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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Advisory

Gulf Conference 2026 focuses on latest science and management for the future of the Gulf

What: The Gulf of America Alliance is hosting the Gulf Conference 2026, the nation's largest meeting focused on the Gulf region. This four-day event will bring together over 1,000 coastal scientists and experts to discuss current research and plan for the future of the Gulf. Emphasizing the intersection of science, policy, and management, the Gulf Conference will include sessions on ecosystem and community resilience, restoration, and resource management.

The Opening Plenary on Tuesday, May 5, will feature:

- Commissioner Chris Blankenship, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Mayor Spiro Cheriogotis, City of Mobile
- Deputy Under Secretary Laura Grimm, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

When: May 4-7, 2026 from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. daily; Opening Plenary is Tuesday, May 5 at 9:00 a.m.

Where: Mobile Convention Center, 1 South Water Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602

Media Information: Event parking is located at the Convention Center. Media should present their credentials at the registration desk, located on the Upper Concourse, to receive a media packet and be introduced to communications staff.

Contact: David Lee Simmons, Communications Coordinator, at 504-352-2539 (cell)

More Information:

Conference website: <https://gulfofamericaalliance.org/gulfcon2026/>

Opening speaker information:

- Chris Blankenship was appointed as the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources by Governor Kay Ivey in August 2017. He is a native of Dauphin Island and graduate of the University of South Alabama.

- Mobile's 109th Mayor, Spiro Cheriogotis, was sworn into office in November 2025, with a vision of creating a city that all Mobilians can be excited to call home. Before his election as Mayor, Cheriogotis built a distinguished career in public service and law.
- Laura Grimm is the NOAA Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere. She graduated from the University of South Alabama and began her career gaining field experience as a field technician at the Fisheries Ecology Lab at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

Primary event sponsors include: National Academies' Gulf Research Program, Harte Research Institute, NOAA RESTORE Science Program, Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, Esri, Gulf of America Coastal Ocean and Observing System, Outdoor Alabama | Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Alabama Power, and Visit Mobile

About the Gulf of America Alliance

The Gulf of America Alliance is a regional partnership focused on enhancing the environmental and economic health of the region through increased collaboration. Led by the five Gulf states, our network includes over 165 participating organizations from state and federal agencies, local governments, communities, academia, non-governmental organizations, and industry. Working with these partners, we address priority issues including coastal community resilience; data and monitoring; education; habitat; water resources; wildlife and fisheries; and marine debris.

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