

**Gulf of Mexico Program
Policy Review Board Meeting Summary
December 12, 2002
New Orleans, LA**

1. Roll Call - Welcome and Introductions of the Board

16 of the 19 members established a quorum. (Action Items are included as Attachment A, a copy of the agenda as Attachment B, and the attendee list as Attachment C.)

Organization:	Member:	Present:	Absent:
EPA	Jimmy Palmer (Federal Chair)	X	
Louisiana	Hall Bohlinger (State Chair)	X	
Alabama	Phillip Hinesley (Alternate)	X	
Florida	Jerry Brooks (Alternate)	X	
Mississippi	Phil Bass (Alternate)	X	
Texas	Vacant		X
HHS	George Hoskin	X	
DOC	Spencer Garrett (Alternate)	X	
USDA	Homer Wilkes		X
DOI	Columbus Brown (Alternate)	X	
DOT	Vacant		X
DOD	Bob Stender (Alternate)	X	
NASA	Marco Giardino (Alternate)	X	
CAC	Robert Crowe	X	
CAC	Brian Grantham	X	
BAC	Mike Lyons	X	
GRN	Paul Templet	X	
CSCA	Joel Yelverton (Alternate)	X	

AFBF-GC	Ron Harrell (Alternate)	X	
---------	-------------------------	---	--

2. Overview of Meeting Agenda & Objectives and Status Review of Follow-up Action Items

Jimmy Palmer, Federal Co-Chair, and Hall Bohlinger, State Co-Chair, welcomed the Policy Review Board members.

Bryon Griffith, Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Program, presented the status of the Gulf Program’s accomplishments for FY 2002 and workplan for FY 2003.

Policy Review Board Action/Direction: Endorsement

3. Status of Harmful Algal Blooms Observing System Pilot Project

Purpose: To receive an update on the progress of the Hazardous Algal Blooms Observing System (HABSOS) Project

Dr. Bill Benson, Director of EPA’s ORD Gulf Ecology Division Laboratory, presented an update on the HABSOS pilot project. Why is there a focus on HABs? The yearly impact can be from \$300- 700M. “Red Tides” are not new; they have been reported since 1600’s. The effects of harmful algal blooms are highly visible through public health (seafood poisoning, respiratory irritation, memory and learning disabilities); economy (shellfish closures, fish kills, beach advisories, loss of consumer confidence); valued resources (shellfish, finfish, manatees, dolphins, sea turtles); and unknown ecological effects (water quality, habitat quality, other non-charismatic species and populations). The purpose of the project is to assist the states with timely access to data and information for efficient uses of resources and to develop forecasting capabilities. The first workshop was held November 27 - December 1, 2000. Public health and natural resource managers were brought together to formulate plans and define requirements for data products, measurements, sensors, and platforms. It was decided to target *Karenia brevis* because that is the most problematic HAB in the Gulf of Mexico. The pilot project is drawing on the HAB expertise around the Gulf and will complete a retrospective case study which will identify, characterize, and organize relevant data and information from across the Gulf during 1996, 1997, and 2000. The relevant data will be integrated into a regional format applicable to forecasting and can be used for decision making. The case study should produce visualization of events prior to, during, and following *K. brevia* blooms; a web-based portal system for linking and integrating multiple data types from multiple sources; a simulation of the blooms to demonstrate the benefits of timely data integration and information dissemination; and a report to the Steering Committee with recommendations for developing and implementing a real-time or near real-time HABs observing system.

Policy Review Board Action/Direction: Informational.

4. Bacterial Source Tracking Research

Purpose: To receive an overview of the current state of the research in this topic area and to solicit broad Gulf State involvement in a collaborative EPA Region 4 and University of Southern Mississippi initiative to provide Gulf State coordination and support for applied Bacterial Source Tracking research.

