

The Gulf of Mexico Research Plan:

**A collaborative approach to
identifying research priorities**

Stephen Sempier and LaDon Swann



Background

- Most research planning is conducted on a state-by-state or organization-by-organization basis
- National Sea Grant Program
 - Funding eight regional planning activities in the U.S.—Gulf of Mexico is one of these regions
- Five-year project covers entire Gulf including five states and Mexico
- First time the four Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant programs have worked together on a Gulf-wide research project

Mission

To identify priority research needs for the Gulf of Mexico through stakeholder input and implement strategies to address these needs.

Service-oriented

Project will provide a service to the Gulf of Mexico research community and stakeholders

Project Organization

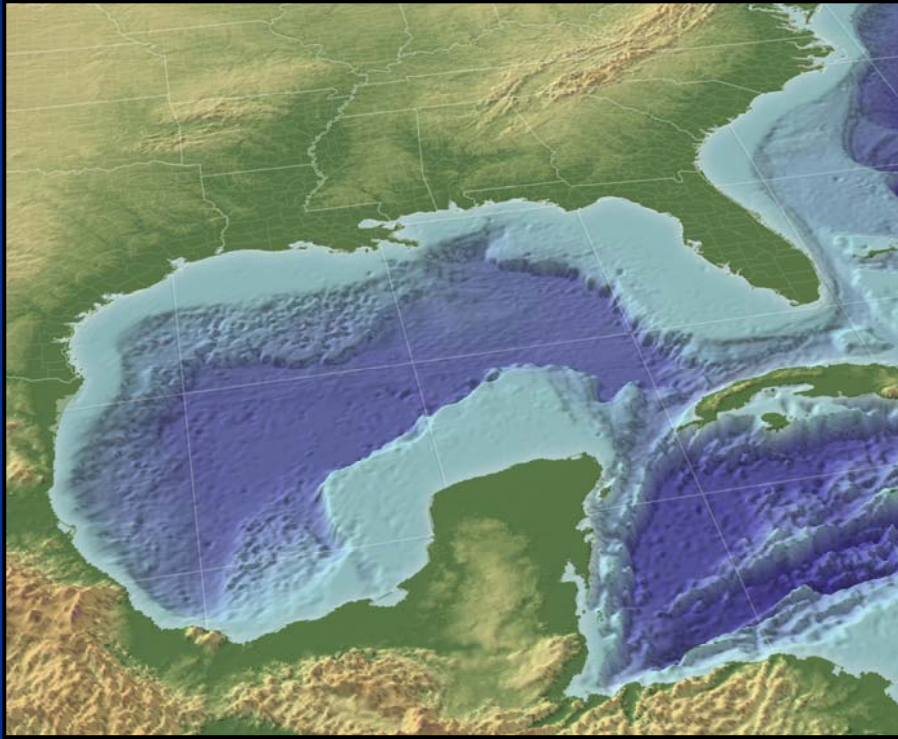


Image: NOAA

- Stakeholder-driven
- Guiding entities
 - Planning and Review council
 - State
 - Federal
 - International
 - Sea Grant
 - Four GOM Directors

Stakeholders

- Federal agencies
- Multi-entity efforts
- State agencies
- Academia and laboratories
- Non-governmental organizations
- Others



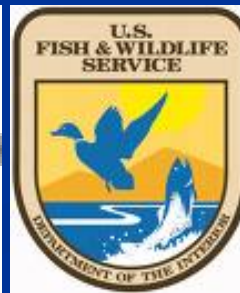
Federal Efforts in the Gulf

■ NOAA

- Coastal Service Center
- National Sea Grant
- National Ocean Service
- NERR
- NESDIS
- NMFS
- NWS
- OAR

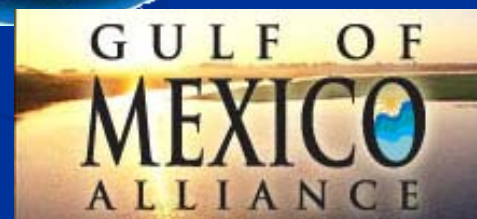
■ Environmental Protection Agency

- Gulf of Mexico Program
 - National Estuary Program
- ## ■ Naval Oceanographic Office
- ## ■ US Army Corps of Engineers
- ## ■ US Dept. of Agriculture
- ## ■ US Fish and Wildlife
- ## ■ US Geological Survey



