NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
leads the nation's management and conservation of coastal and ocean resources

GULF OF MEXICO NEWS

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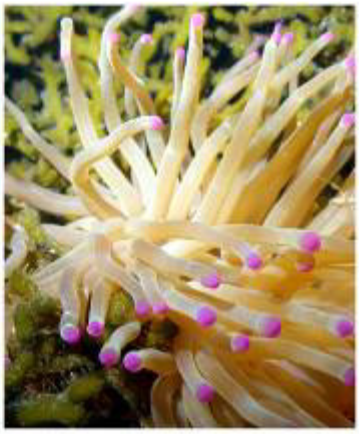
July 2010



NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

.....4
NOS Deepwater Horizon Spill Response.....4
NOAA and University Scientists Launch Research Cruise to Determine Effects of Oil Spill on Endangered Whales.....4
Second Visibility Sensor in the Nation Becomes Operational in Alabama 6
NOAA Releases Data Report on Air Quality Measurements Near the Deepwater Horizon/BP Oil Spill Area 6
Second Federal Analysis Gives Further Clues about Location and Movement of Subsurface Oil.....7
Update on NOAA's Oil Spill Research and Response Missions.....9
Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone One of the Largest on Record 10
Technical Training for Stormwater Engineers.....11

Other NOAA News

.....11
New IOOS Data Catalog Launched 11
NOAA, EPA Meet on Resilient Coasts MOA.....12
NOAA Launches Online Game to Encourage Loggerhead Turtle Conservation.....12
NOAA Predicts Drought Conditions in Southwest U.S. to Worsen.....13
July 2010 Edition of Coastal Management News Available 14
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Awards FY 2010 Grants.....14
Past Decade Warmest on Record According to Scientists in 48 Countries 14

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Meeting Report Released 16
America's Coasts: View from the States Podcasts 16

In the Gulf States

....17
Alabama's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates 17
Websites Help Clarify Water-access Legal Issues 17
Transcripts of Oil-spill Forums Available Online 17
Florida's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates 17
Scallop Search: Results Reported 18
River Estuary Coastal Observing Network: Water Quality Monitoring Network 18
Louisiana's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates 19
Louisiana Coastal Zone Management Program Draft Section 309 Assessment and Strategy Public Meeting 20
Video Shows Consumers How Oil Tainted Seafood is Detected 20
Mississippi's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates 20
Peer Listeners Prepare to Lend an Ear 21
Website Seeks Information on Oil-spill Research, Monitoring Activities 22
DMR Offers Mississippi Shrimp Fishermen Free TED Gear for Their Skimmer Trawls 22
Mississippi Prepares Boom Removal Plan with Cities and Counties 23
New Saltwater Fishing Regulations Book Now Available 24
Mississippi DMR Using Grant to Protect Sea Turtles in Mississippi Sound 25
Tarballs from Deepwater Horizon Found on Bolivar and Galveston Island 26
Texas Tarballs Underscore Need for Perry's Gulf Project 26
Ironically, the State Most Prepared is the Least Affected by Spill 27
Beach Watch Keeping Even Closer Eye on Nueces County 28

Other News

....29
Obama Administration Officials Announce the Final Recommendations of the Ocean Policy Task Force 29
USGS Releases Coastal Vulnerability Assessment 31
EPA Gulf of Mexico Program FY2010 Projects Announced 31
Director Bromwich to Host Public Meetings Nationwide to Discuss Deepwater Drilling Safety, Containment and Spill Response 32
Mackey's Creek Joins 10 Waters To Watch 33

Grant Opportunities

....34
Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration Partnership 34
Call for Gulf of Mexico Environmental Education Proposals 35
NOAA Climate Program Announcement of Funding Opportunity 36
Coastal Habitat Restoration Funding Opportunities 36
FY 2011 Funding Opportunity: Regional Ecosystem Prediction Program 37
Texas Coastal Management Program Call for Proposals 37

