



GULF OF MEXICO NEWS

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February 2010



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NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

NOAA National Weather Service to Use New Hurricane Wind Scale

Storm Surge and Flooding Prediction Dropped in New Scale

February 17, 2010



Senior Hurricane Specialist Jack Beven discusses the forecast track of Hurricane Bill with hurricane specialist unit branch chief James Franklin and NHC director Bill Read, August, 2009.

[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

[NOAA's National Weather Service](#) will use a new hurricane scale this season called the [Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale](#). The scale keeps the same wind speed ranges as the original Saffir-Simpson Scale for each of the five hurricane categories, but no longer ties specific storm surge and flooding effects to each category. Herbert Saffir, a consulting engineer, and Robert Simpson, who was director of the [National Hurricane Center](#) from 1967 through 1973, developed the original scale which was a useful tool to convey the threats of tropical cyclones.

Changes were made to the Saffir-Simpson Scale because storm surge values and associated flooding are dependent on a combination of the storm's intensity, size, motion and barometric pressure, as well as the depth of the near-shore waters and local topographical features. As a

result, storm surge values can be significantly outside the ranges suggested in the original scale.

For example, Hurricane Ike in 2008 was a very large storm that made landfall on the upper Texas coast as a Category 2 hurricane with a peak storm surge of 15 to 20 feet. In contrast, Hurricane Charley struck Southwest Florida in 2004 as a Category 4 hurricane, but produced a peak storm surge of just 6 to 7 feet.

Storm surge forecasts will continue to be included in hurricane advisories and statements issued by the National Hurricane Center and local National Weather Service forecast offices. Beginning with the 2009 hurricane season this information has been expressed in terms of height above ground level giving residents a better understanding of the potential for flooding at their location.

The decision to implement the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale was based, in part, on an assessment of the responses received during a 2009 public comment period. The descriptions of wind impacts in the new scale were updated with assistance from highly respected wind scientists from academia and industry.



Hurricane Ike bears down onto the upper Texas coastline with category 2 wind speed of 110 mph, September, 2008.

[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

"I applaud the NOAA decision to decouple storm surge predictions from the Saffir-Simpson scale," said Al Goodman, Floodplain Management Bureau director, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. Goodman noted that while Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast with top winds of Category 3 strength, its expected and actual storm surge was associated with a higher Category of storm when ranked on the original Saffir-Simpson Scale.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.

Benthic Habitat Atlas of Coastal Texas Available Online

February 2010 - NOAA's new online [Benthic Habitat Atlas](#) contains shallow-water habitat information for over 190 miles of Texas coastal bays. Users of the website can access individual maps in an Internet viewer and download and print them as PDF documents. The maps are useful for public meetings, field activities and planning related to dredging, prop scar management and habitat change detection. Users can also access supplemental information on data development techniques.



▶ [NOAA'S BENTHIC HABITAT ATLAS OF COASTAL TEXAS.](#)

Disaster-recovery Forum Emphasizes Multi-sector Resilience Planning

At a civic leadership forum on disaster recovery held in New Orleans, Louisiana, the NOAA Coastal Services Center highlighted the critical role played by ecosystem services in the resilience of a community's natural, economic, and social systems. Attendees expressed interest in NOAA information that can inform private-sector planning related to post-disaster recovery and overall community resilience. Attendees also discussed Gulf Coast recovery lessons learned since Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, and they highlighted the importance of collaborative planning involving public, private, and nonprofit sectors. For more information, contact [Sandy Eslinger](#).

Tide Information Critical for Port Arthur, TX, Oil Spill Response

The Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS) and the Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R) recently assisted the U.S. Coast Guard with their efforts to determine the reopening of the Sabine-Neches Waterway after two vessels collided, spilling an estimated 450,000 gallons of oil on January 24. CO-OPS provided real-time data from their new Sabine-Neches Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System station to OR&R scientists who inputted this data into SHIO, OR&R's tide prediction tool. This information helped the Coast Guard formulate a plan for a limited opening of the waterway. The Coast Guard used the data to determine when it was safe to open the oil booms and allow vessel traffic to pass. Some rough estimates of the economic impacts of the waterway being closed were over \$3,000,000 in schedule delay losses for barges and over \$2,000,000 for deep draft vessels. So, every hour that NOS information enabled the waterways to operate translated to significant savings, not to mention continuing the flow of vital energy supplies for manufacturing, heating homes, transportation, and other uses. For more information contact [Richard Edwing](#) or [Glen Watabayashi](#).

First Maritime Visibility Sensor in Nation Goes Online at Mobile Bay PORTS®

Data from the first Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS) visibility sensor in the Nation is now publicly available on the [Mobile Bay Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System](#) (PORTS®) Web page. The installation is the culmination of years of intensive testing by the CO-OPS Oceans Systems Test and Evaluation Program to select the most suitable sensor for operations in a marine environment. The sensor employs a light-emitting transmitter and a receiver that measures the degree of light scattering in the air. Data from the system will help guide users in navigation-related decisions. For more information, contact [Kathleen Egan](#).

MMS and NOAA Scientists Study Prey of Gulf of Mexico Sperm Whales

NEW ORLEANS, LA. – Minerals Management Service (MMS) and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service biologists have set sail to learn more about the prey of sperm whales in the northern Gulf of Mexico. The first of the research cruise's three legs was completed on February 10, 2010 and the second is underway. The first and second legs of the cruise departed from the NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Fisheries Science Center laboratory in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

The \$550,000 MMS-funded "Sperm Whale Acoustic Prey Study" is part of a cooperative interagency agreement between the MMS and the NOAA Fisheries Service. The results of this study will give each agency a better understanding of how the sperm whale, an endangered species, survives in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

"For over 36 years we have been gathering and synthesizing environmental information through the MMS Environmental Studies Program in the Gulf of Mexico," said MMS biologist Dr. Deborah Epperson, who is working on the study. "Studies such as this one aid in our understanding of marine mammals in the Gulf of Mexico, further enhancing our ability to responsibly manage these offshore areas."

Study results will characterize the potential prey of sperm whales and assess the prey's abundance, distribution, and diversity. Trawling will take place in the northern Gulf of Mexico in water depths ranging from 3,200 to 8,600 feet. As part of the study, MMS and NOAA Fisheries Service scientists will also collect data on a small isolated population of Bryde's whales, the Gulf's only resident baleen whale.

"We've assembled another great team of scientists for this cruise from NOAA and MMS," said Anthony Martinez, marine mammal scientist for NOAA Fisheries Service. "We are excited to continue our research on the feeding ecology of sperm whales, as this multidisciplinary study will help us better understand how these endangered large whales utilize their environment so we may better conserve and protect them."

The survey is being conducted aboard the NOAA ship *Pisces*, a new state-of-the-art 208-foot fisheries survey vessel, which features quiet-hull technology and carries a crew of 21 and up to 15 scientists on a given mission. The research team aboard the *Pisces* is comprised of scientists from MMS, NOAA's southeast and northeast fisheries science centers, and the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology office.

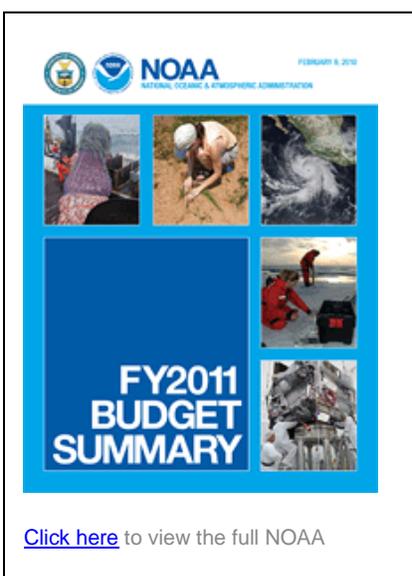
Since the 1990s, the MMS has sponsored numerous studies of sperm whales. One such study included the six-year Sperm Whale Seismic Study (SWSS). The MMS-funded SWSS study provided new information about sperm whales residing in the Gulf, and about their responses to human-created sounds. The “Sperm Whale Acoustic Prey Study” currently underway will address information gaps identified in SWSS.

Other NOAA News

President Proposes Key Investments in NOAA 2011 Budget

Strengthening science and innovation for the global economy

February 1, 2010



President Obama today released the [2011 proposed budget for NOAA](#), requesting \$5.6 billion for the nation’s oceanic and atmospheric agency. The request includes investments to strengthen NOAA’s science, promote economic development, strengthen energy and security, sustain oceans and coasts, and protect lives and livelihoods.

“This budget reflects the commitment of the president and secretary of commerce to job creation, science and the environment,” said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “NOAA’s innovations in science and technology have been instrumental in ensuring that a strong economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. This request will build on that track record as we meet the demands of a changing world.”

Investment highlights

Weather: Each year the National Weather Service issues more than a trillion forecasts and 10,000 warnings to protect lives and property. The FY 2011 budget invests more than \$1 billion for the National Weather Service and weather related research. NOAA will commit \$26.7 million to enhance aviation weather forecasts – a vital tool for the aviation industry. It is estimated that NOAA’s aviation forecasts save the industry \$580 million annually. To address the demands of a global economy that relies heavily on space based technologies and communications, NOAA is investing \$13 million for its Space Weather Prediction Center. Preparing for the future of weather forecasting, \$10 million is requested for research and development of multi-function phased array radar – a potential major improvement in weather detection.

Research and climate: Strengthening science across NOAA and addressing climate change are high priorities for the Obama administration. In FY 2011, the budget proposes \$464.9 million for NOAA’s research office. Examples of programs include \$11.6 million to support new technologies and ecosystem monitoring systems to assess the effects of ocean acidification. Scientific assessment for understanding how and why climate is changing is a vital tool so NOAA will commit \$10 million for regional and national assessments. In 2011, \$20.9 million will be directed to the Carbon Tracker Observing and Analysis System for carbon monitoring and analysis.

Oceans and coasts: While coastal counties represent only 16 percent of the nation's land area, 36 percent of our population lives in coastal communities. These communities provide 42 percent of the nation's economic output. NOAA intends to invest \$550.6 million to support vibrant coastal communities and their economies. Of note is \$6.8 million for coastal and marine spatial planning, \$20 million for regional ocean partnership grants, and \$12.5 million for the development of ocean sensors for marine ecosystems. When linked together, these elements constitute a comprehensive investment to improve the health and resiliency of oceans, coasts and Great Lakes ecosystems and the economies that rely upon them.

Fisheries: Rebuilding our fisheries and sustaining the jobs and communities they support is the focus of \$992.4 million in the president's request. Included in FY 2011 is \$54 million for a national catch share program that will provide fishermen a stake in the benefits of a well-managed fishery. Building on its successful community-based restoration program, \$23.8 million is directed for additional investments in habitat projects, while \$20.8 million is slated for species recovery grants.

Satellites: One of the greatest challenges facing NOAA today is ensuring the continuity of satellite operations to provide coverage of weather forecasts and climate measurements into the future. The president's budget request directs \$2.2 billion to improving observations and management of these critical services. The budget also reflects the recent White House decision to improve federal management for the development of the nation's next generation of polar orbiting satellite and includes \$1.1 billion for the new Joint Polar Satellite System. NOAA's next generation geostationary satellites, GOES-R series, will continue to be developed with \$730 million directed to that program. The request also includes \$9.5 million for the Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR).

Program support: In order to deliver sound science, services and stewardship NOAA must invest in its information technology infrastructure, facilities and its fleet. To that end the FY 2011 request includes \$515.1 million for these efforts. Included is \$10.8 million for information technology and security, \$5 million for work at NOAA's Atlantic Marine Operations Center, and \$10.4 million for major ship repair and the design of a sixth fisheries survey vessel.

Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke is focused on strengthening the conditions for economic growth and opportunity by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and stewardship. The 2011 budget reflects this ethic and will allow the Department of Commerce to better meet the needs of the American people.

Newly Released National Coastal Assessment Workshop Report Online

The summary report from the National Coastal Assessment Workshop, held by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, October 6-7, 2009, has been released. At the workshop, 40 representatives from NOAA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, Environment Canada, coastal states, and National Estuarine Research Reserves helped identify principles and considerations necessary for NOAA to develop a successful Integrated Coastal and Ocean Assessment program. The report also contains three appendices: Questions a National Coastal Assessment Should Answer, Proposed Measurements, and Case Studies. The report is an effort to tell a single story about the environmental, economic, and social health of our coasts by integrating the results from a number of disparate assessment efforts, standardizing measures, and avoiding duplication among the many groups involved in managing coastal and ocean resources. For more information, contact [Ralph Cantral](#).

CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update

CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update #11 is now available [on-line](#). The Coastal Programs Division of NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management distributes the CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update to keep state and territory coastal program managers and climate change/coastal hazards staff informed about climate change (as it pertains to coastal hazards) and coastal hazards activities. If you would like subscribe, please e-mail christa.rabenold@noaa.gov. To read this and previous issues, visit the E-News Update archive online at <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/news/climateneewsletter.html>.

NOAA-DOI Collaboration on Salt Marsh Monitoring

The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's Estuarine Reserves Division hosted an interagency workshop Feb. 4-5, with representatives from USGS, USFWS, and NPS, to develop common systematic approaches for monitoring coastal ecosystem function in the face of climate change and sea level rise. Current vegetation and water quality monitoring protocols being used by the National Estuarine Research Reserve System Wide Monitoring Program and the National Park Services' Inventory and Monitoring Program were discussed, to identify standards and approaches that may be shared between the agencies. Other NOS offices that contributed include the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services and the National Geodetic Survey, which are consulting on the technical protocols for measuring the land and water level changes required for accurately quantifying changes in local sea level. Contact: whitley.saumweber@noaa.gov.

OCRM Issues Call for Nominations for Jones and NOAA Excellence Awards

NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) announces the Call for Nominations for the 2010 Walter B. Jones Memorial & NOAA Excellence Awards for Coastal and Ocean Resource Management, to be submitted by Mar. 31. The awards recognize innovation, resourcefulness, and a commitment to balancing the human use of America's coastal and ocean resources with the needs of the resources.

The award categories are: Coastal Steward of the Year; Excellence in Local Government; Excellence in Coastal and Marine Graduate Study; The Susan Snow-Cotter Award for Excellence in Ocean and Coastal Resource Management; Volunteer of the Year; Non-governmental Organization (NGO) of the Year; Excellence in Promoting Diversity in Coastal or Ocean Resource Management; Excellence in Business Leadership

Awards nominations are open to individuals, organizations, state and local government agencies and their employees. Entries must adhere to the strict submission and judging criteria and must be received by March 31, 2010. Winners will be notified in early May 2010 and honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC, later in the year. See complete nomination information: <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/programs/ocrm/jones-noaa-awards.html>, or email for information, jonesnoaa.awards@noaa.gov.

NOAA Administrator Takes Action on IG Report on Fisheries Enforcement

Lubchenco Announces Immediate Actions and Long-term Plans

February 3, 2010

NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco today instructed the agency's head attorney and its top fisheries manager to take immediate and long-term actions to improve the agency's enforcement and legal operations and enhance its relationship with the fishing community.

In a memo issued today, Dr. Lubchenco directed NOAA General Counsel Lois Schiffer, and NOAA Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries Jim Balsiger, to take a two-part approach to responding to the Jan. 21 recommendations by the Commerce Department's Inspector General that reviewed the policies and practices of NOAA's fisheries enforcement system. Lubchenco requested the review in June 2009 after listening to concerns of fishermen and Congress.

"I take this report very seriously and I want a comprehensive approach to addressing both the IG's observations and the perceptions of fishermen. Fish are a public resource that should be protected through proper regulation and enforcement for the benefit of Americans, coastal economies and the marine environment. We can't manage effectively without trust," said Dr. Lubchenco. "Taking these steps will help us resolve the issues identified by the Inspector General and enhance our efforts to work with the fishing industry and public in a more constructive manner."

NOAA will implement the following immediate actions:

1. Subject to compliance with applicable labor relations requirements, institute higher level reviews of proposed charging decisions, penalties, permit sanctions, and settlements to ensure consistency and predictability and to avoid the appearance of arbitrary decision making.
2. Institute a freeze on hiring criminal investigators until a work force analysis is done and approved by Dr. Lubchenco that will address the appropriate mix of criminal investigators and regulatory inspectors in the enforcement office.
3. Shift oversight of the Civil Monetary Penalties Fund (also known as the Assets Forfeiture Fund), where penalties are accrued, from NOAA's Fisheries Service to NOAA's comptroller.
4. Improve communications on enforcement issues, particularly in the Northeast. This will include actions that enhance understanding of fisheries regulations and transparency of enforcement actions
5. Develop specific objectives and detailed plans for a summit on law enforcement practices to be held no later than June 30. The summit will provide a venue to develop forward thinking approaches and long-range policies for properly executing enforcement actions to protect living marine resources.

NOAA will develop, by March 21, long-term strategies that:

1. Improve data integrity and address inefficiencies of the management information systems used by the enforcement office and the enforcement attorneys, including using the Internet to increase transparency.
2. Implement standardized procedures for setting enforcement priorities that will help ensure consistency among regions while addressing regional needs. Ensure NOAA leadership has input
3. Strengthen enforcement attorney operating procedures, prosecution of charged cases, and settlement actions. This includes revising procedural regulations and penalty schedules for consistency and clarity.

4. Implement an outreach strategy to improve relations with local fisheries communities and improve understanding of fisheries regulations and enforcement activities. This includes increasing rapport between NOAA and fishermen in order to improve communications and informal problem solving.
5. Develop a plan to review law enforcement staffing and procedures with a focus on ensuring that criminal procedures are not applied to civil offenses. Development of the plan should include appropriate independent review.

These ten initial steps are intended to begin to resolve the issues identified by the IG. NOAA will build upon these steps to develop a comprehensive plan that responds to all of the IG's recommendations. [Click here to view Dr. Lubchenco's memo.](#) The IG report is available online at <http://www.oig.doc.gov/oig/>.

The more than 200 agents and attorneys in NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement and the Office of the General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation are responsible for ensuring compliance with more than 35 statutes, including the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Endangered Species Act. Their jurisdiction covers more than three million square miles of open ocean, more than 85,000 miles of U.S. coastline, the nation's 13 national marine sanctuaries and its marine national monuments. As part of their mission to protect our nation's marine resources by ensuring compliance with fisheries laws and regulations, they help to protect fish stocks, marine mammals, and the marine environment, as well as the livelihoods of law-abiding commercial and recreational fishermen.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.

Commerce Department Proposes Establishment of NOAA Climate Service

New office would target nation's fast-accelerating climate information needs

February 8, 2010



NOAA responds to millions of annual requests for climate data vital to planning and operations. In vulnerable areas, infrastructure can be designed with a better understanding of projected sea-level rise, flooding and/or changes in hurricane frequency and intensity. [High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

Individuals and decision-makers across widely diverse sectors – from agriculture to energy to transportation – increasingly are asking NOAA for information about climate change in order to make the best choices for their families, communities and businesses.

To meet the rising tide of these requests, U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke today announced the intent to create a NOAA Climate Service line office dedicated to bringing together the agency's strong climate science and service delivery capabilities.

More and more, Americans are witnessing the impacts of climate change in their own backyards, including sea-level rise, longer growing seasons, changes in river flows, increases in heavy downpours, earlier snowmelt and extended ice-free seasons in our waters. People are searching for relevant and timely information about these changes to inform decision-making about virtually all aspects of their lives.

“By providing critical planning information that our businesses and our communities need, NOAA Climate Service will help tackle head-on the challenges of mitigating and adapting to climate change,” said Secretary Locke. “In the process, we’ll discover new technologies, build new businesses and create new jobs.”

“Working closely with federal, regional, academic and other state and local government and private sector partners, the new NOAA Climate Service will build on our success transforming science into useable climate services,” said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “NOAA is committed to scientific integrity and transparency; we seek to advance science and strengthen product development and delivery through user engagement.”

Leaders from numerous public and private sector entities support the creation of NOAA Climate Service:

“Addressing climate change is one of our most pressing environmental challenges. Making climate science more easily accessible to all Americans will help us gain the consensus we need to move forward,” said Jim Rogers, CEO of Duke Energy. “The new NOAA Climate Service is a welcome addition. It will help bring people together so we can also bring about an economic recovery by more rapidly modernizing our nation’s energy infrastructure.”

“NOAA has consistently led the world in climate research and observation,” said Carol Browner, assistant to the president for energy and climate change. “Businesses, communities and governments will rely even more on its expertise and the critical information it provides to make informed decisions based on the best science available. Through NOAA’s improved climate services we will be better able to confront climate change, and the many challenges it presents for our environment, security, and economy.”

“The establishment of NOAA Climate Service will be an important step forward in helping the nation better understand and forecast the changing climate. The Navy’s Task Force Climate Change looks forward to working closely with NOAA Climate Service to ensure that both the nation and the Navy are best prepared for the future challenges posed by climate change,” said RADM Dave Titley, oceanographer of the Navy and director of the Navy’s Task Force Climate Change.

“NOAA’s reorganization to consolidate its formidable capabilities relating to climate science and services in a single office is an important step forward in the larger effort of harnessing relevant capabilities across all the executive branch agencies to help citizens and businesses plan for and cope with climate change,” said Shere Abbott, associate director for environment and energy at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

To see what other leaders from government, business, science and environment are saying about NOAA Climate Service, and to get additional information, visit <http://www.noaa.gov/climate>.



NOAA researchers collect climate data throughout the world. This data yields important clues about long-term global changes, improving predictions of climate variations in the shorter term, such as during cold spells and periods of drought, and over centuries. [High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)



NOAA weather balloon launch.
[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

Unifying NOAA’s climate capabilities under a single climate office will integrate the agency’s climate science and services and make them more accessible to NOAA partners and other users. Planning has been, and continues to be, shaped by input from NOAA employees and stakeholders across the country, with close consideration given to the recommendations of the NOAA Science Advisory Board, National Academies and National Academy of Public Administration.

NOAA Climate Service will encompass a core set of longstanding NOAA capabilities with proven success. The climate research,

observations, modeling, predictions and assessments generated by NOAA’s top scientists – including Nobel Peace Prize award-winners – will continue to provide the scientific foundation for extensive on-the-ground climate services that respond to millions of requests annually for data and other critical information.

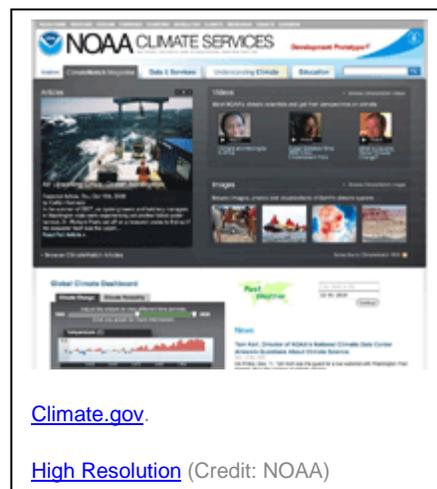
Thomas R. Karl, director of [NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center](#), will serve as transitional director of NOAA Climate Service. New positions for six NOAA Regional Climate Services Directors will be announced soon and will provide regional leadership for integrating user engagement and on-the-ground service delivery within the Climate Service.

