

Gulf of Mexico Alliance 2016 All Hands Meeting

Education & Engagement Team

June 15 – 17, 2016

NOTES

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance conducted the 12th Annual All Hands meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, June 14 – 17, 2016. During this meeting, each priority issue team broke into separate sessions. The agenda goals for the Education and Engagement Team (EE) were:

- Inform the EE Team of GOMA planning efforts and future direction
- Confirm priorities of EE Team
- Scope out specific Team projects which will inform final Tier II Strategies document

Team sessions began Wednesday afternoon, June 15th, following a morning plenary and continued through Friday, June 17th.

General Next Steps

1. Draft RFP for \$10,000 individual mini-grants for Focus Area One
2. Get group together for \$40,000 Citizen Science/Messages Project to move forward
3. Convene interest group for Gulf-Wide Campaign “Year of the Gulf”
4. Solicit EE Team Members to work on monthly messages
5. Update APIII Tier II
6. Work with DWH Project Tracker Team to show EE

Wednesday, June 15th – EE Afternoon Session

Melissa Collier, Mississippi EE Lead with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the EE Team Chair, opened the meeting and conducted introductions.

Lee Yokel, Alliance EE Coordinator, gave a brief Alliance update. The update included an overview of the Alliance structure, contacts for Teams, the EE Team function and contacts, and some recent announcements. The recent announcements were the release of the Governors’ Action Plan III (APIII) and the Ten Year Summary Report. Amy Clark, Regional Coordinator for the Gulf of Mexico B-WET Program, provided an overview of the Team meeting and rules of engagement.

During the course of the meeting, the EE Team had discussions and made decisions that helped direct the new Gulf Star Program.

EE Approach to the Gulf Star Program

In January 2016, the Alliance Coordination Team decided to work with Alliance Headquarters to allot \$90,000 per Team for APIII projects (Coastal Resilience \$50,000). Each Team worked prior to the All Hands meeting to design how they would fund their projects.

Key Gulf Star Program Information:

- HQ Announced last year; grant making program; collaborative approach
- Public-Private Partnership with a goal of \$1M a year (not yet achieved)
- Each Priority Issue Team has \$90,000 to make decisions on how Gulf Star Program works
- Cross- Teams work through Priority Issue Teams
- Basic Requirements-
 - Project duration is 12-24 months;
 - Cross Teams will be funded through PITs;
 - EE voluntary provision in other team projects; data & monitoring provisions in other team projects; and
 - Contracts run through Alliance Headquarters

Prior to the 2016 All Hands meeting, the EE Steering Committee had several email/conference call discussions for how to conduct the EE Team's involvement in Gulf Star.

The EE Steering Committee decisions were as follows:

- Mini Grants for \$50K
 - One per Gulf State- \$10K each
 - Must address APIII EE Focus Area One
 - Competitively selected
 - Notification of RFP will go to Team Members only but does not exclude others from applying.
- Regional Project for \$40K
 - This meeting will decide what the regional project will be
 - Team members present will help make the decision
 - No more than two projects might be funded.
 - May be sole sourced or put out for contractor bid per Alliance procedure manual

Team Questions/Observations:

- Question: Will the amount of time GOMA needs to be engaged (in terms of teleconferences, hours) be available to the applicant?
Suggestion made to give applicant an idea of the amount of time would be required.
- Question: Will the match be used for points?
It is not required but could be used to make the project stronger.
- Question: Is there an "appropriate amount" of Education and Outreach for each project? How will other Team's inclusion of Education and Outreach be evaluated?
Amy Clark offered to assist on this effort. EE Team has offered to provide evaluators if requested.
- Question: Any thought on the EE component being funded from EE pot of money (example give the other teams money to accomplish EE for their project)?
No, EE Team funding will not be provided to the other Teams. It is possible to have submitted projects from across Teams that support or enhance each other.

- Question: In the RFP there are requirements listed, but will the team (ex. EE Team) describe what the EE in each project should look like?
There are basic Alliance Headquarters' requirements for all Team RFPs. The application is relatively short. The EE Project for the individual state mini-grants must reflect APIII EE Focus Area One. The EE RFP will not be so prescriptive as to complicate the short application.
- Question: Can we put forward some standard criteria for EE in the projects?
Yes, and APIII EE Focus Area One is the overarching one. Between the BWET Program, former GOMA EE mini-grant program, and the current guidelines for the Alliance; there are plenty of guidelines to finish the RFP.
- Question: Will grants that apply to more than one team be looked at more favorable?
No. Not necessarily.
- Observation: Adding too many components that can earn extra points on these criteria can put awards receiving on an unequal playing field.
- Observation: Do we want to limit or not have administrative overhead?
We will limit administrative overhead as dictated by Alliance Headquarters.

