

Gulf of Mexico Cooperative Law Enforcement Strategic Plan 2013-2016



Expertise and input from law enforcement

Cooperative interface for state and federal partners

Maximizing resources to achieve Gulf-wide regulatory compliance

Ecosystem health and sustainability through regulations that manage, protect, and conserve

Legal and properly-identified aquatic products for the American consumer

Resources to provide continuous support of state/federal marine resource enforcement

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Commissioners and Proxies

ALABAMA

N. Gunter Guy Jr., Commissioner
Alabama Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-1901

Proxy:

Chris Blankenship, Director
ADCNR, Marine Resources Division
P.O. Drawer 458
Gulf Shores, AL 36547

Representative Steve McMillan
P.O. Box 337
Bay Minette, AL 36507

Chris Nelson
Bon Secour Fisheries, Inc.
P.O. Box 60
Bon Secour, AL 36511

FLORIDA

Nick Wiley, Executive Director
FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Proxy:

David Heil
FWC Division of Marine Fisheries
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Senator Thad Altman
State Senator, District 24
6767 North Wickham Road, Suite 211
Melbourne, FL 32940

Mr. Stephen M. Greep, Jr.
2725 NE 26th Terrace
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33306

LOUISIANA

Robert Barham, Secretary
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
P.O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000

Proxy:

Randy Pausina and Joey Shepard
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries
P.O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000

Senator R.L. "Bret" Allain, II
State of Louisiana
District 21
600 Main Street, Suite 1
Franklin, LA 70538

Campo "Camp" Matens
4554 Emory Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

MISSISSIPPI

William Walker, Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, MS 39530

Proxy:

Dale Diaz and William S. "Corky" Perret
Mississippi Department of Marine
Resources
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, MS 39530

Senator Brice Wiggins
1501 Roswell St
Pascagoula, MS 39581

Joe Gill, Jr.
Joe Gill Consulting, LLC
P.O. Box 535
Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0535

TEXAS

Carter Smith, Executive Director
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

Proxy

Mike Ray
Coastal Fisheries Division
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

Senator Mike Jackson
Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711

Mr. Troy Bello Williamson, II
P.O. 967
Corpus Christi, TX 78403

**GULF OF MEXICO
COOPERATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN**

2013-2016

by the

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Law Enforcement Committee

and

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Law Enforcement Advisory Panel

edited by
Steve VanderKooy

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
2404 Government St.
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564
www.gsmfc.org

October 2012

A publication of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award Number NA10NMF4070006. This paper is funded by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its subagencies.



GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
Law Enforcement Committee (LEC)
&
GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP)

Scott Bannon, Major
Alabama Marine Resources Division
P.O. Box 189
Dauphin Island, AL 36528

Walter Chataginer, Colonel
Chair LEAP
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, MS 39530

Rob Beaton, Captain
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation
Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Brandi L. Reeder, Assistant Chief
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

Jeff Mayne, Lt. Colonel
Chair LEC
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
P.O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000

Jason Brand, LCDR
U.S. Coast Guard – Eighth District
500 Poydras Street, Room 1128
New Orleans, LA 70130

Karen Raine, Senior Enforcement Attorney
NOAA General Counsel
263 13th Avenue South
Suite 177
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Tracy Dunn, DSAC
NOAA/NMFS OLE
263 13th Ave. S.
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Otha Easley, Acting SAC
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
263 13th Avenue South
Suite 109
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Proxy

Mark Kinsey, ASAC
NOAA/NMFS OLE
P.O. Box 1138
Galveston, TX 77553

Nicholas Chavez,, SAC
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Southwest Region - Region 2
P.O. Box 329
Albuquerque, NM 87103

James R. Gale, SAC
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Office of Law Enforcement
1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 380
Atlanta, GA 30345

Stephen Clark, Resident Agent in Charge
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Office of Law Enforcement
61387 Hwy. 434
Lacombe, La. 70445

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Vision Statement | 2 |
| Mission Statement..... | 2 |
| Goals and Objectives | 3 |
| Goal 1 <i>Provide professional law enforcement expertise throughout all rule-making processes</i> | 3 |
| Goal 2 <i>Develop and implement effective outreach programs.</i> | 3 |
| Goal 3 <i>Promote cooperative law enforcement partnerships.</i> | 4 |
| Goal 4 <i>Promote regulations to protect and enhance the health and sustainability of the ecosystem</i> | 5 |
| Goal 5 <i>Protect the American consumer</i> | 5 |
| Goal 6 <i>Obtain funds to aid state and federal law enforcement agencies</i> | 6 |