Commerce Secretary Gary Locke and NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco Unveil Landmark Climate.Gov Portal to Climate Information

February 8, 2010

In a press conference earlier today, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke and NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco unveiled [a new Web site](#) that will serve as a single point-of-entry for NOAA’s climate information, data, products and services. This climate portal will provide information about the impacts of climate on nearly every aspect of our lives from agriculture and energy to transportation.

“More and more individuals – community planners, farmers, public health officials and small business owners – are seeking reliable, user-friendly climate data and information,” said Lubchenco. “We envision this climate portal as the first step toward making the wealth of climate information at NOAA available in one easy-to-use resource.”



[Climate.gov](#).

[High Resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

The site is designed to be adaptable and to respond to changes in users’ needs. Users are encouraged to offer comments and feedback; web designers will continue to update the site based on that feedback.

Known as the NOAA Climate Service Portal, the site is designed to address the needs of five broadly-defined user groups: decision makers and policy leaders, scientists and applications-oriented data users, educators, business users, and the public.

Highlights of the site include:

- An interactive “climate dashboard” that lets users see a range of constantly updating climate datasets (e.g., temperature, carbon dioxide concentration, and sea level) over adjustable time scales;
- A new Web-based climate science magazine called ClimateWatch, featuring videos and articles of scientists discussing their recent climate research and topics that cannot be relayed in charts and graphs;
- Explanations and exploration of data products available from NOAA and partner agencies, with direct links to the sources of the comprehensive datasets;
- Educational resources for students and teachers, including lesson plans for the classroom and laboratory, educational games and interactive media; and
- Easy-to-understand fact sheets and presentations for professionals and the public about climate science, research and climate impacts.

“This site presents climate issues in an exciting way. Storytelling is an ideal approach to convey scientific information, and NOAA has lots of great climate stories to tell,” said Lubchenco. “NOAA scientists are helping to solve the mysteries of how Earth’s climate system works and they are engaging with resource managers and business leaders across the nation and around the world to share their knowledge and benefit society.”

NOAA is one of the leading government agencies monitoring the state of the climate system worldwide, conducting climate science research, producing models to better understand and predict future climate scenarios and assessing the impacts of climate variability and climate change on global, national and regional scales. In recent years the agency has seen more visitors to its Web sites seeking information, asking questions and expressing concerns about climate change. In addition, the users of climate data and services are expanding to include business, local governments and many sectors concerned about the economic and societal impacts of climate change.

Dolphins’ Health Shed Light on Human and Ocean Health

February 18, 2010



[High resolution](#) (Credit: Sarasota Dolphin Research Program)

A panel of governmental, academic and non-profit scientists speaking today at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) unveiled research suggesting that diseases found in dolphins are similar to human diseases and can provide clues into how human health might be affected by exposure to contaminated coastal water or seafood.

“Dolphins and humans are both mammals, and their diet includes much of the same seafood that we consume. Unlike us, however, they are exposed to potential ocean health threats such as toxic algae or poor water quality 24 hours a day,” said Carolyn Sotka of the [NOAA Oceans](#)

[and Human Health Initiative](#) and lead organizer of the session. “Our ecological and physiological similarities make dolphins an important ‘sentinel species’ to not only warn us of health risks, but also provide insight into how our health can benefit from new medical discoveries.”

“Marine animal and ecosystem health are connected to public health and well-being,” said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “NOAA is committed to better understanding these connections and building the partnerships necessary to have healthy oceans, including healthy dolphins.”

NOAA is the principal stewardship agency responsible for protecting dolphins in the wild and supports a network of national and international projects aimed at investigating health concerns. A few of these case studies highlighted today at AAAS illustrate how studying disease processes, or pathologies in dolphins, could lead to future prevention or treatment of some diseases in humans. Equally important is the knowledge gained with regards to overall population health, which can lead to improved management and science-based guidelines to mitigate disease outbreak in both people and animals.

—Read More—

- **Unprecedented Contaminant Levels in Coastal Dolphins Warn of Potential Health Risks**
- **Dolphins May Offer Clues to Treating Diabetes in Humans**
- **Model for Epilepsy Discovered from Marine Exposure to Toxic Algae**
- **Dolphin Viruses May Have Human Health Implications**

These cases and the two other studies presented at AAAS highlight the role of dolphins as important sentinels of ocean and human health. Teri Rowles, Ph.D., NOAA’s lead veterinarian, and Director of NOAA’s Marine Mammal Health Stranding and Response Program, said, “The effect of viruses, toxic algae, contaminants and other stressors on dolphins may pose a risk to populations through decreased survival rates, impaired reproduction and increased risks to catastrophic epidemics. Active surveillance and investigations of these threats by NOAA and partners is critical to conserve and protect marine mammals, the ecosystems in which they live, and public health.”

In the Gulf States

Project to Help Communities Plan for Climate Change

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Sea Grant College Program has awarded a \$25,000 grant that will bring together extension, outreach and education professionals in the Gulf of Mexico to learn more about how coastal communities can adapt to sea-level rise and other regional climate-related issues. This spring, the professionals will interact with leading climate scientists, experts in risk communication and local community planners at a workshop in Florida to learn about reliable science and effective ways to plan for the effects of climate change.

The goal of the effort is to establish a long-term community of practice among extension, outreach and education professionals in the Gulf region that will ensure continued dialogue and information exchange on sea-level rise and other climate-change and coastal-hazard-related issues.

“The potential economic, social, and ecological impacts of sea level rise around the Gulf of Mexico are tremendous” said Buck Sutter, the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team lead and deputy regional administrator of the Southeast Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service. “We are finding that coastal communities want reliable information and science-based guidance regarding both the level of risk to their coastal communities and strategies they can utilize to effectively adapt to climate change.”

The grant is one of eight climate engagement mini-grants awarded throughout the United States to support preparation for climate change. The project will be led by Sutter and the four Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant college programs.

“Since our Sea Grant researchers and extension agents serve the local coastal communities in which they live, Sea Grant is well-suited to connect NOAA science to the needs of local coastal communities,” said Leon Cammen, Ph.D., director of the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program. “Issues related to climate change are a Sea Grant priority.”

Sea Grant is a nationwide network of 32 university-based programs that work with coastal communities. The National Sea Grant College Program engages this network of the nation’s top universities in conducting scientific research, education, training and extension projects designed to foster science-based decisions about the use and conservation of aquatic resources.

Prescribed Burn Planned for Gulf State Park March 2010

February 26, 2010

A prescribed burn on 24 acres within Gulf State Park is planned for March 2010, weather permitting. The Alabama State Parks Division, in conjunction with the Alabama Forestry Commission and the cities of Orange Beach and Gulf Shores will conduct this burn as part of a Pitcher Plant Bog/Longleaf Pine Management Plan. The burn will take place on two separate small tracts of land located east of the Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail.

Every effort will be made to ensure proper smoke management and safety of surrounding areas during this period. As evidenced in past burns, the cities of Orange Beach and Gulf Shores Fire Departments will assist as needed.

The Pitcher Plant Bog/Longleaf Pine Management Plan is an ongoing restoration project, burning alternate zones on a three year basis. Longleaf Pine habitat is crucial for the sustainability of various species including: bobwhite quail, whitetail deer, eastern turkey, eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise and the Bachman’s sparrow.

Recently Gov. Bob Riley designated February 2010 as Prescribed Fire Awareness Month. The official proclamation encourages all Alabamians to learn about the importance of prescribed burning to the stewardship of our natural resources and its role in the protection of our citizens from wildfires.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama’s natural resources through five divisions: Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. To learn more about ADCNR, visit www.outdooralabama.com.

Summer 2010 Educational Programs at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Now Open for Enrollment

Dauphin Island Sea Lab, located on a beautiful barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico, offers one of the most extensive and renowned summer marine science programs in the nation. With programs for everyone from graduate students to K-12 teachers to middle school students, the Sea Lab offers excellence in education with an ideal location for studying and interacting with marine life.

Children Ages 5-8 - Oceans Alive! Make exploring the beach with your children a fun and educational experience. Entertaining classroom activities are combined with an eye-opening beach excursion! These half-day camps are held from 1:00 pm until 4:30 pm and are limited; admissions are taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. Parents/guardians are required to attend, must be 18 years of age and may bring no more than 3 children. Cost: \$35 per student. Includes T-shirt, Estuarium pass, snack and certificate. Dates: June 2; June 18; July 16; August 2. Learn more about programs being offered at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab [website](#).

Restoring the Reefs and Creating New Jobs

JoAnn Mitchell Moody

On a sunrise drive to Dauphin Island, early morning mists blanket dozens of oyster boats, dotting the waters of Mobile Bay. Recent economic and ecological troubles have threatened this traditional source of work and income that has sustained generations of coastal Alabamians. The Oyster Reef Restoration Project, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), seeks to restore the reefs while creating jobs for those who make their living off the waters.

To date, thirty-three people have gained employment from this project - from marine scientists to engineers to laborers to my position as the project's educator and public outreach coordinator. In this role, I have undertaken a variety of tasks including

- developing lesson plans about oysters, oyster reefs and restoration for the Sea Lab's K-12 and teacher training workshops;
- creating a new outdoor oyster reef restoration display for the Living Marsh Boardwalk of the Estuarium; and
- producing educational outdoor signage on the project near the two reef sites.

Through this project, and especially now as we near deployment, I've had the great fortune to work with experts and fishermen from a variety of backgrounds, and I've been inspired by their enthusiasm and teamwork. The scope of this project is made possible by the collaborative efforts of all its partners: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, The Nature Conservancy, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, and The University of South Alabama.

As one of 50 ARRA coastal restoration projects around the country, this ambitious effort covers the greatest expanse of reef ever attempted in our state -- and it takes a tremendous amount of diligence and work to determine the techniques that work the most efficiently.

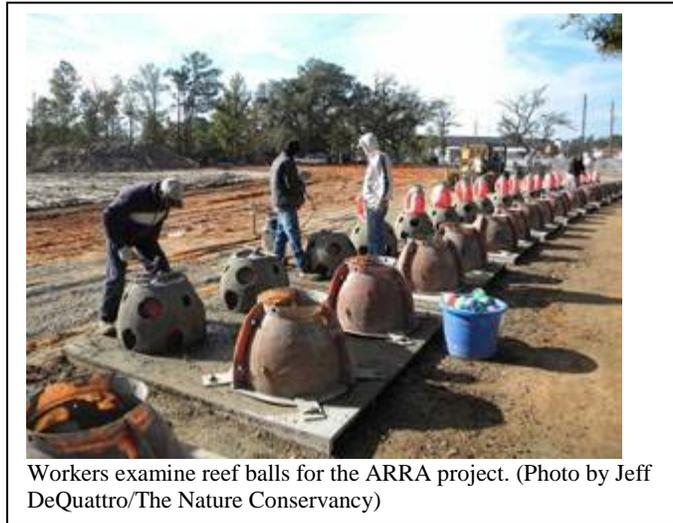
"The lessons we learned about reef longevity in previous projects led to improved designs as well as selection of some new methods for this ARRA project," said Stephen Scyphers, a Ph.D. candidate at the DISL.

The three techniques used in this restoration effort are:

Reef Balls - Employees from Reef Innovations have 15 years of experience in making reef balls, and have worked on sites from Nova Scotia to the Persian Gulf. Now they are determining the best way to use reef balls in Mobile Bay waters.

ReefBLKSM - Steel workers, busy bending and welding, hope to protect 500 meters of shoreline with their patented living units.

Bagged Shell - Hands-on laborers from J&W Marine Enterprises Inc., spend hours bagging the heavy, sharp oyster shells needed for the project.



Workers examine reef balls for the ARRA project. (Photo by Jeff DeQuattro/The Nature Conservancy)

"Probably the greatest strength of this research component is the interdisciplinary approach that will allow us to better understand not only how shoreline restoration projects affect critical nearshore environments, but also the coastal communities that rely so heavily upon them," Scyphers added.

