

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Public and Non-Governmental Organizations Session

Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
NGO	Funding is a priority issue. How will it be disseminated and distributed?
General Public	How would the restoration work? It's an international issue. Tarpon are shared, for example. How will we deal with these sort of things. We share with other countries.
General Public	Urge task force to not try to get back to a particular point in time. Need to identify where we are trying to go. We need to have a realistic attainment level. Success will show through strong partnerships working in the same direction.
NGO	There is a preventative side and it will bring in the "fringe" interests and educational community. Suggest clarifying the preventive aspects.
NGO	Also, new words may be needed to communicate with the public. "Baysheds" and "Greater Gulfshed". Don't let regulatory, science, and community leadership be the only involved people. We need to bring in the upstream communities in the "Gulfshed"
NGO	Following Katrina, Mississippi's governor said "We're going to put things back where they were." Who trumps between restoring a economic environment versus a healthy ecosystem? Generally, the marsh losses out - it doesn't get the headlines, doesn't produce the money. The Task Force has a huge challenge to decide the coinflip between the two sides.
NGO	Healthy estuaries need more research.
NGO	Freshwater inflow is critical.
NGO	Need to develop mechanisms to get the non-Gulf states involved. Ecosystem valuation is a good way.



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General Public	With budgetary crisis, public-private partnerships become even more important. There have been great ones but some have been missed. Partnerships are very important. There have been missed opportunities in the past. Bringing in plans is great. But, there are also coalitions and partnerships in place and need to be built upon.
General Public	Also, the value of freshwater inflows is critical. Upstream issues are important.
NGO	This is a huge-scale issue and the restoration strategy has to address the huge-scale. Particularly big need for better understanding of deep-water communities. We need to "keep the finger on the pulse" to watch what is going on. Ongoing ecosystem monitoring with the penalties would be a highest priority. Help identify threats, assess restoration success.
NGO	Bring in other bodies (GOM Fisheries Council?) would really help public buy-in.
General Public	Need an dedicated agency/group/clearinghouse to oversee the big picture. Individual agencies tend to not recognize the big picture needs.
General Public	Number 1 issue is habitat loss. Destroyed habitat kills fish. Supported Rigs-to-Reefs program and feels there is a knee-jerk reaction since the oil spill (Idle Iron) has forced companies to pull them down because they can't get the permits fast enough. We need access to policymakers to abate habitat loss that is going on. Federal policy is killing the Rigs-to-Reef program.



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General Public	Number 2 issue is getting better information and science. "What was it like before this happened?" Harte Research Institute and UT provide great return on the dollar. The Gulf Council is mostly left out and needs to be included.
NGO	How far back are we going to go? We don't have good data to return to and everyone has a different idea of what restoration is.
NGO	Habitat restoration is incredibly expensive. Priority is protecting what we have. Make money go as far as possible. Protect existing habitat. Make wise choice on extraction. One can get grants for restoration but it's harder to get money for protecting resources.
NGO	Look into future and consider climate change, SLR, etc.
NGO	One of the most important is to restore the marshlands as they feed the Gulf waters.
NGO	The Markhold (sp?) tries to regulate ballast water.
NGO	We need a major conference to include all involved nations and the upstream states to see what the folks can put together.
LGO	Need to balance past damage and prevent future concerns.
General Public	We can't bring everything back as it was before. We need to preserve what we've got and particularly focus on hazard mitigation.



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General Public	Priority issue is to maintain biodiversity. Big fish (tarpon), migratory birds are good. Big fish have long lifetimes and their loss is important. It will take an international effort. Everyone has to be involved. We should look at laws that better protect biodiversity. Look at good fishing limits. Need a giant leap and the Migratory Bird Act was a good one for protecting species.
General Public	Need to have a redefined Caucus for the Gulf that includes all Gulfshed states. An international treaty for the Gulf would represent a success.
General Public	There is traction on ecosystem study and restoration worldwide, but it's not enough. The impediment here is lack of funds. Some of this money could go to ICAD to better regulate migratory fish. Give more funds to Harte Research Institute. Success will partially be defined by accountability and transparency for the funds that are handed out. And, this is best done by established entities.
General Public	Also, enforcement of international treaties.
General Public	Need to form better partnerships. Industry feels the federal agencies are for regulating and not partnerships.
Academia	It would be useful to have someone to turn to help break down impediments and conflicts between agencies
NGO	Monitoring of adaptive management...is it addressing needed benefits (social, ecological, etc.)? Resilience hinges on biodiversity and a system that can stand these stresses. Focus on restoration compo.
Academia	Consider success over different scales. We need to build the resilience Gulfwide, not just in Louisiana.



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NGO	Success would be the great appreciation of the Gulf by the citizenry. Need to bring the citizens into the restoration effort.
General Public	An impediment is need to educate the citizenry and politicians. Need to bring numbers up on seafood safety. Teach decisionmakers how the Coast can be developed smartly. Need an educational component to the restoration.
NGO	Priority issue is the Rigs-To-Reefs program is the Minerals Management Service's Addendum to the Rigs-to-Reef Program, issued in December 2009. Guidance that changed the regs. South and middle Texas don't have a "planned area" and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management doesn't have time these days to designate it. Needs to be removed. There apparently wasn't a public comment period. This program also prevents the explosions
General Public	Make promote the Gulf Coast as a tourist destination. It's everyone's priority. Need to educate people away from the coast.
NGO	The Gulf is a wide body of water and needs different results in different places.
NGO	We have a gem of resources across the spectrum. We need to elevate and bring pride in the resources to the people of the 5 states. Bringing tourists to the coast is a measure of that success. Show that pride to the world.