



GULF OF MEXICO NEWS

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March 2012



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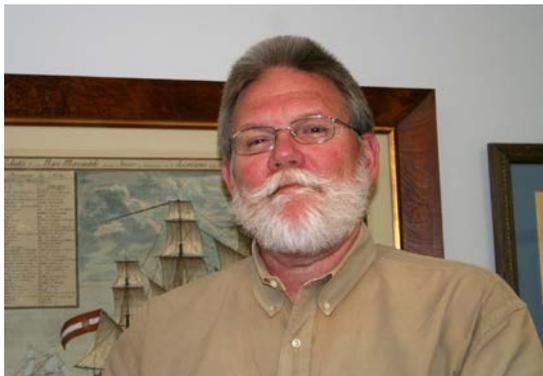
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NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

New NOAA Gulf Team Lead Selected

March 29, 2012



Stennis Space Center, MS—Russell H. Beard has been selected as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team Lead. Mr. Beard will assume this leadership role in addition to his duties as Director of NOAA’s National Coastal Data Development Center (NCDDC), a division of the National Oceanographic Data Center. Mr. Beard is second Gulf Regional Collaboration Team Lead. He previously served as the both the Climate Lead and the Deepwater Horizon Science Lead for the Team.

The Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team is a part of NOAA’s Regional Collaboration effort to coordinate NOAA’s diverse resources within regions and collaborate with partners to respond shared regional concerns. Regional Collaboration Teams are led by Regional Collaboration Team Leads, selected by leadership from all parts of NOAA, which bring together NOAA offices in eight distinct regions. Mr. Beard is the first Regional Collaboration Team Lead to represent NOAA’s National Environmental Satellite and Information Service (NESDIS) which manages NOAA’s national data centers.

“The NOAA Gulf Regional Collaboration Team is composed of dedicated regional personnel who have demonstrated the ability to work across NOAA activities in the Gulf in an integrated, efficient effort to meet the region’s and the nation’s needs related to the health of the Gulf ecosystem,” Mr. Beard said.

Mr. Beard assumes the leadership of the Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team from Frederick (Buck) Sutter, Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer for NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service. “Thanks to Buck’s leadership, we have established strong relationships with Gulf partners, such as the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and the Northern Gulf Institute, that are helping us reach our goals,” Mr. Beard said. “I want to continue to find new ways to work with our federal, state, non-governmental agencies, and academic partners.”

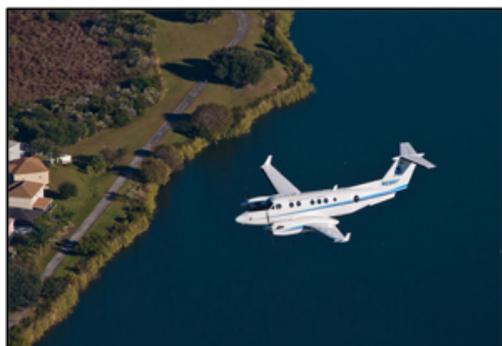
Mr. Beard plans to encourage an active and organized team representing all NOAA efforts in the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team will continue to develop integrated ecosystem assessments, build hazard resilient communities, integrate water resource services, and expand outreach and education. For more information about the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team, visit http://www.regions.noaa.gov/gulf_mexico/index.html.

Mr. Beard has been Director of NCDDC, located at Stennis Space Center, MS, since 2007. He was the NCDDC Chief Scientist for 5 years before becoming director. He is currently the NESDIS representative to NOAA’s Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, the NESDIS representative to the Northern Gulf Institute serving on the Advisory Council, the NESDIS lead for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Ecosystem Integrated Assessments Priority Issue Team and a member of the interagency Deepwater Horizon Joint Analysis Group. Prior to joining NOAA, Mr. Beard was employed by the U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office for 15 years providing oceanographic support to the fleet, joint forces, and naval special warfare. Mr. Beard graduated from Millsaps College with an undergraduate degree in History and in Geology. He received a Master of Science degree in Geology at the University of Southern Mississippi.

NOAA's coastal mapping program offers huge taxpayer benefits, report says

Economic study shows value of program to coastal economies

March 28, 2012



NOAA collects aerial imagery used to improve the accuracy of shoreline data.

[Download here.](#) (Credit: NOAA)

For every dollar American taxpayers spend on NOAA's [National Geodetic Survey \(NGS\)](#) Coastal Mapping Program, they receive more than \$35 in benefits, according to a recent independent socio-economic [scoping study](#).

The program provides critical baseline data for accurately mapping America's official shoreline—important for national security, maritime shipping and navigation, and provides geographical reference data needed to manage, develop, conserve and protect coastal resources.

The study demonstrates the program's contributions in marine safety, geographic information, resource management, and emergency response and the wide

range of economic and societal activities it supports.

“This is a great investment for taxpayers,” said David Kennedy, assistant NOAA administrator for the National Ocean Service. “The coastal mapping program FY11 budget of \$6.8 million brought about \$241 million annually in both direct and secondary economic benefits, as well as non-economic benefits such as those related to safety and the environment.”

Conducted by Leveson Consulting of Jackson, N.J., the study analyzed the benefits to the nation of NOAA's Coastal Mapping Program, which enhances coastal economies by providing accurate and consistent shoreline data. Direct economic benefits of the program alone were estimated at \$100 million—15 times program costs. The study estimated that NGS's Coastal Mapping Program further supports 1,500 jobs outside of the program. In addition to the economic data, the study also provides information on the program's customers and their uses of mapping data.

NOAA derives the shoreline data through various remote sensing technologies including aerial imagery, satellite imagery, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), and Synthetic Aperture RADAR (SAR).

“In 2011, NGS delivered 7,800 miles of shoreline mapping that included 250 miles of California shoreline using new LiDAR-based procedures,” said Juliana Blackwell, NGS director. “Through partnerships with other federal agencies in LiDAR acquisition and with continued technological advances, NGS has demonstrated the ability to achieve a threefold increase in efficiency in some of our coastal projects.”

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

NOAA Leads National Workshop on Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone

This week, NOAA led the third annual Gulf of Mexico Research Coordination Meeting in Bay St. Louis, Louisiana. All NOAA line offices and numerous state, federal, and academic partners updated each other on the science behind harmful algal blooms (HABs) to identify remaining research gaps. Nutrient pollution-driven HABs have caused most of the 300-plus hypoxic or “dead” zones recorded nationwide for several decades, destroying habitat and threatening fisheries. The largest U.S. dead zone forms every summer in the northern Gulf of Mexico, where NOAA has led research for more than 20 years and provided an Interagency Hypoxia Task Force with the actionable science to support two management plans. For more information, contact [Rob Magnien](#).

Illinois, last eligible state, joins national coastal management program

March 9, 2012



Donna Wieting, Deputy Director of NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management joins Marc Miller, Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, to display the new Illinois Coastal Management Program banner in Chicago. [Download here](#). (Credit: Tahinsky/NOAA/OCRM)

Illinois was welcomed into the coastal management system in a ceremony today, making the state eligible for approximately \$2 million in annual grants to help manage its Great Lakes resources.

The creation of the Illinois Coastal Management Program comes at the 40th anniversary of the passage of the Coastal Zone Management Act by Congress in 1972. Illinois was the only remaining eligible state without an approved coastal zone management program in the act's history.

The Illinois Coastal Management Program joins the National Coastal Management Program (CMP), a voluntary partnership between NOAA and 34 coastal states and territories that provide

frontline management of coastal resources for sustainable development and protection of natural resources. NOAA's CMP works with these coastal and Great Lakes states and territories to address today's most pressing national coastal issues including [climate change](#), [ocean planning](#), and planning for [energy facilities and development](#).

"A healthy economy and a healthy Lake Michigan go hand in hand. More than one and a half million jobs and \$62 billion in wages are tied to the Great Lakes," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "Today, NOAA and the state of Illinois celebrate a new partnership that shows state and federal government can work together in building vibrant lakeshore communities with thriving economies because we are working together to manage our Great Lakes to last."

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn designated the state's Department of Natural Resources as the lead state agency for developing, implementing and receiving grants for the program. "This is an important milestone for our state as we work with our federal partners to preserve, protect, restore and enhance coastal resources for our citizens and visitors to Illinois, now and for generations to come," said Gov. Quinn.

The Illinois coast extends along 63 miles of the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan. This area is the most densely populated and highly urbanized coastal area in the Great Lakes. "When Chicagoland



Chicago coastal skyline.

[Download here.](#) (Credit: Sarah VanDerSchalie NOAA/OCRM)

residents are asked their favorite part about living in the Windy City, the overwhelming response is the Lake Michigan lakefront,” said Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois.

“Lake Michigan, like all of the Great Lakes and most of the world’s great bodies of water, faces many challenges. The Illinois Coastal Management Program will give our state access to the resources it needs to address those challenges and protect this beautiful shoreline.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2010, U.S. coastal watershed counties contributed \$8.3 trillion to the U.S. economy. NOAA’s Coastal Management Program in its 40-year history has provided 34 coastal states and territories with over \$1 billion in federal funds, and technical assistance.

The federal-state partnership has resulted in the 34 state programs, preservation of more than 1.3 million acres of coastal habitat, establishment of 28 estuarine research reserves, and the creation of effective regulations and projects. This support of smart economic development has increased public access and environmental conservation as part of a coastal economy that provides half of the U.S. gross domestic product and 66 million jobs in coastal counties.

