

**GULF OF MEXICO  
COOPERATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2001-2006**

by the

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Law Enforcement Committee  
and  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
Law Enforcement Advisory Panel

edited by

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**Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Law Enforcement Committee (GSMFC LEC)  
and  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (GMFMC LEAP)**

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## **Introduction**

Current regulatory approaches point to the need for new law enforcement strategies. Increased state and federal management concerns over living marine resources, coastal habitat conservation, and international concerns over highly-migratory species have led to a dramatic increase in law enforcement responsibilities throughout the Gulf of Mexico. The role of law enforcement in the fishery management process is to ensure compliance with adopted regulations. Compliance, which enhances the success of management plans, is achieved with an effective enforcement program. An integral part of this enforcement program is involvement in the rule making process to ensure regulations are enforceable and will accomplish management goals.

State and federal marine resource regulations mandate a comprehensive and coordinated compliance program. A gulf-wide cooperative law enforcement strategic plan will maximize the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts by defining gulf-wide priorities; supporting comprehensive, cooperative planning efforts; and enabling interjurisdictional fisheries enforcement operations.

## **Vision Statement**

*Improve regulatory compliance through cooperative law enforcement efforts to enhance, protect and conserve living marine resources throughout the Gulf of Mexico for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

## **Mission Statement**

*The committee is dedicated to fulfilling law enforcement's role in fisheries management by providing professional law enforcement guidance and expertise to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. We are committed to improving regulatory compliance through cooperative efforts that enhance, protect and conserve shared living marine resources and their supporting ecosystems throughout the Gulf of Mexico.*

## Goals and Objectives

### **GOAL 1: Provide professional law enforcement expertise throughout rule-making processes.**

*Professional law enforcement expertise and input are integral to the development and promulgation of clear and effective regulations.*

**Objective 1.1** - Increase participation in the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) processes relating to law enforcement issues.

- GSMFC Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) and GMFMC Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP) meetings in conjunction with GSMFC and GMFMC meetings.
- Knowledge of current GSMFC and GMFMC regulatory actions involving law enforcement.
- Assistance in the development of interjurisdictional state and federal fishery management plans (FMPs).
- Timely and substantive comment on GSMFC and GMFMC actions.

**Objective 1.2** - Strengthen relationships with the GSMFC and GMFMC.

- Provide communication links with GSMFC commissioners and GMFMC members.
- Provide annual operating plans and interim and annual reports.
- Provide an interface between the nonrepresented law enforcement agencies and GSMFC commissioners and GMFMC members.

**Objective 1.3** - Identify existing regulations which are ineffective and/or unnecessary.

- Eliminate or modify ineffective and/or unnecessary regulations.
- Simplify regulations.
- Promote statutory and regulatory consistency among all state and federal agencies.

**GOAL 2: Promote law enforcement partnerships among the states and between state and federal agencies.**

*A cooperative interface among the states and between state and federal partners is essential to maximize resources in order to achieve gulf-wide regulatory compliance.*

**Objective 2.1** - Implement effective memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and reciprocal agreements among the states and between the state and federal agencies.

- Comment for the record, whenever appropriate, to state/federal representatives in support of MOU agreements and joint projects.
- Work closely with state and federal agencies in the development of MOUs.
- Ensure changing law enforcement needs are reflected within MOUs in a timely manner.
- Ensure MOUs between state and federal agencies remain current.

**Objective 2.2** - Seek federal programs supporting state law enforcement.

- Law enforcement training for states.
- Law enforcement equipment for states.

**Objective 2.3** - Implement a uniform enforcement reporting system.

- Evaluate states' information collection and reporting capabilities.
- Develop common terminology acceptable to LEC and LEAP members.
- Develop and maintain a standard data reporting system.
- Analyze and distribute information.

**Objective 2.4** - Plan and analyze law enforcement effort and performance.

- Semiannual state-federal strategic plan meetings to evaluate progress and determine milestones.
- State-federal law enforcement meetings concerning joint gulf-wide programs.
- Explore new avenues of state/federal prosecutions of natural resource violations and enhance existing mechanisms of prosecution.

### **GOAL 3: Develop and implement effective educational programs.**

*A cooperative interface between state and federal partners is essential to maximize resources in order to achieve gulf-wide regulatory compliance.*

#### ***Objective 3.1*** - Improve community-oriented policing programs.

- Implement and establish joint programs to increase contact and law enforcement presence among user groups.
- Research the feasibility of a gulf-wide 1-800 crime reporting number with dispatch capability and a “Coast Watch” type program.
- Publicize different state and federal actions through mass media.

#### ***Objective 3.2*** - Promote the development of a gulf-wide information program for recreational fishermen.

- Identify and evaluate current state/federal information processes for adaptation to a *Gulf Wide Fishing Guide*.
- Study and develop mechanisms to compile state/federal regulations into an understandable guide.
- Study funding feasibilities.

#### ***Objective 3.3*** - Enhance educational efforts to increase awareness of the importance of state and federal prosecution to the successful adjudication of natural resource regulations.

- Develop or enhance outreach to prosecutors and litigators.
- Identify mechanisms to meet with prosecutors and litigators.

**GOAL 4: Obtain funds to aid state and federal law enforcement agencies.**

*State and federal agencies which have never had the resources or assets to provide continuous support of state/federal enforcement operations are increasingly confronted by a fiscally-austere environment.*

**Objective 4.1** - Obtain adequate funding for the strategic planning process and greater representation of the LEC and LEAP at GSMFC and GMFMC meetings.

- Seek funding from the GSMFC and GMFMC for the LEC and LEAP to attend the GSMFC spring and annual meetings; the LEAP to attend GMFMC meetings twice per year; and the LEAP Chairman to attend all GMFMC meetings.

**Objective 4.2** - Explore federal grant and funding programs for law enforcement.

- Identify and evaluate law enforcement grant and funding programs.

**Objective 4.3** - Develop a mechanism to procure funds for gulf state enforcement programs.