

The Gulf of Mexico Regional Research Plan

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Outline

- Background
 - Regional activities in the Gulf of Mexico
 - Gulf of Mexico Research Plan
- Description and Status of Project
 - Stakeholders
 - Planning approach and strategy
 - Next steps
- Deliverables

Gulf of Mexico Regional Activities

- 1993-1995
 - Regional marine research planning effort but no work occurred beyond the initial funding period
- Example of Current Gulf-wide Activities (with multiple partners)
 - Gulf of Mexico Alliance*—State led initiative with substantial NOAA and EPA involvement
 - GCOOS—Texas A&M leads but many are participating; linked to the International Ocean Observing System
 - GOM Large Marine Ecosystem Project—United Nations sponsored activity

* Will be discussed in more detail later in this session

Gulf of Mexico Research Plan

- Funded by the National Sea Grant office
 - One of eight regional efforts
- Purpose is to assist Gulf of Mexico groups that conduct or use marine and coastal research
 - It is **Not** a Sea Grant Plan
 - It is **Not** a NOAA Plan
- Leadership
 - Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Directors are the PI's
 - Planning and Review Council
 - Multidisciplinary, multi-institutional membership
 - Geographically balanced

Objectives

- Determine regional research priorities based on stakeholder input and using the Ocean Research Priorities Plan framework
- Identify opportunities for organizations to collaboratively address needs, reduce overlap of effort, and fill research gaps

Stakeholders

- Federal agencies
- State agencies
- Academia and laboratories
- Multi-entity efforts
- Non-governmental organizations
- Others



Example of Federal Efforts in the Gulf

■ NOAA

- National Ocean Service
 - Gulf Services Center*
 - OCRM*/NERR (5 reserves)
 - Nat'l Marine Sanctuaries (2)
- NESDIS
 - National Coastal Data Development Center
- NMFS*
 - Numerous labs
- NWS
 - National Hurricane Center
- OAR
 - National Sea Grant
 - Cooperative Institute*

■ Environmental Protection Agency

- Gulf of Mexico Program
 - National Estuary Program (7)
- ## ■ Naval Oceanographic Office
- ## ■ Army Corps of Engineers
- ## ■ Dept. of Agriculture
- ## ■ Fish and Wildlife
- ## ■ Dept. of Interior
- US Geological Survey
 - Minerals Management Service
- ## ■ Dept. of Homeland Security*



Example of State Agencies and Mexico

- AL, FL, LA, MS, TX NOAA Coastal Management Programs
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Alabama Department of Environmental Management
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida DEP
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Mississippi Dept. of Marine Resources
- Mississippi DEQ
- Texas General Land Office
- Texas Commission on Environ. Quality
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.
- Texas Water Development Board
- Texas Railroad Commission
- Texas Soil and Water Conserv. Board
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Instituto de Ecología A.C. (INECOL)
- Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados Unidad Mérida (CINVESTAV)
- Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología

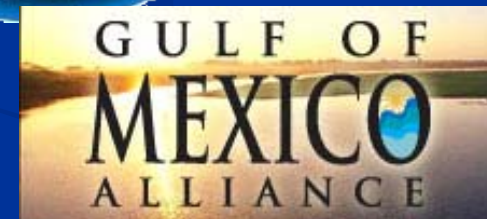
Academia and Laboratories

- Northern Gulf Institute*
- Harte Research Institute
- Universities and Labs
 - Alabama (5)
 - Florida (8)
 - Louisiana (9)
 - Mississippi (4)
 - Texas (15)
 - Southern Association of Marine Labs