Introduction

Current state and federal regulatory approaches require development and implementation of concurrent law enforcement strategies. Concerns over ocean ecosystems, living marine resources, coral reefs, coastal habitat conservation, and international fisheries have continued to escalate law enforcement responsibilities throughout the Gulf of Mexico. The foundations of fishery management plans are dependent upon sound regulations and the ability to maintain acceptable levels of compliance.

Understanding the complexities of fisheries management regulations by the public and user groups requires enhanced interaction and communication by enforcement. Our role as law enforcement is to provide guidance to ensure effectiveness, consistency, and enforceability of proposed and adopted regulations in the fishery management process. Effective education and outreach programs by enforcement will increase public trust and awareness, maximizing voluntary compliance and identifying illegal activity.

This long-term *Gulf of Mexico Cooperative Law Enforcement Strategic Plan* maximizes the effectiveness of interjurisdictional and international fisheries enforcement. This is accomplished by identifying priorities, developing comprehensive planning efforts, and conducting Gulf-wide operations.

Vision Statement

Effect regulations which enhance, protect, and conserve ocean ecosystems and living marine resources to increase compliance throughout the Gulf of Mexico for the safe use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Mission Statement

Law enforcement is dedicated to providing professional guidance and expertise to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We are committed to improving enforceability and regulatory compliance through cooperative efforts that enhance, protect, and conserve shared living marine resources and their supporting ecosystems throughout the Gulf of Mexico.

Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1: Provide professional law enforcement expertise throughout all rule-making processes.

Professional law enforcement expertise and input are integral to the development, promulgation, and implementation of clear and effective regulations.

Objective 1.1 – Increase participation in the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) processes.

- Attend LEC and LEAP meetings in conjunction with GSMFC and GMFMC meetings.
- Conduct a LEAP meeting during GMFMC meeting to increase visibility and discourse on enforcement issues when feasible.
- Conduct a summer work session to continue strategic and operations plan activities and opportunistic discussion of enforcement hot topics.
- Evaluate current GSMFC and GMFMC regulatory recommendations/actions.
- Assist in the development of interjurisdictional state and federal management plans.
- Provide timely and substantive comment on GSMFC and GMFMC actions.

Objective 1.2 – Strengthen enforcement’s relationships with the GSMFC and GMFMC.

- Support communication between enforcement and GSMFC commissioners and GMFMC members.
- Provide bi-annual operating plans and interim/annual reports.
- Act as liaison between all law enforcement agencies and GSMFC commissioners and GMFMC members.

Objective 1.3 – Increase participation in Secretary of Commerce management plans.

- Provide timely and substantive comments on Secretarial management plans.

Objective 1.4 – Provide guidance and input on all regulations to ensure enforceability.

- Provide guidance to modify ineffective regulations
- Provide guidance to identify and prevent unnecessary regulations.
- Promote statutory and regulatory consistency among all state and federal agencies.
- Identify enforcement workload impact and cost-analysis resulting from regulations and changes.
- Identify tools and technologies necessary to provide effective enforcement.

GOAL 2: Develop and implement effective outreach programs.

A working partnership between state and federal partners and the public is essential to maximize resources in order to achieve Gulf-wide regulatory compliance.

Objective 2.1 – Improve community-oriented policing programs (COPPs).

- Continue to implement and establish joint programs to increase contact and law enforcement presence among user groups.
- Continue to publicize different state and federal actions through mass media and social networking.
- Utilize user group feedback to evaluate enforcement performance.

Objective 2.2 – Promote Gulf-wide fisheries information programs.

- Identify and develop web-based services such as social media and smart-phone technology for fishermen and the public to easily obtain current state/federal regulations.
- Encourage the GSMFC, GMFMC, and NOAA to develop mechanisms to compile up-to-date state/federal regulations into an easily accessible, understandable, multilingual format.

Objective 2.3 – Enhance awareness of the importance of state and federal prosecution to the successful adjudication of natural resource regulations.