Action Plan III – Action Selection & Tier II

Throughout 2015, Alliance Teams dedicated most of their time to the development of APIII. The plan was approved by all five U.S. Gulf State governors and unveiled prior to the 2016 All Hands meeting.

Information was collected from the members of the Teams. A subset of volunteers within the Teams crafted the Focus Areas and Actions of the plan. Those were further refined by Alliance Headquarters and ultimately approved by the Alliance Management Team.

EE Team members contributed to APIII's development through conference calls, conference webinars, meetings, and emails. A wide range of information was collected to include very specific steps to broad ideas. Prior to the 2016 All Hands Meeting, the EE Steering Committee voted on a suite of actions. The voting helped to narrow down the ideas into a more manageable set of actions to consider for funding. The top six receiving high ranking votes were brought to the meeting.

These six actions, combined with any potential cross-team marine debris actions, were used to determine the regional \$40,000 Gulf Star funding action. The EE Team took the rest of the afternoon to discuss potential details related to each action. Each action was placed in its APIII Tier II context. Tier II is a document that tracks the specifics of each action and is reported quarterly to Alliance HQ.

The top six in no specific order are:

- Create audience-specific educational products or programs that translate Alliance Priority Issue team information into understandable messages to increase awareness of the value of Gulf natural resources;
- Update the GOMA Communications Plan;

- Explore new and unique ways to disseminate Alliance messages through free time on digital billboards;
- Create a face-to-face Gulf of Mexico EE conference;
- Develop Alliance educational partnerships with non-educational organizations, such as business and industry; and
- Conduct a Gulf-wide "Year of the Gulf" campaign

Action Discussion

#1. Focus Area 1: Communicate Alliance Priority Issues

Assist Priority Issue Teams and cross-team initiatives with their education and engagement efforts to improve communication and collaboration.

- E. Action: Create audience-specific educational products or programs that translate Alliance Priority Issue team information into understandable messages to increase awareness of the value of Gulf natural resources

Group Comments

- Avoid duplication
- Create a list of current projects
- For specificity, have a target audience
- Increase participation/outreach to NGO's that are not represented
- Distribute/create/growing delivery materials focused on audience needs and uses
- Leverage projects that could be regional by utilizing the teams \$40,000
- Provide eval criteria on specific audience

#2 Focus Area 2: Promote Public Awareness

Support public awareness and stewardship activities that include various approaches for creating a conversation with Gulf communities.

- A. Action: Conduct public awareness and stewardship opportunities for audiences within the Gulf of Mexico and broader Gulf Watershed

Update Communications Plan

Periodic messaging for other teams – push what they are doing

365 Messages (Low Handing Fruit LHF)

Members take turns creating bullets each month; facts about the Gulf & our partners (LHF)

Group Comments on Update Communications Plan

- Scalable (may not cost \$40,000)
- Create a communications plan specific to the 5 mini grants to help the other teams
- We could spend as little or as much as we like on the update

#3 Focus Area 2: Promote Public Awareness

Support public awareness and stewardship activities that include various approaches for creating a conversation with Gulf communities.

- E. Action: Explore new and unique ways to disseminate Alliance messages and to receive feedback from Gulf communities
- Conduct surveys or other evaluation
 - Customize education messaging to a communities needs
 - Utilize existing needs assessments (NERRs TOTE CTP)
 - Establish baseline information on what a community knows & needs
 - Internal market analysis & needs assessment
 - Create & implement a series of community meetings to ‘exchange’ information on the selected topics
 - Generate conversations-receiving feedback and information from Gulf communities’
 - Free time on digital billboards? Positive messages - community impact awareness*
- Group Comments on “Free time on digital billboards? Positive messages”
- Large projects that are exciting, lots of media attention, more effective than a media campaign
 - Crowd sourcing, that captures the imagine
 - Another team come up with an idea
 - T-shirts, unique messaging, that businesses could sell, like the gulf girl products
 - Think of new ways to create public awareness
 - Communicating different meanings will require different delivery methods
 - Thank you Ocean program, very successful, 2-3 years to develop, 1 million dollars=free TV time
 - Utilize successful campaigns

#4 Focus Area 2: Promote Public Awareness

Support public awareness and stewardship activities that include various approaches for creating a conversation with Gulf communities.