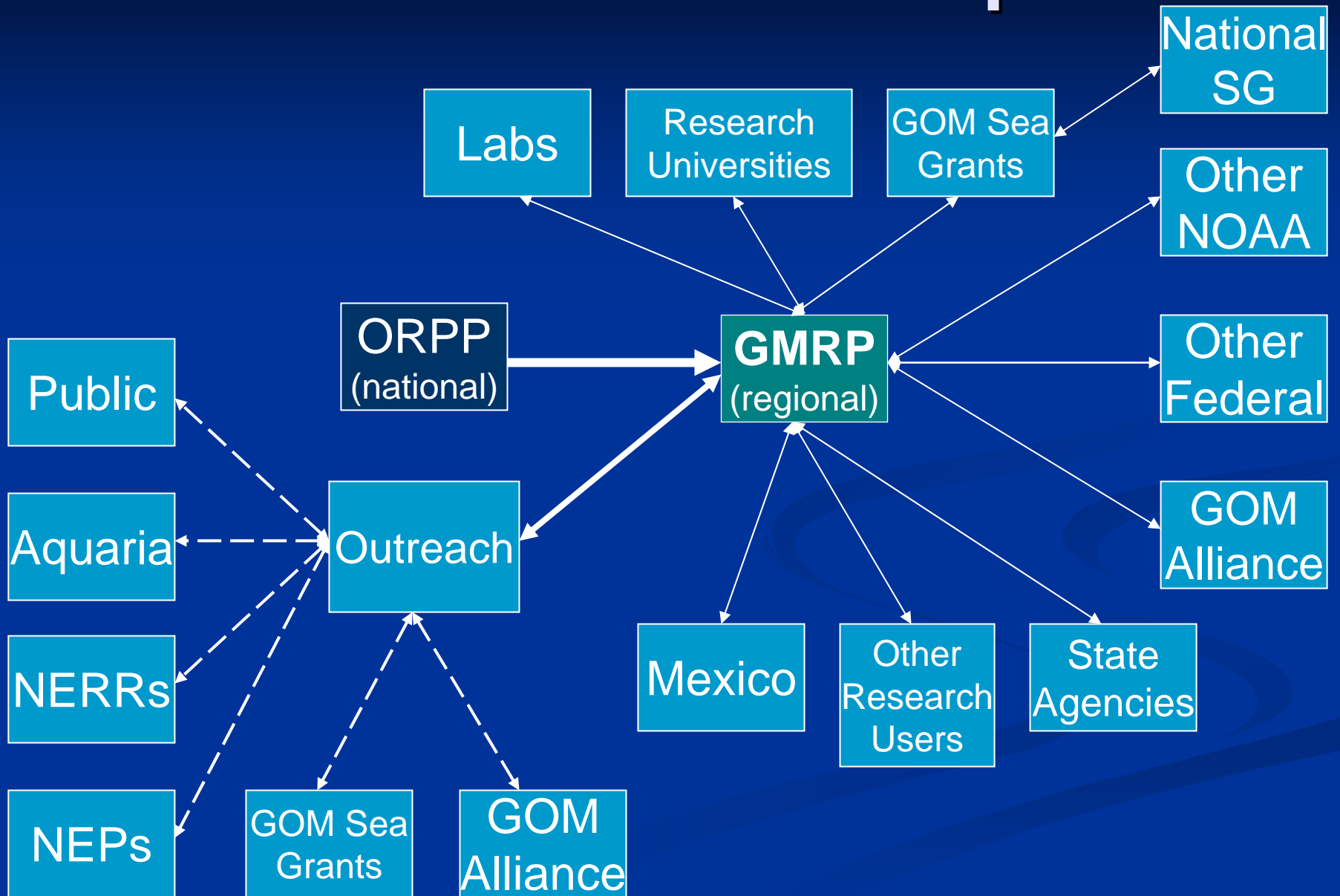


Multi-entity Efforts

- Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
- Gulf of Mexico States Accord
- Gulf of Mexico Alliance*
- GCOOS
- MEXUS-Gulf Program
- White Water to Blue Water



