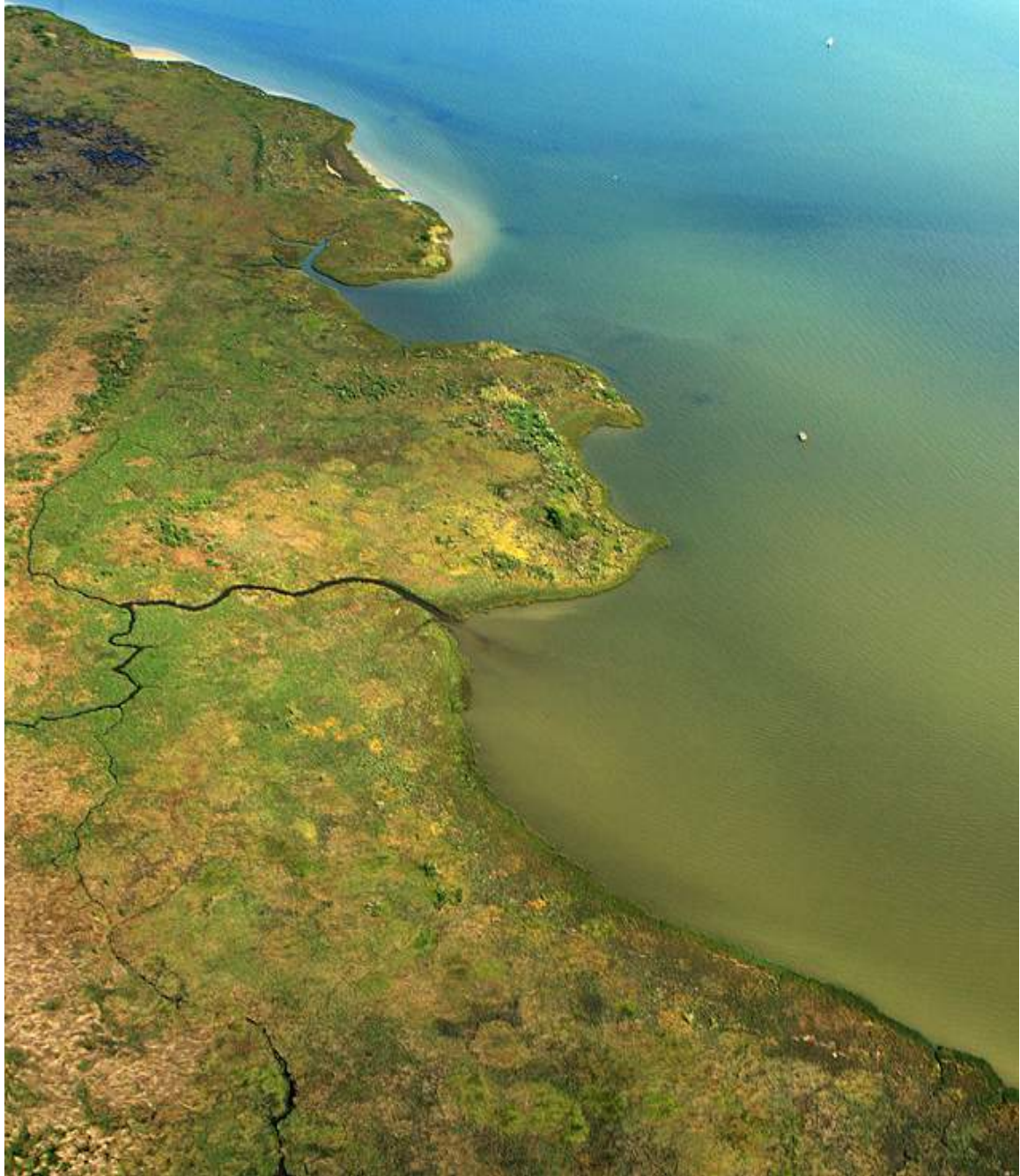


# **GULF RESTORATION NETWORK IS COMMITTED TO UNITING AND EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO PROTECT AND RESTORE THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE GULF REGION.**

Gulf Restoration Network's vision is that the Gulf of Mexico will continue to be a natural, economic, and recreational resource that is central to the culture and heritage of five states and three nations. The people of the region will be stewards of this vital but imperiled treasure, and they will assume the responsibility of returning the Gulf's environment to its previous splendor.

