

Land-Grant Universities and the Mississippi River Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force: Opportunities for Collaboration

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Overview

- Fall 2012 HTF meeting idea of HTF-LGU collaboration initiated
- Small working group assembled to more fully develop concept
- Spring 2013 HTF meeting idea of HTF-LGU collaboration articulated in white paper
- Summer 2013 non-funded cooperative agreement crafted
- Coordination needs identified at Fall 2013 meeting and in follow-up conversations with HTF Coordinating Council members
- HTF-LGU Cooperative Agreement signed and executed
- Conference call Winter 2014 determined that Multistate Extension and Research Activity appropriate organizational structure.

Extension Research Activity

(ERA, SERA, NCERA)

- Formal USDA-NIFA multistate structure designed to promote multistate, Research & Extension activities.
- Are intended to bring together researchers and extension specialists sharing a common problem, issue, or disciplinary interest.
- The general objective is to provide a functionally integrated forum to coordinate joint activities to address stakeholder needs.
- Approved by Experiment Station and Extension Directors and NIFA
- Overseen by Administrative Advisor
- Standardized reporting to USDA-NIFA

SERA Organizational Efforts

- 1/2014 – Southern and North Central leadership appoints SERA 46 leadership (Burger and Schmidt)
- Directors of Experiment Stations and Extension assign LGU participants
- 04/28/2014 – Inaugural organizational meeting, Atlanta Georgia
 - Attended by representatives from 10 LGUs, NC and S Regional directors, Administrative Advisors
 - Developed draft objectives and assigned writing teams
 - Timeline and assignments

Hypoxia SERA Proposal

Timeline and Responsibilities - 2014

Date	Action	Responsible Members
Fri, May 16	Objectives, activities, outcomes initial drafts due	Objective Groups; Obj 1 lead Rebecca Power, Obj 2 lead Wes Burger, & Obj 3 lead Mike Schmitt
Thu, May 22	Draft objectives presented to HTF for feedback/suggestions	Rebecca Power, Wes Burger, & Mike Daniels
Fri, May 23	Justification section draft due	Andy Ward & Wes Burger
May 23 - June 9	Edit Objective Groups' drafts into Objectives, Procedures & Activities, Expected Outcomes & Impacts, and Linkages sections and draft additional minor proposal sections	Wes Burger, Mike Schmitt, Rebecca Power, Robin Shepard, & Eric Young
Mon, June 9	First draft of complete proposal sent to everyone for review/ edits/ additions/ suggestions	Everyone
Wed, June 18	All comments on first draft due	Everyone
June 18 - 23	Second draft developed based on comments	Wes Burger, Mike Schmitt, Rebecca Power, Robin Shepard, & Eric Young
Mon, June 23	Second draft sent to everyone for review and comments	Everyone
Mon, June 30	All comments on second draft due	Everyone
June 30 - July 3	Final draft developed based on comments	Wes Burger, Mike Schmitt, Rebecca Power, Robin Shepard, & Eric Young
Mon, July 7	Final draft sent out for external review	Eric Young

SERA Goals/Objectives

- 1. Establish and strengthen relationships that can serve the missions of multiple organizations addressing nutrient management and environmental quality.**
 - a. Support regular communication and collaboration among LGUs, HTF members, and other partners to strengthen multi-state approaches regarding agricultural and environmental research and outreach
 - b. Encourage intrastate interactions between state agencies, universities and others to meet state-level nutrient reduction goals
 - c. Leverage the synergy of the HTF-LGU relationship to seek/secure funding to support multistate initiatives that address HTF goals

SERA Goals/Objectives

- 2. Strengthen the knowledge base for discovery of new tools and practices as well as for the continual validation of recommended practices.**
 - a. Strengthen the science base that informs our understanding of the costs, benefits, and efficacy of nutrient management strategies at multiple temporal and spatial scales.
 - b. Develop and refine appropriate nutrient decision support tools for better decision-making
 - c. Promote environmental assessment research to improve water and atmospheric quality

SERA Goals/Objectives

- 3. Improve the coordination and delivery of educational programming and increase implementation effectiveness of nutrient management strategies that reduce nutrient movement for agricultural and non-agricultural audiences.**
 - a. Exchange across states information about model education and outreach programs that improve adoption of conservation practices and enhance nutrient use efficiency.
 - b. Within states, collaborate with HTF member agencies and other stakeholders to address outreach and education priorities
 - c. Engage farmers in producer-led watershed projects and on-farm research and demonstration to increase the adoption and effectiveness of nutrient management strategies.
 - d. Engage producer groups and Ag industry (CCAs, Trusted Advisors, Ag consultants) to develop and implement effective nutrient management strategies.

Priorities for Collaborative Work – May 2015

- 1. Strengthening Networks**
- 2. Conservation Systems Research and Outreach**
- 3. Monitoring, Calibration, and Validation**

Priorities for Collaborative Work

- 1. Identify common attributes and gaps across state nutrient reduction strategies to highlight opportunities for cross state information sharing.*
- 2. Translate science regarding the issues and solutions in tile drained areas into accessible information for states to adopt into policies to address nutrient use and movement. Referred to NCERA 217 – Drainage design and management practices to improve water quality.*
- 3. Develop and implement a social indicators system that will guide, evaluate and advance implementation of strategies to reduce nutrient loss from agricultural lands across the 12 HTF states.*
- 4. Create a network of watershed practitioners and farmer leaders to strengthen the implementation effectiveness of nutrient management strategies that reduce nutrient movement.*
- 5. Develop training and educational materials that will provide basic information about agriculture and nutrient management to agency staff, conservation NGOs and others who are less familiar with agriculture.*

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

- Engagement at the Task Force level
 - Work with the HTF to increase implementation of science-based approaches that reduce nutrient losses to the environment.
- Engagement at the state level
 - Collaborate with HTF member agencies within each state to accomplish the nutrient reduction goals of the HTF action plan.
- Engagement with Agricultural Community
 - Provide outreach and education to the agricultural community that increases adoption of nutrient management practices and reduces nutrient losses.

Other Coordination Needs

SERA Process and Next Steps

- Determine mechanisms for ongoing regional communication w/ the HTF, Coordinating Council, and other collaborators.
- Identify related NIFA AFRI Water LOIs and potential NIFA Integrated Water Quality proposal ideas?
- Identify other funding sources?