Collaboration and Input



Bridging Plans

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Action Plan

More research emphasis

Gulf of Mexico Research Plan

More regional focus

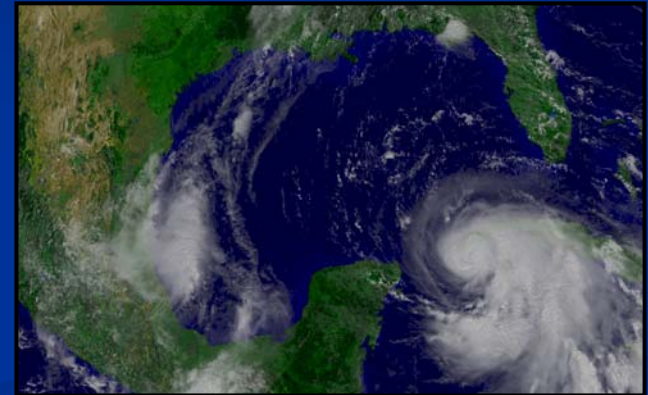
Ocean Research Priorities Plan



Ocean Research Priorities Plan

Societal Themes

- Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Ocean Resources
- Increasing Resilience to Natural Hazards
- Enabling Marine Operations
- The Ocean's Role in Climate
- Improving Ecosystem Health
- Enhancing Human Health



Identifying Priorities

- Review of Strategic Plans
 - 117 plans to date
- Web-based Survey
 - Primary way to collect broad input
- Workshops and Interviews
 - Refine research topics/priorities
 - One workshop in each state



