



# GULF COAST ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

MAFAC Meeting  
May 2011



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# How the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force was Established



“Beyond compensating the people of the Gulf in the short term, it’s also clear we need a long-term plan to restore the unique beauty and bounty of this region. The oil spill represents just the latest blow to a place that’s already suffered multiple economic disasters and decades of environmental degradation that has led to disappearing wetlands and habitats. And the region still hasn’t recovered from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. That’s why we must make a commitment to the Gulf Coast that goes beyond responding to the crisis of the moment.”

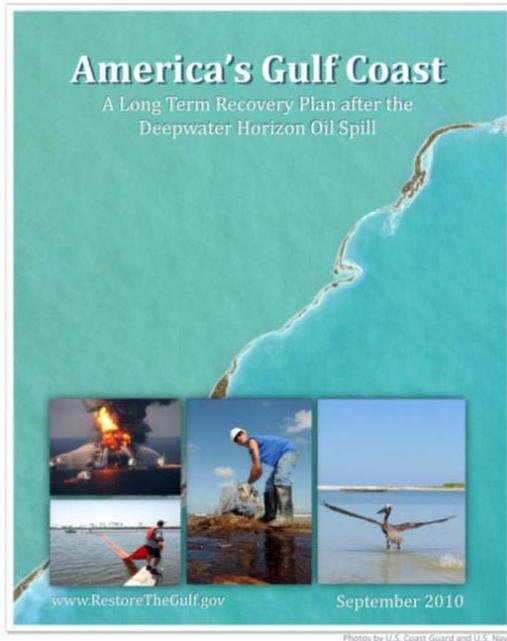
President Obama  
June 15, 2010

## ***America’s Gulf Coast is central to the nation’s economy ---***

- More than 90% of the nation’s offshore oil and gas is produced in the Gulf.
- It is where nearly one-third of seafood production in the continental U.S. is harvested.
- 7 of the nation’s top 10 Ports in terms of tonnage or cargo value are located in the Gulf.

# America's Gulf Coast (aka the Mabus Report)

## Summary of Recommendations



1. Establish dedicated funds for restoration and recovery by depositing CWA civil penalties incurred from DWH oil spill into a congressionally-established Gulf Coast Recovery Fund.
2. Create a congressionally-authorized Gulf Coast Recovery Council to manage the Gulf Coast Recovery Fund.
3. Establish a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force through Executive Order to get started now.
4. Ensure coordination between ecosystem restoration, economic development and long-term health issues.

# Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy Executive Order



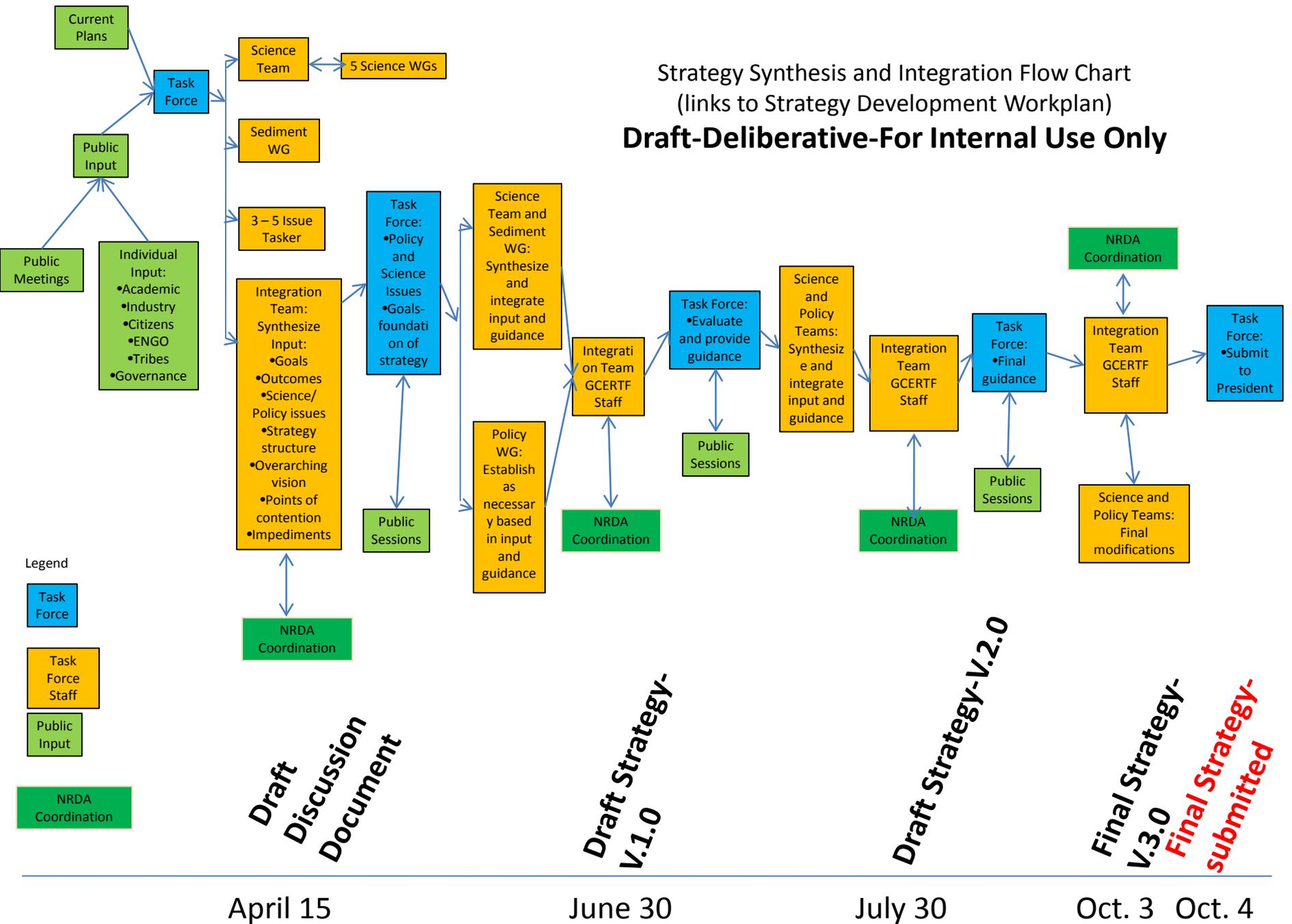
**The Task Force shall :**

**Prepare a Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy within 1 year of establishment (by October 5, 2011).**

**Strategy Components :**

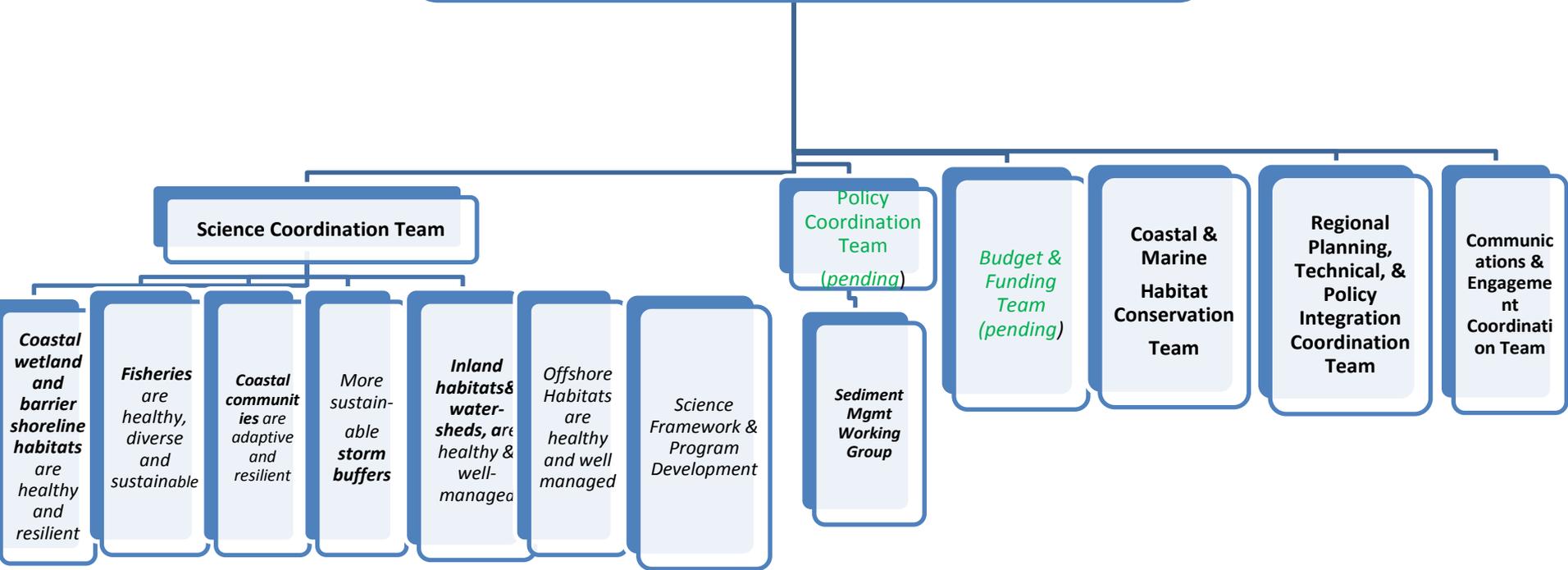
- Define ecosystem restoration goals
- Consider existing research and ecosystem restoration
- Identifying policy areas where government coordination is necessary
- Proposing actions where existing authorities are not sufficient
- Identifying monitoring, research and scientific assessments and gaps needed to support decision making for restoration efforts

