



**GULF
RESTORATION
NETWORK**

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GULF CURRENTS

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20 VICTORIES FOR 20 YEARS

Gulf Restoration Network is celebrating 20 years of environmental advocacy this year. Beginning in 1994 as a project with a staff of one, GRN has grown into one of the leading organizations working on the health of the Gulf region. As we celebrate this landmark, we're also reflecting back on some of our biggest victories over the years.

Following the destructive fallout of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, GRN launched our Flood Washington campaign – which called on Congress to take action to protect the natural lines of defense that buffer Gulf communities from storms. Over 40,000 supporters like you “flooded Washington” with emails to the White House and Congress, elevating the urgent need to restore our coastal lines of defense. GRN and the MRGO Must Go Coalition then successfully pushed Congress to close the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, also known as the “Hurricane Highway.”

Since these initial victories, GRN has been a central player in the ongoing fight to protect our coastal lines of defense. In Mississippi, we worked to make sure that the Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program was an effective blueprint for restoring Mississippi's coast. In Louisiana, we had a major victory in 2012 when the legislature passed the Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast.

The BP drilling disaster was a tragic wake-up call that forced us to switch gears in 2010. Since then, GRN has been working to hold BP accountable for their damages and to ensure effective restoration is implemented in the Gulf. Three days after the rig exploded, GRN was the first non-governmental organization to do an aerial survey, drawing attention to the inadequate response by BP and the Coast Guard. Later that year, GRN and partners organized Gulf Gathering, which brought together 46 organizations to coordinate action and outline community needs. GRN helped found the Gulf Future Coalition to provide long-term support to protect the environment and culture of the region. Finally, we won a landmark victory in 2012 when Congress passed the RESTORE Act, which directs 80% of BP's fines to Gulf recovery. Since then, we've been working to ensure that the funds support effective restoration projects.

These victories reflect our ongoing commitment to protect the Gulf's natural lines of defense and bring about coastal restoration for future generations. The past two decades have been both challenging and transformative for the Gulf environment, and we thank our allies and supporters for making these victories possible.

Read more about these and other victories on page 3.



*Egret in Jean Lafitte National Preserve, LA.
Photo credit: GRN.*

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GRN and the Gulf Future Coalition came together for Gulf Gathering in Fairhope, AL, 2011. Photo credit: Jeffrey Dubinsky.

LOOKING BACK ON 20 YEARS



Cyn Sarthou,
Executive Director

Gulf Restoration Network turned 20 this year, and I marvel at how it has changed over that time and the many victories we have achieved. Sadly, the past two decades have also seen destruction associated with many hurricanes, including Katrina and Rita, and the largest oil disaster in U.S. history. So there is still much work to do to be done to restore the Gulf.

I believe that GRN’s success and longevity results from:

-Our understanding of the importance of building coalitions;

-Carefully focusing our work on significant long-term threats to the Gulf where we feel GRN can make a difference;

- Our commitment to empowering individuals and communities to more effectively address the environmental threats that they face; and

- Strong support from our members, donors, foundation funders and coalition partners – we really couldn’t do it without all of you.

"THERE IS STILL MUCH WORK TO BE DONE TO RESTORE THE GULF."

2015 will be a big year for GRN and the communities of the Gulf – the 5th memorial of the BP drilling disaster and the 10th year since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Far too many of the Gulf’s coastal communities are still feeling the effects of these disasters. And, despite what BP says, the long-term impacts of the BP drilling disaster on our natural resources are still unclear. What is very clear is that all of us must continue to work to ensure that the health of the Gulf and its coastal communities are restored and sustained.



Supporters join hands in a day of collective action for clean energy in Ocean Springs, MS.
Photo credit: GRN.

Cynthia Sarthou,
Executive Director of Gulf Restoration Network

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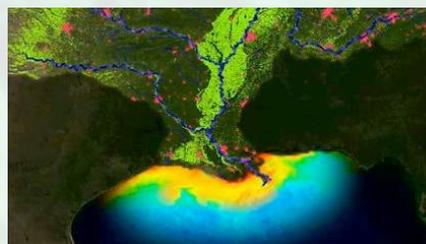
Aaron Viles
New Orleans, LA

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- Grace Morris, Senior Organizer
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- Hannah Pepper-Cunningham, Online Communications Coordinator
- Andrew Whitehurst, Water Policy Director

GRN groups petitioned EPA to take Dead Zone-causing nitrogen and phosphorus pollution seriously and to form an Interstate Management Conference regarding the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone. While the petition was rejected, it served as a catalyst for the formation of the Dead Zone Task Force.