NASA Research Announcement.....38
National Sea Grant Law Center Requests Proposals 38

Conferences and Workshops

.....38
Register for Submerged Lands Conference Webinar Series 38
Project Design and Evaluation Workshop.....39
Gulf of Mexico Alliance Coastal Pathogens Risk Assessment Workshop 39
Clean Gulf 2010 40
5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration.....40
Alabama-Mississippi Bays & Bayous Symposium 41
Coastal Zone 2011.....42

NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

NOS Deepwater Horizon Spill Response

As response to the Deepwater Horizon incident continues, many offices within the National Ocean Service are contributing existing expertise to response efforts. For information on the National Ocean Service response activities please visit http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/deepwaterhorizon/.

For daily updates on the incident, please visit the NOAA BP Oil Spill Incident Response website.

NOAA and University Scientists Launch Research Cruise to Determine Effects of Oil Spill on Endangered Whales

July 1, 2010

NOAA Ship Gordon Gunter.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA ship Gordon Gunter will depart today to continue its mission to evaluate the effects of the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill on whales and dolphins in the Gulf of Mexico, including the endangered sperm whale.

This project includes leading researchers from Cornell University, Oregon State University, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography, who will work with NOAA scientists to monitor the distributions and movements of whales over the next several months.

Twenty-one species of marine mammals call the deep waters of the northern Gulf of Mexico home, including the endangered sperm whale and a small, isolated population of baleen whales called Bryde's (pronounced BRU-des) whales. Scientists will use a variety of tools during the mission to document how these species respond as oil comes into their habitats.

Gordon Gunter will be working in the Gulf until early August. NOAA scientists on the ship will be collecting tissues samples from sperm whales and other marine mammals, and will also be tracking their abundance and spatial distribution both with visual surveys and by recording sounds using a towed array of underwater microphones. The ship will also be measuring water characteristics and using acoustics to measure the amount of plankton, fish, and squid, the primary food for whales.

These studies will help describe the habitats of marine mammals and measure the possible effects of the oil on them. "We have assembled an exceptional partnership with world-class academic scientists who will work with us to evaluate the potential for effects from the spill on marine mammals throughout the Gulf," said Lance Garrison, Ph.D., of NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the principal investigator for NOAA.

Sperm whales.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

Bruce Mate, Ph.D., and his colleagues from Oregon State University's Marine Mammal Institute will attempt to attach satellite tracking tags to as many as two dozen sperm whales near the spill site and track their locations by satellite to see if the spill will affect the size of their "home range" and their movements within feeding areas. "Our previous research provided a wonderful blueprint of sperm whale movements in the Gulf of Mexico," Mate said. "Now we will try to locate a number of different whale groups and tag selected healthy individuals – mostly females – and see if their movements are different than in past years."

Data from the new study will be compared to similar data Mate collected between 2002 and 2005 as part of an interdisciplinary study of sperm whales funded by the U.S. Department of Interior. "We'll also try to locate and tag whales that are in the projected path of the spill to get a better sense of what these individuals will do when the oil enters their habitats," he added.

While the satellite tags are used to track the movements of individual whales, two types of seafloor listening buoys will be used to document changes in the distribution of whales and dolphins in deep water from the Louisiana/Texas border to southwestern Florida. These units will remain in place for up to four months and will record the moans, clicks and whistles that whales and dolphins produce for communicating, navigating, and finding food. These records will allow scientists to track changes in the occurrence of marine mammals as the amount of oil exposure changes throughout the summer and fall. Nearly two dozen Marine Autonomous Recording Units from the Cornell University Bioacoustics Research Program will be deployed to listen for sperm whale clicks and Bryde's whale calls. "The objective is to record the sounds that different species of whales use for communicating, navigating and finding food in order to document where they are and what they are doing over the 3-4 month period," said Christopher Clark, Ph.D., who will oversee their deployment, recovery and the analysis of the data. "Based on our experiences in other offshore habitats I expect we'll hear more than just sperm and Bryde's whales. We should be prepared for fish and some acoustic surprises."