MPA Center and NCCOS Develop New Spatial Analysis Tool

The SPatial Analysis and Resource Characterization (SPARC) tool was developed by the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) Biogeography Branch and the MPAC to help analyze the distribution of marine resources among MPAs and MPA networks. SPARC is designed to support conservation planning by helping coastal and ocean managers identify areas where resources of interest occur, where those areas overlap with existing MPAs, and potential gaps in resource protection. While designed to focus on MPA analyses, this one-of-a-kind tool can be used to evaluate any spatial area of interest for which resource data are available. This could include locations proposed for energy development or other management actions, or marine jurisdictional boundaries. The tool can be downloaded here and is packaged with a detailed tutorial with additional technical support available through NCCOS. For additional information, download the SPARC fact sheet.

http://www.mpa.gov/pdf/helpful-resources/factsheets/sparc_fs_2012_0214_1.pdf.

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NOAA’s National Water Center coming to Alabama

February 21, 2012

Construction began today for NOAA’s National Water Center on The University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa, which will strengthen the nation’s water forecast capabilities when completed in mid-2013.

NOAA Deputy Administrator Kathryn Sullivan, Ph.D., was joined by Senator Richard Shelby, UA President Robert E. Witt and USGS Associate Director for Water William Werkheiser, for the groundbreaking of the new 60,000-square-foot “green” building. In addition to NOAA employees, the National Water Center will house staff from other federal agencies involved in water services, including the USGS.



Pictured here is an artist rendering of the completed National Water Center.

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

“The research conducted at the National Water Center at the University of Alabama will be critical to gaining an increased understanding of our vital water resources,” said Senator Shelby. “This center will allow us as a nation to better predict and manage various water-related ecological problems while fostering nationwide collaboration on water issues.”

The necessary expertise and capabilities to address increasingly complex, multi-disciplinary water resource issues reside in more than 20 federal agencies and academia. The growing need and

demand for better and timely water forecast information and services requires close partnerships among federal “water” agencies, because each brings a unique set of complementary tools and information to the table. The National Water Center will facilitate the strong collaboration needed to best solve the nation’s water challenges and serve the American people.

“Farmers, municipal water managers, and the Army Corps all make vital economic and public safety decisions based on timely and reliable water information,” Sullivan said. “This new center will strengthen our forecasting capabilities for floods, droughts, and water quality and enhance interagency collaboration in support of decision makers.”

The National Water Center will be the first-ever U.S. center for water forecast operations, research and collaboration across federal agencies. The new collaborative water program carried out in the building will enable the National Weather Service, in partnership with other federal agencies, to provide emergency managers and the public with detailed maps that explicitly show forecasted locations and effects of flooding for faster and more effective evacuations. It will also support the development of new forecasts for water supply and availability, thereby helping communities become more resilient to floods. The center will deliver a new generation of information and services to mitigate water-related disasters, inform routine decision-making about water, and address competing demands for increasingly limited water availability.

"Water resources present our society with some of its biggest challenges," Witt said. "The National Water Center that will be built on the UA campus will assist in meeting those challenges while providing a mutually beneficial research relationship between faculty and students from UA and other institutions and the experts with NOAA and other federal water experts."

The National Water Center – part of NOAA’s commitment to create a Weather-Ready Nation – will build upon the National Weather Service’s robust water forecast network comprised of 122 local Weather Forecast Offices that are supported by the agency’s 13 regional River Forecast Centers and national forecast offices including the Hydrometeorological Prediction Center and Climate Prediction Center.

New Coastal LIDAR Data Added to the Digital Coast

Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) is the most frequently requested data via NOAA Coastal Services Center’s Digital Coast. Newly added coastal LIDAR data cover portions of Florida, California, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, and Oregon. Data sources include the U.S. Geological Survey, National Geodetic Survey, California Coastal Conservancy, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The [Digital Coast provides an online viewer](#) to access these data. For more information, contact [Keil Schmid](#).

NOAA unveils improved way to estimate saltwater recreational fishing

January 25, 2012

NOAA today announced it has begun to use an improved method to estimate the amount of fish caught by saltwater anglers, which will allow rules that fishermen follow to be based on more accurate information. The method is part of an overall effort to improve the accuracy of recreational catch data collected by the Marine Recreational Information Program, and was developed by a team of NOAA scientists and outside experts.

“The new estimation method is a fundamental change that better reflects what is happening on the water and within the recreational fishing community,” said Eric Schwaab, NOAA’s acting assistant secretary of commerce for conservation and management. “Better, more accurate estimates can only be a plus for the saltwater recreational fishing industry, which provides jobs for many Americans and contributes to the economic vitality of our coastal communities.”

The agency today released recalculated estimates going back to 2004 using the new method. There were no overall trends in terms of size or direction of the new estimates; catch estimates for some species go up, some go down, and some remain about the same. To view comparisons of recreational catch estimates using the previous method and the revised method, go to: <http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov>.

“The recreational fishing community has a shared interest in scientifically sound, accurate data and a shared responsibility in making it available,” said Bruce Freeman, a New Jersey recreational fisherman, scientist and member of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association. “With this new estimation method, NOAA is taking an important first step toward the high-quality catch data that many of us have been calling for.”

Using these new estimates, NOAA will now work with the regional fishery management councils, the states, and other stakeholders to integrate these results into fisheries science and management. Beginning this year, NOAA will use the new method to calculate estimates for the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico for use in fishery management and stock assessment by NOAA, regional fishery management councils and states. Other areas of the country, such as the West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska, use different survey and estimation methods for saltwater recreational catch. NOAA is working with these regional partners to conduct similar evaluations and, as necessary, implement improvements to their estimation methods.

Another important part of the Marine Recreational Information Program is the National Saltwater Angler Registry, which will help NOAA improve the accuracy of fishing effort estimates by increasing the proportion of fishing households that are surveyed. Additional improvements that will increase the accuracy of the estimates are being developed, including revised dockside survey methods, testing of approaches to improving data timeliness, and use of electronic logbooks in the for-hire vessel sector. To learn more about MRIP, go to: <http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov>.

State Federal Consistency Lists Available Online

Last week, NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management posted state coastal management programs' federal consistency lists [online](#). A key component of the Coastal Zone Management Act, the federal consistency provision provides states with a tool to ensure that proposed federal actions that have reasonably foreseeable effects on the uses or resources of a state's coastal zone are consistent with a state's NOAA-approved coastal policies. An important part of the federal consistency provision is notification to federal agencies and the public. The consistency lists that state coastal management programs maintain identify the federal agency activities, federal license or permit activities, and financial assistance activities, that are, generally, subject to state federal consistency review. For more information, contact [Carleigh Rodriguez](#).

NOAA launches Weather-Ready Nation emergency response project in Louisiana

Mobile weather capability to be tested as part of emergency operations in the region

January 21, 2012



Weather-Ready Nation emergency response vehicle unveiled at the National Weather Service's New Orleans/Baton Rouge office.

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

The National Weather Service's New Orleans/Baton Rouge office today increased its rapid response ability with the launch of a new 24/7 emergency response desk and team of meteorologists and hydrologists who will provide forecasts, warnings, and timely decision support services during high-impact weather and other disasters. A critical part of NOAA's [Weather-Ready Nation initiative](#), these emergency mobile weather and water forecasters are trained to work alongside emergency managers to enhance preparedness efforts in the central Gulf coast region.

"This team adds tremendous value to the weather forecasting services we already provide in Louisiana," said Kathryn Sullivan, Ph.D., deputy administrator, NOAA. "Their ability to produce

timely, accurate forecasts will provide better information for better decisions, allowing officials to pre-position people and resources more effectively to mitigate the impacts of floods and other disasters."

These weather and water forecasters will serve as part of future incident command centers in the region and are skilled at handling a wide range of hazards. Rapid deployment of these forecasters is made possible by their emergency response vehicle – a 38-foot trailer equipped with a high-speed communications link and a full weather forecasting suite.

The forecast office's new emergency response desk is the first of its kind and one of a series of community-based Weather-Ready Nation pilot projects under development to help the nation better prepare for extreme weather. Other projects will be launched later this year in the South and mid-Atlantic.

The New Orleans/Baton Rouge forecast office, located in Slidell, La., serves 2.9 million people in 22 parishes in Louisiana and eight Mississippi counties.

"Weather-related damages have impacted our area to the tune of \$150 billion in 25 years. We hope this pilot project will help the community reach the highest level of preparedness and demonstrate resilience to high-impact weather," said Ken Graham, meteorologist-in-charge, New Orleans/Baton Rouge forecast office.

"In the wake of one of the most destructive weather years on record, this pilot project is an important step to increase weather-readiness in 2012 and in the future," said Jack Hayes, Ph.D., National Weather Service Director.

Pilot projects like the one in New Orleans are an important aspect of NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation initiative. In addition to changes made within the weather service, NOAA is also leveraging a diverse network of partners critical to emergency response to participate in a national dialogue. The dialogue began in earnest last month at a national symposium in Norman, Okla. Recommendations from the

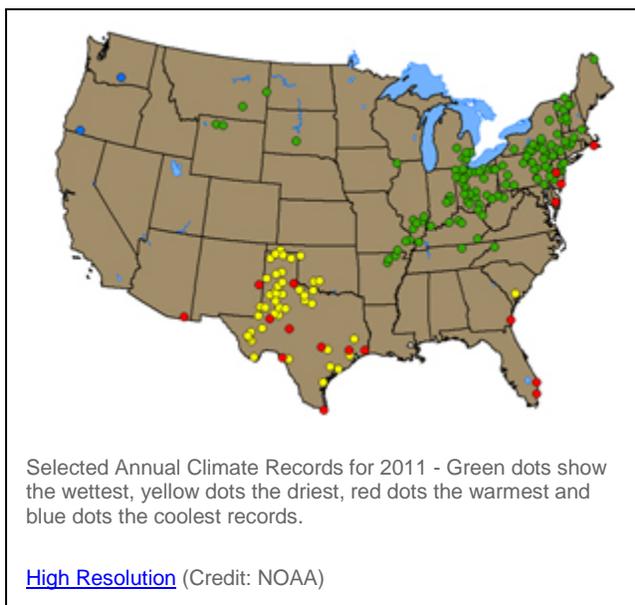
symposium will be the topic of a [Weather - Ready Nation Town Hall Meeting](#) on Jan. 23 during the American Meteorological Society annual meeting in New Orleans.

