

GCOOS-RA Education and Outreach Strategy

1 Background

This Education and Outreach (E/O) plan is designed to guide the outreach and education strategy and actions of the GCOOS-RA. E/O activities will be implemented primarily by the Education and Outreach Coordinator and the Education and Outreach Council (EOC). The overarching goal of the E/O plan is to build resilient ocean literate, climate literate, and energy literate Gulf communities using the data and products available through a comprehensive and sustained GCOOS. Specific goals, objectives, and actions are identified, but not all goals, objectives, and actions will be implemented each year. Specific activities will be linked to available resources, priorities, and opportunities. This E/O plan is intended to be a living document that will be reviewed and updated annually within the regular GCOOS-RA planning process.

2 The Vision for Education and Outreach

To empower regional user communities and residents to be knowledgeable about and effectively use GCOOS data, products and services when making decisions concerning their work, play, and life in the ocean and coastal waters, estuaries and watersheds of the Gulf of Mexico.

3 The Mission of the Education and Outreach Council

The EOC will provide the guidance and leadership essential (1) for the development of programs and materials designed to address regional needs for education, outreach, and public awareness of coastal, ocean, climate, and energy issues of the residents of the Gulf of Mexico region and the nation, and (2) to foster the understanding of such programs and materials by the GCOOS-RA E/O user communities.

4 Education and Outreach Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – GCOOS Education and Outreach Network

Establish and maintain a GCOOS outreach and education network within the Gulf of Mexico region.

Obj. 1 – Office and Staff

Establish and maintain a sustained GCOOS-RA E/O office.

Obj. 2 – Membership

Ensure diversity and inclusiveness in EOC membership.

Obj. 3 – External Communication and Collaboration

Increase collaborations, coordination, and communication efforts within the broader Gulf of Mexico E/O communities by increasing and maintaining effective partnerships that reach diverse audiences.

Obj. 4 – Educator Development

Enhance the GCOOS E/O community by supporting and creating pre-service teacher and professional development programs and practices of formal and informal educators.

Obj. 5 – Internal EOC Marketing

Develop and reinforce key messages in the daily work of GCOOS EOC members.

Goal 2 – GCOOS Coordination

Communicate within GCOOS to ensure that the efforts of all the RA's groups guide outreach and education efforts, and that all GCOOS partners deliver a consistent message.

Obj. 1 – Communication within GCOOS

Facilitate two-way communication between data providers and users to maximize relevancy and usefulness of products.

Obj. 2 – Internal GCOOS Marketing

Collaborate with appropriate committees to create relevant products and materials.

Goal 3 – GCOOS Use

Work toward the use and application of GCOOS observations, products, and services throughout the region.

Obj. 1 – User Needs

Develop GCOOS EOC relevant programs and materials for diverse stakeholder audiences (such as the general public, formal and informal educators, coastal decision makers and resource managers).

Obj. 2 – User Education

Increase the awareness and understanding of GCOOS products and services by various audiences.

Obj. 3 – User Outreach

Target the E/O effort at diverse stakeholder groups.

Goal 4 – Workforce Development

Encourage and enhance workforce development into the ocean observing system.

Obj. 1 – Outreach to Educators

Ensure K-16 teachers are aware of GCOOS as a platform for teaching and learning science, math and technology as well as an opportunity for a professional or vocational career, including (a) collaborations and linkages within the developing educational infrastructure frameworks of the NSF OOI and the NOAA, NSF, NASA Earth System Science programs and (b) development of GCOOS-specific educational materials and tools for targeted case studies.

Obj. 2 – Outreach to Students

Increase knowledge and skills of students in the K-16 community who will improve ocean, coastal, and science literacy through their use of GCOOS products, services, projects, and activities.

Goal 5 – Evaluation

Evaluate the effectiveness and accountability of outreach and education activities

Obj. 1 – Establish Baseline

Establish a baseline to gauge future success.

Obj. 2 – Assess Effectiveness

Identify and implement mechanisms that can be used to measure effects of specific education and outreach activities (e.g., pre/post tests, website hits, feedback form/email, questionnaires, needs assessment instruments, Likert-scale evaluations, and other related evaluation tools).

5 *Specific Education and Outreach Actions for 2013-2014*

Targeted, specific actions for 2013-2014 are

Action 1: Maintain the Education and Outreach Coordinator position.

Action 2: Maintain an active EOC membership.

Action 3: Develop and update outreach materials, such as presentations and flyers, to inform identified Gulf stakeholder sectors about the GCOOS and its values to society.

Action 4: Promote and extend the accessibility of the GCOOS *Eco Hero Game*.

Action 5: Develop an outreach tool, such as exemplified by the recreational boaters web page tool, with identification of the sector with guidance from the GCOOS-RA EOC and PSAC.

Action 6: Obtain funding from non-traditional IOOS funding sources for selected outreach activities.