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September 5, 2007

Mr. Andrew Puffer
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**RE: EPA Contract Number: 68-C-03-041
Work Assignment Number 4-01
Gulf of Mexico Program Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Support
Submission of Final Deliverable for Task 4**

Dear Mr. Puffer:

This letter serves to transmit an electronic version of the final deliverable for WA 4-01, Task 4, CAC Meeting Support: Gulf of Mexico Program Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Summary for June 19-20, 2007.

Please address any technical questions to Corey Wisneski at 781-952-5296 (wisneski@battelle.org).

Sincerely,

Corey Wisneski
Work Assignment Task Leader

FINAL

**Gulf of Mexico Program
June 19-20, 2007
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary**

Submitted to

**U.S. EPA Gulf of Mexico Program
Stennis Space Center, MS**

**Contract No. 68-C-03-041
Work Assignment No. 4-01**

September 5, 2007

Prepared by

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Attachment C. Richard Martin (The Nature Conservancy) Presentation: *Developing Regional Conservation Priorities in the Gulf of Mexico*

DRAFT

**Gulf of Mexico Program
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
June 19-20, 2007
Stennis Space Center, Mississippi**

Tuesday, June 19, 2007

1. Roll Call

Members Present:

Ms. Mary Ellen Whitworth, *CAC Vice Chair*; Ms. Patty Caranna, *CAC Secretary*; Mr. J.R. Wilson; Mr. James W. Kachtick; Mr. Brian Grantham; Ms. Eva Golson; Ms. Eliska Morgan; Ms. Sarah Lewis; Mr. Don Waller; Mr. William Fontenot; Mr. Fred Dunham

Members Absent:

Mr. Paul MacLean, *CAC Chair*; Mr. Ned Meister; Ms. Casi L. Callaway; Mr. Thomas Schultz; Ms. Jenell Tompkins; Mr. Chris Nelson; Ms. Becky Clayton; Mr. David Alex; Mr. Troy Nedbalek (Alternate member); Mr. Scottie Butler; Mr. Lee Harbison (Alternate member); Mr. Michael Waguespack.

Guests Present:

Mr. Bryon Griffith, Gulf of Mexico Program (GMP); Ms. Gloria Car, GMP; Mr. Drew Puffer, GMP; Ms. Corey Wisneski, Battelle; Mr. Jeff Rester, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC)

2. Introduction

Gloria Car, Deputy Director of the GMP, provided a brief overview of the CAC and shared photographs from the last CAC meeting, held in Waco, Texas in the fall of 2006.

3. Presentation: Liquefied Natural Gas in the Gulf of Mexico

Jeff Rester of the GSFMC gave a presentation on liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in the Gulf of Mexico and the potential impacts to fisheries from LNG facilities.

The full PowerPoint presentation is appended as Attachment A.

4. GMP Staff Backgrounds

Drew Puffer presented general backgrounds on some of the GMP staff, including Phil Bass and Diane Altzman.

Lael Butler introduced herself to the CAC. She has been with the GMP for several months and acts as the grant officer for nine projects, all of which are water quality- or nutrient-related. She is participating in the nutrient criteria development effort, as well as assessing field methodologies and helping to identify key coastal water bodies that are good restoration candidates. Some of her other work involves total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and the Gulf hypoxic zone.

John Bowie introduced himself to the CAC. He is a new hire of the GMP, formerly with Duke Energy. His focus at the GMP lies with habitat restoration and stewardship, particularly with regards to assimilated wetlands (or the natural filtering abilities of bottomland hardwoods). He has been very involved with the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, which nurtures corporate philanthropy toward restoring wetlands, and played an important role in the Bahia Grande restoration project in Texas.

Bryon Griffith commented that the face of the GMP is changing, with several new staff members having either recently begun (e.g., John Bowie, Lael Butler) or about to begin employment. Some of the new staff were necessary due to Katrina-related changes, but the GMP has also been recently receiving substantial attention due to the president's Ocean Action Plan and new opportunities have presented themselves.

5. CAC Membership

There are numerous CAC vacancies, especially in Florida. CAC member Scottie Butler is currently working on finding willing representatives for Florida's Business/Industry, Environment, and Fisheries sectors. Under Haley Barbour's leadership, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GoMA) has developed a list of people who serve as state leads and priority issue leads for GoMA. A letter from the CAC membership to the relevant lead may help to fill some membership vacancies. The GMP will draft a letter for CAC members to sign and send to the appropriate individual(s). The CAC membership is in agreement with this plan.

With the retirement of Robert Crowe, there is an opening for a CAC member to join the GMP's Policy Review Board (PRB). According to the Gulf of Mexico Program Citizens Advisory Committee Bylaws, the CAC Chair (Paul MacLean) and Vice-Chair (Mary Ellen Whitworth) are the CAC representatives on the PRB and, unless decided otherwise by the CAC membership, the bylaws will remain in effect. The CAC members therefore agreed that the CAC Chair and Vice-Chair will act as CAC representatives on the PRB.

Jim Kachtick announced that he has been on the GMP Management Committee for a long time, and although he enjoys serving, he wanted to offer the position to anyone else that may be interested. Casi Callaway is currently the other CAC representative to the Management Committee. Jim believes that membership on some of these GMP committees should be reserved for veteran CAC members and that newly appointed members should gain some experience before volunteering for a committee post. The CAC membership believes that, as long as he is willing, Jim should remain the Management Committee's CAC representative. Casi will also continue as a

representative, with Patty Caranna serving as backup representative for the upcoming Management Committee meeting (August 21st-22nd in Biloxi, MS) should either Jim or Casi be unable to attend.

It was also noted that recent changes in the CAC organization mandates that members can no longer serve for open-ended terms. Many of the current members will be required to leave the CAC in 2009 and, given the past difficulties with finding new members, the CAC should start thinking now about possible replacements and recruiting strategies.

The GMP will draft letters of appreciation to several former CAC members, including Robert Crowe, Jean Westbrook, and Heidi Lovett. The Chair and Vice-Chair will sign the letters.

6. Miscellany

Gulf Guardian Awards

Diane Altsman of the GMP is the Gulf Guardian Award coordinator and encourages the CAC membership to nominate candidates for the award. As described on the Gulf Guardian Award website (<http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/gulfguard.html>), the award is not only meant for environmentally-related activities, but covers all efforts that work to “keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful, and productive”. For 2007, the Gulf Guardian Award Selection Committee and the GMP Management Committee would like to have a rich candidate pool from which to select winners. The deadline for submitting nominations for the 2007 Gulf Guardian Awards is **July 31, 2007**.

Gulf Hypoxic Zone and Fisheries

Don Waller asked about nationwide increases in ethanol fuel additives and the implication that increased corn farming could have downstream, especially to the Gulf of Mexico’s hypoxic zone at the mouths of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers (colloquially called the “Dead Zone”). Bryon Griffith commented that the GMP participates in the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force and, despite achieving a better understanding of hypoxia, research has shown that the Dead Zone is growing, not shrinking, in size. The contribution of biofuels farming to nutrient loadings and the Dead Zone is a key issue for the Task Force and one for which there is no simple answer at this time. However, EPA’s Science Advisory Board (SAB) is currently conducting an evaluation of Gulf hypoxia and its causes, location, magnitude, and duration. This evaluation will be released in a report in December 2007 and the GMP will ensure that each CAC member receives a copy.

In the meantime, with the upcoming reauthorization of the Farm Bill, CAC members can encourage the Bush administration and Congress to keep environmental conservation a key ingredient of the Bill. The involvement and activism of the Gulf of Mexico region citizenry is critical to keeping the area on the radar screen of officials, especially considering that much of what happens on Midwest farms has implications for the health of the Gulf of Mexico. Despite the Gulf of Mexico Program itself being a model of environmental organization for the rest of the country, the region’s citizens have

historically been relatively quiet on issues that have the potential to impact the quality of life along the Gulf. The CAC is an ideal platform from which to encourage citizen involvement and boost national attention for the region.

William Fontenot commented that engaging the commercial fishery community and connecting them to the upstream farmers is critical to properly addressing the hypoxia issue. Bryon Griffith and Jim Kachtick mentioned that, while they agree that farmers and fishermen are important contributors to the discussion, the GMP has historically had a difficult time finding and maintaining fishery representatives on the CAC. Bryon said that what the GMP needs is guidance on how to effectively engage the fishery community in the sorts of discussions that have huge industry-wide implications. The new Louisiana CAC member, Fred Dunham, is a fishery representative, so perhaps his involvement will encourage others to play a role.

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

1. Roll Call

Members Present:

Ms. Mary Ellen Whitworth, *CAC Vice Chair*; Ms. Patty Caranna, *CAC Secretary*; Mr. J.R. Wilson; Mr. James W. Kachtick; Mr. Brian Grantham; Ms. Eva Golson; Ms. Eliska Morgan; Ms. Sarah Lewis; Mr. William Fontenot

Members Absent:

Mr. Paul MacLean, *CAC Chair*; Mr. Ned Meister; Ms. Casi L. Callaway; Mr. Thomas Schultz; Ms. Jenell Tompkins; Mr. Chris Nelson; Ms. Becky Clayton ; Mr. David Allex (Interim member); Mr. Troy Nedbalek (Alternate member); Mr. Scottie Butler; Mr. Lee Harbison (Alternate member); Mr. Michael Waguespack.

Guests Present:

Mr. Bryon Griffith, Gulf of Mexico Program (GMP); Ms. Gloria Car, GMP; Mr. Drew Puffer, GMP; Ms. Corey Wisneski, Battelle; Richard Martin (The Nature Conservancy)

2. Presentation: Implementing the U.S. Ocean Action Plan in the Gulf of Mexico

Bryon Griffith gave a presentation on the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GoMA), including its history, organization, and priority issues. He described each of GoMA's five priority issues (see the bulleted list below) in detail and noted that a sixth priority issue will be officially added to the list at next month's Governors' Action Plan Workshop in St. Petersburg, FL. The sixth issue will be 'Community Resiliency' and will focus on decreasing the vulnerability of the Gulf Coast to natural disasters through preparation, education, smart growth initiatives, and policy decisions. As described in the presentation, each of the five Gulf states leads the discussions and actions surrounding a different priority issue:

- **Florida:** Water Quality for Healthy Beaches and Shellfish Beds
- **Mississippi:** Reducing Nutrient Inputs to Coastal Ecosystems

- **Louisiana:** Wetland and Coastal Conservation and Restoration
- **Texas:** Identification and Characterization of Gulf Habitats
- **Alabama:** Environmental Education

The state lead for Coastal Resiliency will be determined at the July meeting. Substantial progress is being made toward including the six Mexican states bordering the Gulf. Currently, GoMA is working closely with Mexico to develop a Mexican Governors' Alliance that, once formed, will facilitate international collaboration on Gulf-wide issues. A GMP-like program in Mexico is also being encouraged to coordinate funding and research resources. This month, the Veracruz Aquarium (Acuario de Veracruz) was designated as the first international Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center (CELC) and the next State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit will be held in Veracruz, Mexico.

The full PowerPoint presentation is appended as Attachment B.

3. Presentation: *Developing Regional Conservation Priorities in the Gulf of Mexico*

Richard Martin, the Director of Conservation Programs for The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Gulf of Mexico Initiative, gave a presentation on TNC's numerous activities in the region.

The full PowerPoint presentation is appended as Attachment C.

4. Miscellany

Senate Bill 1126

Bryon Griffith told the CAC membership about recently-introduced Senate Bill 1126, sponsored by Senator Trent Lott. The bill proposes amending the Clean Water Act with the 'Gulf of Mexico Restoration and Protection Act', which will "expand and strengthen cooperative efforts to monitor, restore, and protect the resource productivity, water quality, and marine ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico". The full text of the bill can be found here: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=s110-1126>. Bryon asked that CAC members contact their representatives to get a similar bill introduced in the House. He pointed out that this is a prime opportunity to get increased attention and funding for the GMP on the twentieth anniversary of its founding. William Fontenot asked for the GMP to provide the CAC with the salient issues of the Senate bill to better facilitate soliciting House members. The GMP will provide this to the CAC membership.

Next CAC Meeting

The CAC Chair, Paul MacLean, has offered to host the next CAC meeting in the Thibodaux/Houma, Louisiana area. This region provides numerous field trip opportunities and resources, including the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (NEP) and the monthly Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) Pelican hypoxia cruise (the current fall schedule for this cruise includes September 26th, October 12th and November 14th, 2007). Late September may be the most ideal time for

this meeting, although other dates in October and November will be considered.

Potential priority issues for the next CAC meeting were discussed, and, in light of the importance of Gulf fisheries, Mary Ellen Whitworth suggested that the entire CAC meeting be devoted to issues surrounding fishing and the Gulf of Mexico. Some of the potential discussion and presentation topics may include:

- Updates on the mercury in fish issue;
- Establishing a common seafood advisory in the Gulf of Mexico
- Cultural aspects of fishing in Louisiana
- Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the impact on fishing
- Overfishing

Potential speakers and presenters may include Kerry St. Pé of the Barataria-Terrebonne NEP and a representative of the GSMFC. A suggestion was also made that a panel-style discussion with multiple experts may be beneficial for the CAC.

ATTACHMENT A

**Jeff Rester (Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission) Presentation: *Liquefied
Natural Gas in the Gulf of Mexico***

ATTACHMENT B

Bryon Griffith (Gulf of Mexico Program) Presentation: *Implementing the United States Ocean Action Plan in the Gulf of Mexico*

ATTACHMENT C

Richard Martin (The Nature Conservancy) Presentation: *Developing Regional Conservation Priorities in the Gulf of Mexico*