In addition, a new technology, the High Frequency Acoustic Recording Package (HARP) developed by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography of the University of California San Diego, will be used to record sounds. One of the units was placed close to the Deepwater Horizon BP site last month, and additional units will be placed in areas with different degrees of exposure to oil. The HARP is capable of recording the full range of marine mammals that inhabit the Gulf of Mexico, including sperm whales, beaked whales, and a variety of dolphin species. By the end of the mission, four of these packages will have been deployed in the Gulf.

"By recording the sounds from all the marine mammals that live in the Gulf of Mexico, we can get a more complete picture of the health of this ecosystem," said Dr. John Hildebrand of Scripps, who heads this effort. "By beginning our study soon after the spill began, we may see trends in the presence of animals in the affected area."

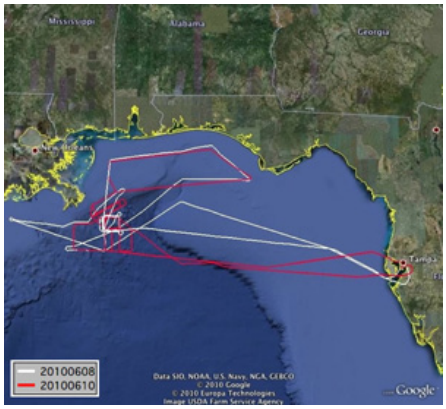
NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us on Facebook.

Second Visibility Sensor in the Nation Becomes Operational in Alabama

On July 6, data from the second operational visibility sensor in the nation, located in Middle Bay Port, AL, was publicly disseminated via the Mobile Bay Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS®) web page. The Middle Bay Port sensor (NOS ID: 8736163) is located on the mid-western shore of the Bay, next to the Theodore Shipping Channel. This installation follows the first visibility sensor at Pinto Island, AL (NOS ID: 8737005), and completes the effort to equip the PORTS® with visibility sensors and to integrate the new data type into systems operated by the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services. Visibility data in Mobile Bay are critical, as the Bay is susceptible to heavy fog at the upper end of the Bay beginning in the fall and in the middle of the Bay during the winter. The Alabama State Port Authority and the Mobile Weather Forecast Office guided site selection for both sensors. For more information, contact Kathleen Egan or Eddie Roggenstein.

NOAA Releases Data Report on Air Quality Measurements Near the Deepwater Horizon/BP Oil Spill Area

July 21, 2010



P-3 flights over the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico during June 2010.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA scientists today released a data report on air quality measurements taken in June in the vicinity of the Deepwater Horizon/BP oil spill area. The report, available online, summarizes the levels of nearly 100 air pollutants measured with sophisticated air sampling instruments onboard a NOAA WP-3D research aircraft.

Scientists found common air pollutants, such as ozone, nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide, in amounts typical of urban areas in U.S. cities. However, 15 to 70 kilometers downwind from the oil spill, concentrations of certain hydrocarbons were much higher than found in typical polluted air. Particulate matter downwind of the oil slick was comparable to concentrations in moderately polluted urban air, but the particles were almost entirely organic material, as opposed to those typically found in urban particulate matter. Scientists also measured large amounts of black carbon in smoke from a controlled burn of crude oil on the water.

"Data from the NOAA flights are providing an important detailed and independent set of air quality data to assess air quality risks of workers at sea and the public ashore," said A. R. Ravishankara, director of the Chemical Sciences Division of NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory, who led the science team. NOAA scientists measured the air pollutants in four areas, including in the immediate vicinity of the spill, downwind from the spill, and along the Mississippi, Alabama and Florida coastlines. They also measured "background" air in an area far from the spill to serve as a control sample. In analyzing the levels of the pollutants, scientists compared them to typical concentrations of a polluted U.S. urban area.

