

**Site Review Team's Review of the  
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium  
June 8-9, 2010**

*Gene W. Kim*

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**Gene W. Kim**  
Chair, Federal Program Officer

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**Date**

*William L. Stubblefield*

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**William L. Stubblefield**  
Co-Chair, National Sea Grant Advisory Board Member

*10/19/10*

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**Date**



## INTRODUCTION

The Site Review Team (SRT) review of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium (MASGC) took place from 8-9 June 2010.

The SRT members included:

<b>Dr. Gene Kim (Chair, NSGO Program Officer)</b> National Sea Grant Office Silver Spring, MD	<b>Dr. William Stubblefield (Co-Chair)</b> Sea Grant Advisory Board Martinsburg, WV
<b>Dr. Gordon Grau (SRT member, SG Director)</b> University of Hawaii Honolulu, HI	<b>Dr. Paul Risser (SRT member)</b> University of Oklahoma Research Cabinet Norman, OK
<b>Dr. Tim Reinhold (SRT member)</b> Institute for Business and Home Safety Tampa, FL	<b>Dr. Nikola Garber (SRT Observer)</b> National Sea Grant Office Silver Spring, MD

### Introduction to report

Prior to the beginning of the SRT visit, and in conformance with National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) guidelines, the MASGC issued a public notice of the upcoming SRT visit by inviting interested parties to send written comments to the SRT Chair. The public notice was distributed by means of electronic mail and local newspapers. The SRT Chair received 2 letters in response to the public notice. Both were highly supportive of the MASGC. Prior to the site review, the SRT held two conference calls.

The site review took place at the Richard Shelby Center, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Dauphin Island, AL (day one; agenda in Appendix 1) and the International Trade Building at Alabama State Docks, Killian Room, Mobile, AL (day two). The venue on Dauphin Sea Lab is part of the MASGC and the location in Mobile, AL provided access on the mainland. During the review, the SRT met with a variety of MASGC staff (management, extension, communications, legal, and education), Sea Grant researchers, stakeholders, regional partners, the Board of Directors, and the Advisory Council. During day one, we were able to observe an official meeting of the Board of Directors and to view the issues raised by members of the consortium. The SRT heard an abundance of heartfelt testimony from a wide range of stakeholders including individuals from the fishing industry, state agencies, representatives of local government, and not-for-profit advocacy groups. MASGC is recognized and highly valued as an unbiased source of information and expertise, a facilitator of dialogue and particularly in engagement that enables movement toward consensus and solution. Time after time, the MASGC was recognized as an indispensable agent of progress.

The report of the SRT follows the guidelines of the SRT Procedures Manual. The SRT reviewed and discussed broad issues related to the MASGC's: 1) Organization and Management of the Program; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; and 3) Collaborative Network Activities. Within each area, the SRT report presents the findings, recommendations, and suggestions of the SRT (included as italicized text in Sections I-III and recapitulated in Section IV).

## I. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE PROGRAM

### Leadership

The MASGC is in good hands, under the able leadership of the Director, Dr. LaDon Swann. Regionally, the MASGC has emerged as a leader in the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. This Alliance, which is an aggregate of federal, state, and local organizations, is the driving force of addressing the research and outreach needs of the Gulf of Mexico. The Director also is quite adroit at managing the various interests of the multiple consortium members in an open, transparent and fair manner—a style that is recognized and appreciated by the Board and Advisory Council members and the member institutions. These members span the bi-state MASGC, and this appears to be working well. Successfully achieving this positive perception is a significant accomplishment, especially because the Director must know and satisfy many constituencies in both states.

- *Finding: The majority of the recommendations of the 2003 Program Assessment Team have been effectively addressed. For those not completed, actions or justification were provided to address why these were not followed.*

The 25-member MASGC Advisory Council, which offers advice and provides guidance to the MASGC Administration in program operation, has equal representation from both states (Appendix 2). Its role is to: 1) participate in long-range programmatic and administrative planning; 2) provide input in the implementation of strategic plan objectives; 3) provide input on the direction of MASGC sponsored research, extension, outreach and education and the relevancy of these core programs; 4) interact with MASGC on a regular and informal basis to develop new, collaborative opportunities and projects of direct benefit to coastal businesses, residents and the environment; and 5) serve as an advocate of MASGC-sponsored research, extension, outreach and education. From a variety of viewpoints, the Council helps guide MASGC in addressing critical local and regional issues and provides input on the relevancy of proposed projects. Following the technical review of a research proposal, members of the Advisory Council will review the proposal for relevancy.

