

# Jean L W Cowan

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## Summary

My career spans more than 35 years, and includes 15 years conducting applied research at academic marine science laboratories followed by more than 20 years in government positions conducting ecosystem restoration. I have direct experience in scientific research; data analysis; providing leadership in the development of multi-disciplinary ecosystem restoration plans, project and program management, and monitoring; setting policy in response to new information and within all applicable laws; and communicating information to a variety of audiences using a range of mediums. I am very interested in this position because I have found organizing teams and helping staff clear obstacles to ensure their success while staying on task and within budget to meet common goals to be among the most rewarding aspects of the work I have done.

Multiple times in my career, I have been called upon to work within and lead teams developing large-scale restoration programs in response to disasters in the Gulf. Each time, consensus and cooperation were required to accomplish goals. The teams were challenged not only to determine the most urgent restoration needs, but to consider policy and overall governance shifts needed in response to the major paradigm shifts caused by the disasters. I have worked with, and successfully communicated complex technical information to, a variety of people including agency technical staff; politically appointed leaders; and the general public, including major stakeholder groups and non-governmental organizations. My foundation in scientific research also allows me to effectively communicate and collaborate with the scientific community.

I have managed groups, ranging in size from three to approximately one hundred, tasked with applying scientific principles to determine the most ecologically- and cost- effective restoration solutions, developing restoration plans, and working with stakeholders and the public to receive their input prior to finalizing the plans. In addition to team leadership roles that I have been called upon to fill during times of crisis, I have formally supervised and managed staff while working for the State of Louisiana and with the RESTORE Council. I developed achievable annual performance plans for my staff, stayed in regular communication to understand their progress on tasks, helped them with problem-solving, identified training opportunities, and conducted formal end of year reviews. I also have developed and managed budgets for large and small contracts and MOUs, in addition to the grants management work on individual restoration projects.

Critical to my success in these roles is my proven ability to provide excellent project and program management, developing and maintaining detailed schedules to accomplish a variety of interrelated tasks, identifying individuals' strengths and putting them in positions where they may succeed, and managing multiple teams working toward a common endpoint. My success in conducting such work is evidenced by the fact that I have been asked to serve this type of role repeatedly throughout my time in government service.

## Skills and Experience

### *Ecosystem restoration*

- Team leadership and consensus-building
  - Conduct large-scale, multi-purpose, multi-agency ecosystem restoration planning and implementation
  - Lead, coordinate, and collaborate with diverse groups to reach consensus on restoration plans including priority projects, and programmatic monitoring and adaptive management plans
  - Communicate complex restoration concepts to a variety of audiences (e.g., agency personnel, scientific researchers, political leaders, stakeholders, and general public)
- Restoration Implementation
  - Experience in a variety of habitats (wetlands, barrier islands, living shorelines, hydrologic reconnection, shellfish and finfish restoration)
  - Conduct technical evaluations supporting development of restoration project designs to meet ecosystem goals
  - Work with contractors to implement restoration projects as designed
  - Develop and implement project monitoring and adaptive management plans
- Project management and oversight
  - Build and maintain schedules (Gantt charts)
  - Manage multiple, depended tasks and ensure that all remain coordinated and on schedule
  - Manage staff workloads
  - Build, monitor, and manage budgets
  - Regularly communicate with clients and the public on issues and progress; incorporate feedback to finalize deliverables

### *Research and monitoring*

- Scientist or Chief Scientist on over 150 cruises, for a total of more than 500 days at sea
- Experience in Chesapeake Bay; Mobile Bay; Atlantic Ocean; Lake Michigan; Gulf of Mexico, including open Gulf and coastal Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas

## Related Employment

### **Director, Ecosystem Restoration Programs** Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (GCERC; Jan 2020 – Present)

*Large-scale ecosystem restoration planning, applied science, program operations:*

- **Director:** Manage GCERC Program staff to achieve RESTORE Act comprehensive plan goals
- Led development of program documents (e.g., GCERC Planning Framework, Funded Priorities Lists, Comprehensive Plan Updates)
  - Maintain schedules, manage teams, ensure timely completion of dependent tasks
  - Facilitate discussions to reach consensus among Council members
  - Coordinate with other restoration funding streams, technical experts, and the public on restoration priorities to ensure effective, comprehensive ecosystem restoration
- Coordinate across GCERC departments to meet the mission of the Council
- Ensure timely staff reviews of applications, and appropriate oversight of awarded funds to grant recipients
- Provide leadership in the development and implementation of a science-based monitoring and adaptive management approach

### **Associate Director Science, Planning, and Program Operations** Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (GCERC; Dec 2017 – June 2020)