The near-shore measurements, 30 to 40 kilometers from shore, showed pollution concentrations generally lower than those typically found in urban areas. The background air was relatively free of pollution from the oil spill. A summary of the measurements is provided in Tables 1 and 2 of the report.

The air chemistry flights were conducted to support the efforts of the Environmental Protection Agency and Occupational Safety and Health Administration to assess air quality for coastal residents and oil spill response workers.

"EPA has been monitoring air quality along the Gulf Coast since the start of this incident to ensure that residents have the best possible information on the air quality, and the data in this report are generally consistent with EPA's findings," said Gina McCarthy, EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation. "EPA will continue to work with NOAA, other federal agencies and independent scientists to effectively monitor air quality and to provide residents living along the coast with the best possible information about the air they are breathing."

"In order to evaluate worker exposure, OSHA has been conducting its own air monitoring in the Gulf, as well as reviewing all additional available data. Our findings are consistent with NOAA's data," says Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health. "We will continue to work closely with all other Federal Agencies to monitor the health and safety hazards facing workers involved in the oil spill response."

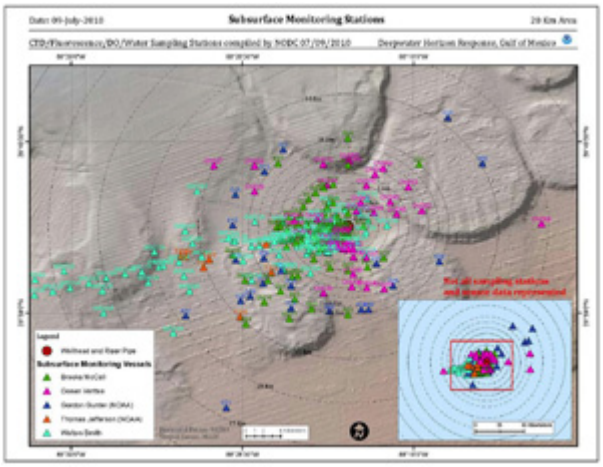
The report offers a highly detailed snapshot of the concentrations of hydrocarbons and other organic chemicals, particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, peroxyacetyl nitrate and a host of other air pollutants in the Gulf in early June. Measurements were taken from as low as 60 meters above sea level and up to 1,000 meters above sea level, with most flight tracks being about 150 meters above the Gulf.

In order to conduct the air sampling, NOAA temporarily diverted the WP-3D plane from its planned participation in the CalNex research mission, a multi-agency field study on California climate change and air quality issues. NOAA scientists recognized that the well-instrumented plane could help in meeting the need to understand how the oil spill was affecting air quality.

Second Federal Analysis Gives Further Clues about Location and Movement of Subsurface Oil

July 23, 2010

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) today released its second peer-reviewed, analytical summary report about subsurface oil monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico. The report contains preliminary data collected at 227 sampling stations extending from one to 52 kilometers from the Deepwater Horizon/BP wellhead. Data shows movement of subsurface oil is consistent with ocean currents and that concentrations continue to be more diffuse as you move away from the source of the leak. This confirms the findings of the previous report.



Subsurface Monitoring Stations within 20 km of the Wellhead. Joint Analysis Group (JAG) Review of Preliminary Data to Examine Subsurface Oil In the Vicinity of MC252#1May 19 to June 19, 2010. High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

The report comes from the Joint Analysis Group (JAG), which is comprised of the afore mentioned agencies and was established to facilitate cooperation and coordination among the best scientific minds across the government and provide a coordinated analysis of information related to subsea monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico.

The JAG report contains data analysis of fluorometric measurements and comments on the methods used to monitor dissolved oxygen levels. Data were collected on the R/V Brooks McCall, R/V Ocean Veritas, R/V Walton Smith, NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson and NOAA Ship Gordon Gunter between May 19 and June 19, 2010. The fluorometric data provide additional information on the likely presence of sub-surface oil and its location in the water column. The report indicates that subsurface oil concentrations are highest near the wellhead and become more diffuse farther away from the source.

Over the course of multiple research missions conducted in the last three months, scientists have employed and tested many techniques to better understand the extent of this unprecedented oil spill and have found fluorometric sampling to be useful to help identify the location and concentration of subsurface oil. Fluorometers use light waves to detect anomalies in the water column. Researchers deployed water sampling devices in areas where the anomalies were detected to collect samples which are undergoing chemical analysis in the labs to determine the actual levels of hydrocarbons present.

Conclusions based on the fluorometric data in this report include:

- Fluorometry measurements show repeated signals between approximately 3,300 feet (1,000 meters) and 4,300 feet (1,300 meters) deep that are consistent with diffused oil in the water.
- The fluorometric signal is strongest near the wellhead and decreases with distance, which is consistent with previous sampling.
- Average fluorescence in the depths of interest – 3,300 feet and 4,300 feet – at sampled locations range from 4 to 7 parts per million (ppm). This estimated value is slightly higher than the laboratory-confirmed values previously reported by the JAG, which at their highest, near the wellhead, were approximately 1 to 2 ppm.

It is important to note that fluorescence techniques also detect other natural organic substances in the water, leading to the existence of a background level of fluorescence throughout the water column. This means that the measured fluorometer signal is not solely attributable to Deepwater Horizon/BP oil.

For the areas sampled, the fluorescence data indicate movement primarily west-southwest until June 2. In mid-June, fluorescence indicates movement toward the northeast within the Gulf. These movements are generally consistent with observed ocean currents in the area.

"The Joint Analysis Group is working to ensure the vast amounts of data being collected in the Gulf are compiled, synthesized and analyzed in a comprehensive manner. This is the best way to ensure the Unified Command is benefitting from a full understanding of the available information, and that relevant findings and lessons are being shared with the responders as well as the broader research community," said Steve Murawski, NOAA's Chief Scientist for Fisheries and the head of the Joint Analysis Group.

Dissolved Oxygen

Dissolved oxygen levels are being continuously monitored as part of the EPA monitoring protocols required for the use of subsea dispersants. Dissolved oxygen measurements sometimes show a drop in dissolved oxygen at or below a depth of 1,000 meters, although these drops were not severe enough to indicate impending hypoxic conditions.

Scientists continue to study these data and have noted that these lower dissolved oxygen readings are the same depths where elevated levels of fluorescence have been detected and where prior work, presented in the first JAG report, has identified elevated concentrations of oil in water samples.

Decreases in dissolved oxygen concentrations may be related to a breakdown of oil by oxygen-consuming microbes. There are also concerns that the instruments used to monitor oil may be affected by that oil in the water. As a way to confirm the dissolved oxygen measurements, the JAG has recommended the use of a second, complementary, dissolved oxygen testing system, called Winkler titrations, be added to all monitoring ships.

The recommended Winkler titration system is more difficult to perform, but it is a more precise measurement method that involves taking discrete water samples and conducting a chemical analysis on board the ship. While the dissolved oxygen sensors most often used provide a continuous stream of data, the Winkler titration provides definitive readings at specific locations. A comparison of results from the conventional sensors and Winkler titration will help verify the sensor data and uncover any interference by the oil or other confounding factors.

Update on NOAA's Oil Spill Research and Response Missions

July 28, 2010

NOAA continues to play a vital role in the Deepwater Horizon/BP oil spill response, using all the scientific methods at its disposal, including satellites in space, planes in the air, ships on the water, autonomous underwater vehicles and gliders under the water, and scientists in the field. There are five NOAA vessels currently operating in the Gulf of Mexico from homeports as far north as New England with missions ranging from seafood safety to detecting submerged oil. This week the NOAA vessels are conducting the following missions:

NOAA Ship Pisces has been supporting the Unified Command in its Deepwater Horizon/BP wellhead integrity testing effort since July 14. The ship has been using sophisticated acoustic echo-sounders and water column profiling instruments to monitor for oil and gas releases in the immediate vicinity of, and directly over, the well head. Data from the mission are currently being analyzed by the National Incident Command, NOAA and the University of New Hampshire daily as they monitor the cap on the wellhead. The 209-ft. vessel is based in Pascagoula, Miss.

