

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



*Tribal Consultation  
Conference Call*

*October 17, 2011*



Gulf Coast Ecosystem  
Restoration Task Force

**Gulf of Mexico  
Regional Ecosystem  
Restoration Strategy  
(Preliminary)**





## MAJOR ACTIONS

<b>Goal:</b>  <b>Restore and Conserve Habitat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Prioritize ecosystem restoration in the Gulf of Mexico by ensuring that social, environmental and economic outcomes are fully considered in all river management decisions, and by placing it on equal footing with other priorities such as navigation and flood damage risk reduction.</li><li>✓ Improve current sediment management practices to maximize to the extent practicable and ecologically acceptable the quantity and effective use of sediments by taking a “strategic use” approach to sediment management.</li><li>✓ Restore and preserve more natural river processes of sediment and freshwater distribution.</li><li>✓ Expand the network of state, federal and private conservation areas to ensure healthy landscapes that support the environment and culture of the region and the diverse services provided by the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem.</li><li>✓ Restore and conserve coastal and near-shore habitats, with a focus on marshes, mangroves, seagrasses, barrier islands, natural beaches and dunes, and coastal forests and prairies.</li></ul>
<b>Goal:</b>  <b>Restore Water Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Decrease and manage excess nutrient levels in the Gulf through the development and implementation of state nutrient reduction frameworks.</li><li>✓ Focus restoration actions in priority watersheds to address excess nutrients in coastal waters and reduce hypoxic conditions.</li><li>✓ Reduce pollutants and pathogens from stormwater flows and other sources.</li><li>✓ Improve the quality and quantity of freshwater flow into priority estuaries to protect their health and resiliency.</li><li>✓ Coordinate and expand existing water quality monitoring efforts supporting adaptive management of programs and projects designed to improve water quality.</li><li>✓ Collaborate with Mexico to assess and reduce emissions from oceangoing vessels in the Gulf that degrade water quality.</li></ul>
<b>Goal:</b>  <b>Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Restore depleted populations of living coastal and marine resources.</li><li>✓ Conserve and protect offshore environments.</li><li>✓ Restore and protect oyster and coral reefs.</li><li>✓ Coordinate and expand existing Gulf monitoring efforts to track sentinel species and sites.</li><li>✓ Minimize, and eliminate where possible, invasive species that impact the Gulf of Mexico.</li></ul>
<b>Goal:</b>  <b>Enhance Community Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Develop and implement comprehensive, scientifically based, and stakeholder-informed coastal improvement programs.</li><li>✓ Provide analytical support tools to enhance community planning, risk assessment and smart growth implementation.</li><li>✓ Promote environmental stewardship by expanding environmental education and outreach.</li></ul>