*Team Leader: Large-scale planning, applied science, Program operations:*

- Coordinate activities to achieve RESTORE Act comprehensive plan goals
- Coordinate and collaborate with Council members, other restoration funding streams, technical experts, and the public on restoration priorities to ensure effective, comprehensive ecosystem restoration
- Coordinate development and implementation of a science-based adaptive management approach

### **Ecosystem Restoration Specialist** GCERC (May 2016 – December 2017)

*Large-scale planning & applied science:*

- Conducted activities to achieve RESTORE Act comprehensive plan goals
- Contributed to coordination and collaboration with Council members, other restoration funding streams, technical experts, and the public on restoration priorities to ensure effective, comprehensive ecosystem restoration
- Supported development and implementation of science-based decision-making

### **Marine Habitat Resource Specialist** NOAA (November 2007 – May 2016)

*Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration:*

- Representative on Trustee Councils for Oil Pollution Act (OPA) and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) cases
- Conducted coastal habitat restoration planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects to address injuries in keeping with all applicable laws
- *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill:

- Senior NOAA Team Member to develop Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan / Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement development (Plan finalized 2016)
- **Team Leader:** Led restoration component of the document that was basis for resolution of the case; coordinated NOAA staff activities (up to 50 staff), and with multiple agency and academic technical experts (hundreds of individuals) to identify restoration and science priorities

**Coastal Resources Scientist** Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (May 2002 – Nov 2007)

*Coastal Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Planning and Monitoring*

- Senior Team Member, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Integrated Planning Team
  - Team developed the first coastal Louisiana Master Plan for integrated community protection and ecosystem restoration (plan finalized 2007)
  - Oversaw document creation; managed activities including development of decision process, data collection and analyses, modeling, and stakeholder and public meetings; delivered presentations to interest groups and the public.
- Monitoring Section Manager
  - Managed Coastwide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS) activities
  - Directed activities of 24 staff housed in 4 offices
- Ecosystem Restoration planning and implementation
  - Supervisor, Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) comprehensive planning team; oversaw the State’s participation in US Army Corps of Engineers’ LCA plan for ecosystem restoration (report finalized 2004)
  - Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA): aided in the design of restoration projects, applying best available science and adaptive management techniques
  - Team member for implementation and monitoring of projects

**Research Associate in 3 Locations:** University of Maryland, Chesapeake Biological Lab; Dauphin Island Sea Lab; Louisiana State University (August 1987 – May 2002)

*Field Research and Monitoring:*

- Manager, Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) Analytical Services Facility; supervised use of analytical and field instrumentation, training staff and coordinating schedules for use of instrumentation; created and regularly updated a manual describing analytical methods and operating instructions
- Assisted in design, and directed implementation of water quality and nutrient biogeochemistry field monitoring programs and laboratory research projects
- Prepared presentations and manuscripts on results, in collaboration with faculty

**Education**

**University of Virginia;** Charlottesville, Virginia (**B.A.**), Environmental Sciences, May 1987

**University of South Alabama;** Mobile, Alabama (**M.S.**), Marine Biology, August 1995

## **Selected Publications**

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council. Draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy.

[https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/PRDFT\\_2022\\_Draft\\_Comp\\_Plan\\_Update\\_PublicComment\\_508\\_Final\\_20220321.pdf](https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/PRDFT_2022_Draft_Comp_Plan_Update_PublicComment_508_Final_20220321.pdf)

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council. 2020, 2021. Funded Priorities Lists 3a & 3b.

*FPL 3a:*

[https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/Final\\_FPL%203a\\_Final\\_Perdido\\_EC\\_508\\_3\\_2\\_2020.pdf](https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/Final_FPL%203a_Final_Perdido_EC_508_3_2_2020.pdf)

*FPL 3b:*

<https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/FPL3b%20Final%20Document.pdf>

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council. 2019. Planning Framework.

[https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/508\\_PlanningFramework\\_Final\\_201908.pdf](https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/508_PlanningFramework_Final_201908.pdf)

Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Trustees. 2016. Final Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan (PDARP) and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

<http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-planning/gulf-plan>

Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. 2007. Integrated Ecosystem Restoration and Hurricane Protection: Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast. 117 pp; 11 appendices.

Twilley, R. R., J. Cowan, T. Miller-Way, P. A. Montagna, and B. Mortazavi. Benthic nutrient fluxes among selected estuaries in the Gulf of Mexico. 1999. In: T. S. Bianchi, J. R. Pennock, and R. R. Twilley (eds.). Biogeochemistry of Gulf of Mexico Estuaries. John Wiley & Sons, New York.

Cowan, J. L. W., J. R. Pennock, and W. R. Boynton. 1996. Seasonal and interannual patterns of sediment-water nutrient and oxygen fluxes in Mobile Bay, Alabama (USA): regulating factors and ecological significance. Marine Ecology Progress Series, 141: 229-245.