This project seeks to create jobs, improve the environment, and protect a living resource that is a vital way of life for generations of coastal dwellers. For me, it has provided an education in cooperation and hope for the future of our coast.

Florida DEP Releases Retail Bags Report

~Report presents options for encouraging the use of reusable retail bags and reducing the use of single-use retail bags in Florida ~



"Currently in Florida, 88 percent of plastic bags and 63 percent of paper bags are thrown away rather than recycled which can harm our natural resources."
Michael W. Sole, DEP Secretary

TALLAHASSEE – After gathering public input from numerous stakeholders and organizations, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today released its report on the need for new or different regulation of retail bags to Governor Charlie Crist and the Florida Legislature. The Energy, Climate Change and Economic Security Act of 2008 directed the DEP to perform an analysis and submit a comprehensive report on the “necessity and efficacy” of retail bags regulation by February 1, 2010.

The report provides an assessment of the impacts associated with current use and disposal of retail bags as well as an analysis of potential options that seek to reduce single-use bags and encourage the use of reusable bags. Each option is presented with the potential pros and cons of implementation in an effort to provide policymakers the information needed to

weigh and balance the effect of proposed actions on the environment, regulated community and the consumer.

“Currently in Florida, 88 percent of plastic bags and 63 percent of paper bags are thrown away rather than recycled which can harm our natural resources,” said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. “The report provides a host of options to improve those numbers and by working together, the retail industry and government, we can achieve that goal.”

Almost every retail establishment provides bag for its customers and studies show that Americans used almost 90 billion bags in 2003. The report explains how improperly discarded plastic bags can affect wildlife, marine life, landfill operation and flood control systems and explores the various approaches that other states and counties have taken to address this issue.

The report also identifies and recognizes the efforts many retailers are already implementing to promote the use of reusable bags. Efforts underway include:

- Nationwide, Walmart has committed to reducing plastic bag usage in its stores by 25 percent per store by 2013.
- Albertsons gives customers five cents back on their purchase for every non-plastic bag used.
- In November 2009, Target launched a program that gives customers a five-cent discount for every reusable bag used at checkout.
- In October 2009, CVS customers began to receive a one dollar bonus on their CVS cards for every four times a reusable bag is used.
- Publix, Food Lion, and Walmart all offer in-store or on-premises plastic bag recycling receptacles for customers.

The information and options in the report were developed based on broad research and contributions of stakeholders who participated in two public workshops. In addition, the dedicated retail bag Web site had nearly 6,000 visits – the site includes meeting summaries, draft notes and other details.

The next step in the process is for the Legislature to consider the options during the 2010 legislative session. To view the report, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/retailbags/.

Florida DEP Forms Partnership with TPC Sawgrass to Help Florida Golf Courses Improve Their Environmental Scorecards



"We are delighted to work in collaboration with TPC Sawgrass to help educate those who can really make a difference in protecting Florida's natural resources."

Greg Strong, DEP Northeast District Director

PONTE VEDRA BEACH – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Northeast District Office will partner with the PGA TOUR's TPC Sawgrass to host a free environmental outreach seminar for golf course managers and superintendents on Wednesday, February 24 at the club. The seminar is designed to assist golf courses in the region with environmental stewardship, using many of the environmental practices initiated at TPC Sawgrass as a model.

"We are delighted to work in collaboration with TPC Sawgrass to help educate those who can really make a difference in protecting Florida's natural resources," said DEP Northeast District Director Greg Strong. "By adopting and applying the best management practices recommended in the seminar, the golf industry can help protect natural

wildlife habitats, enhance the environmental benefits of golf courses, minimize any adverse impacts, and continue Florida's commitment to sound environmental stewardship."

One of the tools that will be used during the seminar will be "Best Management Practices (BMP) for Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses," a free DEP publication covering all of the environmental aspects surrounding golf course design and operation, with environmental guidelines for conserving Florida's precious land and water resources. The publication was developed by the Florida DEP in collaboration with the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, Florida's Water Management Districts, the University of Florida, the Audubon Society, and many other public and private sector partners.

Several specialists will be on hand to discuss a broad range of topics including how to comply with DEP's regulations regarding the proper management of solid and hazardous waste, wetland protection, stormwater protection, wastewater minimization, reclaimed water use, and proper management and use of storage tanks. Additionally, the seminar will highlight the variety of initiatives undertaken by TPC Sawgrass.

"Like the other clubs within the TPC Network, TPC Sawgrass prides itself on its environmental efforts," said TPC Sawgrass Golf Course Superintendent Tom Vlach, CGCS. "We appreciate the opportunity to work in concert with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to share best practices with other golf course professionals on ways to protect and enhance the environment. At the same time, we aim to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in the community surrounding the golf course."

One of the first golf courses in Florida to be certified as an official Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary golf course by Audubon International and winner of the Sustainable Florida Best Practice Award in the non-profit category by the Governor of Florida, TPC Sawgrass recently underscored its environmental efforts by constructing a new environmentally friendly maintenance equipment wash facility. In building the facility, TPC Sawgrass collaborated with the DEP, Southwest Florida Water Management District, St. Johns Utility Department and engineers to make sure it complied with all wastewater disposal regulations.

The new facility is equipped with a pressure soap system and an air compressor for blow-off to minimize water use, and prevents contaminated wastewater discharges to the stormwater pond system located on the golf course by directing any wastewater into the existing on-site sanitary sewer. Additionally, only eco-friendly, biodegradable detergents are used to clean both the maintenance equipment and golf carts at the club.

Other environmentally friendly agronomic practices undertaken by TPC Sawgrass include a system for micro feeding nutrients through the irrigation system; the refinement and recycling of 150 gallons of solvent and 400 gallons of oil annually; initiation of a water conservation program that resulted in an 87 percent reduction in ground water usage over the previous year; installation of bulk heads to protect against erosion; the use of double-walled, above-ground storage tanks to prevent ground contamination; and a club-wide "green" initiative that has led to significant reductions in water and energy usage throughout the club's two golf courses as well as its 77,000 square-foot clubhouse.

TPC Sawgrass is located at 110 TPC Boulevard in Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, visit www.tpcawgrass.com or call (904) 273-3235. For more information regarding the DEP's non-profit best management practices manuals and programs, including the environmental seminar at TPC Sawgrass on February 24, please visit www.dep.state.fl.us/WATER/nonpoint/pubs.htm or call (850) 245-2112.

Sarasota County and Volunteers Monitor Seagrass Health

[http://www.chnep.org/info/HH/HH13\(4\)winter2010.pdf](http://www.chnep.org/info/HH/HH13(4)winter2010.pdf)



Volunteer Eric "Skip" Lyons monitors scallops.
Photo by René Janneman, Sarasota County

While most of us gaze across our shorelines in awe of their simple beauty, Sarasota County and a small army of volunteers are keeping watch of what's going on beneath our precious backyard. For the past three years, the Sarasota Environmental Assessment (SEA) Team has been surveying and mapping local seagrass habitats for information that helps scientists better understand and manage these important ecosystems. In addition to this, the SEA Team has begun enlisting waterfront property owners to help monitor sea scallop populations.

Florida's seagrasses cover more than half a million acres. According to Sarasota County Environmental Specialist Amanda Dominguez, this growth is important because seagrass is considered a key element in measuring the quality of water and protecting Florida's ocean-based economy.

"By providing food, shelter and a nursery for juvenile fish and shellfish to spawn, seagrass is directly responsible for nurturing a multimillion-dollar fishing and recreational industry," says Dominguez. "Seagrass also improves water clarity and helps stabilize our shorelines by reducing erosion."

Twice a year, teams of volunteers fan out over the bays with masks and snorkels to record the status of shoal, turtle and manatee grasses. Their on-site reports from Sarasota's bays supplement annual aerial surveys conducted by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

"The volunteer program has been quite successful," says Environmental Specialist Jon Perry, who helps manage the program with Dominguez. "We started off with about 15 volunteers, and we're up to nearly 100."

On dry land, volunteers measure the quality of bay life from backyard docks, monitoring cages filled with sea scallops that can repopulate Sarasota's bays, free from predators. The volunteers document the scallops' progress for Sarasota County and scientists at the Florida Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI).

Sea scallops are great water quality sentinels, according to Environmental Specialist René Janneman. "If you have poor water quality, you'll know right away because you instantly lose scores of scallops. In that way, they're like the canary in the coal mine." In addition to waterfront docks, the county places mesh bags that collect juvenile scallops throughout Sarasota's bays. Workers collect the bags every month and send them to the FWRI laboratory in St. Petersburg for analysis.



Seagrass bed of turtle grass and manatee grass. Can you find the conch shell?
Photo provided by Heather Dine, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

In June, the SEA Team won an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties, along with a Best of Category Award that marks it as a model program. The Environmental Protection Agency has also honored the team with a Gulf Guardian Award for finding innovative solutions to improve the environmental health of the Gulf, in concert with economic development. The SEA Team continues to seek volunteers. Seagrass survey volunteers choose their own survey locations and attend training classes. To learn more, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941/861-5000 and ask for the SEA Team volunteer program.

Land-Sea Interactions in Southwest Florida Sea Level Rise in the Face of Climate Change

There is broad scientific consensus that global climate is warming largely as a result of increased concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Sea level rise in the coming decades is anticipated to be a major effect of climate change with mostly negative impacts for many coastal regions, including Florida.

Managing the impacts of sea level rise will require adapting human activities in the coming decades through decisive policies, programs and actions so that critical human systems — communities, economies, emergency response systems — and natural resources — wetlands, coastal ecosystems, fisheries — can continue to function effectively as 'resilient' systems in the face of climate change.

Scientists advise that many anticipated impacts from sea level rise can be addressed through early planning and well-designed adaptive responses.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, the Marine Policy Institute took on the task of looking at the policy tools and opportunities already in existence that can help local Florida governments develop strategies to deal with climate-associated sea level rise. [This new policy assessment, titled "Policy Tools for Local Adaptation to Sea Level Rise," is currently in draft format but available here for public review.](#)

[A synopsis of the report is also available by clicking here.](#) The synopsis condenses main issues and observations from the full report and abstracts the full assessment in the following sections:

- Basics about climate change science and sea level rise
- Highlights from Policy Tools for Local Adaptation to Sea Level Rise
- Key principles of adaptation from emerging experience
- Leadership opportunities going forward

On Oct. 12 and 13, 2009, the Marine Policy Institute presented a two-day symposium at Mote Marine Laboratory focused on coastal zone planning in the context of changing land-sea interactions in the Southwest Florida region. The symposium focused on the growth management challenges posed by sea-level rise. Topics included:

- Land use and associated property rights issues
- Emergency preparedness and post-disaster planning
- Leadership roles for the public and private sectors, including local, state and federal governments
- Regional governance capacity building

The Symposium was streamed live by Access Sarasota TV and each talk was archived. Click the links below to view each speaker's presentation.

http://www.mote.org/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=Marine%20Policy%20Institute_Land-Sea%20Interactions&category=Marine%20Policy%20Institute

Sea Grant Announces New Research to Application Award

The National Sea Grant College Program is accepting nominations for its new Research to Application Award, which recognizes a researcher or research team for the successful and continued real-world application of Sea Grant-funded research.

If you know of a project funded by the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium during the last 20 years that is deserving of this award, notify MASGC Director LaDon Swann at swanndl@auburn.edu or 251-648-5877 to discuss the project's impacts. Written nominations should not be more than 10 single-sided pages and should demonstrate how research is being applied in a non-academic setting. Details about nomination requirements are available upon request. MASGC will gather nominations and forward them to the Sea Grant Association's Program Mission Committee (PMC). A subcommittee will determine the award recipient from nominations received through the 32 Sea Grant programs.