Dr. R. D. Ellender, Assistant Dean for Research and Development, College of Science and Technology, University of Southern Mississippi presented an overview of research on bacterial source tracking. The Gulf of Mexico Program's interest in this area is to assist in the development of near real time "litmus paper test" technologies for use by state program managers to accurately identify the principal sources of bacterial contamination. Bacterial contamination is one of the constituents responsible for the states' need to list waters as impaired and ultimately the development and implementation of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The use of indicator organisms is limited by its inability to track organisms associated with fecal contamination to their potential sources. Microbial source tracking techniques can be used to assess the impact of suspected sources of microbial pollution in rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Determination of the sources of microbial pollution requires establishing a large collection of bacterial isolates of a specific species from the impacted waterbody. Nonpoint source runoff can carry the fecal material of domestic and feral animals into recreational waters. Future research should focus on which source-tracking methodologies produce consistent and specific results, on the selection of the indicator organism, and on the actual number of animals of a given species that need to be sampled to give a valid representation of the microbial flora associated with that species. Identification of the microbial pollution sources would then be achieved by a fingerprint comparison of unknown isolates from the water with the library of known isolate fingerprints.

Policy Review Board Action/Direction: Discussions by board members included the need for more information regarding costs involved, models and databases needed, integration of information across the states, a central system or repository, and what the Gulf of Mexico Program can do.

5. **GMP Mercury Project Update - re: Gulf State Marine Fish Advisory Consistency**

Purpose: To receive an update on the status of the GMP initiative to achieve consistent marine fish advisories re: Mercury in Gulf Seafood.

Dr. Fred Kopfler, Gulf of Mexico Program Office, presented an update on the progress of the Project Team formed to develop recommendations for consumption advisories for mercury in marine fish from the Gulf that are consistent in all five Gulf States and to evaluate all aspects of consumption advisories, develop a model advisory, and propose a public outreach plan for communicating mercury risks. A workshop was held December 10-11, 2002. The group agreed that the current king mackerel advisories are similar in the five states and that advisory parameters must be harmonized to reach a common Gulf-wide advisory. There was consensus on the following parameters: adult weight, meal size, susceptible women, and king mackerel lengths. Consensus was not reached on reference dose and meal frequency for king mackerel. Other species discussed included: highly migratory pelagic species whose range includes all five states and species that have similar mercury levels in multiple states. Sharing research and advisory development at the state level will help to identify potential candidates and common advisories. The group agreed that the target population of the king mackerel advisory is recreational king mackerel fishermen, their families and friends. The Team will have a conference call in early February and will decide the scheduling for another meeting. Project Team should make recommendations to Management Committee within one year.

Policy Review Board Action/Direction: Informational.

6. **President's Interagency Work Group on Mercury Presentation**

Purpose: To receive an Executive Briefing on the development and status of President's Interagency Workgroup on Mercury and their future plans relative to the Gulf of Mexico region.

Mr. Gene Whitney, Policy Analyst for the Office of Science and Technology Policy of the Executive Office of the President, presented an overview of mercury which identified two sources of mercury: Industrial mercury and Incidental mercury. Industrial mercury is mined,

processed, and used intentionally in industrial or consumer products and processes. Exposure would be occupational and local. Incidental mercury occurs incidentally in materials that are burned or processed and emitted in gaseous or soluble forms. Exposure to this is regional or global as elemental, salt, or methylmercury. Industrial mercury sources include batteries, electric lighting, thermometers, thermostats, dental uses. Incidental mercury is widely dispersed by the atmosphere and oceans and is deposited, methylated, and enters the food chain where it may become a human health problem. Sources for incidental mercury include coal, oil, and gas combustion; solid waste, medical, hazardous waste combustion; cement operations; sewage sludge incineration; landfills.

In May 2002, Senator Jeff Sessions expressed concern about methylmercury in a letter to the President. In response an interagency forum, NSTC Interagency Working Group on Methylmercury was established to understand the impact on human health, its causes, and to recommend strategic Federal R&D pathways to solutions. Phase I of the Action Plan is to examine the Gulf of Mexico as a priority study area - identify gaps in data and recommend strategies for agencies to fill gaps. Research needs on mercury include: atmospheric mercury sources; atmospheric transport and deposition; mercury cycling and methylation in aquatic ecosystems; mercury bioaccumulation; and, toxicological effects and risk management. In summary, mercury is a serious environmental issue nationally and globally and in its methylated form enters the food chain and becomes a human health problem. The interagency work group as well as the United Nations Environmental Program Global Mercury Assessment Council are examining environmental and health issues related to mercury use and emissions and focusing on solutions.

