The Gross Domestic Product of the U.S. states bordering the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) is $2.2 Trillion, making the health of the GOM vital to the economic well-being of the nation. With unprecedented challenges and opportunities, such as loss of tourism revenue when beaches close from harmful algal blooms; stressed commercial fisheries from record-setting hypoxia (“Dead Zone”) events; increasing tonnage offloaded in our ports; and expanding deep-sea oil and gas exploration, the need for a sustained, integrated system of oceanographic and meteorological information has never been greater. A fully developed observing system will allow us to understand how and why changes are occurring, and enable informed decisions to be made based on reliable forecasts.

“Very cool! All the ocean and weather information I need in one place...I won’t consider a fishing trip without checking here first” (http://gcoos.tamu.edu/products/maps/boaters/). Neil Burke, Recreational Fisherman

Images courtesy of Chris Simoniello
The Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System Regional Association (GCOOS-RA), a Regional Association of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System, consists of an end-to-end system of observations; data management; and products and services designed to meet the following national needs:

- Predict & mitigate against coastal hazards
- Ensure public health
- Facilitate safe & efficient marine operations
- Manage resources for sustainable use
- Detect & forecast oceanic components of climate change
- Preserve & restore healthy marine ecosystems

In situ and remotely sensed data are also used to improve the accuracy of computer models that are developed as part of the system to understand and make ocean forecasts.

**WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE SAYING....**

“GCOOS is vitally important to Fugro GEOS, providing the opportunity to develop and implement new offshore operational ocean observing techniques in a unique partnership. To safely and efficiently undertake Fugro's numerous offshore operations requires accurate, timely and accessible environmental information.” Jan Van Smirren, President, Fugro GEOS Inc.

“Restoring and protecting the Gulf Coast is critical, not only to the region, but also to the Nation. GCOOS provides essential meteorological and oceanographic data that aids us in protection and restoration projects, predicting the future resilience of our coast, and providing us with real-time information during events. Whether oil from a spill or surge and waves from a storm, GCOOS allows us to react appropriately to protect lives, property and the environment.” Jerome Zeringue, Executive Director, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

“The Gulf of Mexico, arguably the most important region of any surrounding the United States from an economic, tourism, ecosystem and shipping standpoint, is also one of the most vulnerable to natural and human-caused catastrophic events. The importance of a sustained, integrated observing system that can address hurricanes, oil spills and other high priority issues cannot be overstated.” Ray Toll, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), Vice President for Industry and Technology, Marine Technology Society

“A sustained, integrated observing system in the Gulf of Mexico will give forecasters the best chance for improving forecast accuracies for significant life threatening events such as storm surge generated by a coastal storm or an approaching hurricane.” Captain Joe Swaykos, USN Retired, Data Management and Communications Branch Chief, NOAA National Data Buoy Center

“The ocean and atmosphere affect almost all the activities of the offshore oil industry from our daily operations to the design of our multi-billion dollar infrastructure. Hence persistent and spatially detailed ocean and atmospheric measurements enable us to do our business efficiently and safely.” Cortis Cooper, Chevron Energy Technology Corporation

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