

GULF

currents



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Progress on the Pearl River
- 2 Oil & Gas in the Gulf of Mexico
- 3 Landmark Fisheries Legislation on the Line
- 4 & 5 Protecting Deep Sea Coral
- 6 Florida Algae Crisis
- 7 New Staff & Board/Houston Strong/Aveda

Gulf Restoration Network, founded in 1994, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to uniting and empowering people to protect and restore the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico region.



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PROGRESS ON THE PEARL RIVER: OPPOSITION GROWS

Under the banner of the One River, No Lake Coalition, Gulf Restoration Network, Pearl Riverkeeper and other groups have collaborated with stakeholders along the Pearl River to oppose the One Lake project. The multi-state coalition has grown in strength in its opposition to the controversial and potentially devastating proposal to dam the Pearl River in Jackson, Mississippi.

GRN has taken a leading role in community outreach and education, using local and national media to shine a light on the threat to wetlands, wildlife habitat, industries, and the coastal zone in both Louisiana and Mississippi. Thanks to the efforts of GRN and our partners in the One River, No Lake Coalition, more than a dozen local and regional governmental bodies have taken action to oppose the project:

- The St. Tammany Parish Council passed a resolution in 2013 against the dam project in Jackson, citing evaporation and low flow as threats.
- Both Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the state's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority were critical of this project in their 2013 scoping comments.
- The Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources passed a resolution against damming the Pearl in 2015. Their concern is oyster restoration.
- The Mississippi Governor's Oyster Council 2015 final report recognized the threat to oyster recovery from upstream freshwater depleting projects, such as this dam.
- The Louisiana Oyster Task Force, an industry group sponsored by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, asked Louisiana's Department of Natural Resources to review and reject this project.
- 2018 resolutions in opposition include: LA Senate Resolution SCR5; Washington Parish, LA; St. Tammany Parish, LA; Hancock County, MS; Lawrence County, MS; Marion County, MS; City of Slidell, LA; Town of Bogalusa, LA.; Pearl River County, MS; Town of Pearl River, LA; Town of Monticello, MS.

GRN will continue to defend the Pearl and everyone who lives along its watershed until the One Lake project is defeated. To learn more and join the fight, visit onerivernolake.com.



The endangered ringed sawback turtle is threatened by the One Lake Project.
Photo Credit: Greg Hume (CC BY-SA 4.0), from Wikimedia Commons.

OIL & GAS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

EVERY YEAR
in the
GULF



2,100
oil & chemical

SPILLS

reported to the
Coast Guard

GRN released a report, *Oil and Gas in the Gulf of Mexico*, to share the findings of our pollution monitoring trips, highlight some of the most egregious oil and gas spills in 2017 and offer recommendations for reforms.

TO VIEW OUR FULL REPORT, VISIT
HEALTHYGULF.ORG/OGREPORT



Source: Skytruth.org compilation of National Response Center data, 2011-2014

DEFEND THE EASTERN GULF MORATORIUM

Florida is the only Gulf state without oil and gas drilling in federal waters off its shores, and its residents, elected officials, and businesses are aligned to make sure it stays that way. Ever since the Trump administration announced a drilling plan that includes the long off-limits eastern Gulf of Mexico, the pushback has been massive.

Elected officials on both sides of the political aisle have expressed strong opposition to eastern Gulf drilling. With environmental groups and citizens united in opposition, many are working in Congress to block drilling off Florida's coast—though so far they have been thwarted by legislators in other states who support offshore drilling off their own shores.

This fall, Florida voters will have a chance to approve Amendment 9, a constitutional amendment that would ban oil and gas drilling in Florida waters—which extend out nine miles on the Gulf side. GRN supports this amendment and is working with a coalition of environmental groups to build support among voters.

**"THE PUSHBACK
HAS BEEN
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"GRN'S EFFORTS WERE CONCENTRATED ON THE GULF COAST, BUT THIS IS A NATIONAL MOVEMENT."

Photo Credit: NOAA.