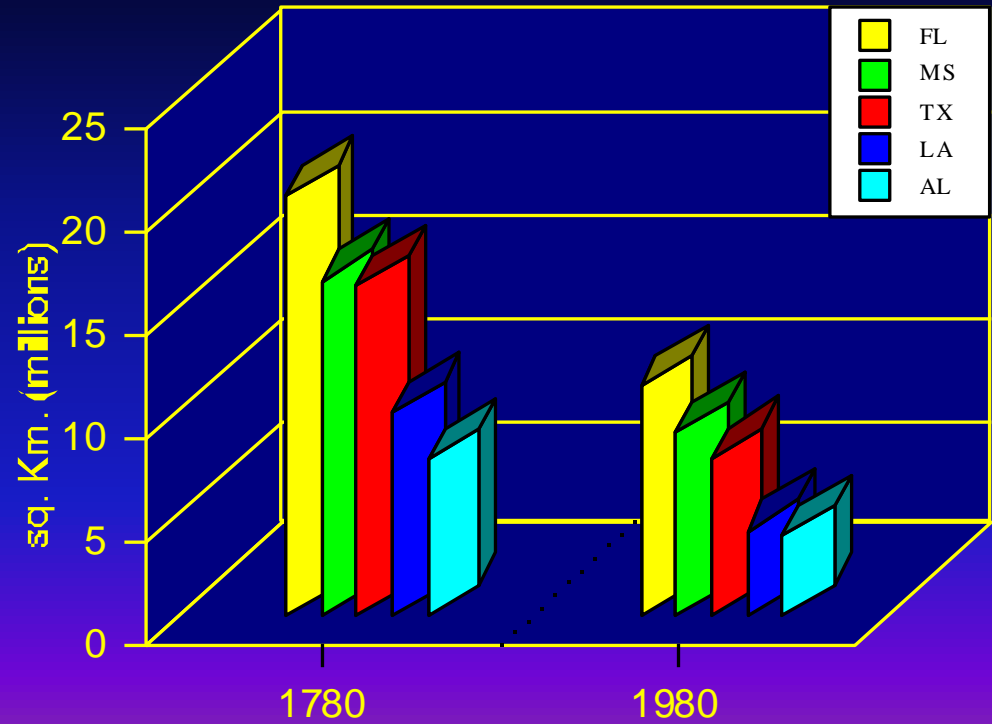


**Goal:**

**Restore and  
Conserve  
Habitat**

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## Wetland Loss, 1780-1980



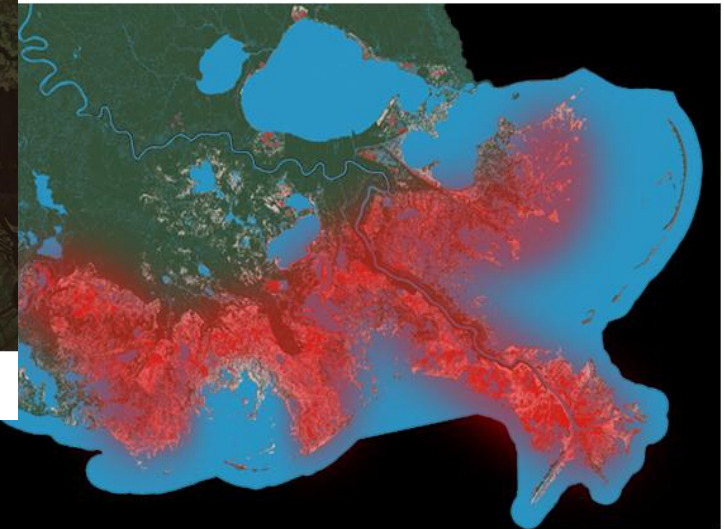
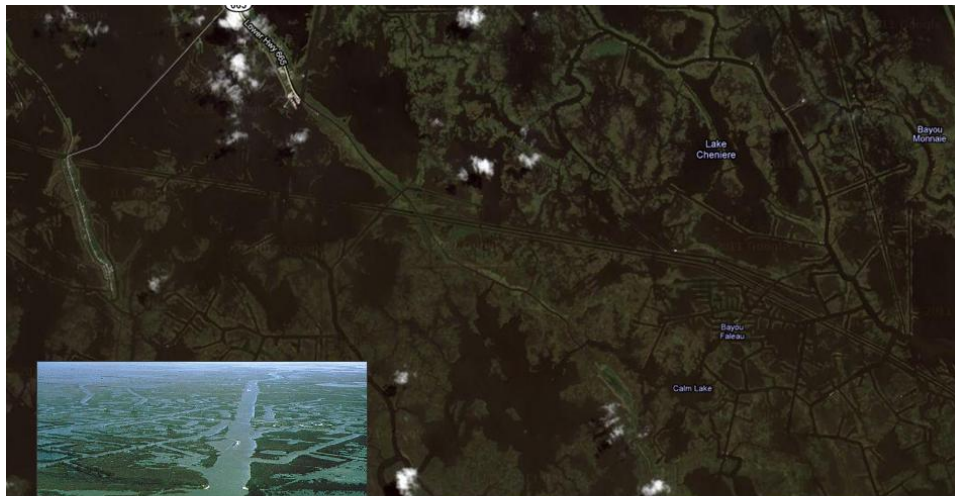


## MAJOR ACTIONS

### Goal:

### Restore and Conserve Habitat

- ✓ Prioritize ecosystem restoration in the Gulf of Mexico by ensuring that social, environmental and economic outcomes are fully considered in all river management decisions, and by placing it on equal footing with other priorities such as navigation and flood damage risk reduction.
- ✓ Improve current sediment management practices to maximize to the extent practicable and ecologically acceptable the quantity and effective use of sediments by taking a “strategic use” approach to sediment management.
- ✓ Restore and preserve more natural river processes of sediment and freshwater distribution.



