



Forward

Author: Pahl, James W.

Source: Journal of Coastal Research, 60(sp1)

Published By: Coastal Education and Research Foundation

URL: <https://doi.org/10.2112/1551-5036-60.sp1.iii>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

www.jcronline.org

FORWARD

www.cerf-jcr.org

Sharing a vision for a healthy and resilient Gulf of Mexico coast, the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, together with their federal partners formalized the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (hereafter referred to as the Alliance). The goal of the Alliance is to significantly increase regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. One of the first actions taken under the Alliance was the development of the Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts, which emphasized the need for establishing a collaborative partnership among the five Gulf States. The Governors' Action Plan identified priority issues of mutual interest to all Alliance partners, triggering the creation of interagency teams to address those issues. One such team was the Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (HCRT), whose mission is to provide leadership to advance conservation and restoration of coastal habitats and ecosystems throughout the Gulf. The HCRT quickly recognized that sediment resources are integral to and a critical resource necessary in planning and implementing conservation and restoration activities. As a result, the Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan (hereafter simply the Plan) was initiated to provide guidance for managing this valuable resource and substantiates the need for a comprehensive understanding of regional sediment systems and processes.

The Plan will benefit Gulf stakeholders by providing guidelines based on the understanding of sediment dynamics (inputs, outputs, movement) to manage sediment resources in the context of ecosystem restoration, conservation, and preservation, while reducing coastal erosion, storm damages, and associated costs of sediment handling. The Plan will provide an inventory of potential sediment sources; assess competing needs for sediment; develop regional strategies that facilitate cooperation among stakeholders; and enhance abilities to make informed, cooperative management decisions. Initially proposed to enable more effective use of dredged material, it quickly became evident that the Plan would need to go well beyond just dealing with dredged material and was expanded to include strategies for the management of all sediment resources and to provide guidelines to the Gulf States for more effective management of sediment, recognizing they are a part of a regional system involving both natural processes and human activities.

The initial effort in the preparation of the Plan was to establish a Technical Framework that uses the understanding of sediment dynamics to manage this essential resource. As a result of extensive interagency coordination and planning activities, several basic topics emerged that became the main focal points deemed essential to the sediment management process. Along with summarizing the general processes throughout the Gulf, these topics are considered fundamental towards implementing regional sediment management. Several working groups comprised of federal, state and non-governmental representatives were tasked to address and refine each topic for inclusion in the Plan. Now that the Technical Framework has been established, information gleaned from this effort will be used to establish guidelines on how to implement regional sediment management throughout the northern Gulf of Mexico.

Several chapters of the Technical Framework are presented in this Special Issue as peer-reviewed papers to disseminate and share this information with the global coastal community. These papers provide the baseline necessary to understand the significance of best sediment management practices in a regional context and assist project managers in fully implementing sediment management practices. Alliance partners can use the

information presented here concerning sediment inventories, sediment budgets and transport processes, navigation activities, ecological processes, and policy considerations as well as other regional priorities, and evaluate this information in relation to current management practices around the Gulf. Outcomes from these evaluations will allow stakeholders to identify how management and planning practices can be improved to make better decisions on a regional scale. This approach will be critical towards improving the design and maintenance of regional sediment management throughout the Gulf.

The next steps in the development of a regional sediment plan will be to establish those guidelines based on future development and refinement of the Technical Framework. The Plan will also reflect the goals and objectives set forth by the five Gulf States and their Alliance partners to improve the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico.

We are very grateful to the editors of the *Journal of Coastal Research* for the opportunity to present this information, which we hope will spur further discussions among resource managers, technical experts and all stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James W. Pahl', with a stylized, cursive script.

James W. Pahl, Ph.D., Co-Chair
On behalf of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance's Habitat
Conservation and Restoration Priority Issue Team