

### **Welcome and Introductions**

*Kevin Claridge, Steering Group Chair*

*Eric Strom, Federal Lead Co-Chair,*

*Debra Hernandez, EPT Partner Arm Chair*

The Governors' South Atlantic Alliance (GSAA) Executive Planning Team (EPT) meeting opened with a warm welcome from the Director of Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Coastal Office, Kevin Claridge. Director Claridge reminded everyone that it has now been six years since the Governors signed the GSAA Partnership Agreement and that the leadership and collaboration of the EPT continues to be central to the success of the GSAA. Director Claridge reviewed some significant discussion and decision points that were planned for the day and invited the Chairs of the Federal and Partner Arms, Eric Strom and Debra Hernandez, to say a few opening remarks.

Eric Strom, Federal Lead Co-Chair, extended a warm welcome and touched on the Alliance's recent developments and activity in resilience, the GSAA's regional driver. Strom noted that the federal agencies value the GSAA as a forum for collaboration with states and other partners, and that GSAA activities influence the way federal agencies work. For example, The NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office recently released their 2016 – 2020 Draft Strategic Plan, which includes strategies directly related to continued support of regional partnership. Also, USGS has consolidated the water science centers into one regional organization, the South Atlantic Water Science Center, which directly reflects the link to back to the GSAA and the services USGS provides to the region.

Debra Hernandez, EPT Partner Arm Chair, also extended a welcome to attendees and noted that many members of the partner arm work "regionally" every day. Hernandez touched on some of the regional efforts that members of the Partner Arm are currently undertaking, such as SECOORA supporting the Southeastern Ocean and Coastal Acidification Network, TNC preparing an assessment of the South Atlantic Bight in coordination with the GSAA's Healthy Ecosystem Team, and Southeastern Sea Grants' recent funding opportunity for a regional coastal resilience grant.

### **Briefing**

#### **Current Status and Expected Outcomes of Ad-hoc Workgroup Strategy Development**

*Kristine Cherry, GSAA Coordinator*

#### Evolution of the GSAA's Strategic Direction (2009 – 2015)

The GSAA partnership agreement was signed in 2009 by the Governors of NC, SC, GA, & FL and established the Alliance and its mission & goals. Under the partnership agreement, the GSAA supports regionally-based actions and solutions, encourages active involvement of partners, and operates by consensus and mutual benefit.

#### Timeline

- 2010: Governors' Action Plan- 4 priority issue areas and 48 actions
- 2011: Implementation Plan- steps to complete the actions
- 2012- 2014: Work Plans- selected actions that could be completed with existing Alliance resources

- 2013: IATT snapshots- projects identified as highest priority by IATTs regardless of resources (currently, 6/15 snapshots are completed or in progress)
- 2014: Regional resilience driver
- 2015: Annual Strategic Issues- responsive to regional resilience driver
  - Strategies- not time limited
  - Actions- time limited (1 yr.)

Discussions:

- Timeframe for partnership- no timeframe, not binding

Suggestions:

- Package GSAA products in a way that expresses value to the Governors' offices to re-encourage adoption and support
- A 2 year timeframe for actions might be more attainable

Annual Strategic Issues selected for 2015

The strategic issues were selected based on specific challenges/problems in the region that were considered responsive to the Resilience regional driver and relevant to or actionable by the Steering Group and/or Governors. The strategic issues are anticipated to be reviewed annually and adjusted based on needs/new challenges.

Strategic issues:

1. Business post-disaster recovery planning
2. Improved data and planning for offshore energy siting

Ad-hoc workgroups were formed around both of the strategic issues and were tasked to develop Strategic Issue Statements for each strategic issue. These Strategic Issue Statements include a brief Statement of the Challenge, an expanded Description of the Challenge, and identified GSAA Strategies for 2015 with specific actions to carry out those strategies. The strategies are focuses around 3 categories: GSAA cooperative or collaborative efforts; research, data, and information needs; proposed changes in government policies or programs. The strategies are not intended to be time limited and should address specific regional needs. The actions under each strategy are intended to be time limited and tied to what can be done within the GSAA framework in approximately 1 year.

Ad-hoc Workgroup for Business Post-Disaster Recovery Planning (PDRP)

The GSAA has a strong foundation for resilience, specifically in post-disaster recovery planning (e.g. long-term recovery planning summit) and relevant tools/technical resources (e.g. GSAA Coast and Ocean Portal and Hazard Vulnerability Assessment). The description of the challenge for the Business PDRP Strategic Issue Statement mentions that the South Atlantic coast is vulnerable and that disasters can impact the economy resulting in short and long-term effects. The National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) provides a framework for long-term recovery planning. The focus of this ad-hoc workgroup is around the Economic Recovery Support Function (RSF). Some of the economic recovery challenges that were identified in the Description of the Challenge include: adequate financial resources, adequate knowledge and information, and complicated network of planning efforts.

(See slides for strategies)

Once completed, the Strategic Issue Statement on Business Post-Disaster Recovery Planning will be reviewed and sent for approval by the GSAA Executive Planning Team and Steering Group. Following adoption, definitive action with partners to implement the strategy will be pursued. Some expected outcomes of the Business PDRP Strategic Issue Statement include:

coastal communities in the South Atlantic are better prepared for the long-term economic impacts of storms, hurricanes, and other hazards, and investments leveraged from multiple sources to support the PDRP activities the South Atlantic is undertaking.

#### Ad-hoc Workgroup on Improved Data and Planning for Offshore Energy Siting

The description of the challenge for the Improved Data and Planning for Offshore Energy Siting Strategic Issue Statement mentions that recently, South Atlantic offshore energy activities have been gaining momentum (e.g. BOEM Draft Proposed Program, Wind Energy Areas, and Hydrokinetic Energy Testing). However, there is the potential for conflict that could lead to delays in development, a lack of resources for a collaborative framework that could reduce conflict, and a lack of coordination of data and information from multiple sources.

(See slides for strategies)

Some expected outcomes of the Offshore Energy Strategic Issue Statement include: coordinated and collaborative approaches to collecting and organizing data and information needed for prudent, efficient decision making on offshore energy development; practical framework for communication to reduce conflict among ocean and coastal uses and users; and investments leveraged from multiple sources to support the planning activities the South Atlantic is undertaking.

### **Facilitated Discussion**

#### **EPT Feedback on Ad-hoc Workgroup activities Business Post-Disaster Recovery Planning Offshore Energy Siting**

##### Annual Strategic Issues selected for 2015: General Feedback

- Brevity is key, reduce repetitiveness
- Include the outcomes and ensure the actions/strategies reflect the outcomes
- Prioritize strategies and actions for this year
- Once strategies are sent to EPT, EPT may further refine actions that are elevated to the Steering Group and Executive Group

##### Business post-disaster recovery planning feedback:

- Eliminate the data table in the interest of brevity
- Focus on incentives rather than dis-incentives
- EPT supported the role of the GSAA in filling gaps in the flow of information between existing channels
- FEMA National Disaster preparedness courses- make available to business groups
- Refer to U.S. Chamber of Commerce's "Disaster Resiliency" white paper for language suggestions

##### Suggested/supported actions:

- GSAA can help to support the development of an award or certification program for non-financial incentives
- GSAA can prepare a lessons learned/best practices product for local communities on the programs that can support businesses post disaster

Improved data and planning for offshore energy siting feedback:

- Draw on existing processes
- Clarify the GSAA niche

Suggested/supported actions:

- Have states request the same kind of investments that the GOM has had in characterizing ecological and environmental conditions via BOEM studies
- Consider whether environmental or ecological data collected by companies could be made more widely available
- Facilitate collaboration among different offshore energy industries in data collection
- States/Governors send letter to appropriate federal agencies to request specific data needs
  - Need to articulate what these data needs are

## **Briefing**

### **Highlights of the Proposed South Atlantic RPB Charter**

*Kristine Cherry, GSAA Coordinator*

*Bruce Cwalina, Navy Installations Southeast*

Kristine provided a brief background on marine planning and the GSAA. Kristine noted that marine planning was included in the Alliance's Action Plan, and every priority issue area has actions related to data and mapping needs. The states have already undertaken some marine planning activities through individual state efforts and GSAA activities. State efforts are at various stages of development, but all include: data and information gathering on ocean and coastal uses, providing open access to spatial data, and some level of stakeholder engagement. GSAA marine planning activities have thus far focused on gathering data and information via the GSAA Coast and Ocean Portal ([gsaaportal.org](http://gsaaportal.org)), which focuses its information on beach nourishment, port expansion, and habitat restoration and conservation. The portal is currently being maintained by SECOORA, but the Alliance has yet to make a decision of whether or not to maintain and grow the portal. A cost estimate for maintenance has been provided by SECOORA. The GSAA also held a marine planning workshop in 2013 and identified some interests and benefits for the Alliance in engaging in marine planning, actions that could be undertaken by the states individually and together as a region, and next steps. The primary challenge identified from this workshop, however, was the ability of partners to commit resources to a new effort. With the elimination of NOAA's Regional Ocean Partnership funding program, the GSAA's funding has become more limited, and the partnership agreed on the need to focus efforts in a specific area where the GSAA could have the most potential for impact. The GSAA chose to adopt "resilience" as this overarching priority for the partnership, which is referred to as the "regional driver".