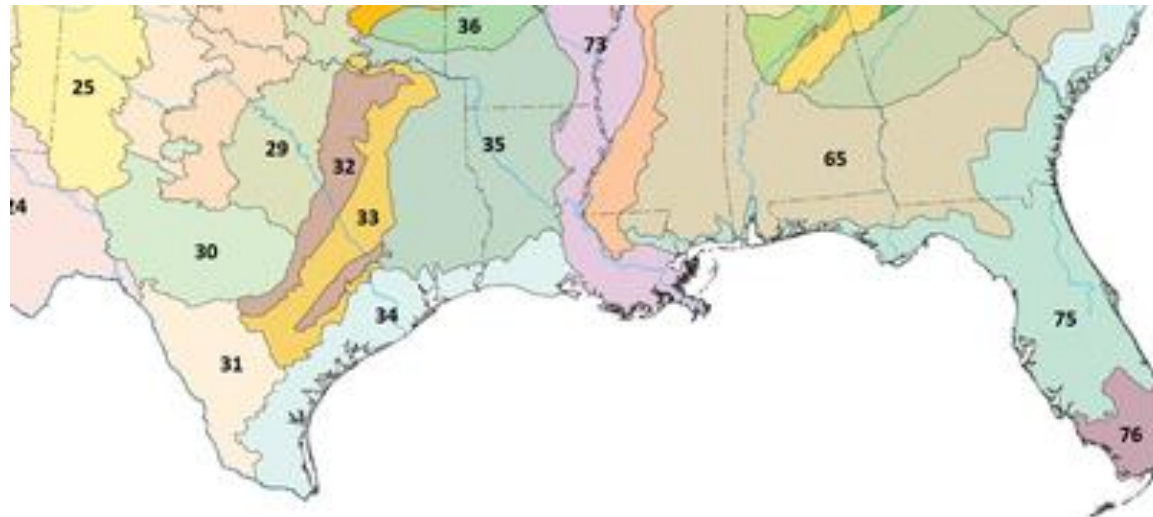
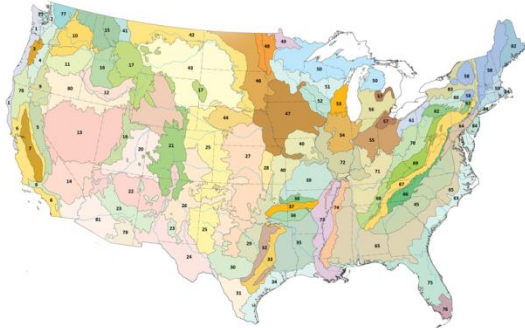


## MAJOR ACTIONS

**Goal:**

**Restore and  
Conserve  
Habitat**

- ✓ Expand the network of state, federal and private conservation areas to ensure healthy landscapes that support the environment and culture of the region and the diverse services provided by the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem.





## MAJOR ACTIONS

### Goal:

### Restore and Conserve Habitat

- ✓ Restore and conserve coastal and near-shore habitats, with a focus on marshes, mangroves, seagrasses, barrier islands, natural beaches and dunes, and coastal forests and prairies.





**Goal:**

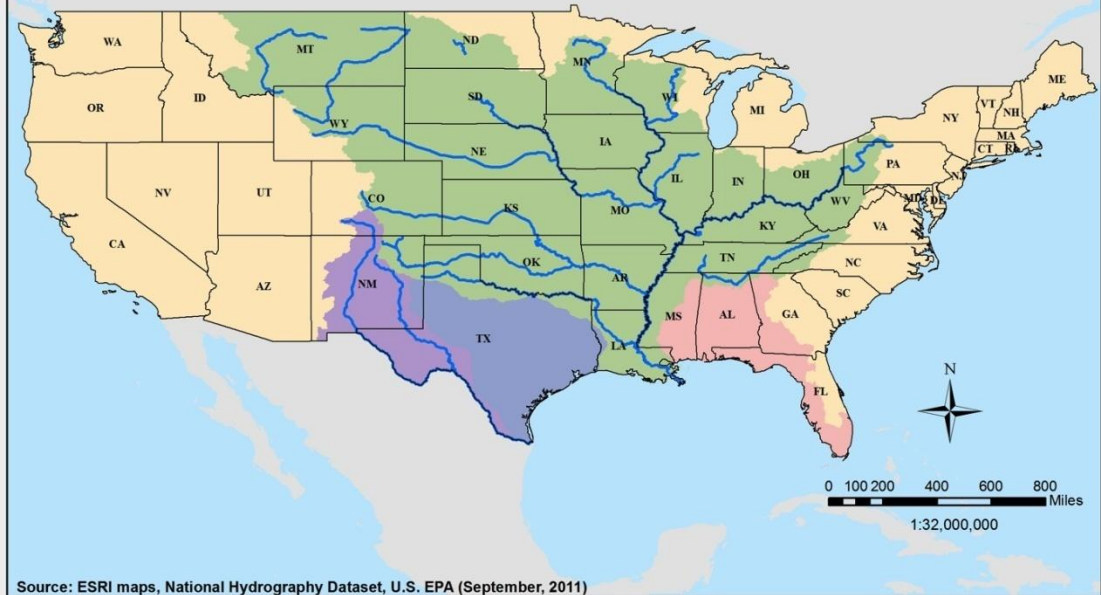
**Restore Water  
Quality**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Largest Watershed  
in the World**