1995 TAKING ACTION ON THE DEAD ZONE



*The watershed of the Mississippi River and the Dead Zone.
Photo credit: NOAA.*

2005 FLOOD WASHINGTON

After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, GRN launched the Flood Washington Campaign, generating over 40,000 emails that urged the federal government to take action on coastal restoration.

In 2006, GRN began to fight the development of fish-killing open loop liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminals on the Gulf Coast. Each of these terminals would have sucked up over a hundred million gallons of Gulf seawater daily, destroying much of the sea life in that water. We worked with our partners in the Gumbo Alliance to successfully prevent two open-loop LNG terminals from being built off the coast of Alabama. In March of 2007, Shell announced that they would finally suspend their Gulf Landing LNG terminal project. In 2008, Alabama Governor Bob Riley vetoed the last remaining proposal for an offshore LNG facility in the Gulf.

2006 PREVENTING FISH KILLING LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FACILITIES IN THE GULF



*Young supporters protest LNG development at One Shell Square in New Orleans.
Photo credit: Darryl Malek-Wiley.*

2008 SAVE OUR CYPRESS



*Second growth cypress in the Atchafalaya Basin.
Photo credit: Dean Wilson, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper.*

Up until 2008, loggers were clear-cutting Louisiana cypress forests to grind them into mulch. Why cut down our storm protection to decorate garden beds? That's the question that GRN and our partners posed over a multi-year campaign that included days of actions in front of stores across the country, seafood boils outside these companies' corporate headquarters and thousands of petition signatures from supporters. Ultimately, Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and Lowe's all committed to no longer sell cypress mulch harvested from coastal Louisiana.

GRN was one of the first organizations to begin monitoring the impacts of the BP disaster and respond by calling the federal government to action. We also brought together a broad coalition of groups and individuals pushing for effective response and restoration in the wake of the catastrophe.

2010 - PRESENT RESPONDING TO THE BP DISASTER



*GRN supporters observe the 3-year memorial of the BP Disaster in 2013.
Photo credit: GRN.*

DEFEND OUR COAST, DEFEND OUR CULTURE FUNDRAISER

In October we held our fall fundraiser at Mondo Restaurant. In addition to marking Gulf Restoration Network's 20th anniversary, the event brought together many of our founding board members. Cellist Helen Gillet played a beautiful set of music, and Chefs Susan Spicer, Kristen Essig of Meauxbar and Michael Gulotta of MoPho served a delectable spread.

After guests had a chance to mingle, we welcomed keynote speaker, Mike Tidwell, to the stage. Mike recounted to the audience how he first became introduced to the interconnected wetlands of South Louisiana and the coastal land loss crisis that threatens this unique region - a journey that informed his seminal book, *Bayou Farewell*.

Thank you to all of our amazing partners who made the event possible!



Greg Gasperecz and Laurie Conner. Photo credit: GRN.



GRN Executive Director Cyn Sarthou and Chef Susan Spicer. Photo credit: GRN.



Robert Desmarais Sullivan poses for GRN's "I Love Clean Water" photo booth. Photo credit: GRN.

BAYOU REVISITED WITH MIKE TIDWELL

In addition to being the keynote speaker at Mondo, Mike Tidwell took a trip down the bayou with us to revisit some of the people and places that he wrote about over a decade ago in *Bayou Farewell*. We visited a restoration site with Windell Curole from the South Lafourche Levee District, saw a sobering reminder of coastal land loss in Leeville and met with members of the United Houma Nation. Then, we finished the day with a book signing at Octavia Books!



Principal Chief of the United Houma Nation Thomas Dardar, Jr. and Mike Tidwell. Photo credit: GRN.



Mike speaking at Octavia Books. Photo credit: GRN.



Mimicking storm surge, Windell and Mike run up a levee. Photo credit: GRN



In *Bayou Farewell*, Mike talks about this graveyard near Leeville sinking into the water as the land disappears. Over a decade later, it is barely visible above the water. Photo credit: GRN.