# Strategy Synthesis and Integration Flow Chart (links to Strategy Development Workplan) Draft-Deliberative-For Internal Use Only





**Gulf Coast Ecosystem  
Restoration Task Force**  
5 State and 11 Federal Appointed Members  
*(supported by interagency staff detailees)*



- Established through Executive Order on October 5, 2010.
- Led by Lisa Jackson, EPA Administrator

# GCERTF Science Coordination Team

GCERTF Staff Leads: Dawn Lavoie & Alyssa Dausman (USGS) and Shelby Walker (NOAA)

Primary Responsibility: Ensure strategy is based on the best available science – “The Restoration Strategy will be an Ecosystem -- Science-based document.”

Actions to date –

- Defining restoration goals
- Articulating current conditions
- Identifying high level activities to achieve the goals
- Establishing performance metrics
- Identifying gaps in scientific understanding, including:
  - Research
  - Monitoring
  - Modeling

# GCERTF Science Coordination Team

## Subgroup 7: Science Program

### Underpinning Program for Research, Modeling, and Monitoring to support Adaptive Restoration Management

Several SCT Members from State and Federal Government Agencies (from 6 working groups and more)

#### Adaptive Management Elements:

Establish goals and objectives based on the Ecosystem Restoration Strategy

*Supporting Research*

*Monitoring and Evaluation*

*Data Management*

*Modeling*

# GCERTF Sediment Management Team

GCERTF Staff Leads: Clay Miller (EPA) and Chris Busch

Interagency State and federal members: individuals from CEQ LA/MS Roadmap Sed Mgmt Working Group and GOMA HCRT identified by GCERTF Principals

Approx. 35 of 70 GOM Plans identify Sed Mgmt issues as a top concern!

## Responsibilities and Tasks

- Revisit existing work and continue (i.e., Roadmap papers, HCRT paper)
- Provide guidance and advice on RSM
- Provide recommendations on breaking down barriers and specific actions to implement sediment mgmt projects
- Coordinate work and findings with other GCERTF teams
- Incorporate proposed Gulf Coast Sediment Management Strategy into proposed Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Strategy



# GCERTF Regional Planning, Technical and Policy Workgroup

GCERTF Staff Leads: Buck Sutter and Joe Redican

## **Responsibilities:**

- Advise TF on development of the GCER Restoration Strategy
- Develop and write drafts of the Strategy
- Identify gaps and planning priorities to enable Gulf Coast Restoration
- Integrate policy into other technical teams or establish policy teams if needed

## **Tasks and Progress**

- Convened Interagency team on March 21
- Synthesizing state and federal priority issues to include in Strategy
- Analyzing/mining existing conservation and restoration planning documents & identify cross cutting priorities in need of TF focus
- Drafting TOC for Strategy Discussion Document
- Prepared Strategy Discussion Document for last TF Mtng held in Mobile 5/6

# GCERTF Coastal and Marine Habitat Conservation Team

GCERTF Staff Lead: Chris Pease (USFWS)