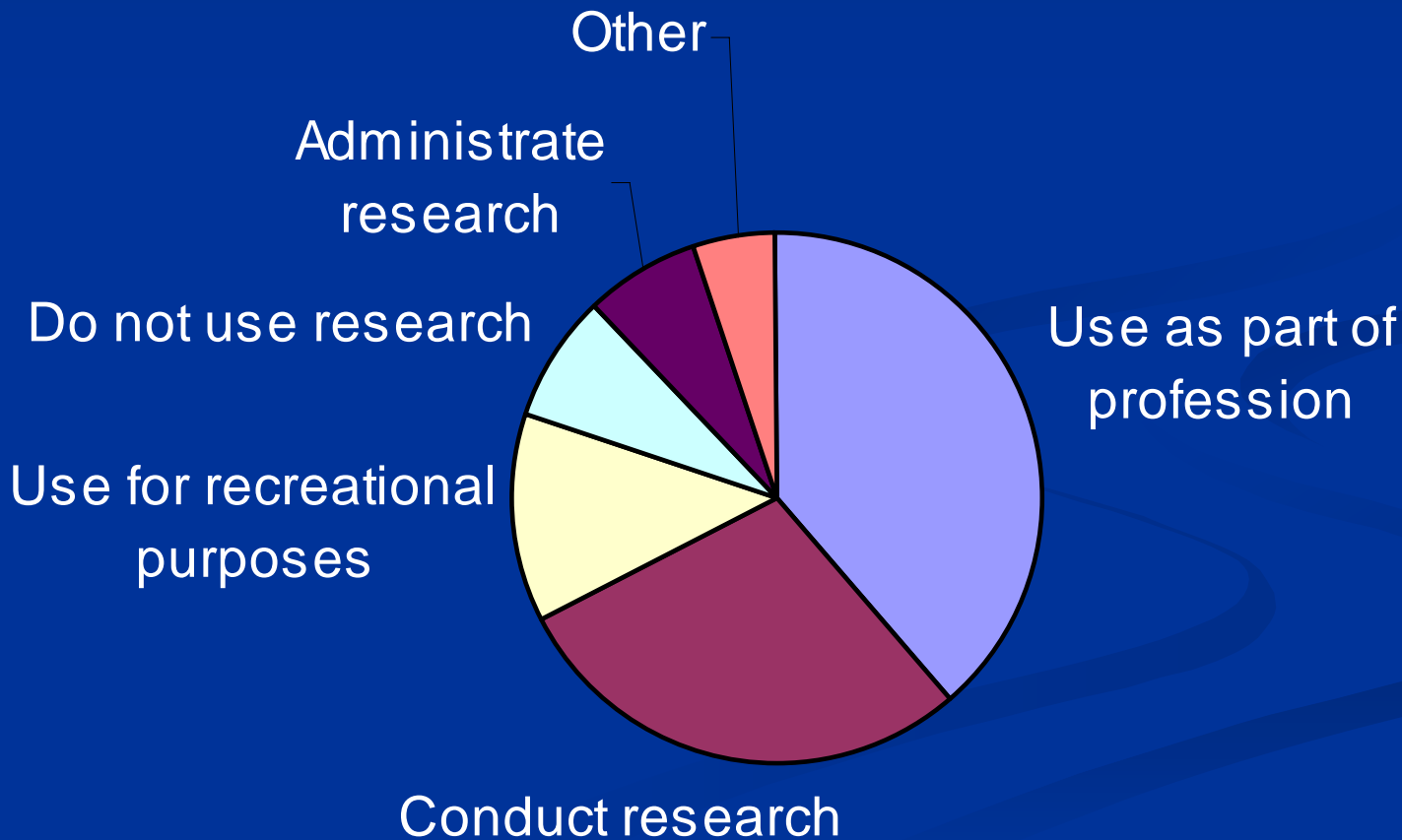
Synthesis of Strategic Plans

- Read plans and identify research-related goals and themes for the Gulf of Mexico
- Connect goals to ORPP-defined research priorities in a matrix
- Examine number of matches between strategic plans and ORPP research priorities