VOODOO EXPERIENCE 2014

This was Gulf Restoration Network's 8th year partnering with the Voodoo Music + Arts Experience and it was a roaring success! At GRN's booth, volunteers and staff signed up over 60 new members and snapped shots of people taking action at our photobooth. Many musicians took action too – after we flew members of the band Rise Against over Louisiana's disappearing wetlands, they gave the coast and GRN a shout out during their set!



GRN outreach team at Voodoo. Photo credit: GRN.



Supporter takes action at our photo booth. Photo credit: GRN.



Kam Franklin of the Suffers. Photo credit: GRN.



Rise Against on stage. Photo credit: GRN.

SUMMER SOLSTICE PARTY

On this year's summer solstice, Gulf Restoration Network celebrated 20 years of environmental stewardship with a party in New Orleans' City Park in partnership with Global Green USA, The Green Project and Concordia. We toasted with champagne, watermelon and live music and auctioned a series of unique rain barrels painted by more than 30 New Orleans artists. The Summer Solstice Celebration was our way of saying a collective thank you to supporters like you who have helped us reach this milestone.



Partygoers pose by one of the painted rain barrels. Photo credit: GRN.



Congo Square Preservation Society leads a drumming circle. Photo credit: GRN.



Solstice party guests enjoy a sunny day at the City Park Peristyle. Photo credit: GRN.

STAY IN TOUCH

Join GRN on social media for more timely updates and breaking news.



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CONNECTING THE DOTS IN PENSACOLA

On July 24, the first *Connecting the Dots: Environment ~ Climate ~ Social Justice* workshop was hosted by Jayeesha Dutta, coordinator of the Gulf Future Coalition, Mary Gutierrez of Earth Ethics, Inc. and Barbara Albrecht of the Panhandle Watershed Alliance to develop trust and maintain an open and engaging dialogue with the greater Pensacola, Escambia and Santa Rosa County communities. The workshop series seeks to bridge communities across the Gulf by encouraging respectful and participatory dialogue and insisting on quality public participation and equitable representation from elected officials on issues that matter to frontline communities.

One participant poignantly asked how one regains a sense of hope within the community. To address the ‘lost hope’ issue, the hosts reminded everyone that collective actions and connections are a lifeline for our communities. This part of our social infrastructure feeds overall community progress; it is progress from within, because change comes from within. Without hope it is difficult for individuals and a community to move forward. How do communities rebuild connectivity? The *Connecting the Dots* workshops aim to support doing just this.



Big Lagoon State Park in Pensacola, FL. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons user Ebyabe.

At the July workshop, participants identified the issues and the ultimate destination: a healthy, sustainable community and ecosystem in every sense of the word. On October 21, a follow-up *Connecting the Dots* conversation collectively identified key issues and concerns within the Pensacola regional community. The group identified actions items to address these issues and concerns. Coming early in 2015, the next step in *Connecting the Dots* is to collaboratively develop an implementation plan that helps to create a collective vision for the Pensacola regional community.

LOUISIANA COMMUNITIES CHOOSE COAST OVER COAL

The proposed RAM coal export terminal that would interfere with one of Louisiana’s major coastal restoration projects and send mile-long, uncovered coal trains running through the West Bank made headlines in 2014.

Existing coal export terminals prove that coal export facilities are bad neighbors. Uncovered mounds of coal release clouds of dust that cover boats, cars and homes with soot and pollute the Mississippi River. This pollution ends up in restoration projects when sediment is pumped from the river to rebuild wetlands.

The West Bank of the Mississippi River, nicknamed by residents the ‘Best Bank,’ is leading the charge against coal export terminals and the threat these facilities pose to coastal communities. Dozens of local leaders from Ironton and Wood Park in Plaquemines Parish to Gretna and Harvey in Jefferson Parish organized neighbors and public officials against the RAM coal export terminal.



Gretna resident Laurie Ledet at a Gretna City Council meeting. Photo credit: Jeffrey Dubinsky, Louisiana Environmental Action Network.

The good news: Westwego, Gretna and Jefferson Parish all passed unanimous resolutions about RAM, citing health and safety concerns, calling for a public hearing and choosing coast over coal in 2014. These victories show that when we come together and get our communities involved, we can convince decision makers to choose coast over coal.

We still have our work cut out for us: it’s going to take the state and its Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) choosing coast over coal to stop RAM’s destructive plan. Mark your calendars for January 21st and join us in Baton Rouge for the next CPRA meeting!



GRN’s Scott Eustis holding one of many chunks of coal scattered throughout a coastal restoration site. Photo credit: Jeffrey Dubinsky, Louisiana Environmental Action Network.

RESTORATION BEGINS IN THE WAKE OF THE BP DISASTER

It's been a busy year on the Gulf Coast as restoration dollars from the BP disaster have begun to flow to projects that protect and restore the communities, wildlife and ecosystems impacted by the disaster. At Gulf Restoration Network, we've been hard at work encouraging our federal and state decision-makers to use the best available science, enhance public participation, ensure the process is transparent and prioritize real ecosystem restoration as they begin the process of making the Gulf whole.

To guarantee that environmental restoration remains the priority, GRN filed a lawsuit challenging the use of Natural Resource Damage Assessment dollars for Alabama's beachfront convention center in Gulf State Park. For the last two years, we have raised serious objections to this project; not only is it wildly inappropriate for this type of funding, it also damages our environment and limits the public's access to the beach in Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. Our state and federal agencies are supposed to look out for the public and our natural resources,



Beachgoers enjoy Gulf State Park, AL. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons user Jodybwiki.



Restoration efforts in Plaquemines Parish, LA. Photo credit: Louisiana Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration.

not misspend precious restoration dollars. We hope they correct this egregious error by withdrawing the funds for the convention center and move forward with other projects that actually restore the Gulf Coast.

The RESTORE Act, which will deliver 80% of BP's Clean Water Act fines to the Gulf Coast, has begun the process of moving restoration dollars towards Gulf recovery. Using \$1 billion in fines from Transocean, one of the contractors involved in the BP disaster, the five Gulf States and federal agencies will be able to start spending funds to go towards environmental and economic restoration. Recently, the RESTORE Council released a list of 50 projects that will be considered for funding. In Spring 2015, the final list will be presented to the public for comment. GRN is committed to advocating for the best possible projects that will benefit the diverse Gulf communities and ecosystem.

VICTORY FOR MISSISSIPPI'S COAST

After a year and a half of litigation, GRN won a big victory this summer in our efforts to protect the Mississippi Coast and Gulf Islands National Seashore from the threat of offshore drilling. GRN and Sierra Club filed suit



Beachfront in Bay St. Louis, MS. Photo credit: GRN.

in 2012 over concerns that the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) had failed to truly analyze the economic impact that drilling could have on the coastal economy, especially tourism. In the final decision, Judge Singletary vindicated this concern, stating that "[a] cursory reading of the [Economic Impact Statement] prepared by MDA shows that it is severely lacking in the requirements established by [the law]."

If the state intends to move forward with offshore drilling they will have the difficult task of showing that it is in fact the best bet for coastal communities. This win protects Gulf Islands National Seashore and the quality of life that makes the Mississippi Gulf Coast such a unique place.



Sea oats in Gulfport, MS. Photo credit: GRN.



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UNITED FOR A HEALTHY GULF

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS FOR A HEALTHY GULF

A lot has changed since our founding in 1994. Here's how you've helped us grow:

While we have secured many victories for our Gulf, threats continue to emerge. This year we've fought the opening of Mississippi waters for drilling, a proposed expansion of coal terminals in Louisiana that would impair restoration efforts and the misspending of Natural Resources Damage Assessment funds on an Alabama beachfront convention center.

Your donations have equipped us to handle these campaigns, as well as strengthened our long term victories. Consider making an end-of-year gift today and help us build on 20 years of victories for our Gulf. You can donate by filling out the enclosed envelope, or by visiting our website at healthygulf.org/donate

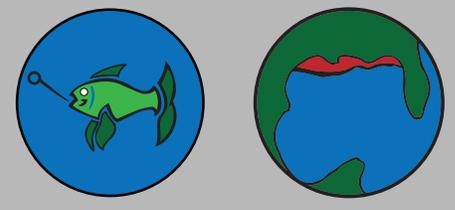
1994
GULF RESTORATION NETWORK

THEN

NOW

2014
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ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS



Gulf Fisheries | Dead Zone



Pearl River | Lines of Defense | Flood Less NOLA | Gulf Future
BP/RESTORE | 12 Miles South | Coast Not Coal



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.