

Gulf of Mexico Research Planning Workshop Summary

Prepared for the:

Gulf of Mexico Alliance's Reducing Nutrient Inputs to Coastal Ecosystems Priority Issue Team

June 2008

Overview of the Gulf of Mexico Research Planning Effort

The purpose of the Gulf of Mexico Research Plan (GMRP) is to 1) identify regional research and information needs and 2) address these needs through collaboration with agencies and organizations that conduct and use Gulf of Mexico-related research. The GMRP is rooted in stakeholder input, and workshops were one of the primary methods used to collect this input. One workshop was held in each of the five Gulf of Mexico states and approximately 300 participants and facilitators representing over 100 organizations, universities and departments of local, state, and federal agencies participated in the workshops. The top ten research priorities from each workshop were linked to one of the GOMA priority issue team areas. This summary describes the top priorities identified at the workshops that most closely align with the Reducing Nutrient Inputs to Coastal Ecosystems Priority Issue.

Summary

Workshop participants often grouped water quality and nutrient issues into one research priority area so there are several research priorities from the workshop that may fit under both Gulf of Mexico Alliance priority issue teams. There were two specific nutrient research priorities that ranked in the top ten (table 1). The top research priority at one workshop is to study nutrient loading and non-point source pollution. Specific needs are to study the effects of storm water and wastewater management on the environment. There is also a need to develop models to predict the impacts of non-point source pollution on coastal resources. Another area of focus is to understand nutrient loading impacts on harmful algae blooms and sea grasses. The other highly ranked nutrient priority relates to eutrophication and hypoxia. More work is needed to understand how eutrophic conditions and hypoxic events impact ecosystem health.

You can find out more about the GMRP at the project's web site at: masgc.org/gmrp or by contacting Steve Sempier, Gulf of Mexico Research Planning Coordinator, at stephen.sempier@usm.edu.

Table 1. Research topics identified at the GMRP workshop that relate to the Reducing Nutrient Inputs to Coastal Ecosystems Priority Issue Team.

Topic	Rank at Workshop	State Workshop
Nutrient Loading/Non-Point Source Research -Effects of storm water and waste water management on environment -Developing models to predict impacts non-point source pollution on coastal resources -Understand nutrient loading impacts on harmful algal blooms and on sea grass	1	AL
Eutrophication/Nutrients -Impacts on ecosystem health -Coastal hypoxia and its impacts	5	MS

“Topic” was the raw comment that was presented as a priority at the workshop and voted for by workshop participants.

“Rank at Workshop” is based on the number of votes the topic received at the workshop. A rank of “1” indicated that the topic received the most votes.

“State Workshop” is the workshop where the topic was presented and received votes.