Policy Review Board Action/Direction: NSTC Interagency Working Group would like to keep a continuing dialog with the Policy Review Board so there is not duplication of efforts. It was suggested that the Gulf of Mexico Program give a presentation to the Interagency Working Group.

7. **Presidential Executive Order Recommendations - Final Review**

Purpose: (1) To conduct the final review of the Management Committee's recommendations regarding the proposed Presidential Executive Order establishing the Gulf of Mexico Program; (2) To discuss and finalize a supporting implementation strategy and schedule for submitting the Executive proposal to the EPA Administrator.

Members reviewed the revisions recommended by the Management Committee and commended the Committee for an excellent job. After discussions, the Board recommended the addition of a subsection to include a transition period. GMP Deputy Director will caucus the Gulf States regarding the Governors' support and will obtain letters of support from Business/Industry, Agriculture, Local Government, and Environmental partners. The amended

Executive Order will be sent to the Board and the Management Committee in January for review.

Policy Review Board Decision/Actions: Review and final endorsement.

8. **GMP's Assistance Role in the Advancing Development and Deployment of NASA's Space-Based Earth Sciences Support**

Purpose: To explore stronger partnership opportunities through NASA's Space-Based Earth Science Applications Development Program.

Dr. Marco Giardino, NASA, Stennis Space Center, presented NASA's Earth Science Applications' extensive satellite and remote sensing capabilities that can be partnered with other Federal agencies to add value and benefits to citizens and society. NASA has decision support systems to provide sustainable solutions and processes for 12 national applications: Agricultural Competitiveness; Air Quality Management; Aviation Safety; Carbon Management; Coastal Management; Disaster Preparedness; Community Growth; Energy Forecasting; Homeland Security; National Invasive Species; Public Health; and Water Management and Conservation.

Policy Review Board Decision/Actions: Informational.

9. **Hypoxia Action Plan Status: Lower Miss. River Sub-Basin Team Development Report (Agricultural Sector) - Lower MS Valley Initiative (LMVI) Watershed Approach**

Purpose: To receive an update on the status of the Lower Mississippi River Sub-basin Team's Development re: Agriculture's organization (e.g., LMVI) and process (i.e., Watershed Approach) approach to addressing many of the sub-basin's industry led solutions.

Mr. Ron Harrell, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, presented an update on the Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative (LMVI) which is a partnership of federal, state, and private organizations formed to address economic, conservation, and environmental concerns in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. The Initiative addresses water quality and other issues affecting agriculture and forestry and involves agricultural leaders from Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Texas, and Oklahoma. A strategic plan will be

developed targeted toward locally-led environmental stewardship that is cost-effective, non-regulatory, incentive-based and sensitive to the economic needs of agricultural producers. The LMVI will affect key conservation-based provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill by supporting existing programs as a conservation base. Some of the factors contributing to concern are the agricultural contributions to Total Maximum Daily Loads, Nutrient Enrichment - Hypoxia, and other concerns such as wetlands, riparian buffers, invasive species. Where agricultural contributions are a concern, agriculture should be in the lead. The overall objective is to demonstrate that the agriculture will reduce nonpoint source loadings without regulation if planning and implementation are locally led, sound science is used, and economic viability is maintained by providing needed incentives to support private actions that yield public benefits. The proposal is to demonstrate on a watershed basis how locally led actions can add much value.

Policy Review Board Decision/Actions : Informational.

10. **Additional Topics**

The Gulf of Mexico Program Citizens Advisory Committee unanimously endorsed a Resolution on Louisiana Wetland Loss which was presented to the Board. The Resolution contains the following recommendations: The Citizens Advisory Committee recognizes that continued rapid loss of Louisiana's coastal wetlands has serious negative implications for the United States. In the five-state region included in the Gulf of Mexico Program, it can be anticipated that continued loss would trigger environmental crises that will, among other effects, endanger important economic interests within the region.

The Citizens Advisory Committee recommends that the Gulf of Mexico Program recognize the regional nature of the loss of Louisiana's coastal wetlands, and that all elements of the Program be encouraged to support, in the ways each finds feasible, efforts to address the land loss.

The Board unanimously adopted the Citizens' Resolution.

Mr. Mike Lyons, Gulf of Mexico Coalition, reported to the Board that the Coalition is planning to support a Congressional Briefing in 2003 in support of the Gulf of Mexico Program.

ATTACHMENT A
Follow-up Action Item Summary
Policy Review Board Meeting
December 12, 2002

ACTION REQUESTED	LEAD(s):	STATUS:
1. NOAA (Spencer Garrett) will provide synoptic survey presentation to PRB.	NOAA	
2. Provide copies of presentations to PRB members so can coordinate with Agency budget development for FY 2005	GMPO	Completed- on web site

<p>3. Executive Order -</p> <p>Document entire process to determine if there is opportunity to comment on final version.</p> <p>Add subsection for a transition period of up to one year.</p> <p>If anyone has additional questions regarding EO, send by email to GMPO.</p> <p>Caucus State Leads to decide options for obtaining Governors support</p> <p>Updated EO to be sent to PRB by the first week of January.</p>	<p>GMPO</p>	<p>Completed</p>
--	-------------	------------------

ATTACHMENT B

Gulf of Mexico Program Policy Review Board Meeting

Embassy Suites Hotel
 Bayou Jean Lafitte Rooms, 6th Floor
 New Orleans, Louisiana
 Thursday, December 12, 2002

AGENDA

- 7:30** **Continental Breakfast (in meeting room)**
- 8:30** **Welcome and Introductions**
 Jimmy Palmer, EPA Regional Administrator, Region 4, Atlanta
 Hall Bohlinger, Acting Secretary, LA Department of Env. Quality

- 8:40** **Overview of Meeting Agenda & Objectives**
Status Review of Follow-up Action Items
 Bryon Griffith, Gulf of Mexico Program Office
- 9:00** **Harmful Algal Blooms Observing System Pilot Project Status**
 Dr. Bill Benson, Director, EPA ORD's Gulf Ecology Division Laboratory
- Purpose:** To receive an update on the progress of the Hazardous Algal Blooms Observing System (HABSOS) pilot.
- 9:45** **Bacterial Source Tracking Research**
 Dr. R.D. Ellender, Assistant Dean for Research & Development
 College of Science & Technology, University of Southern Mississippi
- Purpose:** To receive an overview of the current state of the research in this topic area and to solicit broad Gulf State involvement in a collaborative EPA Region 4 and University of Southern Mississippi initiative to provide Gulf State coordination and support for applied Bacterial Source Tracking research.
- 10:30** ----- **Break** -----
- 10:45** **GMP Mercury Project Update - re: Gulf State Marine Fish Advisory Consistency**
 Dr. Fred Kopfler, Gulf of Mexico Program Office
- Purpose:** To receive an update on the status of the GMP initiative to achieve consistent marine fish advisories re: Mercury in Gulf Seafood.
- 11:15** **President's Interagency Work Group on Mercury Presentation**
 Gene Whitney, Policy Analyst, Office of Science & Technology Policy
 Executive Office of the President
- Purpose:** To receive an Executive Briefing on the development and status of President's Interagency Workgroup on Mercury and their future plans relative to the Gulf of Mexico region.
- 12:00** **Catered Lunch - 2002 Gulf Guardian Awards Video Presentation**
- 12:45** **Presidential Executive Order Recommendations - Final Review**
 Bryon Griffith, Gulf of Mexico Program Office
- Purpose:** (1) To conduct the final review of the Management Committee's recommendations regarding the proposed Presidential Executive Order establishing the Gulf of Mexico Program; (2) To discuss and finalize a supporting implementation strategy and schedule for submitting the Executive proposal to the EPA Administrator.