The National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. It operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to save lives and livelihoods and enhance the national economy. Working with partners, NOAA's National Weather Service is building a Weather-Ready Nation to support community readiness, responsiveness and resiliency in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather. Visit us online at weather.gov and join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

NOAA: 2011 a year of climate extremes in the United States

NOAA announces two additional severe weather events reached \$1 billion damage threshold, raising 2011's billion-dollar disaster count from 12 to 14 events

January 19, 2012



According to NOAA scientists, 2011 was a record-breaking year for climate extremes, as much of the United States faced historic levels of heat, precipitation, flooding and severe weather, while La Niña events at both ends of the year impacted weather patterns at home and around the world. NOAA's annual analysis of U.S. and global conditions, conducted by scientists at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center, reports that the average temperature for the contiguous U.S. was 53.8 degrees F, 1.0 degree F above the 20th century average, making it the 23rd warmest year on record. Precipitation across the nation averaged near normal, masking record-breaking extremes in both drought and precipitation.

On a global scale, La Niña events helped keep the average global temperature below recent trends. As a result, 2011 tied with 1997 for the 11th

warmest year on record. It was the second coolest year of the 21st century to date, and tied with the second warmest year of the 20th century.

Key highlights of the report available [online](#).

Scientists, researchers and leaders in government and industry use NOAA's monthly and annual reports to help track trends and other changes in the world's climate. This climate service has a wide range of practical uses, from helping farmers know what and when to plant, to guiding resource managers' critical decisions about water, energy and other vital assets.

NOAA Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program

January 2012

NOAA Coastal Services Center
(843) 740-1200
www.csc.noaa.gov

Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource
Management
(301) 713-3155
<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov>

On January 10, 2012, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awarded \$6.18 million to regional partners through the Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program (ROPFP). This grant program was developed to advance effective coastal and ocean management through regional ocean governance, including the goals for national ocean policy and comprehensive ocean planning set out in the president's *Final Recommendations of Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, July 19, 2010*. The ROPFP program supported two categories of activities: 1) implementation of a spectrum of regional ocean partnership priorities, with a focus on marine planning activities and 2) support for development and operations for Regional Ocean Partnerships (ROP).

The following projects were selected for funding:

- **Northeast Region – The Association of U.S. Delegates to the Gulf of Maine Council**, representing the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC), was awarded a total of \$1,545,000 for the development of a first-stage regional ocean plan supporting ecosystem-based management of New England's marine environment and its human uses and to expand partnerships and public participation in NROC activities.
- **Mid-Atlantic Region – The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO)** is supported by a total of \$1,569,000, including an award to Monmouth University to enhance MARCO's online Mapping and Planning Portal and an award to the Coastal States Stewardship Foundation to enable MARCO to better implement its actions and reach out to partners and the public.
- **Alaska – The Seward Association for the Advancement of Marine Science**, representing the Alaska Ocean Observing System, was awarded \$760,000 to develop stakeholder-driven visualization and decision-support tools for Alaska and the U.S. Arctic for a range of ocean and coastal uses.
- **South Atlantic – The South Atlantic Alliance** supported two successful grant applications for its region for a total of \$1,062,431. The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium received both grants to support the South Atlantic Alliance's initiative to provide a multi-state and regional framework for ocean planning in the Southeast U.S., as well as to continue the development and organization of the alliance for the Southeast region.
- **Caribbean – The Nature Conservancy**, representing the Caribbean Region, was awarded \$250,000 to support the development of a new Regional Ocean Partnership in the United States Caribbean region.
- **Gulf of Mexico – The Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA)** was awarded \$250,000 to support continued coordination of the GOMA Priority Issue Teams for achieving the specific priority objectives, including those concerning water quality and hazards resilience outlined in the Governors' Action Plan II.
- **West Coast – The West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health** received \$246,400 to aid its work on regional priority development and work towards better regional data access and delivery in support of those priorities.
- **Hawaii – The State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Office of Planning**, representing the Hawai'i Ocean Resources Management Plan, was

awarded \$250,000 to facilitate stakeholder engagement and foster the development of the Hawai'i Sub-Regional Ocean Partnership (SOP).

- **Pacific Islands – The University of Hawai'i**, representing the Pacific Islands region, was awarded \$249,000 to support the development of the Pacific Regional Ocean Partnership (PROP).

Chemical measurements confirm official estimate of Gulf oil spill rate

January 9, 2012



A view of the oil source as seen during an overflight on May 20, 2010. [High Resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

By combining detailed chemical measurements in the deep ocean, in the oil slick, and in the air, NOAA scientists and academic colleagues have independently estimated how fast gases and oil were leaking during the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The new chemistry-based spill rate estimate, an average of 11,130 tons of gas and oil compounds per day, is close to the official average leak rate estimate of about 11,350 tons of gas and oil per day (equal to about 59,200 barrels of liquid oil per day).

“This study uses the available chemical data to give a better understanding of what went where, and why,” said Thomas Ryerson, Ph.D., a NOAA research chemist and

lead author of the study. “The surface and subsurface measurements and analysis provided by our university colleagues were key to this unprecedented approach to understanding an oil spill.”

The NOAA-led team did not rely on any of the data used in the original estimates, such as video flow analysis, pipe diameter and fluid flow calculations. “We analyzed a completely separate set of chemical measurements, which independently led us to a very similar leak estimate,” Ryerson said.

The new study, *Chemical data quantify Deepwater Horizon hydrocarbon flow rate and environmental distribution*, was published online today in the journal [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA](#).

The new analysis follows on another NOAA-led study published last year, in which Ryerson and colleagues estimated a lower limit to the Deepwater Horizon leak rate based on two days of airborne data collected during the spill and the chemical makeup of the reservoir gas and oil determined before the spill. The new analysis adds in many other sources of data, including subsurface and surface samples taken during six weeks of the spill and including a direct measure of the makeup of the gas and oil actually leaking into the Gulf.

Ryerson and his colleagues found that the leaking gas and oil quickly separated into three major pools: the underwater plume about 3,300-4,300 feet below the surface, the visible surface slick, and an airborne plume of evaporating chemicals. Each pool had a very different chemical composition.

The underwater plume was enhanced in gases known to dissolve readily in water, the team found. This included essentially all of the lightweight methane (natural gas) and benzene (a known carcinogen) present in the spilling reservoir fluid. The surface oil slick was dominated by the heaviest and stickiest components, which neither dissolved in seawater nor evaporated into the air. And the airborne plume of chemicals contained a wide mixture of intermediate-weight components of the spilled gas and oil.

The visible surface slick represented about 15 percent of the total leaked gas and oil; the airborne plume accounted for about another 7 percent. About 36 percent remained in a deep underwater plume, and 17 percent was recovered directly to the surface through a marine riser. The location of the balance, about 25 percent of the total, is not directly accounted for by the chemical data.

This information about the transport and fate of different components of the spilled gas and oil mixture could help resource managers and others trying to understand environmental exposure levels.

The chemical measurements made from mid-May through June showed that the composition of the atmospheric plume changed very little, suggesting little change in the makeup of the leaking gas and oil. The team of researchers also used the detailed chemical measurements to calculate how much gas and oil, in total, was spilling from the breached reservoir deep underwater. The new chemistry-based estimate of 11,130 tons per day has an estimated range of 8,900 to 13,300 tons per day. By comparison, the official estimated range was 10,000 to 12,700 tons per day.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

Co-authors of the new paper, "Chemical data quantify Deepwater Horizon hydrocarbon flow rate and environmental distribution," are R. Camilli (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution), J.D. Kessler (Texas A&M University), E.B. Kujawinski and C.M. Reddy (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution), D.L. Valentine (University of California, Santa Barbara), E.L. Atlas (University of Miami), D.R. Blake (University of California, Irvine), J.A. de Gouw (NOAA and Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, CIRES), S. Meinardi (University of California, Irvine), D.D. Parrish (NOAA), J. Peischl (NOAA and CIRES), J.S. Seewald (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution), and C. Warneke (NOAA and CIRES).

In the Gulf States

Restoring the Shore-- North Mobile County Students Build Living Shoreline

March 20, 2012

Over the days of April 2, 3 and 4, nearly 150 students from North Mobile County Middle School will be getting their hands dirty and their sense of community fulfilled as they help build a living shoreline from oyster shells at Bayfront Park near Heron Bay, Theodore, Alabama. Work is expected to begin at 11:00am until 1:00pm on each of these three days; approximately 50 students a day will undertake this vital work of restoring the shore.

Working on a Gulf Alliance Partnership (GAP) project to build a living shoreline, these 6th graders lead by teacher Ms. Mindy Kirksey have been learning about the local habitats of the Mobile Delta, the salt marshes of Dauphin Island, and the waters of Mobile Bay. Field trips to each habitat have given them an up-close and hands-on experience with their environment, reinforcing the lesson that knowledge must be combined with personal action to effect lasting change.

Following their salt marsh field trip a few weeks ago, students prepared over a hundred bags of oyster shells in preparation for deployment in April. This Living Shoreline at Bayfront Park will help restore oyster habitat, a vital economic and environmental component of coastal Alabama.