LANDMARK FISHERIES LEGISLATION ON THE LINE

The House of Representatives voted on July 11 to pass House Resolution 200, also known by those of us who value fish as the Empty Oceans Act. The bill would significantly weaken the science-based overfishing provisions of Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the primary law managing fishing in federal waters.

Despite bipartisan opposition, the bill passed along party lines, with the Republican majority accounting for most of the votes. The Senate has yet to vote on its version of the bill, but GRN will be opposing it every step of the way. The contentious process has highlighted how fisheries policy has become hyper-partisan, but there are still reasons to be hopeful.

The vote on H.R. 200 was much closer than the last time the House voted on a version of a MSA reauthorization bill. Several Representatives, including some on the Gulf Coast, who had previously expressed support

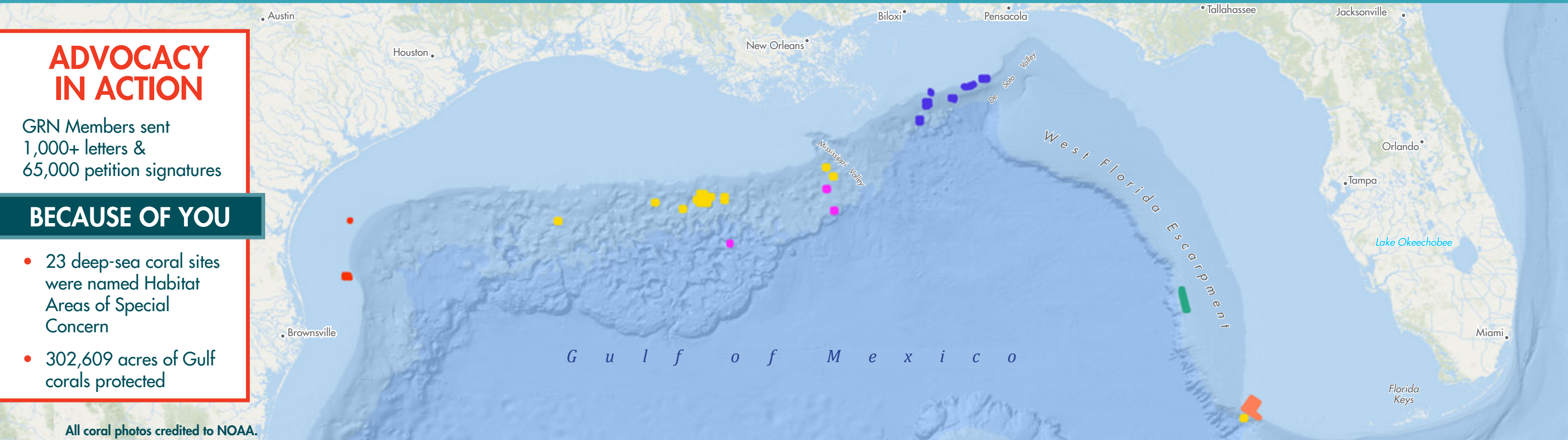
for H.R. 200 ended up voting against the bill or abstaining. This is absolutely attributable to the public pressure from GRN's broad coalition of chefs, fishers, and members like you who took the time to get engaged and call/write your Congress members. We put the special interest groups on their heels and had them playing defense, a position they are unaccustomed to.

GRN's efforts were concentrated on the Gulf Coast, but this is a national movement. People all over the country are learning how federal fisheries policy can affect what ends up on their plates.

The highly partisan nature of H.R. 200 will make it more difficult for S. 1520, the so-called "Modern Fish Act" to advance in the Senate, but it is important that we keep the pressure on, so we can block this bad bill from becoming law. We look forward to working with you in the future as we fight to preserve the last wild food.

INTO THE DEEP: PROTECT GULF CORAL

Recent voyages by deep ocean submersibles in the Gulf of Mexico have revealed entire coral ecosystems we are only now beginning to identify and study. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council recently voted to approve Coral Amendment 9 to create the new protections for some of these fragile and ancient creatures.



