



GULF OF MEXICO NEWS

www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov

July 2009



NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

.....	1
El Niño Arrives; Expected to Persist through Winter 2009-10	4
NOAA and Texas Restore More Than 2,000 Acres of Wetlands	5
NOAA Report: Saltwater Angling a Sign of Coastal Vitality	6
Smaller Than Expected, But Severe, Dead Zone in Gulf of Mexico	7
Experimental Hurricane Wind Scale Debuts This Season	8
Coast Survey Participates in Hurricane Readiness Call.....	8
New Research on Long-term Eutrophication May Assist in Sustaining and Restoring Wetlands.....	8
Newly Transferred Pathogen Monitoring Technology Assists Florida Environmental Managers.....	9
Methodology Review Supports Reduction of Derelict Fishing Gear	9
Workshop Explores Coastal Hazard Risk and Resilience Behaviors	9
NOAA Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project Receives Award.....	9
Lionfish Pose Potential Threat to Native Reef Fish Populations	10

Other NOAA News

.....	1
Scientists Report First Remote, Underwater Detection of Harmful Algae, Toxins	10
Extreme Weather Information Tip-sheet Available for Florida East Coast Residents	11
Updated versions also available for Gulf coast states	11
Eutrophication Susceptibility Screening Tool May Help Focus Nutrient Reduction Strategies on Vulnerable Estuaries.....	12
Customer Satisfaction Survey Open.....	12

New Mapping Tool Improves Resource Management with Unique Data Visualization 13

NERRS Workshop Materials Available Online 13

July Edition of Coastal Management News Available 13

In the Gulf States

..... 1

New Gulf State Park Pier Opens Today 14

Programs to Highlight Storm Resilience 14

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Meeting in Mobile to Discuss Gulf Health 15

Florida Coastal Communities to Receive Grant Funds 16

Two Communities Selected for Waterfronts Florida Program 17

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance Launches Florida Website 18

Florida Releases Climate Summit Report 18

Florida DEP Hosts 13th Annual Power Generation Conference 20

FWC Brings Habitat Conservation Tools to the Internet 21

Louisiana DNR Begins Work on Coastal Zone Boundary Study 22

New Fisheries Research Lab Opens on Grand Isle 23

Louisiana Sea Grant Receives Environmental Communication Award 24

Water Under Fire Producer Films Coastal Hypoxia Segments 24

New Website Dedicated to the Chandeleur Island Chain 25

Scientists Study Submerged Populations of Coast Seagrasses 25

New Saltwater Fishing Regulations Book Now Available 26

Nice Brown Shrimp Caught on Opening Day of Shrimping in Waters North of
Intracoastal Waterway 27

DMR, Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks Turn Abandoned Shrimp Boat into Artificial Reef
Fish Habitat 28

DMR, Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks Rebuild Artificial Reef Habitat at Ocean Springs
Pier 29

New Wind Platform Data Available in the Gulf 29

Patterson Turns Texas Wind into Money for Schools 29

Texas Drought Takes Toll on Springs, Rivers, Lakes, Bays 30

NOAA Grant to Restore Galveston Bay Marsh a 'Happy Surprise' for State 32

Other News

..... 1

America, the Ocean, and Climate Change 33

Sea Grant Law Center Releases Renewable Energy Regulatory Primer 33

MMS Provides Details on Renewable Energy Procedures 33

TNC Releases Global Shellfish Assessment 33

Construction of the MRGO Closure Structure Complete 34

International Program Builds Public Awareness about Water Resources 34

Grant Opportunities

..... 1

NOAA CSCOR Competitive Grants Announced 35

NOAA Restoration Center Announces Three New Funding Opportunities 37

Gulf of Mexico NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (BWET) Program
Funding Opportunity Announced 37

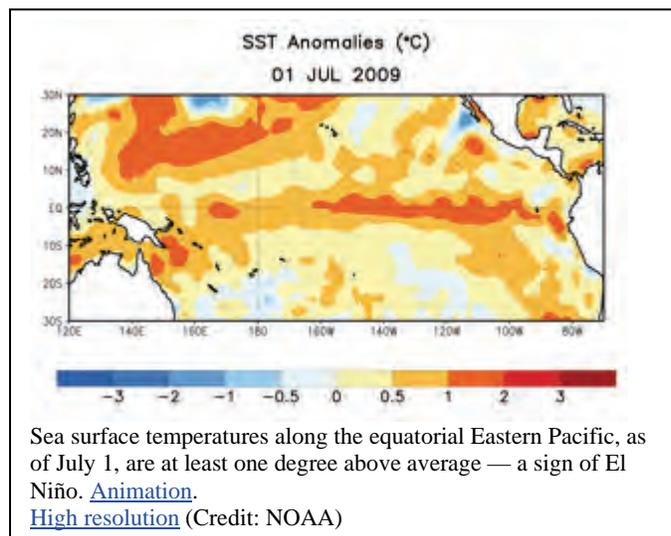
Conferences and Workshops

..... 1
17th National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Workshop 38
First Southeastern Water Trails Forum 38
Alabama BirdFest..... 38
2010 Land Grant and Sea Grant National Water Conference 39

NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

El Niño Arrives; Expected to Persist through Winter 2009-10

July 9, 2009



NOAA scientists today announced the arrival of El Niño, a climate phenomenon with a significant influence on global weather, ocean conditions and marine fisheries. El Niño, the periodic warming of central and eastern tropical Pacific waters, occurs on average every two to five years and typically lasts about 12 months.

NOAA expects [this El Niño](#) to continue developing during the next several months, with further strengthening possible. The event is expected to last through winter 2009-10. “Advanced climate science allows us to alert industries, governments and emergency managers about the weather conditions El Niño may bring so these can be factored into

decision-making and ultimately protect life, property and the economy,” said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

El Niño's impacts depend on a variety of factors, such as intensity and extent of ocean warming, and the time of year. Contrary to popular belief, not all effects are negative. On the positive side, El Niño can help to suppress Atlantic hurricane activity. In the United States, it typically brings beneficial winter precipitation to the arid Southwest, less wintry weather across the North, and a reduced risk of Florida wildfires.

El Niño's negative impacts have included damaging winter storms in California and increased storminess across the southern United States. Some past El Niños also have produced severe flooding and mudslides in Central and South America, and drought in Indonesia. An El Niño event may significantly diminish ocean productivity off the west coast by limiting weather patterns that cause upwelling, or nutrient circulation in the ocean. These nutrients are the foundation of a vibrant marine food web and could negatively impact food sources for several types of birds, fish and marine mammals.

In its monthly El Niño diagnostics discussion today, scientists with the [NOAA National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center](#) noted weekly eastern equatorial Pacific sea surface temperatures were at least 1.0 degree C above average at the end of June. The most recent El Niño occurred in 2006.

El Niño includes weaker trade winds, increased rainfall over the central tropical Pacific, and decreased rainfall in Indonesia. These vast rainfall patterns in the tropics are responsible for many of El Niño's global effects on weather patterns.

NOAA will continue to monitor the rapidly evolving situation in the tropical Pacific, and will provide more detailed information on possible Atlantic hurricane impacts in its updated Seasonal Hurricane Outlook scheduled for release on August 6, 2009.

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

NOAA and Texas Restore More Than 2,000 Acres of Wetlands

July 13, 2009



Restored intertidal marsh at the Lower Neches Water Management Area in Port Arthur, Texas.

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

More than 2,500 acres of coastal wetlands have been restored and enhanced in Port Arthur, Texas, as a result of a cooperative agreement between NOAA and its federal and state natural resource trustee partners. NOAA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Texas General Land Office worked with the Chevron Corporation to restore habitats that were injured by releases from refinery operations that took place decades ago.

“Coastal wetlands are extremely valuable habitats that provide numerous services for both humans and the environment,” said John H. Dunnigan, assistant administrator for [NOAA’s National Ocean Service](#). “The

wetlands restored through this cooperative project will help improve water quality and provide a buffer as tropical storms and hurricanes move onshore.”

The largest restoration occurred in the Lower Neches Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near the Gulf of Mexico, where a project restored historic water flow conditions to approximately 1,300 acres of coastal wetlands. Nearly 90 acres of estuarine intertidal marsh and more than 30 acres of coastal wet prairie were also created. At the J.D. Murphree WMA, approximately 1,500 acres of coastal emergent marsh plant communities have been restored to historical conditions through the installation of berms and other water control structures. “These completed projects will not only provide habitat benefits to the fish and wildlife of the region, but will also enhance public use and outdoor recreation opportunities,” said WMA manager Jim Sutherlin.

These habitats were restored to compensate the public for the natural resources that were harmed by historical releases of hazardous substances from the original Clark Chevron refinery in Port Arthur. Products produced at the refinery site, which has been in operation since 1902, have included gasoline, kerosene, jet fuel and petrochemicals. Natural areas and waterways inside and adjacent to the refinery were negatively affected by operations at the refinery.

The natural resource trustees worked with Chevron to assess the injuries to the environment attributed to historical releases from the refinery. Once the amount of restoration needed was agreed upon, Chevron implemented the compensatory restoration projects with trustee oversight beginning in 2007.

As a principal trustee for the public’s coastal natural resources, [NOAA’s Damage Assessment, Remediation and Restoration Program](#), restores habitats and communities that have been harmed by oil spills, hazardous substance releases and ship groundings. Through the program, NOAA works with other agencies, industry, and communities to protect and restore these coastal and marine resources.

Since its inception in 1992, the program has successfully protected natural resources at more than 500 waste sites. As of 2008, the program had settled almost 200 natural resource damage assessment cases, generating almost \$450 million for restoration projects.

NOAA Report: Saltwater Angling a Sign of Coastal Vitality

July 22, 2009

Saltwater recreational fishing continued to provide important economic benefits to America's coastal communities in 2008, bringing fishermen to the shore to reel in fish, book spots on charter and party boats, buy bait and tackle, stay in local inns and eat at local restaurants, according to a report issued this week by [NOAA's Fisheries Service](#).

Saltwater recreational anglers took an estimated 85 million fishing trips in 2008, down slightly from the 93 million trips estimated in 2007. Saltwater anglers caught an estimated 464 million fish in 2008, down slightly from the 475 million caught in 2007. That the decreases were moderate reflects stability in saltwater angling.

"Saltwater recreational fishing is one of the most popular outdoor sports in America, and those who take part in it bring economic vitality to coastal towns and cities," said NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco, who remembers her first experiences saltwater fishing for salmon with her father aboard a charter boat off the Oregon coast. Saltwater angling generates an estimated \$82 billion in sales and supports more than 500,000 jobs annually, according to the most recent figures available to NOAA.

"Last year we had gas prices around \$4 a gallon and people did not go fishing as they had in 2007," said Captain Scott Lindsey, a recreational fisherman and outdoor writer based in Panama City, Fla. "All in all, I believe the quality of the fish this year is better and the size of the fish we're catching is larger than we have seen in many a year. Is it cyclical or management? We'll have to wait and see."

Frank Blount, owner of the Frances Fleet of party boats in Point Judith, R.I. and a member of the New England Fishery Management Council, also saw a decline in fishing business in 2008 that he estimates around 20 percent. "Surprisingly enough, we've had a very good early spring this year. I'm especially seeing a lot of our regular customers from the Northeast states. I think it's due to good availability of many fish we pursue."

"Saltwater anglers have their eyes on the water and a vested interest in sustaining fishing opportunities for their children and grandchildren," Lubchenco added. "They are natural champions for ocean stewardship." Saltwater anglers demonstrated their conservation ethic by catching and releasing back into the water some 58 percent of the 2008 catch, slightly up from the 57 percent in 2007, today's report said. NOAA's report also tallied the top catches by region.

Spotted seatrout was the most popular catch among marine recreational anglers in 2008. The species is caught in the Gulf of Mexico and the south Atlantic regions, which have the highest combined concentration of saltwater anglers in the nation. The top catches in other regions were grouper (Caribbean), striped bass (North Atlantic), summer flounder (Mid-Atlantic), chub mackerel (Pacific), black rockfish (Pacific Northwest), skipjack tuna (Western Pacific).

The reported catch and effort statistics are compiled by NOAA's Fisheries Service from face-to-face and telephone interviews with recreational fishermen. Currently, NOAA is working with the coastal states and those in the saltwater angling community to redesign the agency's surveys to provide a more complete picture of saltwater anglers' catch and effort and improve the conservation of our shared ocean resources. The data released today on recreational fishing is part of Fisheries of the United States, a detailed annual report on the nation's commercial and recreational fishing, landings, export, per capita fish consumption and consumer expenditures for fish products. The report will be available [online](#).

Smaller Than Expected, But Severe, Dead Zone in Gulf of Mexico

July 27, 2009

NOAA-supported scientists, led by Nancy Rabalais, Ph.D. from the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, found the size of this year's Gulf of Mexico dead zone to be smaller than forecasted, measuring 3,000 square miles. However the dead zone, which is usually limited to water just above the sea floor, was severe where it did occur, extending closer to the water surface than in most years.



Earlier this summer, NOAA-sponsored forecast models developed by R. Eugene Turner, Ph. D. of Louisiana State University and Donald Scavia, Ph.D. of the University of Michigan, predicted a larger than normal dead zone area of between 7,450 – 8,456 square miles. The forecast was driven primarily by the high nitrate loads and high freshwater flows from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers in spring 2009 as measured by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Rabalais believes the smaller than expected dead zone is due to unusual weather patterns that re-oxygenated the waters, among other factors.

“The winds and waves were high in the area to the west of the Atchafalaya River delta and likely mixed oxygen into these shallower waters prior to the cruise, thus reducing the area of the zone in that region,” said Rabalais. “The variability we see within each summer highlights the continuing need for multiple surveys to measure the size of the dead zone in a more systematic fashion.”

“The results of the 2009 cruise at first glance are hopeful, but the smaller than expected area of hypoxia appears to be related to short-term weather patterns before measurements were taken, not a reduction in the underlying cause, excessive nutrient runoff,” said Robert Magnien, Ph.D., director of [NOAA's Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research](#). “The smaller area measured by this one cruise, therefore, does not represent a trend and in no way diminishes the need for a harder look at efforts to reduce nutrient runoff.” The average size of the dead zone over the past five years, including this cruise, is now 6,000 square miles. The interagency Gulf of Mexico/Mississippi River Watershed Nutrient Task Force has a goal to reduce or make significant progress toward reducing this dead zone average to 2,000 square miles or less by 2015. The Task Force uses a five year average due to relatively high interannual variability.

The dead zone is fueled by nutrient runoff, principally from agricultural activity, which stimulates an overgrowth of algae that sinks, decomposes, and consumes most of the life-giving oxygen supply in the water. The Gulf of Mexico dead zone is of particular concern because it threatens valuable commercial and recreational Gulf fisheries that generate about \$2.8 billion annually.

The models used to forecast the area of the dead zone are constructed for understanding the important underlying causes to inform long-term management decisions, but they do not include short-term variability due to weather patterns. Prior to the Louisiana consortium cruise, NOAA's Southeast Monitoring and Assessment Program found a similar sized dead zone during its annual five-week summer fish survey.

Experimental Hurricane Wind Scale Debuts This Season

NOAA officials are experimenting with the traditional Saffir-Simpson Hurricane scale—used since 1975 to label hurricane impacts—by removing its storm surge ranges and flooding. NOAA hopes removing the surge information could make categories less confusing for the public. Storm surge information is “scientifically inaccurate,” according to NOAA officials, and values assigned to storm surge within each category of the Saffir-Simpson scale are often incorrect. For example, Hurricane Ike made landfall in 2008 as a Category 2 storm (based on wind speed), yet the storm surge witnessed in Galveston, Texas, was equivalent to that seen in a Category 4 or 5 storm. Many people chose not to evacuate because they were told it was only a Category 2 storm approaching their homes.

The experimental scale, known as the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, maintains the Category 1-5 range, assesses only wind speed, and does not include other potential impacts, such as storm surge, floods, and tornadoes. More information on the experimental change to the Saffir-Simpson scale is available at the National Hurricane Center Web site: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshhs.shtml> NOAA is accepting e-mail comments on the changes until November 30, 2009 at nhcwebmaster@noaa.gov

Coast Survey Participates in Hurricane Readiness Call

The Office of Coast Survey (CSC) recently participated in a hydrographic survey responders conference call hosted by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Mobile District that included U.S. Coast Guard, Mobile District port, and National Weather Service (NWS) officials. USACE, Coast Guard, NOAA, and port officials work together at locations around the Nation in the aftermath of a hurricane to quickly determine the status of shipping channels in order to reopen ports for commerce. The purpose of the call was to exercise the phone tree, provide status of NOAA and Corps survey assets, review Coast Guard procedural changes since the last hurricane season, and review NWS Webinar content. These status calls are conducted every month during hurricane season. For more information, contact Howard.Danley@noaa.gov.

New Research on Long-term Eutrophication May Assist in Sustaining and Restoring Wetlands

Findings from a 36-year study of the effects of nutrient enrichment on salt marshes in Massachusetts indicate that long-term eutrophication may result in significant losses of marsh elevation. National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science-funded scientists from Louisiana State University, the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute found that while the input of nutrients resulted in an increase in aboveground plant biomass, belowground biomass is reduced. This resulted in a decrease in the amount of organic matter accumulation in the deeper soil layer and increased soil subsidence. It was estimated that the salt marshes in this study are sinking at a rate equal to approximately 50% of the average rate of global sea level rise. The study also found that soil strength was reduced, suggesting a reduction in resistance to erosion. For more information, contact David.Kidwell@noaa.gov.

Newly Transferred Pathogen Monitoring Technology Assists Florida Environmental Managers

In response to an ongoing problem in the state of Florida, Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research (CCFHR) scientists have shown, using a rapid molecular assay, that fish lesions are overwhelmingly caused by the water mold *Aphanomyces invadans*. Managers at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute requested help from scientists at the CCFHR in establishing the cause of large, ulcerative lesions appearing on fish in northern Florida coastal waters. These lesions alarm the public and represent a significant threat to fish health. The necessary protocols, reagents, and training for performing the assay are being provided to Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute staff so that they can screen for this pathogen. For more information, contact Wayne.Litaker@noaa.gov.

Methodology Review Supports Reduction of Derelict Fishing Gear

A National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) investigator participated in a Marine Debris Program workshop held June 2-4 in Silver Spring, Maryland to review existing methods for quantifying derelict traps and share best practices across different projects. The NCCOS presentation summarized towed-diver survey methods utilized in a collaborative study with the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) of commercial spiny lobster trap debris in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS). Interactions with participants from other NOAA line offices and programs, academia, non-profit organizations, and private enterprise, identified the potential use of sonar to broaden the coverage of derelict trap surveys in FKNMS and resulted in the support of NOAA's Marine Debris Program to continue the collaborative effort between NCCOS and FWC. For more information, contact Amy.Uhrin@noaa.gov.

Workshop Explores Coastal Hazard Risk and Resilience Behaviors

NOAA's Coastal Services Center (CSC) and the Northern Gulf Institute co-hosted a workshop in Spanish Fort, AL, to explore the risk and resilience behaviors of specific populations along the coast. Participants used a community-based social marketing model to identify and prioritize target audiences that included the building industry, land use regulators, children, and clergy. This workshop will inform NOAA and partner efforts to understand people's perceptions of risks and to identify and understand specific behaviors that can foster greater resilience in the face of coastal hazards and climate change impacts. Attendees included representatives from local, state, and federal government, academic and extension programs, nongovernmental organizations, and the insurance industry. For more information, contact [Heidi Recksiek](mailto:Heidi.Recksiek).

NOAA Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project Receives Award

The Office of Coast Survey's Hydrographic Survey Division received notification that its Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project won second place in the Gulf Guardian Award partnership category. The Gulf Guardian Awards were created to recognize environmental excellence in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. The award reflects the collaborative and cooperative work between NOAA, the U.S. Coast Guard, FEMA, state agencies and Louisiana parishes in identifying and removing debris with minimal negative impact to habitat. The award will be formally presented in October during the Ocean 09 Conference in Biloxi, MS. For More information, contact Crescent.Moegling@noaa.gov.

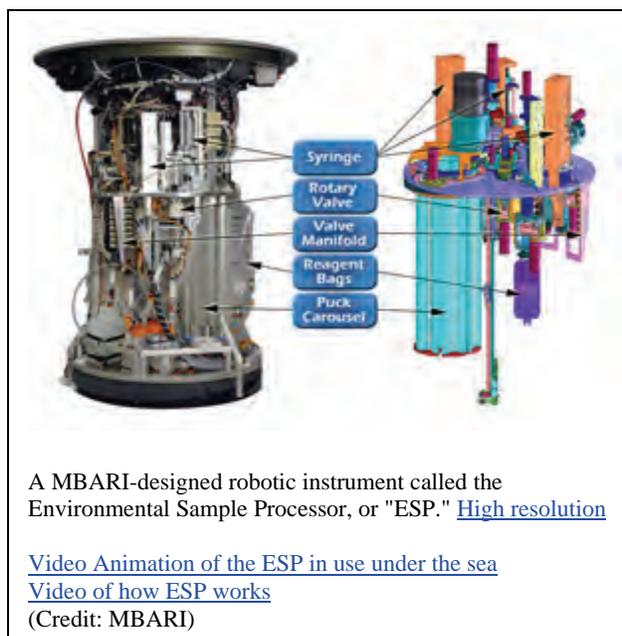
Lionfish Pose Potential Threat to Native Reef Fish Populations

Sanctuary staffers from Gray's Reef, the Florida Keys, and Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuaries recently met with the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (or REEF) to discuss regional approaches to mitigating impacts from the invasive lionfish. The Florida Keys NMS has already begun development of an action plan and is shifting from the early detection/rapid response phase of the plan towards a more control-oriented strategy which will enlist the removal assistance of dive operators and other groups who have received training in lionfish removal and site assessment. To sustain healthy ecosystems within the sanctuary system, the discovery and eradication of invasive species is imperative. Although unable to predict the ecological impacts of lionfish at this time, scientists do know the impacts that other invasive species have caused on industries, navigation, sport fishing, wetlands, etc. For these reasons, scientists plan on tracking lionfish populations, conducting more research, and educating the public. For more information, contact [Karrie Carnes](#).

Other NOAA News

Scientists Report First Remote, Underwater Detection of Harmful Algae, Toxins

July 14, 2009



Scientists at [NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science](#) and the [Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute \(MBARI\)](#) have successfully conducted the first remote detection of a harmful algal species and its toxin below the ocean's surface. The achievement was recently reported in the June issue of *Oceanography*.

This achievement represents a significant milestone in NOAA's effort to monitor the type and toxicity of harmful algal blooms (HABs). HABs are considered to be increasing not only in their global distribution, but also in the frequency, duration, and severity of their effects. HABs damage coastal ecosystem health and pose threats to humans as well as marine life. Climate change is expected to exacerbate this trend, since many critical processes that govern HABs dynamics, such as water temperature and ocean circulation,

are influenced by climate.

A MBARI-designed robotic instrument called the Environmental Sample Processor, or 'ESP,' designed as a fully-functional analytical laboratory in the sea, lets researchers collect the algal cells and extract the genetic information required for organism identification as well as the toxin needed to assess the risk to humans and wildlife. The ESP then conducts specialized, molecular-based measurements of species and toxin abundance, and transmits results to the laboratory via radio signals.

"This represents the first autonomous detection of both a HAB species and its toxin by an underwater sensor," notes Greg Doucette, Ph.D., a research oceanographer at NOAA's Center for Coastal

Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research laboratory in Charleston, S.C. “It allows us to determine not only the organism causing a bloom, but also the toxicity of the event, which ultimately dictates whether it is a threat to the public and the ecosystem.”

For the first demonstration of the ESP’s ability to detect HABs and their toxins, Doucette and his MBARI colleague, Chris Scholin, Ph.D., targeted certain members of the algal genus *Pseudo-nitzschia* and their neurotoxin, domoic acid in Monterey Bay, Calif.

Pseudo-nitzschia and domoic acid have been a concern in the Monterey Bay area for well over a decade. In 1991, the first U.S. outbreak of domoic acid poisoning was documented in Monterey Bay. This outbreak resulted in the unusual deaths of numerous pelicans and cormorants that ingested sardines and anchovies, which had accumulated the domoic acid by feeding on a bloom of the toxic algae.

In the spring of 1998, a mass mortality of sea lions in and around the Monterey Bay area was attributed to the sea lions’ feeding on domoic acid contaminated anchovies. Since that time, *Pseudo-nitzschia* and domoic acid have appeared on virtually an annual basis in California coastal waters and are the objects of an intensive statewide monitoring program run by the California Dept. of Public Health. Humans also can be affected by the toxin through consumption of contaminated seafood such as shellfish.

