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Articulating Needs and Advocating for University-based Gulf Research, Observation and Education

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<http://www3.research.usf.edu/grc/>

Responses to Disasters – Lessons Learned



Exxon Valdez 1989

Emergencies and disasters, e.g.

- Exxon Valdez
- Hurricane Katrina
- Deepwater Horizon

What is required for an effective scientifically based response?

- *Communication*
- *Coordination*
- *Collaboration*

Feds vs. Universities



- Command-and-control capacity (in theory)
- 15 executive departments, one CEO
- Operational capabilities & duties
- Must use NRDA process
- Data collected must stand up in court
- Have NRDA and other funding
- “Herding cats” management
- 282 doctorate-granting institutions and CEO’s
- Enormous source of intellectual capital
- Prefer unrestricted research grants
- Data collected at state-of-the-art; data transparency; not litigation oriented
- Need research funds

About GOMURC



- “Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative” was initially formed to foster academic communication and coordinate BP oil spill research
- Five Gulf states’ consortia include 66 participating universities
- A unified academic voice on research, observation & higher education
- Complements and partners with Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) to assist in bringing academe to bear on important Gulf issues

GOMURC Partners

One Tree Does Not a Forest Make



- The Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
- The Florida Institute of Oceanography
- The Louisiana Universities Gulf Research Collaborative
- The Mississippi Research Consortium
- The Texas Research Consortium

Gulf Needs and GOMURC Goals



- Articulate scientific and educational needs for Gulf of Mexico
- Advocate for research and educational contributions that academe can provide to support science-based decision-making
- Foster faster, relevant, coordinated responses by Gulf university community to short-term, disaster and emergency concerns
- Improve communication among universities and with public sector, NGO's and industry

Collaborate



- Bring academics together through workshops, meetings and conferences
- Foster cooperation in developing multi-state, interdisciplinary proposal preparation
- Partner with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GRI) and others



Lead, Educate, and Inform



- Lead, support and participate in conferences and other opportunities that promote regional strategies and provide educational opportunities for students and the public
- Provide to the public reliable, scientifically based assessments of state of the Gulf environment, impacts of events, and restoration strategies



Advocate for Science: *The Restore Act*



- Introduced by Senators Landrieu and Shelby with 5 co-sponsors; Rep. Scalise with 26 co-sponsors
- Dedicate 80% of CWA penalties paid by responsible parties for restoration of Gulf Coast environment and economies
- Provide needed resources to Gulf Coast States to start recovery immediately
- Establish a Federal-State Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
- Establish a Gulf Coast Fisheries Endowment
- Provide Funding for Oceans Research through the establishment of a National Endowment for Oceans

The Restore Act: State of Play and Action



- **Status in Senate**
 - Passed in Environment and Public Works; some opposition in Senate to bring it to floor for a vote (e.g. Sen. Coburn)
- **Status in House**
 - Recent hearings (Transportation and Infrastructure), more coming (Natural Resources); offsets (\$1.2 billion) are an issue
- **What we need to do: Be Heard!**
 - Ensure that there is \geq simple majority in the House and ≥ 60 votes in the Senate.
 - Make sure all Gulf states' U.S. Senators and Representatives know that you support this bill

For More Info about GOMURC, Contact:



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