Within this vision, the mission of GRN is to unite and empower people to protect and restore the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico region. To this end, GRN works to provide technical support and mentoring to grassroots groups, to connect our members to developments on national and regional issues of importance to their work, and to provide coordination, when needed, of member activities across the region.

GRN's staff also pursues campaigns on priority issues affecting the entire Gulf region, including water pollution, wetlands loss, the BP oil drilling disaster, and threats to the marine ecosystem. GRN partners with other organizations on common initiatives within these arenas. GRN also engages individuals through information sharing, publications and an e-mail action alert network. In this way, GRN plays a pivotal role in providing our members and others with the technical information, Gulf-wide strategic collaboration, and communication that will empower them to successfully address the environmental threats that the Gulf faces.



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Looking back on 2011, I'm incredibly proud of the work of Gulf Restoration Network to protect and restore the Gulf, and I'm also cognizant of the long road that lies before us to realize our vision of a healthy Gulf. The prior year had been marked by crisis: the BP oil drilling disaster overwhelmed the Gulf, grabbed the nation's attention, and consumed a huge portion of our organizational resources. In 2011, we settled into the long-term efforts to obtain good policy outcomes that protect the Gulf from future oil disasters, increase industry accountability, and implement effective restoration projects. I have no doubt that this work will continue for years. Other important issues – the Dead Zone, wetlands destruction and the loss of the Mississippi River delta, inappropriate development in Florida's Nature Coast, pollution in Mississippi's rivers and streams, and many more – also came back into focus.

In late 2010, Gulf Restoration Network developed a strategic plan for 2011 through 2014. This Annual Report presents our 2011 successes and highlights in the context of that plan. While the full strategic plan is not presented here, this report will provide a good sense of our strategic direction for those 3 years and the strong foundation we have built in 2011 for continued success. In reviewing this report I'm most excited about the important victories and accomplishments of 2011, sometimes overlooked in the face of ongoing challenges, that GRN was able to achieve, including the end of the



**"In reviewing this report I'm most excited about the important victories and accomplishments of 2011..."**

Richton Salt Dome project that would have harmed the Pascagoula River, the formation of the Gulf Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and their commitment to forming a Citizens' Advisory Committee, and the development of our new logo and visual branding that you see in this Annual Report.

Financially, it was a solid year for the organization, and, thanks to our supporters and funders, we were able to maintain much of the increased levels of staff and programmatic spending necessary to address the new issues that have arisen in the aftermath of the BP oil disaster while remaining focused on our work for healthy waters, coastal habitats, and the marine ecosystem. Our overall budget of nearly \$1.5 million has been reduced for 2012 as attention and funding for oil disaster response wanes, but it was expected and our financial outlook remains strong.

