

Rowan increases involvement in Gulf of Mexico conservation



The ROWAN ANCHORAGE at work in the Gulf of Mexico.

Story courtesy of the Gulf of Mexico Foundation

A natural resource that is important to Rowan's business are the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Keeping this body of water healthy and productive is critical not only to the oil and gas industry, but also to other industries such as fishing, tourism, transportation, and shipping.

The Gulf of Mexico is the ninth largest body of water in the world, accounting for half the wetlands in the United States and teeming with sea life ranging from killer whales to unexplored deepwater corals living thousands of feet below the surface. The Gulf has some 3,400 miles of shoreline, stretching from Cape Sable, Florida to the tip of the Yucatan peninsula. The Gulf is bordered by Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas to the north, Mexico to the west and the island of Cuba to the southeast.

Rowan employees may not be aware that their company is actively involved

in the Gulf of Mexico Foundation (GOMF) – a unique non-profit organization that promotes conservation of the Gulf of Mexico and its resources through education, public awareness, research and leadership. GOMF's motto is, "America's Sea...Keep It Shining!"

GOMF was founded in 1990 by citizens concerned about the sustainable health and productivity of the Gulf. The founders had interests in business, industry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and environmental conservation. Rowan became a member in 2003 and since then has played an active and significant role in the growth of the Foundation. Danny McNease, Rowan's Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, is a member of the CEO Council. Paul Kelly, who retired from Rowan in 2005 as Senior Vice President, Government Relations, is a member of the GOMF Board of Directors. In 2007, Paul was elected President of the Board.

GOMF's activities fall into three areas:

1. Community based habitat restoration projects

These projects are managed in cooperation with the Gulf of Mexico Governors' Alliance, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and frequently state agencies such as the Texas General Land Office. Projects underway include coastal restoration work being done in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Last year NOAA recognized GOMF as having the best restoration program of its kind in the U.S.

2. Multicultural education

The Science and Spanish Club Network conducted through an innovative outreach program in middle schools and high schools along the Gulf Coast brings students together through science and language. Activities include sampling of bay waters to find what lives below the surface, kayaking through wetlands to monitor animal and plant life, planting mangroves, and cleaning up along coastal areas. In 2007, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality recognized this program as best in the State.

3. Teacher Education

"Down Under, Out Yonder" workshops are sponsored each year for K-12 educators who attend summer workshops on coastal and marine subjects and then participate in an optional three-day dive trip aboard a research vessel. Most often dives are conducted near the Flower Garden Banks and Stetson Bank Marine Sanctuaries and include dives around oil and gas production platforms which also function as artificial reefs teeming with marine life.

Rowan has been a leader in recruiting corporate members of GOMF from the energy sector. Other corporate supporters include BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Transocean, Oceaneering, Anadarko and Valero.

One of GOMF's current priorities is developing ways to get member company employees involved. Want to learn more? Go to GOMF's home page www.gulfmex.org.

