NOAA-led RESTORE Act Science Program

April 8, 2015
Gulf of Mexico Marine Mammal Research Meeting

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Outline

• Program Overview
• Relationship to the Other DWH-related Funds
• Science Plan
• Long-term Research Priorities
• 2015 Funding
• Science Advisory Board Working Group
• Future
Program Overview

Mission: To initiate and sustain an integrative, holistic understanding of the Gulf of Mexico (GoM) ecosystem and support, to the maximum extent practicable, restoration efforts and the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, including its fish stocks, fishing industries, habitat, and wildlife through ecosystem research, observation, monitoring, and technology development.

- NOAA and US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Science needs of resource managers are key driver
- Engagement for input and awareness
- Science plan builds on prior science needs assessments for the region
- Coordinate with other DWH-related science and restoration programs
- $20 million available now
Deepwater Horizon Gulf Science and Restoration Initiatives

Civil Penalties
- Transocean ($1 billion)
  - BP (unknown)
    - RESTORE Act ($800m + unk)
      - 35% Direct Component
      - 30% Council Component
      - 30% Spill Impact Component
      - 2.5% Centers of Excellence

Criminal Penalties
- BP ($2.84 billion)
  - North American Wetlands Conservation Fund ($100m)
    - Alabama $356m
    - Louisiana $1.3b
    - Texas $356m
  - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ($2.54b)
    - Florida $356m
  - National Academy of Sciences ($500m)
    - Mississippi $356m

Natural Resource Damages
- Responsible Parties- BP, etc.
  - BP Early Restoration (up to $1b)
  - Nat. Res. Damages (unknown)
    - NRDA Trustee Council
      - Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative ($500 million)

2.5% NOAA Science Program ($20m now)
Science Plan

• Highlights the areas of investment for the Program
  o long-term research priorities create a foundation
• Describes competitive research program approach
• Identifies partners for leveraging future opportunities
• Final version to be published in FR April 2015
Long-term Research Priorities

• Comprehensive understanding of:
  – coupled social and ecological systems
  – watershed, sediment, & nutrient impacts to coastal ecology
  – *living marine resources (LMR) food webs, habitats, protected areas, and carbon flow*
  – climate change and weather effects

• Management-ready ecosystem models

• **Long-term trends on status and health of ecosystem**

• Indicators of GoM coastal environ. & socioeconomic conditions

• Decision tools to monitor and manage habitat, LMRs, and wildlife

• **Integrated GoM monitoring programs**

• **Advanced technologies to improve monitoring**
Federal Funding Opportunity - 2015

• **Short-term priorities:**
  1. Inventory and assess existing ecosystem models (not just Gulf models)
  2. Identify and evaluate GoM biological and human health indicators
  3. Assess GoM monitoring and observation needs and develop recommendations for a Gulf-wide network

• Further refined by three topical areas:
  — Ecosystem and living marine resources management
  — Climate change and extreme weather impacts on sustainability of restoration
  — Integration of social/behavioral/economic science into restoration and management

• $2-2.5 million for up to 7 projects of 1 to 2 year duration

• >100 letters of intent; <40 full proposals; Reviews by June
Science Advisory Board Working Group

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science Program Advisory Working Group

• Provide independent guidance and review of the Science Program
• Provide a mechanism for formal coordination between organizations (NOAA HQ Program)

Representatives of Gulf of Mexico Science Programs:

• Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
• Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
• RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence (Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas)

Subject Matter Experts:

physical, chemical, biological oceanography; economics or social sciences; wetlands ecology; fishery, wildlife, and marine mammal ecology; ecosystem modeling; toxicology; observing and monitoring systems; ecosystem management

Ex-officio members:

• Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative
• National Academy of Sciences Gulf Research Program
• Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
• National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Future

• April 2015 - Science Plan published
• June 2015 – Science Advisory Bd. WG meets
• Fall 2015 – Award 2015 FFO $s (expected)
• Fall 2015 – Develop 2016 FFO
  o Setting which priorities from Plan will be the focus
  o Digesting new information
• Develop metrics to measure success
QUESTIONS?

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