



Gulf of Mexico Alliance & ROPs



NE CZM Virtual Mtg.
November 12, 2009



BACKGROUND

- **Pew and Ocean Commissions recommended in 03 and 04 that ocean management should be REGIONAL**
- **Initiated in 2004 by FL Gov. Jeb Bush**
- **Leadership assumed in 2006 by MS Gov. Haley Barbour**
- **State lead, federally supported partnership**
- **Academia, NGOs, non-profits, private sector**



BACKGROUND (Cont.)

- Action Plan I, 2006-2009, 73 specific actions, 95% completed
- Action Plan II, 2009-2014, released in June, 6 priority areas, 25 focus areas, 97 specific actions



Alliance Partnership Successes

- **870 acres of wetlands acquired; restoration done on 250 acres in Coastal Mississippi**
- **1200 acres of oyster habitat created**
- **51 inshore and 16 offshore artificial reefs created in Coastal Mississippi**
- **1,000,000 Acres enrolled in conservation practices in the Yazoo basin of Mississippi**



Alliance Partnership Successes

- **Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Plan completed for 5 southern most MS Counties**
- **Low cost/low maintenance de-centralized Wastewater Systems planned for low density communities in Mississippi**
- **Clean Marina Program established in the Gulf States**
- **National Heritage Area dedicated in Mississippi**
- **109 rivers and streams delisted as polluted in Mississippi**
- **7 hydrological monitoring stations installed**
- **16,000 trees planted in Coastal Mississippi**
- **50-acre marsh created thru beneficial use in Mississippi**



Alliance Partnership Successes

- **Gulf-wide approach and plan to nutrient characterization in support of numeric criteria development**
- **Strategic Storm Recovery Rebuilding Toolbox for local, state and federal decision managers**
- **Resiliency Index developed for Coastal Communities**
- **Working with Corps of Engineers and other federal & state partners to change the Federal Standard to allow the Corps to value environmental benefits**
- **Provided HABs sampling vessels to Campeche & Veracruz**
- **Significant # of septic systems taken off line**
- **Established DEQ beach monitoring program**



Alliance Partnership Successes

- **Over 3,000,000 people are informally educated through Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers Gulf-wide**
- **Established Regional Online Digital Library (USGS NRWC)**
www.nbii.gov/gomaeen
- **Earth Gauge developed over 500 messages about the Gulf Coast**
- **Northern Gulf Institute developed and launched GOMA Environmental Education Network web presence**
www.gulfallianceeducation.org
- **The reliability and comparability of environmental data is being evaluated and improved through a series of round-robin studies**
- **New remote sensing capabilities for detecting and responding to Harmful Algal Blooms Deployed.**



