

GULF OF MEXICO ALLIANCE



Community Workshop – August 25, 2005
Apalachicola Community Center - Apalachicola, Florida
Apalachicola Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Results of Voting on Individual Participant Issues

Process: 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 16 broad issues, listed numerically below. Beneath each issue, the exact responses from the index cards are listed. The 16 broad issues were posted and all participants voted three times to arrive at the top four. These issues then became the focus of smaller breakout groups. Please refer to the summary of the breakout sessions on the top four priority issues for participant responses to that aspect of the workshop.

PRIORITY ISSUES

1. **Wildlife Impacts – 3 votes**
 - o Effects on wildlife- human, habitat, pollution
2. **Need For Education on environmental processes, human impacts and connections (between inland & coastal areas, and among Gulf Coastal communities) – 7 votes**
 - o Lack education of general public on impacts of human activity to the environment/watershed
 - o Make People aware coast to coast and inland
 - o Translate science to the layman – how to expose public to info, not lecture
 - o Continue to promote coastal education to youth, adults, and community leaders
 - o People are the problem and the solution – sensitivity and education informed by: simple and clear critical baseline data, simple rules and regulations, positive image and good feeling of doing the right thing
 - o Education: decision makers, general public
 - o Lack of environmental coastal education
3. **Coordination (across agencies, across states) – 9 votes**
 - o Inclusion, integration and efficiency of agencies: single accountability for special actions, information sharing, agreed completion dates, removal of political encumbrances, freedom to take direct action, clear powers to enforce, specialization (regional) in science and technology, linkages and education with local city and county government
4. **Political/Economic Pressure – 4 votes**
 - o Short-term profit motivation greater than concern for the environment
 - o Political and economic pressures on agencies – ability to do the job

- o Limits on field people to do their job and lack of \$ to do the job
- 5. **Lack of Access – 5 votes**
- 6. **Lack of Accessible Baseline Data – 5 votes**
 - o Data collection and presentation – lack of baseline data
 - o Establishing baseline of Gulf status: hydrogeological, biological, chemical, physical
 - o Lack of understanding of and appreciation of and sensitivity to the dynamic nature of a coastal environment – too much shoreline armoring, dredging and filling, beach renourishment, etc, building homes on shifting sand
 - o Regional Sediment Management – Studies and Implementation
- 7. **Oil Drilling – 1 vote**
 - o Big picture effects on Gulf
- 8. **Over Population – 1 vote**
 - o The negative impact of population growth and land use intensity increases on the health and well-being of the natural resource known as the Gulf of Mexico
 - o Overpopulation
- 9. **Development Practices and Lack of Effective Growth Management – 13 votes**
 - o Understanding dynamic coastline and modifying development practices
 - o Growth management along gulf coast
 - o Balance and inclusion regarding special interests: fair zoning and planning (managed growth)
 - o Inadequate coastal development controls
 - o Lack of development management that is cognizant and sensitive to ecological conditions and processes
 - o The cost to the community of maintaining shoreline development
 - o Overdevelopment of coastlines
 - o Unbridled coastal development
 - o Land use planning and aquatic management regulations should be based on the area's carrying capacity
 - o Growth and development in hazardous coastal areas
 - o Coastal development - development setbacks, nutrient loading (ie septic tanks, runoff), wildlife habitat impacts
 - o Development pressures: density increase and property value escalation driving land use/zoning decisions
- 10. **Fisheries Management – 3 votes**
 - o Improved/different harvesting technology, use verifiable data from oystermen and fishermen
 - o Incompatible fisheries management
- 11. **Loss of Cultural and Economic Viability in Coastal Communities – 9 votes**
 - o Loss of seafood industry from development pressures
 - o Loss of cultural and economic viability in coastal communities
 - o Destruction of cultural norms
- 12. **Habitat Destruction – 15 votes**
 - o Habitat loss – all ecosystems
 - o Estuarine habitat loss and secondary/cumulative impacts
 - o Economic and population pressures on coastal habitats
 - o Development and habitat loss

- o Over development of coastal areas, impacts on habitats, lack of infrastructure (i.e. Sewer service)
- o Impacts on coastal habitats from population and economic standpoints
- o Wetland protection – buffer on uplands
- o Habitat loss, destruction & deterioration
- o Habitat destruction (3 responses)

13. Lack of Enforcement – 13 votes

- o Enforcement
- o Lack of/inadequate compliance and enforcement
- o Not strict enough laws or non-enforcement of existing ones
- o Zoning & regulation enforcement
- o Lack of enforcement of environmental regulations
- o Lack of enforcement of current regulations
- o No enforcement of rules, regs and laws put in place to manage for healthy environment
- o Compliance and enforcement – clear signage, summons/tickets, community service, etc.

14. Water Quality and Quantity – 13 votes

- o Water quality of the rivers, bays and Gulf is critical concern for the life, health and quality of life
- o Water quality and quantity – nutrients, toxins, etc.
- o Water quality impacts - education and enforcement
- o Water quality declines, increases in nutrients and sediment loads to GOM and coastal estuaries
- o Water quality and quantity (2 responses)
- o Upstream water allocation, freshwater delivery
- o Water quality (2 responses)
- o Controlling and minimizing water runoff/surface and Stormwater into Gulf
- o Water quality degradation
- o Water quality – stormwater management, nutrient loading, contaminants
- o Water quality –nutrient loading, contaminants, stormwater, hormones, antibiotics and pharmaceuticals
- o Human development – disturbance, impervious surface, habitat destruction, wildlife destruction
- o Nutrient loading
- o Pollution from river, coastal construction
- o Water quality/flow data lack of timely information for management decisions