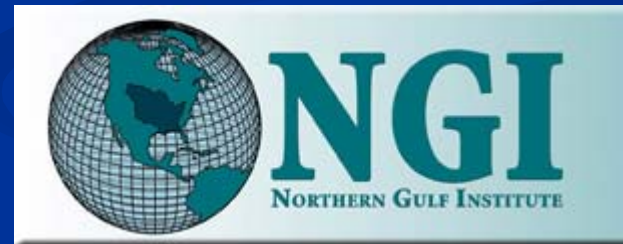
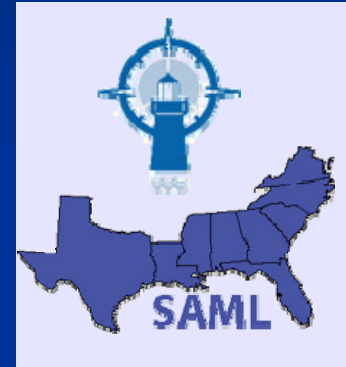
Multi-entity Efforts

- Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
- GCOOS
- Gulf of Mexico Alliance
- Gulf of Mexico States Accord
- MEXUS-Gulf Program
- White Water to Blue Water



Academia and Laboratories

- Northern Gulf Institute
- Harte Research Institute
- Universities and Labs
 - Alabama (5)
 - Florida (8)
 - Louisiana (9)
 - Mississippi (4)
 - Texas (15)
 - Southern Association of Marine Labs



State Agencies and Mexico

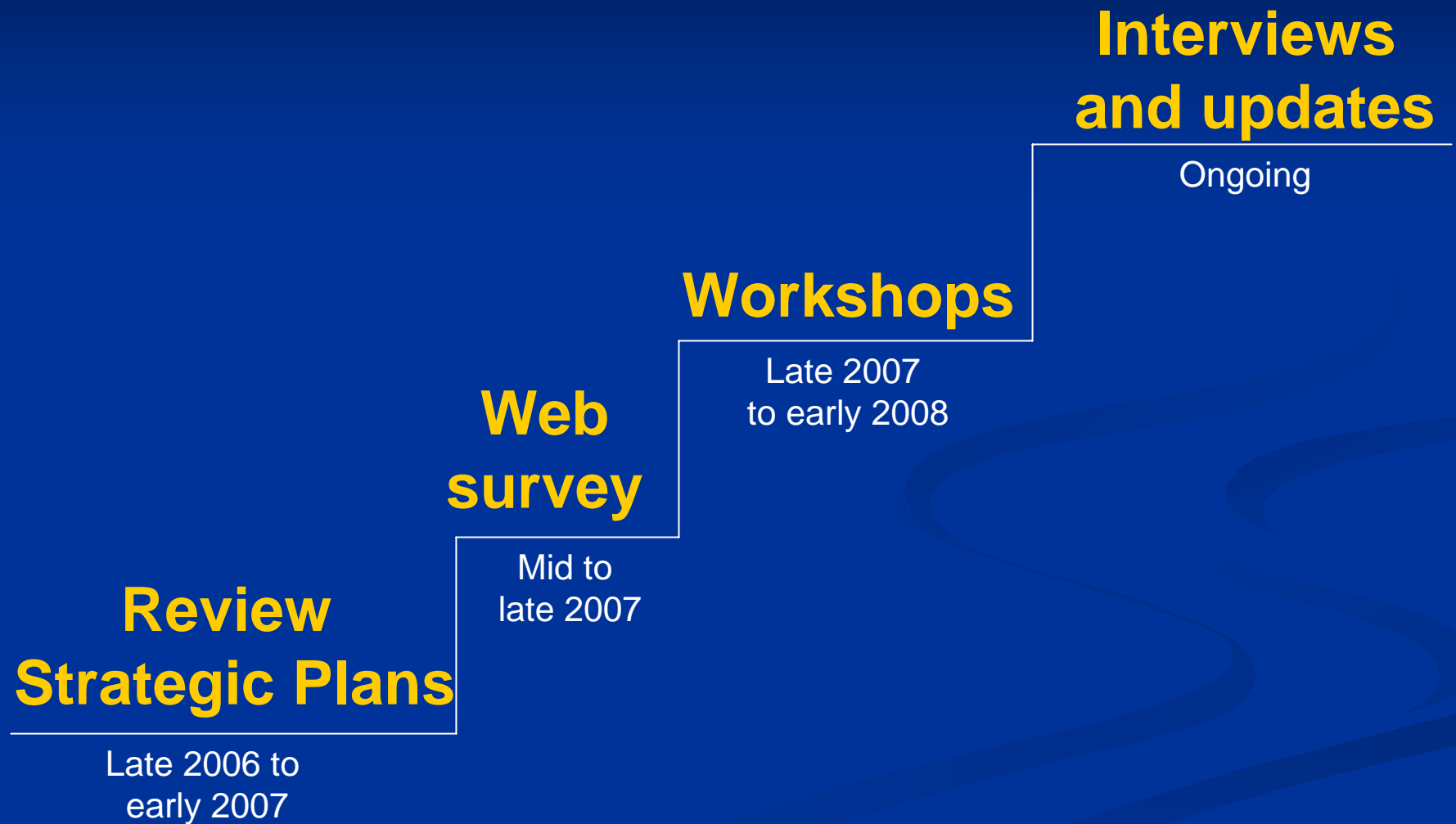
- Alabama NOAA Coastal Management Program
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Alabama Department of Environmental Management
- Florida NOAA Coastal Management Program
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Louisiana NOAA Coastal Management Program
- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Mississippi NOAA Coastal Management Program
- Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
- Texas NOAA Coastal Management Program
- Texas General Land Office
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Water Development Board
- Texas Railroad Commission
- Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Instituto de Ecología A.C. (INECOL)
- Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados Unidad Mérida (CINVESTAV)
- Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología

Identifying Priorities

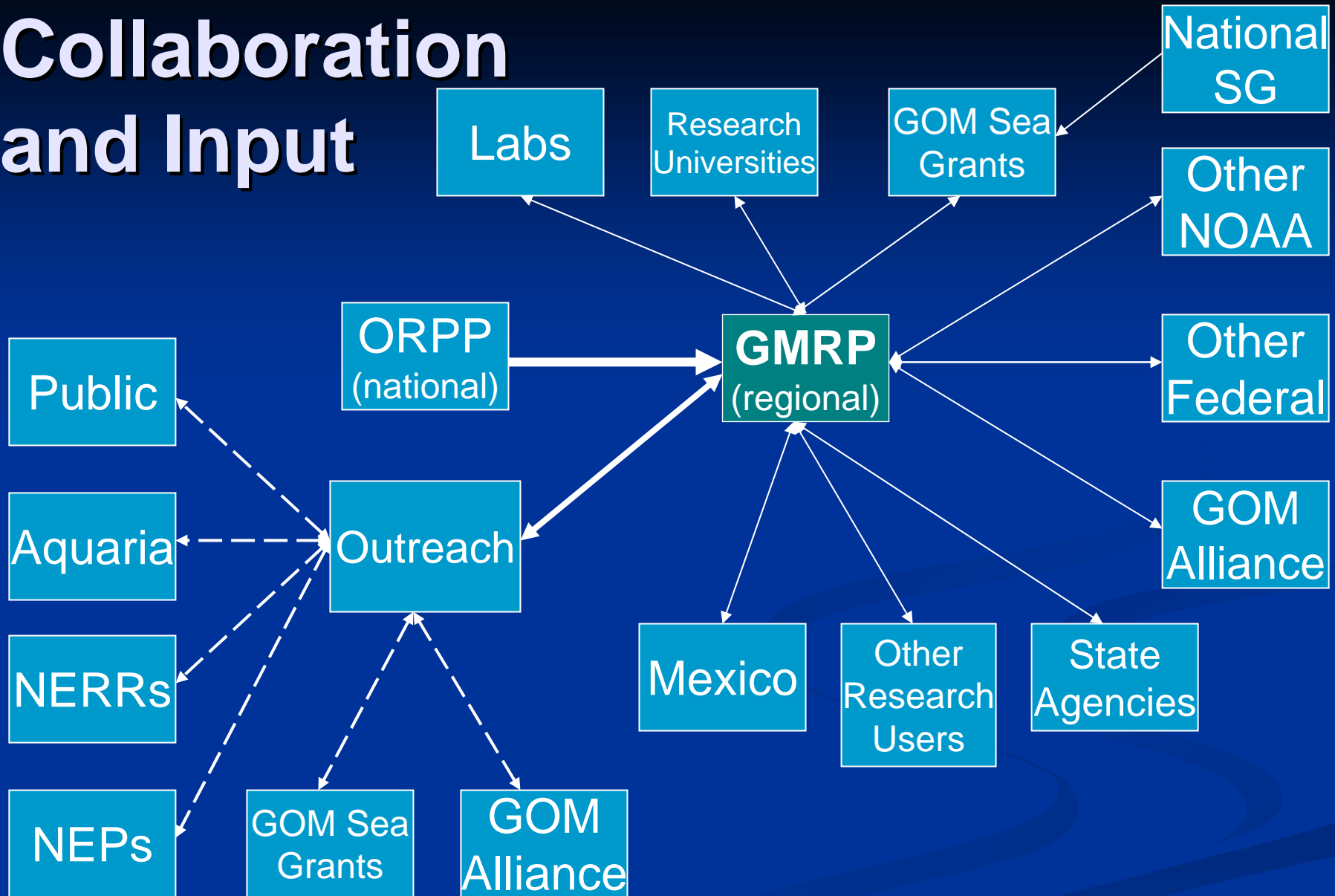
- Review of Strategic Plans
 - Over 35 plans are being examined
 - Entering themes/topics into a matrix
- Web-based survey
 - Primary way to collect input
 - Based on the review of plans
 - Will be sent to thousands of stakeholders
- Workshops and interviews
 - Priorities refined and gaps identified
 - One workshop in each GOM state
 - One regional workshop
 - Identify opportunities to collaborate