NOAA Ship Gordon Gunter is currently studying sperm whales and other marine mammals to learn more about how they are impacted by the oil spill. It will be tracking their abundance and distribution both with visual surveys and by recording sounds using an array of underwater microphones. Earlier this week, the ship monitored for the presence of oil and gas near the wellhead as part of the Unified Command's wellhead integrity testing. The 224-ft. Gordon Gunter is set to remain on this mission until August 8 when it will return to its base in Pascagoula, Miss.

NOAA Ship Nancy Foster is using a remotely operated vehicle to monitor deep-water bottom habitats that have been exposed to the oil/dispersant mixtures from the Deepwater Horizon incident, investigating what impacts may have occurred at this stage of the spill. Researchers will visit areas in the northern Gulf of Mexico that have been previously sampled as well as go to new areas to collect baseline samples on deep-water corals and associated marine life in the Gulf. The 187-ft. vessel is based in Charleston, S.C.

The 209-ft., New England-based NOAA Ship Henry B. Bigelow will sail from Key West this week to the well head and use its echosounder to monitor for oil and gas releases while NOAA Ship Pisces resupplies. The 170-ft. NOAA Ship Oregon II departed from its home port of Pascagoula, July 26 to collect samples of fish and shrimp off Louisiana at depths between 30 and 360 feet. The samples will be tested for contaminants as part of the ongoing program that ensures that seafood harvested from the Gulf remains safe for consumers.

Two NOAA aircraft operating out of Mobile, Ala., are active in the spill response effort:
One NOAA DHC-6 Twin Otter, a twin-engine turboprop, is using a multi-spectral scanner to measure surface oil density and thickness. Another NOAA Twin Otter is providing aerial observations and surveys of marine life, including dolphins, whales and sea turtles in the area of the oil spill. Scientists will evaluate the exposure of marine mammals and turtles to oil, estimate short-term changes in abundance before and after exposure, and examine changes in spatial distribution that may be associated with avoidance of oil as it enters near shore coastal and estuarine habitats.

Sea Turtle Rescue Boats
NOAA sea turtle experts are members of the Incident Command's Wildlife Branch, which has deployed five turtle rescue boats whose crews search for oiled turtles. So far, about 180 turtles have been rescued, and 170 of those are currently alive in rehabilitation. In addition, the Wildlife Branch has contracted 12 trained turtle observers to work on skimmer boats operated by the Coast Guard and BP. NOAA staff play an integral role in the observer program.

Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone One of the Largest on Record

The 2010 "dead zone" in the northern Gulf of Mexico west of the Mississippi River is one of the largest recorded since 1985, covering 7,722 square miles, nearly the size of the state of New Jersey. This area of low oxygen causes mobile organisms to leave and kills those unable to move away, which not only affects the ecosystem, but harms livelihoods of those who harvest seafood. The size of this summer's hypoxic area is also an important benchmark against which progress in reducing nutrients from the Mississippi River can be measured. This area closely matches an earlier forecast that the 2010 dead zone would measure between 6,500-7,800 square miles. The area was measured by National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science-supported Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium and Louisiana State University scientists. NCCOS has supported the mapping of the dead zone in the northern Gulf of Mexico since 1990. *Contact*: Rob.Magnien@noaa.gov,
Link: http://www.lumcon.edu/Information/news/default.asp?XMLFilename=201008021451.xml

Technical Training for Stormwater Engineers

The University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center (UNHSC) is piloting "Beyond Pipe and Pond," a research-based stormwater system design workshop. Developed for engineers and other professionals involved in the development or review of stormwater site designs, this one-day workshop features science-based information related to the design and performance of stormwater treatment systems. The course is designed to improve participants' ability to choose stormwater treatment systems that can effectively manage peak flows, reduce stormwater runoff volumes, and achieve federal, state, and local water quality regulatory targets.