**CYNTHIA SARTHOU,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



# OUR 2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

---

**Robert Hastings, Chair** from Prattville, AL

**Hank Caddell, Vice Chair** from Mobile, AL

**Teresa Carrillo** from Corpus Christi, TX

**Martina Cartwright** from Houston, TX

**Allen McReynolds** from Houston, TX

**Jose Miranda, Secretary/Treasurer** from New Orleans, LA

**Cynthia Ramseur** from Ocean Springs, MS

**Brooke Rosenberg** from St. Petersburg, FL

**Susan Spicer** from New Orleans, LA



# OUR 2011 STAFF

---

**Cynthia Sarthou**, Executive Director

**Aaron Viles**, Deputy Director

**Eir Danielson**, Development Director

**Irene Dowling**, Office Manager

**Michelle Erenberg**, Special Projects Coordinator

**Scott Eustis**, Coastal Wetlands Specialist

**Dan Favre**, Communications Director

**Cathy Harrelson**, Florida Organizer

**Jonathan Henderson**, Coastal Resiliency Organizer

**Raleigh Hoke**, Mississippi Organizer

**Briana Kerstein**, Special Projects Coordinator

**Harry Lowenburg**, Development Associate

**Natasha Noordhoff**, Administrative Assistant

**Ayn Pivonka**, Campaign Assistant

**Darden Rice**, Florida Program Director

**Casey DeMoss Roberts**, Science and Water Policy Assistant  
Director (*outgoing*)

**Matt Rota**, Science and Water Policy Director

**Leanne Sarco**, Campus Organizer

**Tarik Zawia**, Canvass Director

**Andrew Whitehurst**, Science and Water Policy Assistant  
Director

# GRN BY THE NUMBERS

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## INCOME SOURCES, 2011

**\$729,119** from Foundation Grants **48%**

**\$374,158** from Aveda Earth Month Partnership **24%**

**\$326,026** from Membership Dues **22%**

**\$23,811** from Interest on Investments **2%**

**\$19,103** from Special Events **1%**

**\$37,423** from Other Sources **3%**

**\$1,503,710** Total Income





## ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENSES, 2011

**\$1,233,796** Programs Total **85%**

**\$292,946** towards Defend our Wetlands **20%**

**\$427,596** towards BP Oil Drilling Disaster Recovery **30%**

**\$13,020** towards Sustainable Fisheries **1%**

**\$109,472** towards Florida's Nature Coast **8%**

**\$344,662** towards Healthy Waters **24%**

**\$36,100** towards Other Expenses **2%**

**\$219,716** Support Total **15%**

**\$59,687** towards Administration & General **4%**

**\$160,029** towards Fundraising **11%**

**\$1,443,512** Total Expenses



# OUR GOALS

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**CLEAN FLOWING WATER** CONNECTED TO THE GULF OF MEXICO WILL SUSTAIN ECOLOGICALLY VIBRANT RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT HABITAT, WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITIES.

**COASTAL AND ESTUARINE HABITATS** OF THE GULF OF MEXICO WILL BE PROTECTED AND RESTORED TO SUPPORT HEALTHY WILDLIFE AND RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.

THE GULF OF MEXICO WILL BE A **HEALTHY MARINE ECOSYSTEM** SUPPORTING A DIVERSITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABLE RECREATIONAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS **COLLABORATE TO TAKE ACTION** FOR A HEALTHIER GULF.

EMERGING THREATS TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE GULF OF MEXICO REGION ARE IDENTIFIED AND **EFFECTIVE ACTION INITIATED.**

# OUR STRATEGIES FOR A HEALTHY GULF

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Ensure implementation of federal environmental laws, like the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act, in the Gulf region by watchdogging, proposing solutions, and litigating when necessary.

Educate decision-makers about issues facing the Gulf – local, state, and federal agencies, elected officials at all levels, and business leaders – and urge them to make choices that will create a healthy future for the Gulf of Mexico region.

Organize citizens and organizations, through focused outreach, communications tools, and coordinated actions, to advocate for better environmental policies in the Gulf region.

Tell compelling stories through the media, GRN publications and videos, and face-to-face contact in order to inform the public about the beauty and wonder of the Gulf region, threats to its future, and our work for a healthy Gulf.



# THE BP OIL DRILLING DISASTER IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

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While the BP's Macondo well was capped and media attention moved on in 2010, BP's oil disaster continues to impact the Gulf's ecosystems and communities. Our field monitoring program, which conducted over 60 trips by plane and by boat in 2011 to observe impacted areas and response efforts, documented continuing visible oiling of the Gulf's wetlands and beaches. During this time of bearing witness with cameras and video, science continued to uncover many of the unseen effects. From microorganisms to dolphins and humans, every link in the food chain has shown alarming signs for concern, and the potentially devastating long-term impacts will not be known for years.