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

GRN Members sent
1,000+ letters &
65,000 petition signatures

BECAUSE OF YOU

- 23 deep-sea coral sites were named Habitat Areas of Special Concern
- 302,609 acres of Gulf corals protected

All coral photos credited to NOAA.

SOUTHWESTERN GULF; HARTE BANK AND SOUTHERN BANK	SOUTHEED, GARDENBANKS 229/ 535, GREENCANYON140/ 272/ 234/ 354, MISSISSIPPI CANYON 751/ 885	NORTHWESTERN GULF: AT 047, AT 357 AND GREEN CANYON 852	NORTHEASTERN GULF: ALABAMA ALPS REEF, L&W PINNACLES AND SCAMP REEF, MISSISSIPPI CANYON 118, ROUGH TONGUE REEF, VIOSCA KNOLL 826/ 862/ 906	WEST FLORIDA WALL	PULLEY RIDGE SOUTH
Total Area: 9,832 acres or 11.6 square nautical miles (nm ²)	Total Area: 115,012 acres or 135.7 nm ²	Total Area: 14,747 acres or 17.4 nm ²	Total Area: 59,922 acres or 70.7 nm ²	Total Area: 30766 acres or 36.3 nm ²	Total Area: 79,330 acres or 93.6 nm ²

NEW STAFF



Dwayne Breashears is our new Major Gifts Officer. He is a native New Orleanian with many ties to the Gulf and the former program director at WWOZ.



Natalie Montoya Zamora is our new Analyst. Natalie helps protect wetlands and communities by reviewing permits and conducting GIS analyses.

POLICY MATTERS: CLEAN WATER VS GREEN WATER

The Sunshine State is pretty green right now. At least its waters are. This year is the second time in three years that a state of emergency has been declared due to toxic algae blooms in Florida. These blooms are caused by nitrogen and phosphorus pollution flowing from sugar fields, septic systems, urban areas, livestock operations, and sewage treatment facilities. The causes of these blooms are well-documented and are largely preventable with the right pollution runoff standards and a commitment from politicians, industries and municipalities to promote clean water, or at least to prevent green water.

Adding insult to toxic injury, red tides have been a constant off of the coast of south Florida since October 2017. These red tides have caused the death of uncounted fish, 80 manatees and hundreds of sea turtles. While the algae blooms that lead to red tides are caused by a combination of factors, they can be fed by the same pollution causing the toxic green algae plaguing inland waters of south Florida.

There is or has been a lot of finger pointing on who is to blame. However, all fingers should be pointing ultimately at Governor Rick Scott and the Florida legislature. Together they have cut funding, rolled back regulations and eliminated vital enforcement staff. Policy matters, enforcement matters, and, ultimately, a commitment to clean water is a choice. Floridians will soon be heading to the polls. Will they choose clean water? Or will they choose the same old politicking that led to this crisis of green water?



Photo credit: Julie Dermansky

AND BOARD



Ariadne Acevedo is now the Director of Membership and Community Fundraising. Ari builds donor giving, coordinates events and manages the Outreach Team.



Sam Perez is the newest member of GRN's Board. Sam is a bartender and beverage director with roots in the Lower St. Bernard Parish Isleños community.

HOUSTON STRONG: EQUITABLE RECOVERY

GRN is excited to be working with the Coalition for Environment, Equity and Resilience (CEER) in Houston, Texas. CEER is a collaboration that envisions a more environmentally equitable and resilient Houston. To accomplish their vision, CEER brings the voice of the community to post-Hurricane Harvey decision-making to (1) raise awareness of the connections between environmental threats (like flooding and pollution) and community health and well-being; and (2) advocate for public and private investment in protecting community by cleaning up hazards that contaminate the air, water and land, while at the same time preventing or reducing flooding.



AVEDA EARTH MONTH 2018

We want to send a big THANK YOU to our great ally, Aveda. From ambitious corporate production standards to their Earth Month initiative, Aveda puts their values into action. In April, Aveda salons and institutes across the South hosted everything from clean water walks to fashion shows to raise critical funding for GRN's clean water initiatives. We cannot thank them enough!