The deadline for nominations to MASGC is **Monday, April 26**. The award winner will be notified no later than July 15. The Sea Grant Association and award recipient's local Sea Grant program will provide the winner with travel support and lodging to accept the award during Sea Grant Week, which will be held Oct. 16-20 in New Orleans.

CWPPRA Coastwide PPL20 Voting Results

Priority Project List 20 Coastwide Voting Results

The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) Priority Project List (PPL) 20 voting results from the February 24, 2010 meeting can be viewed in a PDF table that can be reached by following this link: <http://lacoast.gov/reports/multiproject/PPL/index.htm>

Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Survey Available

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation has acquired a new bathymetric survey of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) channel from the GIWW to Breton Sound. The data acquisition and processing were completed by the Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences in 2009. The map may be viewed at: <http://www.saveourlake.org>. The full report, and data grid are available upon request. Requests should be sent to John Lopez Ph.D. at Johnlopez@pobox.com.

Louisiana DEQ to Distribute Questionnaires for Mercury Risk Reduction Plan

BATON ROUGE – Beginning this month, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality will distribute questionnaires to approximately 180 natural gas pipeline owners and operators across the state as part of the Mercury Risk Reduction Plan.

In 2007, DEQ implemented the Mercury Risk Reduction Plan in order to engage industry, regulatory agencies, groups and individuals in reducing the use, release and exposure of mercury within the state. As

part of that plan, DEQ has implemented a voluntary survey by which representatives from the oil and gas industry can take a proactive approach to identify, monitor and clean up potential mercury release locations.

“This questionnaire is our first shot at asking the industry as a whole to provide us help in locating potential sites where elemental mercury may be impacting the environment. It is our best chance at addressing the most easily removed sources of mercury affecting our watersheds and wildlife,” said Bill Schramm, DEQ Geologist III.

The questionnaire seeks information on how a pipeline owner/operator may inventory their mercury manometer locations and how ownership of these properties has been transferred through the years. Manometers are measurement devices containing mercury used to record natural gas production across the state. With 20,000-30,000 potential manometer locations in Louisiana, DEQ has been successful in working with several companies over the past 20 years in order to identify and assess approximately 5,000 manometer locations. Volunteers are asked to complete and return their questionnaires within 30 days, or make arrangements with DEQ if further time is needed.

Information gathered from the questionnaires will be compiled into a database which will enable DEQ to monitor and track areas in the state that may contain mercury readings that are above regulatory limits. Upon identification of mercury manometer locations, DEQ will assist site owners/operators in their assessment and clean up efforts through oversight and field testing programs.

This effort is an outcome of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Partnership for Environmental Priorities (NPEP), a partnership which focuses on the reduction of potentially hazardous chemicals from products and processes across the United States. Under NPEP, DEQ has partnered with the U.S. EPA, industry, and others in order to reduce the use of toxic chemicals, such as mercury and lead, in the environment. “The USEPA has been very supportive of the DEQ Mercury Reduction Program by providing substantial funding and resources to help discover and reduce the mercury burden released to Louisiana’s environment,” said Schramm.

Hanging in the Coastal Balance: How do coastal communities choose between economic growth and protecting their citizens?

The Sea Grant Law and Policy Journal provides a forum for the timely discussion and exploration of legal topics of relevance to the Sea Grant network of extension agents, researchers, coastal managers and users, and local decision-makers.

Municipalities are often faced with tough land use planning questions where they must make a decision between what is best for the health and safety of their community and what is in their community’s best economic interest. These decisions arise with a variety of property, from commercial to residential, and must take into account both the risks and benefits of developing that property. One such situation was recently brought to the attention of the Louisiana Sea Grant Law & Policy Program (SGLPP). The SGLPP has been a component of the Marine Advisory Services of the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program for nearly forty years. Its mission is to provide timely and relevant legal information and services for the many users of Louisiana’s coastal lands and waters, including state and local governments; coastal businesses, including commercial fishers, recreational fishers, and non-governmental organizations; and the general public. Read more: <http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/SGLPJ/Vol2No2/jones.pdf>.

Mississippi DMR Receives Grant to Help Protect Deer Island Shoreline



BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) has received a grant from the Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration Partnership (GCRP) to help fund a part of the Deer Island Restoration Project. The GCRP is a multi-year, regional partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program (CRP); the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Gulf of Mexico Program's Gulf Ecological Management Sites (GEMS) Initiative; and the Gulf states and

Caribbean territories. The purpose of this partnership is to strengthen the conservation efforts of the CRP and GEMS by supporting on-the-ground restoration activities and fostering local stewardship of ecologically significant areas.

The \$20,000 grant, to be matched by DMR, will be used to help protect about 800 linear feet of shoreline on the northeast corner of Deer Island from erosion by creating a breakwater/berm using bags of recycled oyster shell stacked and staked along the shoreline. The recycled shell will be bound in mesh wire bags, which will eventually rust away leaving the oyster habitat free of debris.

“The breakwater/berm should be just below the surface of the water during high tide and exposed during low tides, and will break up the wave action along the shoreline, therefore reducing erosion,” said DMR Coastal Preserves Program Manager Jeff Clark. Once the breakwater is in place, live oysters will be deployed along the base of the shells. The recycled oyster shells will provide suitable substrate for oyster spat (small oysters) to settle and create an oyster reef. The oyster reef in turn will attract fish and create a habitat for small marine plants and animals.

The initial deployment of oyster shell is planned for early March 2010. The Deer Island Restoration Project is part of an ongoing effort to restore Deer Island to its original size prior to Hurricane Katrina. Deer Island is a GEMS site, which is part of a program developed in coordination with the EPA and the Gulf of Mexico Program to acquire information about coastal wetland sites and make them accessible to the public through the Internet. The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Management Team for the Mississippi GEMS Program includes: Jeff Clark, site manager, and Rhonda Price, coordinator; DMR Shellfish Bureau Director Scott Gordon and DMR Marine Fisheries Scientist Marty Jones, project grantee; and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation Restoration Program Manager Ryan Fikes and Executive Director Quenton Dokken, corresponding project grantor.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

Save the Dates: 11th Annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference to Be Held May 12-13, 2010

BILOXI, Miss. – Celebrate the culture and heritage of the Mississippi Gulf Coast at the 11th annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference on May 12-13, 2010. Hosted by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Office of Coastal Management and Planning, Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area and conference partner the Gulf Coast Business Council, the conference will be held at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi.

The first day of the conference will feature keynote speaker Quentin Snediker, director of Mystic Seaport's Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard. Snediker will discuss the use of live oak timber from trees downed during Hurricane Katrina to restore the National Landmark vessel Charles W. Morgan. Other topics include the "Mississippi Seafood Industry: The Foundation of Heritage and Culture"; "The Gulf Coast's Heritage Assets: Opportunities and Challenges"; "The Evaluation Process on Historical Properties"; "Tourism's Encouraging Future for the Mississippi Gulf Coast"; an update on the City of Ocean Springs' recovery efforts; and "The Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards."

Following conference sessions on May 12, the Mississippi Seafood Marketing Program will host the Great Mississippi Seafood Cook-Off. Some of Mississippi's finest chefs will compete to represent the state at the Great American Seafood Cook-Off in New Orleans. On the second day of the conference, attendees may participate in an optional field trip to Beauvoir, Lynn Meadows Discovery Center and the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies.

This multidisciplinary event draws elected officials, city and county staff, contractors, developers, bankers, planners, zoning officials, realtors and appraisers, engineers, landowners, industry, students, federal and state agencies, boards of supervisors, lawyers, private and corporate entities, environmentalists, resource managers and others committed to rebuilding the Gulf Coast.

Real estate agents can earn 10 hours and appraisers can earn four hours of continuing education credit by attending the 11th annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference, and receipts will be provided to all other professions—such as, engineers, teachers and architects—to submit for credit to their respective organizations.

The deadline for pre-registration is April 1, 2010, and is \$125 per person (\$80 for students). After April 1, the registration fee will be \$155 (until May 11), and on-site registration is \$175. Conference fees include breakfast, refreshment breaks, lunch, field trip and conference materials.

For information on how you can be a sponsor of the conference, call Susan Perkins at 228-523-4124 or Leslie Young at 228-523-4123. Registration information can be downloaded at <http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/CMP/CRMP/Conference/10/conference.htm>.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

Mississippi Awarded \$20 Million Federal Grant for Railroad Improvements from Port of Gulfport to Hattiesburg

February 17, 2010

Governor Haley Barbour announced today that Mississippi has received a \$20 million federal grant that will help fund railroad improvements from the Port of Gulfport to Hattiesburg, a major step for the Mississippi economy.

“I personally thank Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and the Obama Administration for giving favorable consideration to and recognizing the importance of the Gulf ports, such as the Port of Gulfport, to international commerce. Once the Panama Canal’s expansion is completed and open to shipping, our Gulf ports will fill a vital need if we have sufficient intermodal surface transportation. This grant is a big step in that direction,” Governor Barbour said.

The grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, will partly fund improvements along 67.5 miles of Kansas City Southern Railroad track between the Port of Gulfport and north to Hattiesburg. In Hattiesburg, the KCS line connects with the Norfolk Southern line that continues into the Northeast U.S. and then connects to networks serving the entire eastern U.S. Also in Hattiesburg, the KCS line connects to the Canadian National line that continues into Chicago and Canada.

Funding is through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which provided the U.S. Department of Transportation \$1.5 billion to fund transportation projects. The Port of Gulfport competed with other state and local governments for funding from the discretionary program to fund needed rail improvements on the KCS line from Gulfport to Hattiesburg.

Currently, the track can only accommodate 10 mph single stack freight traffic. The project will upgrade the existing line within the existing right of way to 49 mph double stack standards.

If the Port of Gulfport is to grow to its full potential, as it can and should once Panama Canal expansions are complete, this improved rail connection is imperative, Governor Barbour said. The improved rail infrastructure, along with improved road infrastructure and shipping channel expansions, is critical to the Port of Gulfport’s restoration and expansion plan because container activity and new business opportunities are expected to significantly increase as the Port expands.

This project is also a cost effective way to improve quality of life in the communities along the route by relieving road congestion, especially in the City of Gulfport. Highway 49 has been identified as a congestion point and a major cause of costly traffic delays. Currently, 95 percent of container freight imports leave the Port of Gulfport on rubber tires. With container freight traffic expected to grow significantly, relief is needed. The quickest and easiest way to provide relief is to upgrade the existing railroad to improve the business case for potential users.

Improved intermodal infrastructure is critical to a successful restoration and expansion of the Port of Gulfport and critical to continued growth for Hattiesburg as a transportation hub.

Winter Texans Brave Cold for Adopt-A-Beach



AUSTIN — A howling wind cold enough to chill a Canadian didn't deter 30 Winter Texans from removing 1,375 pounds of trash from Edwin Atwood Park Saturday. The Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Winter Texan Beach Cleanup drew volunteers from Canada, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, New Mexico, Montana and Illinois to clean the Cameron County beach.

Odd and unusual items found included a scuba mask, a doll, a toilet seat and a pacifier. The Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Winter Texan Beach Cleanup is one of three all volunteer seasonal cleanups coordinated by the Adopt-A-Beach Program of the Texas General Land Office. It is part of an all-volunteer effort that has partnered with Cameron County Parks to remove trash from Texas beaches and waterways and to increase public awareness of the problems of marine debris and beach litter.

As volunteers clean up beaches they record data to learn more about the causes of marine debris and to help mitigate pollution along Texas' 367 miles of coastline. Since 1986, the program has successfully removed more than 7,500 tons of debris, with the help of over 390,000 Adopt-a-Beach Volunteers.

