



Investments and Capabilities for the Gulf Coast Region

The Department of the Interior's (DOI) mission is to protect America's natural resources and heritage, honor our cultures and tribal communities, and supply the energy to power our future. DOI has a wide variety of bureaus covering the mission including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to name a few.

Authorities and Missions

DOI bureaus have a broad regional programmatic presence extending from the Lower Mississippi River Delta to the Gulf of Mexico's sea floor including responsibilities for:

- Trust resources – including 38 federally listed species, migratory birds, freshwater, marine and anadromous fish (FWS)
- Natural resource and land management, including coastal zones and barrier islands (FWS/NPS/BLM)

- Science support and leadership, including established research programs (USGS/FWS/BOEM)
- Ocean energy (BOEM/BSSE)
- Recreation and Tourism (NPS/FWS/BLM)

Commitments

DOI relationships with the five Gulf States and local Gulf communities are strong and far-reaching based upon a shared mission and a commitment to ecological and economic sustainability of the Gulf coast.

DOI recognizes that a healthy and resilient ecosystem provides economic benefit and jobs to local communities, and our refuges, parks and myriad programs contribute to ecological and economic health of the Gulf and the Nation through recreational and tourism experiences.

DOI continually demonstrates its commitment to the people and communities of the Gulf Coast region by providing timely and supportive emergency response and assistance in the aftermath of numerous natural resource disasters such as hurricanes, fires and oil spills.

DOI has been working with and has close relationships with the NGO community that supports the restoration of the Gulf Coast and its communities.

DOI supports the recovery of the Gulf Coast Region by promoting outdoor recreation and tourism on our lands and communicating the economic and health benefits of outdoor activity in our communities.

Infrastructure

DOI has a large field presence with employees living and working in the Gulf Coast Region.

- DOI manages 45 national wildlife refuges within the Gulf Coast Region, covering more than 1.5 million acres from Texas to South Florida and the Keys and maintains at least one office in each Gulf state providing conservation management and support such as: ecological services, migratory birds, fishery management, and law enforcement. DOI also manages eight units of the National Park System along the Gulf Coast comprising more than 2 million acres. (FWS/NPS)
- DOI provides exceptional scientific support through Science Centers and Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units located in all five Gulf States and the National Wetlands Research Center. (USGS)
- DOI has facilities in the Gulf and provides scientific leadership in understanding, managing, and protecting roughly 1.7 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf. (BOEM/BSEE)

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Steve Hillebrand



U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI administers numerous grants, cooperative agreements and other payment programs delivering significant amounts of conservation funding to other federal agencies, states, tribes, and non-governmental organizations in the Gulf region, such as:

- Coastal and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- National Coastal Wetlands Grants
- Coastal Impact Assistance Program Grants
- Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Grants
- State Wildlife Grants

Partnerships in Science

DOI hosts four Landscape Conservation Cooperatives in the Gulf, where federal, state, university and nonprofit partners are expanding science capacity to design and manage functional landscapes with biological outcomes.

DOI supports Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units in every gulf coast state allowing seamless cooperative science efforts with universities.

DOI is a partner in several Joint Ventures to cooperatively conserve and manage priority bird habitat.

DOI also participates on regional leadership groups such as the Southeast Natural Resource Leadership Group (SENRLG), the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS).

Expertise and Experience

DOI has the knowledge and expertise for implementing Gulf restoration across a range of habitat types in coastal and offshore environments and has the capacity and broad vision to identify key, strategic leveraging opportunities.



by Steve Hillebrand

DOI scientists and resource managers serve as both leaders and active participants on the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (GCERTF), and Deepwater Horizon (DWH) Trustee Council as well as numerous other regional and local restoration efforts.

DOI contributed to the Louisiana-Mississippi Roadmap, the Mabus Report and the GCERTF Strategy. All three reports recommend actions to address the long-standing natural resource challenges facing the Gulf Coast and its communities.

DOI has long-term experience participating in and leading intergovernmental landscape-scale restoration efforts, such as the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force.

DOI has expertise in critical restoration science such as: research and monitoring of hydrology, coastal processes, climate change, aerial imagery, aquatic and terrestrial biology, toxicology, ecology and wetlands. (USGS)

Through the Environmental Studies Program and the Technology Assessment & Research Program, DOI produces the scientific knowledge needed to predict, assess, and manage the impacts from offshore renewable and non-renewable energy and marine mineral exploration, development, production activities on human, marine and coastal environments. (BOEM/BSEE)

Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration

DOI serves as the Federal Lead Administrative Trustee (FLAT), Lead Administrative Trustee (LAT) and lead for both the Legal and Restoration Sub-Committees for the Trustee Council.

DOI leads numerous assessment studies including: sea turtle nesting and blood analysis, Gulf sturgeon, colonial waterbirds, and avian toxicity.

Nearly one of every three acres of land oiled from the DWH disaster is owned or managed by DOI.

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