- A. Action: Conduct public awareness and stewardship opportunities for audiences within the Gulf of Mexico and broader Gulf Watershed
- C. Action: Distribute parallel messages across the states with uniform public awareness campaigns
- i. Participate in other campaigns – ex. iHeartEstuaries and National Estuaries Day
 - ii. Parallel messages distributed across states with uniform public awareness campaigns

Define the parallel messages
 Identifying the campaigns through which they'll be distributed
 Identify best method to engage the campaign
 Conduct a Gulf-wide "Year of the Gulf" campaign

Group Comments on Conduct a Gulf-Wide "Year of the Gulf" Campaign

- This idea came from the other Teams
- Suggestion from other team member that to properly prepare with needs assessment, etc. start date would be 2020
- Why only one year, should this be a continuing campaign
- Utilize a campaign that inspires, or promotes stewardship and action
- Tie campaign to existing festivals, etc.
- Legislation that supports a national "Year of the Gulf"
- Whatever campaign, we need a sustainability plan
- Merchandizing campaign would generate revenue
- Inclusive to all those on the GOM,
- Collective message to include teams, NGO's, all involved
- Pay a contractor to develop the messages
- Involve GOM Sea Grant communications, NPS etc. hire a facilitator
- Utilize a different topic each year
- Involve Mexico
- Needs assessment how well the campaign will be received by government/private interests and geographic limitations (FL)
- If scheduled in a timeframe, so participants are prepared and it is easy to incorporate into existing programs and events
- Important that we focus on results

#5 Focus Area 3: Education and Engagement Network

Increase education and engagement network collaboration to reduce duplication, leverage resources, and expand local, regional, and national opportunities.

- D. *Action: Develop Alliance educational partnerships with non-educational organizations, such as business and industry*

Group Comments on Action D

- Why fund this when it shouldn't cost \$ to encourage others to participate
- Could be used for education/outreach to industry (low impact development), Living shorelines, build on existing programs that target industry, include awards/acknowledgement
- Create support to involve partners
- Leave only your footprint campaign in Gulf Shores, expand this program Gulf wide, it is working down there, "no plastics day" help with issues and challenges
- Marriot in Bahamas, campaign to explain projects

- Create a platform for the business and industry to discuss what they have done to protect the Gulf.
- Develop materials to offer solutions

#6 Focus Area 3: Education and engagement Network

I. Focus Area 3: Education and Engagement Network

Increase education and engagement network collaboration to reduce duplication, leverage resources, and expand local, regional, and national opportunities.

A. Action: Create an opportunity for a face-to-face Gulf of Mexico educator conference

Step 1.

i. Needs Assessment/Market Analysis

- Consideration: Professional development opportunity for individual members
- Consideration: Inclusive to those that are not formal educators - local people who want to learn more about the local environment and issues - tools to reach community "lay person"

ii. Identify overlap of issues, institutional framework within EE PIT & audiences to leverage existing assets

- Define how to reach audience we've selected
- Who is doing what, where?

Step 2 Need to define specific audience (Team, community, K-12, International)

- Define how to reach audience we've selected
- Reach out to new partners - agencies that work with our selected audiences - define "carrots" like CEUs or other to engage to engage them

Step 3

i. Define specific objectives for the conference –

- Consider: Professional development opportunity for individual members
- Consider: Inclusive to those that are not formal educators - local people who want to learn more about local enviro - tool to reach community "lay person"
- Consider: formal day meeting with evening session to invite others for Q&A session

ii. Flexibility “on the road” show – go to the audience

Group Comments on Face to Face Group Educator Conference

- Nothing like this exists
- Include only EE, or others
- Travel restrictions, etc.
- Utilize CEUS to overcome travel restrictions
- Offer funds for travel
- Virtual meeting, active participation is questionable,
- Dynamic platforms for virtual meetings
- Involve universities for CEUs, could be challenging process
- Identify a specific audience (citizen science, adult decision makers)

- Need to address objectives, involve other teams priority
- Could rotate audiences, topics, etc.
- Webinar series
- Offer to NERRs, other pilots
- Building on the messaging campaign

The afternoon session was followed by a very successful Alliance Tools Café' and reception.