Volunteers at Saturday's Sixth Annual Coastal Bend Winter Cleanup braving a bonechilling cold to remove more than 5.4 tons of trash.

Volunteers also focused their efforts on Corpus Christi Beach at the Texas State Aquarium, Port Aransas and Padre Island National Seashore. Muddy conditions forced the cancellation of the Aransas Pass cleanup, which has been rescheduled for March 6. Odd items found by the beachcombers included a hypodermic needle, tires, a tube of glue and a Timex watch.

The Coastal Bend Winter Cleanup is one of three all-volunteer seasonal cleanups coordinated by the Adopt-A-Beach Program of the Texas General Land Office. It is part of an all-volunteer effort that has partnered with Nueces County Coastal Parks, to remove trash from Texas beaches and waterways and to increase public awareness of the problems of marine debris and beach litter.

As volunteers clean up beaches they record data to learn more about the causes of marine debris and to help mitigate pollution along Texas' 367 miles of coastline. Since 1986, the program has successfully removed more than 7,500 tons of debris, with the help of over 390,000 Adopt-a-Beach Volunteers. For additional information on the Coastal Bend Winter Beach Cleanup and the Adopt-A-Beach program, or to participate in the next cleanup visit www.texasadoptabeach.org. You may also call the Texas General Land Office toll free at 1-877-TXCOAST.

South Padre Beaches Get Much Needed Sand

AUSTIN — South Padre Island will have more beach to boast about after a Texas General Land Office beach renourishment project finishes placing more than 250,00 cubic yards of sand over the next two weeks. The \$740,000 project is a partnership between the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the City of South Padre Island and Cameron County Parks Department. The Corps is conducting a maintenance dredging project at the Brazos-Santiago Pass, which is part of the Brownsville Ship Channel navigation system.

“The Corps needed to dredge, so we took advantage of the opportunity to get high-quality, lowcost sand on our beaches where it belongs,” said Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. “Our job here at the Land Office was to get everyone working together to get this done.”

The beach renourishment is expected to take about two weeks and will place about 50,000 cubic yards of sand at Isla Blanca Park and another 200,000 cubic yards of sand on beaches four to five miles north of the ship channel.

When work is done, the beaches at Isla Blanca Park and on the northern mile of the city will be wider by about 35 more feet, providing more beach for people to enjoy. Access to these stretches of beach during the short construction period may, however, be limited.

Marsh Planting Is Final Step for Burnet Bay Restoration Project

Article and photos by Galveston Bay Foundation Staff

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_br_t3200_0003_01_10.pdf

This fall, the Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) led over 150 Galveston Bay-area community and corporate volunteers in planting native marsh vegetation at its newly completed Burnet Bay Wetlands Restoration project site. Construction for the project broke ground in June and was completed the first week of October 2009. Planting marsh vegetation at the site was the final step in the process of restoring over 30 acres of marsh habitat within Burnet Bay.

Located in Baytown, Texas, Burnet Bay was historically bounded by rather extensive intertidal marsh habitat. Historical aerial images show that Burnet Bay, between the northwestern shoreline and North Independence Parkway (formerly Crosby-Lynchburg Road), experienced a gradual loss of these marshes between 1944 and 1969, and by 1978, nearly all of these vital habitats were lost due to land surface subsidence. In this area, subsidence was severe, equaling nearly 8 feet between 1906 and 1987. Since the late 1970s, subsidence has largely abated along the Houston Ship Channel and in the Baytown and Pasadena areas in the coastal lowlands south and east of Houston owing to a reduction in groundwater pumping.

The Burnet Bay Wetlands Restoration Project restored intertidal marsh elevations to a 33-acre area within the heavily subsided segment of Burnet Bay adjacent to North Independence Parkway. Geotechnical analysis of the site revealed that this area consists of a shallow, hard bottom, making it very conducive to wetlands restoration work. The project was constructed by hydraulically dredging on-site material from a designated borrow area and creating earthen mounds to raise elevations to levels that will support intertidal marsh vegetation. Earthen berms, constructed by sidecasting in situ material, were also constructed to serve as protection for the mounds.

Since construction, GBF has hosted several marsh grass planting events, known locally as “Marsh Mania,” at this site. The first planting was held on September 19 with volunteers from Mitsui USA and Intercontinental Terminals Company. Subsequent planting events were held on October 17 with volunteers from NRG Energy and on November 6 with volunteers from ConocoPhillips and students from the University of Houston-Downtown.

Volunteers used tools called dibbles to plant stems of smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) at appropriate elevations. Once established, the marsh grass will function to provide habitat and feeding grounds for fish and birds, improve water quality, and absorb wave energy to protect from shoreline erosion.

The Burnet Bay Wetlands Restoration Project is a project of the Galveston Bay Foundation and its many project partners, including: Restore America’s Estuaries, NOAA Restoration Center, Texas General Land Office Coastal Management Program, TCEQ Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Harris County, Mitsui & Co., Ltd, USFWS Coastal Program, Port of Houston Authority, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, NRG Texas, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and NOAA Fisheries Habitat Conservation Division.

Be Aware of Rip Current Dangers for Safe Spring Break

As thousands of college students arrive at Texas beaches for spring break this month, the Texas Sea Grant College Program wants to remind them of the dangers of rip currents, which can pull even the strongest swimmer out to sea.

A rip current is a horizontal current that moves perpendicular to the shore. It does not pull people under the water, it pulls people away from shore. Drowning deaths occur when people pulled offshore are unable to keep themselves afloat and cannot swim to safety.

Rip currents cause at least 100 deaths each year at United States coastal and Great Lakes beaches. They frequently form around man-made structures like jetties, groins and piers, which are often places with easiest beach access. Rip currents also are more likely to form when there are heavy surf conditions, and many beach forecasts now include rip current information.

Texas Sea Grant, in partnership with the National Sea Grant College Program, the National Weather Service (NWS) and the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA), is participating in a national public awareness campaign, called “Break the Grip of the Rip,” to educate beachgoers about the dangers of these fast-moving currents.

The campaign recommends that beachgoers learn how to swim and never swim alone; be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches; and whenever possible, swim at lifeguard-protected beaches and obey all instructions from lifeguards. Other factors that can increase the danger include consuming excessive alcoholic beverages before entering the water.

If you are caught in a rip current, Texas Sea Grant and USLA recommend the following strategy: Remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.

- Don’t fight the current by trying to swim straight to shore.
- Escape the current by swimming in a direction following the shoreline. When free of the current, swim at an angle — away from the current — toward shore.

- If you are unable to escape by swimming, float or tread water. When the current weakens, swim at an angle away from the current toward shore.
- If you feel you will be unable to reach the shore, draw attention to yourself — face the shore and call or wave for help.

Some clues that may indicate the presence of a rip current include a channel of churning, choppy water; an area with a noticeable difference in water color; a line of foam, seaweed or debris moving steadily seaward; and a break in the incoming wave pattern. However, these signs are not always visible.

Many people have died trying to rescue rip current victims. If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If there is no lifeguard, yell instructions on how to escape, throw the victim something that floats and have someone call 9-1-1.

More information about rip currents is available from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov. Posters and other printed materials in English and Spanish are also available by contacting Texas Sea Grant at sgpublications@tamu.edu. For more information, contact: Cindie Powell, Texas Sea Grant College Program at cpowell@tamu.edu.

Other News

Obama Administration Officials Release Roadmap for Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Focused on Resiliency and Sustainability

WASHINGTON, DC – Obama Administration officials today released a Roadmap for Restoring Ecosystem Resiliency and Sustainability in the Louisiana and Mississippi Coasts that emphasizes the protection and restoration of coastal ecosystems as a key element to the long-term safety and viability of the region. In keeping with President Obama's effort to cut through red tape and ensure residents of the Gulf Coast have access to the tools and funds they need to rebuild, the Roadmap outlines Federal actions over the next eighteen months to address policy, process, and legal hurdles to coastal restoration in the region.

President Obama formed the Louisiana-Mississippi Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Working Group in October, 2009, which is co-led by the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Management and Budget and comprises senior-level officials from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Departments of the Army, Homeland Security, the Interior, and Transportation. Over the past six months the Working Group has engaged with the States, local governments, and the public to develop this Roadmap, which will lay the foundation for a long-term vision achieved jointly with the States and works to eliminate barriers that have hindered previous restoration efforts.

"The Louisiana and Mississippi coastal region is critical to the economic, cultural, and environmental integrity of the nation," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "We have a unique opportunity to address the issue of coastal resiliency in the face of ever-present change. With bold and decisive action, we can slow the rate of ecosystem loss in the area and, where possible, restore the ecosystems and the services they provide."

"This ecosystem restoration for the Louisiana - Mississippi Gulf Coast is a challenging and nationally-significant opportunity that is a high priority for the Army and the Corps, and builds upon the work we are already doing in the states of Louisiana and Mississippi," said Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. "The Roadmap maximizes the impact of Federal resources over the next 18 months, and we are very pleased with the spirit of inter-agency cooperation and commitment that is already in evidence."

"With 10 National Wildlife Refuges totaling over 300,000 acres in Coastal Louisiana and Mississippi, the Department of the Interior recognizes the vital role that Gulf Coast wetlands play in supporting fish and wildlife resources, as well as the nation's commerce and domestic energy. The Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service along with USGS will play a strong role working with our State and Federal partners to reverse Gulf Coast wetland and habitat loss so that we can ensure the long-term economic and ecological sustainability of the Lower Mississippi River basin, the delta and the Gulf Coast region," Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks Tom Strickland said.

"Human health, jobs, prosperity and well-being depend upon healthy and resilient marine ecosystems," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). "NOAA is looking forward to working with its Federal and State partners to utilize a science-based approach to address the challenges of restoring and protecting this region's coastal and marine ecosystems."

"President Obama knows how important the wetlands and habitat are to the culture, economy, and health of Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coast communities," said Peter S. Silva, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water at the Environmental Protection Agency. "This initiative will move us toward comprehensive, science-based management of the resources to protect the communities, jobs and ecosystems they support."

In the near term, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Working Group will request that the States designate a senior official to collaborate with the Working Group to develop a long-term vision and recommend a governance structure or other forum for Federal-State decision-making. The Working Group will also conduct public outreach and will host listening sessions in the region. Longer term, the Working Group will release a proposal outlining recommendations for a governance structure or entity to implement the vision.

To resolve policy and process obstacles, the Working Group also will begin a suite of actions to eliminate barriers that have hindered previous restoration efforts. These barriers include inadequate coordination within and among Federal agencies, water resource policies that unintentionally inhibit ecosystem restoration efforts, inconsistent or opaque priority-setting that undermines cooperation and support for projects, incomplete science and limited Federal and State budgets.

A Shared Long-Term Federal-State Vision

The Working Group seeks to define a shared Federal-State vision for ecosystem sustainability of the lower Mississippi River, its delta, and the Louisiana and Mississippi coastal areas. This vision will reflect the value of well-functioning ecosystems to the enduring resilience of the region. Moving forward, this will require more robust collaboration between the Working Group, the States, Tribes, local governments, and the public. A shared vision will help reconcile inconsistencies in existing planning and prioritization efforts and provide a framework for jointly evaluating necessary trade-offs.

Promoting Science-Based Decisions

Ultimately, successful implementation of the shared vision depends on access to the best available science in a form that is useful for management decisions. The Working Group will assess current capacities and

identify gaps in science so the Federal-State vision will be implemented based on the best information. Furthermore, the Working Group will apply the principle of adaptive management to account for uncertainty and adapt to changed conditions. This will ensure the overall effectiveness of restoration and protection efforts.

Identifying Near-Term Projects

While the Working Group engages the States in developing the vision, it will simultaneously work toward implementing interim projects to help curb irreversible ecosystem degradation. The Working Group will draw these projects from relevant project lists, with special consideration for areas with the most critical need and for projects that will provide long-term benefits.