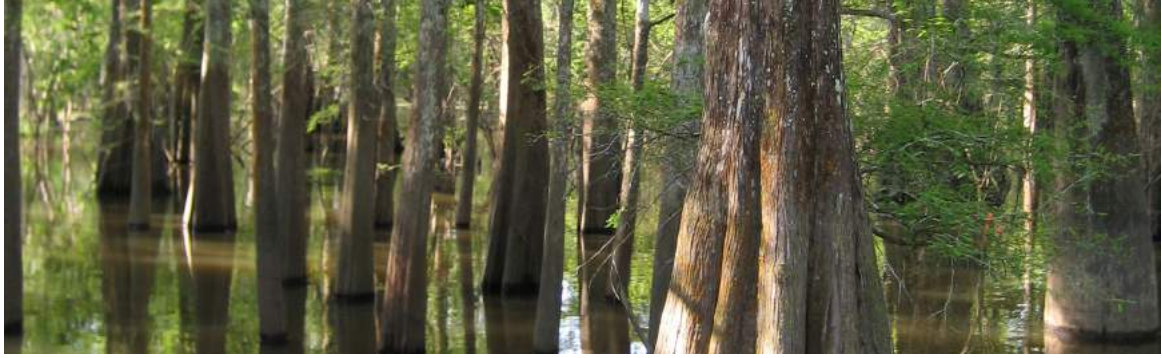
To move forward, the nation must prioritize restoring the natural resources that wildlife and communities rely upon while protecting the Gulf from future oil disasters. Gulf Restoration Network's efforts in 2011 reflected these aims. While being engaged in many issues, from challenging the use of dispersants to guiding early restoration, we strove to achieve two main priorities:

- Holding BP accountable and ensuring that a substantial portion of their Clean Water Act fines go towards Gulf recovery
- Protecting the Gulf by giving local, impacted communities a formal role in oil and gas industry oversight by establishing a Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

Our accomplishments towards these goals are listed throughout the report, and responding to the BP oil drilling disaster will continue to be a part of Gulf Restoration Network's work for years to come. Directly confronting the root causes and the damages from the BP disaster is crucial to accomplishing our mission for a healthy Gulf.

While the Gulf was already in a crisis state prior to April 20, 2010, when the BP oil disaster began, the crude and dispersants have exacerbated our environmental troubles. It has also brought unprecedented opportunities to potentially reign in industry-wide abuses and use BP's fines to jumpstart long-needed restoration projects.





## GOAL #1

**CLEAN FLOWING WATER CONNECTED TO THE GULF OF MEXICO WILL SUSTAIN ECOLOGICALLY VIBRANT RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT HABITAT, WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITIES.**

## STRATEGIES FOR 2011-2014

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- Use direct advocacy and grassroots mobilization to compel policymakers and agencies at the state and federal levels to adopt strong regulations that will better implement the Clean Water Act across the five Gulf states to better protect rivers, lakes, and wetlands connected to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Empower communities to protect and enhance local water quality by connecting them with existing tools and resources to help them influence decision-making.
- Analyze and review permit applications and oppose, through litigation if necessary, those that allow for excess pollution discharges, have potential large-scale wetlands impacts, and/or impact rare or endangered species.



# 2011 SUCCESSES

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The Richton Salt Domes project that would have greatly impacted the Pascagoula River is abandoned after organized public pressure from GRN members and partners. This project would have withdrawn 50 million gallons of water per day from the river and created an estimated 90 oil and salt spills.

GRN helps the Nature Coast Coalition formally incorporate as a 501c3 non-profit group with its own board of directors, members, and plan to protect Florida's Nature Coast.

Proposal to dam streams to create unnecessary reservoirs that would have impacted the Pearl River is temporarily abandoned, and Peco Foods Chicken Processing is forced to reduce its pollution flow in order to help clean up the Pearl River. Both victories are a direct result of threatened GRN lawsuits.

Over the year, GRN's work saves at least 2,327 acres of wetlands and 30,279 linear feet of streams, including the Chickasawhay Creek.

After several years of pursuing the lawsuit, GRN successfully holds Hancock County Development Corporation accountable for their violations of the Clean Water Act when they started an unpermitted development that threatened 3,027 acres of wetlands and caused flooding in neighboring properties.

GRN successfully convinces EPA to formally list Louisiana's coastal waters as polluted due to the impacts of the Dead Zone. Under the Clean Water Act, this now requires a formal plan to clean up the Dead Zone.

## GOAL #2

**COASTAL AND ESTUARINE HABITATS OF THE GULF OF MEXICO WILL BE PROTECTED AND RESTORED TO SUPPORT HEALTHY WILDLIFE AND RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.**

## STRATEGIES FOR 2011-2014

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- Monitor federal and state Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) processes and coastal programs and advocate for full funding to BP oil disaster restoration.
- Educate federal administration officials and members of Congress on issues of coastal resiliency and urge them to take appropriate actions to protect and restore coastal ecosystems.
- Engage the public on coastal issues through online organizing and communication.
- Provide technical assistance and support to coastal communities planning for future storm protection.



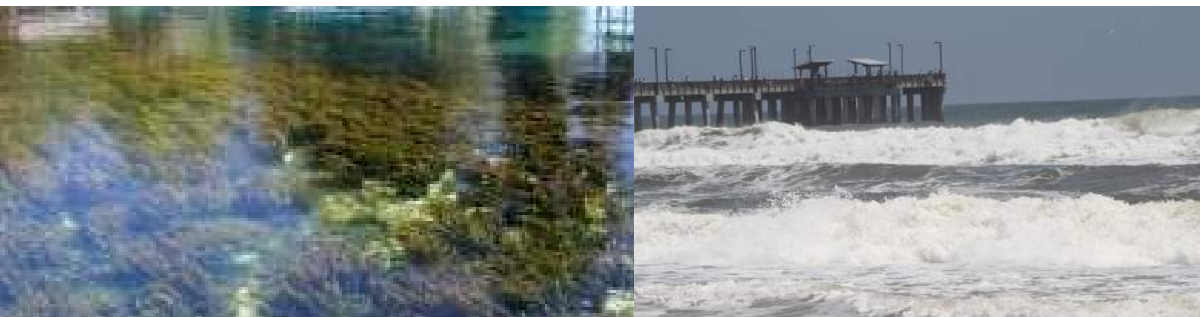
# 2011 SUCCESSES

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The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, created by President Obama in the immediate aftermath of the oil disaster, uses the Gulf Future Coalition's prioritization guidelines to help develop their restoration plan and commits to forming a citizens advisory committee after much public pressure by GRN and our partners.

The Gulf Future Coalition releases *Sunshine on the Gulf: The Case for Transparency in Restoration Project Selection* and garners significant attention. The report pushes decision-makers to effectively negotiate the NRDA process for maximum ecological benefit.

GRN and our supporters send 22,381 e-actions and over 2,300 signed postcards sent to Congress urging passage of the RESTORE Act to dedicate BP's Clean Water Act fines to Gulf recovery and establishment of a Regional Citizens' Advisory Council to help prevent future oil disasters.





## GOAL #3

**THE GULF OF MEXICO WILL BE A HEALTHY MARINE ECOSYSTEM SUPPORTING A DIVERSITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABLE RECREATIONAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.**

## STRATEGIES FOR 2011-2014

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- Monitor federal agency actions – permits, funding decisions, etc. – with impacts to Gulf of Mexico and publicly oppose dangerous proposals.
- Working in coalition, advocate for federal policies that fully assess and adequately limit the negative impacts of Gulf oil and gas development and exploration activities.
- Organize and mobilize Gulf citizens to pressure state decision-makers to strengthen policies that provide protection for unique marine habitats in state waters, including the establishment of a moratorium on oil and gas drilling in Florida state waters.
- Advocate for the creation of new marine sanctuaries and federal policies that protect important marine areas.



## 2011 SUCCESSES

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A lawsuit filed by GRN and our partners forces EPA to disclose chemical components of dispersants and exposes lack of rigorous testing in approval process for dispersants, which were widely used in response to the BP oil drilling disaster.

Legislation that mirrors GRN recommendations to establish a Gulf of Mexico Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, which gives impacted communities a formal role in oil industry oversight, is introduced in the United States Congress. Unfortunately, it does not pass.

Over 2,000 public comments submitted in opposition to a proposal to dredge a mega-channel through seagrass beds at Fillman's Bayou in Florida. The permit continues to be reviewed, and GRN will fight for preservation of this important manatee habitat.

GRN helps organize the Hands Across the Sand events that brought together hundreds of people, including former Florida Governor Charlie Crist, to stand up and join hands to protect the Gulf's beaches from offshore oil drilling.



## GOAL #4

**INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS COLLABORATE  
TO TAKE ACTION FOR A HEALTHIER GULF.**

## STRATEGIES FOR 2011-2014

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- Seek input and collaboration from organizations and community groups throughout the nation on strategic issues regarding the Gulf.
- Inform and engage a wide array of individuals through focused outreach, good communication tools, and regular opportunities to take action.
- Facilitate regular communications between groups throughout the region on issues, such as the BP drilling disaster, that have broad impact.



# 2011 SUCCESSES

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GRN is a leader in organizing the Gulf Future Coalition, a group of over 50 civic, fishing, environmental, and faith organizations, which releases *Gulf Future: Action Plan for a Healthy Gulf* that outlines specific actions for Gulf recovery that the coalition demands from government and industry in the wake of the BP disaster. GRN hosts regular conference calls to facilitate the on-going work of the Gulf Future Coalition.

GRN's Summer Outreach Office conducts one-on-one conversations with over 51,000 individuals and recruits nearly 3,000 dues-paying GRN members to support our efforts to respond to the BP disaster while collecting over 500 handwritten letters to Congress pushing for action on sending BP's Clean Water Act fines to the Gulf and establishing a Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

Another successful partnership with Voodoo Experience music festival results in hundreds of concert goers experiencing our coastal lines of defense wetlands installation as well as a musicians' tour of our coastal crisis with artists such as Ani DiFranco, Blind Pilot and MyNameIsJohnMichael.

In September, 206 dedicated individuals host Defend the Gulf Home Movie Screenings to recruit friends and family to support the Gulf, and a handful of hosts go on to deliver petitions postcards to their legislator's district offices.



## GOAL #5

**EMERGING THREATS TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE GULF OF MEXICO REGION ARE IDENTIFIED AND EFFECTIVE ACTION INITIATED.**

Strategies, benchmarks, and outcomes will be related to issues that arise. Strategies to identify and assess new threats include:

- Monitoring state and federal agency public notices and other publications,
- Maintaining communication with GRN members and ally organizations,
- Attending issue forums in the region, and
- Researching and analyzing proposed projects

For issues that merit further attention, GRN will focus on developing campaigns, litigating, and securing funding as needed to address new threats.

# NEW ISSUES TO RESPOND TO IN 2011 & BEYOND

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In August of 2011, disaster struck the Pearl River (which forms the border between Louisiana and Mississippi) when the Temple-Inland paper mill released a toxic by-product called black liquor that killed hundreds of thousands of fish and mussels in the river, including over twenty endangered Gulf sturgeon. GRN, along with our conservation partners, monitored this disaster and shared our observations with the public and the responsible state and federal agencies. GRN testified at two Louisiana Senate committee hearings, and is working with a coalition of groups to ensure that adequate fines are assessed, the fines are devoted to the restoration of the Pearl, and that the plant's new permit is improved in order to protect the Pearl and the Gulf.

In the last days of 2011, while most of us were focused on family holidays, out-going Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour put in motion a plan to expand oil and gas drilling in Mississippi state waters, including areas directly adjacent to Gulf Islands National Seashore and other pristine coast. GRN quickly jumped into action and worked to reinvigorate the 12 Miles South Coalition to counter this threat, and our work on this issue has continued into 2012.

After three years of delay, the U.S. EPA denied a petition filed by GRN and members of the Mississippi River Collaborative. This petition requested that the EPA do its mandatory duty and set limits on nitrogen and phosphorus pollution in the Mississippi River Basin and Gulf. Due to this denial, the Collaborative was forced to file suit against EPA in 2012.

# GULF RESTORATION NETWORK VISIBILITY



Executive Director Cynthia Sarthou on C-SPAN testifying before Congress.

**RAISING THE VISIBILITY OF GULF RESTORATION NETWORK AND OUR EFFORTS TO PROTECT AND RESTORE THE GULF IS CRUCIAL TO OUR SUCCESS. SPECIFIC EFFORTS HAVE INCREASED THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE GULF REGION AND NATION WHO ARE AWARE OF THREATS FACING THE GULF AND HOW THEY CAN WORK WITH GRN TO TAKE ACTION FOR A HEALTHY GULF.**

# 2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & VICTORIES

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Our perspective and quotes are included in many print, radio, and TV stories in outlets like the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Times-Picayune*, NPR, the *Sun Herald*, WWL-TV, and many more.

GRN is recognized as a leader in the Gulf Coast, receiving invitations to participate in high profile panels such as the National Aquarium in Baltimore's "NRDA for the Gulf" panel discussion, Environmental Grantmakers Association's annual retreat, and Rachel's Network New Orleans retreat.

GRN staff appear in 3 high profile documentaries on the Gulf: *The Big Fix* (premiered at Cannes in 2011), Spike Lee's *If God is Willing and Da Creek Don't Rise*, (released on DVD in 2011) and a new documentary *Dirty Energy*, which premiered at the 2012 Santa Barbara Film, winning the Social Justice Prize.

We continue our high profile partnerships, working with musicians and bands such as Pearl Jam, REM, Rise Against, Ani DiFranco, Dr. John, and many others; actors such as Mark Ruffalo, Katee Sackhoff, and Tricia Helfer; NFL player Scott Fujita, and Chef Susan Spicer.

Working with professional designers and marketers who donate their time and expertise, GRN develops a new logo and branding that will increase our visual recognition amongst the public when unveiled in early 2012.

Our 43,792 activists and supporters on our email list send over 205,000 messages to decision-makers in support of a healthy Gulf in 2011. With 12,457 Facebook friends and 3,958 Twitter followers in 2011, and a growing social media presence, GRN quickly informs and activates supporters.

# DONORS & CONTRIBUTORS

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We would like to thank the following donors for their critical contributions in 2011. Their generosity is what allows GRN to continue working towards a healthy gulf.

## FOUNDATIONS

Alki Fund (Tides Foundation)  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
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(Gulf Coast Fund)  
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A sincere thanks to each and every one of the 4,569 people who donated between \$30 and \$250 in 2011 to establish or renew their GRN membership.

## AVEDA PARTNERSHIP 2011

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Every April, GRN is an Aveda Earth Month Partner and Aveda Salons throughout the Southeast raise awareness and significant funds for our work. Our sincere thanks to Aveda; all the Aveda customers and salons who supported us; and especially distributors The Neill Corporation, The Salon People, and Aveda Services Southeast. In 2011, total funds raised through Aveda to restore and protect the Gulf exceeded \$374,000!



**GULF RESTORATION NETWORK**

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