This is the second year of the GAP project, which is funded by EPA Gulf of Mexico Program. Teacher Mindy Kirksey said, “Our students here at North Mobile have truly enjoyed themselves these past two years helping rebuild ‘our’ shoreline. This experience has been one that some of them would have never experienced without the Gulf Alliance Project.”

Dr. Tina Miller-Way, the project’s director, said, “We have had the most fun teaching these students about the incredible diversity of life in their watershed and how scientists go about learning about and monitoring these environments. Ms. Kirksey and Ms. Gross have helped make this project both valuable and enjoyable and the principal, Mr. Campbell, has been very supportive of our visits to the school and of the time students have spent away from school. It has been rewarding to witness the enthusiasm the students have for working on ‘their’ reef.”

The 2-year GAP program’s mission is to increase environmental literacy of more than 2,000 students and provide professional development for 32 teachers at eight sites across the Gulf of Mexico. Each project site has sought to achieve measurable improvements in local environmental quality.

The Business of Nature

In 2009, Alabama’s coastal beaches attracted over 4 million visitors who spent more than \$2 billion. In turn this generated 40,000 travel- related jobs accounting for \$915 million in wages and salary. Increasingly important to Alabama’s coastal tourism is the number of wildlife viewers. In 2000 when the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail was completed nearly 100,000 visitors who came to Baldwin County participated in nature tourism activities, by 2009 more than 400,000 visitors were participating in nature tourism activities.

Visitors and residents are becoming more environmentally aware and recognize the importance of low impact tourism. It is important to continually create opportunities for the public to enjoy our coastal habitats and species and to become educated about the requirements for healthy natural resources. In a new newsletter, [The Nature of Alabama’s Coast](#), we introduce you to the Certified Coastal Nature Guide Program and the Certified Fisher Invested in Sustainable Harvests Program which provides hands-on environmental education that encourages behaviors that contribute to the sustainability of the Gulf Coast region’s natural ecosystems and resources. In the field, well-planned and managed nature tourism businesses can enrich the livelihoods of our coastal communities and by relying on healthy natural resources, can offer powerful incentives to conserve and protect our biodiversity that enhances our quality of life and the lives of future generations.

Certified Coastal Nature Guide



Coastal Nature Guide Certification Program

The Coastal Nature Guide Certification Program is designed for a new generation of nature tourism professionals in the Gulf of Mexico region. To be successful, nature tourism experiences should provide quality opportunities to engage the public with nature in ways that lead to greater understanding and appreciation, while protecting and preserving the wildlife populations they are viewing.

To continue reading, [click here](#).

Certified Fisher Invested in Sustainable Harvests



CFISH Program

The Certified Fisher Invested in Sustainable Harvests Program is designed for a new generation of charter fishing professionals. The goal of the program is to build and enhance the skills needed for charter fishing professionals to adopt and promote sustainable fishing practices that preserve healthy marine resources, while stimulating local economies.

To continue reading, [click here](#).

Work to Begin in Joe's Branch Watershed

January 26, 2012

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program has been awarded \$850,000 by ADEM and ALDOT to improve water quality in Joe's Branch Watershed in Spanish Fort. Joe's Branch is part of the D'Olive Watershed, which empties into Mobile Bay.

Joe's Branch is on the state's list of impacted waterways for sediments which wash downstream into wetlands, D'Olive Creek and Mobile Bay. The rapid urbanization of the area and conversion of natural landscapes to hardened surfaces – roads and buildings – has intensified problems of stormwater runoff.

“Step pools will be constructed along a degraded tributary of Joe's Branch to reduce the volume and velocity of runoff, improve water quality and to decrease the transportation of sediment downstream into Mobile Bay,” explained Roberta Swann, Mobile Bay NEP director. The project will showcase best management practices to establish a ‘living’ or ‘green’ stormwater conveyance that will restore habitat for aquatic organisms, birds and other wildlife.

“One of the project goals is to demonstrate to public officials, engineers and other professionals how water quality protection through natural ‘green infrastructure’ is a practical alternative to rock fill and bank retention systems. The project includes an education component to stress the importance of protecting water quality. It will show business owners and residents how to capture rain water where it falls to prevent runoff,” Swann said. According to the EPA, polluted stormwater runoff is the primary threat to our nation's water quality.

ADEM is providing \$650,000 toward the project, with ALDOT contributing \$200,000. Dauphin Island Sea Lab is donating in-kind services and Mobile Bay NEP is coordinating the project. ALDOT's involvement stems from concern over the eroded tributary, which if not addressed, will compromise Hwy. 31. Project completion is slated for late summer.

Plan to encourage working waterfronts could revitalize area

February 8, 2012



As part of a Historic Downtown Overlay District, the zoning for some areas north and south of the Intracoastal Waterway in Gulf Shores may encourage water-dependent businesses in an effort to revitalize the area (click image to view full-sized).

Andy Bauer first heard about working waterfronts at a workshop the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium held in 2010. The concept of working to protect, preserve and enhance traditional waterfront areas, areas that are home to water-dependent businesses, was new to Bauer, who is the director of planning and zoning for Gulf Shores, Alabama.

Since then, Bauer has been working with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant and the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program to research ways to encourage the return of water-dependent businesses along the Intracoastal Waterway. Because of this work, the Gulf Shores Planning Commission recently approved a new overlay district, the Historic Downtown Overlay District. An overlay district is a layer of zoning regulations that is added to the existing zoning regulations. Overlay districts can further restrict or lessen zoning restrictions.

The Historic Downtown Overlay District, which is expected to go before the City Council in the coming weeks, would set the framework for a downtown neighborhood district. It would allow for the re-establishment of water-dependent businesses—boatyards, marinas, seafood processors—that historically were part of the waterfront. Those uses are not allowed now, and the overlay encourages them.

“Before tourism, the Gulf Shores economy was more dependent on waterfront businesses,” Bauer said. Plans for the district may include pedestrian pathways on the north and south sides of the waterway that would not only allow people to walk along the waterfront and from business to business, but would permit some type of seafood market or seafood exchange. In a seafood exchange, fishermen can post what they have caught that day on the Internet, and customers can meet them at the dock to buy the catch.

The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program offered research assistance on this zoning project. It identified regulations for seafood markets and exchanges and potential issues and challenges with getting them started. The program also identified some of the legalities of creating a pedestrian pathway, and it provided examples of language used in other cities regarding working waterfronts in regulations.

“We were happy to support Gulf Shores’ efforts to preserve public access and the historic character of the Intracoastal Waterway,” Niki Pace, research counsel for the Legal Program, said. Consultants from Watkins, Acy, Strunk Design also were part of the project.

In the end, the city would eventually like to see the Intracoastal Waterway become a second coast—one that is unique and different from Alabama’s famous beaches. “The city is very excited to get these regulations adopted and go through with getting this area redeveloped,” Bauer said.

Jody Thompson and Marie Dyson with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and Auburn University helped facilitate this project with Gulf Shores. “Vital working waterfronts are important to the cultural and historic fabric of the Alabama coast,” Thompson said.

The Historic Downtown Overlay District is strategic and will serve as a model for other communities desiring to take steps to protect and preserve working waterfronts and encourage economic development and waterfront access, Dyson said. “Gulf Shores should be commended for its vision,” she said.

Florida DEP, Collier County Open Isles of Capri Paddlecraft Park ~First-of-its-kind park in Naples through DEP, Collier partnership~

March 30, 2012

NAPLES – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), along with Collier County officials, today celebrated the opening of the Isles of Capri Paddlecraft Park. This park represents a key partnership in opening the county’s first public access paddle craft launch while providing continued preservation and protection to Florida’s natural resources.

DEP Deputy Secretary for Water Policy and Ecosystem Restoration Greg Munson joined the festivities at the park, which included a ribbon-cutting, facility tour, music and remarks.

“I am excited by this project, which is protecting Florida’s precious coastline by restoring valuable mangrove forest habitat while still offering Floridians access to one of Florida’s most beautiful natural resources,” said Deputy Secretary Munson. “This project is a great example of a successful partnership between the state and local governments to protect our environment and better serve our citizens.”

A cooperative agreement between DEP and Collier County allows Collier County Parks & Recreation to manage the park’s day-to-day activities, while DEP’s Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (RBNERR) staff will continually monitor and assess water quality at the site.

The Isles of Capri Paddlecraft Park is located on a 10-acre site located within the reserve. Originally intended to be a hotel and 50-slip marina, the land was purchased by the State of Florida in 1998. In 2003, RBNERR staff designed and constructed an altered mangrove forested wetland using grant funds awarded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Staff then completed a project design for public parking, restroom facilities and a paddle craft launch, where residents and visitors can use kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and other paddle craft. Construction began in 2009. The park provides public access to McIlvane Bay, a shallow mangrove fringed bay that provides great opportunities for wildlife viewing. Hours are sunrise to sunset and the cost is \$4 per paddle craft. Collier County Manager Leo Ochs, Collier County Commissioner Donna Fiala and other county employees attended the ceremony.

“I want to applaud the partnership between the State, DEP’s Rookery Bay, and Collier County’s Parks and Recreation Department that made this park possible,” Ochs said. “Not only have you established protections for an important and environmentally sensitive area, you’ve provided the public with much needed access to a part of Florida’s ecosystem that many never get to experience.”

About Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Rookery Bay Reserve was established in 1978 as a partnership between the state of Florida and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The reserve is one of 27 research reserves operating across the nation. DEP’s Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (CAMA) manages Rookery Bay Reserve along with 41 aquatic preserves, two other National Estuarine Research Reserves and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. CAMA’s programs and activities are designed to help Floridians better understand and conserve the state’s resources through research, education and conservation. For more information about the reserve, please visit www.rookerybay.org. For more information on DEP’s Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal>.

Rookery Bay Reserve Works in Partnership to Protect Important Mangroves

The Rookery Bay NERR is working hard to restore mangrove forests in the Naples, Florida area. The Reserve is working with the Coastal Resources Group to restore mangrove forests that serve as essential breeding grounds and habitat for fish and birds. There are about 225 acres of mangroves that are either dead or dying, and another 250 acres are in danger. The project will reestablish a historic tidal channel adjacent to the Steven's Landing community near Marco Island and ultimately restore 64 acres of mangrove forests. The first phase of the project will aim to restore a small area at Steven's Landing with results becoming visible by this summer once the natural ebb and flow of water is restored to the affected area. This is a multi-party effort with several supporters, including Fabien Cousteau who lent his personal support and that of his environmentally focused nonprofit, Plant-a-Fish, at a recent press conference, "As wonderful as it is to have restoration happen, we need so much more of it to happen because we're really far behind in terms of catching up on the last 50 years of environmental impact ... The most important investment we can have is in our one and only life-support system, which is this planet," Cousteau added. Phase I of the work was funded through private donations and a grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service grant obtained by Coastal Resources Group, Inc. and Rookery Bay Reserve.

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Survey Shows Outdoor Recreation is Important to Florida's Residents and Visitors

~Saltwater beach activities rank high among preferred outdoor activities~



Visitors enjoy the beach at Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park in the panhandle.

TALLAHASSEE - The Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Florida Park Service today announced the results of the [2011 Florida Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey](#). The study, which measured the satisfaction of Florida's residents and visitors with current recreation opportunities in Florida and determined levels of participation for outdoor recreation activities, found that outdoor recreation is important to 98 percent of tourists and 96 percent of residents.

"This study is a great tool for Florida's outdoor recreation providers, and will help us ensure that we are in tune with the recreational needs of the

state's citizens and visitors," said DEP's Florida Park Service Director Donald V. Forgione. "Outdoor recreation is not only a major contributor to Florida's economy, but also educates and cultivates the next generation of environmental stewards."

Responsive Management, a survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, surveyed nearly 4,000 Florida residents and nearly 3,000 tourists between April and October 2011 by telephone. Of the tourists surveyed, 97 percent said they were satisfied with the outdoor recreation opportunities in Florida, including 77 percent who are very satisfied. The majority of Florida residents (80 percent) are satisfied with the outdoor recreation opportunities in their county. Nearly all participants (99 percent of residents and 96 percent of tourists) noted that spending time with family and friends is an important factor for participating in outdoor recreation .

Saltwater beach activities were the most popular among all participants—63 percent of residents and 49 percent of visitors enjoyed this activity in the past 12 months. The next most popular activity among Florida residents was wildlife viewing, which 49 percent enjoyed in the last year. Forty-six percent went fishing, 44 percent enjoyed bicycling and 40 percent enjoyed a picnic outdoors in the last year. Forty-seven percent of tourists enjoyed wildlife viewing last year, followed by 37 percent who enjoyed picnicking, 29 percent of visitors who went swimming in public outdoor pools and 26 percent of tourists who visited historical or archaeological sites.

The Florida Park Service is not only one of Florida's leading outdoor recreation providers with 160 state parks, the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway and eight state trails, but is also responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, in cooperation with other public recreation land managers, including state and local recreation providers. This survey will be used to evaluate the supply, demand and need for outdoor recreation for the 2013 update of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan ([SCORP](#)).

By contributing to the quality of life for residents and the state's desirability as a tourist destination, outdoor recreation in Florida stimulates the economy and creates jobs. Florida's outdoor recreation program provides a diverse system of resources, facilities and programs. The 2011 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey confirms that outdoor recreation opportunities are very important to Florida's residents and tourists. View the [complete survey](#).

DEP Launches Phase I of New Online Beach Guide

~Finding Your Ideal Florida Beach Just Got Easier~

TALLAHASSEE - The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) Florida Coastal Management Program today announced the launch of the first phase of its new Online Beach Access Guide. The Guide is an interactive website that will help users find beach access points and other additional information on amenities such as restrooms or lifeguard availability. The first phase includes data for the panhandle region, encompassing 13 Gulf Coast counties spanning from Escambia to Citrus.

"Florida's coastlines are home to more than just white sandy beaches; they also include many of Florida's cultural, historic and natural resources," Danny Clayton, Program Administrator of DEP's Florida Coastal Management Program. "This online tool will allow visitors to choose the access that best matches their interests and needs through an interactive map and detailed information about parking, and other amenities such as facilities, picnic areas, boardwalks, camping, boat ramps and more."

Once completed, the Online Beach Access Guide will include public beach access points in coastal counties throughout the state. The guide also provides directions, a list of amenities at each access point and a list of state parks, paddling trails, points of interest and a county overview.

Information about Florida's Atlantic coast and Southwest Florida will be added to the website in the coming months. To use this new interactive tool, please visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp/beachaccess/>.

About the Florida Coastal Management Program

The Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) seeks to protect and sustain Florida's natural, cultural, historical and economic coastal resources and communities. Program activities are implemented in partnership with network agencies through program support projects, special initiatives, grant programs and the coordinated reviews of federal activities for consistency with the statutory authorities in the FCMP.

Louisiana Office of Coastal Management Facilitates Coastal Community Resiliency Index Sessions

LCP staff working in cooperation with Louisiana Sea Grant Law and Policy Program, LSU Cooperative Extension Service, Alabama/Mississippi Sea Grant and other Gulf of Mexico Alliance members continues to facilitate the Coastal Community Resiliency Index in towns and parishes throughout coastal Louisiana; strengths and weaknesses regarding hurricane recovery are assessed and parish government and emergency operation's personnel are provided with the results and offered suggestions on improving community resiliency.

The Coastal Resilience Index is a tool communities can use to examine how prepared they are for storms and storm recovery. To complete the index, community leaders get together and use the tool to guide discussion about their community's resilience to coastal hazards. To date, Resiliency Index Sessions have been facilitated in Calcasieu, Cameron, Lafourche, Orleans, St. Tammany and Terrebonne communities. Additional sessions will be conducted very soon in: Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. James Parishes. For additional information please contact Jon Truxillo at OCM at 225-342-3394 or Melissa Troclair Daigle at SGLPP at 225-578-9968.

Mississippi CZM Projects Continue

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), as Mississippi's federally approved state coastal zone management program, receives funding from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) annually for Coastal Zone Management Act administration and enhancement of Mississippi's coastal resources. MDMR's Office of Coastal Ecology continues three projects under NOAA funding.

The final phase of the [Public Access](#) project has commenced and will provide final update data for the map and inventory which will reside on MDMR's website. Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District, with funding from NOAA's Coastal Zone Management Program through a contract with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, developed a map as part of an inventory of public access sites in the three Mississippi coastal counties. The purpose of the inventory was two-fold: to update a previous inventory published in 2001 and to assess the condition of public access sites following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The Coastal Hazards Mitigation project continues with its final phase, providing technical assistance to coastal communities in their flood planning. A third project, initiated in November 2011, will assess and inventory the hardened shoreline of Mississippi's coast and develop an alternative shoreline management guideline to promote sustainable shoreline alternatives to bulkheads in Mississippi's coastal waterways. The project is scheduled to complete in 2013.

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.

Hydrographic dye study conducted in St. Louis Bay

In mid-January, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' Shellfish Bureau teamed up with scientists from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to conduct a hydrographic dye study around Mississippi's oyster-growing areas located near Pass Christian and Bay St. Louis.

The purpose of the study was to find possible pollution sources that might affect the oyster growing areas. The study involved water sampling at locations along the beaches and in the bayous along Waveland, Bay St. Louis and Pass Christian. The teams also deployed hydrographic instruments along the St. Louis Bay to monitor for red dye that was released in Joe's Bayou at high tide. The purpose of the red dye deployment was to follow the route that the dye would take during the falling tide from areas of concern into the St. Louis Bay and adjacent waters of the Mississippi Sound.

The dye, Rhodamine WT, is not harmful to people or the ecosystem. However, because the dye is used to track the movement of water, it turns the affected water bright red. The FDA will produce a report with dispersion maps from the study. Information from the January dye study will be used to determine any potential impacts on nearby shellfish waters.

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Unveils New Website Design

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) has launched its newly redesigned website at www.dmr.ms.gov. Visitors to the site will now find improved navigation that allows quicker access to popular content and highlights programs of which the public may not otherwise have been aware.

New features include a plant life database that allows users to search local flora based on biological and physical characteristics, information on a variety of agency-sponsored events, contact forms for various departments, an RSS feed for news releases (which automatically updates new content to subscribers), and online registration for newsletters. There are also direct links to the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area websites. Plans for future improvements include providing an online events calendar, developing dynamic seafood marketing content, and expanding the focus on eco-tourism.

Currently, the website receives more than 13,000 visitors per month, from more than 100 nations. Users come to the MDMR website seeking information on topics such as licensing and regulations, fishing reefs, shrimp, oysters, crabs, boating safety, education materials, wetlands permitting, coastal preserve properties, and Mississippi wildflowers.

MDMR's Information Technology Bureau worked with GodwinGroup, an ad agency in Jackson, Miss., to design a website that integrated a coastal aesthetic with scalable technology.

"We are excited to finally launch our new website," said Kimberly Denz, MDMR programmer analyst and redesign project manager. "Our internal steering committee and our visitors provided us with many great ideas and suggestions on how to improve the site, and we hope it results in an enhanced experience for our diverse group of users."

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.

Texas Coastal Management Program Grant Cycle 18

Upcoming Workshop Dates

May 8, 2012

9:00 a.m.
Port Isabel
Port Isabel Public Library
213 North Yturria St.

May 15, 2012

9:30 a.m.
Corpus Christi
Natural Resources Center
6300 Ocean Drive
Room 1003

May 24, 2012

9:30 a.m.
Galveston County Courthouse
722 Moody
Workshop Room

Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson expects to award approximately \$1.8 million for §306/306A coastal projects funding [Grant Cycle #18](#). The pre-proposal deadline is June 20, 2012. Submission of the pre-proposal is only required if you would like written comments on your pre-proposal. The final application deadline is September 26, 2012, with a proposed project start date of October 2013.

The local match requirement remains at 40 percent of total project cost for this cycle. Match may be in the form of a "cash" match or an "in-kind" match or a combination of both. (Federal funds, received directly or passed-through by a state agency, cannot be used as match.)

For on-the-ground habitat protection, restoration, and land acquisition projects, Commissioner Patterson will consider funding individual large-scale project up to \$400,000. For other types of eligible §306/306A projects, the Commissioner will fund individual small-scale projects up to \$100,000. The commissioner will accept applications for both construction and non-construction projects that address the funding categories.

The requirements to receive federal grant funds are outlined in the CMP Cycle #18 Grant Guidance and Application document. In order to submit pre-proposals or final applications, you must register to receive a user ID and password. Applications must be submitted electronically. Facsimiles or hard copies of pre-proposals and final applications will not be accepted.

Check out the cool Coastal Project Search Database!

[Project Search Database](#)

Contact:

Melissa Porter, [✉Melissa Porter](mailto:Melissa.Porter@noaa.gov)

Sediment Sources Investigations Along the Texas Coast

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) has developed the [Texas Sediment Viewer](#), a web site that provides access to a [centralized coastal sediment database](#) (TexSed). The database will include available Texas coastal sediment data the GLO has access to. The goal of TexSed is to facilitate the search for information about sediments for beach nourishment, dune restoration, shoreline protection, habitat restoration (marshes, wetlands, and sea grasses) and barrier island enhancement projects, etc. The centralized sediment database will be populated with the available geological, geotechnical, and geophysical data of coastal sediments compiled and/or created by various agencies and for GLO coastal projects. TexSed will be available to anyone with an interest in sediment data.

Balancing Freshwater Needs in Texas Estuaries

With a three year, \$757,000 grant from the NERR Science Collaborative, the Mission-Aransas NERR in central Texas is assisting local officials to develop freshwater flow recommendations that maintain the health and productivity of the Guadalupe-San Antonio and Mission Aransas estuaries. The project is bringing scientists, ranchers, fishermen, boaters, and planners together to better understand the effects of land use decisions and climate change on the supply of freshwater to these two important Texas estuaries which are home to commercially and ecologically important marine animals. Information developed by this project will be used to inform how policy changes affecting freshwater flow will impact estuarine salinity and circulation patterns, and how recreational and commercial fisheries species like white shrimp, blue crab, rangia clams and oysters will be impacted. The estuaries of central Texas are vital to the state's economy, supporting a multi-billion dollar fishing industry and a growing tourist industry. Estuaries need freshwater to maintain healthy habitats for fish and other marine animals they depend on, but the water demands of a growing population, changes in land use, and a shifting climate have all combined to reduce the amount of freshwater that estuaries along Texas' central coast receive.

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Public input sought on coastal and marine efforts

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — The Texas Sea Grant College Program is asking Texans to help it chart its course in the areas of coastal and marine research, outreach and education by participating in an online survey. As a “thank you,” five people who complete the survey will be chosen at random to win \$100 gift cards. The program that bills itself as “Science at Work for Texans” is currently developing its strategic plan for 2014-2017. Texas Sea Grant's mission is to improve the understanding, wise use and stewardship of Texas coastal and marine resources. To achieve this mission, Texas Sea Grant develops and supports research, education and outreach programs and partnerships, and relies on the public for knowledge, advice and guidance.

The survey takes just a few minutes to complete and gauges participants' interest in issues concerning coastal community growth and development, jobs and the economy, coastal and marine education, and coastal health, safety and beauty. Individuals interested in voicing their opinions can find a link to the survey on Texas Sea Grant's homepage, <http://texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu>. All responses are anonymous.

Based on the Land Grant concept, Texas Sea Grant is a unique partnership that unites the resources of the federal government, the State of Texas, universities across the state and marine-related industries to create knowledge, tools, products and services that benefit the economy, the environment and the citizens of Texas. Based at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas Sea Grant is a non-academic research center in the College of Geosciences. It is also one of 32 university-based Sea Grant Programs around the country that are part of the National Sea Grant Network. The National Sea Grant Program is administered through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Red Tide Rangers earn rest as bloom wanes

February 15, 2012

[Jim Hiney](#), Communications Coordinator



A red tide in 2009 discolored the Gulf of Mexico waters off the City of South Padre Island. Photo courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — One of the largest and longest red tides in Texas history appears to be disappearing, thanks in part to recent and much-needed rains, giving a well-deserved rest to volunteers who helped track the harmful algal bloom.

Samples collected and studied by Red Tide Rangers, a group created by the Texas Sea Grant College Program's Tony Reisinger and the acting director at The University of Texas-Pan American's Coastal Studies Laboratory, Don Hockaday, showed no red tide cells in the waters near South Padre Island.

"I think we can say that red tide gone from South Texas and is not likely to come back in the near future," said Reisinger,

Cameron County Coastal and Marine Resources Agent with the Texas Sea Grant Extension Program (TXSGE).

Declining water temperatures had already affected the health of red tide organisms — the small photosynthetic plant *Karenia brevis* — and increased freshwater inflows into Texas coastal waters from inland storm runoff is dropping salinities below levels the normally open-ocean dweller needs to survive.

"I'm really hopeful this (freshwater inflow) is the nail in the coffin for red tide," said Meridith Byrd, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) harmful algal bloom (HAB) biologist. "We're seeing very low cell counts along the rest of the Texas coast."

Most of the information Byrd uses to track red tide in south Texas comes from Red Tide Rangers, who collect water samples daily from several locations around South Padre Island and then count the number of *Karenia* cells. They also note the number of dead fish, if any, and gauge the severity of the irritating aerosol created when red tide cells break apart in the surf. Byrd calls the Red Tide Rangers "an invaluable part of our red tide monitoring program. They are out there giving us daily data, and there is no other network like them along the Texas coast. We would not otherwise be getting the kind of data they give us because we don't have sufficient staff to do so."

The current red tide has been an inconvenience at times to coastal residents but it has devastated the state's oyster industry. The public oyster season, which should have opened Nov. 1, 2011, remains closed along most of the coast, including in Galveston Bay, where the vast majority of the state's oyster crop is harvested. The closure has cost oyster fishermen about \$7 million thus far, said Lance Robinson, TPWD Coastal Fisheries Division Upper Coast Upper Coast Regional Director.

The bloom was first detected in Brazos Santiago Pass, near the City of South Padre Island, in early September by a TPWD crew conducting a routine sampling cruise to monitor local fish populations. Crew members noticed fish swimming erratically near the water's surface and gulping for air. Reisinger collected a water sample from the area shortly thereafter and confirmed the presence of *Karenia* cells.

Karenia is an ever-present inhabitant of the Gulf of Mexico, but usually in extremely small numbers of cells per milliliter of water, a standard by which it is measured.

“Finding one cell here and there is not enough to cause a panic, but finding even a handful of cells can spur us into stepping up our monitoring to determine if the counts will continue to grow over time into a full-blown bloom,” Byrd explained.

In terms of geographical size, the latest red tide spread from the southern tip of Texas to the lower reaches of Galveston Bay, putting it on par with another very large Karenia bloom in 1986. For reasons as yet unknown, the recent red tide killed just one-fifth of the 22 million fish that died in 1986. Robinson said the latest bloom owes its duration — it is thought to be among the longest on record — to the severe drought in Texas. Karenia likes living in seawater, where the average salinity is about 35 parts per thousand (ppt). Red tides can spread to Texas bays but they usually do not persist for long when freshwater inflows lower the salinity of the bays below about 22 ppt. The drought has greatly curtailed freshwater inflows, leaving Texas bays saltier than normal.

“Galveston Bay rarely sees red tide because the organism is an open ocean dweller and usually the bay is fresh enough that the plant doesn’t like it,” Robinson said. “This drought is responsible for some of Galveston Bay’s highest salinities on record and is providing an education on a number of fronts for us by showing us what may happen in the future as more freshwater — even in non-drought years — is diverted from rivers for use by our growing population. As less water gets to the bays, the incidence of red tide will most likely increase. The impact on resources like oysters will be there as well.”

The Texas Sea Grant College Program is a partnership of university, government and industry focusing on marine research, education and outreach. It is administered through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and is one of 32 university-based Sea Grant Programs around the country. Read the full [story online](#).

Ecosystem Services

Linking the environment to human well-being

Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies

Winter 2012 [HRI NEWS](#)

by [Carlota Santos](#), HRI Research Specialist

HRI’s [Socio-Economics Group](#), in collaboration with NOAA and the Northern Gulf Institute, hosted a workshop this winter to identify appropriate mechanisms for incorporating ecosystem services into restoration decisions.

Participants in the workshop, held January 24-26 at HRI, included 26 scientists specializing in ecology, geology, biology, oceanography and economics, as well as representatives from federal and state agencies, NGOs, the private sector and academic institutions.

This workshop was a follow-up to the first Gulf-wide Ecosystem Services (ES) Workshop held in Mississippi in 2010, during which attendees came to a consensus on approaches, definition and identification of ES in the Gulf of Mexico.

The main goal of the 2012 workshop was to explore a more consistent way to integrate ES into natural resource decision-making at the local, state and regional levels. Workshop participants discussed how to integrate existing ES valuation methodologies and approaches into the decision-making process currently being used for Gulf restoration.

During the first two days attendees discussed if and how ES were already being used in conservation and restoration projects, how the inclusion of ES could influence or change conservation and restoration decisions, and the benefits or disadvantages of using ES in decision-making.

On the third day, participants developed a step-by-step framework to operationalize ES in the decision-making process. This framework is adaptive and general enough to be applied by state, federal, local governments, NGOs and the private sector. It works with existing planning processes and, once fully developed, will provide a way to easily include ES into existing processes by linking the environment to human well-being.

Since ES can be used as a powerful communication tool to engage the public, the framework also contains a communication component. The next step will be to take this framework on the road and promote the inclusion of ES in the decision-making process.

Other News

January 2012 Coastal Management News

The January 2012 edition of Coastal Management News is now available (coming out a little late so we can announce the exciting news that as of January 31st, Illinois is now part of the National Coastal Zone Management Program. Welcome Illinois!). Also, be sure to catch this week's episode of *This Old House* on PBS--it features the Rhode Island coastal management program and airs nationally Thursday Feb. 2nd at 8:00pm (check your local listings for local air dates). More details in the newsletter.

Checkout the newsletter online at <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/news/docs/czmnewsjan12.pdf>.

Inside you'll find the following stories:

- NOAA Approves Illinois' Coastal Management Program
- Michigan Shoreline Viewer Improves Decision Making
- Rhode Island to be Featured on *This Old House*
- OCRM Posts State Consistency Lists Online
- Hawai'i Helps Lay Foundation for Community Restoration
- Maine Learns from Pilot Ecosystem Management Project
- NOAA Announces Regional Ocean Partnership Awards
- New Sea Level Rise Policies to Guide Coastal Project Development in San Francisco Bay Area
- Coastal Program Managers to Gather for Annual Meeting
- North Carolina Conducts March Sill Evaluation
- CELCP Updates
- NOAA Spotlight: CELCP Acquisitions Benefit Estuarine Research Reserves

CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update

New CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Updates are now available [online](#). 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.

The Water Institute of the Gulf Formed

By: Mark Schleifstein

To read original article, click [here](#).

Feb 14, 2012 — BATON ROUGE, La — As originally printed in the Times Picayune
A new nonprofit science institute that will become the research arm of the state's coastal-restoration program kicked off operations Tuesday with the appointment of a former director of the U.S. Geological Survey as its president and chief executive. [The Water Institute of the Gulf](#), or TWIG, begins with a \$1 million grant from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and a promise of a long-term research contract with the state's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, said President Charles "Chip" Groat. In time, the new institute hopes to become the equivalent of the Deltares institute for water issues in the Netherlands, he said.

"The state is interested in sustaining the quality of science it has used in developing the first revision of its master plan" for coastal restoration and protection, Groat said. "As you know, we are working on an estimated \$17 billion in coastal projects today and expect significantly more moving forward," said Garret Graves, chairman of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, in an email announcing the institute to authority members.

"Rather than allowing the science, engineering, legal issues and many other 'lessons learned' to come and go, the center will help to ensure that we use the best coastal experts to help us build upon our successes and learn from our mistakes." Graves said the state is working on an agreement with the institute to do the following:

- Watch live data streams from state, federal and private coastal-monitoring stations.
- Develop and maintain computer models of coastal systems.
- Assist the authority in addressing uncertainties and obstacles associated with coastal projects.
- Work on "horizon science" to help inform the authority's long-term vision.
- Provide feedback on emergency response measures.

Both Groat and Graves said they envision that the institute will help coordinate scientists at state universities, engineering and construction companies, levee districts and non-government organizations, rather than building its own staff of scientists.

At the moment, a skeleton institute staff is sharing office space with a state contractor in Baton Rouge, and Groat is concluding teaching responsibilities at the University of Texas at Austin, where he serves as director of the Center for International Energy and Environmental Policy. He served as director of the Geological Survey during the administrations of President Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush. Earlier, he headed the Louisiana Geological Survey at LSU and worked for the state Department of Natural Resources. Later this year, the institute hopes to move into its own offices in Baton Rouge.

Southeast Climate Science Center Science Plan Approved for Release

The Southeast Climate Science Center is pleased to announce that the [CSCs Science Plan](#) has been approved for release. The science themes described in this plan were established by partners in the southeastern conservation community to address information gaps that can inform the conservation science and resource-management needs of ecoregion conservation partnerships, such as the LCCs. The plan identifies six science themes that frame the activities needed to achieve the objectives of the Southeast CSC:

Science Theme 1: Develop climate projections and determine appropriate projections to use for resource management,
Science Theme 2: Land use and land cover change projections,
Science Theme 3: Impacts of climate change on water resources,
Science Theme 4: Ecological research and modeling,
Science Theme 5: Impacts of climate change on coastal and nearshore marine environments, and,
Science Theme 6: Impacts of climate change on cultural-heritage resources.

The science products developed under these themes will provide models of future conditions, assessments of potential impacts, and tools that can be used to inform the LCCs and other partners. The information will be critical as managers anticipate and adapt to climate change. Resource managers in the Southeast are requesting this type of information, in many cases, as a result of observed climate-change effects. The Southeast CSC will support integration of science information into conservation delivery, by working with, and building the capacity of, resource managers to interpret the science in order to integrate it into their management and decision making processes.

The America's WETLAND Foundation applauds efforts of the American Carbon Registry and Entergy

January 19, 2012

NEW ORLEANS-The America's WETLAND Foundation (AWF) applauds efforts of the American Carbon Registry and Entergy Corporation to develop a protocol for quantifying the carbon value of coastal restoration projects, a process that could lead to reducing carbon and serve as a means to finance the restoration of coastal wetlands in Louisiana and throughout the Gulf region.

According to Valsin Marmillion, AWF managing director, the development of protocols that give industry the opportunity to invest in wetland restoration to offset carbon emissions could have a significant impact on the state since Louisiana has the vast majority of the nation's coastal wetlands. The AWF reported to the President's Task Force on Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration that creating beneficial uses of carbon both to reduce carbon and recycle or reuse it as a by-product creates incentives to find market solutions for carbon reduction.

"The American Carbon Registry and Entergy Partnership is a prime example of public private cooperation where the U.S. Government and Gulf states would be unable to afford such a valuable, timely study," Marmillion said.

The American Carbon Registry, a nonprofit enterprise of Winrock International, today announced an open public comment period for a new methodology to quantify how wetland restoration can help reduce carbon emissions and pay for repairing the disappearing coastal marshes.

The methodology was funded by Entergy Corporation and developed by a team led by Dr. Sarah K. Mack of New Orleans-based Tierra Resources. The methodology, if proven feasible, could help lead to the sale of credits for companies to offset carbon emissions.

For the past year, AWF and Entergy have partnered on research that quantified the economic impacts of climate on the Gulf region. The research has informed the Foundation's Blue Ribbon Resilient Communities project that is helping Gulf Coast communities plan for resiliency in light of sea level rise, more severe storm events and the increased vulnerability of critical infrastructure. Recommendations generated through the forums include establishing a viable CO₂ market with incentives and investments in carbon sequestration and reuse through policy and public/private partnerships to create new market mechanisms and establishing protocols for tidal wetlands for use in carbon sequestration.

"We have great hopes for this new research as it is looking at the glass half full and not empty," noted Marmillion. "Entergy Corporation has been visionary in its efforts to help address vulnerabilities and risks due to rising sea level and increased storm events through practical, adaptive approaches by businesses and communities. The Blue Ribbon forums have featured a multi-million dollar study by Entergy and AWF to build greater awareness of vulnerable areas in the five Gulf Coast states, in considering the future and what steps need to be taken to ensure resilient economies, cultures, and environments. Now, through Entergy's funding beneficial use of carbon research, we may be one step closer to establishing coastal wetlands as viable for carbon sequestration and, at the same time, create new markets for carbon credits that could be used to fund wetland restoration."

"Science tells us that using wetlands like we do through reforestation to reduce carbon in the air could provide multiple opportunities," Marmillion said. "Through our national polling and our continuing series of Blue Ribbon Resilient Communities Forums, we have found support for creating new funding streams for coastal restoration and this may provide a new, big idea for raising hard to find restoration dollars. It's a win-win situation."

"We look forward to the comment period on the research and are hopeful about the results," Marmillion said. "There is no single answer to our severe funding needs, but one thing is certain, our coast is in jeopardy without dedicated resources to correct a long-term problem that can further weaken our nation and severely cripple our ecosystem. We are a nation comfortable with cost/benefit ratios, but in this case the cost/deficit ration of inaction is overwhelming and demands action or we will all be big losers."

More information:

For more information visit: <http://www.americaswetland.com/>.

Other Sources of Information for the Gulf of Mexico Region

The following websites provide information about activities, announcements, and events in the Gulf of Mexico region.

[Restore the Gulf](#)

RestoretheGulf.gov is the official federal portal for the Deepwater BP oil spill response and recovery. This site provides the public with information on the response, current operations, news and updates, how to file a claim and obtain other assistance, and links to federal, state and local partners.

[NOAA Gulf Spill Restoration](#)

NOAA and [other federal and state agencies](#) are leading efforts to assess impacts to, and determine appropriate restoration for, Gulf resources injured by the Deepwater BP oil spill. We are in the process of identifying the types of restoration activities that will be appropriate to restore the natural resources impacted by the spill. This is a key step in the ongoing [Natural Resource Damage Assessment](#) for the spill. Through the process, you will have the chance to give us your feedback on what projects are important to restore the affected resources after the spill. You can make your voice heard by [submitting a project idea](#). You can also [view projects](#) that have been submitted for consideration.

The restoration planning process involves many steps and includes input from scientists, experts, and the public. Restoration can take many years and requires the work of many dedicated people. NOAA will continue this work until the Gulf of Mexico is restored to its pre-spill condition. Over the years, NOAA

has been involved with 380 restoration projects in the Gulf. NOAA's restoration scientists and specialists in the Gulf states have been providing technical assistance, coordination, and funding for restoration to many local organizations. Learn more about NOAA's restoration projects in the Gulf using our interactive [Restoration Atlas](#).

[Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force](#)

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force was created by President Obama through an [Executive Order](#) (PDF) on October 5, 2010, and is the result of a recommendation made in [Secretary Mabus' report](#) (PDF) on long term recovery following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. By October 5, 2011, the Task Force is charged with development of a restoration strategy that proposes a Gulf Coast ecosystem restoration agenda. The task force is directed to:

- Define ecosystem restoration goals and describe milestones towards reaching those goals;
- Consider existing research and ecosystem restoration planning efforts;
- Identify major policy areas where coordinated actions between government agencies is needed; and
- Evaluate existing research and monitoring programs and gaps in data collection

The Task Force is an advisory body comprised of lead officials from the five Gulf states appointed by the President upon recommendation of each Governor, and 11 Federal agencies and White House offices. The Environmental Protection Agency's [Administrator, Lisa P. Jackson](#), serves as Chair of the Task Force and the Chair of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana, [Garret Graves](#), serves as Vice-chair. [John Hankinson](#) serves as Executive Director.

[Gulf of Mexico Alliance](#)

[The Gulf of Mexico Alliance](#) is a partnership of the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, with the goal of significantly increasing regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. See [Gulf of Mexico Alliance News and Events](#).

Other Gulf of Mexico Alliance Related Links

Partnerships throughout the Gulf-region are developing between universities, governments, businesses, and others. Local non-profits are becoming more and more a part of the decision-making process in the gulf. Some of the partnerships and organizations listed below provide opportunities for collaboration with the Alliance.

[Alliance Environmental Education Network Website](#)

[Support the Gulf](#)

[Alliance Diversity Website](#)

[Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative](#)

The mission of the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GRI) is to improve society's ability to understand and mitigate the impacts of hydrocarbon pollution and stressors of the marine environment, with an emphasis on conditions found in the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, the knowledge accrued will be applied not only to resolve, but also to improve the long-term environmental health of the Gulf of Mexico.

[Gulf of Mexico Coastal Training](#)

Gulf of Mexico Coastal Training is a unique collaboration between the five Gulf Coast National Estuarine Research Reserve Coastal Training Programs. Through the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas are now working together to address priority issues affecting the entire Gulf of Mexico region. Gulf of Mexico Coastal Training is educating professional audiences and coastal communities across each of the five Gulf States using shared information and technology. From coastal community resilience to habitat conservation, topics covered in Gulf of Mexico Coastal Training workshops address priority issues and promote activities that improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico.

Gulf of Mexico Coastal Training hosts regular workshops that cover one or more Gulf of Mexico Alliance priority issues. [You can view and sort through upcoming and past workshops on the Workshops page.](#)

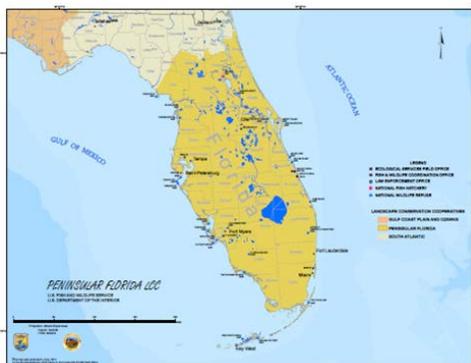
Landscape Conservation Cooperatives for the Gulf of Mexico Region

The following websites provide information about activities, announcements, and events for the [Landscape Conservation Cooperatives](#) in the Gulf of Mexico region. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives are applied conservation science partnerships among federal agencies, regional organizations, states, tribes, NGOs, universities and other entities within a geographic area. They are designed to inform resource management decisions in an integrated fashion across landscapes at a broader scale than any individual partner's responsibility. The partnerships will consider landscape-scale stressors, including climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and water scarcity as it attempts to provide a vision for a landscape capable of sustaining healthy populations of fish, wildlife, plants and cultural resources.

National Updates:

- [LCC network news and updates](#) (February 2012)
- The first National LCC Workshop was held in Denver on March 27-28, 2012. The program, documents, and presentations are available [online](#).

Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative



The [Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative](#) (PF LCC) is part of a national network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). The PFLCC will complement Florida's Wildlife Action Plan and other landscape level conservation strategies to restore, manage, and conserve the biodiversity of the region in the face of both climate change and intense development pressure associated with a rapidly growing human population.

Updates:

- The newly formed Steering Committee met in Gainesville, Florida on April 3, 2012.
- The Steering Committee approved a Charter for the Peninsular Florida LCC that will be available soon on their website.

- The Steering Committee also elected a Chair, Tom Logan, Vice President of Breedlove, Dennis & Associates, Inc., and Vice Chair, Thomas Eason, Deputy Director of Planning and Policy Development for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- Next steps identified by the Steering Committee included the development of a PF LCC Science Needs Assessment and a Strategic Plan.

South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative

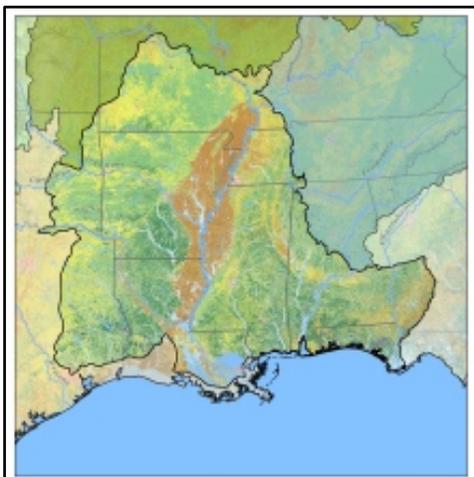


The [South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative](#) (SALCC) is part of a national network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. The SALCC crosses six states, from southern Virginia to northern Florida. The South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative is the leading forum in which the conservation community develops a shared vision of landscape sustainability, cooperates in its implementation, and collaborates in its refinement. The mission of the SALCC is to create a shared blueprint for landscape conservation actions that sustain natural and cultural resources. The SALCC publishes a monthly [newsletter](#) to share more information about the Cooperative.

Updates:

- The South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative's Annual Report for 2011 is now available! You can view it by clicking here: [SALCC Annual Report 2011.pdf](#).
- Through an iterative process that began in December 2012, the South Atlantic LCC developed our Strategic Plan. The plan provides a simple strategy for moving forward over the next few years. It is now finalized and can be seen here: [StrategicPlan3pg.pdf](#).
- The 2012 SALCC Science Assessment is now ready for review and comments at <http://www.southatlanticlcc.org/page/science-assessment>.

Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative



The [Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative](#) (GCPO LCC) describes both a unique geographic region as well as a new kind of conservation partnership. It is part of a national network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). LCCs are partnerships among federal agencies, regional organizations, states, tribes, NGOs, universities and others, all of whom leverage resources to define a common vision for sustaining natural resources within a region. The GCPO LCC conducts research, develops tools that improve natural resource management, and conducts outreach. The goal is to focus coordinated action in support of shared conservation priorities across large connected areas, or landscapes. The GCPO LCC publishes a newsletter, the [GCPO Monitor](#), to share more information about the Cooperative.

Updates:

- The [GCPO LCC 2011 Annual Report](#) is now available.
- The [Gulf Issue of the GCPO LCC newsletter](#), *The Monitor*, is now available.
- Steering Committee [background materials](#) for the April 10-12 [spring 2012 GCPO LCC Interim Steering Committee meeting](#) in Spanish Fort, Alabama are now available.
- A new [Gulf of Mexico Coastal and Marine Conservation](#) forum for Gulf of Mexico discussions and regional-scale topics that cross the 4 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives bordering the Gulf of Mexico is now available for site members. Join the GCPO LCC site to become a member.

Gulf Coast Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative



The [Gulf Coast Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative](#) (GCP LCC) is part of a national network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. The Gulf Coast Prairie encompasses portions of five states (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas) and four terrestrial ecoregions (Oaks and Prairies, Gulf Coast Prairie, Tamaulipan Brushlands, and Edwards Plateau). Eventually, it is envisioned to include portions of three Mexican states that share similar habitats (Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, and Coahuila). The GCP LCC consists of partnerships based on science, and brings information to on-the-ground strategic conservation efforts. The GCP LCC offers leadership to strengthen the effectiveness of conservation of wildlife populations and their habitats throughout the region by providing the best available scientific information to inform management decisions. It will achieve this collaborative

vision through shared access to science, data, expertise, and resources.

Updates:

- The new [GCP LCC website](#) is now live!
- The [GCP LCC 2011 Annual Report](#) is now available.
- The [GCP LCC 2012 Development and Operations Plan](#) is now available.
- The GCP LCC held its first [Science Forum](#) on February 21-22, 2012 in Ft. Worth, Texas to identify science needs for prioritization by the GCP LCC Steering Committee during their June meeting. The Summary and list of participants from the Science Forum are available online.

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



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