1:30 **GMP's Assistance Role in the Advancing Development and Deployment of NASA's Space-based Earth Sciences Support**
Dr. David Powe, Director, Earth Science Applications Directorate
NASA, Stennis Space Center, Mississippi

Purpose: To explore stronger partnership opportunities through NASA's Space-based Earth Science Applications Development Program.

2:00 **Hypoxia Action Plan Status: Lower Mississippi River Sub-basin Team Development Report (Agricultural Sector) - Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative's (LMVI) Watershed Approach**
Invited speaker

Purpose: To receive an update on the status of the Lower Mississippi River Sub-basin Team's development re: Agriculture's organization (e.g., LMVI) and process (i.e., Watershed Approach) approach to addressing many of the sub-basin's industry led solutions.

2:30 **Wrap-up and next steps**
Jimmy Palmer and Hall Bohlinger

2:35 **Adjourn**

ATTACHMENT C

GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM POLICY REVIEW BOARD MEETING December 12, 2002 - New Orleans

ATTENDEE LIST

Mr. Phil Bass
Pollution Control Director
MS DEQ
P. O. Box 10385
Jackson, MS 39289-0385
601-961-5100 Fax: 601-961-5337
Email: Phil_Bass@bcbe.org

Mr. William H. Benson
Director, Gulf Ecology Division

US EPA ORD
1 Sabine Island Drive
Gulf Breeze, FL 32501
850-934-9208 Fax : 850-934-2406
Email: benson.william@epa.gov

Mr. Hall Bohlinger (State Co-Chair)
Acting Secretary
LA Dept. of Environmental Quality
7290 Bluebonnet Drive, 3rd Floor (70810)

P. O. Box 82263
Baton Rouge, LA 70884-2263
225-765-0639 Fax: 225-765-0641
Email: hall_b@deq.state.la.us

Mr. Bob Bosenberg
Liason to GMPO
US Army - Corps of Engineers
P. O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160
504-862-2522
228-688-1185 (GMPO)
Email: bosenberg.bob@epa.gov

Mr. Jerry Brooks
Deputy Director, Division of Water Res. Mgt.
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
2600 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, FL 32399
850-245-8338 Fax:
Email: Jerry.Brooks@dep.state.fl.us

Mr. Columbus Brown
Special Assistant to the Regional Director
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Blvd., Suite 205
Atlanta, GA 30341
404-679-4143 Fax:: 404-679-7194
Email: columbus.brown@fws.gov

Ms. Gloria Car
Associate Director for Administration
EPA - GMPO
Mail Code: EPA/GMPO
Tennis Space Center, MS 39529
228-688-2421 Fax: 288-688-2709
Email: car.gloria@epa.gov

Mr. John Carlton
Chief, Mobile Branch
AL Dept. of Environmental Management
2204 Perimeter Road
Mobile, AL 36615
251-450-3400 Fax: 251-479-2593
Email: jcc@adem.state.al.us

Mr. Robert Crowe
Land Supervisor, Alabama Power Company
150 St. Joseph Street
Mobile, AL 36652-2247
251-694-2391/928-6615 Fax: 251-694-2430
Email: rhcrowe@southernco.com

Ms. Mary Dokianos

Public Affairs Manager
Shell Exploration and Production Company
P. O. Box 61933
New Orleans, LA 70161
504-728-6996 Fax: 504-728-0225
Email: Mary.dokianos@shell.com

Mr. R. D. Ellender
Associate Dean for Research
University of Southern Mississippi
Box 5165
Hattiesburg, MS 39406
601-266-4887 Fax: 601-266-5829
Email: rudolph.ellender@usm.edu

Mr. Wildon J. Fontneot
Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative (LMVI)
Co-ordinator
USDA/NRCS
700 Cajundome Blvd
Lafayette, LA 70506
337-291-3098 Fax: 337-291-3085
Email: wildon.fontenot@usda.gov

Mr. Spencer Garrett
NOAA/ Fisheries
705 Convent Street
Pascagoula, MS 39567
228-769-8964 Fax: 228-762-7411
Email: spencer.garrett@nozz.gov
Mr. Marco Giardino
NASA
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529
228-688-2739
marco.giardino@nasa.gov

Mr. Brian Grantham
Agriculture Department
Foley High School
17380 Charolais Road
Foley, AL 36535
(334) 943-1486 Fax: (334) 943-3538
Home: (334) 943-8267
Email: bgrantham@bcbe.org

Mr. Bryon Griffith
Acting Director
Gulf of Mexico Program Office
Mail Code: EPA/GMPO
Tennis Space Center, MS 39529
228-688-1172 Fax: 228-688-2709

Email: griffith.bryon@epa.gov

Mr. Ron Harrell
Gulf States Farm Bureau
9516 Airline
Baton Rouge, LA 70815
225-922-6211 Fax: 225-922-6211
Email: ronh@1f6f.org

Mr. Tom Herrington (Alternate)
Marine Biologist/Public Health Advisor
FDA Liaison
Gulf of Mexico Program Office
Mail Code: EPA/GMPO
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-6000
228-688-7941 Fax: 228-688-2709
Email: herrington.tom@epa.gov

Mr. Phillip Hinesley
Chief coastal Section
AL Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources
20720 US Hwy. 98
Fair hope, AL 36532
251-929-0900 Fax: 251-00-9293
Email: Phinesley@dcnr.state.al.us

Dr. George Hoskin
Director, Division of Science/Technology
Office of Seafood/Food and Drug Administration
FedEx Address:
5100 Paint Branch Parkway
College Park, MD 20740
Regular Mail:
Harvey W. Wiley Building
5100 Paint Branch Parkway
FDA - Room 3D-045
301-436-1402 Fax: 301-436-2599
Email: ghoskin@cfsan.fda.gov

Mr. Doug Jacobson
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue (6WQ-EM)
Dallas, TX 75202
214-665-6692 Fax: 214-665-6689
Email: jacobson.doug@epa.gov

Mr. Fred Kopfler
EPA GMPO
Mail Code: EPA/GMPO
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529
228-688-2712 Fax: 228-688-2709
Email: kopfler.fred@epa.gov

Mr. Michael Lyons

Environmental Affairs Manager
LA Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association
801 North Boulevard, Suite 201
Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5727
225-387-3205 Fax: 225-344-5502
Email: lyons@lmoga.com
Secretary: Jan Pourciau
Secretary Email: lmoga@lmoga.com

Mr. Jimmy Palmer (Federal Co-Chair)
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Atlanta Federal Center, 14th Floor
61 Forsyth
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-562-8357 Fax: 404-562-9961
Email: palmer.jimmy@epa.gov

Mr. Dugan Sabins
Senior Environmental Scientist
Louisiana DEQ
P. O. Box 82178
Baton Rouge, LA 70884-2178
225-765-0246
Email:

Mr. Robert Stender (Alternate)
Environmental Program Manager
CNET/USN (Code N441)
250 Dallas Street
Pensacola, FL 32508-5220
850-452-4022 Fax: 850-452-4066
Email: robert-g.stender@cnet.navy.mil

Ms. Terry Teague
Special Assistant for the Director
EPA/GMPO
Mail Code: EPA/GMPO
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529
228-688-1156 Fax: 228-688-2709
Email: teague.terry@epa.gov

Dr. Paul Temple
Professor, Institute for Environmental Studies
Louisiana State University
42 Atkinson Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
225-578-6428 Fax: 225-578-4286
Email: ptemple@lsu.edu

Ms. Larinda Tervelt
Region 4 Liaison
EPA/GMPO

Mail Code: EPA/GMPO
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529
228-688-1033 Fax: 228-688-2709
Email: tervelt.larinda@epa.gov

Mr. Gene Whitney
OSTP
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20502
202-456-6081 Fax: 202-456-6027
Email: gwhitney@ostp.eop.gov