- *Best Management Practice: The manner by which MASGC conducts post-panel relevancy reviews of research projects to help identify the projects with the greatest potential for application by constituents should be considered by all Sea Grant Programs, prior to final selection.*

The Advisory Council is made up of senior officials and community leaders from the university system, federal, state, and local governments, industry and the public (Appendix 2). Although the representation was quite impressive, the lack of elected officials and membership of emergency management agencies was noted. Other gaps in representation may exist.

- *Recommendation: Evaluate the membership of the Advisory Council, not simply based on representing a range of agencies, but rather by focusing on specific areas of expertise and access that would most benefit the MASGC. One path to such evaluation is evaluating the networks that the MASGC can influence through extension and other outreach. Such an evaluation might result in the inclusion of additional members, for example, elected officials and representatives from emergency management and other organizations.*

MASGC is a consortium of nine member universities (with the University of Southern Mississippi serving as fiscal host), with each university represented on the MASGC Board of Directors. The Board, whose members are Vice Presidents of Research or similar positions, meets annually to approve the upcoming budget. The SRT visit coincided with the Board's annual meeting. This afforded the opportunity to meet the Board. During discussions, the Board members expressed full faith and confidence in the Director; as a result, they have chosen to take a "hands-off approach" to management of the MASGC. In the past, when more engagement was required, the Board was willing to take that responsibility.

With that said, however, the SRT feels that the MASGC Board of Directors is not providing adequate leadership to support the MASGC. This "hands-off approach" has resulted in a mechanical approach to the Board's leadership role. This lack of leadership was demonstrated in several dimensions, but particularly the casual approach to conducting business and the apparent unwillingness to assume greater responsibility for the success of the Sea Grant Program. Because of this minimalist operational style, the Board of Directors misses an opportunity to promote increased resources for the MASGC and for their institutions which would enable greater access to resources and expertise. For example, the SRT observed little evidence that the member institutions and their administrators value the connection the MASGC offers for technology transfer to link the university researchers and research to the constituents who would directly benefit from the research. It is viewed by the SRT that these institutions are missing an opportunity to effectively use the MASGC for enhancing their own research proposals and translating the research into practical outcomes. A strong, vibrant, and well-supported MASGC will result in success for each of the consortium members.

- *Suggestion: The MASGC Board of Directors should re-assess its approach to its responsibilities as a Board. The resulting evaluation would either re-affirm the current passive leadership role or would conclude that a more active approach would benefit the MASGC, coastal communities and the institutions themselves. With active leadership, the Board could raise the visibility of the MASGC within their respective universities and across the two states. This also is an opportunity for the Board to become a more visible advocate for the MASGC, especially in finding additional funding for the MASGC. Certainly their advocacy would be extremely useful in garnering more support from the nine member institutions and from their respective legislators. In addition, their collective knowledge of available funding sources and their influence with funding organizations would be invaluable to the program. If MASGC is to accomplish what is needed to meet future demands of the region, more active engagement from the nine supporting institutions is necessary.*

## **Organization**

The MASGC, consisting of a two-state consortium, represents a powerful approach for bringing together the collective strengths from two states. As described above, the Director effectively manages this bi-state arrangement. As a result, this arrangement offers administrative efficiency, extends the total expertise beyond the capabilities of either state, marshals a broader advocacy and minimizes artificial distinctions within environmental analyses that might otherwise be erected by the boundary between the two states. The consortium is designed to bring together support by balancing representation for each state on the MASGC Board of Directors and the Advisory Council.

- *Suggestion: This two-state consortium represents a powerful model that has been effective for 38 years. A full analysis, however, recognizes that there are resulting costs to this consortium arrangement. Managing operational, fiduciary and political differences between the states does exert additional transactional costs. And, it is possible that either state might take a stronger advocacy role if the program was not a shared program. Revisiting the cooperative model would be a major distraction. However, there are very effective one-state and one-institution organizational models elsewhere in the country. Therefore, it is suggested that the MASGC should informally re-evaluate if the current model remains the best model for the two states.*

The MASGC aggressively recruits the best talent by widely distributing its Request for Proposals to various organizations in both states. Distribution includes the nine member institutions, other academic institutions, local community leaders, non-profit/non-governmental organizations, the Advisory Council, as well as posting on the MASGC website and appropriate e-mail lists. For the three omnibus cycles (2006-2011) this solicitation process resulted in 106 pre-proposals, 54 full proposals, with 21 funded proposals. An additional 21 program development projects were funded, with nearly half funding new investigators. The track record of having at least one Knauss Fellow selected in the last four years of selection (2006-2009) also is noted by the SRT as a solid track record.