**66%** of the Rivers within  
the Continental U.S. Flow  
to the Gulf.....

...and, **80%** of  
all precipitation reaches the  
Gulf.

### Gulf of Mexico Watershed Extent in the United States



**Total U.S. Gulf Watershed Extent:**

1,741,246 sq miles (56% of continental U.S.)

**Contributing U.S. Watershed Regions:**

Mississippi 1,295,860 sq miles (41.9%)

Rio Grande 132,845 sq miles (4.2%)

South Atlantic-Gulf 133,263 sq miles (4.3%)

Texas-Gulf 179,278 sq miles (5.8%)

**Legend**

- Major Rivers
- Mississippi Region
- Rio Grande Region
- South Atlantic-Gulf Region
- Texas-Gulf Region
- State Boundaries





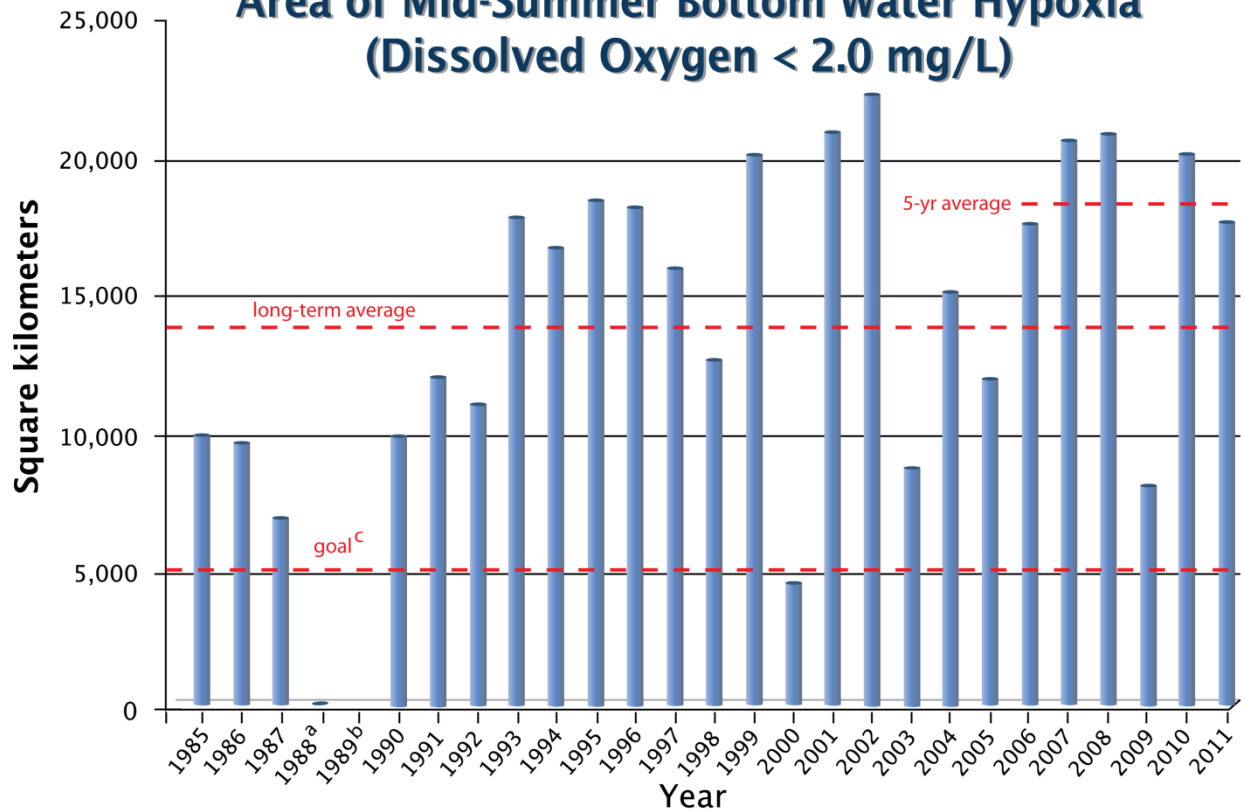
## MAJOR ACTIONS

**Goal:**

**Restore Water  
Quality**

- ✓ Decrease and manage excess nutrient levels in the Gulf through the development and implementation of state nutrient reduction frameworks.