“Our public health monitoring program is one of the many groups that can benefit directly from the ESP technology and ability to provide an early warning of impending bloom activity and toxicity,” said Gregg Langlois, director of the state of California’s Marine Biotoxin Monitoring Program. “This is critical information for coastal managers and public health officials in mitigating impacts on the coastal ecosystem, since the toxicity of these algae can vary widely from little or no toxicity to highly toxic.”

Beyond improving forecasting of HABs, this research will contribute to the rapidly emerging [U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System \(IOOS\)](#) by adding a new way to make coastal ocean observations. IOOS is a network of people and technology coordinated by NOAA that work together to generate and disseminate continuous data on our coastal waters, Great Lakes, and oceans.

Extreme Weather Information Tip-sheet Available for Florida East Coast Residents

Updated versions also available for Gulf coast states

July 15, 2009



NOAA satellite image of Hurricane Katrina, taken on Aug. 28, 2005, at 11:45 a.m. EDT.

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

Emergency management and severe weather contact information for Florida’s Atlantic coast is now available in an easily read tip-sheet. Part of the popular NOAA Extreme Weather Information Sheet series, this one-page document contains critical phone numbers and Web site information residents can use during potentially life-threatening weather emergencies.

With the addition of Florida’s east coast, all coastal residents in the state can access this valuable information. Updated for 2009, the laminated and waterproof tip-sheets, known as NEWIS, also are available for residents in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

“These weather information sheets have proven to be very effective tools when our emergency management staff help residents prepare their hurricane plans,” said Mack Austin of the Hillsborough County, Florida Emergency Management Agency. “It is very well organized, easy to understand and the lamination is great for using it in the field.”

NEWIS was created by personnel at NOAA’s National Coastal Data Development Center, located at Stennis Space Center on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The idea grew out of the center’s experiences after Hurricane Katrina.

“Following Katrina, everyone at the center had pieces of paper with important phone numbers written on them,” said NCDDC Director Russ Beard. “We wanted to create an information sheet for use before and after a storm, and I knew from my experience it had to be waterproof.”

During 2008 more than 143,000 of the documents were distributed in the five Gulf Coast states, mainly through county emergency management agencies and local libraries. Special emphasis was made to get them in the hands of senior citizens, first responders and people who might not have Internet access.

This year’s NEWIS also contains updated information about mobile data links for [NOAA’s National Hurricane Center](#) and [NOAA’s National Weather Service](#), and [NOAA Watch All Hazard Monitoring Information](#). Online versions also are available for download at [NOAA’s National Coastal Data Development Center’s Coastal Science, Information and Data for the Ecosystem](#) Web site.

NCDDC annually verifies all contacts, phone numbers, and Web sites listed on NEWIS and continues to monitor the information throughout the hurricane season. Any updates are added to the online versions. NCDDC urges residents to monitor the official advisories issued by NOAA’s National Hurricane Center as well statements and warnings from your local NOAA National Weather Service forecast office. Follow the direction of the local emergency managers or law enforcement.

Eutrophication Susceptibility Screening Tool May Help Focus Nutrient Reduction Strategies on Vulnerable Estuaries

National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)-funded researchers at the University of Michigan recently published a model in April 2009 to assist managers in targeting more cost-effective nutrient reduction interventions on watersheds with downstream estuaries most susceptible to algal blooms. This relatively simple phytoplankton production model relates nitrogen loads to phytoplankton production in a range of estuaries around the U.S. Excess nutrients flowing into estuarine and coastal waters can lead to serious problems including overgrowth of unsightly algae, harmful algal blooms, and low oxygen. The model shows that estuaries with relatively higher flushing rates are less susceptible to developing problems associated with excess nutrients. This research was supported through the Coastal Hypoxia Research Program. For more information, contact Libby.Jewett@noaa.gov.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Open

The NOAA National Ocean Service (NOS) Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS) (<http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/>) invites customers to participate in an American Customer Satisfaction Index Survey. Your participation would help CO-OPS improve its water level and tidal current products and customer services. For over 200 years, CO-OPS and its predecessors have gathered data along our nation’s coasts and turned those data into meaningful information to protect life, property, and the environment. CO-OPS would like to determine user satisfaction and would appreciate your feedback. CFI Group, an independent research and consulting firm, is conducting this survey, which will

take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey is hosted via a secure server and responses will remain strictly confidential and anonymous. Please take a few minutes to rate CO-OPS performance via the Internet by clicking on the link below. Click the following link to start...

<https://svy.cfigroup.com/cgi-bin/qwebcorporate.dll?id=9W8NQD&rk=MG6UFW>

New Mapping Tool Improves Resource Management with Unique Data Visualization

NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science and National Marine Fisheries Service have completed a collaborative project that has produced an ArcGIS extension for creating time-and-area summarized maps of fishing catch and effort from logbook, observer, or fishery-independent survey data sets. They have also identified four priority needs (fishing catch and effort analysis, area characterization, by-catch analysis, and fishery/habitat interactions), and propose a way forward for development of new GIS tools and capabilities. They have published the results in a report "EcoGIS: GIS Tools for Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management." A PDF version of the report, along with additional information, is available at <http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/publications/TechMemoNCCOS75.pdf> or <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/ecogis/>. For more information, contact David.Moe.Nelson@noaa.gov, or Tim.Haverland@noaa.gov.

NERRS Workshop Materials Available Online

Materials are now available for Planning for Climate Change, a workshop that was developed as a national project for the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS). The workshop is geared primarily toward shoreline planners and developed so that Coastal Training Programs (and other agencies) around the country can customize the workshop and use it as part of their educational efforts regarding climate change. It was piloted twice in Washington State and, while it lays a foundation in current climate research, it primarily addresses the fundamentals of how to prepare and adapt to the anticipated impacts of climate change. All of the workshop materials, evaluation results, lessons learned, PowerPoint presentations, and streaming video of the training sessions are all posted on the NERRS website: <http://nerrs.noaa.gov/Training/padillabay/project.html>. It is best to think about this project as a "road map" which can be followed closely by using the posted materials - or simply used as a starting point for moving forward. It will be important for planning teams to enlist experts who can highlight the climate impacts expected in their regions and speak about local planning issues and case studies.

July Edition of Coastal Management News Available

The July 2009 edition of Coastal Management News is now available. Checkout the newsletter online at <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/news/docs/czmnewsjul09.pdf>. Inside you'll find the following stories:

- * Hawaii Increases Resiliency Through Hurricane Force Wind Building Designs
- * Michigan Works With to Preserve Waterfront Character
- * Minnesota Symposium Educates Students about Lake Superior
- * Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) Updates
- * New York Developed Ecosystem Based Management Approach
- * Coastal Hazard Mitigation Guide Developed for Louisiana Residents
- * Interagency Guide Offers Smart Growth Help for Coastal and Waterfront Communities
- * National Ocean Service Website Uses Social Media to Get the Word Out About New Website

In the Gulf States

New Gulf State Park Pier Opens Today

The long wait is over. Today, Thursday July 23, Gov. Bob Riley will cut the ribbon officially opening the new pier at Gulf State Park to the public. This highly-anticipated \$14.8 million project is now the longest pier on the Gulf of Mexico and Alabama's only public pier on the Gulf. The original pier was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

The pier has several new features including indoor concession-area seating, indoor retail space for tackle and souvenirs, mid-pier comfort stations, and wheelchair accessible rail fishing. At 1,540 feet long, 20 feet wide, and boasting 2,448 feet of fishing space available along the rails, it's much larger than the previous pier and can accommodate up to 30 people on the octagon-shaped end of the pier.

In addition to a saltwater fishing license or pier license, the daily fishing permit is \$8 for adults and children over the age of 12. For children under age 12, who would like to fish while the adults watch, the charge is \$4. The sightseeing only fee for adults is \$3. Weekly, monthly, semi-annual and annual permits are available. For more information, including a complete list of pier rules and regulations, visit the Gulf State Park section of www.alapark.com.

After exploring the new pier visitors are encouraged to take advantage of the multiple recreational opportunities that Gulf State Park has to offer that range from tennis to swimming, to an 18-hole of championship-style golf course. There are also more than 10 trails to choose from in the park with most offering abundant opportunities to view a broad range of wildlife. And of course there are the two miles of white sun-kissed beaches to enjoy.

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

Programs to Highlight Storm Resilience

The first show in a three-part series called "Gambling Against Mother Nature" will air at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 29, on WKRG-TV. The show will explore how beaches and barrier islands protect the coast, how Orange Beach has changed since Hurricane Ivan and how Mississippi is rebuilding after Katrina. Other topics will include storm preparedness for homeowners and how flood maps affect insurance. The two additional programs in this series will air at 6:30 p.m. on Aug. 19 and Aug. 26.

The series is made possible through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Storms Program, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, WKRG-TV, the city of Orange Beach and grassroots, inc.

"Gambling Against Mother Nature"

Three programs about community resiliency from storms

The Gulf Coast is an area of storms, high winds and heavy rainfall. We can do a better job of building in this fragile environment by developing better building codes, preserving trees and open spaces. We need to be better educators on teaching our communities how to respect the protective nature of our beaches and wetlands. We must become more aware that we can work with our environment instead of bulldozing, clearing and paving it. We can litter less. We can work with our communities to lessen our damage from storms and we can make our recovery more cost-effective for us and for our communities. Today, we can begin to clear up our beautiful waters so our kids and generations beyond can enjoy them.

“Wind and Water” Part One

(Beaches, Barrier Islands and Storm Surge)

Alan Sealls explains the stormy nature of our weather and the reach of storm surge.

Dr. George Crozier, Dr. Scott Douglass and Dr. Bret Webb describe the nature of our beaches, barrier islands and wetlands and their natural protective role. Mayor Tony Kennon, Lanny Smith and Phillip West tell us how the City of Orange Beach, Alabama, has changed since Hurricane Ivan. Officials from Mississippi discuss rebuilding on the coast. The dramatic new flood maps and their effect on home owners insurance are presented. Danny Lipford outlines storm prevention for home owners.

“Water Runs Down Hill” Part Two Aug 19 6:30 pm

(The ABC's of a Watershed)

Everyone lives in a watershed, though few of us realize it. A watershed is part of Nature's cycle of rainfall – storing runoff water in the ground for future use and returning water to the air. We alter the patterns of runoff by bulldozing the land, clearing the trees and vegetation and paving over the ground. The water has nowhere to go except in huge torrents that tear up our creek beds, wash dirt and litter into our rivers, and create erosion, pollution and flooding.

We can do better. Alan Sealls and Dr. George Crozier explain the nature of our coastal watersheds. Dr. Kevin White discusses alternate storm water management practices. Malcolm Steeves outlines the problems caused to our water system. Terry Plauche tells us about the value of trees. The City of Orange Beach shows us the dramatic changes they have made in order to lessen storm water damage, and Biloxi's tree and park programs after Katrina are outlined.

“Hedging Our Bets” Part Three Aug 26 6:30 pm

(Flooding, Storms and Insurance)

We can build better and we can act as a community to improve our storm water management. Senator Richard C. Shelby discusses changes coming in flood insurance and State Senator Ben Brooks describes his legislation to improve homeowner's insurance costs. The City of Orange Beach, Alabama, outlines their course of action that has reduced the cost of flood insurance by 15% for their citizens. Carl Schneider relates improvements that home owners can make to lower their insurance costs, and Danny Lipford demonstrates these changes.

DVDs of all three programs will be available later. For further information, contact Emily Sommer, Executive Director of grassroots, inc. at sommeremily@bellsouth.net.

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Meeting in Mobile to Discuss Gulf Health

Barnett Lawley, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, will join officials from the four other Gulf states, Washington, D.C., and Mexico in Mobile for a meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) to address the health of the Gulf Region.

The three-day event, set for Aug. 4-6 at the Battle House Hotel, will be used as a venue to discuss implementation of the 2009 Governor's Action Plan which outlines key steps and priorities for the

Alliance over the next five years. Supported by each of the five Gulf State governors, the plan aims to enhance community resilience, promote environmental education, support habitat restoration, reduce nutrient inputs to coastal waters, mitigate impacts to water quality, and identify and characterize Gulf ecosystems.

The Alliance recognizes climate change, the Gulf economy, ecosystem health and water quality as the four major challenges for the Gulf Region. By working to organize and implement accurate mapping, tide level predictions, resilient land use plans, and habitat conservation and restoration, the Alliance aims to increase communities' ability to "bounce back" after storm events.

Other Alliance activities involve increasing awareness of the connection between the environment and our health by coordinating effective water quality testing and communicating the risks of exposure to mercury from fish and harmful algal blooms. The Alliance is working to reduce nutrient inputs to decrease the dead/hypoxic zone. Through the use of a sediment master plan, dredged material will be used for the most crucial restoration projects.

"The health of the Gulf of Mexico is of utmost importance to the people of Alabama as well as the nation," Lawley said. "Gov. Bob Riley felt compelled to sign the Governor's Action Plan to ensure that Alabamians and visitors alike continue to benefit from the state's pristine beaches, diverse marine environment and bountiful recreational and commercial activities connected with the Gulf. These valuable natural resources can only be conserved through the dedicated stewardship of our citizens and groups like the Gulf of Mexico Alliance."

Lawley will join Dr. Bill Walker, Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, and Bryon Griffith, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program, for a news conference at 10:30 a.m. Aug. 5 at the Battle House Hotel.

The second Governor's Action Plan for Healthy & Resilient Coasts builds upon the successes of the previous effort and sets specific actions necessary for a healthy economy and ecology for the Gulf of Mexico. The regional meeting enables federal, state, non-profit, business, education, and research members of the Alliance to come together to solidify a course of action. Visit www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org for more information.

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

Florida Coastal Communities to Receive Grant Funds

~ Grants to help communities restore and enhance coastal resources during difficult economic times ~

TALLAHASSEE -- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been awarded annual cooperative grant funds of \$2.65 million from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to continue and enhance protection of Florida's coastal resources. The grant funds will support several state priorities such as: restoring seagrasses; developing a derelict vessel management program and a database of geo-referenced shoreline trends; improving the state's understanding of storm surge impacts on aquifers; and developing plans for post-disaster redevelopment and response to harmful algal blooms.

"The federal grant funding helps underwrite Florida's commitment to restore marine habitat and safeguard vital coastal areas," said Sally Mann, DEP's Director of Intergovernmental Programs.

“Working with our federal and state partners, local governments and nonprofit organizations, DEP continues to protect the sandy beaches and coastal communities for residents and visitors alike.”



"The federal grant funding helps underwrite Florida's commitment to restore marine habitat and safeguard vital coastal areas."

Sally Mann
DEP's Director of Intergovernmental Programs

Seven coastal communities and six non-profit groups will receive a portion of the grant to:

- Improve access to public lands;
- Restore coastal habitats;
- Revitalize waterfront areas;
- Develop watershed master plans;
- Promote stewardship of seagrasses and sea turtles;
- Conduct a cultural resource survey; and
- Produce a paddling trail map.

The following local governments will receive the grant funds: Apalachicola, Palm Coast, Bagdad, St. Marks, Palm Bay, Dunedin and Palm Beach County. In September, communities may apply for grant funds for fiscal year 2010-11. The grant proposal solicitation will be published in the Florida Administrative Weekly and posted on the Florida Coastal Management grants webpage at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp/grants/index.htm>.

DEP's Florida Coastal Management Program administers the annual grant from NOAA. The program includes a network of agencies that protect and enhance the state's natural, cultural and economic coastal resources and helps sustain viable waterfront communities. The program coordinates local, state and federal agency activities using existing laws to ensure Florida's coast remains a valuable resource for future generations. The program also provides coastal communities with beach access signs, safety/warning flags and rip current awareness signs.

For more information on the Florida Coastal Management Program and local grant funding opportunities, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/programs/cmp.htm>.

Two Communities Selected for Waterfronts Florida Program

TALLAHASSEE - Department of Community Affairs Secretary Tom Pelham selected Fort Myers in Lee County and the community of Millville in Panama City to join the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program, a designation that will boost the communities' efforts to revitalize their traditional working waterfront areas. With this designation, the communities will be entitled to receive intensive technical assistance and grants from the state to reimburse costs associated with participating in the Program over an initial two-year period.

"Throughout its history, Florida's vitality has been connected to its waterfronts, and the Waterfronts Florida Program is an outstanding way to help communities reconnect with their past while moving into the future," said Secretary Pelham. "I am pleased that we will be able to help these communities renew the waterfront areas that are so much a part of their history."

Fort Myers and Millville join 21 other Florida communities that have been selected for the Waterfronts Florida Program since its inception in 1997. The Program generally designates communities every two years to receive state assistance to formulate a community-designed vision plan to guide the revitalization of traditional water-dependent economies. Each plan ensures public access to the waterfront area, prevents losses from disasters, protects environmental and cultural resources, and enhances the waterfront economy.

The designations followed the recommendations of an Application Review Committee, which evaluated applications, listened to presentations, and asked questions of the applicant communities. The selections were based on the strength of the applications, the program's potential for success within the designated communities, and the demonstration of strong local public and governmental support. To be eligible, communities must provide a dollar-for-dollar match and also provide a local program manager. In their applications, the two designated communities indicated what they hoped to achieve by participating in the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program:

Fort Myers

The project area was chosen because the land along the Caloosahatchee River remains underutilized and unappreciated. Through this designation, Fort Myers hopes to draw more people to enjoy the riverfront by creating a pedestrian-friendly environment with increased public access for recreational activities.

Millville - Bay County

The project area encompasses the waterfront, the historic neighborhoods, the Highway 98 corridor and surrounding areas that the residents identify with as "Millville." Through this designation, Millville hopes to protect the waterfront from further industrial uses and create a safe, clean, attractive pedestrian environment with parks, open space and well-defined pedestrian connectors.

The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program is funded with federal grants provided by the Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. DCA's Division of Community Planning provides staff to implement the program and provide technical assistance, training, and contract management.

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance Launches Florida Website

www.supportthegulf.org

Celebrate and learn about The Gulf, and its importance to Florida and the Nation through this renovated website brought to you by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance – a federal, state, and local partnership program dedicated to the environmental and economic health of The Gulf.

The website includes:

- *Gulf of Mexico Minute* [podcasts](#)
- A [media center](#) for journalists
- Links to dozens of videos and online games
- List of Gulf-friendly [events](#)
- [Interviews](#) with real scientists studying The Gulf and its cool critters
-

To join our email list or to post information on the events calendar, email Bridget Washburn, Gulf Alliance Educator, at bridget.washburn@dep.state.fl.us.

Florida Releases Climate Summit Report

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is pleased to announce the publication of the [Climate Change Summit Report](#) from "Florida's Wildlife: On the front line of climate change" summit held in Orlando last year. The report summarizes information from presentations and discussions in the workshops conducted during the summit. It also identifies some of the concerns that emerged after three days of discussions about potential impacts of climate change for Florida's fish and wildlife resources.

Workshop leaders synthesized the summit's conclusions with a vision of Florida "where protected healthy, functional, adaptive and richly diverse connected ecosystems are in balance with the needs of people." After the summit, FWC's Executive Director Ken Haddad established a Climate Change Steering Committee. This committee is charged with integrating climate change into the FWC's agency structure to manage fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.

"The FWC is committed to developing a comprehensive plan of action for Florida to address the impacts of climate change on its fish and wildlife resources," Haddad said. "Our summit was the first step in helping the FWC develop climate change strategies to ensure the best possible future for Florida's wildlife."

The steering committee has appointed several agency teams on climate change. As they develop materials, the FWC's Climate Change Web site will host informative pieces on the work being done to manage wildlife for resiliency and adaptation.

DEP Secretary Announces Two New Public Access Web Tools

~Web tools will allow public greater access to waste cleanup progress as well as compliance and enforcement efforts~

TALLAHASSEE – Today, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Michael W. Sole gave the keynote address at the Florida Chamber's 23rd Annual Environmental Permitting Summer School, before more than 400 attendees. The conference provides an opportunity for the state's regulators and environmental professionals to come together to discuss issues involved with environmental regulations and permitting. The exchange of information and ideas leads to a more open and transparent system of protecting Florida's natural resources and economy.

Building on a theme of a more open and transparent system of protection, Secretary Sole announced the launch of two new public access Web tools – the Contamination Locator Map, known as CLM, and the Compliance and Enforcement Web site.

"These Internet accessible tools put information in the hands of the public so they can make informed decisions that affect their families, their property, their communities and their environment," said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. "Both CLM and the Compliance and Enforcement Web site allow the public to review information, ask questions and hold DEP to the highest standards."

CLM includes locational information for Brownfield sites, petroleum sites, Superfund sites, and other waste cleanup sites such as drycleaning, hazardous waste and state-owned lands. Search results in the vicinity of the specified location are depicted on a map with site name, address, facility identification number, site type and cleanup status (active or pending). By using the facility identification number, users may view actual documents associated with the site by clicking on the direct link to search the DEP's Web-based document management system known as OCULUS™.

The CLM subscription service allows users who want to be notified on the cleanup progress of a specific site to receive e-mails from DEP when the site has reached one of the following four cleanup milestones:

- Milestone 1 – Site Assessment is complete;
- Milestone 2 – Remedial Action Plan or Strategy has been approved;
- Milestone 3 – Approved Remedial Action Plan or Strategy has been modified;
- Milestone 4 – Site Rehabilitation has been completed.

The subscription service is currently available for petroleum cleanup sites only. It will be available later this year for Brownfields, Superfund and other waste cleanup sites.

The other Web addition is the Compliance and Enforcement Web site, which offers insight into DEP's compliance and enforcement philosophy and efforts – providing an overview on Environmental Litigation Reform Act (ELRA), the penalty assessment process, enforcement statistics as well as enforcement examples.

“Allowing Floridians to see our progress is incredibly important in effectively implementing and evaluating our policies and procedures. And each of these Web tools will allow Florida's citizens, businesses and legislators to better understand how the more than 3,500 employees of DEP help protect the environment each day,” said Secretary Sole.

The Compliance and Enforcement Web site includes statistics from 2008 highlighting DEP's regulatory efforts including:

- DEP opened 1,653 enforcement cases in 2008 and has opened more than 1,600 cases in each of the last four years—more cases in each of those years than during any year in the preceding decade.
- DEP assessed more than \$10.7 million in penalties in 2008 and has assessed more than \$36 million in penalties over the last three years, more than during any three-year period on record.
- CLM and the Compliance and Enforcement Web site are two Web features in a series of tools that DEP has development to foster open government. Other tools include:
- OCULUS™ - A Web-based document management system that allows the public to search and review more than two million waste documents within DEP. The documents are broken into four different categories: hazardous waste, solid waste, storage tanks and waste cleanup.
- PASS – Permitting Application Subscription Service allows any interested party to receive e-mail alerts when environmental permit applications are submitted to the DEP based on identified locations and activities of interest. Application information includes project identification, location, permit application number and contact information for the DEP permitting office.
- iNOI – Interactive Notice of Intent is a Web-based tool for industrial and construction stormwater discharge permits. The system allows users to track, view and complete National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater permit applications online. The iNOI website allows users to pay permit fees, cancel permit coverage and track, search, view and sort a listing of all NPDES Stormwater permits.

All of the interactive Web features listed can be found on DEP's home page at www.dep.state.fl.us, located under the Public Access Tools button. Visit the CLM site at www.dep.state.fl.us by clicking on the CLM button. The Compliance and Enforcement site is located at www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/ce/default.htm.

Florida DEP Hosts 13th Annual Power Generation Conference

~Conference engages government and industry in environmental protection~

LAKE BUENA VISTA – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Central District office today hosted the 13th Annual Power Generation Conference at Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort & Conference Center in Lake Buena Vista. The one-day conference, featuring the power generation industry, government and other stakeholders, focused on alternative energy sources, carbon reduction, and emerging trends and technologies related to climate change.

“The Power Generation Conference has proven to be an extremely successful and valuable event,” said Vivian Garfein, DEP's Central District Director. “By engaging industry and government in a mutually-beneficial learning environment, the conference aims to increase awareness and willingness amongst all stakeholders to continue to improve environmental protection in Florida.”

Reedy Creek Improvement District, Gulf Power/Southern Power Florida, LLC and Golder Associates, Inc., co-sponsored this year's conference with support from DEP's Central District Air Resource Management staff. Key speakers included Tommy Boroughs of Holland and Knight, LLP and former member of the Governor's Action Team on Energy and Climate Change as well as leaders from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DEP, Florida's electric utilities and the conference co-sponsors. Issues discussed included climate change, solar energy, nuclear energy, mercury emissions from electric utilities, plasma arc electric generation as well as regulatory updates from DEP and the EPA.

The Power Generation Conference began in 1996 with two dozen governmental regulators and representatives from Florida's electric utilities gathering to discuss relevant environmental issues. In previous years, the conference focused on air pollutants such as sulfur and nitrogen compounds, and information disseminated at previous conferences contributed to reduction of emissions from steam electric plants statewide. Over the last two years, sulfur dioxide decreased by 20 percent and nitrogen oxides decreased by more than 10 percent.

In 2007 and 2008, the conference expanded to topics such as carbon emissions and climate change. The conference has served as a great resource for stakeholders as evidenced by DEP Central District and Air Division staff's receipt of a 2008 Davis Productivity award, which recognizes excellence in government service.

DEP's Division of Air Resource Management is tasked with protecting, conserving and restoring Florida's air, with the primary goal of protecting the health of its residents. Air pollution comes from many sources including factories, power plants, dry cleaners and motor vehicles. The division implements the federal Clean Air Act and appropriate statutes to protect Floridians. The division also monitors the state's air pollution control programs and coordinates our work with the efforts of other local, state and federal air quality programs. For more information about the division, visit www.floridadep.org/air. To view presentations from this year's Power Generation Conference, visit www.floridadep.org/air/publication/powergen.htm

FWC Brings Habitat Conservation Tools to the Internet

Having the right information at the right time is the most critical element to sound decision-making, and it's no different for anyone trying to provide for wildlife conservation through land-use planning or land management. Anyone in the land-use planning and development industry can tell you that pulling together pertinent wildlife information can be a challenge.

Now the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), offers a one-stop shop for this information with the Florida Wildlife Conservation Guide. The guide is an online portal that provides access to much of the basic technical assistance information that the partnering agencies use when consulting with landowners and land managers about conservation issues and opportunities in Florida.

"We've recognized for a long time that there is a large number of regulated activities out there that could really benefit from early consultations, but we simply do not have the staff resources to handle the volume," said Joe Walsh, environmental commenting leader. "However, we envisioned a much wider audience for the guide as well. For example, there are new landowners who have moved to the countryside and want to conserve wildlife on their properties, but simply don't know where to begin. The guide pulls together as many Florida-relevant information sources as we could find to one convenient place."

While information on many of Florida's common species, such as the robin or white-tailed deer, is available on this Web-based application, the guide also emphasizes resources vital to the maintenance and recovery of Florida's rare and imperiled species, such as the Florida scrub-jay and gopher tortoise. The guide also is endorsed by the USFWS.

"We are pleased to be a part of this comprehensive reference for managing and conserving Florida's wildlife and their habitats," said Dave Hankla, supervisor of the USFWS Jacksonville Field Office. "Information unique to our federal endangered species programs is included as well."

The Florida Wildlife Conservation Guide assists landowners in understanding the resources at their site and offers guidance for development and conservation. The guide is intended to increase the capacities of the FWC, USFWS, and FNAI to deliver technical assistance on projects and land-use planning activities to support fish and wildlife resources.

The guide consists of four sections that lead the user through various conservation options. The first section establishes a framework for site assessment and natural resource evaluation. Habitat classification and species on those habitats make up the second section. The natural history of wildlife and possible conservation actions are provided in the next section. Finally, the user will be offered a host of conservation opportunities, natural resource planning guidelines, permit requirements and best management practices.

To access the Florida Wildlife Conservation Guide, go to MyFWC.com/Conservation/FWCG.htm. Finding all the information needed to make wise conservation choices for wildlife is now as easy as a click of the mouse.

Louisiana DNR Begins Work on Coastal Zone Boundary Study

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources' Office of Coastal Management is beginning a science-based study on the inland boundary of the state's coastal zone to determine whether the boundary set more than 30 years ago still meets the coastal zone management needs of the state and its people.

The state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, acting upon the direction of the state Legislature, authorized the comprehensive study and evaluation of the coastal zone boundary by DNR's Office of Coastal Management and calling for the final draft of the study to be submitted to the CPRA on or before its February 2010 meeting.

The Coastal Zone Management Program, enacted by the federal government in 1972, creates state and federal partnerships with the goal of protecting, restoring and responsibly developing coastal communities and resources. Louisiana created its coastal management program within the federal guidelines in 1978. The program gives DNR the authority to regulate development activities and manage resources within the defined coastal zone.

"Our coastal zone boundary was set more than three decades ago, and much has changed in our state since then. Ongoing erosion and hurricanes have changed the physical makeup of our coast, and new programs, new science and ever-increasing interest have changed the way we approach protecting it," said DNR Secretary Scott Angelle. "It is very appropriate that we take a fresh look at the boundary of our coastal zone to ensure we are managing our resources in the most effective way."

The health of Louisiana's coast is crucial to both the entire state and the nation:

- Nearly half the state's population lives in coastal parishes
- More than half of the state's annual revenues are generated in the coastal zone
- Five of the top 15 tonnage ports in the U.S. depend on the coastal zone

- About 26 percent of the oil and 26 percent of the natural gas used by the nation flow through Louisiana
- Louisiana is the top producer in the lower 48 states in fisheries, and the top producer in the nation of oysters, blue crabs and crawfish.

The coastal zone designation can be important to parishes because they can be eligible for funding, loans and participation in coastal programs, but also take on new funding and regulatory responsibilities. The CPRA's directive calls for the coastal zone study to be science-based, to consider existing legal issues and other state coastal programs, to take economic concerns such as energy, fisheries, maritime transport and tourism into account, and to consider archaeological and cultural concerns.

The study will include participation of groups outside DNR, including other state and federal government agencies, an advisory group of stakeholders, a series of public meetings in the fall and a web site allowing for further public comment.

"It is important in a process such as this that the public has every opportunity to be heard," said Louis Buatt, assistant secretary with DNR's Office of Coastal Restoration and Management. "We intend for any changes to the coastal zone to be science-based, easily understood by the public and able to meet the needs of our state for another 30 years." More information on the coastal zone study can be found at <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/crm/>.

New Fisheries Research Lab Opens on Grand Isle

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries officially opened the \$23 million, state-of the art Fisheries Research Lab on Grand Isle today. Secretary Robert Barham and Assistant Secretary Randy Pausina were joined by area legislators, local officials and the community of Grand Isle for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Governor Bobby Jindal said, "The Fisheries Research Lab will go a long way to help protect our state's aquatic resources. Indeed, the new lab will help LDWF better manage and monitor fisheries resources across the state which will benefit our fishermen, the tourism industry and our coastal communities." The 35,000 square foot Fisheries Research Lab complex is located on a seven acre site that fronts on Caminada Bay on the north shore of Grand Isle. The site is part of a 30-acre parcel of land owned by the Grand Isle Port Commission.

"This project is one of my proudest accomplishments in my tenure at Wildlife and Fisheries," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "This is one of the finest research facilities in the United States and will help Louisiana maintain its dominance and prestige as one of the greatest seafood producers in the world. I welcome all Louisianians to visit the Fisheries Research Lab in the months and years to come as we continue to fulfill our mission of monitoring, managing and protecting the living aquatic resources for all."

The new lab will support resource sampling and research work performed by Office of Fisheries staff, which drives the decision making process for management of the resources within the entire state. Biologists based in Grand Isle study a variety of marine species including finfish, crab, shrimp and oysters and their associated habitat, which are all vital to the economy of Louisiana.

The Sport Fish Restoration Program and the Artificial Reef Program for the state will also be based at the new lab. These programs help provide boating and fishing access opportunities for the recreational and commercial fishers of Louisiana.

The following measures were taken to ensure that the facility is hurricane and flood proof:

- Dredged material from construction of the marina was used to build the site up to 6 feet above sea level
- The buildings are raised to 12 feet above the new grade which results in the finished floors being 18 feet above sea level
- All elements at grade are designed to "wash out" during a high flood event
- The buildings are constructed of concrete columns, beams, floors and walls to withstand 150+ MPH winds

Additionally, the lab will provide a base of operation for the rehabilitation of stranded and out-of-habitat marine species such as manatees, dolphins and sea turtles. The new facility will allow LDWF to continue to build on the cooperative working relationships with the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, the Louisiana Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Rescue Program.

Facility space is available in the visitors' lab to accommodate the research needs of any public group or visiting scientist and can provide meeting space for up to 100 people. Activities the lab can accommodate include but are not limited to law enforcement training, educational high school programs such as 4-H and graduate-level study programs with Louisiana State University, Southeastern Louisiana University and Nicholls State University, among others.

Louisiana Sea Grant Receives Environmental Communication Award

The Louisiana Sea Grant College Program communications office has received a 2009 Eco Award of Merit in Environmental Communications for its educational multimedia CD "Marsh Mission." The disc allows students to explore the coastal marshland through the eyes of celebrated naturalist and photographer CC Lockwood and acclaimed landscape painter Rhea Gary. The duo shares the story of Louisiana's vanishing wetlands through their images and words in two powerful talks on the disc. Along with their presentations, the CD contains *The Rise and Disappearance of Southeast Louisiana* by Dan Swenson, coastal stewardship messages from Peyton and Eli Manning, and other educational resources. Global Environmental Communications LLC, which sponsors the competition, received more than 170 entries from professional communicators and organizations. Award winners are selected on the overall effectiveness of the environmental communication. Only 42 contestants received Awards of Merit. Copies of the free Marsh Mission disc are available by sending a request to jsche15@lsu.edu.

Since its establishment in 1968, LSGCP has worked to promote stewardship of the state's coastal resources through a combination of research, education and outreach programs critical to the cultural, economic and environmental health of Louisiana's coastal zone. Louisiana Sea Grant, based at Louisiana State University, is part of the National Sea Grant College Program, a network of 32 programs in each of the U.S. coastal and Great Lakes states and Puerto Rico.

Water Under Fire Producer Films Coastal Hypoxia Segments

A Canadian documentary film producer and videophotographer visited LUMCON to complete segments for an environmental education film on Eutrophication. Eutrophication is the process by which the rate of primary production increases along with carbon accumulation in aquatic systems. The film will focus primarily on the effects of increased phosphorus on the eutrophication of lakes, which is primarily manifested by algal blooms, scummy water, poor water clarity, and often toxic cyanobacterial blooms. A closing segment on the educational video will focus on coastal eutrophication as symbolized by coastal water oxygen deficiency, also known as hypoxia, or 'Dead Zones.' Dr. James Byrne, Professor and Chair of Geography at University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, and his wife Leanne Little are the producers

of a series of educational videos that are free to the public and the environmental science community. Their series, "Water Under Fire," is a seven-part documentary aired on Canadian television and sponsored by the Canadian Wildlife Federation (<http://www.waterunderfire.ca>). Kyle Dodson, videographer, accompanied Dr. Byrne on the trip to Louisiana. Joining the Canadian team was Dr. Robert Diaz of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, an authority on oxygen depletion and the increased incidences of hypoxia around the world. After interviewing LUMCON Executive Director and Professor, Dr. Nancy Rabalais, who has studied hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico for 25 years, the group went down LA Highway 1 to Grand Isle for a look at the Gulf of Mexico and more interviews of the shrimping community. Dr. Byrne is considering a separate documentary on just the coastal hypoxia issue now that he has visited Louisiana and learned more about this critical coastal water quality issue.

New Website Dedicated to the Chandeleur Island Chain

To keep the history of the isolated Chandeleur Island chain alive, Louisiana Sea Grant has compiled a collection of photographs, interviews and information to serve as a gateway for anyone wanting to learn more about the unique coastal ecology, geology and past of our vanishing barrier island systems.

Coastal erosion continues to claim more of this amazing landscape, most recently with the passage of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008. Researchers are now concerned that the islands may disappear entirely and much sooner than originally predicted.

To view the newly launched website dedicated to the Chandeleur Island chain, please click on the following link: <http://www.laseagrant.org/lighthouse/>.

Scientists Study Submerged Populations of Coast Seagrasses *Habitats have top economic values*

(MOSS POINT, Miss.) — A team of scientists is surveying bays and a bayou at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to determine what factors make seagrass beds appear, disappear and reappear.

"Seagrass beds are one of the most important essential fisheries habitats," said Hyun Jung "J." Cho, assistant professor in the biology department at Jackson State University. "They provide nursery and foraging grounds for crabs, shrimp, fish and waterfowl."

Seagrasses have many other benefits. Their roots hold sediment, which helps reduce increasing turbidity and curb sediment re-suspension. Above the ground, seagrass shoots help protect shorelines from erosion by buffering wave energy. And, because they remove nutrients from the water, sea grasses help prevent harmful algal blooms, which cause fish kills. Seagrass beds also top the charts when it comes to economic value per acre, Cho said, making them some of the most valuable habitat in the world.

Surveys in recent years show that only two seagrasses are present at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve: wigeon grass (*Ruppia maritima*) and shoal grass (*Halodule wrightii*). While other seagrasses, such as turtle grass and manatee grass, were also present in the 1960s, they no longer are found in the Mississippi Sound, Cho said. A decrease in habitat quality and size likely made them disappear. Only wigeon grass and shoal grass can grow in current water conditions in the reserve area. Water quality should be improved and more habitat restored before trying to reintroduce those lost seagrasses.



In additional research, Cho and Patrick Biber, an assistant professor at The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL), are using funding from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium to work to develop protocols for propagating wigeon and shoal grasses and planting them in bayous. By collecting seeds from grass beds instead of uprooting the grasses, scientists keep the natural habitat intact. They germinate the seeds in a lab, grow them in an indoor tank and greenhouse and eventually plant them in bayous and estuaries. A larger seagrass population should increase water quality and could lead to conditions favorable for future seagrass restoration of turtle grass and manatee grass.

Scientists have tried transplanting wigeon grass using peat pots, peat pellets and biodegradable mats to help them take hold underwater. Growing seedlings in peat pots and planting the entire pot in submerged sediment seems to be showing the most promise. But, seagrass restoration test plots in Bayou Cumbest and at GCRL are showing just how difficult it is to plant seagrasses and see them successfully take root.

“Only peat pots showed success, presumably because of the larger soil volume, allowing a more stable substrate for the plants to remain anchored after transplanting,” Biber said. “Transplants to Bayou Cumbest were monitored and survived up to six months after transplanting, at which time funding for this project was completed.”

There are several factors that make seagrass restoration challenging, Biber said. There is a lack of source material and plants often need to be harvested from already declining meadows. High plant mortality can be attributed to inappropriate water quality or sediment disturbance. And, plants often are washed away or underwater sediment is fluidized after seagrasses are planted.

“This makes the long-term success of seagrass transplanting particularly challenging in all but the most quiet and calm conditions, which are rare in the ocean,” Biber said.

In 2006, the year after Hurricane Katrina, scientists found unusually large amounts of wigeon and shoal grasses. Cho believes the wigeon grass may have been so abundant because Katrina possibly stirred the water bottom and exposed buried seeds to favorable growing conditions. Due to the large fluctuation in abundance of wigeon and shoal grasses, long-term surveys using consistent methods are the only way to determine environmental factors and drivers that affect sea grasses and their long-term trends in this changing environment, Cho said.

“With only three or four years of data, you can’t really tell what is happening,” she said.

But, thanks to funding from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and other sources, Cho and her team have been able to do biannual surveys since 2005. She hopes to be able to keep the surveys going.

“Seagrass gets very little attention in the state,” she said. “In the Gulf Coast area, especially in Louisiana, the focus is on disappearing marshes.”

New Saltwater Fishing Regulations Book Now Available

BILOXI, Miss. – The 2009-2010 edition of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources’ free booklet, “Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing Rules and Regulations,” is now available at the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) office located at 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi. The guide incorporates new and revised saltwater fishing regulations for the state of Mississippi.

Copies of the guide will be handed out to attendees at the 61st Annual Mississippi Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo at Pt. Cadet in Biloxi at the gate and at the DMR booth on July 2-5, 2009. The guides are also being distributed to bait shops along the Coast.

The 36-page fishing regulations book includes information on commercial and recreational saltwater fishing, license requirements, size and possession limits, descriptions of fish, and covers topics such as catch and release, protected species, marine litter and invasive species. The guide also features shark identification pages. The guide includes the original artwork of Joe Jewell, a member of the DMR's Office of Marine Fisheries staff. Jewell has provided illustrations for the fishing regulations book since 1999.

The 2009-2010 edition of the "Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing Rules and Regulations" is also available on the DMR Web site as an Adobe PDF file and can be downloaded free at www.dmr.ms.gov

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.

Nice Brown Shrimp Caught on Opening Day of Shrimping in Waters North of Intracoastal Waterway

BILOXI, Miss.— Bad weather Tuesday, July 7, diminished the opening of Mississippi waters to shrimping north of the Intracoastal Waterway. Only 212 shrimping vessels were observed in Mississippi waters, even less than the 230 that were counted on June 25, when Mississippi waters were opened to shrimping south of the Intracoastal Waterway.

Based on reports by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Marine Patrol officers, most of the vessels, about 150, were found east of the Gulfport Ship Channel spread out to Pascagoula. However, a group of 62 vessels were active in the western sound around Cat Island. The annual aerial boat count was cancelled by Civil Air Patrol due to inclement flight conditions.

Small catches of nice brown shrimp (36/40s and 40/50s) mixed with a few 16/20 white shrimp were reportedly caught intermittently throughout the Mississippi Sound. "Many shrimpers were looking forward to shrimping tonight as brown shrimp are nocturnal and harvests tend to be better at night. The shrimp population movement in response to tonight's full moon may also be beneficial," says Traci Floyd, director of the DMR's Shrimp and Crab Bureau.

Shrimp season shall close at midnight Dec. 31, 2009, except south of the Intracoastal Waterway. In addition, all state waters shall close to shrimping activities except live-bait shrimping at midnight, April 30, 2010. For the latest updates on the Mississippi shrimp fishery, call the toll-free Shrimp Information Hotline 1-866-We Trawl (866-938-7295). For further information contact the DMR at (228) 374-5000, or write to the Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, MS 39530.

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.

DMR, Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks Turn Abandoned Shrimp Boat into Artificial Reef Fish Habitat

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) Derelict Vessel Removal Program and Artificial Reef Bureau have combined efforts with the Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks (MGFB) to enhance fish habitat in the Mississippi Gulf. On Thursday, July 9, 2009, the DMR and MGFB deployed the Tiger Shark shrimp boat to the southeast of Fish Haven 13, about 15 miles south of Horn Island, to be used as artificial fish habitat.



The Tiger Shark had been stranded in the Mississippi Sound just off the Biloxi beach near the Biloxi Small Craft Harbor since the beginning of the year. The derelict vessel was removed about mid-June by a private contractor, who then cleaned and prepped it for deployment. A derelict vessel is a marine vessel that is no longer operational, has been abandoned by its owner and is moored and/or sunk and posing a hazard to navigation.

Before a vessel can be deployed, all fuel, oil, engines and any wood must be removed and the vessel pressure-washed. It is then inspected to be sure there are no remaining hazardous materials.

To deploy the Tiger Shark, holes were cut along the water line and wood patches placed over the holes. The boat was then pulled to the site in Fish Haven 13, where the patches were removed to allow water to overtake the boat. It took about 45 minutes for the Tiger Shark to sink.

“This vessel will create an excellent fishing and diving reef,” said Kerwin Cuevas, director of DMR’s Artificial Reef Bureau. “It’s great to work with Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks and the Derelict Vessel Removal Program to further reef development in Mississippi.”

The DMR’s Derelict Removal Vessel Program was created to record all derelict vessels within the coastal wetlands, prioritize the removal of each and contract for the removal and disposal of the vessel in order to restore the coastal wetlands to a natural state, enhance the environment, enable safe navigation and remove harmful substances from the coastal waters. Since May 1998, the program has removed about 190 vessels.

“Since 2002, 43 derelict vessels have been used to create artificial reef habitat,” said Derelict Vessel Program Director Irvin Jackson. “It’s a pleasure to work with the Artificial Reef Bureau and MGFB to help turn these vessels into something useful and beneficial for our Coast.”

The DMR’s Derelict Vessel Removal Program and MGFB shared the \$32,000 cost of removing, cleaning and deploying the Tiger Shark. About 90 percent of Mississippi’s artificial reefs were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. A little more than 60 percent of those reefs have been rebuilt. Currently, DMR and MGFB are working on inshore reef deployment, using cultch material around boat ramps, fishing piers and deepwater markers to help build those habitats.

DMR, Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks Rebuild Artificial Reef Habitat at Ocean Springs Pier

BILOXI, Miss. – The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Artificial Reef Bureau, in partnership with Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks (MGFB), is working to rebuild fishing reefs destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. On Wednesday, July 29, 2009, about 300 cubic yards of crushed limestone were distributed across a half acre just off the Ocean Springs Chester M. McPhearson Jr. community pier as part of the effort to restore inshore fish habitat and rebuild the fish population for pier and nearshore fishermen. About 90 percent of Mississippi's inshore and offshore artificial reefs were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. More than 60 percent of those reefs have been rebuilt.

During this year, the DMR and MGFB plan to distribute another 22,000 cubic yards of cultch material, which is often made up of crushed limestone, concrete or other suitable material, over 18 sites along the Coast.

“The inshore reefs provide excellent habitat for fish species such as speckled trout, white trout, flounder and redfish,” said DMR Artificial Reef Bureau Director Kerwin Cuevas. “Fishing is such an important part of life on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and these reefs allow fishermen a way to have a great catch without going offshore.”

Mississippi State Rep. Hank Zuber, who pushed to get the artificial reef at the Ocean Springs pier, said, “I would like to thank DMR for its cooperation. They have been extremely helpful from day one.”

“I grew up here in Ocean Springs, and I can remember the fun and excitement of fishing,” said Zuber. “The establishment of this reef will allow children to come out here and spend quality time with their families catching fish.”

This artificial reef recovery project is funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Emergency Disaster Recovery Program and MGFB.

New Wind Platform Data Available in the Gulf

Gulf Coast partners of the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) are now receiving ocean data collected at a wind platform off the Texas coast. Researchers from Texas A&M University recently deployed the State's first water quality monitoring system off the Texas coast to provide hourly updates on water temperature, salinity, oxygen, waves, and other information. The system has already provided an important finding by detecting low oxygen levels indicating the [return of the dead zone to coastal Texas](#). Improvements and additions to the ocean observation capabilities will increase our ability to predict and mitigate potential hazards to our safety, economy, and environment. For more information, contact [Zdenka Willis](#).

Patterson Turns Texas Wind into Money for Schools

AUSTIN — Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office, today announced an agreement with a Houston-based corporation to build the world's first wind-powered data center on Permanent School Fund lands in the Texas Panhandle. Baryonyx Corporation plans to lease Permanent School Fund land in Dallam County and build a highly secure data center, or server farm, that will be powered by on-site wind turbines.

Also on Tuesday, Baryonyx successfully won the bidding for offshore tracts of state submerged land off the coasts of Mustang Island and South Padre Island to develop what could be the biggest offshore wind farms in the nation.

“With these leases, we’re turning green power into green cash for the state’s Permanent School Fund,” Patterson said.

A data center is a facility where governments and businesses house computer systems off-site in a secure area. Baryonyx plans to build a Tier 4 data center, which is the most secure type of data center designed to host mission critical computer systems with fully redundant subsystems and compartmentalized security zones controlled by biometric access. Data centers can include everything from backup generators to security devices and require a great deal of energy to operate, maintain proper temperatures and keep data secure. That’s why the telecommunications industry is moving toward environmentally sustainable data centers.

The two offshore wind leases are the sixth and seventh leases for offshore wind farms signed by Patterson since 2005. Like the previous offshore wind leases, the Land Office lease will allow Baryonyx to conduct research and to build wind turbines that will create electricity. The engineering and design for the tracts is expected to begin before the end of the year.

Baryonyx plans to produce a minimum of 750 megawatts of power on each of the two coastal areas using turbines that produce up to five megawatts each. Ian Hatton, Chief Executive Officer of Baryonyx Corporation said the importance of developing alternative forms of energy is vital and that the need to power servers for the Internet has increased energy demand and now accounts for 1.5 percent of the global energy demand.

“The grant of these leases from the State of Texas are not only an important milestone for Baryonyx, but also for demonstrating a way forward to reduced reliance on imported energy and simultaneously increasing the environmental sustainability of technology that has become core to the modern economy,” Hatton said.

Under the lease, Baryonyx will pay the state’s Permanent School Fund a nominal fee to lease the two offshore areas for wind development. But once the wind farms are built and producing energy, they will pay royalties to the Permanent School Fund. For the first eight years, according to the lease, Baryonyx will pay a minimum royalty of 3.5 percent of the wind farms’ total production. That royalty will increase to 4.5 percent in the ninth year of the lease, and then to 6.5 percent in the 17th year of the lease.

The General Land Office may then resell that electricity to schools, prisons, cities or other public partners to earn additional money for the state’s Permanent School Fund through the Land Office’s State Power Program. Once built, the two offshore wind farms will earn the school children of Texas a minimum of \$338 million over the 30 year lease. “Developing wind energy for Texas is just plain smart,” Patterson said. “It’s not just sustainable energy to power our businesses, it’s sustainable funding for public education.”

Texas Drought Takes Toll on Springs, Rivers, Lakes, Bays

AUSTIN, Texas — A scorching one-two punch of prolonged low rainfall and record high temperatures in central and southern Texas is stressing fish and other aquatic creatures, especially rare species that depend on spring flows, and decreased river flows are sending salt content in mid-coast bays soaring. Nonetheless, biologists say fishing is actually good in many parts of Texas, and some fisheries could even improve long-term.

"It's not as bad as the drought of record in the 1950s, but if it continues through summer and into fall, we've got a problem," said Cindy Loeffler, a water resource expert with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "What's made this so bad is the record heat. Unless something miraculous happens, this will be the hottest month in Texas ever, not just the hottest July."

Reports from TPWD Inland Fisheries Division biologists in various Texas regions paint a varying view of drought impacts on fishing and aquatic life, depending on which part of the state they're reporting from. According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), about a quarter of the state is in extreme or exceptional drought, an area bounded roughly by Del Rio on the west, the Austin area on the north, on the east from a line near Bryan down to Victoria and extending into South Texas below Kingsville. Outside this area, especially in East and North Texas, higher rainfall has meant more typical summer water resource and fishing and boating conditions, although temperatures have hit record highs statewide.

On the central coast, where drought-stricken rivers like the Colorado and Guadalupe drain into bays and estuaries, low river inflows mean high bay salinity.

"On Monday we did a bag seine sample where salinity in Aransas Bay went over 40 parts per thousand for the first time since 1997," said Karen Meador, Aransas Bay ecosystem leader with TPWD in Rockport. "It was 41.5 ppt, extremely high, in Port Bay at the south end of Copano Bay. The good news is we did catch some small, juvenile spotted seatrout (speckled trout), so they're surviving so far."

Meador said although this high salt content is at the upper reaches of fish tolerance level for Aransas populations, there has been a fairly gradual salinity increase since early 2008, so marine organisms have been able to adapt fairly well. She said oysters are suffering from high salinity, as are some less tolerant species of ecologically important seagrass such as widgeon grass.

Recreational fishermen in the Aransas Bay system "seem to be doing okay with red drum (redfish) and black drum, and some guides are doing okay with spotted seatrout," Meador said. She added "some weekend anglers are complaining they're not catching the trout in the Rockport area, although longtime guides here are not having problems catching their limit."

Recreational fishermen in the Aransas Bay system "seem to be doing okay with red drum and black drum, and some guides are doing okay with trout," Meador said. She added "some weekend anglers are complaining they're not catching trout in the Rockport area, though longtime guides here are not having problem catching their limit."

Todd Neahr, TPWD coastal fisheries biologist for the large Upper Laguna Madre bay system south of Corpus Christi, said salinities there have gone from a January average of 36 parts per thousand to 50 ppt on average in July, with a range from 41-to-71. However, he said most fish and other creatures in the Laguna Madre -are used to sporadic droughts, and some fish, like the sheepshead minnow, can tolerate hyper salinity up to 100 ppt.

On the Net:

Read the full [press release](#).

Texas Drought Information/Agricultural Task Force: <http://agriflife.tamu.edu/drought/>

USGS Real-Time Water Data for Texas: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/tx/nwis/rt>

Texas map/U.S. Drought Monitor: http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/DM_state.htm?TX,S

TPWD Weekly Fishing Report: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/fish/recreational/fishreport.phtml>

NOAA Grant to Restore Galveston Bay Marsh a 'Happy Surprise' for State

AUSTIN, Texas — When the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration publicly announced the last week of June that it was providing \$5,148,369 to help restore critical wetlands in West Galveston Bay, the news took Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staffers who wrote the grant request by surprise.

"It's a very happy surprise that we got this money. The project will return long-term benefits both to Galveston Bay and to the people of Galveston Island," said Mike Ray, interim Coastal Fisheries Division director for TPWD.

The project, officially called "Recovery Act: Restoring Estuarine Habitats in West Galveston Bay," is one of 50 nationwide funded through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009. NOAA received more than 800 proposals, with the Texas project among the 10 largest.

With another \$647,597 from the Texas General Land Office, a \$250,000 in-kind donation from NRG Texas Power LLC and \$10,000 in staff time from TPWD, the more than \$6 million project will restore 328 acres of intertidal marsh complex at two locations: Galveston Island State Park and Jumbile Cove.

"Coastal wetlands perform both chemical and physical functions, including temporarily retaining pollutants such as excess nutrients, toxic chemicals and disease-causing microorganisms," said Cherie O'Brien, TPWD coastal ecologist and project leader. "They also provide critical habitat for juvenile finfish and shellfish and reduce damage from storms by acting as a buffer between shoreline and inland areas."

The Galveston Island State Park shoreline component will reduce erosion at the state park, which is visited by approximately 500,000 people a year. It also will protect infrastructure within the City of Jamaica Beach by protecting its eastern shoreline from erosion.

The Jumbile Cove component of the project will protect private property directly behind it from erosion. O'Brien said property owners in the area have been supportive of previous restoration projects. The concept for the project was developed in coordination with the Natural Resource Uses Subcommittee of the Galveston Bay Council.

"This is really a team effort between the state and federal governments, private partners such as NRG Texas Power and the Galveston Bay Council, which is charged with implementing the living resources elements of The Galveston Bay Plan," said O'Brien.

The project will employ approximately 50 people at the Galveston Island State Park site and 52 people at the Jumbile Cove site. It is scheduled to be complete in October 2010.

Other News

America, the Ocean, and Climate Change

New public opinion research, America, the Ocean, and Climate Change: New Research Insights for Conservation, Awareness, and Action, commissioned by The Ocean Project in collaboration with Monterey Bay Aquarium and National Aquarium, surveyed over 22,000 Americans on a comprehensive range of ocean- and environment-related topics. The website offers downloadable files, including the executive summary, a PowerPoint presentation, key findings, and more.

[http://www.theoceanproject.org/resources/America the Ocean and Climate Change.php](http://www.theoceanproject.org/resources/America_the_Ocean_and_Climate_Change.php)

Sea Grant Law Center Releases Renewable Energy Regulatory Primer

The National Sea Grant Law Center is pleased to announce the availability of "Offshore Renewable Energy: A Regulatory Primer." The Regulatory Primer provides basic information on regulatory authorities with respect to offshore wind, wave, tidal, and ocean thermal energy conversion projects. It also briefly discusses state authority, local concerns, and an emerging alternative management framework - marine spatial planning. Its brevity and straight-forward explanations should help Sea Grant extension agents, communicators, local decision-makers and anyone else struggling to understand the complex regulatory framework. The Regulatory Primer is available online at

<http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/SGLC/National/offshore.pdf>. Please contact Stephanie Showalter at sshowalt@olemiss.edu for more information. Hardcopies are available upon request, although the numbers are limited.

MMS Provides Details on Renewable Energy Procedures

On July 20, the Minerals Management Service provided details on the procedures to develop renewable energy projects in federal waters offshore (74 Fed. Reg. 35204, July 20). In the notice, MMS provided addresses for filing applications for renewable energy leases and grants for projects in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). For more information: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-17163.htm>; Maureen Bornholdt, Office of Offshore Alternative Energy Programs, (703) 787-1300.

TNC Releases Global Shellfish Assessment

The Nature Conservancy, a NOAA Restoration Center partner, has published a report called [Shellfish Reefs at Risk](#), which finds that 85 percent of the world's oyster populations are gone. The report also describes the importance of these ecosystems, examines the threats leading to their decline, and provides recommendations on how best to manage these resources. According to the report, shellfish reefs are at less than 10 percent of prior abundance in most bays and eco-regions, and reefs are functionally extinct in many areas, particularly in North America, Australia and Europe. The Restoration Center works with TNC to improve and restore shellfish habitat. Since 2001, the Restoration Center has partnered with TNC through a cooperative agreement to implement innovative coastal restoration activities, with a focus on native shellfish restoration projects that emphasize ecosystem services (e.g., provision of fish habitat, shoreline protection, and water filtration). To learn more about the partnership, click [here](#).

Construction of the MRGO Closure Structure Complete

July 23, 2009

NEW ORLEANS – As of July 9, 2009, the physical construction of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) closure structure is complete. A total of 352,086 tons of stone have been installed in the channel over the past 6 months at a total cost of \$11.2 M.

“Thanks to the hard work of the Corps team, our contractor, and our stakeholders, we were able to complete this project ahead of schedule,” says COL Alvin Lee, New Orleans District Commander. “With completion of the MRGO closure structure, attention can be turned to future work in the area, which will include ecosystem restoration projects to protect and rebuild coastal wetlands.”

Building the MRGO closure structure included the placement of approximately 126,274 tons of jetty stone removed from Breton Sound and 225,812 tons of quarry stone materials. The structure stretches 950 ft across the MRGO channel, and has a 12-foot top crown, a 450-foot bottom width, and a height of 7 feet above the water level. Boaters are urged to use caution in the area around the rock closure structure and to use alternate routes for marine transit in the area.

The federal government funded the construction costs, with the state of Louisiana, through the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – East, providing lands, easements and rights of way. With construction completed, the Corps is preparing a construction completion report and other project details that will be provided to the state to assume long-term operation and maintenance responsibilities for the closure structure. For additional information on the MRGO closure and coastal restoration, visit www.mrgo.gov

International Program Builds Public Awareness about Water Resources

Alexandria, Va. – Global engineering, project delivery and sciences firm, [Sinclair Knight Merz](#) (SKM) announces its partnership with World Water Monitoring Day™ (WWMD), an international outreach program that builds public awareness about and involvement in protecting water resources around the world. Coordinated by the [Water Environment Federation](#) (WEF) and the [International Water Association](#) (IWA), more than 70,000 people in 70 countries monitored water quality at approximately 5,000 sites last year.

As a multidisciplinary global firm that includes a leading water environment business group, SKM possesses a keen interest in issues related to water quality and sustainability. “In all of our projects, we aim for outcomes that consider the economic, social and environmental impacts of both our work and our corporate footprint,” said SKM Water and Environment General Manager Geoff Linke. “Our support of WWMD is one more way that we, as an environmentally responsible organization, can demonstrate that we are prepared to ‘walk the talk’ alongside our clients and our people.”

In addition to facilitating WWMD outreach via its worldwide network, SKM will also lend insight and vision to the program’s steering committee, the body responsible for developing the program’s long-term goals.

“We are excited to partner with a company that is not only committed to sustainable environmental practices, but also shares WEF’s specific dedication to protecting our global water resources,” said WEF Executive Director Bill Bertera. “SKM is a wonderful addition to the World Water Monitoring Day program team.”

To implement WWMD on a global basis, WEF coordinates the program with the International Water Association. “IWA is delighted about the sponsorship arrangement and looks forward to further strengthening and developing the outreach program,” said IWA Executive Director Paul Reiter.

Citizens monitor their local water for a core set of water quality parameters including temperature, acidity (pH), turbidity (clarity) and dissolved oxygen (DO). The data gathered is then reported to WWMD’s online database and compiled to provide a quick glimpse of the world’s water resources.

Other sponsors include the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, PerkinElmer, ITT Corporation and Smithfield Foods. For more information about WWMD visit www.WorldWaterMonitoringDay.org.

About SKM

Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) is an independent, employee-owned global consulting group with a team of over 6,000 people working from offices in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the Middle East, the Pacific, South East Asia and South America. From these locations SKM operates in the following market sectors: water and environment; power and industry; mining and metals; and buildings and infrastructure.

About WEF

Formed in 1928, the Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization with 35,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. WEF and its Member Associations proudly work to achieve our mission of preserving and enhancing the global water environment.

About IWA

The International Water Association (IWA) is a global network of water professionals that spans the continuum between research and practice, covering all facets of the water cycle. IWA membership comprises 10,000 individuals and 400 corporate members, working in 130 countries. The Association seeks to connect water professionals worldwide to lead the development of effective and sustainable approaches to water management.

Grant Opportunities

NOAA CSCOR Competitive Grants Announced

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) July Omnibus Competitive Grants announcement has been published for availability of grant funds for Fiscal Year 2010. Announcements of Opportunity have been issued to submit proposals to the Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (CSCOR)/Coastal Ocean Program for the Coastal Hypoxia Research Program (CHRP), Harmful Algal Blooms Program (i.e., ECOHAB, MERHAB and PCMHAB) and Sea Level Rise (i.e., Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise Program).

[Proposals under the COASTAL HYPOXIA RESEARCH PROGRAM \(CHRP\) closes 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time October 14, 2009.](#)

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA is soliciting proposals for projects of 2 to 5 years in duration that advance understanding, prediction, and management of the causes and ecological and economic impacts of hypoxia in representative coastal ecosystems. Funding is contingent upon the availability of

Fiscal Year 2010 Federal appropriations. It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this announcement will be made by early Calendar Year 2010, and that projects funded under this announcement will have an August 1, 2010 start date.

Background information about the needs and priorities for research related to hypoxia in U.S. coastal waters is available in:

1. An Assessment of Coastal Hypoxia and Eutrophication in U.S. Waters. 2003. Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. (Report prepared pursuant to Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act): <http://www.nccos.noaa.gov/publications/hypoxia.pdf>;
2. The updated version of #1, A Scientific Assessment of Hypoxia in US Coastal Waters (2009), should be publicly available soon at either http://www.cop.noaa.gov/stressors/extremeevents/hab/habhrca/Report_Plans.html or http://ocean.ceq.gov/about/sup_jsost_iwgs.html;
3. Effects of Nutrient Enrichment in the Nation's Estuaries: A Decade of Change (2007): <http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/publications/eutrouupdate/>.
4. Priority Topics for Nutrient Pollution in Coastal Waters: An Integrated National Research Program for the United States. 2003. Howarth et al. NOAA/NCCOS, in cooperation with the National Science Foundation, United States Department of Agriculture and United States Geological Survey: <http://www.nccos.noaa.gov/documents/nutrientpollution.pdf>;
5. Gulf of Mexico Alliance documents <http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org/>; and
6. CSCOR's CHRP web site describing past and current projects and program priorities: <http://www.cop.noaa.gov/stressors/pollution/current/chrp.html>.

Proposals should be submitted through Grants.gov, <http://www.grants.gov>.

[Proposals under the HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS PROGRAM closes 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time October 14, 2009.](#) (**Please note:** Letters of Intent for the Harmful Algal Blooms Program, although not required, should be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Time, August 17, 2009).

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA is soliciting proposals for the interagency Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algal Blooms Program, the NOAA Monitoring and Event Response for Harmful Algal Blooms Program, and the NOAA Prevention, Control, and Mitigation of Harmful Algal Blooms Program.

[Proposals under SEA LEVEL RISE closes 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time October 14, 2009.](#)

Funding Opportunity Description: NOAA is soliciting research proposals for projects of 3 to 5 years in duration for development of modeling and mapping tools to better understand and predict the impacts of sea level rise on coastal ecosystems, including ecologically and economically valuable natural resources, to support proactive coastal management and mitigation decisions.

The area of interest includes the coastal ecosystems in the northern Gulf of Mexico, ranging from the eastern boundary of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve to the western extent of the Mississippi coast. Projects should be interdisciplinary, multiple investigator, and well integrated studies designed to develop capabilities for understanding, predicting, and mitigating the effects of longterm sea level rise. Funding is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2010 Federal appropriations. It is anticipated that final recommendations for funding under this announcement will be made in early calendar year 2010, and that projects funded under this announcement will have a July 2010, start date.

Electronic Access: Background information about the NCCOS/CSCOR efforts in the Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise Program can be found at <http://www.cop.noaa.gov/stressors/climatechange/welcome.html>. Proposals should be submitted through Grants.gov, <http://www.grants.gov>.

The full Announcements of Federal Funding Opportunity and Federal Register Notices can be accessed through the Grants.Gov website at <http://www.grants.gov/search/basic.do>. To search on all the CSCOR announcements please use CFDA # 11.478.

NOAA Restoration Center Announces Three New Funding Opportunities

On July 16, the NOAA Restoration Center announced that it is accepting applications for several habitat restoration funding opportunities through its Community-based Restoration Program.

NOAA Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration National and Regional Partnerships - Through this program, NOAA will fund its newest round of three-year national and regional Partnerships, which will invest funding in the restoration of coastal and marine habitat nationwide from 2010-2012. Applications are due by **September 30, 2009**. For more information, contact [Melanie Gange](#) or click [here](#) to apply.

Community-based Marine Debris Removal Projects - Through this program, NOAA provides funding to projects that will benefit coastal and marine habitats through the removal of marine debris, particularly non-re-accumulating debris or debris which is no longer being introduced into the marine environment. Applications are due by **October 31, 2009**. For more information, contact [David Landsman](#) or click [here](#) to apply.

Open Rivers Initiative - Through this program, NOAA funds dam and river barrier removal projects that aim to repair vital riverine ecosystems, enhance populations of migratory fish, and benefit local communities. Applications are due by **November 16, 2009**. For more information, contact [Tisa Shostik](#) or click [here](#) to apply.

Projects should feature strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components, as well as social and economic benefits for the impacted communities. For more information, contact the Community-based Restoration Program's Program Manager, Robin Bruckner, at 301-713-0174 x208 or robin.bruckner@noaa.gov.

Gulf of Mexico NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (BWET) Program Funding Opportunity Announced

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-SE-2010-2001852
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.463, Habitat Conservation

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Southeast Region, is seeking proposals under the Gulf of Mexico B-WET Program. The B-WET program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. Funded projects provide meaningful watershed educational experiences for students, related professional development for teachers, and helps to support regional education and environmental priorities in the northern Gulf of Mexico. This program addresses NOAA's mission goal to "Protect, Restore, and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources Through an Ecosystem Approach to Management."

Dates: Full proposals must be received and validated by Grants.gov on or before 5 p.m. ET on **November 13, 2009**. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline.

Applications received after the deadline will be rejected/returned to the sender without further consideration. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

Conferences and Workshops

17th National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Workshop

September 14-17 New Orleans, Louisiana

The [Annual Nonpoint Source \(NPS\) Monitoring Workshop](#) is an important forum for sharing information and improving communication about controlling and monitoring NPS pollution issues and projects. The focus of the 17th National Workshop is on nutrients and what lessons we have learned that can be factored into State Nutrient Reduction Strategies.

The workshop will bring together NPS monitoring and management personnel from state, federal, Tribal and municipal governments, private sector, academia, environmental groups and local watershed organizations. This year's workshop will provide examples of nutrient monitoring and management lessons learned from completed NPS projects, demonstrations of new technologies and monitoring approaches, and documentation of successful application of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Management Measures to achieve nutrient management goals. Information presented at this workshop will be useful in the development of State Nutrient Reduction Strategies.

First Southeastern Water Trails Forum



[REGISTRATION OPEN for the First Southeastern Water Trails Forum!](#)

The Southeast is home to some of the most beautiful rivers, lakes and streams in the country. These unique assets are important not only for the valuable habitat and water resources, but also for their economic and tourism potentials. [Join us for the first Southeastern Water Trails Forum, October 29-30, 2009 in Chattanooga, TN](#) at the Chattanooga Marriott to hear from regional and national experts, learn from fellow success stories and share ideas.

Alabama BirdFest

Oct. 15-18, 2009

Registration is now open for the 2009 John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest! If you would like more information about this year's BirdFest, please call 251-625-0814. [Click here for Registration](#)

Local Birders will recognize the names of two featured speakers for the 2009 Alabama Coastal BirdFest, said John Borom, president of Mobile Bay Audubon Society and BirdFest chairman. "Kathy Hicks and Bill Summerour are local residents, but we think they will present programs that will appeal to birders from all over the country who will be here for BirdFest this fall," Borom said. "For opening night, we will have a presentation by photographer Kathy Hicks. Kathy is also a very talented graphic designer, and she

created our 2009 poster using three of her Great Blue Heron photos. I think it's going to be a very popular poster."

A Baldwin County resident who grew up on the Western Shore of Mobile Bay, Kathy calls herself an 'advanced amateur' photographer, but her work has won several awards and has been used in Forbes, Antique Road Show, Science Daily, and Outdoor Alabama. She is also an exclusive photographer for iStockPhoto.com. Her show Thursday night is A Gulf Coast Photo Journal, a selection of her best birding shots, set to music.

"On Friday night, we feature another birder and artist, Dr. Bill Summerour. Bill is as well known as a biologist as he is artist. His watercolor of a Purple Gallinule was featured on the 2005 BirdFest poster."

A graduate of Auburn University, Bill earned his Ph.D. in zoology at Mississippi State. He taught biology, zoology, botany, and ornithology at Jacksonville State University for more than 20 years and was a visiting professor of biology at Virginia Military Institute. He spent seven years as editor of Alabama Birdlife, the Journal of the Alabama Ornithological Society. Since retiring in 1991, he continues to photograph and paint birds and conduct research into Red Crossbills in the Talladega National Forest and Swainson's Warbler in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Bill's Friday night presentation, Birding the Alabama Gulf Coast will highlight some of the best birding spots in our area.

More information about the 2009 Alabama Coastal BirdFest – including the schedule of guided tours – is available at <http://www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com/index.htm>.

2010 Land Grant and Sea Grant National Water Conference Call for Proposals

The conference provides opportunities for water scientists, engineers, educators, and managers to share knowledge and ideas, to identify and update emerging issues, and to network with leading researchers, educators, and innovators from academia, government, and the private sector. The conference is hosted by a team of educators from Land Grant and Sea Grant Institutions around the nation in cooperation with national program leaders from USDA and NOAA. The conference includes the following opportunities for learning and engagement:

- Invited speakers will address current and future water resource management issues
- Concurrent technical sessions will highlight results of research and educational programs
- Poster and exhibit sessions and receptions will provide informal networking opportunities
- Workshops and symposia will provide intensive learning opportunities with national experts on targeted water issues
- Tours will provide exposure to water resource management experiences on the Southeast Atlantic Coast

When: Sunday, February 21, 2010 - Thursday, February 25, 2010

Where: Marriott Hilton Head Resort, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina (843) 686-8400

Contacts: [Joni Tanner](#) and [Kathryn Luxford](#)

Website: [National Water Program](#)

Deadline for Proposals: September 15, 2009

Submission Guidelines

To propose an oral or poster presentation, go to "[Submit Proposal](#)," and follow the instructions. In addition to your contact information, you will be asked to include the following:

Title

Author(s) and Affiliation(s)
 Preference for Oral, Poster, or Either
 Category (from list below)
 One paragraph describing the learning objectives and expected outcomes of the presentation.
 (This paragraph must be 300 words or less.)

The program committee will review all submissions and select oral presentations by October 31, 2009. Poster proposals will be accepted until the floor space is full. Use the format indicated on the submission form, and limit your abstract to 300 words. We recommend that you compose your abstract in Word, (check your word count through "tools") and then paste it into the Abstract box. Remember to keep a copy of your abstract in your own files.

Categories

Agricultural Best Management Practices

Animal Waste Management
 Nutrient and Pesticide Management
 Education Programs for Farmers
 Evaluation of Conservation Systems
 Aquaculture and Water Quality

Human Dimensions of Water Resources

Social Factors in Water Management
 Economics of Water Resources
 Measuring Behavior Changes
 Working with Watershed Organizations
 Water Quality Research in Response to Local Needs

Conservation and Resource Management

Water Conservation
 Climate Change Impacts on Water Availability
 Irrigation & Drainage Management
 Water Policy and Planning

Rural & Coastal Environmental Protection

Drinking Water and Human Health
 Onsite Waste Management
 Rural-Urban Interface Environmental Issues
 Education Programs for Rural & Coastal Audiences
 Pathogens in Water

Watershed Assessment & Restoration

Water Quality Monitoring & Modeling
 Citizen Science and Stewardship through Environmental Monitoring
 Ecosystem Restoration
 Watershed Management
 Pollutant Trading

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



Laurie Rounds

Coastal Management Specialist
 NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
Laurie.Rounds@noaa.gov
<http://www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/>