### **Programmed team approach**

The MASGC has provided leadership nationally, claims 400 partners, works well with the new cooperative institute, is a leading participant and advocate for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, and participates in many educational programs at all levels. Its Advisory Council is engaged and enthusiastic, and the MASGC is adept at managing pass-through funding from different agencies. Thus, by all overt measures, the MASGC has mastered the team approach and should be commended for its widely recognized successes. However, it is difficult to discern the level of engagement of each of these partners and the strategic rationale for the myriad of programs and partnerships. With careful evaluation, there may be possibilities to move the team approach and thus the MASGC to a significantly higher level.

- *Suggestion: To ensure the greatest possible return on investment, the MASGC should continue to consider ways of leading large regional or national programs. Such programs will require careful articulation by the MASGC of its unique capabilities. Success will also require the active engagement of the nine member institutions (i.e., MASGC Board of Directors) and the Advisory Council to maintain relevancy to their stakeholders. And finally, the Management Team could consider the range of possible incentives that would result in greater investment by the nine member institutions.*

### **Support**

The MASGC has artfully enlisted support from a wide variety of partners, despite minimal federal support. For its budget, 56% comes from the National Sea Grant Office, 18% is matching funding, 11% from the state from either direct appropriation or grants, and an additional 15% from leveraged funds. The MASGC is quite adept at leveraging funds, and this is lauded. These include funds from other NOAA, federal, state and local sources. Although this approach serves

to demonstrate the widespread attractiveness of the MASGC and the willingness of partners, there are intricacies and costs to doing this. Due to the bi-state arrangement, there are differences in funding policies.

In terms of research, MASGC has done well at balancing funding between research and other elements of the program. The guidelines from the NSGO are for research to constitute between 45 to 65% of the total budget. In tough financial times, many programs find it difficult to allocate this amount to research. The MASGC is within the NSGO guidelines for their research portfolio.

- *Finding: The fiscal host, the University of Southern Mississippi, is commended for its flexibility to be able to fund a wide variety of entities, beyond the nine universities, and arrangement to reduce overhead costs. Further, the fact that overhead is not charged on any subcontracts is of significant assistance in forming partnerships with other groups.*

## **II. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The MASGC continues its well established tradition of excellence in stakeholder engagement. The 2003 Program Assessment Team report awarded a rating of "Highest Performance" to MASGC's community engagement, being particularly impressed by the both the extent and breadth of the success of MASGC's efforts. The effectiveness of MASGC in engaging its stakeholders was central in its success in education and outreach. This foundation, and the relationships upon which it is built, continues to be utilized by the MASGC to achieve a superior level of excellence in engaging its stakeholders in building successful and resilient coastal communities and economies that serve people and their movement toward a sustainable future.

Based on the information provided by the stakeholders, the SRT concluded that the stakeholder engagement could be described by a number of key characteristics of the MASGC:

- Management of operations has shown characteristics of nimbleness and aggressive pursuit of opportunities that serve stakeholder needs and help achieve strategic goals;
- MASGC is managed as an enabler to provide meaningful connections between its research base, the regional resources provided by its partnerships, and the local needs;
- In several instances described by stakeholders, it was clear that the MASGC staff provided leadership and acted as resources, helping them to avoid pitfalls and wrong steps;
- Clear management goals and specific planned activities help ensure that MASGC listens to stakeholder needs and then acts to provide meaningful connections between the scientists and underlying science and meeting the needs of the stakeholders; and
- While the MASGC has acted quickly to meet emerging needs, it has done so in a sensitive and professional manner, bringing together experts and stakeholders to help provide credible science based information to sensitive and emotionally charged issues.

