Design and Implementation Support of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Environmental Education Network and Diversity Websites by NGI and GOMA/DISL

Valerie Kleinschmidt[3], Gabriel Brackman[2], Suzanne Shean[1], Lee Yokel[3] and Jay Ritchie[1]
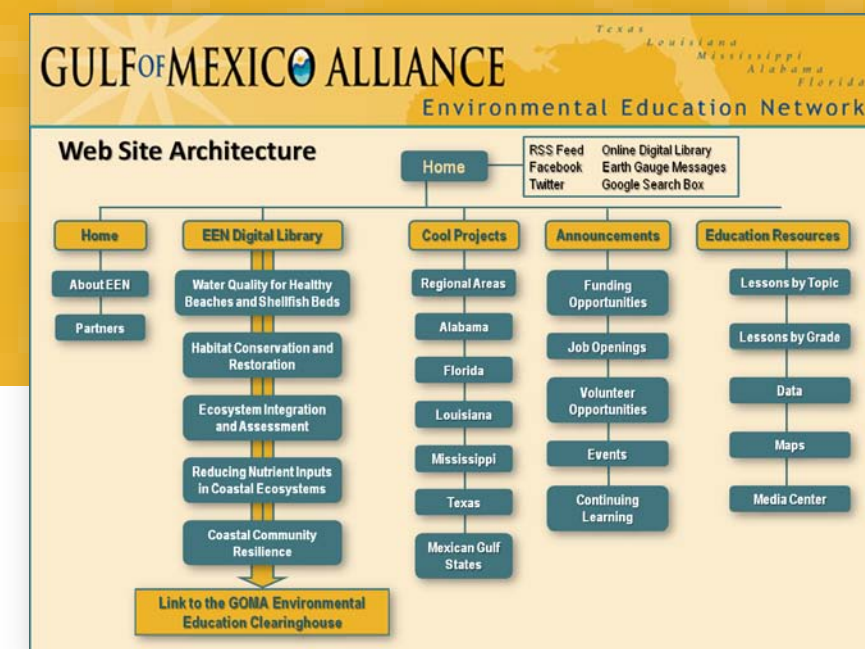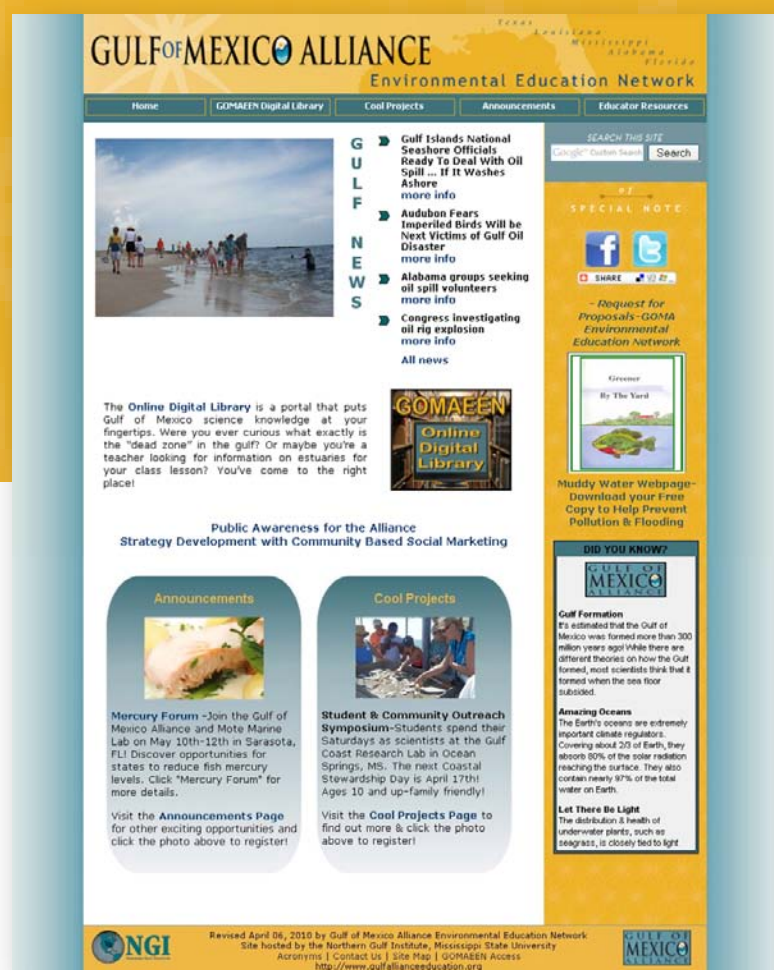
[1]Mississippi State University, Northern Gulf Institute, [2]Mississippi State University, High Performance Computing Collaboratory, [3]Gulf of Mexico Alliance/Dauphin Island Sea Lab

