

Gulf Coast Emphasis Area Teams



Name: Aaron Archibeque
Title: Regional Chief of Refuges
Program: National Wildlife Refuge System
Location: R2 Regional Office, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Length of Federal service:
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team?



Name: William G. (Bill) Vermillion
Title: Bird Conservation Specialist
Program: Division of Migratory Birds, Gulf Coast Joint Venture
Location: National Wetlands Research Center, Lafayette, Louisiana
Length of Federal service: 14 years
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? Knowledge regarding priority bird species in the northern Gulf of Mexico region and the relevant issues impacting those species.



Name: Mike Montagne
Title: Project Leader
Program: Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation
Location: Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, San Marcos, TX
Length of Federal service: 21 Years with the USFWS
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? Worked in Fisheries for 24 years in four states, the last five in Texas. Served on a Detail as the Surrogate Species Coordinator in 2014 as well as a member of the Gulf Coast Surrogate Species Team.



Name: E. Dawn Gardiner, formerly Whitehead
Title: Assistant Field Supervisor
Program: Ecological Services
Location: Texas Coastal Ecological Services Field Office, Corpus Christi, Texas
Length of Federal service: 29 years, 10 months but who is counting?
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? I am passionate about the Gulf Coast because I am fortunate to be the fifth generation of my family raised on the upper Texas coast on a cattle ranch in the marsh with oil and gas and colonial waterbirds and ducks and redfish and oysters

and so much more that I loved and shared with anyone I could. I did stints as the Coastal Coordinator in Florida and as a South Atlantic Fisheries Coordinator for the Southeast that keyed me in to principle players in fisheries management and coastal habitat conservation. Being on the Gulf Emphasis Team allows me to use all my career experiences plus my most recent certifications in mediation and facilitation.



Name: John A. Huffman
Title: Regional Coordinator
Program: Coastal Program
Location: Houston, TX
Length of Federal service: 15 years
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? Serves as the Region's representative for the Service's Gulf Restoration Program, engaging in a cross-regional team to communicate a vision and coordinate actions across programs, field stations, and regions. He and his team collaborate with conservation groups and build relationships between non-traditional external partners to make the most of the \$ billions pending for Gulf ecosystem restoration. His team works along the entire Texas coast to conserve and restore habitats for many coastal fish and wildlife including the several endangered species. They provide technical assistance, public outreach and develop capacity in new partners.



Name: Bill Bartush
Title: CWB®, Coordinator
Program: Gulf Coast Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative
Location: National Wetlands Research Center, Lafayette, LA 70506
Length of Federal service:
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? Bill is a Certified Wildlife Biologist®, and is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Biologist and Coordinator for the Gulf Coast Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative. Bill has remained active in private lands management, providing technical advice for agricultural, forestry, and wildlife operations in Florida, Texas, and Oklahoma. He has had many opportunities to work with, and learn from, exceptional natural resources managers, research scientists, ecologists, and biologists.



Name: Kelly McDowell
Title: Refuge Supervisor Texas Gulf Coast
Program: National Wildlife Refuge System
Location: San Marcos, Texas
Length of Federal service: 24 years
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? I have managed refuges on the Gulf Coast for over 20 years. I began working on private lands before my career with the Service and have extensive experience in restoration and management of coastal habitats ranging from Chenier Plain marshes to Tamaulipan Thorn Scrub.



Name: Kris Metzger
Title: Southwest Regional Inventory and Monitoring coordinator
Program: National Wildlife Refuge System
Location: Southwest Regional Office, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Length of Federal service:
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? Kris Metzger has a background in landscape ecology and coordinates the southwest region Inventory and Monitoring Program. She started working at the regional office in Albuquerque almost four years ago. Her research focuses on understanding the impact that land cover change and human caused and natural disturbances have on the conservation and sustainability of ecosystems. Specifically she is working on a project in the Gulf coast to predict which areas remain high quality whooping crane habitats through the coming century.



Name: Jennifer Sanchez
Title: Project Leader
Program: National Wildlife Refuge System
Location: Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Length of Federal service: 26 years with FWS
What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas Team? I have worked on Texas coastal refuges for most of my career with FWS.



Name: Mitch Sternberg

Program: Nation Wildlife Refuge System, Division of Biological Sciences

Title: Zone Biologist

Location: Alamo, Texas

Length of Federal service: 17 years

What strengths do you bring to your Emphasis Areas

Team? Applying and monitoring habitat restoration treatments on riparian, thornscrub and grassland areas; endangered species management and planning; migratory bird, seashore bird, ocelot, and other mammal research; international partnerships; knowledgeable of Realty and Planning Division processes.