### **Extension, Communications and Legal Outreach**

Aside from the core management staff, the remainder of the MASGC is devoted to communications, extension, education, and legal outreach. Federal core funding fully supports only eight FTEs devoted to non-management activities; additional support comes from matching

and leveraged funding. These individuals are located through both states. Also, MASGC extension is affiliated with the USDA Cooperative Extension Services in both states. Both MASGC and the Cooperative Extension Services now work on a bi-state, regional basis. Beginning in 2006, what formerly comprised four separate outreach components was integrated into one overall proposal.

The process through which the MASGC engages stakeholders is thorough. The MASGC describes their method for engaging constituents as a three-step approach: 1) investigators gather and assimilate the latest research and regulatory findings in their areas of expertise; 2) applicable stakeholder input is obtained, evaluated and integrated with existing information. Stakeholders are engaged informally and formally, such as through the MASGC Advisory Council, which meets annually; and 3) outreach programs are conducted that will transfer information to the general public, agencies, elected officials and special interest groups. Cooperation among staff and excellent working relations ensure mutual support across program areas.

MASGC uses meetings, workshops, newsletters, newspaper columns, presentations to civic groups and written materials, such as journal articles, pamphlets, circulars and booklets, to convey coastal and marine-related information to stakeholders. New methods of information delivery, such as computer-generated presentations, teleconferencing, and web pages, social networking sites and satellite downlinks of appropriate programs, are used when appropriate. Just as important are the many personal contacts through office visits, telephone calls, and letters. These often are initiated by a broad range of people who have come to rely on the MASGC for unbiased information.

As a result, the MASGC provides research-based information to the coastal community and the broader community of citizens with an interest in marine resources and coastal issues. This is pursued by establishing objectives based on elements of the MASGC Strategic Plan, input from the MASGC Advisory Council, Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center, Mississippi State University Extension Service and informal feedback from constituents. In order to facilitate coordination, the MASGC administrative office and the MASGC Legal Program have monthly conference calls with the MASGC Extension Programs to discuss programming successes, failures and opportunities. These calls are structured to encourage joint planning and coordination of educational efforts.

## **Relevance**

The research of MASGC is guided by its strategic plan. The priorities in the MASGC strategic plan are grounded in local stakeholder input and framed with the four National Sea Grant focus areas. The Advisory Council encourages the MASGC to use existing plans and needs assessments as a basis for constituent input. The strategic plan is based on information gathered from numerous guidance documents and stakeholder input that the SRT finds to be thorough. The priorities in the strategic plan focus on servicing Alabama and Mississippi needs but also align with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance priorities and other state, regional, and national priorities. In addition, the MASGC is opportunistic in its strategic and tactical planning. Within the four National Sea Grant focus areas, the MASGC is very conscious of local needs. New research or outreach efforts are directed toward emerging needs. This is apparent from their response to Hurricane Katrina and more recently to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The MASGC research to applications approach is built upon partnerships. This includes the nine-member consortium, in addition to close ties with federal agencies, state agencies, local authorities, business and industry. These partnerships provide a synergy that allows the Consortium to provide science-based knowledge and services in a highly effective manner that is far in excess of what could be accomplished from core federal resources alone. Important stakeholder engagement is maintained through annual meetings of the MASGC Advisory Council. The Council plays a central role in guiding MASGC Director in program operation (see above). Given the above-mentioned potential gaps (e.g., elected officials and representatives from emergency management organizations) in Council representation, this may affect relevance through time.

## **Relationships**

Management team and outreach project personnel actively engage researchers supported by MASGC in order to develop and implement effective delivery mechanisms for research results. A formal process has been established to link MASGC-funded researchers with the Outreach Program. Principal investigators, who have been selected for funding, meet with specific outreach personnel whose areas of expertise correspond to the research focus. This leads to the development of an outreach plan that is included in the final version of the proposal.

The MASGC places highest importance on constituent engagement by being accessible, responsive, and respecting its partners. With one or two individuals identified as leads, MASGC uses a “task force” approach that includes all elements (research, education, legal, extension and communications). This may include a legal and regulatory review by legal personnel, demonstrations or workshops conducted by extension personnel and researchers, and development of publications, websites and media coverage by communications staff. Among the techniques used for this purpose are pre-test / post-test client evaluations, exit surveys and dedicated questionnaires related to publications. Constituent input obtained through surveys is usually more detailed and provides the consortium with data to assess the overall value of specific products, tools or services. The MASGC outreach program is greatly enhanced by the resources of The University of Mississippi School of Law, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and the Mississippi State University Extension Service and county offices in both states.