Thursday, June 16th – Morning Session

The EE Team met in conjunction with the Marine Debris Cross-Team Initiative. Prior to the 2016 All Hands Meeting, the Marine Debris Cross-Team met in Mobile, Alabama. Actions from that meeting were shared with the EE Steering Committee prior to All Hands. They also prioritized those actions. Those results and the morning's discussions were included in the EE Team's afternoon work.

Thursday, June 16th – Afternoon Session

Marine Debris Inclusion Discussion and Action Voting

Four marine debris actions were discussed as possible inclusion to an existing EE action or as a stand-alone action to be considered. Steve Ashby with the Northern Gulf Institute reviewed the actions and noted they overlap with much of what the EE Team does. Those actions were:

- Citizen Science: for Marine Debris Monitoring (coverage in existing programs);
- Communication/Language: Develop consistent syntax/communication vocabulary and standard protocols for defining and describing impacts of marine debris (i.e. stand data sheets/apps) – deliverable workshop or workshop sessions;
- Communication/Outreach: Outputs of research projects to the public effectively (i.e. Sea grant oil spill outreach); and
- Education: Where to dispose of nets, gear, monofilament, etc. (commercial vs recreational)

Discussion on the second bullet above regarding development of consistent vocabulary determined that action could be best served by the Data & Monitoring Team. It was also viewed as something that could be accomplished through conference calls and webinars without requiring a lot of funding.

Discussion on the third and fourth bullets above noted those could be included in several of the existing EE Team actions. These include the "Gulf-wide campaign", translation of PIT products and actions, and partnerships with other industry/organizations.

The Citizen Science bullet was discussed as a stand-alone action.

#7 Focus Area: Research

Action: Add Citizen Science to Increase MD monitoring coverage in existing programs. (Example: Microplastics sampling at coastal clean ups)

Group Comments on Citizen Science

- Some quantitative MD data being collected by Steve's group
- Much of debris removal is not reported

- Connect and expand an existing citizen science program
- Identify the difference between crowd sourcing, and citizen science, crowd sourcing is seeing and reporting, citizen science is volunteers collecting data using scientific protocols, so the data can be used in science
- Connection to Water Resources, Wildlife & Fisheries, Habitat Resources, and Data & Monitoring Teams
- Lots exists, inventory
- Support, expand, existing network/platforms, connect – GCOOS, GBF, etc.
- Don't create new apps – use existing – ex. Georgia App, NOAA App, LEEC App
- Training on how to conduct/collect MD monitor
- Define who is the citizen –
 - public, industry, retired scientist
 - this is distinct from crowd sourcing
- Define protocols/methods

Other Comments

- Aquatic trash lends itself to education
- Create a marine debris initiative (similar to the GOM Sea Grant oil spill)

Action Voting

After discussing the Marine Debris options, the EE Team briefly reviewed the actions discussed from the previous day.

Points to remember:

- This vote will determine what the EE Team's \$40,000 Regional Project will be
- Need to consider the budget
- Remember the timeframe of 12-24 months.
- No action is lost

All present EE Team members voted. Each member got two dots. A blue dot with #1 was their first priority for funding. A red dot with #2 was their second priority. You could not double dot an action. After the vote, dots were counted and EE Steering Committee members returned to discuss and confirm the vote.

The EE Steering Committee members combined to actions that received a lot of attention: Citizen Science with Marine Debris and creating Positive Messages with Unique Delivery Methods.

- Marine Debris and the EE actions discussion
 - Communication/Outreach of research understanding the new MD research in the GOM, getting the research out to the public
 - Some quantitative MD data being collected by Steve's group
 - Other PITs are developing EE
 - If the other PITs have needs, they need to communicate to us, so we can list those in the RFP and applicants could pick one
 - We need to keep our action broad enough to include other PIT needs

- Much of debris removal is not reported
 - Get MD into restoration plans
 - Identify gaps in research, list what research is on-going
 - Discussion of proposed actions
- Discussion of the need to work with other the PITS and the difficulties our of our task for today without this knowledge
 - Communications plan may not cost money, could be addressed in a number of ways, very broad
 - Harte summit, highlight what others are doing, with a display at Gulf summit
 - Be careful with trying to raise money with donated money

Friday morning, June 17th

NOAA Restore Act Science Program

Dr. Julien Lartique is the Program Director for the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program. He came to provide an overview of the program and its future direction. He also answered questions from the group. The program recently released its second funding opportunity. As they get results from their first two funding activities, they will share the results and evolve how the program functions.

Of interest to the EE community, as research results are available, the program will want to share those results with the end user. This may involve training, decision support tools, or other management to reach target audiences (examples include federal, state, private land owners, land trust, citizen science, and similar).

Deepwater Horizon Project Tracker

The Deepwater Horizon Project Tracker (www.dwhprojecttracker.org) is an easy and comprehensive way to track restoration, research, and recovery projects resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. An Alliance initiative, partners include Ducks Unlimited and The Trust for Public Lands. Jes Skillman with Ducks Unlimited held an interactive conversation with the EE Team to help make the Tracker more user friendly for the EE community. The question asked was, "How to better show education and outreach?"

Several ideas were brainstormed to make the tool more searchable for Education and Outreach (E&O) related projects or, those projects that contain an E&O component. A sample page was demonstrated with available data. A challenge is that many programs are not reporting if their programs have a related E&O element to them. Soon, the tool should be searchable for secondary and tertiary characteristics that do have E&O listed. That may help in some search capabilities.

The Tracker Team will review how to create a crowd sourcing document that will allow user to go online and update information. This may help with new projects added to the tracker. It will allow those familiar with programs already in the tracker to add key information. They will also review the ability to create tags for projects that would help make them more searchable.

Decision 2016

After sleeping on the day's previous decision, the group revisited the voting outcome. Many were surprised by the results. As a result of the discussion, nothing was changed. A few positions were clarified. The group as a whole was more confident moving forward.

Clarifications on the decision's outcome voters:

- Understood and were concerned with funding amount restrictions of the funding source
- Understood the project time frame of 12-24m
- Felt that just having a campaign plan did not look like a good product (i.e. Gulf Wide Campaign Setup)
- Wanted to fund a smaller more tangible item
- Understood there are 5 mini-grants – more opportunities for inclusiveness; address other Team & Cross-Team issues

In general:

- Need to help reach overall vision of the Alliance – leads toward a 2020 vision (Gulf-wide campaign)
- Items are not lost – they are still in the Tier II and can be addressed later.

Additional discussion addressed the need to prevent the “silo effect” of items being streamlined in and of themselves without connections to a broader Alliance picture. What brings everything together, including the other Team successes? Milestones and deliverables can reflect a larger vision through small tangible results. Want to establish something that is part of an overall plan and not just a pilot. A piece of an overall strategy. The Alliance Communication plan helps support this directive as does the Gulf-wide Campaign.

Next Steps Citizen Science/Messages

1. Group subset of people together for this process
2. Decide what needs to be done for the \$40,000

Next Steps Gulf Wide Campaign

1. Need to create workgroups to talk about these issues. Outline for a plan and bring back to Team.
2. Use overarching 2020 plan and show how MD & Citizen Science into this overarching plan. Not a single track vision but one fits into a larger plan.

Gulf-Wide 2020 Campaign Early Connections

- Citizen Science, Marine Debris, Positive Messages
- Other Team projects – nexus to fit this
- Action Plan III into 4th year
- Communication Plan Updated
- Katrina & Oil Spill anniversaries
- Multi-Team Results

Brainstorming

Funding Opportunities

Watch for other funding opportunities for any and all projects (2020) – in-kind services to meet EE needs

- add smaller grants to funding page (Wes)
- send through GOMAEEN listserv
- consider EE Constant Contact list

Target Audience K-12

Suggest highlighting directed efforts in each state (one or more schools in each state) that have participated in EE program that shows results. Include these in the Year of the Gulf as part of the event; engage in activity as well as showcasing successes – create visible milestones and highlight “shining stars”. Also look to foundations that support school districts; Science Coordinators; and have each EE Member highlight one teacher/program from their area

Encourage more sharing within the Educators Network to share successes, grants, and information.

Utilize education in other locations – outside approaches “Boys & Girls Club” YMCA, Churches etc. Girls Scouts of America = Informal Education; Job Corps Nature Centers; EPA GMP Gulf Awareness Patch (camps & curriculum).

There are Ocean literacy principles, climate change principles, and so forth, need literacy principles for the Gulf of Mexico.

Outreach

Regarding Gulf-Wide campaign, inserting in outreach events something about the GoM.

Find ways to connect with other Teams for service projects

Team members write facts about the Gulf; share responsibility; need source.

See additional files for flipcharts and presentations.