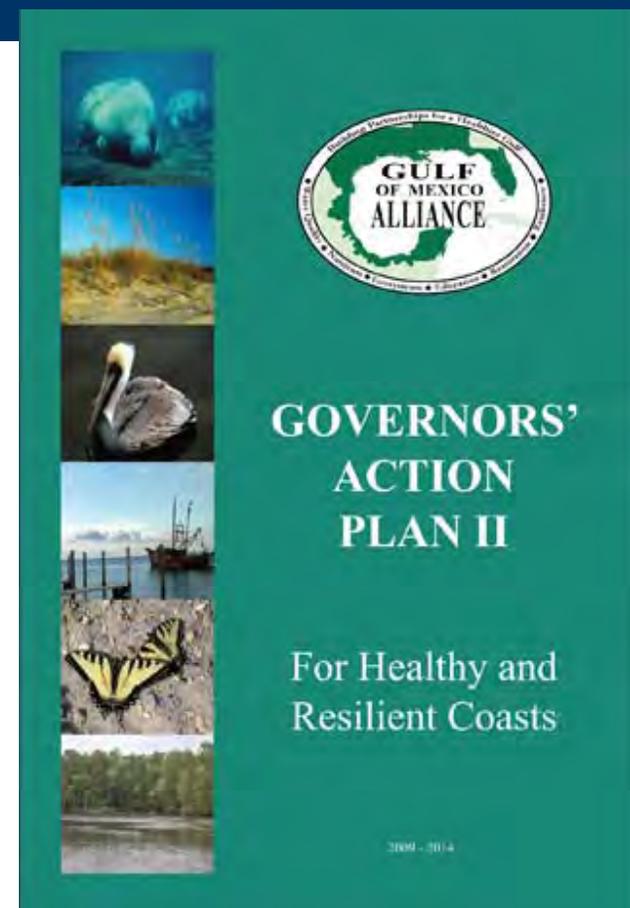
Alliance Partnership Successes

- **Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCs) have been established in each of the five Gulf States and Veracruz, Mexico;**
- **A Regional Sediment Management Master Plan has been drafted that will provide a framework for better management of Gulf sediment resources facilitating a reduction in coastal erosion and storm damages, as well as the restoration of coastal habitats;**
- **Bi-national workshops designed to standardize harmful algal bloom identification and field sampling methods were conducted in Texas, Florida, and Mexico;**
- **An ecosystem data portal has been established that will be used by resource managers to evaluate habitat extent and changes over time; and**
- **A regional Nutrient Criteria Research Framework was developed that has led to a better understanding of nutrient impacts to Gulf ecosystems, as well as a coordinated approach to managing them.**



Governors' Action Plan II Released June 2009

- Sets a course for actions designed to improve the health of coastal ecosystems and economies of the Gulf in ways that a single entity could not achieve
- Five-year regional plan
- Expanded partnerships including international partners, business, NGOs, academia
- A strategy for tangible results





Priorities in Action Plan II

Water Quality for Healthy Beaches and Seafood

Habitat Conservation and Restoration

Ecosystems Integration and Assessment

Reducing Nutrient Impacts to Coastal Ecosystems

Coastal Community Resilience

Environmental Education



Challenges Addressed in Action Plan II

Gulf Challenges

- Sustaining Gulf Economy
- Improving Ecosystem Health
- Mitigating the Impacts of and Adapting to Climate Changes
- Mitigating Harmful Effects to Coastal Water Quality





GOMA's Vision of EBM

- **5-year, 5-state Action Plan with a Regional Vision focused on six regional needs**
- **Tangible, measureable results**
- **Parallel program in Mexico; Cuba next**



Roadblocks & Hurdles

- Funding: pretty good and getting better, but not near where it needs to be.
- GOMA organization needs to be more structured; we need to be able to receive and spend money.
- We need to expand participation – better partnerships with cities and counties.



Funding

- NOAA \$10M to support GOMA in FY08 & 09
- NOAA Fisheries \$3M to support GOMA in FY08-10
- DOI-MMS \$20M to support GOMA FY09-12
- EPA Gulf of Mexico Program \$6M for GOMA in FY08 & 09 (~\$7M in 2010); S. 1311
- NASA \$5M commitment in FY09
- USACOE MSCIP
- MS River Nutrient Reduction



Opportunities

- **June 12 President's memorandum**
OPTF – natl. policy; coord. framework; imp. Strategy;
critical that states/regions be engaged
- **Regional interactions with federal agencies**
- **Partnership of federal agencies**
- **Regional interactions with Congress**
- **Region to Region partnerships (presently in place)**



OPPORTUNITIES (Cont)

- GOMA and ROPs increase communication and collaboration between federal agencies and between federal gov and states/regions
- GOMA and ROPs facilitate aligning federal goals and objectives with those of states and regions
- Increased federal/regional partnering leads to development of priority actions focused on Regional ocean issues



OPPORTUNITIES (Cont)

- Simply increasing federal budget lines will not ensure improved agency performance, higher ecosystem function, or more sustainable forms of economic development.
- Increased investments in ocean activities must be pursued in parallel with increased coordination of effort between federal agencies and the regional partnerships to reduce duplication of effort, leverage resources, and tighten the focus of funding on *activities that directly implement priority actions.*



OPPORTUNITIES (CONT)

- Five ROPs have been meeting (in person) with CEQ to ensure that the regions are engaged in the development of a National Oceans Policy
- CEQ response has been very encouraging with a commitment to continue the dialogue and to continue to work with the regions.
- Five ROPs also recently met with OMB and presented a proposal to provide funding in President's 2011 budget request to support regional goals and objectives.



OPPORTUNITIES (CONT)

Continued interaction between the five ROPs and federal agencies presents a real opportunity to create a **MEANINGFUL** partnership of appropriate federal agencies with each other and with the ROPs and the creation of an achievable National Ocean Policy focused on priority **REGIONAL** ocean needs.