www.gulfallianceeducation.org

Environmental Education Network

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a partnership of the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Its goal is to significantly increase regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico region. Partnerships with Mexico have also been established. Environmental education is one of the six priority issues of the *Gulf of Mexico Alliance's Governor's Action Plan II for Healthy and Resilient Coasts*.

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance Environmental Education Network (GOMAEEN) was formed in response to the first Action Plan during an inaugural meeting in June 2006. GOMAEEN is a regional body of educators/outreach professionals organized with the purpose of coordinating education outreach activities that address the Gulf of Mexico Alliance's priority issues. The creation of this network precipitated the development of the GOMAEEN website for education outreach.
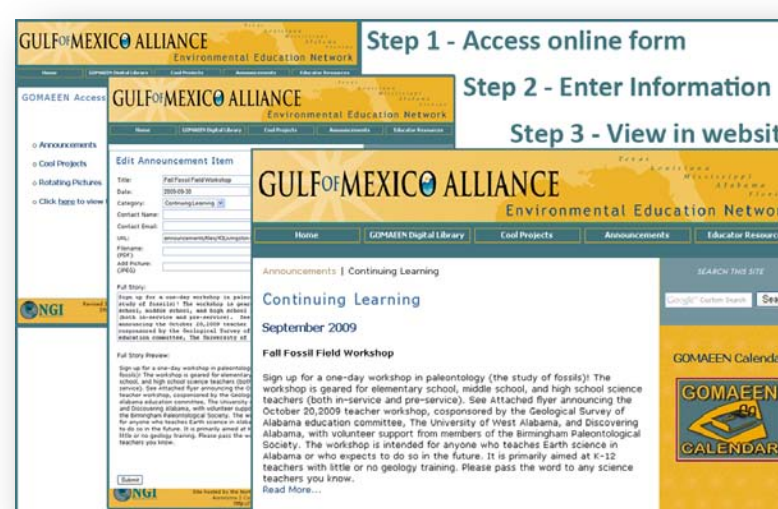
In June of 2008, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance members met for the first storyboard session at Mississippi State University to discuss the website project. In January of 2009, the project was ready for implementation. With funding provided by NOAA Coastal Services Center, website technical staff provided by the Northern Gulf Institute and High Performance Computing Collaboratory (HPC2) of Mississippi State University, website hosting and database access by HPC2 and Gulf Of Mexico Alliance/Dauphin Island Sea Lab staff, the website came to fruition in just three short months when www.gulfallianceeducation.org was launched to the public.
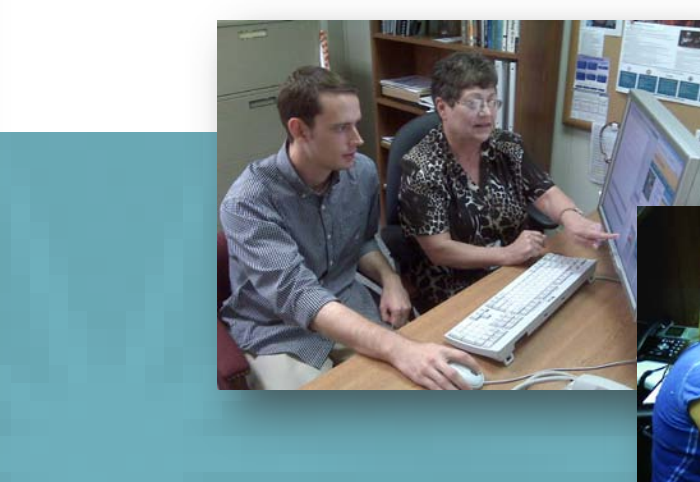