- Continue outreach to prosecutors and litigators.
- Identify mechanisms to meet with prosecutors and litigators.

GOAL 3: Promote cooperative law enforcement partnerships.

Working partnerships are essential to maximize enforcement resources in order to promote Gulf-wide regulatory compliance.

Objective 3.1 – Maintain cooperative enforcement agreements (CEAs), joint enforcement agreements (JEAs), memorandums of understanding (MOUs), and reciprocal agreements across states and federal agencies.

- Whenever appropriate, provide comments in support of CEAs, JEAs, MOUs, and reciprocal agreements to state and federal representatives.
- Promote the streamlining of processing and tracking JEAs.
- Promote continuation of National JEA Working Group.
- Encourage JEA-related training for state enforcement personnel.

Objective 3.2 – Identify state and federal programs supporting fisheries enforcement.

- Identify and enhance law enforcement equipment for states.
- Enhance communications among federal and state enforcement partners on Homeland Security issues.
- Enhance inter-operable communications among state and federal enforcement partners.

Objective 3.3 – Explore a uniform enforcement data collection and reporting system.

- Evaluate available technology.
- Identify funding sources.

- Analyze and distribute information.
- Promote the use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and NLETS as a point source for natural resource violations and provide input to that system.
- Acquire the wireless ability to access this system in the field by enforcement officers in real time.

Objective 3.4 – Coordinate law enforcement effort and evaluate observed compliance.

- Conduct state/federal strategic plan work sessions to evaluate progress and determine milestones.
- Conduct state/federal law enforcement meetings concerning joint Gulf-wide programs and operations.
- Ensure that future law enforcement programs support fisheries management plans.

GOAL 4: Promote regulations to protect and enhance the health and sustainability of the ecosystem.

Ecosystem health and sustainability is the foundation for a viable living marine environment in the Gulf of Mexico. Regulations that manage, protect, and conserve the ecosystem are critical to maintain its health and sustainability now and in the future.

Objective 4.1 – Incorporate realistic compliance estimates into stock assessment models in support of ecosystem sustainability.

- Support the inclusion of law enforcement statistics and other information in stock assessments and biological opinions.
- Identify impacts of noncompliance to living marine resources.
- Identify and evaluate law enforcement strategies to address unique ecosystem enforcement challenges.

GOAL 5: Protect the American consumer.

Ensure the American consumer is receiving a legal and properly identified aquatic product regardless of where harvested.

Objective 5.1 – Ensure the integrity of imported fisheries products.

- Identify illegal fisheries products.
- Identify participants of illegal interstate trade.
- Support enhanced development of documentation for imported fisheries species.
- Work cooperatively with other state and federal law enforcement agencies to identify and apprehend traffickers in illegal international trade.

Objective 5.2 – Protect consumers regarding mislabeled or adulterated product.

- Work with partner agencies in using forensic tools to improve fisheries law enforcement capabilities.
- Identify persons who provide mislabeled or adulterated products.
- Support enhanced development of documentation for all marine species.

GOAL 6: Obtain funds to aid state and federal law enforcement agencies.

State and federal agencies do not have sufficient resources or assets to provide continuous support of state/federal marine resource enforcement operations.

Objective 6.1 – Explore and enhance federal grant and funding programs for law enforcement.

- Identify and evaluate law enforcement grant and funding programs.
- Promote adequate long-term funding for JEAs that takes into account increased operation costs at a minimum of the current Consumer Price Index (CPI) to maintain historical JEA patrol levels.

Objective 6.2 – Seek a long-term, dedicated source of funding/appropriations for the JEA program to support regulatory compliance initiatives in the Gulf of Mexico.

- Identify the positive performance of the JEA program.
- Evaluate the cost effectiveness of current federal funding in fisheries law enforcement in the Gulf of Mexico.

Objective 6.3 – Obtain adequate funding for the strategic planning process and greater representation of the LEC and LEAP at GSMFC and GMFMC meetings.

- Seek funding from the GSMFC and GMFMC for the LEC and LEAP to attend the GSMFC spring and fall annual meetings.
- Fund the LEAP state representative to attend each of the GMFMC meetings when in their home state.



**Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
2404 Government Street
Ocean Springs, Mississippi, 39564**