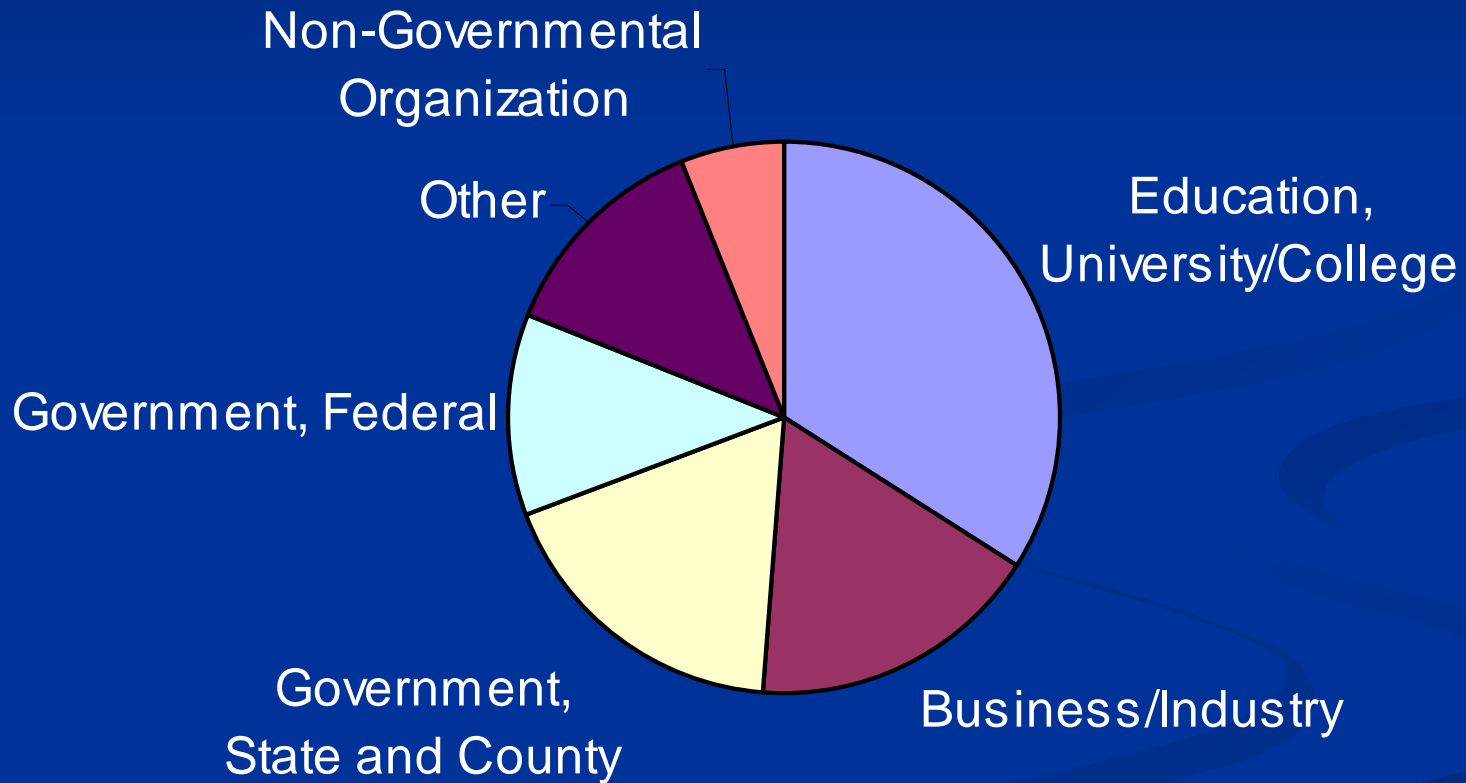
Web-based Survey

- Use the 20 ORPP research priorities to frame questions and rate the importance of the priorities on a regional level
- Responses
 - 1,582 responses
 - ~1,201 individuals rated the research priorities
 - 571 comments to open-ended questions