Steps to Identify Priorities

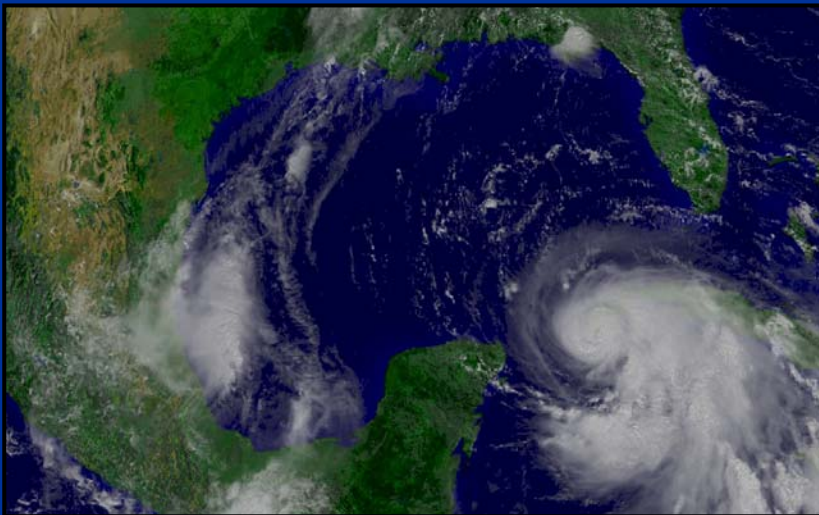


Collaboration and Input



Possible Research Priority Areas

- Overfished and overcapitalized fisheries
- Coastal erosion
- Coastal storms and hazards
- Contaminants (point and non-point)
- Freshwater input
- Habitat use, assessment, loss, restoration, and enhancement
- Harmful algal blooms
- Nutrient enrichment and cycling
- Population growth of coastal communities



Project fills a niche

- Identifies current research activities in the region
- Determines regional research priorities
- Reduces overlap of effort
- Discovers research gaps
- Fosters collaboration between groups
- Produces a more unified approach to address research needs
- Assists agencies/organizations when updating or revising own strategic plans
- Complements other efforts

Bridging Plans

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Action Plan

More research focus

Gulf of Mexico Research Plan

More regional focus

Ocean Research Priorities Plan



Deliverables

- Gulf of Mexico Research Plan
 - Strategic Plan
 - Implementation Plan
- Clearly defined research priorities
- Increased collaboration between research-based programs in the Gulf
- Leveraged funds resulting in more effective use of limited research dollars

Extension and the GMRP

- Assistance in conducting state-wide meetings
- Active involvement throughout process
 - Define research priority areas
 - Feedback during development of the plans
- Increase awareness of the project
- Encourage participation in surveys and review process
- Fill information gaps
 - Mexico contacts
 - Identify other key stakeholders

Thank you

**More information available at:
<http://masgc.org/gmrp>**

This presentation was supported by the National Sea Grant College Program of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under NOAA Grant NA06OAR4170078 and the Florida Sea Grant Program, Louisiana Sea Grant Program, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, and Texas Sea Grant Program. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of those organizations.