Bringing Wetlands to Market on the Gulf Coast: An Extension of Bringing Wetlands to Market in Waquoit Bay

Project Location

Texas

Project Duration

August 2016 to April 2018

Project Lead

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Project Type

Science Transfer – promoting the use of science

Project Partners

- Gulf of Mexico Regional Coastal Training Program Initiative
- Restore America's Estuaries
- Tierra Resources, LLC
- Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Overview

In taking on this project, the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve is leveraging approaches and lessons learned from the first "Bringing Wetlands to Market" project, which was developed by the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and supported by the Science Collaborative from the National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

Using the original project's successful "Roadshow Dialogues" model, the Mission-Aransas Reserve team will provide outreach in order to communicate blue carbon concepts and highlight relevant scientific research to currently engaged blue carbon end users. Outreach efforts not only will identify ways to incorporate blue carbon benefits into wetlands conservation and restoration activities but also will identify carbon finance opportunities. The project will boost support for restoration and conservation in several ways. It will connect Gulf Coast blue carbon end users with established blue carbon networks. It will provide long-term and sustained technical assistance opportunities and connections to carbon finance markets. And it will engage the public's interest in blue carbon education through tours, videos or other media, and two "Bay Talks" lectures.

Anticipated Benefits

- Strengthened relationships among researchers, stakeholder groups, and those interested in moving blue carbon projects forward in Texas.
- Improved communication and facilitation techniques to more effectively gauge blue carbon stakeholder needs and interests.
- Enhanced stakeholder knowledge and confidence in discussing blue carbon concepts and financial market opportunities, and the ability to identify ways of integrating blue carbon into their work.
- More informed decision makers and members of the public who can better articulate the ecosystem services associated with coastal habitats and relate blue carbon to the value of coastal wetlands.

Project Approach

The team will begin by synthesizing the blue carbon needs assessments from prior workshops to help inform the Roadshow Dialogues and subsequent workshops. Using the existing communications model from Waquoit Bay Reserve, the team will then develop and conduct Roadshow Dialogues with key stakeholders. These events will consist of personal meetings to introduce blue carbon concepts, gather information about opportunities and constraints, identify additional stakeholders, and inform subsequent workshops.

The first workshop will transfer blue carbon knowledge, skills, and lessons learned from the "Bringing Wetlands to Market" project to Texas researchers. The second workshop will highlight needs and opportunities identified during Roadshow Dialogues that can—with the help of stakeholders— move blue carbon projects forward in Texas.

The team will develop two podcasts from existing workshop footage to create a blue carbon information resource. The team will also work with the reserve's education staff members to incorporate blue carbon concepts into existing tours and host two public lectures. All project activities and products will be shared with the existing Blue Carbon Network in the Gulf Coast region.

Anticipated Products and Targeted End Users

- Targeted blue carbon end-user needs assessment
- Roadshow Dialogues with key blue carbon stakeholders in Texas
- Workshops for blue carbon stakeholders in Texas
- Blue carbon videos or other media for a non-technical audience
- Blue carbon public lectures

About the Science Collaborative

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System's Science Collaborative supports collaborative research that addresses coastal management problems important to the reserves. The Science Collaborative is managed by the University of Michigan's Water Center through a cooperative agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Funding for the research reserves and this program comes from NOAA. Learn more at nerrs.noaa.gov or graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs.