



# GULF OF MEXICO NEWS

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April 2010



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## NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

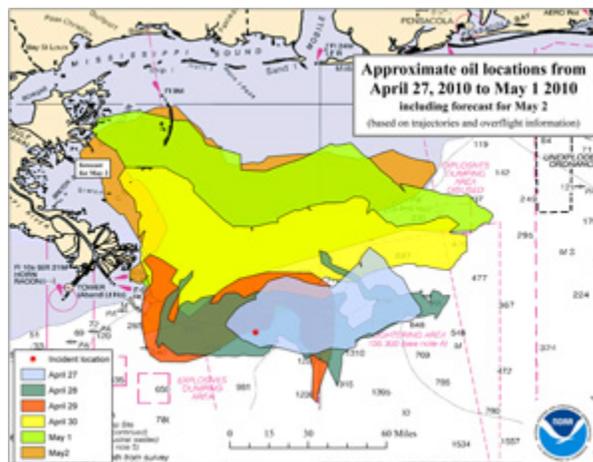
### ***Deepwater Horizon Incident, Gulf of Mexico***

<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/deepwaterhorizon>

As the nation's leading scientific resource for oil spills, NOAA has been on the scene of the Deepwater Horizon spill from the start, providing coordinated scientific weather and biological response services to federal, state and local organizations. [More](#)

Updated daily  
Situation: Friday 30 April

NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco spoke with fishermen in Venice, Louisiana today as the Deepwater Horizon incident grows.



Jump down to our [Trajectory Maps](#) section on this page for a full-sized trajectory map.

Also visiting the spill were Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Admiral Mike Mullen, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, Rear Admiral Mary Landry, Deputy Secretary of Interior David Hayes and Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Carol Browner. The Department of Defense authorized mobilization of the Louisiana National Guard to help protect critical habitats from contamination and assist local communities in the cleanup and removal of oil.

Oil continues to flow into the Gulf of Mexico at an estimated 5000 barrels (210,000 gallons) per day from three leaks in damaged piping on the sea floor from the Deepwater Horizon incident recently declared a Spill of National Significance (SONS). NOAA is assisting the Unified Command in evaluating a new technique to apply dispersants to oil at the source - 5000' below the surface, if successful this could keep plumes and sheens from forming. Work also continues on a piping system designed to take oil from a collection dome at the sea floor to tankers on the surface; this technique has never been tried at 5000'. Drilling of a relief or cut-off well is still planned - one drilling rig is on site and one should arrive this weekend, but the process will not be complete for several months. Aircraft have applied over 139,000 gallons of dispersant and will continue as conditions allow.

With shore impacts looming, more than 217,000 feet of boom have been assigned to contain the spill, with an additional 305,760 feet available. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries announced the closure of both recreational and commercial fishing in areas of likely impact and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals closed molluscan shellfish (oyster) harvesting areas in the coastal parishes of Plaquemines and St. Bernard.

NOAA efforts have included: modeling the trajectory and extent of the oil, getting pre-impact samples surveys and baseline measurements, planning for open water and shoreline remediation, supporting the Unified Command as it analyzes new techniques for handling the spill and starting Natural Resource Damage Assessments (NRDA).

National Weather Service forecasts persistent southeast winds through the weekend which will push surface oil towards shore and hamper surface recovery efforts until a forecast shift on Monday.

The Coast Guard is using forecasts and graphics of oil movement prepared by NOAA's Emergency Response Division (ERD) and Marine Charting Division to keep mariners out of oil areas by depicting them on electronic charts.

Baseline aerial surveys to assess marine life continued today with personnel from NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), more flights are planned this weekend. NOAA's Assessment and Restoration Division (ARD) coordinated with natural resource trustees from five states and with Responsible Party representatives on seven resource assessment workgroups (birds, mammals and turtles, fish, shoreline habitats, water column injury, data management, and human use).

NOAA and the Louisiana Department of Health and Human Hospitals gathered oysters and water and sediment samples in four commercial harvest areas.

An ARD natural resource economist arrives on scene tomorrow to lead a team that will evaluate spill related losses of human-use activities.

### **Important Contacts**

For NOAA media inquiries, please contact Keeley Belva at [keeley.belva@noaa.gov](mailto:keeley.belva@noaa.gov) or 301.713.3066

For response inquiries, please phone the Joint Information Center (JIC) at 985.902.5231 or 985.902.5240

To report oil on land, or for general Community and Volunteer Information, please phone 866.448.5816

To report oiled or injured wildlife, please phone 800.557.1401

To discuss spill related damage claims, please phone 800.440.0858

BP is asking fishermen for their assistance in cleaning up the oil spill. BP is calling this the Vessel of Opportunities Program and through it, BP is looking to contract shrimp boats, oyster boats and other vessels for hire to deploy boom in the Gulf of Mexico. Fishermen should phone 425.745.8017 about this program.

### **More Information about this Incident**

[IncidentNews: Deepwater Horizon](#) View the most up-to-date information on OR&R's IncidentNews site.

[The Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program](#) Federal and Louisiana natural resource trustees have developed a statewide Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program to assist the natural resource trustees in carrying out their Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) responsibilities.

[EPA: Federal Response to BP Spill in the Gulf of Mexico](#) This site tracks EPA's ongoing work in the area and help answer questions about the incident.

[Deepwater Horizon Joint Information Center](#) This site is providing information regarding the April 20 incident in the US Gulf of Mexico involving a Transocean drilling Rig Deep Water Horizon. The Horizon was engaged in drilling activity on behalf of BP at Mississippi Canyon Block 252, about 52 miles southeast of Venice, La.

[Deepwater Horizon Response on Twitter](#) This site is providing information regarding the April 20 incident in the US Gulf of Mexico involving a Transocean drilling Rig Deep Water Horizon.

[Deepwater Horizon Response on Facebook](#) This site is providing information regarding the April 20 incident in the US Gulf of Mexico involving a Transocean drilling Rig Deepwater Horizon.

Trajectory Maps

[Deepwater Horizon Trajectory Map April 30 2145](#) Approximate oil locations from April 27, 2010 to May 1, 2010 including forecast for May 2 based on trajectories and overflight information.

## ***Gulf Coast Reserves Brace for Possible Oil Invasion***

Published: *Thursday, April 29, 2010*

Staff members at the Weeks Bay and Grand Bay Reserves are bracing for the possible landfall of a massive oil spill following the April 21 explosion and collapse of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico.

As estimates of the amount of oil still leaking increased, weather forecasters predicted that southeast winds will strengthen Thursday and persist into next week, possibly driving the oil slick toward the coast in the area of Mississippi Sound and Mobile Bay, where the Weeks Bay and Grand Bay reserves are located.

Natural resource managers along the Gulf Coast are concerned that the large spill could significantly damage coastal wetlands that are nursery grounds for shrimp, crabs, oysters and the hundreds of species of commercially and recreationally important fish like red snapper and redfish.

Dave Ruple, manager of the Grand Bay Reserve in Mississippi, said he has met with state emergency officials to discuss options for deploying booms offshore to deflect oil from the reserve's waters, but forecast strong winds and unusually high tides over the next few days will make containment difficult. The state also has alerted contractors to help with clean-up if necessary, and Ruple has been in contact with a neighboring Chevron facility with expertise in oil clean-up.

The reserve also is a comprehensive suite of environmental sampling and is conducting bird and wildlife surveys in advance of a possible landfall in order to understand the extent of damage that might need to be addressed. If necessary, Ruple said, staff may remove weather and water quality monitoring instrumentation to prevent damage.

"Potential impacts to the sea grasses, oyster reefs, vegetated marshes and associated wildlife are bleak," Ruple said.

At the Weeks Bay Reserve in Alabama, Manager L.G. Adams has been keeping in close contact with Coast Guard and state officials with the immediate focus on protecting the reserve, and he also has been fielding offers from contractors and volunteers in the event clean-up becomes necessary.

Seth Blich, manager of the Apalachicola Reserve on Florida's panhandle, said he is in touch with state officials and is cooperating in collecting pre-impact samples of sediment and water quality. He is working very closely with partners in the Northwest Florida Aquatic Preserve office, who are coordinating with NOAA to collect an extensive suite of baseline data.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is deeply involved in the federal response to the spill, primarily through the Office of Response and Restoration in NOAA's Ocean Service. NOAA has established a [Web site](#) with up-to-date information on the spill and the various resources involved in damage control.

In NOAA's Estuarine Reserves Division, [Whitley Saumweber](#) and [Marie Bundy](#) are coordinating with the affected reserves to ensure access to NOAA resources.

## ***Sea Grant Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill Website***

The Gulf of Mexico (GOM) oil spill [website](#), hosted by the four GOM Sea Grant programs, provides visitors with access to a wealth of data concerning the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Website content will be continually updated, and visitors should check back often for new and revised information.

The spill involves a deepwater drilling platform approximately 50 miles southeast of Venice, La. An explosion and subsequent fire damaged the rig, which capsized and sank on April 22, 2010, after burning for hours. It is unclear how much of the estimated 700,000 gallons (approximately 16,700 barrels) of #2 fuel onboard burned before it sank. The rig is owned by Transocean and is under contract to British Petroleum (BP). For more information about the website, contact Roy Kron, Louisiana Sea Grant [rkron@lsu.edu](mailto:rkron@lsu.edu).

## ***Norfolk, Va.-based NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson to Map Ocean Floor in Gulf of Mexico***

April 6, 2010

NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson, one of the most technologically advanced hydrographic survey vessels in the world, will depart its Norfolk, Va. homeport on April 6 to conduct a five-month long effort to map the seafloor and look for hazards to navigation off the Gulf coast.

“The Gulf of Mexico has been affected by a number of large hurricanes in recent years, and our work will pinpoint the resulting hazards and shoals in these busy waters,” said Cmdr. Shepard Smith, Thomas Jefferson's commanding officer.

Thomas Jefferson's primary mission is to collect and process the data needed to maintain and update the nautical charts along the U.S. East Coast, Gulf of Mexico, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Nautical charts and other navigational products are available on [NOAA's Office of Coast Survey's](#) Web site.

“With dynamic changes in maritime commerce, especially the tremendous growth in the size and draft of commercial vessels, surveying coastal areas and sea lanes helps to support America's maritime economy,” said Capt. John Lowell, director of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey. “Waterborne cargo contributes more than \$742 billion to the nation's economy, and NOAA's hydrographic surveys provide real support for continuing growth in maritime trade.”



Aerial view of NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson.  
[High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)



NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson in the Elizabeth River, near its Norfolk homeport. [High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA)

Equipped with high resolution seafloor imagers, the 208-ft. Thomas Jefferson and 36-person crew can map the ocean bottom and identify areas of interest to coastal managers, biologists, geologists and emergency responders.

In 2005, Thomas Jefferson conducted hydrographic surveys to support safe navigation and commerce following Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson was named in honor of the president who, in 1807, formed the Survey of the Coast, the agency whose successors would eventually become part of NOAA.

Thomas Jefferson is part of the NOAA fleet of ships and aircraft operated, managed and maintained by [NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations](#), which includes commissioned officers of the [NOAA Corps](#) and civilian wage mariners.

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.

## Other NOAA News

### ***April Edition of Coastal Management News***

The April 2010 edition of Coastal Management News is now available. Checkout the newsletter online at <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/news/docs/czmnewsapr10.pdf>. Inside you'll find the following stories:

- Mississippi Restoration Focuses on Deep Island and Beneficial Use
- OCRM, NOS Host Priorities Roundtable for NGOs
- Connecticut Helps Town with Climate Change Adaptation
- NOAA Launches State of the Coast Website
- Climate Change Adaptation Workshops Held in San Francisco Bay Area
- Ohio Groups Unite to Advance Lake Erie Education and Outreach
- CELCP Updates
- MPA Center Launches New Interactive Mapping Tool, Ocean Uses Atlas
- New Jersey Coastal Nonpoint Program Receives Full Approval
- NOAA Spotlight: New NOAA Initiatives Emphasize Importance of Climate

If you are aware of anyone else who would like to be added to the newsletter distribution list to receive this newsletter directly, please have them contact Allison Castellan at [allison.castellan@noaa.gov](mailto:allison.castellan@noaa.gov). The submission deadline for the next newsletter is July 1, 2010.

## ***Updated Spatial Trends in Coastal Socioeconomics Website Launched***

The coastal management community is challenged to better understand and incorporate human activities into the management of coastal and ocean resources. To support this need, Special Projects launched the updated [Spatial Trends in Coastal Socioeconomics \(STICS\) website](#), providing coastal and ocean managers easy access to demographic and economic information for a variety of geographic units that coastal managers must work with on a daily basis. STICS takes demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau, demographic projections to 2040 from Woods and Poole, Inc., and employment and income statistics from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and recompiles them into coastal floodplains, watersheds, and coastal management program boundaries. The site also offers a detailed discussion about different definitions of the coast, including lists and maps of various popular assemblages of coastal counties. For more information, contact [Percy Pacheco](#) or [Brent Ache](#).

## ***Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard Submitted for Public Review***

This proposed classification standard provides a uniform protocol for identifying, characterizing, and naming coastal and marine ecological units. The type of unifying framework provided by the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard is essential for coordinated marine spatial planning and habitat monitoring and management. The proposal represents many years of development, testing, and validation and the work of esteemed experts from all sectors. Submitting the standards for public review through the Standards Working Group of the Federal Geographic Data Committee is one of the final steps in the process needed for a national standard. The effort has been led by NOAA's Coastal Services Center and NatureServe; the proposed standard can be found [online](#). For more information, contact [Becky Allee](#).

## ***Digital Coast Inundation Toolkit Update***

Coastal communities rely on the Coastal Inundation Toolkit to better understand and address coastal inundation issues. Recent toolkit additions include state setback requirements (“Assess” section); tips for managing floodplains using a “no adverse impact” approach (“Communicate” section); a resource for finding local low impact development projects, and new case studies from the Association of State Floodplain Managers and The Nature Conservancy (“Discover” section). A publication by the National Association of Counties that helps county officials address coastal flooding, habitat conservation, and land use issues is also available.

The Coastal Inundation Toolkit is part of NOAA’s Digital Coast. Sponsored by the NOAA Coastal Services Center, the Digital Coast is administered by Digital Coast Partnership, which includes the Coastal States Organization. To explore the Coastal Inundation Toolkit:

<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/inundation/index.html>.

## NOAA Requests Comment on Fish Imports and Marine Mammals

April 30, 2010



Humpback whales are protected by the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act, but also are found outside of U.S. waters.

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

NOAA is requesting public comment on options for implementing parts of the [Marine Mammal Protection Act](#) that address the incidental catch of marine mammals in foreign fisheries, including species such as whales and dolphins.

The [Federal Register notice](#) describes the options the United States is considering for assessing whether foreign fisheries whose products are exported to the United States meet U.S. standards to protect marine mammals while fishing. The notice also describes options for working with countries to reduce their fisheries' effects on marine mammals through capacity building, training, and technology transfer.

“A large portion of the fish Americans consume is imported,” said Eric Schwaab, NOAA assistant administrator for [NOAA’s Fisheries Service](#). “With this notice, we are looking for ways to lessen the effects of fishing on marine mammals worldwide, and to level the playing field for our own fishermen, who take many protective measures when fishing to ensure the survival of marine mammal species.”

Commercial fishermen in the United States must comply with the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the [Endangered Species Act](#), and other laws and regulations that often specify what kind of fishing gear they can use, as well as how, when, and where fishing can take place, in order to reduce the number of marine mammals killed or injured by fishing gear. However, marine mammals are found around the world and interact with a wide variety of fisheries. International collaboration through exchange of technology and information may help control and minimize effects on marine mammals.

In this initial phase, NOAA is looking to gather as much information on the subject as possible. If NOAA moves forward in creating regulations on this subject, the public will have opportunities to comment.

Members of the public are invited to comment by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on June 29, 2010 via electronic comment at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), fax (301-713-2313) or mail (mail to: Director, Office of International Affairs, Attn: MMPA Fish Import Provisions, NMFS, F/IA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910).

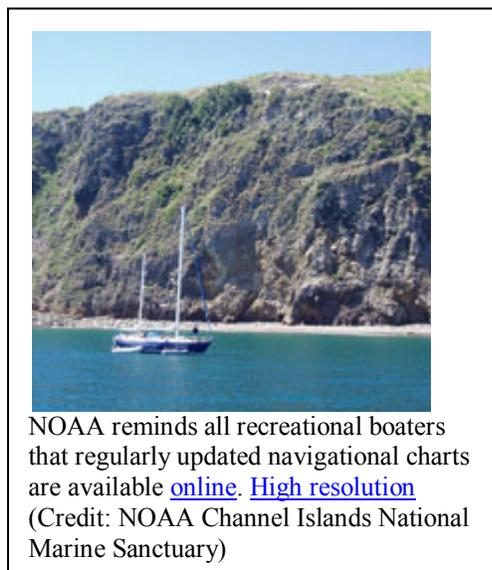


Bottlenose dolphins, including this mother and calf, often interact with fish species of commercial importance.

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

## NOAA Sponsors New Alliance to Promote Navigation Safety

April 21, 2010



NOAA reminds all recreational boaters that regularly updated navigational charts are available [online](#). [High resolution](#) (Credit: NOAA Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary)

As summer nears and some 12.5 million registered boaters hit the water, [NOAA's Office of Coast Survey](#) is launching an effort to remind people about the importance of using up-to-date nautical charts. NOAA is a co-sponsor of the newly formed [Alliance for Safe Navigation](#), a public-private partnership that raises awareness of safe boating practices and offers an instructional Web site to get people started.

“Recreational boaters, unlike commercial mariners, are not required to carry nautical charts,” explains Captain John Lowell, director of NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey. “We are sponsoring this new nationwide educational effort because we want people to understand that NOAA’s nautical charts are easy to find and easy to use. By using ‘Print on Demand’ paper charts or multi-functional electronic charts that are updated by NOAA cartographers, people have a better chance of avoiding potential groundings and other accidents.” Charts can become outdated quickly because storms may alter

seafloors, with shoals building up and water depths changing. NOAA conducts hydrographic surveys along U.S. coasts, measuring ocean depths and recording seafloor shifts. The agency uses the survey information to continually update nautical charts.

Joining NOAA in the Alliance for Safe Navigation are the Boat Owners Association of the United States (Boat U.S.), Jeppesen Marine, the United States Power Squadrons (USPS), OceanGrafix and the Sea Tow Foundation for Boating Safety and Education. The Alliance for Safe Navigation will encourage boaters to be aware of the significant and frequent changes that are occurring in their boating area. Recreational boaters can now obtain continuously updated nautical charts at [www.allianceforsafenavigation.org](http://www.allianceforsafenavigation.org), a site developed by NOAA and the Alliance for Safe Navigation. As the nation’s official nautical chartmaker, NOAA maintains a suite of 2,000 navigation products that support safe recreational boating and marine transportation along coastal waterways and in the Great Lakes. NOAA and other alliance members provide many tools that give mariners the latest information, distributing a range of products such as print-on-demand paper charts and digital updates for electronic charts. “The alliance members identified a widespread lack of awareness among boaters regarding the accuracy of their charts, whether electronic or paper,” explains David DeGree, president of OceanGrafix. “The truth is that inaccurate chart information can turn a safe and enjoyable cruise into a dangerous situation.”

## NOAA Delivers Coral Program Report to Congress

On April 12, NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program delivered the "[Implementation of the National Coral Reef Action Strategy: Report on NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Activities from 2007 to 2009](#)" to Congress. It is the third biennial progress report to Congress required by the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. The report provides summaries and examples of the activities conducted by the CRCP and its extramural partners between 2007 and 2009 to implement the thirteen goals addressed in the National Coral Reef Action Strategy. The report also describes the Program's reorganization to focus its efforts to understand and address the three major threats to reefs: impacts from climate change, fishing, and land-based sources of pollution. For more information, contact [Kacky Andrews](#) or [Paulo Maurin](#).

## **NOAA Hosts Interagency Workshop on Sea Level Change**

NOAA hosted an interagency and international workshop last week to help develop "Procedures to Evaluate Sea Level Change Impacts, Responses, and Adaptation," a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Engineering Technical Letter. This action follows recent acceptance of USACE to adopt NOAA standards for datums. This is a significant step forward in moving toward unified data and standards across Federal agencies in a time when climate change and resulting sea level change need to be considered in future planning. USACE is coordinating with NOAA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Navy, and Federal Highway Administration in an effort to support rapid transfer of best available science and provide a foundation for consistent approaches for adaptation to future sea-level change. For more information, contact [Kristen Tronvig](#).

## **NOAA Makes it Easier to Access nowCOAST**

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey recently unveiled a new Web service for [nowCOAST](#), a map-based online gateway to ocean and weather observations and forecasts. Updated regularly throughout the day, nowCOAST displays near real-time weather and ocean surface observations directly on its interactive map found on NOAA's website. With the new Web Map Service, users may now conveniently access nowCOAST's marine weather or ocean conditions from the palm of their hand with a smart phone, or create their own applications that combine nowCOAST maps with background maps from other sources, such as Google® Maps. For more information, contact [John Kelley](#).

## **In the Gulf States**

### **Gov. Riley Declares State of Emergency to Prepare for Oil Approaching Alabama Coast**

*Says oil slick poses "serious threat" to Alabama's environment, economy*

MONTGOMERY - Governor Bob Riley today declared an official state of emergency due to the imminent threat posed by the oil approaching Alabama's coastline. The emergency declaration enables the Governor to invoke various emergency preparedness measures to make sure state agencies are ready to respond if and when the oil reaches Alabama's shores.

"This oil leak poses a serious threat to our environment and economy," Governor Riley said. "With our natural resources, our businesses and our coastal communities in harm's way, Alabama can't afford to take anything for granted. Our state agencies have been working with federal agencies to prepare Alabama for an unprecedented environmental disaster."

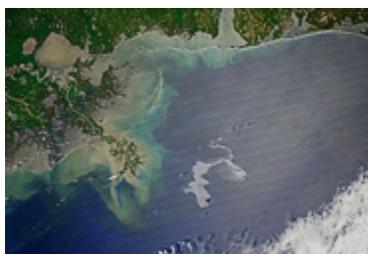
In his state of emergency declaration, Governor Riley directs state agencies to assist communities affected by the oil leak. He also directs ADEM and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency "to make the appropriate assessments of damages and seek the necessary state, private and federal assistance for the affected areas."

Governor Riley's emergency declaration comes after days of briefings with officials from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and other state agencies. The Governor this week has taken two aerial tours over the gulf to survey the oil leak and observe the magnitude of the hazard approaching Alabama's coastline.

Today, Governor Riley participated in a conference call with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and fellow gulf coast governors to discuss response measures. He said an emergency declaration is the next step toward ensuring Alabama is properly prepared to respond.

[Download State of Emergency Declaration](#) (PDF)

## ***Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill Information***



BP issued phone numbers for the following response inquiries:  
To report oiled wildlife, please call 1-866-557-1401 and leave a message. Messages will be checked hourly.

To discuss spill related damage, please call 1-800-440-0858. To report oiled shoreline or request volunteer information, please call 1-866-448-5816.

Track latest events associated with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. ADEM and other State and federal officials are engaged and prepared to respond should Alabama resources be impacted. The unified command has established a Web site where photos, press releases and fact sheets are available at [www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com)

### **Information Concerning Volunteer Opportunities**

Due to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, many agencies may experience inquiry calls from volunteers and voluntary organizations requesting information to assist with environmental clean-up. All calls for volunteers should be directed to 2-1-1 Alabama by dialing 2-1-1. Alternately, 2-1-1 operators can be reached by dialing 1-888-421-1266. This provides a central site to capture the data and ability to follow up in the event volunteers are needed. The Emergency Management Agencies in Baldwin and Mobile Counties are referring calls to 2-1-1 as well.

Alabama is prepared in the unlikely event our coast is impacted; however, volunteers are not needed at this time and are strongly discouraged from self deploying to the Alabama coast. [The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives](#) will remain in contact with Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as British Petroleum to coordinate any volunteer response should the need arise.

## ***Dauphin Island Sea Lab Oil Spill and Response Activities***

News Release: 4/29/10

In a continuing effort to provide additional baseline information prior to anticipated oil spill exposure, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Mississippi Laboratory have launched a joint effort to obtain tissue and community samples from the area of Dauphin Island, Alabama through Chandeleur Sound off the east coast of Louisiana.

The Fishery Ecology Program (FEP) at the Richard C. Shelby Center for Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management is conducting a reef community collection between Orange Beach, AL and Fort Morgan aboard a contracted long line vessel while The R/V E.O. Wilson is carrying out bottom fishing stations both offshore and within eastern Mississippi Sound while the R/V Alabama Discovery is obtaining trawl collections and plankton samples along the same tracks.

In addition, three smaller boats have been dispatched to characterize grassbed resources from Little Lagoon in FL to Grand Bay, AL. The grassbeds along with oyster reefs are generally considered to be the most vulnerable habitats because they are both highly productive and the most difficult to restore if impacted by the oil spill. Community samples will be analyzed at DISL while fish collected will be analyzed by the NMFS laboratory as a baseline for seafood safety issues that may emerge from the anticipated exposure. Eggs and larval samples collected yesterday will be managed by the Fisheries Oceanography of Coastal Alabama (FOCAL) Program at the Shelby Center. Baseline water samples were obtained at sites from Mobile Bay south 20 and 35 miles and will be analyzed for hydrocarbon levels. It is important to have some idea of what was present before any possible contamination.

**Volunteer Information:**

[Mobile Bay National Estuary Program](#)  
[Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#)

**Links to relevant articles and sites:**

[DISL FOCAL sampling](#)  
[Deep Water Horizon Response - Transocean Drilling Incident](#)  
[NOAA - Deepwater Horizon Incident, Gulf of Mexico](#)  
[Skytruth - Gulf Oil Spill](#)  
[Mississippi Press - Oil Slick in marshes could be disastrous for seafood](#)  
[Skytruth - Photos of Deepwater Horizon Blowout](#)

## ***Dauphin Island Sea Lab Press Release on the Oil Spill***

For Immediate Release: April 28, 2010

Faced with what could become the worst oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) through several State and federally funded programs of the Richard C. Shelby Center for Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management, is sending a series of cruises out to sample several critical conditions in the path of the massive oil spill threatening the central Gulf coast.

Ever since the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources funded a continuation of the Fisheries Oceanography of Coastal Alabama (FOCAL) research originally supported by ConocoPhillips in its past effort to place a LNG (Liquid Natural Gas) terminal offshore of Dauphin Island, the DISL FOCAL laboratory led by Dr. Monty Graham has broadened its baseline studies to include much of the offshore area. There is now almost 5 years of three dimensional data from the continental shelf south of Dauphin Island out to about 35 miles.

The Fisheries Ecology Program (FEP) at the Shelby Center is a project conducted in concert with the National Marine Fisheries Service laboratory in Pascagoula, MS. Dr. Sean Powers, DISL and the University of South Alabama Marine Sciences, has almost ten years of experience working on the Exxon Valdez impacts in Alaska.

As part of these ongoing studies, and now in response to emergency situation, research vessels from DISL are out today collecting samples that will allow marine scientists to assess the age composition and spawning state of local reef fish of both commercial and recreational value. In response to the recent oil spill, they are also taking a series of water samples to be tested for hydrocarbon levels in order to establish a baseline prior to any possible spill exposure. The routine sampling of the distribution of fish eggs, larvae and other microscopic plankton over the shelf are ongoing, and efforts will be made to provide an effective assessment of any negative impact to the new crop of fish important to future harvest. In addition, The National Park Service has asked another research unit at DISL to immediately take samples from central Gulf seagrass beds to establish the same kind of baseline information in anticipation of any exposure and ongoing impact. Over the past several years, the submerged grasses of the Grand Bay area have been determined to be some of the largest in Alabama. This is critical nursery habitat for many species of highly valued fisheries.

Dr. John Dindo, Associate Director at DISL, has begun coordinating efforts that might be necessary to deal with oiled wildlife, particularly birds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and contacts with the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary Foundation are trying to re-establish oiled bird emergency response plans that have not been exercised for many years.

The effort will involve three different vessels including the R/V Alabama Discovery which has only recently put into service, replacing the R/V A.E. Verrill. According to Dr. George Crozier, Executive Director (DISL); “The capacity for DISL to provide these services is due entirely to the decisions by Governor Bob Riley and Senator Richard Shelby to establish and support such activities at the Sea Lab. Otherwise the State would have very limited ability to address this growing emergency.” Crozier emphasized that DISL will make every effort to incorporate the needs of sister agencies, state and federal, in their sampling design. Appropriate web links, contacts, and information can be found at the DISL web site: [www.disl.org](http://www.disl.org).

## ***'Oyster Relay' Completes Transfer of Oysters to New Reef***

More than 100,000 bushels of oysters are now residing on a newly formed reef in Mobile Bay in the first phase of the “Oyster Relay,” a coordinated effort to revitalize the ailing oyster industry along the Alabama Gulf Coast.

After two hurricanes and three years of drought, the oyster industry along the Gulf Coast has been suffering through one of its lowest production periods since record-keeping started in 1950. The hurricanes displaced many oysters from the reefs and the subsequent drought allowed oyster drills, a destructive marine snail, to attack the remaining oysters.

With funds from Emergency Disaster Relief Program (Hurricane Katrina), the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Marine Resources Division administered the recruitment of more than 900 of the area's oystermen to transfer oysters from reefs in upper Mobile Bay to the new reef about 2.5 miles south of the mouth of East Fowl River.

“Everyone who enjoys the delicious oysters that are harvested from the Alabama Gulf Coast should be thrilled with the ‘Oyster Relay’ and the work done to restore this cherished natural resource,” said Governor Bob Riley.

Jason Herrmann, biologist with Marine Resources, said the recent planting effort covers about 75 acres of the new 800-acre reef. The Alabama Department of Public Health will check the reef to determine when the oysters meet human consumption standards.

“The oysters have to sit on the reef for at least 21 days,” Herrmann said. “But the reef may not open until Oct. 1. The reason is the actual quality of the oysters. The oysters need to spend a certain amount of time on the new reef in order to acclimate to the new area and feed enough to make them a higher quality product for the oyster industry. We are in the process of getting additional cultch material to plant on the reef that will serve as substrate for oyster larvae and hopefully eventually expand the oyster production on the reef.”

Bayou La Batre Mayor Stan Wright, who is also in the seafood business, became the Marine Resources’ oyster consultant last year and is heavily involved in the relay.

“This is a definitely a blessing for the state of Alabama,” Wright said. “The short-term plan for the project was to relay oysters from up the bay to more acceptable water conditions and put our fishermen to work quickly. Another part of the short-term plan was to use some Katrina money to benefit the fishermen by letting them plant the shells to enhance these reefs with cultch. But it takes about two years for these oysters to grow big enough to harvest, which means it’s really a long-term plan.”

During the recent relay, tongers took oysters from a shallow-water reef north of Gaillard Island in Mobile Bay, while dredges were used to gather oysters in deeper water south of the island. The oysters were then loaded onto barges and transferred to the new reef.

“The oyster industry in Alabama has been decimated by natural disasters and drought,” said Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley. “The seafood industry along the Alabama Gulf Coast is a vital part of the coastal community. The ‘Oyster Relay’ will hopefully begin to revitalize the seafood production in Alabama and provide the quality of oysters to which consumers have become accustomed.”

## ***2010 Outlook for Coastal Moon Jellyfish, Aurelia, in the Northern Gulf of Mexico***

Released April 26, 2010

Purpose of the Outlook: Large coastal jellyfish exert a great deal of ecological and economic pressure on our coastal living resources. In addition to the physical disruption of fishing, jellyfish are also voracious consumers of fish eggs, fish larvae and larval stages of shrimp and crab. This outlook is intended to provide information to fishers and fishery managers of the northern Gulf of Mexico (eastern Louisiana to the Alabama-Florida state line) on expected densities of large jellyfish Aurelia (regionally known as moon jellies, four-eyes, and figure-eights) for the coming season.

This Outlook only concerns this species given its relative importance to net-based fisheries such as the economically important commercial shrimp industry of the northern Gulf. While future outlooks may be given for species of concern to the tourism industry, scientists simply do not have the tools needed to accurately forecast beach-side distributions of jellyfish since their numbers are largely influenced by highly variable local currents, tides and winds.

How the Outlook is derived: Using a decades-long record of Aurelia densities and distribution across the northern Gulf of Mexico provided by Federal and State agencies, scientists at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab derived a relationship between sea surface temperature and Aurelia numbers. Lower than average spring-time (April) and higher than average summer (July-September) temperatures tend to yield above average numbers of Aurelia in the northern Gulf.

Outlook for 2010: Given early indications of physical conditions, we expect numbers of Aurelia sp. jellyfish to be above average during the period of late summer through fall (August – November). Sea surface temperature, one of the key predictors for number of young jellyfish released from the polyp stage, has been well-below average across the northern Gulf of Mexico during April of this year. In fact, April 2010 documented the lowest average sea surface temperature in the northern Gulf since records began in 1949.

Warming water temperatures during summer (July-September) is also a key variable in the prediction of Aurelia sp. An updated Outlook will be given July 2010. This will be followed by monthly aerial surveys of Aurelia swarms from July through November with specific locations, densities and general drift tendencies of jellyfish provided each month. Distributed maps will be available at that time.

Potential impacts: The greatest economic impact of widespread, dense swarms of Aurelia sp. is with net-based fisheries such as inshore shrimp trawling. These impacts include damage to nets, increased handling time of catch and reduced overall catch due to shortened trawl times. Occasionally, dense jellyfish may foul fishing line, but this is a minor nuisance. There is little impact expected to tourism given both timing and the fact that Aurelia does not exhibit a painful sting.

For more information on coastal jellyfish of the northern Gulf of Mexico, please visit <http://dockwatch.disl.org> or call 251-861-2141 x2289. Contact: DISL Jellyfish Research Group, Dr. Monty Graham, 251-861-2141 x2272.

## ***New ADEM Director Selected***

MONTGOMERY — The Alabama Environmental Management Commission has selected Lance R. LeFleur to serve as the next director at ADEM. He will take over the state's top environmental position on June 1, 2010.

Mr. LeFleur was one of 16 applicants for the position and one of three candidates interviewed publicly by the Commission. He has served as the president of Materials Recovery Corporation in Mobile since 1990. Materials Recovery Corporation has implemented numerous recycling programs in eight states and developed new methods to recycle waste in the paper pulping and dairy packaging industries. Mr. LeFleur is a graduate of Georgia Tech and also holds a MBA degree from Southern Methodist University.

## Florida Deepwater Horizon Statement

April 30, 2010

Governor Charlie Crist today issued Executive Order 10-99 declaring a state of emergency for Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay and Gulf Counties and activating the Florida National Guard. DEP continues to be Florida's lead agency in preparing for and responding to any potential impacts to Florida's shoreline. To support the Department in this role, and in response to the Governor's Executive Order, the State Emergency Operation Center has activated to a Level 2 (Partial).

DEP currently has four staff members in Mobile where they are working with the U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA, BP, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the impacted states. We have been assured that all available resources are being used in an attempt to shut off the oil discharge currently releasing an estimated 5,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf each day. The latest NOAA oil-spill projections do not indicate oil reaching Florida's shores over the weekend, assuming the rate of oil release is steady and the weather remains as forecast.

DEP today launched a website dedicated to Florida's response efforts. To view that website, visit: [www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon). Effective immediately, all communication related to this issue will be coordinated through the Department's website and the State Emergency Operation Center media office (ESF 14) at 850-921-0217. For further information, contact the established Joint Information Center at (985) 902-5231 or (985) 902-5240. A website has also been established for updates at: <http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com>.

## FGCU and Volunteers Begin Oyster Reef Construction

[http://www.chnep.org/info/HH/HH14\(1\)Spring2010.pdf](http://www.chnep.org/info/HH/HH14(1)Spring2010.pdf)



*FGCU students, staff and volunteers transport shell bags to create a reef. Oyster larvae in the water column settle, attach to these created substrates and form oyster reefs. Photo by David Jaeger, FGCU.*

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) scientists and local volunteers began reef construction and restoration in Estero Bay this April. In its seventh year, the project involves loading fossil oyster shells into wire mesh bags, transporting them and placing them in strategic points in the estuaries that attract natural oyster spat (larvae) and eventually form reefs. The project began in 2002 with support from a CHNEP research and restoration partner grant awarded to Dr. Aswani Voley at FGCU. The project helped educate and involve the general public and students in a community-based project to restore oyster reefs in the lower Charlotte Harbor estuary by creating,

maintaining, restoring and enhancing oyster shell reefs in order to establish healthy, living oyster reefs. The project also assessed the suitability of other locations within the lower Charlotte Harbor estuary for the enhancement of existing oyster bars or the restoration of historic bars. (Visit [www.CHNEP.org](http://www.CHNEP.org) for a report of this project.)

This year, FGCU scientists, Lee County and West Coast Inland Navigation District, in collaboration with local, state and federal agencies, are involved in a project that creates and restores oyster reefs in Estero Bay, thereby improving water quality and habitat availability as well as protecting shoreline and mangrove erosion.

Within one year, the 200 square meters of oyster reef created by this project will produce more than 1,000 oysters per square meter, filter at least 10 liters of water and particulates per oyster per hour from the water column, provide stability to mangrove shorelines by minimizing the impact of boat wakes, and provide food, shelter and habitat to nearly 300 species of invertebrates, fishes and birds.

### ***Ranchers to Improve Fertilization Practices***

Robyn Felix, Southwest Florida Water Management District  
[http://www.chnep.org/info/HH/HH14\(1\)Spring2010.pdf](http://www.chnep.org/info/HH/HH14(1)Spring2010.pdf)

Charlotte County ranchers can learn how to use soil testing to more effectively fertilize pastures through a Community Education Grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

The Range Cattle Research and Education Center received a \$5,000 grant to offer free soil and tissue testing and educational materials to regional beef and forage producers. Reductions in the amount of fertilizer applied to pastures could decrease pollution of surface water and groundwater resources in ecologically sensitive areas in west-central Florida. If you are a rancher who would like to participate in the project, please contact Reyna Speckman, range cattle station Extension specialist, at 863/735-1314.

Funding for the project is provided by the SWFWMD Alafia River, Manasota and Peace River basin boards. The overall goal of the Community Education Grant program is to actively engage adults in water-related issues pertaining to conservation, protection and preservation.

These grants offer up to \$5,000 to help fund projects that motivate communities to get involved in watershed protection through various educational activities.

The SWFWMD 2011 Community Education Grant program will begin its application process in June 2010. For more information, please call the District's Communications Department toll-free at 800/423-1476, ext. 4757.

### ***DEP Seeks Public Input on Numerical Ranking of Florida Forever Projects***

~Second hearing to be held to allow public testimony for land acquisition decisions~

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), along with the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC), has instituted a new process for establishing funding priorities for conservation land acquisition projects, after 10 years of ranking Florida Forever projects in either "A" or "B" priority groups.

"It is important that public testimony be given prior to the June ARC meeting, since the members will be expected to bring their individual ranking recommendations to that meeting. The ARC members will consider public comments as they prepare their lists," said Deborah Poppell, Director, DEP's Division of

State Lands. "All comments received before June 1, 2010 will be made available to the ARC members to be considered in their deliberations for June's ranking exercise."

Two public hearings were scheduled; one was previously held in Tallahassee on April 16 and the final one is scheduled for May 6, 2010 in Arcadia. These hearings provide the public with opportunities to refresh and educate the eleven ARC members on each of the more than 100 projects on the Florida Forever priority list. Project rankings will be a primary factor for determining whether a project is funded under the program.

If you are unable to participate in the public hearing, you are invited to provide comments in writing via email to [Jim.Farr@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Jim.Farr@dep.state.fl.us) or via US mail to Mr. Jim Farr, ARC Staff Director, Division of State Lands, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 140, Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000. For more information about the Acquisition and Restoration Council, please visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/arc.htm>.

## ***DEP Awarded \$535,294 to Increase Waves of Ocean Literacy for Florida Classrooms***

~Partnership enables widespread ocean literacy and environmental improvement~



"This grant brings students to the water's edge to discover - through hands-on science labs - the connections between their lives and the ocean."

Greg Ira

Director of DEP's Office of Environmental Education

TALLAHASSEE –The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will receive a \$535,294 grant for the project Gulf Alliance Partnership: Building Cultural Competency in Experiential Environmental Education from the Gulf of Mexico Program.

The Gulf Alliance Partnership is designed to increase the environmental literacy of 2,400 students, provide professional development for 32 teachers, strengthen the cultural competency of the eight organizations engaged in nonformal experiential environmental education (E3), and achieve measurable improvements in local environmental quality.

"This grant brings students to the water's edge to discover - through hands-on science labs - the connections between their lives and the ocean," said Greg Ira, Director of DEP's Office of Environmental Education.

Through hands-on environmental education, the project will increase environmental knowledge, improve environmental

attitudes, motivations and behaviors, enhance programmatic capacity of nonformal educators and teachers, and enhance the local environmental quality.

"The commitment of this year's projects to meet the collaborative goals of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a high watermark for EPA and the Gulf states," said Bryon Griffith, Director of the Gulf of Mexico Program and federal co-lead for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. "The work our partners are completing this year will achieve measurable successes in protecting the health and environment for our families, friends and neighbors in the Gulf."

For more information about the Gulf of Mexico Program, please visit their website at <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo>. For more information about the Gulf of Mexico Program, please contact: Dr. Troy Pierce at [pierce.troy@epa.gov](mailto:pierce.troy@epa.gov); (228) 688-3658; or, visit <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo>.

DEP is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. DEP enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. For more information about the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, visit [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us).

## ***DEP Celebrates Earth Day with Restoration Project***

-- DEP Partners with Navy to restore sensitive shoreline habitat--



"The NSA Living Shoreline Project will provide members of the public, military and other support organizations a unique opportunity to contribute to the restoration of this environmentally important resource."

Ken Prest

DEP Northwest District Director

PANAMA CITY BEACH – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Northwest District today participated in the start of a multi-site habitat restoration and stabilization project with the help of local volunteers coordinated by Naval Support Activity (NSA) Panama City. The project, located at NSA Panama City, will involve the installation of a Living Shoreline along 3400 feet of the base's St. Andrew Bay shoreline.

"The NSA Living Shoreline Project will provide members of the public, military and other support organizations a unique opportunity to contribute to the restoration of this environmentally important resource" said DEP Northwest District Director Ken Prest. "Efforts such as this serve as an example of how public and private partnerships can work together to restore, protect, and preserve Florida's natural resources for future generations."

Coastal salt marshes are regarded as one of the most biologically productive ecosystems in the world. Salt marshes help to protect our shorelines from erosion, provide a nursery and feeding grounds for approximately 70 percent of Florida's commercially valuable fish and shellfish fisheries and improve water quality by filtering excess nutrients and pollutants. Salt marshes in Northwest Florida were abundant in the past but due to severe storms and adverse human influences have consistently degraded over time.

The project will involve installing more than 25,000 salt marsh grasses along the shoreline and the construction of 193 oyster reefs to provide oyster and fish habitat. It will also provide the shoreline with maximum protection from damaging wave energy, allowing the upland and developing vegetation to become established. The entire project is scheduled to take place from April through November of 2010 via several volunteer supported events. Once completed the project will provide stabilization of the shoreline in an effort to prevent further erosion and reestablish much needed coastal marine habitat. Funding for the project is the result of a grant obtained by DEP Northwest District's Eco-Restoration Section from the Fish America Foundation, American Sportsfishing Association, and the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Restoration Center on behalf of NSA Panama City. Additional support was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Since 1994, the Ecosystem Restoration Section of DEP's Northwest District has been working to restore coastal habitats throughout the Florida panhandle by creating, restoring and enhancing coastal dune systems, oyster reefs, salt marsh, and submerged aquatic vegetation. For more information, visit [www.dep.state.fl.us/northwest/Ecosys/section/restoration.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/northwest/Ecosys/section/restoration.htm).

For more information on volunteer opportunities please contact Amy Baldwin at 850-595-8300 or [amy.baldwin@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:amy.baldwin@dep.state.fl.us)

## ***Governor Jindal Announces the Activation of the Louisiana National Guard to Support Oil Spill Response Efforts***

Apr 30, 2010

BATON ROUGE – Today, following the approval of the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to grant Title 32 status for the Louisiana National Guard, Governor Bobby Jindal announced the activation of the Guard to support the oil spill response efforts in the Gulf.

The Louisiana National Guard began pre-positioning soldiers and resources today on the coast and by tomorrow, 600 Guardsmen will begin assisting with oil spill response efforts.

The National Guard will provide support for at least 90 days of military duty from up to 6,000 soldiers and airmen serving on active duty. The Guardsmen will provide security, medical capabilities, engineers, clean-up efforts and communication support.

On Thursday, Governor Jindal sent letters to Secretaries of the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security requesting that the Louisiana National Guard be utilized to support the oil spill response efforts under federal Title 32 status.

## ***Governor Jindal Meets with Federal Officials, Stresses Need for Requested Federal Support in Oil Response Efforts***

Apr 30, 2010

ROBERT, LA – Governor Jindal today met with DHS Sec. Napolitano, Dept. of Interior Sec. Salazar, EPA Administrator Jackson, White House Energy Dir. Browner, Coast Guard's Admiral Landry, and BP officials at the Shell Robert Training & Conference Center in Robert, LA. The Governor received an update on the efforts to respond to the oil spilling into the Gulf and stressed the need for federal support resources that have already been requested by the state from federal agencies.

Governor Jindal said, "I appreciate Secretary Salazar, Secretary Napolitano and Secretary Jackson for coming down to Louisiana and seeing first-hand the response efforts. As I told the President yesterday, we're urging the federal government and BP to deploy more resources to help mitigate the impact of the oil spill that is threatening the coast of our state.

"We must do everything we can to contain the oil spill that threatens our wildlife and vast natural resources. And I am worried that the booms as currently deployed are not effective. The areas that will be

impacted first by this oil spill are critical and fragile coastal sites. These next few days are critical and that's why we must do everything necessary to protect our coasts.

"I do have concerns that BP's current resources are not adequate to meet the three challenges we face and I have urged them to seek more help. The three challenges we face are stopping the leak, protecting our coasts and preparation for a swift clean up of the impacted areas. We've been working with local officials to access their needs and help them request resources from BP and the Coast Guard. It's critical that the Coast Guard and BP uphold their commitment and responsibility to provide resources to the coastal areas that could be affected by this spill. On the state side, we're taking every step we can to help protect our coasts, wildlife, environment and our people."

To read the complete press release, visit:

<http://www.gov.state.la.us/index.cfm?md=newsroom&tmp=detail&articleID=2143>.

## ***DNR Notes First Coastal Project to Invoke New Beneficial Use Rules***

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources' Office of Coastal Management has accepted the first contribution to the Coastal Resources Trust Fund tied to a project making use the state's rule changes on the beneficial use of material dredged in projects requiring a coastal use permit.

The project also highlights the state of Louisiana's ongoing concern about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' dumping of tens of millions of cubic yards a year of dredged material into areas that not only do not benefit the effort to preserve the coast, but can actually worsen the problem of coastal erosion. Energy Partners Ltd. has paid the state about \$28,000 – based on the number of cubic yards of material the company will be dredging for a project involving the maintenance dredging of an access canal near Pass-A-Loutre in Plaquemines Parish.

The new beneficial use rules were crafted to allow in-lieu contributions instead of direct use of the dredged material for projects where direct use of the soil on beneficial coastal projects is not feasible due to quality of soil or the expense of transportation. Several smaller projects such as the Energy Partners dredging can bring contributions to the Coastal Trust Fund that can be combined to fund larger projects.

The rules for beneficial use adopted by the Office of Coastal Management last year include four options for permit applicants involved in coastal projects that include dredging – implementing a project that makes beneficial use of the dredged material, providing for the use of the dredged material on an approved coastal restoration project, using dredged material at another location that creates the same amount of beneficial use, or making a voluntary contribution to the Coastal Resources Trust fund, based on the amount of material dredged.

Beneficial use refers to taking material dredged for a project and using it to provide soil to help build or protect coastal wetlands. The intent of the new rules is to ensure as much material as possible from dredging projects under state regulation is put to that beneficial use.

The beneficial use rules apply to any project requiring a state coastal use permit that involves dredging 25,000 cubic yards or more to facilitate the movement or mooring of vessels. The amount of material in eligible projects has amounted to about 3 million cubic yards annually, though only about 22 percent of it was put to beneficial use under the old program.

“Our rules for beneficial use of dredged material give us the opportunity to ensure that 100 percent of these kind of projects result in a contribution – either in dollars, soil or projects – that strengthens our coast,” said DNR Secretary Scott Angelle. “It is critical that we do not waste the resources our eroding coast needs to continue to protect our people and our property.”

Windell Curole, general manager of the South Lafourche Levee District, said the coastal problem in Louisiana requires every bit of soil the state can muster to strengthen the coastline.

“Beneficial use is one of the best ways of working to keep what we still have left,” he said. “I have had great response and support from DNR on beneficial use.”

Ted Falgout, retired executive director of Port Fourchon, agreed with Curole on the need for beneficial use on the coast and said he was glad to see that companies are beginning to make use of the new rules. “It’s a great beginning, and hopefully only a beginning of a much larger use of the dredged material,” he said. “We certainly applaud the effort.”

Angelle noted, however, that the greatest generator of dredged material that could bolster the coast – the Corps of Engineers – still only makes of beneficial use of 12 percent of the 60 million cubic yards of sediment it dredges from navigation channels in an average year.

Much of the wasted sediment has historically been dumped in open water at the head of Pass-A-Loutre, which has resulted in the blocking of fresh water and sediment flow to the eastern Mississippi Delta and an acceleration of the loss of coastal wetland, said Lou Buatt, assistant secretary for DNR’s Office of Coastal Management.

Energy Partners noted in the permit application for its Pass-A-Loutre dredging project that the Corps of Engineers’ dumping contributed to the silting in of its access channel, necessitating the dredging project. DNR, in December 2009, took the latest step in the years-long continuing effort to require the Corps of Engineers to make beneficial use of the sediment it produces in the maintenance dredging in the area of the Mississippi River’s Southwest Pass by calling for U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke to assist by mediating between the state and the Corps of Engineers.

Locke indicated in a March letter to the state that the Corps of Engineers has not responded to the state’s request to begin the mediation process set forth in federal law.

“We are only asking that the Corps of Engineers follow the same standards and rules that we require of every other dredging project in the state’s Coastal Zone,” Buatt said.

Curole said that stakeholders in the coast believe that the material dredged by the Corps of Engineers in Louisiana should belong to the state.

“It should be put where the state of Louisiana needs it,” he said.

## ***Governor Barbour Issues State of Emergency for Mississippi Gulf Coast***

April 30, 2010

Governor Haley Barbour issued today a State of Emergency for the Mississippi Gulf Coast in response to the oil spill moving toward the state's coastline. He also ordered the Mississippi National Guard to aid local officials with emergency response.

"I have issued a State of Emergency to help local governments and state agencies work together more efficiently as they respond to this massive oil spill," Governor Barbour said. "The Departments of Environmental Quality and Marine Resources continue to work with BP and the federal government to monitor our coastline." See orders [here](#).

## ***Governor Barbour Keeps Close Watch on Gulf Coast Oil Spill***

April 29, 2010

Governor Haley Barbour said today that numerous state and federal agencies are working together in the effort to repel residue from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill away from the Mississippi Gulf Coast and to clean areas that might be contacted by the spill.

"While we continue to hope that BP, its contractors and the federal departments that make up the unified command will succeed in shutting off the leaks and preventing any landfall by oil, we are preparing for the worst," Governor Barbour said. "The state's effort is being led by the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Marine Resources. They're working closely with the private company, its contractors and the federal government – including the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard – to block oil residue from coming ashore and to clean up any that does."

DEQ and DMR are coordinating with contractors to place collection booms along environmentally sensitive areas, and water, sediment and fishery samples are being taken. These agencies also have been performing flyovers to document the conditions of the Mississippi Sound and adjacent state and federal waters.

The DMR, DEQ and the U.S. Coast Guard are jointly on 24-hour watch to monitor the situation. "We're advised by the federal government there is a possibility that the leading edge of the oil sheen could make landfall in Mississippi as early as Saturday," Governor Barbour said. "We continue to monitor the situation on a real-time basis."

BP has setup three call numbers for people to report wildlife problems, damage or oiled shoreline.

To report oiled wildlife, please call 1-866-557-1401 and leave a message. Messages will be checked hourly.

To discuss spill related damage, please call 1-800-440-0858.

To report oiled shoreline or request volunteer information, please call 1-866-448-5816.

## **Groups to Work Together on Sea-level-rise Issues**

*Effort unites extension, outreach and education professionals on climate*

ST. PETE BEACH, Fla. -- About 70 extension, outreach and education professionals met with scientists, communications specialists and local community planners last week to learn more about sea-level rise and possible ways to begin preparing Gulf of Mexico communities for its consequences.

The workshop was part of an effort to create a “storm smart” community of practice, a group that works together to learn the best approaches, techniques and scientific information regarding sea-level rise and other storm-preparedness issues.

During the three-day workshop, funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Sea Grant College Program, extension professionals from across the Gulf heard from their peers, sea-level rise experts and planners from communities that have either begun taking steps to address sea-level rise or are not yet addressing the subject.

Participants collaborated to gauge community opinion about climate change and sea-level rise. They also identified groups that they work with, groups that are asking for climate information and groups that are ready to take action.

“This has been beyond our expectations,” said Buck Sutter, the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team lead and deputy regional administrator of the Southeast Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service. “There is a lot of interest in continuing this effort, building on it and inviting additional groups. I think it will prove to be a valuable investment in preparing the coastal communities for sea-level rise.”

Scientists spoke about factors that contribute to varied sea-level-rise projections in the Gulf, the impacts on existing facilities and structures, policy issues and natural environment impacts. Speakers also focused on community-based social marketing theories and case studies, as well as community efforts to understand and plan for sea-level rise. While the professionals at the meeting represented many extension, outreach and education organizations, they quickly identified other organizations that could enhance the community of practice effort.

“If you know folks that should be a part of this, please ask them to engage,” Sutter said.

The extension, outreach and education professionals at the meeting identified several actions that would help communities plan for sea-level rise. The top steps were developing a simple message about sea-level rise, having sea-level rise included when determining flood maps, creating a sea-level-rise visualization tool for the entire Gulf Coast and having officials incorporate sea-level rise into their community planning efforts.

Regulatory Manager deEtte Smythe with the St. Tammany Parish (Louisiana) Department of Engineering gave a presentation about her community’s efforts to become more resilient. She was impressed with the workshop, which was different from most she has attended, she said.

“I thought it was marvelous,” Smythe said. “It’s not the typical meeting I attend. Usually, it’s a one-way conversation.”

An overview of community-based social marketing techniques intrigued Smythe, who said that engineers are not always effective in communicating with the public. “I’m gonna take that back and think about it,” she said.

Chris Simoniello, the education and outreach coordinator for the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System, said working with peers who understand education and outreach make this community of practice valuable.

“The amazing thing about this meeting is that education and outreach related to sea-level rise is finally a focus across programs and agencies and not an afterthought,” she said. “After seven years working in the education and outreach arena, this is a major breakthrough.”

The climate community of practice has created a social network on the web. Sign up at <http://stormsmartconnect.org/> and join the Climate Outreach Community of Practice group to participate in the discussion or share resources.

The Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant programs, the NOAA Coastal Services Center, the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team and the Gulf of Mexico Extension, Outreach and Education Engagement Pilot Program organized the event.



Panelist deEtte Smythe, regulatory manager for the St. Tammany Parish Department of Engineering, second from left, talks about what her community is doing to become more resilient. Others who participated in the panel discussion are Tim Tietjens, director of planning for the City of La Porte, left; Phillip West, coastal resource manager for the City of Orange Beach; Seth Blicht, manager of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve; Joan LeBeau, chief planner for the City of Punta Gorda; and Eric Myer, director of community development and planning for the City of Ocean Springs.

## **DMR Partners with Mississippi Power, Hard Rock and Beau Rivage to Clean Deer Island on Earth Day**



Volunteers scour Deer Island for trash on Earth Day.  
Photo credits: Photos courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) Coastal Preserves Program partnered with volunteers from Mississippi Power, the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino, Hard Rock Hotel and Casino and several other Coast businesses Thursday, April 22, 2010, in an effort to clean up Deer Island.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the State by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational,

educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at [www.dmr.ms.gov](http://www.dmr.ms.gov).

## **Texans Bring Gear to Corral Deepwater Horizon Spill**

*General Land Office Oil Spill Program Called to Assist with Potential Burn*

AUSTIN — Crews from the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program are transferring state-owned fire boom to help corral and burn the oil slick spreading from the Deepwater Horizon disaster. A damaged wellhead on the ocean floor, more than a mile beneath the surface, is discharging an estimated 1,000 barrels of oil each day.

“Burning this oil on the surface is one of the best ways to deal with an open-water spill of this magnitude,” said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. “Our crews are on the way with 1,000 feet of special fire boom to help corral the spill and assist.”

The spill can already be smelled as far away as Florida and Mississippi, according to U.S. Coast Guard reports. Patterson said deliberately burning oil slicks on the water can remove as much as 95 percent of free-floating oil.

“When you burn it, the plume from the fire is the biggest environmental concern, but this far out to sea it will not be as big of a problem,” Patterson said. “As long as that oil is on the surface, it continues to pose a real threat to wildlife.”

Patterson said the last time crews with the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program used fire booms to corral and burn oil was a 1995 spill on the San Jacinto River. The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program has other expertise called upon by industry and state and federal responders to the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

“If this oil heads for the coast, be it in Mississippi or Alabama or Florida, we’ll have our wildlife rehabilitation trailers on standby, ready to help,” Patterson said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has also requested Texas’ oil spill expertise in tracking the slick. Patterson said the Land Office’s arsenal of data-gathering capabilities includes the Texas Automated Buoy System, which is a series of stationary buoys in the Gulf, as well as drifting buoys that move with the current and relay their information and coordinates via satellite.

“We know this could have happened off the Texas coast, and we want our partners in Louisiana to know that Texas is standing by with additional personnel and equipment,” Patterson said. “The Gulf knows no political boundaries, it’s a resource we’re all duty bound to protect.”

## ***2011-2015 Texas Coastal Management Program Report***

The Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) was approved by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on January 10, 1997. The Texas General Land Office (GLO) is the lead administrative agency for the CMP. Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) allocates federal funds to develop projects that will effect program enhancements in one or more of the following eight enhancement areas: wetlands, public access, coastal hazards, cumulative and secondary impacts, energy and government facility siting, marine debris, ocean resources, and aquaculture. Texas must submit a section 309 Assessment and Strategies report to NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management every five years.

At this time, we are seeking public comment for the Assessment portion of the [2011-2015 CMP Report](#). Written comments will be accepted online until May 14, 2010:  
[CMP Public Comment](#)

Public comment sessions for the assessment portion of the 2011-2015 Texas Coastal Management Program report will be held:

May 5, 2010

10:00 am-12:00 pm

Sea Aggie Center, SAC 601

Texas A&M University - Galveston

200 Seawolf Parkway

Galveston, TX 77553

 [parking map](#)

For questions regarding public comment please contact:

[Barrett Fines](#)

Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies

Phone: 361-825-2032

Fax: 361-825-2050

This project is funded by a grant from the Coastal Coordination Council pursuant to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration award No. NA09NOS4190165.

 [Texas Coastal Management Program Section 309 Assessment and Strategies Report 2011-2015](#)

## **Nearly 7,000 Volunteers Haul Over 131 Tons of Trash off Texas Beaches**

AUSTIN — More than 6,700 volunteers picked up more than 131 tons of trash off of Texas beaches Saturday in the 24th Annual Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Spring Cleanup. “It was a beautiful day at the beach, I’m not surprised by the strong turnout at all,” said Jerry Patterson, commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. “Texans are always willing to help lend a hand for a good cause.”

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 AdoptABeach volunteers have walked the beaches. Among the more interesting items volunteers found were a \$20 bill, shotgun shells, a hydraulic jack, a refrigerator, a load of ceramic tiles, a chicken foot, silly string, a milk carton from China, a bottle from Japan, an artificial Christmas tree, a bathtub and a kitchen sink.

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 397,000 Adopt-A-Beach volunteers have picked up more than 7,700 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 25, 2010.

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.

Apache Corporation was the lead sponsor for the 2010 Adopt-A-Beach Spring Cleanup. KBR, Newfield Foundation and Keep Texas Beautiful have also made substantial donations toward the effort. Other friends of the 2010 Adopt-A-Beach Spring Cleanup include AkzoNobel Surface Chemistry LLC, ExxonMobil, Flint Hills Resources Community Action Council, Halliburton, Storm Water Solutions and Tetra Technologies.

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).

## ***Mission-Aransas Reserve Gets GOMA Grant to Monitor Nutrient Flows***

Published: *Tuesday, April 13, 2010*

The University of Texas Marine Science Institute and the Mission Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve have been awarded a research grant of nearly \$600,000 to study nutrient transport through the estuary over the next three years.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program announced the \$595,626 cooperative agreement for the project "Development of Pilot Nutrient Criteria for an estuary in the Western Gulf of Mexico." Dr. Edward J. Buskey, University of Texas professor and research coordinator for the Mission-Aransas Reserve, will head the project.

The goal is to describe where and how nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus enter and leave the Mission-Aransas Reserve as well as how nutrients are used and reused in the Reserve. This project will specifically address the Gulf of Mexico Alliance's priority of nutrient reduction in Gulf waters. Reduction of excess nutrients can help reduce "Dead Zones" in the Gulf as well as increase natural habitat.

Dr. Buskey's team will aim to provide a more complete understanding of what constitutes a healthy amount of nutrients in a coastal ecosystem, with the ultimate goal of developing protective nutrient criteria for places like the Mission-Aransas ecosystem.

"This research will contribute critical information to the Gulf of Mexico Alliance's efforts to develop nutrient criteria and to design regional monitoring programs that will protect and enhance our coastal environments nationwide," said Dr. Buskey.

Bryon Griffith, Director of the Gulf of Mexico Program and federal co-lead for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, said, "The commitment of this year's projects to meet the collaborative goals of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a high watermark for EPA and the Gulf states. The work our partners are completing this year will achieve measurable successes in protecting the health and environment for our families, friends and neighbors in the Gulf."

## **Other News**

### ***EPA Establishes Web site on Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill***

WASHINGTON – As part of the ongoing federal response to the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, EPA today established a website to inform the public about the spill's impact on the environment and the health of nearby residents. The website –<http://www.epa.gov/bpspill> will contain data from EPA's ongoing air monitoring along with other information about the Agency's activities in the region. Also today, Administrator Jackson joined Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to tour the region. The Administrator will spend the next 36 hours visiting with community groups and meeting EPA staff responding to the spill.

"We are taking every possible step to protect the health of the residents and mitigate the environmental

impacts of this spill,” EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson said. “For several days, EPA has been on the ground evaluating air and water concerns and coordinating with other responding agencies. We are also here to address community members --the people who know these waters and wetlands best. They will be essential to the work ahead.”

EPA has established air monitoring stations along Plaquemines Parish on the Louisiana coast. EPA established those facilities to determine how oil set on fire in the Gulf and oil that is reaching land is impacting air quality. EPA is monitoring levels of a number of chemicals potentially emitted by oil, including volatile organic compounds such as xylene, benzene and toluene.

EPA has also deployed two Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzers – mobile laboratories that collect and analyze air quality samples in real time – to monitor air quality in the region.

EPA tested smoke from the controlled burn two days ago and found the Louisiana coast had not been affected because an off-shore breeze was blowing away from land and out to sea during that time. The Agency will continue to collect and share data with the public, and will coordinate and share information with local health officials.

In addition to monitoring air quality, EPA is also assessing the coastal waters affected by the spreading oil. EPA deployed our twin-engine aircraft to assist in the collection of air sampling data and photograph the spill and surrounding area.

All of the data EPA collects will be posted to <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill>, along with frequently asked questions, fact sheets about potential health impacts of the spill, and links to more information on the spill and the government’s response.

To share the latest, validated environmental sampling results with the public and to keep the public informed about EPA’s response to the BP Spill, EPA has a dedicated website for this response effort: <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill>.

Additional information on the broader response from the U.S. Coast Guard and other responding agencies is available at: <http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com>.

## ***Gulf of Mexico Foundation Completes Sabine and Red River Basins Project***

SARP Partner, the Gulf of Mexico Foundation announced the completion of its Sabine and Red River Basins Project. The project was initiated in 2009 with SARP funding and took a regional watershed approach to identifying habitat and conservation needs in the Sabine and Red River Watersheds, which drain parts of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas. The project engaged a broad range of stakeholders and extracted information from wildlife management plans to reveal the state of conservation efforts. It also identified threats, objectives and impediments that impact aquatic resources in the project area, as well as strategies for success.



*Lake Fork Water Hyacinth, Sabine River Basin*

at [mike@gulfmex.org](mailto:mike@gulfmex.org). The report will also soon be available on the GMF [gulfmex.org](http://gulfmex.org) and SARP [southeastaquatics.net](http://southeastaquatics.net) websites.

The final report inventories conservation issues, identifies the affected habitat and species, and recommends targets for restoration and conservation actions. As a SARP pilot habitat assessment project, the final report will also serve as a guide for similar efforts planned for other basins relative to aquatic habitat conservation that are included in the Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan, developed by SARP. USGS geospatial assessments for these watersheds will complement the final report and will be available soon.

To learn more about this project or to obtain a copy of the final project report, contact Mike Smith, GMF Project Manager,

## Grant Opportunities

### **2010 NOAA Sea Grant Aquaculture Research Program**

NOAA Sea Grant will make available up to \$6,000,000 in total for a national competition to fund aquaculture research projects for FY 2010 to FY 2011, as part of the overall plan to support the development of environmentally and economically sustainable ocean, coastal or Great Lakes aquaculture.

This aquaculture research competition is designed to support the development of environmentally and economically sustainable ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes aquaculture by funding research, outreach and management. Proposed projects must support the goals stated in Sea Grant's National Strategic Plan (2009-2013) Focus Area of Safe and Sustainable Seafood Supply: a sustainable supply of safe seafood to meet public demand; a healthy domestic seafood industry that produces, processes, and markets seafood responsibly and efficiently; and informed consumers who understand the importance of ecosystem health and sustainable harvesting practices to the future of our domestic fisheries who appreciate the health benefits of seafood consumption; and who understand how to evaluate the safety of the seafood products they buy.

Institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, commercial organizations, State, local and Indian tribal governments and individuals are eligible to apply.

Application materials are due **May 25, 2010**.

Submit applications to State Sea Grant Programs, or directly to [grants.gov](http://grants.gov), depending on applicant's location. Consult the RFP or your state Sea Grant Program for more details. Contact information for all Sea Grant Programs is [here](#). To obtain the RFP, please visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), FFO number NOAA-OAR-SG-2010-2002488.

Applications may request up to \$400,000 in total. 50% Non-federal matching funds are required. For more information, please see the [Question-and-Answer webpage](#), or send questions to [oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.hq.sg.aquaculture@noaa.gov).

## ***The Gulf of Mexico Foundation Announces \$210,000 in Funding***

The Gulf of Mexico Foundation (GMF) is pleased to announce this opportunity to contribute to advancing habitat conservation and restoration in the Gulf of Mexico. The outputs from the resulting projects will provide vital support to the Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (HCRT) of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. The HCRT is one of the Priority Issue Teams within GOMA and outlined in the Governor's Action Plan. The successful applicants responding to this request for proposals will work directly with HCRT members toward implementing HCRT actions.

This Request for Proposals solicits proposals under the following four topic areas:

- Conservation and Restoration in the Gulf of Mexico: Comparison of Mexico and U.S. Policy, Law and Management
- Analysis of Local, State and Federal Policy & Regulatory Programs That Provide Protection to Coastal Habitats
- Analysis and Recommendations for Increasing Restoration and Conservation on Private Lands
- Analysis and Recommendations of Cross-PIT Sea Level Rise Efforts, Data Needs and Science

Funding for these projects was provided under a grant from NOAA's Coastal Services Center. GMF serves as Contract Administrator and provides coordination and support for the HCRT. The full announcement can be found at <http://www.gulfmex.org/goma.htm>. Application deadline: **May 31, 2010**.

## ***CZM Information Systems Federal Funding Opportunity***

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce  
Funding Opportunity Title: Modernizing and Improving State Coastal Zone Management Information Systems - FY2010 Funding Competition  
Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-OCRM-2010-2002621  
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.419, Coastal Zone Management Administration Awards

Dates: Proposals must be submitted to and received by Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT on June 1, 2010. No facsimile, paper copy, or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Please note that it may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject an application. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline; do not wait until the last day to submit an application.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this [document](#) is to advise eligible applicants (requirements described below) that NOAA is soliciting proposals for competitive funding under the Modernizing and Improving State Coastal Zone Management Information Systems Funding Competition. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement should support state coastal zone management programs in their efforts to build, modernize, expand on, or otherwise improve state information systems to assess, track, and manage permitting activities and/or land use in state coastal zones. The program authority is the Coastal Zone Management Act 16 U.S.C. 1456c.

Any state or territorial coastal zone management program that has been approved by NOAA pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1455) is eligible to apply for this competition.

**Funding Availability:** Total anticipated funding for all awards is \$1,000,000. The maximum amount that may be requested for the federal share for a project is \$300,000. Multiple awards are anticipated from this announcement. The anticipated federal funding per award is approximately \$50,000 to \$300,000. The anticipated number of awards ranges from 4 to 10, approximately.

**Project/Award Period:** The standard financial assistance award period is 18 months. It is anticipated that projects funded under this announcement will have a grant start date of October 1, 2010, or later.

## ***Texas Coastal Management Program Grant Cycle 16***

As in the previous grant cycles, the [Coastal Coordination Council](#) (CCC) expects to award approximately \$1.8 million for planning, acquisition, construction, education, and research projects in Grant Cycle 16.

### **DEADLINE**

The deadline for pre-proposals is **June 23, 2010** by 5:00 p.m. (Submission of the pre-proposal is optional and is only necessary if written comments are desired.) The full application is due October 13, 2010 by 5:00 p.m.

### **WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

Five grant workshops will be on the coast to help potential applicants through the guidance document and application package. All potential applicants were strongly encouraged to attend the workshops. The workshops usually take two to three hours. We will also be available after any of the workshops to meet with applicants individually. Please contact [Melissa Porter](#) at 1-800-998-4GLO or (512) 475-1393 if you would like individual attention so that we can schedule our travel arrangements to allow ample time to meet with you.

We also encourage current subrecipients of CMP grant funding and their financial staff to attend the grant workshops. We have expanded the grant workshops to include project management training to educate subrecipients of the administrative requirements once a contract is executed. Project management training will cover the progress report, invoice, local match, budget amendment, timesheet, and equipment forms. The schedule for the Grant Cycle #16 Workshops are as follows:

May 6, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Port Isabel

Port Isabel Housing Authority - Community Center, 100 Hockaday.

May 13, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Corpus Christi

Texas A&M University - Natural Resources Center, 6300 Ocean Drive, Room 1003.

May 20, 2010, 9:00 a.m., Port Arthur

City Hall, 444 Fourth Street, 5th Floor.

May 27, 2010, 9:30 a.m., Galveston

County Courthouse, 722 Moody, Workshop Room.

For more information, including application guidance, eligible entities, and funding categories go to <http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/grants/cycle16.html>.

## **National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is offering approximately 20 awards to coastal states that will invest in projects to protect and restore valuable coastal wetlands. All projects must ensure long-term conservation efforts such as restoring wetland hydrology, breaking tile drainage systems, installing water control structures, planting native vegetation, and removing invasive species. Eligible applicants include any coastal state agency. Applications are due by **June 25, 2010**.

To apply:

<http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=B2CgLnCB3J6nx4LTrTwKPX8GmTwks709S88vylrQV8SJt1v0kh6b!-1299818899?oppId=51001&mode=VIEW>.

## **Conferences and Workshops**

### **Louisiana Coastal Resources Program Evaluation Public Meeting**

Pursuant to the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, a public meeting will be held as part of the federal performance evaluation of the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program (LCRP). The meeting will be held at 6:30 pm (1830 hours) CDT on 10 May 2010 at Griffon Room, LaSalle Building, Capitol Complex, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Physical address is 617 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA. The purpose of the meeting is to receive public comments regarding the operation and implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program (LCRP) since the last evaluation in April 2005. Written comments are encouraged, and participation at the public meeting is not required for submission. Written comments should be sent to Mr. Gregory Gervais, NOAA/NOS/OCRM, 1305 East-West Highway, N/ORM7, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or via e-mail to [greg.gervais@noaa.gov](mailto:greg.gervais@noaa.gov) no later than 15 days after date of public meeting.

### **Yard Care Best Management Practices Workshop**

- **May 7, 2010** [Workshop Flyer](#) [Workshop Agenda](#)

The Mission-Aransas NERR Coastal Training Program is hosting this event on Friday, May 7 from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas, Texas (750 Channel View Dr.). The workshop will feature speakers from several partners including Adria Schreiber-Garza from the City of Corpus Christi Storm Water Department, Michael Womack from the South Texas Botanical Gardens and Michael Potter from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

#### **Workshop Objectives:**

- Understand how yard care decisions can impact the environment.
- Learn about BMPs for waste disposal, tree trimming and landscaping practices such as chemical and fertilizer application.
- Identify local programs that can provide assistance such as the Texas Master Gardeners or the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

## **11th Annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference**

**May 12-13, 2010**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Regulatory and Commenting Agency Permitting Roles in the Louisiana Coastal Zone**

**May 18, 2010**

The Office of Coastal Management is proud to announce the seminar titled "Regulatory and Commenting Agency Permitting Roles in the Louisiana Coastal Zone". This seminar will cover topics including a general overview of what OCM, DEQ and COE do as part of the Coastal Use Permitting process within the Coastal Zone of Louisiana, as well as the roles that the various commenting agencies (LDWF, NOAA, USFWS, EPA, etc.) hold in the permitting process.

May 18, 2010 in the Conference Room at NOAA's Estuarine Habitats and Coastal Fisheries Center in Lafayette, LA (646 Cajundome Blvd). The seminar is free but because space is limited we are requesting pre-registration. If demand for the seminars exceeds available space, additional seminars will be scheduled. Below is the agenda for both seminars. Please contact our office at [OCMinfo@la.gov](mailto:OCMinfo@la.gov) or Christine Charrier at 225-342-7953 to reserve your spot today.

## **2010 Northern Gulf Institute Annual Conference**

**May 18-20, 2010 Mobile, Alabama**

The NGI Annual Conference will include updates on the activities and direction of the institute, but the emphasis of the conference will be on research presentations and poster presentations by the NGI project teams.

NGI is encouraging the participation of students at the conference and they will be able attend the regular technical and program sessions. Students are also encouraged to participate in the poster and photography competitions. The photography contest is open to NGI researchers and students.

We will be meeting in Mobile again this year at the Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel (see hotel information link). This venue allows the participation of more people and reflects feedback received in previous year's meeting evaluations. Come join us. We look forward to seeing everyone together again this year. [Click here to view the website.](#)

## **Coastal Resiliency Symposium**

**May 26, 2010**

Rice University.

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

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

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

## **Techniques for Creating Living Shorelines in Northwest Florida**

**Apalachicola, FL**

**May 26-27, 2010**

9 a.m. -5 p.m. EDT (Wed)

9 a.m. -12 p.m. EDT (Thu)

Apalachicola Community Center – City Hall

**Pensacola, FL**

**June 8, 2010**

9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m. CDT

Gulf Power Auditorium

One Energy Place

Living shorelines use plants and other natural materials to stabilize the shoreline, minimize coastal erosion, and maintain coastal processes while enhancing the natural shoreline habitat for the benefit of property owners as well as fish and other wildlife.

### **Who Should Attend?**

Consultants, Developers, Natural Resource Staff, Contractors, Engineers, Planning and Permitting Staff, Coastal Land Managers, Environmental Scientists, Shoreline Property Owners

### **Workshop Highlights**

- Detailed case studies of living shoreline projects in Northwest Florida
- Field excursion to local living shoreline projects
- Guided discussion of the permitting process and funding opportunities for living shorelines in Florida

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED to attend, includes lunch and all materials. Register at [www.GulfAllianceTraining.org](http://www.GulfAllianceTraining.org). The deadline for pre-registration is **May 21** or as soon as the classes fill.

For additional information contact:

Amy Gohres at 251-990-5004, [amy@weeksbay.org](mailto:amy@weeksbay.org)

Rosalyn Kilcollins at 850-653-8063, [Rosalyn.Kilcollins@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Rosalyn.Kilcollins@dep.state.fl.us)

Additional funds for this workshop provided through a grant from the Weeks Bay Foundation and the NOAA Coastal Services Center in support of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

## ***Louisiana State of the Coast Conference***

**June 8-10, 2010 - Baton Rouge, Louisiana**



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

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

## ***Third Annual Monitoring Forum***

**June 9-10, 2010      St. Petersburg, FL**

Purpose: To discuss the general status of current monitoring efforts and future data needs in the Gulf of Mexico. Topics at this Year's Forum include:

- Coastal Ocean Observing Systems
- Remote Sensing Technologies
- SPARROW modeling
- Coordinated Coastal Monitoring Network Framework
- New Microbial Beach Criteria

Held in conjunction with GOMA Nutrient Team's Nutrient Criteria Conference (June 8-10) and GOMA Water Quality (June 11) and Nutrient (June 8) Team meetings. Requests for posters can be sent to [Kyana.F.Brown@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Kyana.F.Brown@dep.state.fl.us).

## ***Shifting Shorelines: Adapting to the Future***

**June 13 - June 16, 2010**

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

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

## ***5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration***

**November 13-17, 2010**

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

The 2010 conference focus, "Preparing for Climate Change", while a concern for all coastal regions, has particular resonance for coastal Texas and Galveston, still recovering from the damage inflicted by Hurricane Ike in 2008. RAE is committed to helping Galveston recover from the environmental and

economic damage caused by Ike. Through this conference, we will: work to restore resiliency to Galveston's shoreline through sea- and marsh-grass planting projects; stimulate the local economy through the business generated during this five-day conference; push Galveston's ongoing restoration needs to national attention through press work and through the attendance of senior federal officials; and increase the direction and momentum of new resources to aid the Galveston area.

Early Registration Deadline: September 30, 2010

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

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

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