Mississippi River Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force

Hypoxia Task Force: Moving Forward to 2013

Catherine Ngo, EPA NOAA 3rd Annual Hypoxia Coordination Workshop March 27, 2012

Hypoxia Task Force: Who We Are

5 Federal Agencies and Tribes:

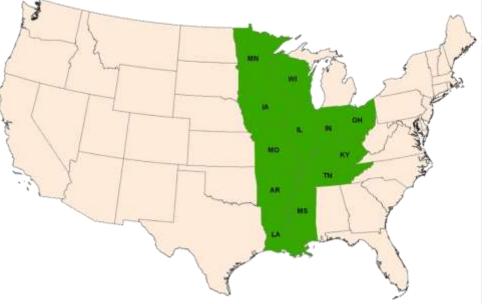
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Department of Agriculture

12 States:

- Arkansas
- Ohio
- Missouri
- Iowa
- Tennessee
- Minnesota
- Indiana

- Louisiana
- Illinois
- Mississippi
- Kentucky
 - Wisconsin

- US Geological Survey
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Tribal Water Council



Each state is represented on the Task Force by either:

Agriculture agency, Environment (pollution control) agency, or Natural Resources agency

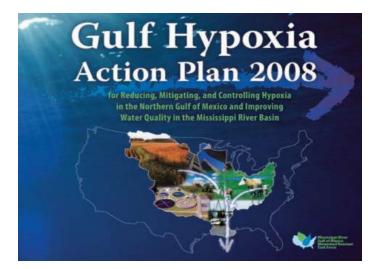
Goals of the Hypoxia Task Force

- Coastal Goal: By 2015, reduce 5-year running average size of the Gulf hypoxic zone to 5,000 km²
- Within Basin Goal: Restore and protect the waters of the 31 states in the Mississippi River Basin
- Quality of Life Goal: Improve the communities and economic conditions across the Basin



Task Force Focus:

- > 2008 Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan
 - Product of a four-year reassessment and consideration of emerging science



- Actions to achieve goals include:
 - Develop/implement statewide nutrient reduction strategies with complementary federal strategies
 - Track interim progress on reducing N & P
 - Develop nutrient management tools and reduce scientific uncertainties

Task Force Actions Supporting Nutrient Reductions and State Strategies

Increased coordination:

- EPA Nutrient Framework (March 2011)
- USDA Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)
- Gulf Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
- Virtual Workshops

2008 Action Plan: Progress on Nutrient Strategy Development

Various stages of the development process:

- Developed the strategy and moved on to implementation
- Submitted strategy framework to EPA Regions for review
- Completed initial drafts of nutrient reduction strategies (internally)
- Holding large stakeholder meetings

2013 Reassessment: Action Plan Action Item #11

"In five years (2013) reassess N and P load reductions, the response of the hypoxic zone, changes in water quality through the MARB, and the economic and social effects...determine appropriate actions to continue to implement, or if necessary, revise the strategy."

History of Task Force Reassessment

- Reassessment on the state of the science began in 2006:
 - Involved a series of scientific symposia, publication of major technical reports, extensive reviews and stakeholder comments Informed 2008 Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan

Progress and Reassessment 2001–2007 Areal Extent of 2007 Hypoxic Zoni of the goal.

Trends in the Size of the Hypoxic Zone

The hypoxic zone in the Northern Gulf of Mexico forms each summer and can extend up to eighty miles offshore and stretch from the mouth of the Mississippi River westward to Texas coastal waters. The size of the hypoxi zone varies considerably each year, depending on natural and anthropogenic factors. In 2007 the measured size of the hypoxic zone was 20,500 square kilometers (7,900 square miles), about the size of the state of Massachusetts the third largest hypoxic zone since measurements began in 1985 (Figure 2). The goal of this Action Plan is to reduce the fiveyear tunning average size of the zone to less than 5,000 square kilometers (about 1,900 square miles). The current five-year average (2003-2007) is 14,644 square kilometers (5,600 square miles), more than twice the size



Reassessment 2013: Approach

Assumptions:

- Studies have informed and refined our approach but do not necessitate a radical shift in actions away from the Action Plan.
- Approach approved by HTF members in September 2011
 - Focus on reporting the progress of implementing the first ten Actions in the 2008 Action Plan

Reassessment 2013: Progress Update

Formed a Reassessment Workgroup to cover each action in the Action Plan

Workgroup agreed to a draft timeline

Date	Action
Mid-April 2012	All outlines submitted
Mid-August 2012	Second draft completed
September 10, 2012	Face-to-Face Work Group Meeting

Reassessment 2013: Summary

- > 2008 Action Plan remains valid
 - Recent developments continue to support current direction of our activities
- Maintain current HTF priority of developing and implementing state nutrient reduction strategies