- *Suggestion: The MASGC extension and advisory function is successful, engaging 400 partners. With this extensive program, not all interactions and projects will be equally successful. Thus, periodic review and assessment of the costs and benefits of each project will provide guidance to management about the prudence of continuing existing partnerships and projects. The cumulative conclusions from this analysis will provide guidance toward the criteria that can be used to decide the wisdom of beginning specific new projects.*

## **III. COLLABORATIVE NETWORK/NOAA ACTIVITIES**

The MASGC is engaged with the NOAA, SG network, and the federal community. It has frequent contact with many state and federal agencies that provide indispensable programming information and opportunities. Many programming efforts are possible only because of the support from other state and federal agencies and private organizations. Cooperating partners include: the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; the Alabama Department of

Conservation and Natural Resources; NOAA Fisheries and other NOAA line offices, such as the Coastal Services Center; the U.S. Coast Guard; regional fishery management councils; and other Sea Grant Extension programs. In several instances during the site visit, the partners indicated that the MASGC provided advance information on upcoming opportunities and worked closely with them to assemble teams that could respond to those opportunities.

From the MASGC perspective, NOAA is both a Sea Grant partner and stakeholder. NOAA colleagues praised Sea Grant for its effective synergistic partnering in connecting the human resources and expertise of the university enterprise to NOAA's mission. Experience with MASGC during the recent Gulf of Mexico oil spill has demonstrated to NOAA leadership that Sea Grant is a special and highly valuable asset with capabilities not common in other parts of NOAA. During the visit, the SRT heard that the MASGC provides a real-world influence to partnerships within NOAA (and other federal agencies), because of its ability to connect to the local community level. The universal message is that MASGC is an important partner in building regional capability to respond to challenges and opportunities that face people and industries throughout the Gulf of Mexico within the context of a sustainable and safe seafood supply, and in the building of economically vibrant and resilient communities that function within the capabilities of their ecosystems and coastal habitats.

During the June 2010 site visit, the Director was singled out by several persons associated with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance as deserving much of the credit for the new direction and success of the Alliance. Similarly, the Director and the MASGC were recognized by the NOAA Cooperative Institute (Northern Gulf Institute) as being a valuable partner to regional cooperative efforts. Within the network of the Cooperative Institutes, MASGC is recognized as a model for cooperation.

Contributing to its success in building partners is the organizational setting. Several of the federal and state agencies who have regulatory responsibilities use MASGC as a liaison to local communities, realizing the high level of credibility bestowed on MASGC within these communities.

Examples include:

- The Gulf of Mexico Regional Research Plan (developed by the MASGC);
- Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant and Regional Collaboration Team Climate Community of Practice;
- COSEE Central Gulf of Mexico;
- NOAA Engagement pilot and NOAA Regional EOE Lead; and
- Regional research (EPA, NOAA Coastal Storms Program, Northern Gulf Institute, and the four Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs.

Nearly all of the MASGC management staff contributes to Sea Grant Network activities. The Director provides leadership for the Sea Grant Network as president-elect of the Sea Grant Association, as member of the Sea Grant Association's External Relations and Program Mission Committees, and as Co-Chair for the Hazard-Resilient Coastal Communities Focus Team. MASGC contributes members to two of the four Focus Teams: Hazard-Resilient Coastal Communities and Sustainable Coastal Development. MASGC contributes to the many Sea Grant Networks: Extension, Communication, Fiscal, Regional Research Planning Coordinators, Education, Research Coordinators, and Webmasters. However, leadership and contribution by

the extension specialists and agents was generally lacking. More participation would benefit the Sea Grant Network and provide professional development opportunities for extension personnel.

- *Best Management Practice: The MASCG provides excellent leadership at the regional scale through numerous Gulf of Mexico organizations. This leadership is exemplary, cascading from the Director to the rest of the management staff. The regional efforts that the MASGC leads should be held as a model for other regional efforts within NOAA and the Sea Grant Network.*
- *Suggestion: The MASGC is positioned to serve as a model for regional collaboration within the NOAA Regional Teams and the Sea Grant Regions. To enhance the potential of this model, MASGC should prepare a summary white paper of the benefits versus transactions costs (lessons learned) of the regional approach. Doing so could aid in catalyzing other NOAA and Sea Grant regions to devote time and effort towards regionalization.*
- *Suggestion: There are efforts within the MASGC that contribute to a larger effort within NOAA or Sea Grant. The MASGC should explore tying their local efforts to the larger efforts so as to maximize the impact of these efforts. Examples include the citizen sampling within the Master Naturalist (i.e., combine with other SG programs' efforts or the NOAA Phytoplankton Monitoring Network), Clean Marinas, and working waterfronts.*

#### IV. SUMMARY of FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS and SUGGESTIONS

Note: A *recommendation* is a formally prescribed course of action for which the Sea Grant Program is accountable. The Sea Grant Program is expected to respond to each recommendation, explaining how it *has* implemented, how it *plans* to implement, or why it *chooses not* to implement each course of action. A *suggestion* is an idea that is presented for consideration. The Sea Grant Program is not accountable for responding to suggestions, but is encouraged to consider implementing those deemed useful and appropriate by program leadership. The best management practices identified by the SRT will be shared with other Sea Grant Programs.

##### Findings

- The majority of the recommendations of the 2003 Program Assessment Team have been effectively addressed. For those not completed, actions or justification were provided to address why these were not followed [for background, see Section I: Organizing and Managing the Program - Leadership].
- The fiscal host, the University of Southern Mississippi, is commended for its flexibility to be able to fund a wide variety of entities, beyond the nine universities, and arrangement to reduce overhead costs. Further, the fact that overhead is not charged on any subcontracts is of significant assistance in forming partnerships with other groups [for background, see Section I: Organizing and Managing the Program - Support].

##### Recommendations (items the Program must consider)

- Recommendation: Evaluate the membership of the Advisory Council, not simply based on representing a range of agencies, but rather by focusing on specific areas of expertise and access that would most benefit the MASGC. One path to such evaluation is evaluating the networks that the MASGC can influence through extension and other outreach. Such an evaluation might result in the inclusion of additional members, for example, elected officials and representatives from emergency management and other organizations [for background, see Section I: Organizing and Managing the Program - Leadership].

##### Suggestions (ideas the Program may want to consider)

- Suggestion: The MASGC Board of Directors should re-assess its approach to its responsibilities as a Board. The resulting evaluation would either re-affirm the current passive leadership role or would conclude that a more active approach would benefit the MASGC, coastal communities and the institutions themselves. With active leadership, the Board could raise the visibility of the MASGC within their respective universities and across the two states. This also is an opportunity for the Board to become a more visible advocate for the MASGC, especially in finding additional funding for the MASGC. Certainly their advocacy would be extremely useful in garnering more support from the nine member institutions and from their respective legislators. In addition, their collective knowledge of available funding sources and their influence with funding organizations would be invaluable to the program. If MASGC is to accomplish what is needed to meet future demands of the region, more active engagement from the nine supporting

institutions is necessary [for background, see Section I: Organizing and Managing the Program - Leadership].

- Suggestion: This two-state consortium represents a powerful model that has been effective for 38 years. A full analysis, however, recognizes that there are resulting costs to this consortium arrangement. Managing operational, fiduciary and political differences between the states does exert additional transactional costs. And, it is possible that either state might take a stronger advocacy role if the program was not a shared program. Revisiting the cooperative model would be a major distraction. However, there are very effective one-state and one-institution organizational models elsewhere in the country. Therefore, it is suggested that the MASGC should informally re-evaluate if the current model remains the best model for the two states [for background, see Section I: Organizing and Managing the Program - Organization].
- Suggestion: To ensure the greatest possible return on investment, the MASGC should continue to consider ways of leading large regional or national programs. Such programs will require careful articulation by the MASGC of its unique capabilities. Success will also require the active engagement of the nine member institutions (i.e., MASGC Board of Directors) and the Advisory Council to maintain relevancy to their stakeholders. And finally, the Management Team could consider the range of possible incentives that would result in greater investment by the nine member institutions [for background, see Section I: Organizing and Managing the Program – Programmed Team Approach].
- Suggestion: The MASGC extension and advisory function is successful, engaging 400 partners. With this extensive program, not all interactions and projects will be equally successful. Thus, periodic review and assessment of the costs and benefits of each project will provide guidance to management about the prudence of continuing existing partnerships and projects. The cumulative conclusions from this analysis will provide guidance toward the criteria that can be used to decide the wisdom of beginning specific new projects [for background, see Section II: Stakeholder Engagement - Relationships].
- Suggestion: The MASGC is positioned to serve as a model for regional collaboration within the NOAA Regional Teams and the Sea Grant Regions. To enhance the potential of this model, MASGC should prepare a summary white paper of the benefits versus transactions costs (lessons learned) of the regional approach. Doing so could aid in catalyzing other NOAA and Sea Grant regions to devote time and effort towards regionalization [for background, see Section III: Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities].
- Suggestion: There are efforts within the MASGC that contribute to a larger effort within NOAA or Sea Grant. The MASGC should explore tying their local efforts to the larger efforts so as to maximize the impact of these efforts. Examples include the citizen sampling within the Master Naturalist (i.e., combine with other SG Programs' efforts or the NOAA Phytoplankton Monitoring Network), Clean Marinas, and working waterfronts [for background, see Section III: Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities].