- ✓ Focus restoration actions in priority watersheds to address excess nutrients in coastal waters and reduce hypoxic conditions.
- ✓ Reduce pollutants and pathogens from stormwater flows and other sources.

**Area of Mid-Summer Bottom Water Hypoxia  
(Dissolved Oxygen < 2.0 mg/L)**





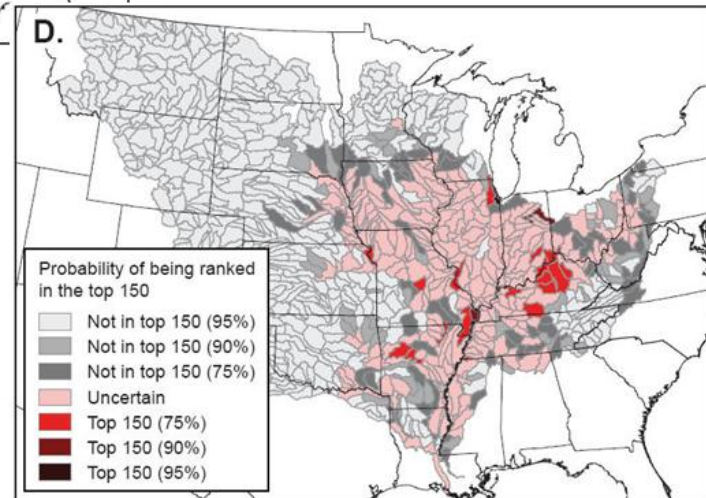
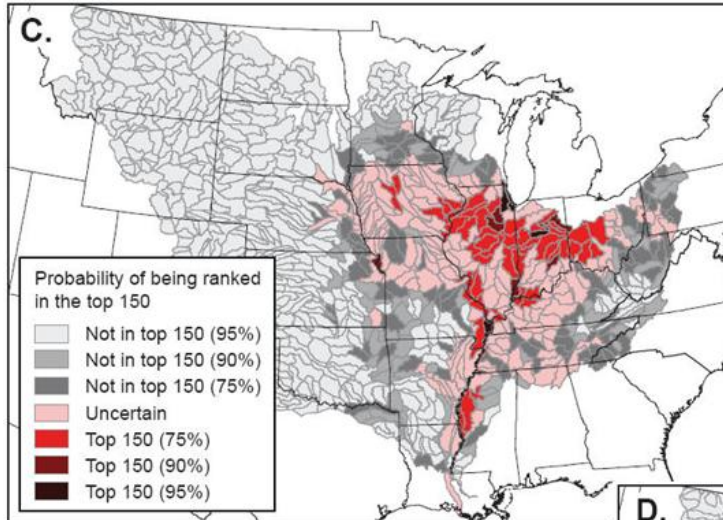
## MAJOR ACTIONS

**Goal:**



Focus restoration actions in priority watersheds to address excess nutrients in coastal waters and reduce hypoxic conditions.

**Restore Water  
Quality**





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## MAJOR ACTIONS

**Goal:**

**Restore Water  
Quality**

- ✓ Reduce pollutants and pathogens from stormwater flows and other sources.
- ✓ Improve the quality and quantity of freshwater flow into priority estuaries to protect their health and resiliency.