While implementing the Roadmap during the next 18 months, the Obama Administration will continue to advance actions underway both on the ground and in the water. The President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget includes \$35.6 million for the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) restoration program, \$5 million to restore key fish and wildlife habitat in Mississippi and Louisiana, and \$5 million to integrate ocean and coastal mapping. The LCA program also received \$18 million in the enacted Fiscal Year 2010 Budget.

Additionally, the 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act directed \$439 million to barrier island and ecosystem restoration projects along the Mississippi Coast. Taken together, these efforts are providing critical ecosystem protection and restoration resources to the region.

The Roadmap is available at www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/initiatives/gulfcoast

President's Fiscal 2011 Budget includes \$35 million for Louisiana Coastal Area Program

Funding to focus on Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Program

NEW ORLEANS – The President's Fiscal 2011 Budget released this week includes \$35 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District's Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) program, which has been highlighted as a high priority project.

A budget amount of \$19 million will be applied to projects which have completed necessary requirements and are approved for construction. Implementation of the Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Program will be one source of such projects and the identification of demonstration projects will be another source.

Approximately \$16.5 million of the budget for LCA will be used to continue efforts on feasibility studies and initiate engineering and design for six projects. Another \$6.5 million of the funds will support the Science and Technology Program. These efforts are contingent upon the execution of a cost-share agreement with the Corps' partner, the state of Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

The President's Budget includes \$4.939 billion for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works Program with a focus on navigation, flood and storm damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, water and wetlands protection, and natural disaster emergency preparedness. The FY11 civil works budget funds the administration's priorities to improve the nation's infrastructure and revitalize the economy.

Overall, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers restores, creates, enhances or preserves approximately 49,000 acres of wetlands annually.

West Bay Sediment Diversion to Close

Stakeholder Update

February 12, 2010

<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/pao/2010Feb12Stakeholderupdate.pdf>

Wednesday, January 20, 2010, the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act Task Force met at the New Orleans District to approve construction of coastal restoration projects and to discuss the future of the West Bay Diversion. The task force approved construction of five projects, totaling over \$103 million, which are spread across seven coastal parishes including Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. Charles, Lafourche, Terrebonne, Vermilion and Cameron.

The task force also voted unanimously to close the West Bay Diversion, located in lower Plaquemines Parish, during the low water period of 2010. The task force approved continuing the project's 12-month work plan to gather valuable information that can be used in future planning of other Mississippi River diversions. The decision to close the diversion was based on the fact that long term costs to maintain and dredge anchorage areas near the diversion outweigh the benefits of the diversion.

These aerial photographs were taken of the West Bay Diversion project area in May 2008. Though the project is set to close later this year, the lessons learned will assist in planning future coastal efforts.



\$1.6 Billion Requested for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2011

The President's FY 2011 budget request of \$1.6 billion for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will focus funding on the agency's highest priority conservation initiatives, while containing costs through management efficiencies and other savings to address government fiscal realities. Among the top strategic investments are increases of \$18.8 million for Climate Change Adaptation and \$4 million for work to review planned renewable energy development to ensure they do not place threatened or endangered species at risk, as well as an additional \$15.8 million for ecosystem restoration and \$20 million for Federal land acquisition.

The budget focuses on key ecosystems threatened by pollution, water shortages and habitat destruction through the Treasured Landscapes Initiative, and includes an additional \$2.5 million to fund conservation jobs for youth through the Youth in Natural Resources Initiative. An additional \$1.23 billion would be made available through permanent appropriations, most of which will go directly to states for fish and wildlife restoration and conservation efforts.

"This budget request recognizes the need to make difficult choices in challenging economic times, while providing substantial increases to address the unparalleled threat posed by climate change to our nation's fish and wildlife resources," said Sam Hamilton, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "The strategic investments this budget makes will allow us to continue to work with our partners to build the capacity we need to tackle climate change and other future challenges. Our request also recognizes the need to protect significant ecosystems across the nation and to facilitate the responsible development of renewable energy resources."

A brief summary of the Service's FY 2011 request is available [online](#). Details on the President's FY 2011 Budget Request are available online at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov

MMS Approves Nearly \$700,000 Grant for Lake Pontchartrain Protection

First phase designs a lake shoreline protection plan in Tangipahoa Parish

NEW ORLEANS – The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has approved a grant for \$699,400 to Tangipahoa Parish in Louisiana through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) for the first phase of a proposed shoreline protection project on the northern edge of Lake Pontchartrain. Grant funding for the first phase of the project will provide for engineering and design service, coordination of land rights, and administration costs. The project is located along the northwestern rim of Lake Pontchartrain in Tangipahoa Parish, approximately fifteen miles southeast of Ponchatoula, Louisiana.

"MMS is committed to assisting Louisiana in its important inland shoreline restoration efforts through the CIAP program," said MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Lars Herbst. "We are proud to partner with

Tangipahoa Parish in supporting vital conservation initiatives like the Lake Pontchartrain Shoreline Protection Project.”

The second phase of the project will include construction of a detached breakwater system to reduce wave energy along the highly erodible northern rim area of Lake Pontchartrain. This feature is planned to extend approximately 18,000 feet, from Pass Manchac to the Tangipahoa River.

The CIAP was created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Through the program, MMS will provide \$250 million in grants annually, from 2007-2010, to six eligible Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas producing states: Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, California, Mississippi, and Texas. The funding to Louisiana included \$127.5 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008, \$120.9 million for 2009 and \$119.6 million 2010. Nineteen Coastal Political Subdivisions (parishes) share in the funding of projects outlined in the state’s approved plan.

Baby Boomers Attracted to the Southeast and Smart Growth



Photo courtesy Smart Growth Online.

A recent article from housingwatch.com discusses two recent trends with important implications for our region. The article, ["Aging Boomers: No Golf Please, Feed My Mind,"](#) looks at Baby Boomers' new opinions on retirement housing and how they differ from traditional ideas.

One of the first trends is that while Florida may still be a popular choice for many retirees, several other states have grown in popularity with four of them in the Southeast (North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia). Another trend the article discussed, however, was that the types of housing and neighborhoods preferred by retiring Baby Boomers were more high-density and pedestrian-friendly. The sprawling subdivisions on golf courses are giving way to more urban-style communities closer to commercial areas, parks and public transportation.

By 2014 the percentage of the people in the country age 55 or older is expected to be more than one quarter of the total population. With growth and development in the Southeast already outpacing that of other areas of the country, the idea that a large percentage of this segment of the population could be relocating to our region further illustrates the need for quality growth planning and resource conservation.

Thankfully, with the additional growing preferences in housing and community styles by this demographic, the Southeast has an excellent opportunity to embrace and implement the principles of smart growth.

To bring Quality Growth training or workshop series to your community, contact the Southeast Watershed Forum at 615-627-1310 or by [email](#). To learn more about smart growth concepts and practices, visit the Southeast Watershed Assistance Network at www.watershed-assistance.net.

Register for National Environmental Education Week, April 11-17, 2010

National Environmental Education Week (EE Week, www.eeweek.org), the nation's largest environmental education event held April 11-17, 2010, inspires environmental learning and stewardship among K-12 students. EE Week connects educators with environmental resources to promote K-12 students' understanding of the environment. EE Week is a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation, found online at www.neefusa.org.

When you register for EE Week, you will join a national network of educators dedicated to increasing the environmental literacy of K-12 students. You will also receive certificates of participation, free online resources, information on professional development and funding opportunities, and access to discounts on educational materials from Acorn Naturalists, Kilowatt Ours and Nature-Watch just for EE Week participants. Register today at www.eeweek.org/register.

Whether you are an educator looking to engage your students and inspire real-world problem-solving in the classroom, a homeschooling parent looking to encourage leadership in your children or a community leader looking to promote local habitat conservation, participating in EE Week is a terrific way to enhance learning and bring about positive change in your school and community. Visit www.eeweek.org today to register and join thousands of educators working to bring environmental learning into our nation's classrooms.

Grant Opportunities

Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

Request for Letters of Interest: Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

The Development, Community, and Environment Division in EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation is seeking applications for technical assistance from communities that want to incorporate smart growth in their future development to meet environmental and other community goals. This request is being coordinated under the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Staff from HUD and DOT will assist in the provision of this technical assistance. Eligible entities are tribal, local, regional, and state governments, and nonprofit organizations that have a demonstrated partnership with a governmental entity. Letters of interest are due at 3:00 pm EST, April 9, 2010.

EPA has identified some key topics in which communities are likely to benefit from technical assistance:

- climate change
- equitable development
- financing and planning infrastructure investments
- hazard mitigation plans
- removing local barriers to implementing LEED-ND
- suburban retrofit
- transportation solutions for rural communities and places without rail
- cities in transition (significant population loss, poverty, or economic deterioration)

Proposals are not limited to requests for technical assistance in only these thematic areas; other topics for

assistance are welcome and encouraged, provided they demonstrate cutting-edge challenges and the possibility of replicable solutions. The type of work may incorporate policy analysis and review, planning and visioning processes, scorecard/ranking criteria development and assessment, and/or other elements pertinent to the role of the applicant.

Selected communities or states will receive assistance in the form of a multi-day visit from a team of experts organized by EPA, HUD and DOT and other national partners to work with local leaders. EPA plans to assist three to four communities over a period of twelve months. The Agency anticipates announcing the selected communities in fall of 2010. For more information and application materials, visit http://epa.gov/smartgrowth/2010_0128_rfli.html.

Conferences and Workshops

2010 Florida Oceans Day

March 10, 2010

TALLAHASSEE, FLA. – Florida legislators will join scientists, researchers and maritime interests March 10th in Tallahassee to celebrate the 2010 Florida Oceans Day to promote awareness and stewardship of the state's ocean resources. Healthy coasts and oceans are critical to the state's economy and provide sustainable resources for all Floridians. This year's Ocean's Day theme, "Florida's Ocean Economy: Planning for Future Uses of Ocean Spaces," focuses on the need to plan for uses of the State's oceans while sustaining the State's economy.

The day's activities will include a workshop and panel discussion on uses of Florida's oceans. It will be held in the Historic Capitol Building, Old Senate Chambers, for the public, legislators and agency staff. Events are sponsored by the Florida Ocean Alliance, Mote Marine Laboratory, and the Florida Institute of Oceanography.

"This year's Oceans Day highlights planning for uses of Florida's oceans and the need to sustain our ocean and coastal economies, valued at \$562 billion. We are focusing on how ocean management can help preserve Florida's oceans and coasts and heighten awareness by the public and legislators of the challenges we face," said David L. McDonald, chair of the Florida Ocean Alliance and executive director of Port Manatee. Vice Chair Kumar Mahadevan, president and CEO of Mote Marine Laboratory, said, added: "As a coastal state with the longest coastline and largest continental shelf in the lower 48 states whose economic health depends on its oceans and coasts, it is imperative that the state move to plan for multiple uses and long term health of our oceans. There is a need to balance the growing demands for conflicting ocean uses with the public's use and stewardship of its ocean resources."

The Florida Ocean Alliance (www.floridaoceanalliance.org) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public-private partnership of government, academic and private sector organizations promoting awareness and understanding of the ocean's importance to the ecology and economy of Florida.

Oceans Day Schedule of Events Wednesday, March 10

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. – Oceans Day Workshop and Panel, Old Historic Capitol, Old Senate Chambers, 2d floor

Plenary Speaker: Charles Ehler, UNESCO, and panel discussion by ocean users.

http://www.floridaoceanalliance.org/documents/Agenda_for_Workshop_Oceans_Day_2010.pdf

Green Industries Best Management Practices Training

March 11, 2010

The Green Industries Best Management Practices training was developed to provide landscaping professionals with knowledge, skills and tools to minimize the impacts of nonpoint sources pollution related to their business practices

The Florida Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Quality by the Green Industries program, commonly known as the “Green Industries Best Management Practices” was developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Community Affairs, the water management districts, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and the green industries.

