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## **Gulf Conference 2026 brings together scientists and stakeholders to share their work and vision for the future of the coast**

*Over 1,000 experts meeting in Mobile, Ala., this week for the nation's largest conference focused on the Gulf's environment and coastal communities*

Mobile, Ala., May 5, 2026 – Over 1,000 coastal scientists and experts are gathering this week to discuss current research and plan for the future of the Gulf. This four-day event, hosted by the Gulf of America Alliance, is the nation's largest meeting focused on the Gulf region.

Emphasizing the intersection of science, policy, and management, the Gulf Conference (GulfCon) includes 32 sessions and nearly 500 presentations on ecosystem and community resilience, restoration, and resource management. The conference also includes a popular "Tools Café," where presenters will demonstrate 45 regional tools designed to assist stakeholders in making informed decisions about data management, AI use, online mapping, and more.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey provided a video welcome to conference attendees during the opening plenary session. "Our state is known as Alabama the beautiful for a reason and we understand that a healthy ecosystem is what supports a strong economy," said Gov. Ivey. "To each of you here, your work matters. This Alliance continues to bring together leaders from across our region and I'm proud Alabama is hosting you in Mobile. Thank you for all you do to keep the Gulf of America strong."

Commissioner Chris Blankenship, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Mayor Spiro Cheriogotis, City of Mobile, followed with additional remarks. "I'm excited to have GulfCon here," said Mayor Cheriogotis. "Alabama is special because of its environment and we care about our environment [here in Mobile]."

Laura Grimm, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration spoke on the importance of restoration investments for both the environment and coastal economies and said, "We are ensuring the region's natural beauty remains for generations to come. Good relationships are how we get work done." Grimm has strong ties to the Alabama Gulf Coast, graduating from the University of South Alabama and working in the Fisheries Ecology Lab at Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

Throughout the rest week, attendees are participating in numerous workshops, professional development opportunities, and presentations on community resilience, coastal ecology, restoration, environmental education, and more. The overall goal of the meeting is to foster

connections between conference attendees so that the best available science can be used to inform practical solutions to issues that impact the region as a whole.

“Partnerships are what enable us to move the needle on issues that benefit from a regional approach,” said Laura Bowie, Executive Director for the Gulf of America Alliance. “This conference is one of the few places that provides a forum for collaboration on this scale.”

The Gulf Conference is hosted by the Gulf of America Alliance. Primary event sponsors include: the 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, Visit Mobile, Black in Marine Science, Chevron, Freese and Nichols, Alabama Center of Excellence | Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Oceans and Wildlife Institute, Shell, Stantec, Florida RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence | Florida Institute of Oceanography, RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana, and Texas OneGulf Center of Excellence.

### **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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