



**Community Workshop Participant Priority Issues
Port Aransas, Texas - January 19, 2006
University of Texas Marine Science Institute**

Rationale: Participants were asked to write down two priority issues regarding the economic and/or environmental health of the Gulf of Mexico on two separate index cards. These cards were collected and categorized by the facilitators into 23 broad issues, listed numerically below. Beneath each issue, the exact responses from the index cards are listed. The 23 broad issues were posted and all participants voted twice to arrive at the top five. These issues then became the focus of smaller breakout groups. Water quality and fresh water inflow both had the same number of votes, so these two issues were combined to create a breakout session for water quality and quantity. Please refer to the summary of the breakouts for participant responses to that aspect of the workshop.

PRIORITY ISSUES

- Coastal Habitats – preservation, loss, etc. (24 out of 138 votes)
 - Loss of coastal habitat to development (3 index cards)
 - Degradation of wetlands
 - Habitat destruction; seagrass loss
 - Destruction of wetlands
 - Loss of coastal wetlands and habitat (5 index cards)
 - Coastal wetlands
 - Wetland/seagrass habitat loss/impairment
 - Passes and wetlands
 - Estuaries and wetlands
 - Habitat destruction, degradation along coast and bay system
 - Loss of coastal habitats: - includes wetlands and coastal submerged habitats (affects many species & storm protection) –causes may be erosion, subsidence, development, storm/climate
 - Habitat preservation and restoration
 - Preservation of coastal habitats (wetlands, dune systems, sensitive uplands like riparian zones and coastal prairie); preserving integrity of these habitats; conservation easements, buying of land for preservation (2 index cards)
 - Habitat restoration
 - Habitat modification (wetlands, endangered species)
 - Habitat preservation and conservation; conservation easements, buying of land for preservation
 - Habitat conservation
 - Natural resource; tidal passer
 - Bay and estuary protection

- Population Growth and Development (18 out of 138 votes)
 - Population growth (4 index cards)
 - Population density along coasts
 - Population control
 - Over use of coastal areas
 - Responsible coastal development
 - Coastal overdevelopment/population pressures (2 index cards)
 - Coastal community development loss of coastal habitats from development; need to conserve habitats through acquisition
 - Control of coastal development
 - Unplanned development along shorelines & river drainages
 - Linking county/community input into smart growth along the coast and working on ecosystem services
 - The urbanization of Texas Barrier Islands
 - Lack of long-term comprehensive land use and development planning

- Education at all Levels – K-12, public (14 out of 138 votes)
 - Education (2 index cards)
 - Lack of education (public and K-12)
 - Lack of education and involvement of the local population
 - Local ignorance of natural sciences and systems at work in area
 - Lack of adequate K-12 marine education (2 index cards)
 - Deficient education on environmental issues
 - Credibility; helping the community understand how to identify what information is accurate, credible and what they can/should do – what action can they take
 - Public education (marine science issues)
 - Public awareness of the environmental issues
 - Education ocean science/environment
 - Communication; effective methods of communicating accurate information to members of the community to facilitate and speed-up goal setting and action; looking long-term, not short-term

- Balancing Environmental and Economic Interests/Impacts (14 out of 138 votes)
 - Balancing demands on coastal zones; political/economic/environmental/scientific; increase funding and incentives to study/protect/understand importance of area
 - Balance between economics and ecology
 - Balancing the environment with its economic impact to local communities and the state
 - Balancing environmental vs. economic impact (5 index cards)
 - Socio-economic impacts

- Water Quality - nutrient loading, non-point source (11 out of 138 votes)
 - Improving water quality (from non-point source pollution particularly including storm water)
 - Nutrient loading
 - Nutrification/entrophication
 - Site-specific water quality standards
 - Non-point source pollution (7 index cards)
 - Stop pollution
 - Water pollution due to environment's degradation
 - Pollution control

- Freshwater Inflow (11 out of 138 votes)
 - Freshwater inflow alteration
 - Freshwater inflow (10 index cards)
 - Freshwater input management (bays and estuaries)
 - Water releases
 - Providing adequate fresh water inflows to coastal bays and estuaries (2 index cards)
 - Freshwater inflow from lake and gulf
 - Freshwater inflow to bays and estuaries
 - Reduction of freshwater inflows due to inner population needs
 - Freshwater inflow needs of estuaries

- Social and Economic Pressures Overriding Science (7 out of 138 votes)
 - Local/governing agencies ignoring responsible conservation (money talks)
 - Development (public opinion) over-riding scientific expertise
 - Ignoring scientific input over cash input
 - Economic goals over-riding scientific knowledge and environmental needs
 - Public opinion (based on bias and feelings) is over-riding scientific expertise

- Funding (5 out of 138 votes)
 - Greater funding for agencies tasked with enforcing current laws and regulations
 - Increased funding for better science
 - Improved funding for enhancing measurements (physical, biological, chemical, geological) of coastal ocean environment (bays, estuaries, coastal, to open ocean of Gulf of Mexico)

- Endangered Species (4 out of 138 votes)
 - Endangered species
 - Protect endangered species (this will automatically "take care of" many of the other concerns)

- Beach management/maintenance (4 out of 138 votes)
 - Beach management techniques that are destructive to wildlife and promote erosion
 - Sensible plan to use in beach maintenance
- Lack of Enforcement (3 out of 138 votes)
 - Lack of enforcement power regarding coastal management
- Fisheries (3 out of 138 votes)
 - Increased recreational fishing pressure in Aransas Bay (coastal Bend)
 - Lack of ecosystem management approach to fisheries as opposed to single species management
- Dumping (3 out of 138 votes)
 - Marine debris
 - Dumping- illegal, beaches and into water, gulf and bays
 - Offshore dumping (2 index cards)
 - Illegal dumping
- Technology Informing Management (3 out of 138 votes)
 - Integrate coastal ocean observing systems
 - Geospatial technology and ecosystem management
 - Incorporating G/S into management (ID habitats)
- Ecosystem-Based Management – relationships and interconnectedness (3 out of 138 votes)
 - Citizen education of ecosystem management at regional and local (immediate) level
 - Quality control over aspects of Gulf of Mexico
 - Need to better understand the relationship between coastal habitat destruction and marine fisheries
 - Upstream/downstream social disconnect
 - Relationship between upstream/downstream better understood
 - Need to have better monitoring and management in an ecosystem-based format
- Lack of Coordination – local, state, federal, international (2 out of 138 votes)
 - Lack of coordination between local, state and feds
 - Coordination (or lack of) between local/state/federal authorities
 - International cooperation efforts
- Dredging and Sediment Management (2 out of 138 votes)
 - Toxic waste from dredging
 - Regional sediment management
 - Dredging and beneficial use of dredged material
 - Regional sediment management

- Lack of Science to Inform Management (2 out of 138 votes)
 - Lack of scientific information to manage GOM resources
 - Lack of scientific baseline data
- Coastal Hazards Mitigation (2 out of 138 votes)
 - Coastal hazard mitigation
- Value of Ecosystem Services (2 out of 138 votes)
 - Better/more information on the values of ecosystem services
- Erosion (1 out of 138 votes)
 - Land erosion
 - Degradation of the GOM coastline from pollution and erosion
 - Coastal erosion
- Permitting (0 out of 138 votes)
 - Permitting allowed to develop wetlands & shorelines
- Oil and Gas (0 out of 138 votes)
 - Oil and gas