It was designed to provide landscaping professionals with knowledge, skills and tools to minimize the impacts of nonpoint sources pollution related to their business practices. The program promotes careful consideration of plant selection, irrigation, maintenance, fertilization and pesticide application that does not compromise Florida’s environment.

Thursday, March 11, 2010

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

[Best Management Practices for the Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries](#)

Location: Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Environmental Learning Center

Registration: \$25; Registration is required.

For information: Renee Wilson at 239-417-6310 ext. 231

[More Information](#)

Saturday, March 20 through Saturday, May 8

Dates and Times Vary

[Florida Master Naturalist Program Freshwater Wetlands Course](#)

Location: Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve

Registration: \$225; Registration is required at www.masternaturalist.org (Franklin County)

For information: Rosalyn Kilcollins at 850-653-8063 or rosalyn.kilcollins@dep.state.fl.us

[Registration](#)

Gambling Against Mother Nature

a production of grassroots, inc.

Friday, March 12, 2010

Five Rivers Convention Center, Blakeley Hall

6 Hours of Continuing Education Credit for Engineers, Realtors and Developers

Based on the popular television series on WKRG - TV, and funded by a grant from NOAA Coastal Storms Program and Mississippi - Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, this course will feature all 3 programs, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A

“Wind and Water” – beaches, barrier islands and storm surge

Panelists: George F. Crozier, Ph.D. Scott Douglass, Ph.D., P.E., Philip West, AICP Bobby Moore, Assoc. Broker, Roberts Brothers

“Water Runs Down Hill” – storm water management in the watershed

Panelists: Kevin D. White, Ph.D., P.E. Terry C. Plauche, ASLA, Mimi Fearn, Ph.D. George F. Crozier, Ph.D.

“Hedging Our Bets” – protecting our property from storms

Panelists: George F. Crozier, Ph.D. Carl Schneider, CIC, Landon K. Smith, CBO, CFM Mike Daniels, GRI, GMB

Tuition - \$95.00 (Lunch and complimentary DVD provided). For reservations, email Wendy at Mobile Area Association of Realtors at wendy@gcmls.com.

Workshop to Highlight Habitat-friendly Shoreline-protection Techniques

March 17-18, 2010

The Weeks Bay and Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Coastal Training Programs are partnering with Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant, NOAA Restoration Center and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance to sponsor the workshop “Constructing Living Shorelines in Alabama and Mississippi.” The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 17, and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, March 18, at Pelican Landing Conference Center in Moss Point, Miss.

Detailed case studies of living shoreline projects in Alabama and Mississippi will be presented, and participants will have the opportunity to visit selected local projects. A vendor social will be held to showcase various living shoreline products and techniques. By the end of the workshop, participants should be better able to design and construct living shorelines.

Target audiences for the workshop include contractors, consultants, developers, city and county planners, engineers, coastal land managers, environmental scientists and natural resource staff. This event is \$45 to attend, and pre-registration is required at www.GulfAllianceTraining.org. For additional information, please contact Amy Gohres at 251-990-5004 (amy@weeksbay.org) or Mike Shelton at 251-928-9792 (Michael.Shelton@dcnr.alabama.gov). For further information, please reference the [flyer](#) (PDF, 335 KB).

DMR, Partners to Hold Mississippi Artificial Reef Seminar

March 26, 2010

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and partners will hold a Mississippi Artificial Reef Seminar on Friday, March 26, 2010, from 9 to 11 a.m. in the first-floor meeting room of the Bolton Building at 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi. The seminar is part of a series aimed at enhancing familiarity between interested groups and increasing awareness of the programs, needs and opportunities that are relevant to marine research in Mississippi waters. Keynote speaker Kerwin Cuevas, director of the DMR Artificial Reef Bureau, will speak on the “Mississippi Artificial Reef Plan.”

Additional talks scheduled are:

- Brandi Noble, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Southeast Fisheries Science Center, “Reef Fish Video Surveys”
- Jason Brandt, Mississippi State University, “Red Snapper Affiliation with Mississippi Artificial Reefs”

- Jason Lemus, University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, "Stock Enhancement Research for Red Snapper"

All interested parties are welcome to attend. For more information, contact DMR Shrimp and Crab Bureau Director Traci Floyd at (228) 374-5000.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

Spring Plant Identification Class: Wetland and Transitional Habitats

March 29-April 1, 2010

Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Coastal Resources Center
6005 Bayou Heron Road
Moss Point, MS 39562

This is a 3.5 day field-intensive plant class taught by Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock, renowned botanist from Southern Illinois University. Dr. Mohlenbrock travels across the country studying wetland plants and teaching plant identification techniques to the staffs of various environmental agencies and organizations. Participants in this class will visit a number of field sites within Jackson County Mississippi and learn to identify the key plant species of each habitat type. Target audiences for this event include federal and state agency regulatory personnel, ecotourism operators, natural resource managers, mitigation bank managers, and wetland professionals and consultants. The fee for this class is \$100. It includes class instruction, materials, and transportation to field sites. To register for this event, please contact the Grand Bay NERR to reserve a seat. Please note that only checks or Purchase Orders will be accepted, and they should be addressed to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. The deadline for registration is Friday February 26, 2010 or as soon as the class is filled. The class is limited to 20 participants - EARLY REGISTRATION is recommended! If you have questions about this event, please contact Grand Bay NERR at 228-475-7047. [Read More...](#)

2010 Texas Bays and Estuaries Meeting

April 15-16, 2010

The University of Texas Marine Science Institute (UTMSI) is pleased to announce the annual Texas Bays and Estuaries Meeting (TBEM) for 2010. The meeting will focus on work being done in the bays, estuaries and near-shore Gulf of Mexico. It provides an opportunity for scientists working in the Texas coastal zone to share information, results and insights into our diverse coastal environment. Both natural and social science research is welcome. Submissions are welcome on any topic concerning the coastal zone.

Location: University of Texas Marine Science Institute, Port Aransas, Texas, USA

Early Registration and Abstract Submission Deadline: March 29, 2010

Contact Information: Dr. Tracy Villareal: t.villareal@mail.utexas.edu

Home Page URL: <http://web.me.com/tv951100/Site/TBEM.html>

11th Annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference

May 12-13, 2010

Hosted by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Office of Coastal Management and Planning, and the Gulf Coast Business Council, this conference will celebrate the culture and heritage of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Topics to be discussed at the conference include: The use of live oak timber from trees downed during Hurricane Katrina to restore the National Landmark vessel Charles W. Morgan; the Mississippi Seafood Industry: The Foundation of Heritage and Culture; The Gulf Coast's Heritage Assets: Opportunities and Challenges; The Evaluation Process on Historical Properties; Tourism's Encouraging Future for the Mississippi Gulf Coast; an update on the City of Ocean Springs' recovery efforts; and the Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards.

Following conference sessions on May 12, the Mississippi Seafood Marketing Program will host the Great Mississippi Seafood Cook-Off. On the second day of the conference attendees may participate in an optional field trip to Beauvoir, Lynn Meadows Discovery Center and the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies.

This multidisciplinary event draws elected officials, city and county staff, contractors, developers, bankers, planners, zoning officials, realtors and appraisers, engineers, landowners, industry, students, federal and state agencies, boards of supervisors, lawyers, private and corporate entities, environmentalists, resource managers and others committed to rebuilding the Gulf Coast. Real estate agents and appraisers can earn continuing education credit by attending the 11th annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference, and receipts will be provided to all other professions, such as, engineers, teachers and architects, to submit for credit to their respective organizations.

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center, Biloxi, Mississippi, USA

Early Registration Deadline: April 1, 2010

Contact Information: Tina Shumate, Mississippi Dept. of Marine Resources, Office of Coastal Management & Planning, 228-523-4122, tina.shumate@dmr.ms.gov

Home Page URL: <http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/CMP/CRMP/Conference/10/conference.htm>

Coastal Resiliency Symposium

May 26, 2010

Rice University.

This forum will address how vulnerable the area is to hurricanes and other major storms and what can be done to prepare for future events. Topics include:

- What is Coastal Resiliency?
- What are the Threats?
- What's at Risk and What are Our Vulnerabilities?
- What are the Structural and Non-Structural Options?
- What are the Public Policy Issues?

Experts from the United States and abroad will share experiences and information that local decision-makers can use to increase the resiliency of our region. More information on registration and confirmed program topics will be available in the coming month. Visit <http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/CoastalResilience/> for more information.

Louisiana State of the Coast Conference

June 8-10, 2010 - Baton Rouge, Louisiana



The State of the Coast (SOC) conference, to be held June 8-10, 2010, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, aims to bring the latest science and engineering regarding coastal ecosystem restoration and hurricane protection issues to the planners and decision makers across coastal Louisiana. The SOC conference is being developed through partnership and coordination of state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations and universities. Partners include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana.

The State of the Coast (SOC) conference's mission is to provide a forum to learn from recent advances in science and engineering as they relate to hurricane protection and ecosystem restoration in coastal Louisiana, to ensure that relevant and current knowledge is applied to existing and future coastal restoration and protection efforts, and to effectively inform policy and decision making. For more information, visit www.stateofthecoast.org.

Shifting Shorelines: Adapting to the Future

June 13 - June 16, 2010

TCS is proud to announce The Coastal Society's 22nd International Conference will be held at the Hilton Riverside Wilmington, Wilmington, North Carolina. The TCS 22 conference will be held at the [Hilton Wilmington Riverside](#), located at 301 North Water Street, Wilmington, NC 28401-3934. The hotel is located in the heart of downtown Wilmington on the Cape Fear River. The room rate is \$169 single/double occupancy per night plus tax. This rate will be available up to May 18, 2010, based on hotel availability.

Reservations can be made by phone or online. To make your hotel reservation by phone, call the Hilton Wilmington Riverside directly at General Information: 910.763.5900 between 8 AM - 5 PM, or phone Hilton Reservations: 888.324.8170. Mention that you will be attending The Coastal Society Conference to receive the group rate. To make your reservation online, go to the TCS Group Web Page at: http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/ILMNCHF-TCS-20100611/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG. Use the group code: TCS.

5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration

November 13-17, 2010

The Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) national conference brings together the best and the brightest in the coastal habitat restoration community: diverse stakeholders from across the country, including top representatives from federal, state, and local governments; corporations and businesses; non-profits; grassroots organizations; tribal associations; and education, all united in the search for solutions to the needs of our coastal ecosystems. More than 1,000 attendees are expected, as well as 150 exhibitors, 160 poster presentations, and 400 presenters. There will be more than 80 high-level sessions dealing with the best and newest approaches to coastal habitat preservation and restoration.

The 2010 conference focus, "Preparing for Climate Change", while a concern for all coastal regions, has particular resonance for coastal Texas and Galveston, still recovering from the damage inflicted by Hurricane Ike in 2008. RAE is committed to helping Galveston recover from the environmental and economic damage caused by Ike. Through this conference, we will: work to restore resiliency to Galveston's shoreline through sea- and marsh-grass planting projects; stimulate the local economy through the business generated during this five-day conference; push Galveston's ongoing restoration needs to national attention through press work and through the attendance of senior federal officials; and increase the direction and momentum of new resources to aid the Galveston area.

Location: Galveston, Texas, USA

Dates: November 13-17, 2010

Early Registration Deadline: September 30, 2010

Contact Information: ssimon@estuaries.org This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. Ph: +1 772-776-1129.

Home Page URL: <https://www.estuaries.org/conference/>

Did you find this edition useful? Please send suggestions, comments, and new items for publication to



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<http://www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/>