## **V. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

- The manner by which MASGC conducts post-panel relevancy reviews of research projects to help identify the projects with the greatest potential for application by constituents should be considered by all Sea Grant Programs, prior to final selection [for background, see Section I: Organizing and Managing the Program - Leadership].
  - The MASCG provides excellent leadership at the regional scale through numerous Gulf of Mexico organizations. This leadership is exemplary, cascading from the Director to the rest of the management staff. The regional efforts that the MASGC leads should be held as a model for other regional efforts within NOAA and the Sea Grant Network [for background, see Section III: Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities].
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**APPENDIX I - SRT Agenda - National Sea Grant Site Review of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium  
June 8-9, 2010, Dauphin Island and Mobile, Alabama**

<b>Tuesday, June 8</b>	
<b>Richard Shelby Center, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Dauphin Island, AL</b>	
8:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome Site Review Team (SRT)</b> LaDon Swann, director, and Stephen Sempier, deputy director
<b>Program Management and Organization</b>	
8:30 a.m.	<b>Discussion between SRT and MASGC Management Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management structure</li> <li>• Strategic planning process</li> <li>• Local, regional, and national partnerships</li> <li>• MASGC ability to address emerging issues</li> </ul>
9:45	<b>Break</b>
10:00 a.m.	<b>MASGC Board of Directors meeting</b> During this session, <b>leadership, programmed team approach</b> and <b>support</b> will be discussed. The administration budget will also be approved.
Noon	<b>Lunch</b> Site Review Team, Board of Directors (BOD), Advisory Council (AC) and MASGC Management Team (Gambling Against Mother Nature video)
1:00 p.m.	<b>Site Review Team Presentation on Purpose of Site Review</b> Gene Kim and Bill Stubblefield
1:30 p.m.	<b>Joint Board of Directors and Advisory Council Meeting</b> LaDon Swann facilitates Discuss the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual program summary (20 minutes)</li> <li>2. Discussions on <b>programmed team approach</b> will be presented by Advisory Council members <b>Relevance</b> will be addressed from the perspective of Advisory Council members</li> <li>3. Round-robin discussion among SRT, BOD and AC using related questions from Site Review Criteria</li> </ol>
3:00 p.m.	<b>Break</b>
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> This session is designed to directly address the <b>extension, outreach and education</b> .	
3:30 p.m.	<b>Panel Discussion with Extension, Outreach and Education (EOE) leaders</b> This session will provide an overview of these programs, how EOE adds value to MASGC and the processes used to engage constituents. Presenters for extension: Dave Burrage, Stephanie Showalter and Jody Thompson (60 minutes) Presenter for education: Sharon Walker (30 minutes) Specific topics for each presentation will include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaboration/Integrations (how we are organized)</li> <li>2. Describe value this adds to the program (examples of integration between extension, outreach, education, legal, communication)</li> <li>3. Describe how we engage locally, regionally and nationally with constituents</li> <li>4. Question and Answers</li> </ol>
5:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>
5:00 p.m.	<b>Site Review Team closed meeting</b>
6:00 p.m.	<b>Reception at the Estuarium</b> Networking among SRT, AC and BOD (Life on the Water oral history video)
<b>Wednesday, June 9</b>	
<b>International Trade Building at Alabama State Docks, Killian Room, Mobile, AL</b>	
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> This session is designed to directly address <b>relevance</b> and <b>relationships</b> through case studies.	
8:00 a.m.	<b>Constituent Panel 1</b> Dave Burrage and Chris Boyd facilitate

