

Value of decision analysis in stakeholder interactions for the restoration and recovery from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill

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Platform Session Considerations:

First choice- Issues and Directions of the 2010 Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill

Second choice- SCI-030 Exploring Human Dimensions and Decision-making in Coastal and Estuarine Management OR SCI-044 Integration of Socio-Economic Values into Coastal Resource Decision Making

Character limit for abstract- 2000 (including spaces)

The importance of stakeholder involvement in the management of watersheds is receiving greater recognition than in the past; however, interacting with stakeholders is frequently accomplished using informal procedures. It is essential to structure elicitations so that they can be more effective in deriving new objectives and alternatives from stakeholder values. The decision analysis literature offers a wealth of empirically-derived and common sense structures that can improve stakeholder interactions and the information obtained or conveyed during elicitation processes. A case study will be presented to illustrate aspects of the value-focused approach for structuring stakeholder beliefs and perspectives. To demonstrate salient products, major post-oil spill policy documents related to the restoration, recovery, and long-term health of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) coastal communities were reviewed and an objectives hierarchy containing fundamental objectives and potential measures for the objectives was constructed. The fundamental objectives describe the primary concerns in restoring the viability of the GOM during recovery efforts. Strategic objectives were also elucidated to describe the long-term quality of life aspirations for GOM communities and ecosystems beyond recovery and restoration efforts. In addition, a means-ends network was constructed to differentiate means objectives from the fundamental objectives. Means objectives are essential only for their influence in achieving fundamental objectives. The demonstrated products were developed from management reports and policy documents but actual products should be constructed with meaningful stakeholder input. Properly preparing stakeholder elicitation workshops and obtaining useful objectives can be time-consuming and challenging but necessary to ensure a robust management process and better decisions.