





US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Academia Session</h2>
Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
Academic presentation	<p>Depiction of Texas coastal habitats, geo- and bio-diversity (Texas 101). The key to issues in Texas is to remember that Texas goes from wet to dry in a north to south direction. Unlike other parts of the Gulf, Texas is largely a barrier island system. The point was that the best restoration in Texas would be to put aside land for protection.</p>
Academic presentation	<p>Policy and legal issues, with primary focus on a Nov 5, 2010, Texas Supreme Court case <i>Severance v. Patterson</i> that allowed private land owners on the Gulf beach to retain ownership following avulsion events. Homes and associated structures are now located on open beach which makes beach de facto private property trumping the 1959 Texas Open Beaches Act. This has already stopped a \$50 million beach renourishment project by the Texas General Land Office (GLO) which is prohibited by the State constitution on spending State funds to benefit private property.</p>
Academic presentation	<p>A second hearing has been requested as this precedent has broad ramifications for restoration work on Texas Gulf beaches. Also implications for Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) are that land ownership will have to be determined prior to restoration and will likely take court action.</p>
Academic presentation	<p>Overview of sea level rise (SLR)-big variability, but significant in Louisiana. Need to understand long-term drivers of trend, but also variability. What does this mean for salt marsh accretion-need to get sediment onto the marshes. Managing marshes will depend on where they are-protected marshes will be more impacted by steady SLR, exposed marshes will be more influenced by dynamic processes (storms, etc). Need to move away from simple averages, since many factors influence SLR.</p>

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<p>Academic presentation</p>	<p>Variability in water levels-not a simple process-long-term trend with short-term variability. Diversions will create different kinds of land from what we've lost. highly variable subsidence rates-greatest at the mouth, slower as you move onshore. Coastal zones are dynamic on both spatial and temporal scales. ADCP (Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler) Backscatter by Mead Allison shows river varies and there are some parts of the river that carry more sediment than others. Restoration must take advantage of this variability-Restoration should target areas where subsidence rates are low, river sediments are abundant and sediment trapping efficiencies are high.</p>
<p>Academic presentation</p>	<p>Impacts of Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill in Relation to Broader Coastal/Marine Stressors. Key points include: Evaluating ecosystem services and states that they are degrading rapidly due to population growth and altered land/seascapes; the priority issue world and Gulf-wide is fresh water quantity reaching the bays and estuaries. No restoration possible without restoring freshwater inflows; developing maps of ecosystem services in one estuarine system in Texas that result in “heat maps” highlighting the greatest impaired ecosystem service and hence the highest restoration need (work in conjunction with David Yoskowitz).</p>
<p>Academic presentation</p>	<p>Could be a model for the entire Gulf of Mexico for identifying highest priority restoration needs. Ecosystem services were defined by the stakeholders, not necessarily with dollar values, but with perceived value and relative weighting; and noted that Texas has a law that requires that development upstream give consideration to impacts downstream (estuaries). Additionally, there is a new state law that requires re-evaluation of restoration efforts every ten years-adaptive management.</p>

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Academic presentation	Overview of restoration approaches-discussion of wetlands, seagrass, oysters, estuaries/freshwater inflows, and continental shelf. Pushed the concept of a report card for the Gulf, which he would like to see reported at the December 4, 2011 Gulf Summit. He wants to see a big picture assessment of the entire Gulf and would like the TF to annually measure progress with some type of assessment common to the Gulf states. This concept has already been presented to Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) – not sure if other entities are picking it up.
Academia	Sustainability and resiliency were focused on as to how restoration would be framed. “Sustainability is the key to restoration.”
Academia	“Restoration is a backward looking doctrine; resiliency is a forward looking doctrine.”
Academia	The issue of metrics needed to define progress was discussed and would need further refinement to enable assessment and communication of restoration success.
Academia	The GCERTF needs to have a robust GIS component to provide the big picture of all the issues.
Academia	There are continuing discussions through the Gulf on a network of Marine Protected Areas (“Islands in the Stream”) – a symposium on this topic is planned for end of May at Mote Marine.
Academia	Habitats of concern were the hard banks including natural and artificial reefs, especially the 4,000 plus oil platforms.
Academia	The oil platforms are also seen as a source of information: that which is developed via exploration and that which is required and collected by BOEMRE. There was a consensus that these types of information need to be centralized and made available.
Academia	Oyster reefs were identified as “the most endangered habitat type on the Texas coast”. This is due to decades of oyster shell dredging in the past century and limited freshwater inflow.

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Academia	“Nitrogen loading in estuaries and marine systems is as big of an issue as climate change”.
Academia	“ Stopping the ethanol subsidy would have an immediate beneficial effect.”
Academia	The primary issue in Texas are that watershed inputs and fresh water inflows. To restore, it will be necessary not to create marsh and other traditional restoration projects but to manage the rivers (by salinity). Once the drivers of degradation are “fixed” the outcome (a healthy ecosystem) should result.