## MAJOR ACTIONS

**Goal:**

**Restore Water  
Quality**

- ✓ Coordinate and expand existing water quality monitoring efforts supporting adaptive management of programs and projects designed to improve water quality.



*K. brevis*, Charlotte Harbor, Charlotte Sun Herald, Paul Schmidt



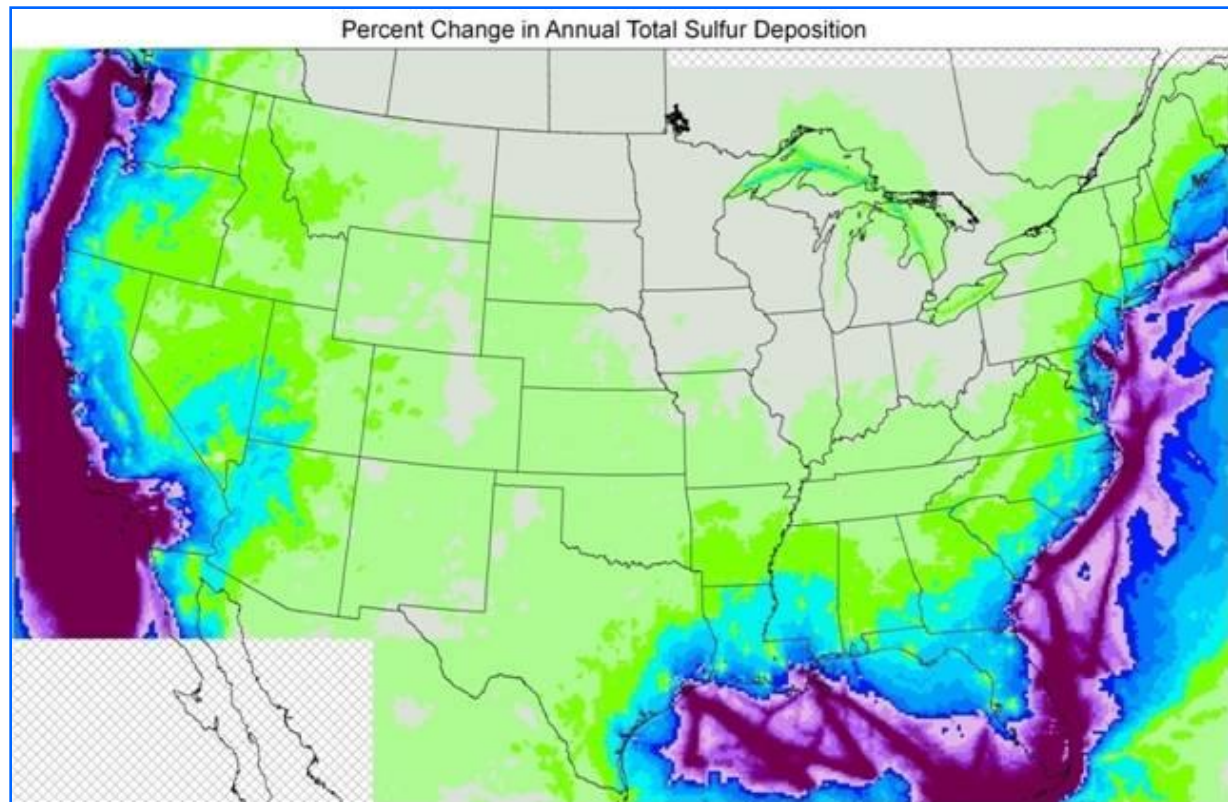


## MAJOR ACTIONS

**Goal:**

**Restore Water  
Quality**

- ✓ Collaborate with Mexico to assess and reduce emissions from oceangoing vessels in the Gulf that degrade water quality.





## MAJOR ACTIONS

### Goal:

### Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources

- ✓ Restore depleted populations of living coastal and marine resources.
- ✓ Conserve and protect offshore environments.
- ✓ Restore and protect oyster and coral reefs.
- ✓ Coordinate and expand existing Gulf monitoring efforts to track sentinel species and sites.
- ✓ Minimize, and eliminate where possible, invasive species that impact the Gulf of Mexico.