## **Responsibilities:**

- Advise TF on development of Habitat Conservation initiatives
- Build upon the existing system of protected areas to sustain coastal fish and wildlife populations, protect cultural resources, ensure stability for natural resource based economies, and provide a level of resiliency from the effects of major storm events and sea level rise.
- Enhance conservation on privately owned lands

## **Tasks and Progress**

- Convened Interagency team in early April
- Lead is meeting with Agency Stakeholders
- Has inquired about potential for coordination with GOMA HCRT
- Contributing to Strategy Discussion Document

# RESTORE Act by Senators Landrieu & Vitter



- Amend FWPCA
- Est. GC Restoration Council (8F/5S)
- Council develops "Comprehensive Plan" (No mention of GCERTF)
- 80% of DWH CWA \$ Penalties to Restoration Trust Fund
- Fund allocation
  - 35% to States
  - 60% to State/Fed Council for Comp Strategy (priority to approved State Comp Plans & lrg scale projects)
  - 5% to Science, Monitoring, & Tech Program, NOAA administers grants to 5 State Centers of Excellence

# Comprehensive GOM Recovery, Restoration & Resiliency Act by Senator Nelson

- Est. GC Restoration Council composed of GCERTF
- Est. Scientific Advisory Com, a Citizens Advisory Com & Gulf Observation System
- 100% of DWH CWA \$ Penalties to Restoration Trust Fund
- Fund allocation
  - 45% to Local Political Subdivisions through grants
  - 50% to State/Fed Council, use Strategy to guide grants to states, feds, higher Ed, & local pol. subs
  - 5% to Fisheries Endowment , managed by NOAA & GMFMC

# GCERTF Restoration Strategy

## 4 PRIORITY ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION GOALS

- Revitalize and Build Resilient Communities
- Restore and Conserve Habitat
- Assess and Improve Water Quality
- Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources

# GCERTF Restoration Strategy

## FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS



### **Science-based Adaptive Management**

Formulate an adaptive, science-based framework to inform decision-making, build upon existing knowledge, and anticipate and meet emerging needs.

### **Community Engagement, Outreach and Education**

Continue to communicate with stakeholders, elected leaders, citizens and indigenous populations and promote dialogue on restoration strategy development, and provide opportunities to engage in the process.

### **Regional, State and Local Implementation Efforts**

Build on collaborative working relationships to facilitate, utilize, empower, and enable programs and partnerships to deliver restoration and protection results.

### **Bi-National Collaboration**

Cooperate with international partners to address transnational areas of concern, building on existing programs and creating new ones.

### **Consultation and Coordination with Federally Recognized Tribes**

Formalize collaboration and engagement with Gulf states' tribes.

# Agency and Public Discussion Questions Presented at Mobile GCERTF Meeting

## 5 five key questions:

- Are these the 4 right **goals**?
- What are the **critical actions** or **major outcomes** that need to be accomplished as part of this strategy in order to achieve the overarching goals?
- What **new programs and actions** (state, federal and private) are needed?
- What **key policy changes** will improve the processes necessary to support restoration?
- **What would "success" look like**, and how should it be measured and reported?

# What are MAFAC's priorities for Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration?



# How to Get Involved and Provide Your Input

- Attend TF meetings and listening sessions being held in each of the five Gulf states and speak to TF members to give them input that will inform Strategy development.
- Participate in stakeholder calls being held in advance of each TF meeting.
- Share your individual thoughts and comments by emailing **GulfCoastTaskForce@epa.gov**.
- Join the listserv, receive announcements and find information at <http://www.epa.gov/gulfcoasttaskforce/> or call toll-free at **855-427-9263**.

# GCERTF Future Meetings and Listening Sessions

## **GCERTF Public Listening Sessions**

4/20 Corpus Christi, TX: Ortiz International Center 5:30pm – 7:30pm

4/28 Gulfport, MS: Isiah Fredericks Community Center 6-8pm

## **GCERTF Meetings**

Past:

Nov 8, 2010 - Pensacola, FL ; Feb 28, 2011 - New Orleans, LA,

May 6, 2011 - Mobile, AL

Upcoming:

June 1, 2011 – Pensacola, FL, 9-1pm, Saengar Theatre, 118 South Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL 32502

June 27, 2011 – Galveston, TX

August 29, 2011 - Biloxi, MS