

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

The Gulf of Mexico is one of America's greatest and most diverse treasures uniting five states with a single coastline. It is home to extraordinary habitats and wildlife from its deep blue ocean depths to productive estuaries and magnificent beaches. It is home to more than 44 million people, many of whom depend on the Gulf for their livelihood or were drawn here by Gulf's natural beauty and great lifestyle.

With all this beauty, the Gulf faces many challenges. The region has 30 percent, or roughly three million acres, of the Nation's coastal marsh which is disappearing at an alarming rate. Recent events such as hurricanes and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill have added to this ecological decline making communities, infrastructure, ports and other resources incredibly vulnerable.

Task Force Members

State of Alabama
State of Florida
State of Louisiana
State of Mississippi
State of Texas
Council on Environmental Quality
Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of the Interior
Department of Justice
Department of Transportation
Domestic Policy Council
Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Management and Budget
Office of Science and Technology Policy

Gulf-wide ecosystem restoration is imperative to address this longstanding ecological decline to begin moving toward a more resilient Gulf Coast ecosystem.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus made several recommendations in his report "America's Gulf Coast: A Long Term Recovery Plan after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill," including the establishment of a task force to coordinate Gulf restoration activities and develop a comprehensive, Gulf-wide restoration strategy to address these issues. On October 5, 2010, President Obama created the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force through Executive Order 13554.

Task Force Responsibilities

By October 5, 2011, the task force is charged with development of a restoration strategy that proposes a Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration agenda. In order to develop an effective strategy, the task force is working to engage Gulf Coast communities, local stakeholders, local governments and tribes and to inform the development of the strategy.

Strategy Components

- Defining ecosystem restoration goals
- Considering 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

Tribal Consultation

As Chair of the Task Force, EPA will spearhead tribal consultation and coordination.

- EPA will consult with tribes via face-to-face meetings and teleconferences.
- The Task Force will hold webinars on the Strategy.
- Comments as part of the consultation can be submitted via EPA's Tribal Portal www.epa.gov/tribal.

For more information about the Task Force, Strategy development and webinars, visit www.epa.gov/tribal.

To set up a consultation meeting, contact Angela Bandemehr at bandemehr.angela@epa.gov or call 202-564-1427. To contact the Task Force, email GulfCoastTaskForce@epa.gov.

Task Force Member Meetings

November 8, 2010 – Pensacola, FL
February 28, 2011 – New Orleans, LA
May 6, 2011 – Mobile, AL
June 27, 2011 – Southeast Texas
August 30, 2011 – Biloxi, MS