## Alabama

### Kickstarting Recovery in Alabama

Partnership aims to  
restore 100 miles of oyster  
reef to protect 1,000 acres  
of seagrass and marsh





## MAJOR ACTIONS

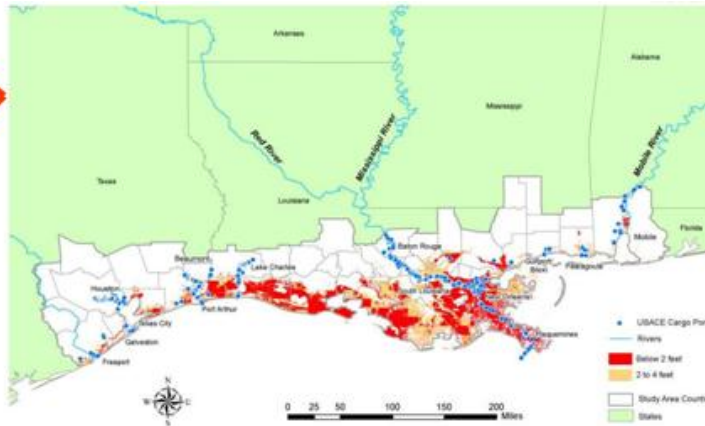
**Goal:**

**Enhance Community Resilience**

- ✓ Develop and implement comprehensive, scientifically based, and stakeholder-informed coastal improvement programs.
- ✓ Provide analytical support tools to enhance community planning, risk assessment and smart growth implementation.
- ✓ Promote environmental stewardship by expanding environmental education and outreach.

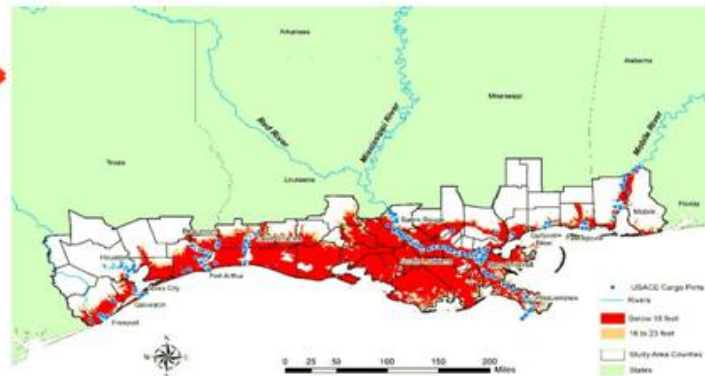
**Risk of Relative SLR of 2'**

-50%  
Highway /  
Rail Miles  
-70% Ports



**Risk of Increasing Storm Severity (Facilities <18')**

-51%  
Highway /  
Rail Miles  
-98% Ports



Leverage existing partnerships among state and federal agencies, **affected Indian tribal governments**, universities, non-profits and community organizations to engage citizens in addressing current and future restoration and conservation needs, with particular attention to under-represented individuals and communities.