Kristine then reviewed the progress the Alliance has made in pursuing a RPB (see slides for details).

Bruce Cwalina then reviewed the development and content of the draft RPB Charter for the South Atlantic.

## **Briefing**

### **Proposed Options for Integrating a South Atlantic RPB into the GSAA Framework**

*Kristine Cherry, GSAA Coordinator*

Kristine reviewed some different definitions of regional marine planning. Kristine then suggested there are two main components to regional marine planning: mapping (data and information on natural resources and human uses) and planning (decision making on human uses and conservation). Kristine

then discussed and recommended the GSAA consider West Coast Aquatic's example of an integrated approach between communities, businesses, and government that can result in stability, joint priorities that lead to joint advocacy for needs, a forum for coordination and leveraging, and joint or individual implementation. Kristine went on to explain that West Coast Aquatic had created Canada's first co-management board under its Oceans Act with four levels of government and ten marine sectors. This shared decision-making model increases value and decreases risk by ensuring industry is an equal partner in the process and has the ability to influence decisions, work, and funding.

In determining the GSAA's role in regional marine planning, Kristine laid out multiple scenarios of how the GSAA could engage in one, some, or all of three actions: advocate, coordinate, and implement. Kristine provided an example for each option as well. The states mentioned that intention of implementation would need to be formally defined, and that the overall intention of states is not to create a policy oriented map of decided upon uses.

Kristine then reviewed the 2 structures proposed by the RPB Charter that the GSAA could incorporate into its organization: a National Ocean Council (NOC) Advocacy Arm and a Marine Planning Technical Team (see slides for details). Kristine then visually reviewed what each option could look like within the GSAA organizational framework. The remaining questions were: what the GSAA's role is and where the GSAA should support stakeholder engagement.

## **Facilitated Discussion**

### **EPT Feedback on RPB Charter**

#### **Feedback on proposed RPB Charter**

#### **Preferred option for integrating marine planning activities in the GSAA Framework**

RPB Charter Discussions:

- Draw on existing processes
- Clarify the GSAA niche
- Benefit of RPB: provides states opportunity to have influence/formal voice in activities in federal waters (another tool in the GSAA toolbox)
  - Advocacy
  - More formal federal partner incorporation
- Charter includes language that gives states the option to participate
- NOC requirements have changed to focus more on regional priorities and choices
- Federal partners remain committed to the Alliance
- Intention of Charter: RPB can be whatever the GSAA wants it to be

Remaining questions/concerns:

- Still unclear what the GSAA niche is for marine planning
- Figure out the marine planning needs first before committing to a RPB
- Results of ad-hoc workgroups/strategic issue statements needed to inform direction

Suggestions to changes to RPB Charter

- Change "Advocacy Arm" to "Liaison Arm"

Needs:

- Communication pieces to affirm new NOC direction
- Defined purpose of a RPB
- Determine membership and joining process
- Figure out if an RPB will add an additional level of public noticing or engagement

The EPT discussed the possibility of a number of different options for the GSAA and the RPB Charter.

RPB discussions/consensus among states:

The GSAA will table the charter for now, continue supporting current NOC liaison (federal Co-Chair- Navy), continue to move forward with marine planning discussions, and will send a letter to the NOC when there is a decision about a RPB to communicate

## **Briefing**

### **2015 IATT Activities and GSAA Grant Activities**

*Kristine Cherry, GSAA Coordinator*

Kristine reviewed the current activities that each of the IATTs are currently engaged in (see slides).

Kristine then reviewed the Alliance's current grant activities and went through each grant's remaining deliverables (see slides).

## **Facilitated Discussion**

### **EPT Feedback on IATT and Grant Activities**

#### **Opportunities to support IATT activities**

#### **Opportunities to engage with partners on grant deliverables**

Decisions to be made at later date/next Steering Group Meeting:

- Determine GCC appointee to NOC at next meeting
- Approval on ad-hoc work group strategic issue statements

501c3 discussions/decision:

- Tabling discussion of creating an independent 501c3 for Alliance
- Look into options for a 501c3 fiscal agent, such as the Coastal States Stewardship Foundation

GSAA Annual Meeting discussions/decision:

- Table decision until later meeting date, once outcomes of strategic issue statements are clearer
- Look into potential for adding on to an existing regional meeting
  - Coastal Management Program meeting or Coastal States Organization meeting

## **Closing**

*Kevin Claridge, Steering Group Chair*

Kevin Claridge thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions to the day's discussions.