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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FUTURE OF GULF OF MEXICO IN COMMUNITY'S HANDS**

Upcoming Gulf of Mexico Alliance Community Workshop bringing together wetland stakeholders to improve the state of the Gulf of Mexico.

To improve the Gulf of Mexico and the surrounding region, The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program will host a Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) Community Workshop September 8, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m at the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve, 314 St. Mary Street, Thibodaux, LA.

Coastal wetland stakeholders throughout Louisiana are coming together to gain perspective on critical issues related to the environmental and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. The five issues that will be addressed in the Gulf Alliance Plan of Action for the Gulf include nutrient loading, improving water quality, restoration of coastal wetlands, identification of Gulf habitats and Gulf of Mexico environmental education.

Participants hope to gain support for the creation of a Plan of Action for the Gulf, identify programs that can help attain potential objectives in this plan, as well as build better relationships and provide education/outreach.

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance has been formed to unite Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida on environmental issues related to the Gulf. In December 2004, the US Commission on Ocean Policy released recommendations for a new and comprehensive national ocean policy, emphasizing the need for integrated ecosystem-based management that transcends political boundaries. Currently, the Alliance is setting an example by sharing science, expertise and financial resources to better protect the health of this complex ecosystem that is the Gulf of Mexico, while securing a lasting underwater legacy for future generations. Results of the Alliance Community Workshop will be incorporated into a larger long-term Action Plan in response to the US Commission on Ocean Policy that will be unveiled at a November Summit in Corpus Christi, Texas.

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If you'd like more information about this meeting, please visit the Web at <http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org/> or contact Sandra Helmuth at 985/447-6201 or email Sandra at [Sandra@btnep.org](mailto:Sandra@btnep.org). To learn more about the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program visit the Web at [www.btnep.org](http://www.btnep.org).