Survey Respondent's Relationship to Gulf of Mexico Research



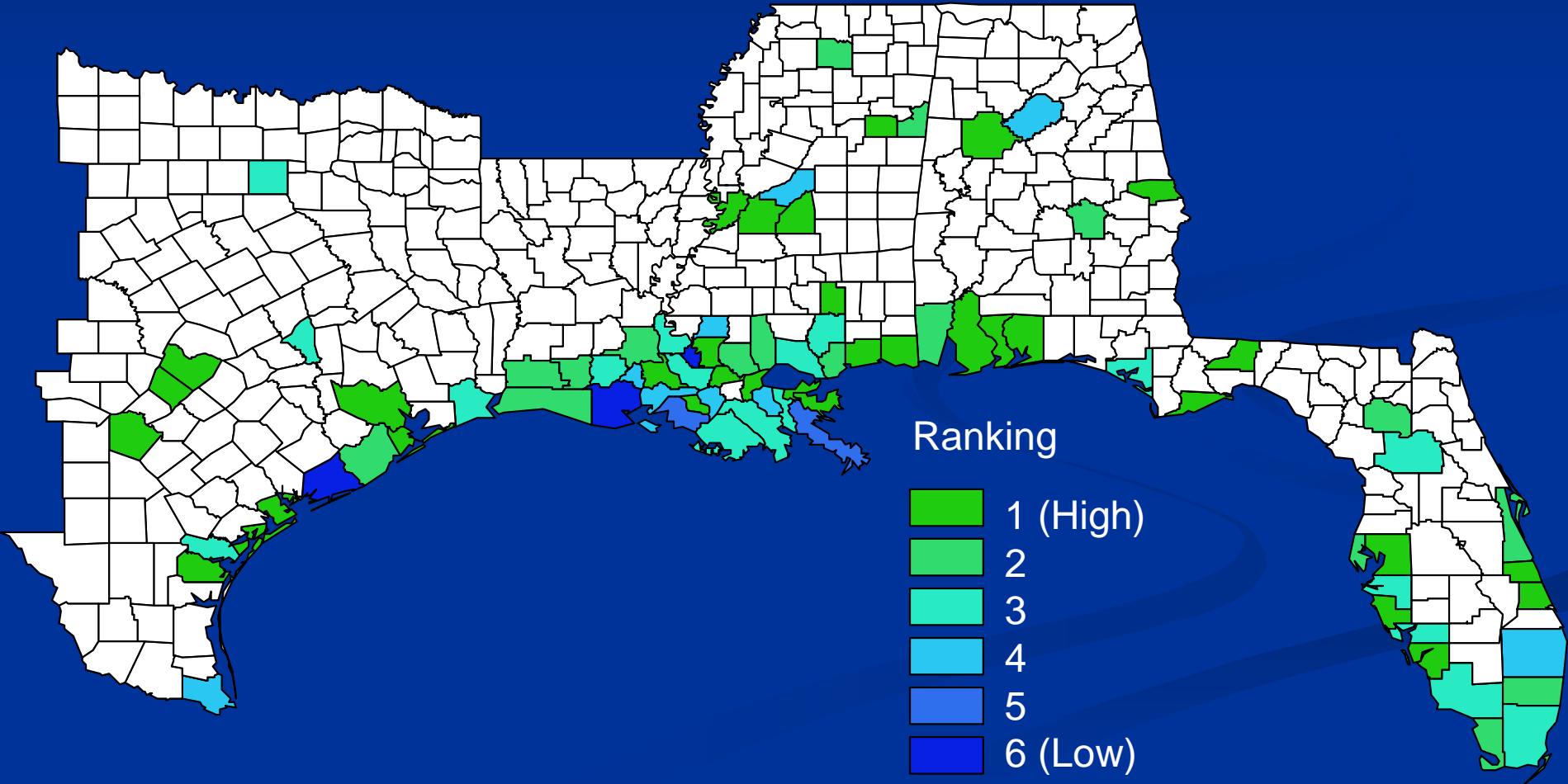
Survey Respondent's Affiliation



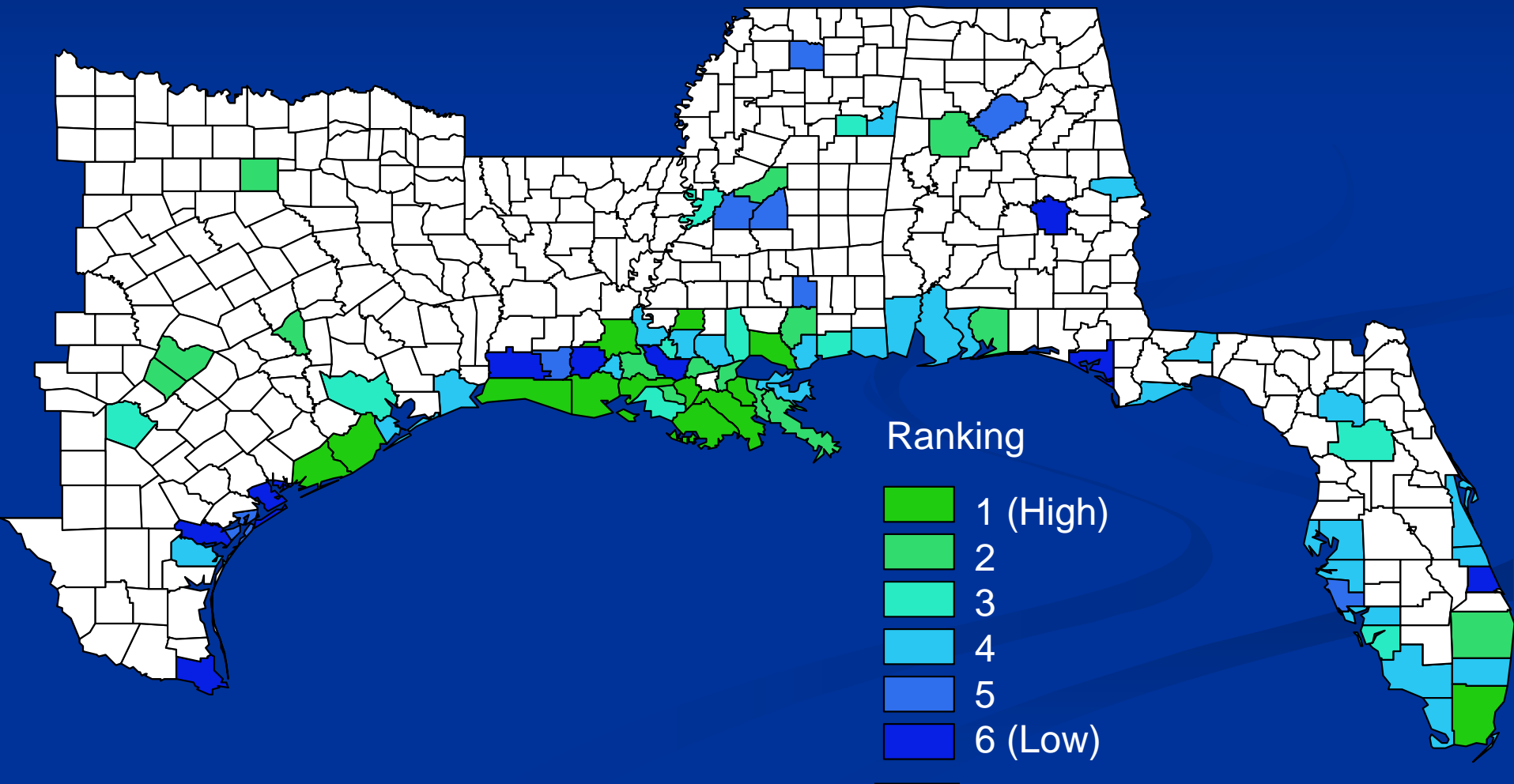
Preliminary Matrix and Survey Results

Ocean Research Priorities Plan Societal Theme	% of strategic plan goals with link	Survey ranking
Improving Ecosystem Health	34.8%	1
Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources	32.9%	2
Increase Resilience to Natural Hazards	8.7%	4
Enhancing Human Health	8.7%	6
Enabling Marine Operations	8.4%	5
The Ocean's Role in Climate	6.6%	3

Preliminary Survey Results: County Relative Ranking of “Improving Ecosystem Health”



Preliminary Survey Results: County Relative Ranking of “Increasing Resilience to Natural Hazards”



Workshops

- **Primary workshop partners:**
 - National and GoM Sea Grant College Programs (sponsors)
 - NOAA Gulf Service Center (co-facilitators)
 - ALDCNR, LSU, MSU, NOAA Fisheries, USGS (hosts)
- **Primary goal:**

Identify highest priority research topics for the region and link to the ORPP
- **Invitees:**

Individuals that conduct, sponsor, or use Gulf of Mexico research
- **Results:**

Will combine survey and workshop results to identify regional research needs

Workshop Dates and Locations



Alabama

Jan. 15, 2008

Mississippi

Jan. 17, 2008

Florida

Feb. 19, 2008

Louisiana

Feb. 26, 2008

Texas

Feb. 28, 2008

Register at: masgc.org/gmrp

Project fills a niche

- Identifies current research activities in the region
- Determines regional research priorities
- Fosters collaboration between groups
- Reduces overlap of effort
- Discovers research gaps
- Produces a more unified approach to address research needs
- Assists agencies/organizations when updating or revising own strategic plans
- Complements other efforts

Deliverables

- Gulf of Mexico Research Plan
 - Strategic Plan
 - Implementation Plan
- Clearly defined research priorities
- Increased collaboration between research-based programs in the Gulf
- Leveraged funds resulting in more effective use of limited research dollars

Thank you



**More information available at:
<http://masgc.org/gmrp>**

Or contact Steve Sempier at stephen.sempier@usm.edu

This presentation was supported by the National Sea Grant College Program of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under NOAA Grant NA06OAR4170078 and the Florida Sea Grant Program, Louisiana Sea Grant Program, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, and Texas Sea Grant Program. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of those organizations.

Images: NPS and FWS