	<p><u>Safe and Sustainable Seafood Supply</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert Nguyen, Shrimper and logbook program, Buras, LA</li> <li>• Dale Diaz, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources</li> </ul> <p><u>Healthy Coastal Ecosystems</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Randy Shaneyfelt, Alabama Department of Environmental Management</li> <li>• Renee Brooks, Master Naturalist, Pass Christian, MS</li> </ul>
9:00 a.m.	<p><b>Constituent Panel 2</b> Jody Thompson and Tracie Sempier facilitate</p> <p><u>Sustainable Coastal Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B. G. Thompson, Alabama Working Waterfront Coalition, Bayou La Batre, AL</li> <li>• Larry Ellis, City of Orange Beach, AL</li> </ul> <p><u>Hazard Resilience in Coastal Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tina Shumate, Mississippi of Department of Marine Resources and Gulf of Mexico Alliance Coastal Community Resilience Priority Issue Team</li> <li>• Emily Sommer, Grass Roots, Inc., Mobile, AL</li> </ul>
<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities</b>	
10:30 a.m.	<p><b>Discussion Led by MASGC Director and Management Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea Grant Network (e.g. oil spill, National Office)</li> <li>• Focus Teams (e.g. HRCC, SCD leadership)</li> <li>• Sea Grant Association (e.g. NAC)</li> </ul>
10:45 a.m.	<p><b>Discussion Led by NOAA Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NOAA Engagement Pilot</b> Louisa Koch, director, NOAA’s Office of Education (10 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Coastal Storms Program, Coastal Services Center</b> Audra Luscher, NOAA Coastal Storms Program coordinator (10 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team</b> Buck Sutter, Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team Lead, Deputy Regional Administrator Southeast Region (10 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Questions and Answers</b> (15 minutes)</li> </ul>
11:30 a.m.	<p><b>Discussion Led by Regional and National Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gulf of Mexico Alliance</b> William Walker, executive director, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (5 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>United States Geological Survey</b> Virginia Burkett, chief scientist, USGS (5 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Regional Research Plan</b> Karl Havens, Florida Sea Grant (5 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Regional Education Programs</b> (COSEE and B-Wet) Sharon Walker, director of education and outreach programs at the Institute of Marine Mammal Studies (5 minutes)</li> <li>• <b>Questions and Answers</b> (10 minutes)</li> </ul>
Noon	<p><b>Lunch</b> Invited guests (AC, BOD, Panelists, MASGC Management Team) Site Review Team takes lunch to Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel</p>
<b>1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Closed Session for Site Review Team (Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel)</b>
<b>3:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Site Review Team meets with MASGC Director (Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel)</b>
<b>4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Site Review Team meets with Board and Advisory Council (Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel)</b>
<b>5:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>

## APPENDIX II - Advisory Council Membership

### Member

Becky Allee, Ph.D.  
Vince Altese  
Pete Barber  
Tom Becker  
Steve Bosarge  
Michael Carron, Ph.D.  
Lisa Desfosse, Ph.D.  
Dale Diaz  
Bryon Griffith  
Judy Haner  
Phillip Hinesley  
Linda Holden  
Richard Ingram  
John Jensen, Ph.D.  
James Lyons  
Herb Malone  
Thomas McIlwain, Ph.D.  
Steve Perry  
Susan Rees  
David Ruple  
Buzz Sierke  
Larry Simpson  
Judy Stout, Ph.D.  
Roberta Swann  
Tony Zodrow

### Organization

NOAA Gulf Coast Services Center  
Pickering, Inc.  
Alabama Seafood Association, Inc.  
Mississippi Charter Boat Captains Association  
Bosarge Boats and Dockside Seafood  
Northern Gulf Institute – Mississippi State University  
Mississippi Laboratories, Southeast Fisheries Center, NMFS  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Office of Marine Fisheries  
Gulf of Mexico Program  
Nature Conservancy of Alabama  
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Economic Development, City of Moss Point  
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality  
College of Agriculture, Auburn University  
Alabama State Port Authority  
Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau  
The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Lab  
The FORUM  
Coastal Environmental Team, U.S. Army Corps, Mobile District  
MS Department of Marine Resources, Grand Bay NERR  
GothicArch Greenhouses  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries  
Mobile County School Board  
Mobile Bay National Estuary Program  
National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico