



# GULF OF MEXICO NEWS

www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov

April 2009



## NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

|  |   |
|--|---|
| .....  | 3 |
| NOAA Announces Emergency Rule to Protect 'Threatened' Sea Turtles .....  | 3 |
| NOAA's "EstuaryLive" Webcast Takes Students on Virtual Field Trip .....  | 4 |
| Public Hearings for Reef Fish Amendment 31/Loggerhead Sea Turtle Interactions with Reef<br>Fish Bottom Longline Gear ..... | 5 |
| NOAA Celebrates New Gulf of Mexico Museum.....   | 6 |
| Restoration Center Aids in Emergency Marine Debris Cleanup.....  | 7 |
| New Understanding of Florida Red Tides Improves Management and Response .....  | 7 |
| Hurricane Preparedness Week .....  | 8 |

## Other NOAA News

|  |    |
|--|----|
| .....  | 9  |
| Department of Commerce Upholds NY State Objection to Broadwater LNG Project .....                        | 9  |
| National System for Marine Protected Areas Launched by U.S. Departments of Commerce<br>and Interior..... | 9  |
| National Ocean Service Web Site Grows in Popularity .....  | 10 |
| NOAA's Climate Program Office Requests Input from Policy Makers on Research Priorities<br>.....          | 11 |

## In the Gulf States

|   |    |
|---|----|
| .....   | 11 |
| MMS Approves \$51.1 Million Plan for Alabama Coastal Restoration.....   | 11 |
| Florida Communities Trust Announces Funded Projects for the Stan Mayfield Working<br>Waterfronts Program..... | 12 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Governor Crist Announces \$132 Million in Recovery Act Funding for Florida Water Projects .....                         | 13 |
| Rookery Bay Research Reserve Partners with City of Naples to Teach Landscapers to “Greenscape” .....                    | 14 |
| It's Lights Out for Sea Turtle Nesting Season.....  | 15 |
| Fire and Water.....   | 16 |
| Agreement calls for Air Monitoring Effort Along Mississippi River.....  | 17 |
| New Marine Lab Takes Shape .....  | 17 |
| NOAA Celebrates New 1,200-Acre Texas Nature Preserve .....  | 17 |
| Two New Web Sites Aim to Inform Texans about Climate Change and Sustainability .....                                    | 18 |
| Texas Beach Watch Launches Revised Web Site.....  | 18 |
| Nearly 7,000 Volunteers Haul 212 Tons of Trash Off Texas Beaches .....  | 19 |
| Land Office Awards Three Offshore Geothermal Leases .....   | 20 |
| MMS Awards \$1 Million Coastal Protection Grant to Texas.....   | 21 |
| 13th Annual Great Texas Birding Classic Aids Declining Songbirds .....  | 21 |
| <b>Other News</b>   |    |
| .....   | 23 |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Gulf of Mexico Program Now Accepting Nominations for 2009 Gulf Guardians! .....  | 23 |
| U.S. and Mexico Hold Border Environmental Forum to Help Confront Climate Change.....                                    | 23 |
| New Quality Growth Report Released .....  | 24 |
| New Article on Ranking of SPARROW Model Nutrient Yields .....   | 24 |
| UN Declares June 8th as World Oceans Day .....  | 25 |
| Coastal States to Share \$500 million in Next Two Years from Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Revenues.....          | 25 |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces 183 Projects in Southeast Region Under President’s Economic Recovery Plan..... | 26 |
| Service Seeks to Bring Coastal Barrier Resources System Maps Into Digital Age .....                                     | 28 |
| <b>Grant Opportunities</b>  |    |
| .....   | 29 |
| Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership RFP.....  | 29 |
| Solicitation for Estuary Habitat Restoration Project Proposals .....  | 30 |
| Gulf of Mexico Alliance Regional Partnership Projects.....  | 30 |
| <b>Conferences and Workshops</b>  |    |
| .....   | 31 |
| Call for Presenters for the First Southeastern Water Trails Conference.....   | 31 |
| Gulf Council to Convene its Outreach and Education Advisory Panel .....   | 31 |
| Texas General Land Office’s Coastal Conference.....   | 32 |
| Ghosts of Katrina: Natural Disasters and Community Resilience.....  | 32 |

## NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

### ***NOAA Announces Emergency Rule to Protect ‘Threatened’ Sea Turtles***

April 29, 2009



Loggerhead sea turtle.  
[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

[NOAA’s Fisheries Service](#) today announced an emergency rule to protect threatened sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico. The temporary rule, which takes effect May 18, will require the commercial reef fish longline fleet to fish seaward of a line approximating the 50-fathom contour in the Gulf of Mexico. Current regulations require this fleet to fish seaward of 20-fathoms.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council requested this emergency rule after a NOAA observer study documented the reef fish longline fleet was incidentally catching and killing too many loggerhead sea turtles. This emergency rule will primarily affect

longline fishermen who target shallow-water grouper species, such as red grouper. Most shallow-water grouper fishing occurs within the 50-fathom contour off the west Florida shelf – an important sea turtle feeding area – where most of the incidental sea turtle bycatches occur. The emergency rule also prohibits all reef fish longline fishing east of 85 degrees 30 minutes west longitude in the Gulf of Mexico after the quotas for deep water grouper and tilefish are reached.

“We are working closely with the council and constituents to find more permanent solutions to protect sea turtles affected by this fishing gear,” said Roy Crabtree, NOAA’s Fisheries Service southeast regional administrator. “I hope we can identify options that not only provide sea turtles the protection they need, but minimize the economic affects to the fishing industry.”

Loggerhead sea turtles are listed as “threatened” under the [Endangered Species Act](#). NOAA’s Fisheries Service is implementing the emergency rule in accordance with both the Endangered Species Act and the [Magnuson-Stevens Act](#).

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that conservation and management measures minimize bycatch of non-target species and minimize mortality when bycatch cannot be avoided. The emergency rule will be in effect for 180 days and can be extended for up to an additional 186 days. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is considering actions to address this issue on a long-term basis. NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth’s environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.

## NOAA's "EstuaryLive" Webcast Takes Students on Virtual Field Trip

April 29, 2009

Students of all ages will have an opportunity on May 1 and May 15 to take a virtual field trip in the marshes and bays of four estuaries as part of NOAA's "[EstuaryLive](#)" webcast. Students in their classrooms will interact with scientists in the field from [NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve System](#) to learn about the animals and physical dynamics of estuaries, the critical ecosystems where rivers meet the sea.



Aerial image of estuary.  
[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

The scientists will explain various facts about estuaries, ranging from the animals and plants that live there to the physical dynamics of tides and rivers and the mingling of fresh- and saltwater. They will discuss the observed and anticipated impacts of climate change such as rising sea level and warming water temperatures for the Web audiences and for students in the field with them.

Students can e-mail questions to the scientists, who will answer on air and by e-mail. All programs will be archived on the Web for later viewing. Past "EstuaryLive" programs are already archived [online](#). This year's webcasts will consist of two 30-minute segments on May 1 highlighting the Hudson River Reserve in New York, South Slough Reserve in Oregon, and Padilla Bay Reserve in Washington. Two webcasts on May 15 will highlight the Weeks Bay Reserve in Alabama.

Registration for teachers and other interested parties is [online](#). The site also contains helpful resources for getting the most from the "EstuaryLive" program, and other NOAA educational resources about estuaries and estuarine science.

"EstuaryLive" is part of the NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve System's robust online educational presence, which includes complete classroom curricula, videos, quizzes, an educational game and various other resources for students and teachers.

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System is a network of 27 reserves in 21 states and Puerto Rico, protecting more than 1.3 million acres of coastal and estuarine areas for research, education and stewardship purposes in support of coastal management.

2009 "EstuaryLive" Schedule (all times are Eastern Daylight Time):

May 15, 2009

11:00 am - 12:00 pm [Weeks Bay Reserve, Alabama](#)

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm [Weeks Bay Reserve, Alabama](#)

## ***Public Hearings for Reef Fish Amendment 31/Loggerhead Sea Turtle Interactions with Reef Fish Bottom Longline Gear***

Tampa, Florida - The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has scheduled a series of public hearings to solicit comments on a proposed amendment developed to address the bycatch of hard-shell sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico bottom longline reef fish fishery. The Council is considering a range of actions and alternatives outlined in Public Hearing draft of Amendment 31 to the Reef Fish FMP to mitigate hard-shell sea turtle interactions with bottom longline gear, and it has selected Preferred Actions and Alternatives. The public hearings will be held on May 26, 2009 through June 8, 2009 at six locations throughout the Gulf of Mexico. The public is encouraged to attend and provide suggestions and input, which will be relayed back to the Council before final action. All meetings, with the exception of the Madeira Beach meeting, will begin at 6:00 p.m. and conclude no later than 9:00 p.m. and will be held at the following locations:

### **Tuesday, May 26, 2009**

Travelodge  
5201 Gulf Freeway  
LaMarque, TX 77568  
409-986-9777

### **Wednesday, May 27, 2009**

Hilton Garden Inn  
1101 US Highway 231  
Panama City, FL 32405  
850-392-1093

### **Wednesday, May 27, 2009**

South Lafourche Levee  
District

17904 Hwy 3235  
Galliano, LA 70354  
985-632-7554

### **Thursday, May 28, 2009**

Wingate Inn  
12009 Indian River Road  
Biloxi, MS 39540  
228-396-0036

### **Monday, June 8, 2009**

Banana Bay Resort  
4590 Overseas Highway  
Marathon, FL 33050  
305-743-3500

### **Thursday, June 4, 2009\***

City of Madeira Beach  
300 Municipal Drive  
Madeira Beach, FL 33708  
727-391-9951

*\*This public hearing will begin at 6:30 pm and conclude at the end of public testimony or no later than 9:30 pm.*

Observer data from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) indicates the level of bycatch in the bottom longline fishery exceeds the anticipated take outlined in the 2005 Biological Opinion. In April 2009 an updated report from the SEFSC was published with information collected in 2008 indicating the incidental take of sea turtles remains a concern.

The Council operates under mandates to minimize bycatch to the extent practicable and to protect endangered and threatened species. National Standard 9 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), requires that conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, minimize bycatch and, to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch. The bycatch reduction and monitoring requirements in the MSFCMA apply to a broad range of living marine species, including sea turtles.

Copies of the draft amendment can be obtained by calling the Council office at 813-348-1630. Hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina O'Hern, Council staff, at least five working days prior to the meeting. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans designed to manage fishery resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

## ***NOAA Celebrates New Gulf of Mexico Museum***

**Tim Osborn, NOAA Coastal Survey**

Jack Dunnigan, assistant administrator for NOAA's Ocean Service, joined Alabama Governor Bob Riley, Sen. Richard Shelby, Rep. Jo Bonner and other state and local officials at an April 13 keel-laying ceremony for the new National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico in Mobile, Ala. The new museum, known as GulfQuest, is projected to open in the spring of 2011 in downtown Mobile by the port and next to the cruise ship terminal. Supported by NOAA grants, GulfQuest will be the first museum dedicated to the Gulf Coast's rich maritime traditions — and only the third interactive maritime museum in the world. It will specifically feature exhibits on the nation's history and the Gulf of Mexico.



Historic copper chart plate NOAA contributed to the museum. The plate is hand-etched in a reverse (mirror) format. Photo credit: Tim Osborn, NOAA NOS.

“The Gulf of Mexico has perhaps been somewhat overlooked by historians and researchers (although it is the ninth largest body of water in the world,” Dunnigan told the crowd. He added that the Gulf “provides invaluable resources for our nation: essential fisheries and wildlife habitats, attractive beaches for maritime recreation, seven of the nation's top 10 shipping ports, four of the nation's top seven fishing ports, and 90 percent of the nation's offshore oil/gas production.”

One of NOAA's contributions to the new museum — placed on exhibit at both the museum reception and the keel laying ceremony — is a copper chart plate used by the agency in 1851 to print the navigational chart “Entrance to Mobile Bay.” The copper plate, hand-etched in reverse (mirror) format, was one of the first plates used to print charts for navigation into the Port of Mobile. As part of his remarks, Dunnigan emphasized NOAA's commitment to the museum.

“NOAA is already a partner with the Maritime Museum, providing financial and technical support for the museum's interactive exhibits, many of which feature the same areas that dominate NOAA's scientific endeavors — marine archeology, oceanography, meteorology, marine ecology and coastal resource conservation,” Dunnigan said.

NOAA is also developing a new Sea Grant Extension/Outreach/Education program to reside at GulfQuest. Several Sea Grant extension specialists will be onsite to engage the public on priority Gulf issues and to better communicate NOAA's scientific research initiatives.

## ***Restoration Center Aids in Emergency Marine Debris Cleanup***

On March 10, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) officers in an aircraft noticed possible illegal gill net fishing about three miles from the mouth of the Shark River in the Florida Everglades. The boat had cut and abandoned its nets and left the area as soon as they saw FWC law enforcement. To help remove the nets, the FWC reached out to the NOAA Restoration Center for assistance. NOAA estimates that 3,000- 4,000 linear feet of net was adrift in the Gulf of Mexico due to this incident.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program and the Restoration Center worked to respond within a few hours. Soon, a recovery plan and staff were in place. NOAA and FWC worked to remove the nets and dispose of them properly. Officers verified the removal of 19,400 lbs of netting and thousands of trapped and entangled Spanish Mackerel and Carcharhinid.

"This was an excellent example of interagency cooperation and effort," said Sean Meehan, a Habitat Restoration Specialist for the NOAA Restoration Center who also works with the Marine Debris Program. "It's a sad situation, but I'm glad that we were able to act quickly to prevent any further harm."



The Monroe County Marine Resources Division generously waived the dump fees for the nets, and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary covered the fees for moving the nets and fish to the landfill.

Derelict and abandoned fishing gear is a large problem on both sides of the coast. The NOAA Marine Debris Program works with many partners across the nation to address this type of marine debris, which has detrimental impacts on the health and living resources in the marine ecosystem. For more information, please contact [Sean Meehan](#).

## ***New Understanding of Florida Red Tides Improves Management and Response***

The [March special issue](#) of the scientific journal *Harmful Algae* contains the most comprehensive assessment of the Florida red tide ever published. The information provided in this special issue will help managers improve their ability to predict, monitor, and manage Florida red tide events and impacts. *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide, frequently forms large blooms off the west coast of Florida and occasionally elsewhere. It causes mass mortality of marine animals as well as human illness from consumption of toxin-contaminated shellfish or exposure to toxin-laden aerosols near beaches. The special issue showcases National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)-funded research presented at the 2006 scientific workshop, State of the Research on Red Tide in the Gulf of Mexico, sponsored by NCCOS, Mote Marine Laboratory, and [Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute](#). For more information, contact [Quay Dortch](#).

## Hurricane Preparedness Week

History teaches that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters. By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce the effects of a hurricane disaster. Hurricane Preparedness Week during 2009 will be held May 24th through May 30th.

The goal of this Hurricane Preparedness Web site is to inform the public about the hurricane hazards and provide knowledge which can be used to take ACTION. This information can be used to save lives at work, home, while on the road, or on the water.

| HISTORY   | HURRICANE HAZARDS   | FORECAST  | PREPARE   | ACT  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Sunday<br>24 May 09   | Monday<br>25 May 09   | Tuesday<br>26 May 09  | Wednesday<br>27 May 09  | Thursday<br>28 May 09  |
|   |   |   |   | Friday<br>29 May 09  |
|   |   |   |   | Saturday<br>30 May 09  |

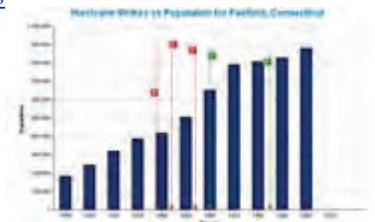
Hurricane hazards come in many forms: [storm surge](#), [high winds](#), [tornadoes](#), and [flooding](#). This means it is important for your family to [have a plan](#) that includes all of these hazards. Look carefully at the safety actions associated with each type of hurricane hazard and prepare your family disaster plan accordingly. But remember this is only a guide. The first and most important thing anyone should do when facing a hurricane threat is to use common sense.

You should be able to answer the following questions before a hurricane threatens:

- What are the Hurricane Hazards?
- What does it mean to you?
- What actions should you take to be prepared?

Download the Hurricane Preparedness Week Poster (2009 version)  
[High Resolution Poster](#) (1 MB PDF)

Visit the NOAA Coastal Services Center [Historical Hurricane Tracks website](#) to learn about historical tropical cyclones occurring in different areas located throughout the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico. The website provides information about U.S. coastal county population versus hurricane strikes as well as links to various Internet resources focusing on tropical cyclones. The interactive mapping application allows you to search the National Hurricane Center historical tropical cyclone database and graphically display storms affecting your area since 1851.



## Other NOAA News

### ***Department of Commerce Upholds NY State Objection to Broadwater LNG Project***

April 13, 2009

The Department of Commerce today issued a [decision](#) upholding New York State's objection to the proposed construction and operation of a floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and subsea pipeline that would be located in the New York waters of Long Island Sound. [Broadwater Energy](#) LLC, and Broadwater Pipeline LLC proposed constructing the terminal to which tankers would deliver LNG. At the terminal, LNG would be regasified and then transported to shore by way of a new 21.7 mile subsea natural gas pipeline that would tie into the regional network. New York objected to the Project under the [Coastal Zone Management Act](#), asserting that the proposal was inconsistent with the [Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program](#). Broadwater appealed the State's objection to the Department of Commerce on June 6, 2008.

The Department of Commerce concluded that the Project's adverse coastal impacts outweighed its national interest, in part because its location in an undeveloped region of the Sound would significantly impair its unique scenic and aesthetic character and would undermine decades of federal, state, and local efforts to protect the region. The decision was based on the appeal record, which includes information developed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), additional briefs and documents offered by the parties, the views of interested federal agencies, as well as a "friend of the court" brief filed by the Attorney General of Connecticut. Today's ruling prevents the issuance of any federal permits necessary for the construction and operation of the Project. It does not, however, prevent Broadwater from developing alternate proposals for federal and state review.

### ***National System for Marine Protected Areas Launched by U.S. Departments of Commerce and Interior***



Marine Protected Area.  
[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA/USFWS)

In an effort to conserve critical natural and cultural marine resources, the U.S. Departments of Interior and Commerce are partnering with federal, state and territorial agencies to form a [National System of Marine Protected Areas](#) (MPA).

"This new national system provides a mechanism for all levels of government to work together to leverage resources, coordinate regional planning, and manage marine protected areas as a system," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "We will continue to work with federal, state, tribal and local governments and stakeholders to share best

practices for effectively achieving common marine conservation goals."

Two hundred and twenty-five (225) existing MPAs managed by various agencies will initially enter the system, which aims to enhance protection of marine resources, build partnerships to address issues affecting MPAs, and improve public access to scientific information and decision-making about marine

resources. The national system does not bring state, territorial or local sites under federal authority, nor does it restrict or change the management of any MPA. While MPAs have been established throughout the U.S. for decades, there has not been an overarching mechanism to coordinate effective ecosystem management. About 100 federal, state, territory and tribal agencies manage the nearly 2,000 MPAs across the country, often with no coordinated strategy.

MPAs are areas where natural or cultural resources are given greater protection than in the surrounding waters. In the U.S., these areas may span a range of habitats including the open ocean, coastal areas, intertidal zones, estuaries and the Great Lakes. The majority are ‘multiple-use’ areas, which allow fishing, diving, boating, swimming and other uses. ‘No-take’ MPAs allow human access but prohibit extraction or significant destruction of natural or cultural resources. They are sometimes used as research and monitoring zones, to protect spawning or nursery grounds, or to protect ecologically important deep-water habitats. Eligible existing MPAs were invited to nominate themselves for inclusion into the national system beginning in November 2008. The second round of nominations will begin later this year. Priority conservation objectives will continue to guide development of the national system.

The value of MPAs as a tool for protecting biodiversity and restoring fish populations within ecosystems is well documented. Many sites included in today’s charter group have been the subject of scientific studies comparing commercially and recreationally important fish populations both inside and outside the boundaries of the MPA. In the [Tortugas North Ecological Reserve](#) in the Florida Keys, studies on the number of fish populations were conducted before and after establishment of the reserve. Scientists found that three species of commercially important fishes increased in abundance and size within three years inside the reserve.

“MPAs are a critical tool for conserving cultural resources, marine species, habitats and ecosystems, and a national system will make this tool even more effective,” said Will Shafroth, acting deputy assistant secretary of interior for fish, wildlife and parks. “The diversity of sites accepted into the national system today help ensure that it is truly a representative system. This is a major step in the nation’s marine conservation efforts, and demonstrates our willingness and ability to work together to conserve our common marine heritage for future generations.”

## ***National Ocean Service Web Site Grows in Popularity***

In September 2008, the National Ocean Service (NOS) Communications and Education Division (CED) launched a revamped version of the [NOS Web site](#). The “new” site features a redesigned home page and regularly updated content, including [news stories](#); [ocean facts](#); two audio podcasts – [Making Waves](#) and [Diving Deeper](#), which launch on alternating Wednesdays; and a [multimedia section](#) with images, videos from the Ocean Media Center, desktop wallpaper, and games. The site also includes a robust [education section](#) that is a popular resource for students, teachers, and anyone looking to learn more about our ocean.

In conjunction with the update of the site, CED also launched an effort to “get the word out” about the site using a range of social media tools, including [RSS feeds](#) for the facts, stories, video, and podcasts; an [NOS Twitter account](#); and an [NOS Facebook page](#). The combination of continually updated content and marketing efforts is having an impact. Between January and March 2009, the site received 1,262,847 page requests—an increase of 35 percent over the same period of time last year. The RSS feeds for the podcasts were the most frequently requested pages on the site in March and the NOS Twitter account gained its 1,000th follower this week, with an average of 100 new followers joining each week. The NOS Facebook has over 85 fans, despite having been launched less than a month ago. These changes are just the beginning and, with support from all NOS Program Offices, the NOS Web site is helping to deliver the NOS story while becoming a “go to” site for all things oceans and coasts. For more information, contact [Emily Crum](#) or [Troy Kitch](#).

## ***NOAA's Climate Program Office Requests Input from Policy Makers on Research Priorities***

[http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/index.jsp?pg=/news/news\\_index.jsp&news=2009/3-30\\_request\\_sustained.html](http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/index.jsp?pg=/news/news_index.jsp&news=2009/3-30_request_sustained.html)  
[http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/index.jsp?pg=/news/news\\_index.jsp&news=2009/3-30\\_reques\\_climate.html](http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/index.jsp?pg=/news/news_index.jsp&news=2009/3-30_reques_climate.html)

NOAA's Climate Program Office is soliciting information from stakeholders, including state coastal managers, that will help them develop priorities for a limited set of academic/research centers that work with NOAA to improve its capabilities in aspects of climate, climate prediction, and efforts to bring climate science and information into policy and decision making. In a second request, they are seeking information on state-of-the-art climate risk management research and practices on timescales ranging from weeks to decades and adaptation techniques and strategies for dealing with climate change in developing countries. Responses to the requests, which can be read in their entirety online, are due May 15, 2009.

## **In the Gulf States**

### ***MMS Approves \$51.1 Million Plan for Alabama Coastal Restoration***

April 21, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service announced today the approval of Alabama's Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) Plan, calling it a major step forward in providing \$51.1 million to the state of Alabama in the coming year, representing the first two years of funding under CIAP. Additional funding for grants will also be available for the following two years. The money will help fund 129 projects over a four year period in the state of Alabama.

"The Interior Department is committed to protecting our nation's natural resources," Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said. "I applaud the state of Alabama for submitting such a strong and balanced plan for the Coastal Impact Assistance Program so we can put these funds to work."

Alabama became the fifth state to receive approval from Interior's Minerals Management Service for its Coastal Impact Assistance Program plan when MMS Acting Director Walter Cruickshank joined Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Commissioner M. Barnett Lawley today in a signing ceremony at Five Rivers – Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort, AL. The approval of Alabama's plan allows the state to submit grant proposals for Coastal Impact Assistance Program projects involving conservation, restoration, enhancement and protection of natural coastal resources.

Alabama's Grant Program Announcement has been posted at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The announcement provides instructions and guidance on the submittal process for CIAP grant applications. Funding is made available to the State and counties when the grants are awarded. The allocation of each year's \$25.5 million will be divided with \$16.6 million going to the state of Alabama and \$8.9 million being split among the two coastal counties.

## ***Florida Communities Trust Announces Funded Projects for the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program***

~ Three working waterfront projects from around the state chosen to receive \$6.8 million in funding ~

TALLAHASSEE - The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) today announced that the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program will award more than \$6.8 million in Florida Forever funds to three working waterfronts projects from across the state. On Tuesday, Governor Charlie Crist and the Cabinet voted to approve funding for the Sebastian Working Waterfront Collaborative in the City of Sebastian, Blue Crab Cove in Brevard County and Apalachicola Boat Works in the City of Apalachicola.

"Florida's traditional working waterfronts are a valuable resource to our coastal communities and have made a positive impact on our history and culture," said DCA Secretary Tom Pelham. "I congratulate these recipients for being the first to be awarded funding from the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program, and for their commitment to preserve the legacy that working waterfronts have made upon their communities and our state."

The Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program, which is administered by Florida Communities Trust (FCT) and housed within the Department of Community Affairs, receives \$7.5 million each year in Florida Forever funds. The funds are awarded to local communities to purchase land that facilitates commercial fishing or aquaculture, or that promote and educate the public about the economic, cultural and historical heritage of Florida's traditional working waterfronts. This was the first grant application cycle for the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program, and FCT received 12 applications from coastal communities requesting a combined total of \$28 million in Florida Forever funds. The following are summaries of the three selected applicants that will receive funding:

**Sebastian Working Waterfronts Collaborative, City of Sebastian:** Located along the Indian River Lagoon, this two-acre property represents a public/private partnership between the City of Sebastian and Fisherman's Landing Sebastian, a non-profit working waterfront organization. The vision of this project is to link several parcels together to educate the public about the commercial fishing heritage of the community through a retail/wholesale seafood house, exhibitions, educational venues and events. Florida Communities Trust will award more than \$3.1 million in Florida Forever funds for the acquisition and the City of Sebastian will contribute more than \$351,000 in local match.

**Blue Crab Cove, Brevard County:** Located in Merritt Island in incorporated Brevard County, this three-acre property is home to Doc's Bait Shop and Ms. Apple's Crab Shack. The county is acquiring the property to ensure its continued use for the commercial harvest of marine organisms, particularly blue crab and mullet. FCT will award more than \$2.6 million in Florida Forever funds and Brevard County will contribute more than \$1.4 million in local match.

**Apalachicola Boat Works, City of Apalachicola:** This half-acre property will be incorporated into the Apalachicola Maritime Museum and used to provide instruction in the building and maintenance of vessels utilized in the commercial seafood industry. The opening of this shop will provide commercial fishermen and seafood harvesters with access to repair facilities that are currently unavailable in the community, and train student workers in the craft of historic boat building and restoration. FCT will award \$1 million in Florida Forever funds to the City of Apalachicola for the acquisition.

## ***Governor Crist Announces \$132 Million in Recovery Act Funding for Florida Water Projects***

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist, continuing his efforts to reinvigorate Florida’s economy and protect Florida’s environment, today announced the award of more than \$132 million to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The funds, provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will help the state and local governments finance many overdue improvements to wastewater and stormwater projects that are essential for protecting public health and the environment across the state.

“These federal stimulus funds will help create jobs, boost local economies, improve aging water infrastructure and protect our health,” said Governor Crist. “At least 20 percent of the funds will be committed to green infrastructure and promoting innovative green practices such as water and energy efficiencies.”

The \$132 million in federal money will be used to make low-interest loans to local governments for wastewater and stormwater construction projects. At least 50 percent will go to disadvantaged communities in the form of loans under which repayment of loan principal will be forgiven. In addition, 20 percent will fund “green” infrastructure projects. Approximately 70 projects are currently under review for award of the federal funds, with a total estimated cost of \$1.2 billion. Under the Recovery Act, projects must meet the basic qualifications of the state’s Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) program, be willing to accept certain additional federal requirements and be under construction no later than mid-February 2010.

“The influx of Federal Stimulus dollars will allow DEP to put these funds to use quickly since many of the communities that will benefit from the money have been waiting for funding to become available,” said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. “This will allow the state to help finance more wastewater and stormwater projects than we would have otherwise been able to provide.”

Since the federal Clean Water SRF program began in 1987, Florida has received \$932 million in federal “capitalization grant” funds. Through state matching funds, repayments on earlier loans, proceeds on bonds issued by DEP and interest on the fund, Florida has turned the federal funds into \$2.7 billion in financial assistance to local governments throughout Florida for wastewater, stormwater and other pollution control projects. Nearly \$730 million, or 27 percent, of the total financial assistance has been awarded to small communities.

Governor Crist made today’s announcement during the seventh meeting of Florida’s Economic Stimulus Working Group. Governor Crist formed the Federal Stimulus Working Group on February 2, 2009 in anticipation of Congress’ American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to review the best use of federal stimulus dollars. The working group includes Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp, along with the Governor Crist’s Chief of Staff, Budget Director and Policy Director. The group also includes Don Winstead, special advisor to the Governor for the implementation of the federal recovery act and leaders from state agencies, departments and offices.

The ability to use the federal stimulus funding is subject to budgetary appropriation by the Florida Legislature, and Governor Crist looks forward to working with the Legislature to obtain the necessary approval. For more information about Florida’s use of the federal recovery dollars made available through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, please visit [www.FlaRecovery.com](http://www.FlaRecovery.com).

## ***Rookery Bay Research Reserve Partners with City of Naples to Teach Landscapers to “Greenscape”***

*~Educational program helps protect Florida’s water quality~*

NAPLES – Continuing a commitment to preserve Florida’s natural resources’ the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is partnering with the city of Naples to protect water quality in Naples Bay through Project Greenscape, an education and technical assistance program that provides training for professional landscapers.



“We are pleased to be a part of Project Greenscape, which serves as a successful model for addressing one aspect of nonpoint source pollution in Naples Bay,” said Gary Lytton, Reserve Manager at Rookery Bay Reserve. “Reaching more than 1,000 local landscapers since the program’s inception in January 2007, we anticipate it growing to help other municipalities guide residents to make wise landscaping choices that will restore and improve water quality statewide.”

In 2006, the city of Naples passed an ordinance to address the application of fertilizers to lawns and landscaped areas, in an effort to protect water quality. The program is part of a multi-pronged effort to reduce leaching and runoff of nutrients.

“Project Greenscape came about as an effort aimed at reducing the amount of nutrients entering Naples Bay through stormwater runoff,” said Michael Bauer, Ph.D., Natural Resources Manager for the city of Naples. “The program has exceeded all my expectations with both City Council’s strong support and the landscape industry’s conscientious response. I am expecting to see lower phosphate and nitrate level in our monthly water samples as a result.”

By incorporating the DEP’s Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) manual, Florida Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries, into the training course provided during Project Greenscape sessions, instructors are able to teach participants about wise landscaping choices that reduce nonpoint source pollution and promote the efficient use of water.

The following topics are offered to participants during Project Greenscape training courses:

- Reduce the off-site transport of sediment, nutrients, and pesticides
- Use appropriate site design and plant selection
- Use appropriate rates and methods of applying fertilizer and irrigation
- Use integrated pest management to minimize pests and apply chemicals only when appropriate

The Green Industries training program is part of the Florida-Friendly Landscape Program and partly funded through DEP using section 319 nonpoint source management grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

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 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.

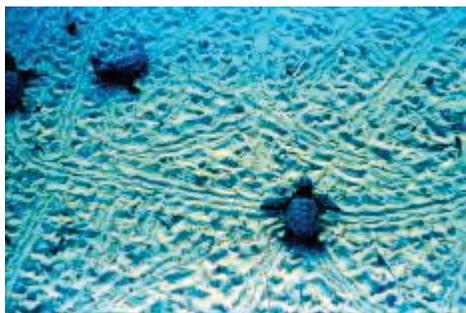
For more information about the reserve, please visit [www.rookerybay.org](http://www.rookerybay.org).

For more information on Project Greenscape, please visit <http://www.rookerybay.org/CTP-BMP.html>.

For more information on Best Management Practices, please visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/nonpoint/pubs.htm> or <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>.

## ***It's Lights Out for Sea Turtle Nesting Season***

Sea turtle nesting season has begun on Florida's beaches, which means beach residents and visitors need to follow a few precautions to ensure a successful season. Lights along the beach should be managed to prevent disorienting a female that comes ashore at night, according to biologists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). To do this, lights that are needed for human safety should be shielded so they are not visible from the beach or turned off when not needed. The instincts of the ancient sea creature tell her to proceed toward the brighter horizon over the ocean. Bright lights on the landward side of the beach can confuse the nesting sea turtle and the hatchlings that emerge from the nest. Lights on the beach can lead them away from the ocean.



Loggerhead hatchlings can become disoriented by beach lighting as they try to head to the ocean. (FWC photo)

"Just one light can kill thousands of turtles over several years," said Dr. Robbin Trindell, a biologist with the FWC. "Many lights burn all night without contributing to human safety."

Five species of sea turtles nest on Florida beaches, with the loggerhead showing up in the largest numbers. Green and leatherback sea turtles also nest in the Sunshine State. Two other species, Kemp's Ridley and hawksbill sea turtles, nest infrequently in Florida but inhabit Florida waters. The FWC lists the loggerhead as a threatened species; the other four are listed as endangered.

Nearly 90 percent of the loggerhead population that nests in the southeastern United States does so on Florida's beaches. This population is one of only two large loggerhead nesting populations worldwide. Sea turtles are air-breathing reptiles well-suited for sea life with a hydrodynamic-shaped shell and large, powerful front flippers. These physical characteristics enable them to dive deep into the ocean and to swim long distances.

Female loggerhead turtles begin coming ashore in the spring, with peak months for laying eggs in June and July. The nesting female digs a hole with her hind flippers and then lays approximately 115 eggs. After covering the nest with sand, the massive creature, weighing from 150 to 300 pounds, makes her way back to the ocean. A female might come ashore two to five times during the nesting season. Amazingly, females come back to the same beach where they hatched decades earlier. The males, once they make the long crawl after hatching out of the egg, never return to land.

Late in the summer, after an incubation of 55 to 70 days, the hatchlings begin breaking out of their shells. Up to 100 hatchlings wait below the sand surface until darkness, when they emerge together and crawl out of the nest. Instinct tells the 1- to 2-inch hatchling to head toward the brightest horizon and away from dark silhouettes. In days long gone in Florida, the brightest horizon shone over the ocean, and the hatchlings would move away from the shadows on the dunes and begin the crawl to the sea.

In modern-day Florida, hatchlings must crawl through a battlefield of debris left by humans. Furniture discarded by lazy beachgoers can obstruct a nesting female turtle or become a trap for the hatchlings. Avoiding firework leftovers strewn along the hatchling's path can cause exhaustion and delay in getting to the water. If a hatchling is stranded on the beach when the sun rises, its chance for survival diminishes, and dehydration and sun exposure become hazards.

"We can all help sea turtles survive," Trindell said. "If we just take personal responsibility, we can go a long way to ensure the sea turtle co-exists with us for many more years to come." For wildlife-friendly lighting options, go to [MyFWC.com/Conservation](http://MyFWC.com/Conservation), and click on "[Conservation & You](#)."

## ***Fire and Water***

### ***Scientists study how fire may affect key functions in marshes***

(MOSS POINT, Miss.) – Natural resource managers often use prescribed burns in forests to reduce fuels, improve habitat and prepare sites for seeding and planting. When it comes to black needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*) marshes, less is known about the potential benefits or drawbacks of using fire for management purposes. Coastal wetlands are important to communities because they lessen the strength of storms, reduce flooding and offer biodiversity for recreational activities and coastal economies.

In a research project funded by the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, scientists are studying how fire affects water quality, plant production and soil accretion (the increase of land along the shoreline) at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Moss Point, Miss. Julia Cherry, an assistant professor at the University of Alabama in the Department of Biological Sciences and New College, is co-leading the project with Christopher May of The Nature Conservancy.

While fire is not necessarily thought of as something that could affect elevation in marshes, it could, Cherry said. "Prescribed burning may be a useful tool for enhancing elevation gain in marshes threatened by submergence due to sea-level rise," she said. "We are trying to figure out what affects the ability of these marshes to persist in the long term. Some processes might be more important than others."

The team of scientists, which includes Cherry and May, UA Graduate Student Anna Braswell, Grand Bay NERR Stewardship Coordinator Will Underwood and Stewardship Associate Jay McIlwain, is observing soil chemistry, plant production and accretion before and after controlled burns on test plots at the reserve.

The findings may determine if fire had a positive or negative effect on nutrient availability, accretion, plant mass and plant diversity. To test soil accretion, the scientists use a probe to take soil samples and measure any gains or losses using a white marker layer in the soil. To estimate the amount of aboveground plant material, scientists collect plant stems in a specified area, dry them and weigh them. To quantify belowground plant material, they cored holes in each plot at the reserve and filled them with a root-free peat, which is very light in color compared to the existing soil. On return trips to the field, the holes are cored again to determine how many roots have grown into the peat over time.

To monitor water quality, the scientists withdraw water from the soil and sample it in a lab for acidity, salinity, sulfides, nitrogen and phosphorus. They also measure the extent of soil flooding using platinum electrodes. The scope of the project, which originally included studying the affects of burning large piles of dead plant material and wood that washed up during Hurricane Katrina, has changed. The debris disappeared last year when Hurricanes Gustav and Ike raised waters and took it out to sea. Braswell, however, is taking that issue into a greenhouse environment at the university, where she will measure variables and elevation change in response to burns and hurricanes.

## ***Agreement calls for Air Monitoring Effort Along Mississippi River***

BATON ROUGE – The Department of Environmental Quality and the American Waterways Operators are partnering on a study to determine the effect of barge traffic on air monitors and air quality. The two parties signed a memorandum of understanding today that outlines an in-depth plan to determine if barges are impacting volatile organic compound readings at the DEQ's Carville air monitoring site, and possibly at other monitors. The Carville monitoring site is located at a bend in the Mississippi River. It was chosen because of its location and because it reports higher annual ozone readings than other monitors in the region. The plan calls for the DEQ air monitor to automatically take a sample when VOCs reach a pre-determined level. An e-mail will be sent to DEQ and the barge industry representatives who will take a snapshot of the river traffic in the vicinity of the monitor. Then, the barge owner companies will be contacted and asked what they were shipping on the day the monitor was triggered. The American Waterway Operators and DEQ will be able to determine if there was any product moving on the river that may have triggered the VOC sampler. —We're pleased to have The American Waterways Operators on our team for this important project, said DEQ Secretary Harold Leggett. —The American Waterways Operators' participation and determination to investigate the possibility of barge traffic contribution to any air-quality issues in the area is a great indication of the partnerships that can be formed to find solutions for Louisiana.

## ***New Marine Lab Takes Shape***

By: Myron Fischer

Despite the setbacks caused by recent hurricanes, the new Marine Biological Laboratory is near completion. Located in the center of Grand Isle, this state of the art facility will serve as a research hub for LDWF biologists, as well as university research and cooperative efforts with other states. The new Marine Lab complex consists of a 12,000 square foot laboratory containing a wet lab, dry lab, library, conference room, offices and many other work areas.

An adjacent dormitory building has 13 bedrooms, two bunk rooms, bath facilities, a kitchen, dining and entertainment area, large conference room and a laboratory for visiting researchers. A covered boathouse has slips to accommodate 14 vessels and the underside of the lab building will serve as a hatchery area for both shellfish and finfish. Also on site is a large maintenance area. The new Lab, built at the end of Ludwig Street, will be accessible by water, air and highway. The projected completion timeline has the main lab building, boathouse and maintenance shop ready by May.



## ***NOAA Celebrates New 1,200-Acre Texas Nature Preserve***

Last month, officials from the NOAA Restoration Center, the City of Port Aransas, Texas, and other partners gathered at an area known locally as Charlie's Pasture to celebrate the groundbreaking for the 1,200-acre Port Aransas Nature Preserve.

The project is the result of collaboration between the local government, state and federal agencies, and community members. In fact, strong community support for the project allowed project planners to cut the project's 20-year implementation plan almost in half. City staff worked alongside representatives from other local, state, federal organizations to coordinate the purchase of the various properties that now make up the Preserve and the protection of those properties through stabilization of the ship channel shoreline.

NOAA support for the project began in the shoreline stabilization phase of the project, with funding directed through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. NOAA support continues today with funding directed through the Community-based Restoration Program, furthering the coastal and wetland habitat conservation goals of the project.

The recent groundbreaking initiated construction of a system of hike and bike trails, vehicular access controls, birding and wildlife observation areas, and an interpretive center that will direct and limit impacts from public access to the site. The project will also enhance coastal habitat resources at the site through estuarine wetland restoration and the removal of invasive species such as Brazilian pepper trees. The overall goals of the project are to conserve the valuable coastal natural resources at the site as an educational resource and an attraction for current and future generations.

### ***Two New Web Sites Aim to Inform Texans about Climate Change and Sustainability***

<http://www.TexasClimate.org/>

<http://www.TexasClimateNews.org/>

The Houston Advanced Research Center has launched two new web sites on climate change and sustainability to help meet Texas' research, information, and news needs. Both sites will give special attention to the risks and opportunities for Texas in the changing climate of the twenty-first century. The Texas Climate Initiative site targets Texas educators, policy makers, and others working in the areas of climate and sustainability. Texas Climate News is an online magazine designed to benefit all Texans with original journalism and regularly updated links to other reports.

### ***Texas Beach Watch Launches Revised Web Site***



March generally signals the beginning of the beach season in Texas with Spring Break, and this year it will also mark the Launch of the Texas General Land Office's (GLO) new Texas Beach Watch web site ([www.TexasBeachWatch.com](http://www.TexasBeachWatch.com)). This web site represents Texas' commitment to the public to provide public notification of water quality conditions along the Texas coast at its recreational beaches.

Texas is fortunate to have clean beaches and the results of water quality testing have been available to the public at the

GLO's Texas Beach Watch web site for several years. In addition to an explanation of this program, the web site provides an ARC GIS map that illustrates the advisory level for Texas' recreational beaches.

The new web site will feature a Google interactive map as well as a search feature on the home page. The web site will also serve as a resource to individuals by providing a link to the GLO web site as well as additional pages about the Beach Watch program including the following: About-Us, Texas-Beaches, Water-Sampling, Media, and Kids.

The "Stay Informed" feature will add a whole new way for the public to receive up-to-date information on water quality. This page allows visitors to subscribe to receive updates on one or more beaches in Texas where water samples are collected and reported. When a water quality result is reported for a particular beach, a subscriber will receive an email indicating the current conditions.

Water quality advisories will be reported as follows:  Low indicates bacteria counts are less than 35 colony forming units (cfu) per 100 ml;  Medium indicates bacteria counts are between 35 and 104 cfu/100 ml; and  High indicates bacteria counts are greater than 104 cfu/100 ml. A high bacteria count will result an advisory being issued for a beach.

In March, the GLO will be utilizing banner ads on select web sites to begin generating buzz and driving traffic to the new web site. Look for the banner ads at some of your favorite web sites this month!

Beginning in early April, the GLO will release public service announcements (PSAs) aimed at generating buzz and driving traffic to the web site. The PSAs include both a 30 second television and radio spot in both English and Spanish both which can be viewed on the beach watch web site.

In addition to the new web site, the GLO has designed new beach notification signs to replace the current signs. The new signs contain the new logo and incorporate the logo colors used throughout the campaign. The signs are located at Texas' recreational beaches, in the general location where water samples are collected including entrances to parks. The signs, in the closed position, indicate the most recent water quality testing was acceptable. Signs flipped down in the open position, indicate that based on recent testing contact with recreational beach water is not advised.

Look for GLO's Coastal Resources staff at various coastal events to promote the Texas Beach Watch Program this spring and summer with brochures and promotional items and visit our new web site at [www.beachwatch.org](http://www.beachwatch.org) for up-to-date water quality conditions at your favorite Texas beach destination!

## ***Nearly 7,000 Volunteers Haul 212 Tons of Trash Off Texas Beaches***

AUSTIN — A total of 6,954 volunteers — including President George H. W. Bush, former Secretary of State James Baker III and Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson — picked up more than 212 tons of trash off of Texas beaches Saturday in the 23rd Annual Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Spring Cleanup. On the Bolivar Peninsula, the Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Program, the Bush Clinton Coastal Recovery Fund and the Points of Light Institute joined forces to bring national attention to the Bolivar Peninsula's ongoing recovery from Hurricane Ike for the first time ever.

Bush, Baker and hundreds of volunteers from Crystal Beach and the Houston area converged on Bolivar and enjoyed a fantastic morning working together on the biggest cleanup effort in Adopt-A-Beach history. On Bolivar alone, an amazing 1,277 volunteers worked together to haul more than 75 tons of trash from the streets, rights of way and beaches.

“Texans are always willing to help lend a hand for a good cause,” Patterson said. “On Saturday, we proved that.”

All along the Texas coast, volunteers spent Saturday morning combing the beaches for trash. Among the more interesting items volunteers found was a live snake, a TV remote, an ice chest full of beer, a jockstrap, a pregnancy test, a mattress, a record player, a Dallas Cowboy pinky ring, beer bottles from Mexico, a turquoise toilet, bottles from Rome and Germany, a cheese slicer and candy from Mexico and China.

Most of the trash found consisted of typical items left by beachgoers: cigarette butts, soda cans, beer bottles, beach toys and tires. This mix of trash has changed over the years that Adopt-A-Beach volunteers have walked the beaches. When the program started in 1986, the bulk of trash on Texas beaches washed ashore from international ships that simply dumped it overboard. Since then, data collected by Adopt-A-

Beach volunteers has helped to pass an international shipping treaty that bans such sloppy practices and requires all oceangoing vessels to dispose of their trash responsibly while in port.

The Texas General Land Office's Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup is an all-volunteer effort to remove trash from Texas' shores. Coastal cleanups are held three times each year and the program's success is due to the hard work of volunteers, including local coordinators who work many unpaid hours publicizing the cleanups in coastal communities.

Texas beaches continue to receive large amounts of marine debris due to a convergence of currents in the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1986, more than 382,000 Adopt-A-Beach volunteers have picked up more than 7,300 tons of this debris, some of it originating from as far away as South America. Volunteers record data on the trash to learn more about the causes of marine debris and to help mitigate pollution along Texas' 367 miles of coastline.

The Adopt-A-Beach Spring Cleanup is one of three all-volunteer seasonal cleanups coordinated through the Adopt-A-Beach Program of the Texas General Land Office. The next coastwide cleanup will be the Fall Adopt-A-Beach effort scheduled for Saturday, September 26, 2009.

The success of the Adopt-A-Beach Program is made possible by the generous efforts of dedicated volunteers and the strong support of community leaders and sponsors across the state. Texans who were not able to attend the cleanup can help keep their beaches clean by making a tax deductible donation online at [www.texasadoptabeach.org](http://www.texasadoptabeach.org). There are several different Adopt-A-Beach sponsorship levels ranging from \$25 to \$25,000, allowing both individuals and corporations to contribute to this major cleanup effort. Statewide coastal cleanups are held every spring and fall.

Those who want to help Bolivar but could not participate in the cleanup may make a donation online to the Bush Clinton Coastal Fund by visiting its Web site at [www.BushClintonCoastalFund.org](http://www.BushClintonCoastalFund.org). Shell Oil Company was the lead cleanup sponsor for 2009. Other statewide sponsors were Flint Hills Resources Community Action Council, Johnson Controls, Newfield Foundation, Halliburton, AkzoNobel Surface Chemistry LLC, HNTB, Tetra Technologies, Beaumont Coca-Cola Bottling Company, ESPEY Consultants, Inc., Grainger, and McCoy's Building Supply. To learn more about items collected at the cleanup, and for information on the health of the Texas coast, visit the Adopt-A-Beach Program Web site at [www.texasadoptabeach.org](http://www.texasadoptabeach.org), or contact the Texas General Land Office at 1-877-TXCOAST (1-877-892-6278).

## ***Land Office Awards Three Offshore Geothermal Leases***

AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson and the School Land Board today awarded three geothermal energy leases off the Texas coast. "Texas is the nation's new frontier for renewable energy and today's lease sale is more evidence of that," Patterson said. "These leases should earn the state's school fund millions and show that renewable energy is profitable in Texas."

Geo Texas Co., based in Eugene, Oregon, was the winning and only bidder for the right to produce geothermal energy on 128,758 acres of state submerged land off the coasts of Galveston, Brazoria and Matagorda counties.

The terms of the bid require Geo Texas to pay \$2 an acre bonus and \$3 an acre annual rental for the state submerged land. Once Geo Texas begins to produce electricity, the state's Permanent School Fund will earn a 2.05 percent royalty for years 1-10 of the lease, and 3.8 percent on years 11-30. Even without any energy production, the state's Permanent School Fund will earn more than \$386,000 a year.

In 2005, Patterson and the School Land Board signed the nation's first-ever lease for offshore wind energy production off the coast of Galveston. In 2007, Patterson signed the state's first leases for solar and geothermal energy production. This push to exploit the Permanent School Fund's renewable energy resources is one of Patterson's top goals. Oil and gas have earned more than \$9 billion for public education in Texas, but oil and gas are depletable resources. "We must take action now to diversify our revenue stream for the PSF," Patterson said. "For the schoolchildren of Texas, renewable energy means renewable revenue."

## ***MMS Awards \$1 Million Coastal Protection Grant to Texas***

*Coastal Impact Assistance Program provides for erosion protection of Pelican Island.*

**NEW ORLEANS** – The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has awarded a grant for \$1,005,612 to the Texas General Land Office through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) for Pelican Island erosion protection. This is the first grant awarded through the CIAP to the State of Texas. "MMS is committed to working with Texas and its coastal counties to make valuable coastal protection projects such as Pelican Island a reality," said MMS acting Director Walter Cruickshank. "The Pelican Island erosion protection project is an important effort toward restoring Texas' barrier islands, and MMS is proud to be a part of those efforts."

Funding from the grant will provide erosion protection for approximately 1,000-1,500 linear feet of the northeastern shoreline portion of Pelican Island, located along the south side of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel between Mustang Island and Ingleside Points, Texas - about 17 miles east of Corpus Christi. The project will also protect the island's associated habitats, including submerged aquatic vegetation and wetlands in Corpus Christi Bay.

"Pelican Island protects both critical industry and critical bird habitat, because in Texas both are important," said Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. "Texans know oil and gas production sustains our coastal economy, but I think many would be surprised to know revenue earned from coastal oil and gas production also funds huge environmental projects like Pelican Island."

The premier colonial water bird rookery habitat in the Corpus Christi Bay area, Pelican Island also serves as a natural brush and tree habitat for tree and ground-nesting species, including the endangered brown pelican. Included in the project will be the construction of a revetment to stop erosion that is threatening this habitat and its wide variety of wildlife. The CIAP was created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Through the program, MMS will provide \$250 million in grants annually, from 2007-2010, to six eligible Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas producing states – Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, California, and Mississippi. The funding to Texas included \$48.6 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008. Eighteen Coastal Political Subdivisions (counties) share in the funding of projects outlined in the state's approved plan.

## ***13th Annual Great Texas Birding Classic Aids Declining Songbirds***

*Fun Event Beckons Birders, But Highlights New Reports of Birds in Decline*

LAKE JACKSON, Texas — Corporate-sponsored teams from across the USA that include some of the nation's birding elite will once again take part in what organizers call the world's longest, wildest birding competition along the entire Texas coast April 26-May 3. The Great Texas Birding Classic raises funds to protect bird habitat and promotes the fun and excitement of one of nature's great spectacles, but it also highlights a growing concern: the decline of migratory songbirds.

To date, the GTBC has contributed \$651,000 to avian habitat conservation along the Texas Gulf coast through Conservation Grants funded through team sponsorships and donations. Prior to each year's

competition, various organizations submit conservation project proposals to seek funding through grants awarded by the winning teams. This work focuses on habitat loss caused by human development, the biggest problem facing wildlife in Texas and around the world. Conservation scientists say the grants could not come at a more urgent time. Last week, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior released the first ever "U.S. State of the Birds" report. This shows nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened or in significant decline due to habitat loss, invasive species, and other threats. It also shows half of all coastally migrating shorebirds have declined; for example, red knots have declined by an alarming 82 percent, and clapper, yellow, black and king rails are either federally endangered or of high concern. The Interior report reveals troubling declines of bird populations over the past 40 years in all ecosystems — grasslands, wetlands, forests and prairie.

"The U.S. State of the Birds Report is a warning signal of the failing health of our environment," said Carter Smith, Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "At the same time, there is heartening evidence that strategic land management and conservation action can reverse declines of birds as evidenced from the increase of hunted migratory waterfowl and other success stories such as the bald eagle and wild turkey."

An initial motive for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to create the Great Texas Birding Classic was to raise money to arrest the decline of migratory song birds along the Texas coast by funding habitat conservation projects. The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory became the lead partner operating the competition in 2005, working with local communities along the Texas coast.

"There has been a long term, steady decline in many bird species that pass through or reside some part of the year here in Texas" said John Arvin, GCBO research coordinator. "Anything that slows that process is a good thing. Birding Classic conservation grants have made a positive difference for birds at habitat hot spots along the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail."

For millions of birds that migrate between North, South and Central America, the Texas coast provide critical stopover habitat, although many natural areas have been lost to human development. The worst losses hit areas most important for birds and wildlife, such as wetlands.

The study "Texas Coastal Wetlands; Status and Trends, Mid-1950s to Early 1990s" was produced jointly by TPWD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Aerial photos and other sources show the 12.8 million-acre study area contained about 4.1 million acres of wetlands in 1955 and less than 3.9 million acres in 1992, a net loss of about 210,000 acres. The greatest losses were of freshwater emergent and forested wetlands, with significant but relatively smaller losses of saltwater wetlands. One of the most sobering trends is the loss of forested wetlands, including hardwood bottomlands along rivers and streams, one of Texas' most important wildlife habitat types in terms of the density and diversity of species it supports — these declined by 96,000 acres, a 10.9 percent decrease.

For birds, birders and coastal communities, the habitat hot spots which remain are vital — recreationally, environmentally and economically. Research in spring 1992 showed 6,000 birdwatchers visited High Island east of Galveston within a six-week period, spending \$2.5 million on lodging and travel-related activities. Total economic impact over a two-month period was estimated at \$4-to-\$6 million. The 13th annual birding classic will be celebrated at the contest awards brunch in Corpus Christi on Sunday, May 3. Tickets are available to the Brunch for \$20 per person and may be purchased in advance from GCBO at (979) 480-0999 or from the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau at (800) 678-6232. More information is on the birding classic Web site. The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory is a 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to conserving coastal habitat for birds through science and international partnerships.

---

On the Net:

<http://www.birdingclassic.org>

<http://www.gcbo.org>

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>

## Other News

### ***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program Now Accepting Nominations for 2009 Gulf Guardians!***



The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program (GMP) partnership developed the Gulf Guardian awards as a way to recognize and honor the businesses, community groups, individuals, and agencies that are taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful and productive. The Gulf Guardian Award exemplifies what the Gulf of Mexico Program is all about; innovative solutions that come about when we pool resources and look for creative ways to positively impact our quality of life and economic well being.

There are many companies, organizations, and individuals in the Gulf States that are "Gulf Guardians." The GMP partnership believes they should be awarded for their stewardship of this national resource from which we all derive so much benefit.

The first Gulf Guardian Award winners were recognized in 2000. Every year since, a first, second and third place award are given in seven categories: Business, Civic/Non-Profit Organization, Partnerships, Youth/Education, Individual, Government, and Bi-National. All 21 winners in seven different categories receive an impressive marble and glass memento, press coverage on their project, and recognition by their peers. All winners receive a professional video about their project and/or effort that is presented on the evening of the Gulf Guardian Awards ceremony.

The Gulf of Mexico Program began in 1988 to protect, restore, and maintain the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem in economically sustainable ways. The Gulf of Mexico Program is underwritten by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is a non-regulatory, inclusive consortium of state and federal government agencies and representatives of the business and agricultural community, fishing industry, scientists, environmentalists, and community leaders from all five Gulf States. To complete a nomination application for 2009, go to the Gulf of Mexico Program's web site at <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo> and click on the Gulf Guardian Application button. Applications are available in both English and Spanish. Nominations are due May 15th, 2009. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Altsman at (228) 688-7015 or email her at [altsman.diane@epa.gov](mailto:altsman.diane@epa.gov).



### ***U.S. and Mexico Hold Border Environmental Forum to Help Confront Climate Change***

Contact: Lina Younes, [younes.lina@epa.gov](mailto:younes.lina@epa.gov).

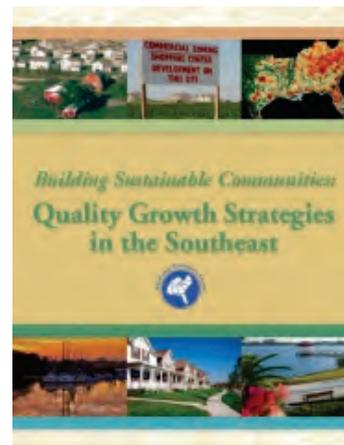
(Washington, D.C. – April 22, 2009) This week, the U.S. and Mexico are holding their first Border States Climate Change Workshop in Monterrey, Mexico to continue collaborative efforts to address climate change. The workshop brings together representatives from the EPA and its Mexican counterpart, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), along with its science arm Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE), and stakeholders from 10 states on both sides of the border to discuss ongoing national and state level efforts to address climate change and to explore future initiatives.

The workshop, being held April 22-23, will focus on a variety of ongoing and future efforts including greenhouse gas inventories and emissions forecasts, reporting systems, action plans, and energy efficiency projects and financing opportunities. The workshop is sponsored by the Border 2012 Program Air Policy Forum and the Border Environment Cooperation Commission. The U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Program is a collaboration between the United States and Mexico to improve the environment and protect the health of nearly 12 million people living along the border. The Border Environment Cooperation Commission strengthens cross-border cooperation and supports sustainable projects.

The Border 2012 Air Policy Forum is helping to achieve significant environmental benefits through projects in the U.S. and Mexico. Completed and ongoing projects include coordination on airshed management, improvements to ambient air monitoring networks, retrofits to diesel trucks and buses, feasibility studies of anti-idling measures for border crossings, reductions of brick kiln emissions, and reductions of greenhouse gas emissions through landfill gas capture projects. More information on the U.S. - Mexico Border 2012 Program: <http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/>.

## ***New Quality Growth Report Released***

As pressure from development, drought and climate change threaten our natural resources, water availability and quality of life here in the Southeast, many communities and organizations have found solutions for managing growth while conserving their green infrastructure. To showcase some of these most innovative case studies, the Forum is proud to announce the release of it's newest special report, *Building Sustainable Communities: Quality Growth Strategies in the Southeast*. This 40-page publication first looks at challenges facing the Southeast as a whole and then takes you on a tour of towns, villages, and neighborhood developments where on-the-ground Quality Growth strategies are being implemented successfully. Found within the report as well are training and on-line resources for individuals, organizations and communities. A limited number of hard copies of *Building Sustainable Communities* are available for free by contacting [kd@southeastwaterforum.org](mailto:kd@southeastwaterforum.org). Electronic copies are available on the Forum's website - [click here](#).



## ***New Article on Ranking of SPARROW Model Nutrient Yields***



The National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ranked each of the 818 large watersheds in the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin (MARB) on the basis of SPARROW model estimates of nitrogen and phosphorus yields delivered to the Gulf of Mexico.

[Uncertainties in the nutrient yield estimates from the MARB SPARROW model](#) were incorporated into a statistical ranking procedure to determine the probability that a watershed is within the top 150 delivering the highest nutrient yields to the Gulf. The results of this study are described in the *Journal of American Water Resources Association* (JAWRA) article and detailed supplemental tables with rankings of the delivered nutrient yields from the 818 large watersheds in the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin. A new [Fact Sheet on the SPARROW model](#) is intended to assist water-resources managers with interpretation of the SPARROW model and its products. For additional information on the nutrient ranking study, please contact: Dale Robertson at [dzrobert@usgs.gov](mailto:dzrobert@usgs.gov).

## ***UN Declares June 8th as World Oceans Day***

The concept of a "World Ocean Day" was first proposed in 1992 by the Government of Canada at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The Ocean Project has been working closely with the World Ocean Network for the last six years to promote and coordinate World Ocean Day events and activities with aquariums, zoos, museums, conservation organizations and agencies, universities, schools, and businesses. Each year an increasing number of countries and organizations have been marking June 8th as opportunity to celebrate our world ocean and our personal connection to the sea. With the World Ocean Network, we also developed and widely circulated a petition to the United Nations urging them to officially recognize World Ocean Day. With help from our Partner organizations, tens of thousands of people from all parts of the world signed online or paper copies of the petition. Your participation in all of this made a real difference.

While official U.N. designation is not going to change things overnight it is an important step in improving the health of our world's ocean. Now we need to capitalize on this fresh momentum! I hope you will be involved in planning or participating in a World Oceans Day celebration near you in June. Please visit the World Oceans Day website to list your event, get celebration ideas, access the media and outreach kit, and more. For more information, contact: Bill Mott, Director, The Ocean Project, [www.TheOceanProject.org](http://www.TheOceanProject.org).

## ***Coastal States to Share \$500 million in Next Two Years from Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Revenues***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Six U.S. coastal states will share nearly half a billion dollars from offshore oil and gas revenues in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 to help restore and protect coastal wetlands, wildlife habitat and marine areas, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said today. The funds are available for approved uses by Alabama, Alaska, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and their coastal local governments.

“The Department takes great pride in its mission to preserve and protect our nation’s natural areas,” Salazar said in announcing the allocation of funds from the Coastal Impact Assistance Program. “The funding we provide through this program goes a long way to restore portions of our coastline and I look forward to working with each of the states on their upcoming projects.”

For Fiscal Year 2009, the total allocations by states include about \$121 million for Louisiana; \$37.5 million for Alaska; \$35.6 million for Texas; \$23.8 million for Mississippi; \$19.7 million for Alabama; and \$5 million for California. The same amounts also will be available in Fiscal Year 2010. Alaska’s allocation in 2007 and 2008, which was the minimum 1 percent, rose more than 1500 percent due to bonus payments of about \$2.6 billion in Chukchi Sea Sale 193, held in February 2008, and variability of production in the Gulf of Mexico due to recent hurricanes.

The Coastal Impact Assistance Program, mandated by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and administered by Interior’s Minerals Management Service, authorizes funds to be distributed to states adjacent to Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas producing areas to mitigate the impacts of that energy development on marine and coastal areas. Under the program, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to distribute to producing states and coastal political subdivisions \$250 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2010. This money is shared among eligible states and coastal political subdivision and allocated based on formulas prescribed by the Energy Policy Act. Each eligible state is allocated its share based on that state’s Qualified Outer Continental Shelf Revenue generated off of its coast in proportion to the total

Qualified Outer Continental Shelf Revenue generated off the coasts of all eligible states. Congress also approved a 3-percent appropriation of the funds for the Minerals Management Service to administer the program.

The Energy Policy Act requires that all program funding be used for projects and activities for the conservation, protection, or restoration of coastal areas, including wetlands; mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, or natural resources; implementation of a federally-approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan; or mitigation of the impact of Outer Continental Shelf activities through funding of onshore infrastructure projects and public service needs. Eligible recipients can also use the funds for planning these mitigation and restoration measures and to cover the administrative costs of complying with program legislation. Only states that submit a coastal impact assistance plan meeting Minerals Management Service approval are eligible to receive program funds. Plans must be developed in consultation with eligible coastal political subdivisions. More information on the program is at: <http://www.mms.gov/offshore/CIAPmain.htm>, including a more specific breakdown of allocations by all six states and 67 coastal political subdivisions.

## ***U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces 183 Projects in Southeast Region Under President's Economic Recovery Plan***

April 27, 2009 (Contacts: Tom Mackenzie, [Tom\\_MacKenzie@fws.gov](mailto:Tom_MacKenzie@fws.gov))



Recovery.Gov Logo

Atlanta, Georgia – From the Lower Mississippi River's Delta to North Carolina's coast and south to the waters of the Caribbean, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will undertake 183 construction projects in the agency's Southeast Region focused on energy efficiency, habitat restoration and facility improvements at national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries and other lands, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced today.

These projects total approximately \$56.5 million for improvements within the Southeast. Salazar noted that these projects also create jobs and conserve our nation's fish and wildlife resources, treasured landscapes, and rich heritage for future generations. In the Southeast Region, funding will be used

to build two new visitor centers and complete one of the largest floodplain reconnection projects ever in the Mississippi River Basin.

Funding for these projects and hundreds more across the nation comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Of the \$3 billion appropriated to the Department of the Interior, the Act provides \$280 million to the Service – which includes \$115 million for construction, repair and energy efficiency retrofit projects at Service facilities, and \$165 million for habitat restoration, deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects. The Service will benefit from an additional \$10 million administered by the Department of Transportation used improve and rebuild roads on several national wildlife refuges. This money is not included in the Service's \$280 million appropriation. Projects will immediately create local jobs in the communities where they are located, while stimulating long-term employment and economic opportunities for the American public.

"These projects are an investment in America's future that will help get our country moving again," Salazar said. "They will enable us to preserve our rich history and natural heritage by conserving and restoring awe-inspiring landscapes, important historic sites and crucial wildlife habitat."

The Service will receive \$56.5 million for 183 projects in the Southeast Region, including:

- Capital Improvements: \$4.3 million
- Deferred Maintenance of facilities and infrastructure: \$24.5 million
- Habitat Restoration: \$10.3 million

- Construction of new visitor centers and other facilities: \$12.7 million
- Reconstruction and Repair of Service buildings and other structures: \$3.8 million
- Energy Efficiency Retrofits of Service facilities: \$687,000

The 183 projects are spread across the Southeast Region, which includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They will benefit national wildlife refuges such as the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge and the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, where a total of \$12.7 million will be spent to build two new visitor centers that will include office space for Service employees and eliminate thousands of dollars in annual rental payments.

Among other highlights for the Southeast Region, more than \$2 million will be used to breach 16 miles of levee at the Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana, reconnecting roughly 16,000 acres of floodplain to the Ouachita River to restore vital habitat for migratory birds, aquatic species, and other wildlife.

“These projects will strengthen our conservation work, enhance the experience of visitors at our national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries, improve energy efficiency, and save money in the future by eliminating thousands of dollars in rental payments for office space,” said Sam Hamilton, Regional Director in the Service’s Southeast Region. “Equally important, these projects will help us create jobs over the next two years and improve the experience of hunters, anglers, birders, and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts at wild places across the Southeast, from Louisiana to North Carolina’s coast.”

All the projects announced today represent long-standing priority needs identified by the Service through its capital planning process. The Service worked through a rigorous merit-based process to identify and prioritize investments meeting the criteria put forth in the Recovery Act: namely, that a project addresses the Department’s highest priority mission needs; generates the largest number of jobs in the shortest period of time; and creates lasting value for the American public.

Under the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Department of the Interior is making an investment in conserving America’s timeless natural and historical treasures, while also focusing on renewable energy projects, employing youth and promoting community service.

For a full list of funded projects nationwide, go to the Department’s Recovery Web Site at <http://recovery.doi.gov/>. Secretary Salazar has pledged unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Department of the Interior’s economic recovery projects. The public will be able to follow the progress of each project on the recovery web site, which will include an interactive map that enables the public to track where and how the Department’s recovery dollars are being spent. In addition, the public can submit questions, comments or concerns at [recoveryact@fws.gov](mailto:recoveryact@fws.gov).

Secretary Salazar has appointed a Senior Advisor for Economic Recovery, Chris Henderson, and an Interior Economic Recovery Task Force. Henderson and the Task Force will work closely with the Department of the Interior’s Inspector General to ensure the recovery program is meeting the high standards for accountability, responsibility, and transparency that President Obama has set.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov/southeast/](http://www.fws.gov/southeast/).

## ***Service Seeks to Bring Coastal Barrier Resources System Maps Into Digital Age***

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released to the public its Report to Congress: John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System Digital Mapping Pilot Project and announced the start of a 90-day public comment period. The report, which was directed by the Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-514), highlights the benefits of updating Coastal Barrier Resources System (System) maps with more accurate and precise digital maps to better protect people, coastal areas and natural resources.

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (Act) established the System in 1982. The Act removes the federal incentive to build on the coastal barriers designated within the System by prohibiting most federal expenditures that promote development, including federal flood insurance. The location and dynamic nature of coastal barriers makes building on them risky because they are susceptible to storm surge and erosion – issues of increasing concern in the wake of global climate change and associated sea-level rise. By removing federal incentives to develop, the Act seeks to minimize unnecessary expenditure of taxpayer dollars and decrease problematic coastal development that can put human life at risk, decrease the ability of coastal barriers to protect inland areas from flooding by acting as storm surge buffers, and threaten natural resources. The Act does not restrict or regulate any non-federal activity. The System is comprised of 857 geographic units totaling 3.1 million acres of relatively undeveloped coastal barriers located along the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Great Lakes coasts, as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The report provides a background of the System, presents the challenges associated with the existing maps and the benefits of digital maps, explains digital mapping data needs, outlines the digital mapping protocols and methodology, presents the results of the pilot project including the draft digital maps, and identifies the next steps for comprehensive map modernization. The report includes draft revised maps for 70 units, or approximately 10 percent of the entire System, and a framework for modernizing the remainder of the maps. The 70 pilot project units are located in Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. The report concludes that existing System maps are outdated technologically and identified several key issues:

- The lines on the current maps seldom align precisely with the underlying features they were intended to follow on the ground, resulting in some properties and projects intended to be eligible for Federal subsidies not being eligible, and vice-versa.
- Modernizing the System maps using digital technology would correct errors that adversely affect private property owners, improve customer service and government efficiency, conserve natural resources, and secure the future integrity of the System by limiting the need for future legislative action to modify boundaries,
- Comprehensive modernization of the System maps will cost up to \$17 million.

The draft maps presented in the report will not become effective until they are legislatively enacted by Congress. If enacted, the revised maps will result in a net addition of approximately 23,840 acres to the System (mainly associated aquatic habitat); removal of 363 acres of upland from the System (including about 300 private structures); and addition of 1,625 acres of undeveloped uplands to the System. The Service will conduct a public review and finalize the pilot project maps as directed by the Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-226). Comments on the report and draft maps can be submitted until July 6, 2009, by mail to the Coastal Barriers Coordinator, Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 860A, Arlington, VA 22203 or electronically to [CBRAcomments@fws.gov](mailto:CBRAcomments@fws.gov). For more information about the pilot project, including a downloadable version of the report and draft maps, visit [www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/coastal\\_barrier.html](http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/coastal_barrier.html).

## Grant Opportunities

### *Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership RFP*

The Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program are pleased to [request pre-proposals](#) for funding for projects that help further the goals of the Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan in the Southeast. Pre-proposals are due **May 20th**. Please see the RFP for full details and application instructions.

Projects meeting this request for proposals will target the nine coastal states of the southeastern United States: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Eligible applicants include: non-governmental organizations (e.g., community associations, watershed user groups, cooperatives, civic groups), municipalities, universities, schools, state and tribal governments. Federal agencies are not eligible to apply.

SARP and NOAA seek to fund projects that:

1. Result in on-the-ground aquatic habitat restoration benefitting NOAA trust resources (please see section below);
2. Have applicability to one or more of the eight objectives of the Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan (SAHP). The SAHP can be found at [www.sarpaquatic.org](http://www.sarpaquatic.org);
3. Ensure lasting benefits and enhanced community stewardship through a focused and effective education and outreach element;
4. Provide a minimum 1:1 non-federal match to the partnership funds requested;
5. Include a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the success of the project.

Projects of interest may include but are not limited to the following:

- removal of impediments to fish passage for diadromous species;
- restoration of spawning, foraging, and thermal refugia for diadromous species;
- improvement of hydrologic flow regimes affected by dams, reservoirs, siltation, and commercial or residential development; restoration of foraging, spawning, and nursery habitat such as riparian corridors along tidally-influenced streams and bayous, estuarine wetlands, mangroves, oyster reefs, seagrasses, and coral reefs for estuarine and marine fish species;
- improvement of hydrological regimes in tidally-influenced areas; and
- control or elimination of invasive species affecting native fish and shellfish populations.

Applicants are urged to discuss project ideas and questions prior to submitting pre-proposals. For questions regarding applicability to the SAHP, contact Marilyn Barrett-O'Leary, SARP Project Manager at 225-892-7470.

## ***Solicitation for Estuary Habitat Restoration Project Proposals***

Congress has appropriated limited funds to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for implementation of the Estuary Habitat Restoration Program as authorized in Section 104 of the Estuary Restoration Act of 2000, Title I of the Estuaries and Clean Waters Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-457) (accessible at <http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/ERA/pages/Default.aspx>). On behalf of the Estuary Habitat Restoration Council (Council), the Corps is soliciting proposals for estuary habitat restoration projects. Project Proposals are due on or before **May 12, 2009**. Find out more at <http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/ERA/Pages/pps.aspx>.

## ***Gulf of Mexico Alliance Regional Partnership Projects***

The EPA Gulf of Mexico Program's (GMP) mission is to protect, restore, and enhance the coastal and marine waters of the Gulf and its natural habitats; to sustain living resources; to protect human health and the food supply; and to ensure the long-term use of the Gulf shores, beaches, and waters. To carry out the GMP mission, EPA must continue to develop and maintain a partnership of State and Federal agencies, local governments, academia, regional business and industry, agricultural and environmental organizations, and individual citizens and communities that effectively addresses the complex ecological problems that cross State, Federal, and international jurisdictions and boundaries.

EPA is working with the states and other partners to support attainment of environmental and health goals that align with the [Governors' Action Plan II for Healthy and Resilient Coasts](#) which follows the successes of the first Action Plan released in March 2006. For more information on the Governors' Action Plan go to <http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/>. Action Plan II is intended to be a farther-reaching, five-year regional plan that addresses specific issues and projects which will result in a healthier Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and economy with a vision toward healthy and resilient coasts and communities in the Gulf of Mexico. Plan II sets out a strategy with actions addressing specific projects/activities that will deliver significant results to achieve the environmental outcomes of improved water quality for healthy beaches and shellfish beds; habitat conservation and restoration; increased awareness/stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico; ecosystems integration and assessment; reduced nutrient inputs to sustain productive Gulf aquatic ecosystems; and coastal community resilience.

An estimated amount of up to \$3,000,000 depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations for approximately 10 to 50 cooperative agreements may be awarded under this announcement to eligible applicants for projects that improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico by addressing improved water quality and public health, priority coastal habitat conservation and restoration, more effective coastal environmental education, improved ecosystems integration and assessment, strategic nutrient reductions, and coastal community resilience. Projects must actively involve stakeholders and focus on support and implementation of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Governors' Action Plan II for Healthy and Resilient Coasts. For more information go to [http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/action\\_plan2/welcome.html](http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/action_plan2/welcome.html).

The deadline for submissions is 5:00 P.M. CST June 15, 2009. Proposals must be received by the Agency Contact (see Section IV Application and Submission Information of this RFP) by hard copy through the mail or commercial delivery service or through email to [GMP.proposals@epa.gov](mailto:GMP.proposals@epa.gov). All required documents listed in Section IV of this announcement must be attached to the email as separate Adobe PDF files. Please note that if you choose to submit your materials via email, you are accepting all risks attendant to email submission including server delays. All proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. To view the full Request for Proposals go to <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/pdf/gma-rpp-2009-rfp.pdf>.

## Conferences and Workshops

### ***Call for Presenters for the First Southeastern Water Trails Conference***

#### **Submission Deadline May 15**

Conference Date October 29-30 in Chattanooga, TN

Presentations are currently being solicited for the Southeastern Water Trails Forum. Planned by the National Park Service and the Southeast Watershed Forum, in association with other state and regional agencies and organizations, this event is a unique opportunity for individuals and organizations, working on water trails throughout our region, to come together to showcase their ideas and collaborate with others. This symposium is a first for the Southeast and seeks to enhance the development of local water trails and state programs, showcase the economic and tourism benefits of water trails, and develop a regional network for developing and promoting water trails throughout the Southeast. Presentation topics will be focused on the basics of establishing water trails as well as their construction and maintenance, success stories, mapping and marketing strategies, funding sources and the economic and tourism benefits to local economies. The submission deadline is May 15. Abstracts can be sent to [kd@southeastwaterforum.org](mailto:kd@southeastwaterforum.org) and the complete call for presenters, along with instructions and topic descriptions is available. [Click here](#) for more information.

### ***Gulf Council to Convene its Outreach and Education Advisory Panel***

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene its Outreach and Education Advisory Panel (AP) **Wednesday, May 27, 2009 and Thursday, May 28, 2009** in Tampa, FL. During this Advisory Panel meeting, the Outreach and Education AP will hear a presentation by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute on its Marine Resource Education Program. The Panel will also review and prioritize its list of recommendations to the Council on improving outreach and education efforts, as well as develop a list of issues to consider and discuss during its next meeting. The AP may develop recommendations to the Council regarding Outreach and Education.

The meeting will be at the Hilton, 2225 N. Lois Ave. Tampa, FL, and is scheduled to begin at 1:00 am Wednesday, concluding no later than 5:00 pm Thursday. Copies of the agenda other related materials may be obtained by calling 813-348-1630. This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina O'Hern at the Council at least five working days prior to the meeting. Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the AP, in accordance with the M-SFCMA, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Panel action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans designed to manage fishery resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

## ***Texas General Land Office's Coastal Conference***

The Texas Coastal Conference 2009: Caring for the Coast will be held from **June 4th -5th** in Galveston at the Galveston Island Convention Center. The event will kick off on the 4th with a field trip to various locations within the Galveston and surrounding areas. That evening a welcoming reception will be held at the convention center where guests will have the opportunity to mingle as well as view various coastal exhibitor's booths.

This conference was rescheduled after being postponed from its previously scheduled date in September 2008 because of the devastating impacts of Hurricane Ike on the upper Texas coast. Since then, the GLO has been involved in restoration efforts and data collection within the impacted area. The conference session tracks have been modified and will include a half-day devoted to panel discussions on hurricane impact studies and post-storm restoration.

The conference will include one full day of presentations on June 5th that will consist of a set of at least two panel discussions during a half-day plenary session in the morning followed by a set of three concurrent sessions for individual presentations in the afternoon. A variety of subjects will be covered to include discussions about climate change/sea level rise/subsidence, coastal habitat restoration, coastal hazard mitigation, and coastal erosion planning and response. The sessions will break at noon for a luncheon to include a speech by our keynote speaker. After the luncheon, sessions will resume for the remainder of the day. Visit our website at [www.texascoastalconnection.com](http://www.texascoastalconnection.com) for up-to-date details on the conference and for information on how to register. Please join us for this event!

## ***Ghosts of Katrina: Natural Disasters and Community Resilience***

**June 5 & 6, 2009**, University of Southern Mississippi—Gulf Coast, Gulfport, MS

Sponsored by The Community and Regional Resilience Institute (CARRI) and the Center for Policy and Resilience (CPR). This interdisciplinary conference will address community resilience and its applications to post-disaster communities like Gulfport, MS. A resilient community anticipates problems and opportunities, reduces vulnerabilities, responds effectively, fairly and legitimately and recovers rapidly, safely and fairly. Additional information at <http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=167189>  
How to register: Contact: Jack Covarrubias, University of Southern Mississippi, at [ghostsofkatrinaconference@gmail.com](mailto:ghostsofkatrinaconference@gmail.com).

---

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



**Laurie Rounds**

Coastal Management Specialist

NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

[Laurie.Rounds@noaa.gov](mailto:Laurie.Rounds@noaa.gov)

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