



**Community Workshop Executive Summary
Tampa, Florida – August 23, 2005
Florida Aquarium**

The Tampa Bay area community workshop was held at The Florida Aquarium in downtown Tampa, Florida on Tuesday, June 23, 2005. The workshop was jointly sponsored by the The Florida Aquarium, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Funding was provided by the Alliance for Coastal Technology, Photo Science, Inc., and the Gulfstream Natural Gas System, LLC.

Two sessions were offered at this workshop: an afternoon session focusing on scientists and bay managers and an evening session designed to encourage citizen attendance and participation. The afternoon format involved a series of presentations on key issues affecting the Gulf of Mexico, including the history of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA), a review of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan, and a summary of the five priority issues identified by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. The evening session featured a more condensed version for citizens and focused on encouraging local participation. There were 112 total attendees with 80 attending the afternoon session and 61 in the evening session. Please see the full agenda and list of participants for further information.

During each session, participants were encouraged to brainstorm Gulf issues from a local perspective and then collectively rank the issues. Five priority issues were identified by each group. Participants then divided into smaller breakout sessions to discuss actions needed to define and resolve the five highest priority issues. **An interesting conclusion is that both groups identified the same top three priority issues: growth management, habitat loss, and water quality and quantity.** Complete summaries of the issues, rankings, and small group ideas by session are included separately.

The highest ranked issues during the afternoon technical session were:

- growth management,
- habitat loss,
- water quality/quantity,
- apathy/societal perceptions, and
- public education.

The highest ranked issues during the evening citizen session were:

- growth management,
- habitat loss,
- water quality/quantity,
- lack of regulations and enforcement, and
- political agendas.