Ease of Updates

The site was designed to facilitate updates by GOMAEEN staff at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. In addition to providing website development and training, several online forms were designed for entering data, such as announcements, cool projects, events, etc. into a SQL database. These entities can then be displayed on associated pages based on dates, priorities, and other criteria. In the summer of 2009, the GOMAEEN Website began implementing Phase II and added the "Educational Resources" section for its main audience-- teachers. This section includes over 100 lesson plans correlated with the National Science Standards, data, maps, and media resources related to the science of the Gulf of Mexico.
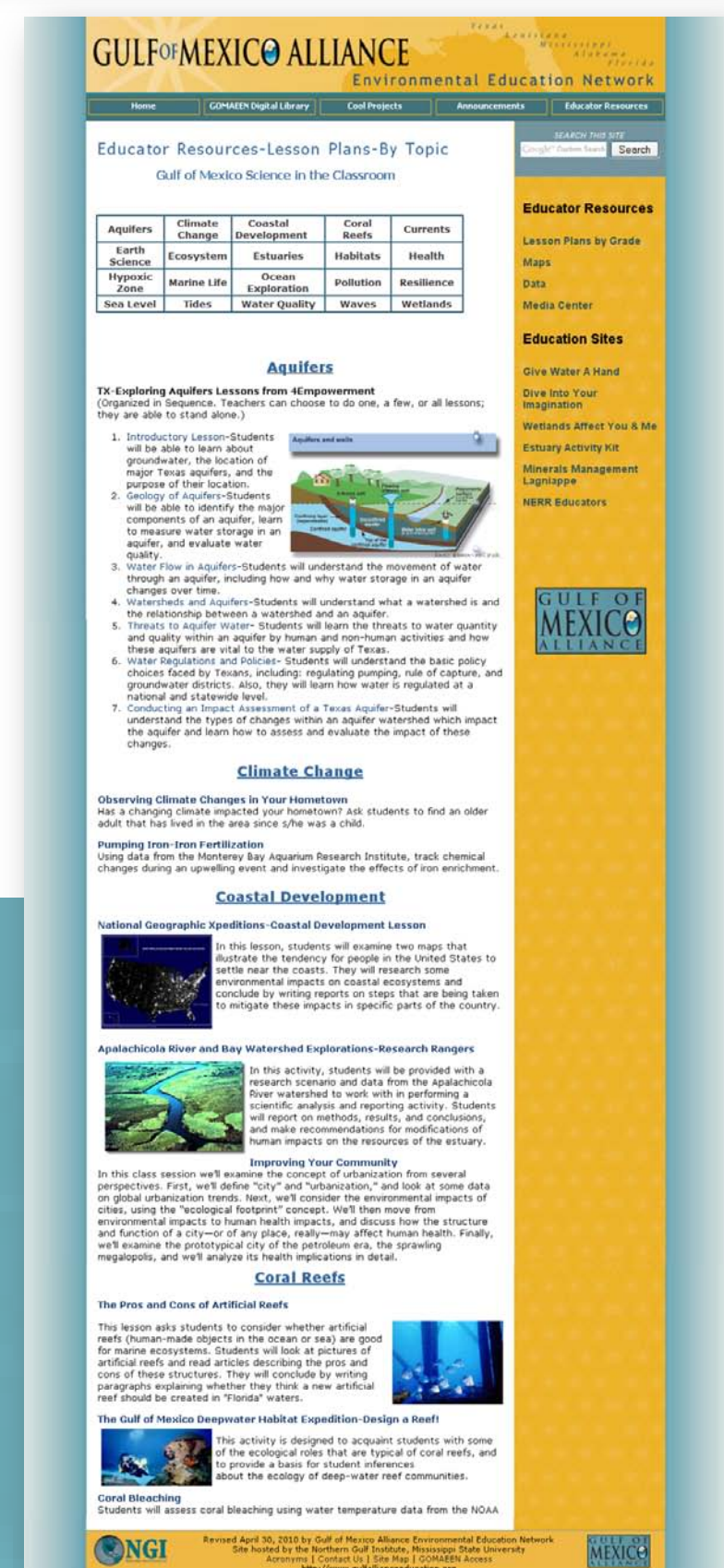

The GOMAEEN staff assists with content and page development. The NGI and HPC2 staff are available for technical assistance, design changes and website development support.

www.gulfalliancediversity.org

Environmental Education Diversity Projects

In order to reflect the broad scope of the Environmental Education Network more fully, a new website was developed and launched in March of 2010 to provide outreach for the Underserved and Underrepresented Working Group. The GOMAEEN Diversity website, www.gulfalliancediversity.org, promotes the need for engaging underserved and underrepresented populations in environmental education and showcases successful programs being carried out in the Gulf Region. The website provides educators with resources, networking and funding opportunities, and professional support with engaging diverse audiences.