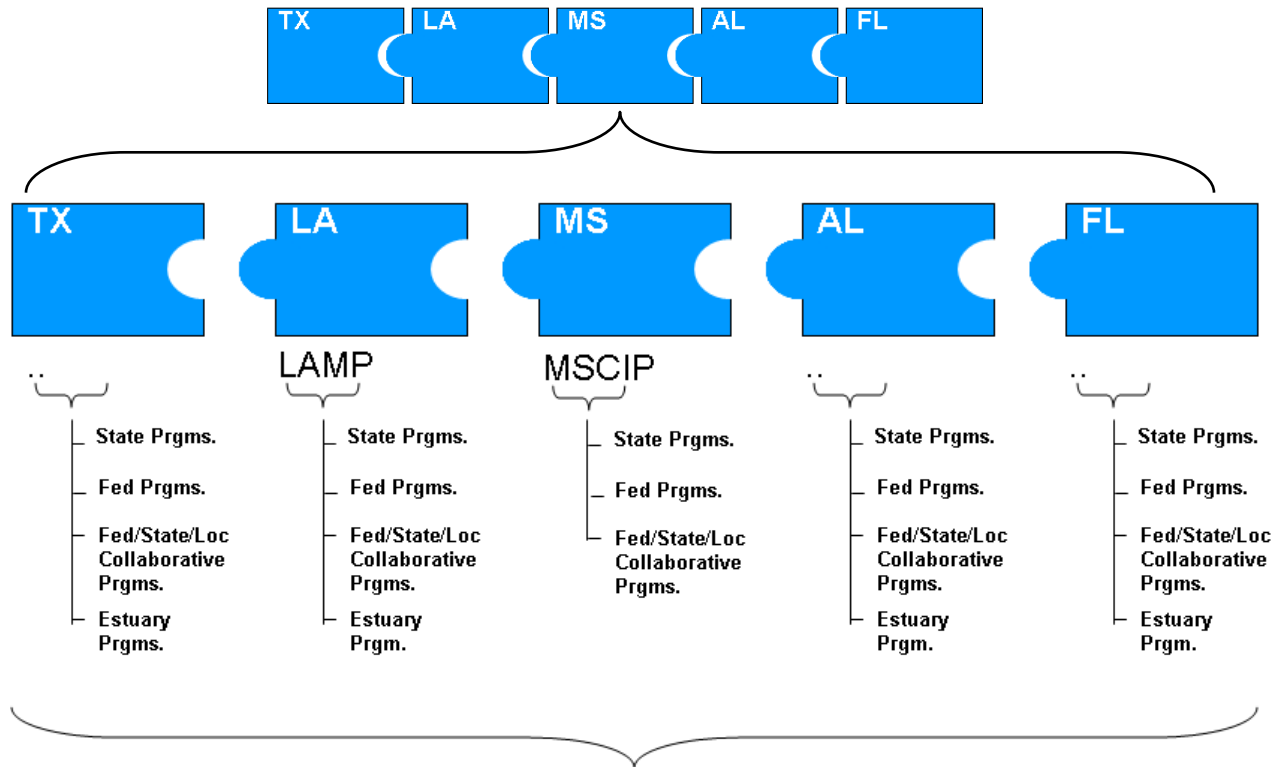


## MAJOR ACTIONS

**Goal:**

**Enhance  
Community  
Resilience**

✓ Provide analytical support tools to enhance community planning, risk assessment and smart growth implementation.



**Uniform Project Prioritization Tool**





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## FUTURE EFFORTS OF THE TASK FORCE:

### LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

#### **The Hypoxia Task Force**

#### **Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustee Council**

#### **National Ocean Council**

“promote and sustain a culture of shared stewardship, both across federal agencies and between federal, **tribal**, state and local jurisdictions.”

“shared commitment to openness, transparency, and a bottom-up, regionally driven approach to planning and action, with opportunities for **tribal**, state and local governments, private sector, academic and non-profit stakeholders, and the public to engage and help define the way forward.”



## NEXT STEPS: Executive Order Requirements

- ✓ Support the NRDA process by referring potential ecosystem restoration actions to the Trustee Council for consideration and facilitating coordination among the relevant departments and agencies as appropriate.
- ✓ Engage local stakeholders, communities and the public to ensure they have an opportunity to share their needs and viewpoints to inform the work of the Task Force.
- ✓ Identify major policy areas where coordinated intergovernmental action is necessary.
- ✓ Prepare a biennial update to the President on progress toward the goals of Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration as outlined in the Strategy.
- ✓ Provide leadership and coordination of research needs in support of ecosystem restoration planning and decision-making and facilitate consideration of relevant scientific and technical knowledge.
- ✓ **Communicate with affected tribes in a manner consistent with Executive Order 13175.**
- ✓ Coordinate with relevant agencies and offices on ways to encourage health and economic benefits associated with ecosystem restoration.



## NEXT STEPS: For New Actions

- ✓ Specify the current status of each issue, including which agency is working on the issue, under which authority, and with which resources.
- ✓ Identify a lead agency, state or other actor for each task needed to implement the action, along with appropriate partners.
- ✓ Create a schedule of specific activities to accomplish each goal, along with any necessary or available resources, authority, science or external support needed.
- ✓ Establish a science-based approach for ensuring success of actions undertaken.
- ✓ Provide critical decision-support tools to reflect ecosystem trends over time, communicate progress of restoration projects, and inform critical decisions and necessary changes in restoration efforts.
- ✓ Continue to engage the public and communities on the restoration effort by providing a forum for the public to bring its ideas and needs regarding ecosystem restoration to governmental leaders.
- ✓ Establish and maintain the core interagency staff expertise needed to develop the implementation plan and guide its execution as envisioned in this Strategy.
- ✓ Expand opportunities for collaboration with local governments, business entities, and NGOs as a critical component of Strategy implementation.



***Questions?***