The workshop is based on UNHSC's independent, scientific performance evaluation of stormwater treatment systems. UNHSC operates a nationally unique research field site at which system performance is evaluated in a side-by-side setting. Center scientists combine this evaluation with research that targets specific issues in the rapidly evolving field of stormwater management.

UNHSC developed this course in partnership with the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET), the NOAA Coastal Services Center, and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Coastal Training Program. Stormwater engineers and professionals from around the country also provided input on training design. UNHSC will continue to offer this workshop in partnership with NERRS Coastal Training Programs from the following NERRS sites in 2010 and early 2011:

Hudson River NERR, New York, October 27, 2010
Old Woman Creek NERR, Ohio, November 3, 2010
Apalachicola NERR, Florida, November, 2010
Weeks Bay NERR, Alabama, January, 2011
Contact: dwight.trueblood@noaa.gov

Other NOAA News

New IOOS Data Catalog Launched

This week, the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) launched the first version of the IOOS Data Catalog to help people find ocean observations. The goal is to allow users to find the data they want, for the location and time period of interest, from all available IOOS partners without having to know in advance what partners actually operate the observing systems and data servers. At launch, data are available from NOAA's National Data Buoy Center, NOAA's Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services, and NOAA CoastWatch, as well as several regional partners of IOOS. The U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will also be included in the near future, as their data services are available. The initial version of the catalog is available at http://ioos.gov/catalog/. This catalog is a work in progress. IOOS will add more features and more observing assets as available. Comments and problem reports may be sent to ioos.catalog@noaa.gov. For more information, contact Jeff De la Beaujardiere.

NOAA, EPA Meet on Resilient Coasts MOA

On June 29 and 30, office directors, senior managers, and staff from OCRM, CSC, National Sea Grant, the EPA Smart Growth Program and the Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds Coastal Branch met to discuss the development of a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on sustainable and resilient coastal and waterfront communities and healthy coastal ecosystems. The meeting was held at NOAA's Coastal Services Center in Charleston, SC. The new MOA will replace the current coastal community development partnership MOA that expires this year. The new MOA will be a valuable opportunity to leverage NOAA and EPA expertise and capabilities in assisting regional governance entities, States, Tribes, and territories, and local governments as they act to: become sustainable and resilient coastal and waterfront communities, protect healthy coastal ecosystems, and restore degraded coastal ecosystems to health. Joint FY11 projects were also discussed. Contact: Sarah.vanderSchalie@noaa.gov,

NOAA Launches Online Game to Encourage Loggerhead Turtle Conservation

July 8, 2010

Welcome screen to WaterLife: Sea Turtles and the Quest to Nest.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA's National Ocean Service and Fisheries Service launched the second online educational game in the WaterLife series, "Sea Turtles and the Quest to Nest," earlier today. The web-based game encourages and explains loggerhead sea turtle conservation through a series of games and animations aimed at fourth through seventh grade students.

"This new game is part of NOAA's educational strategy to engage students in challenges that maintain an interest in science and technology. It joins other games and educational efforts that promote the knowledge and behaviors of future environmental stewards," said Holly Bamford, acting deputy assistant administrator of NOAA's National Ocean Service.

The game takes place in a seaside town in the southeastern United States and involves six stakeholders critical to the protection and recovery of the loggerhead sea turtle, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Players navigate a series of mini-games from the beach cleanup to clear the way for nesting turtles to a food chain version of Sudoku to improve the likelihood of survival of the loggerhead turtle. To succeed, players must understand human actions affecting loggerheads and what people can do to improve the chance for survival of the species, both on land and in the ocean. The game is available online.

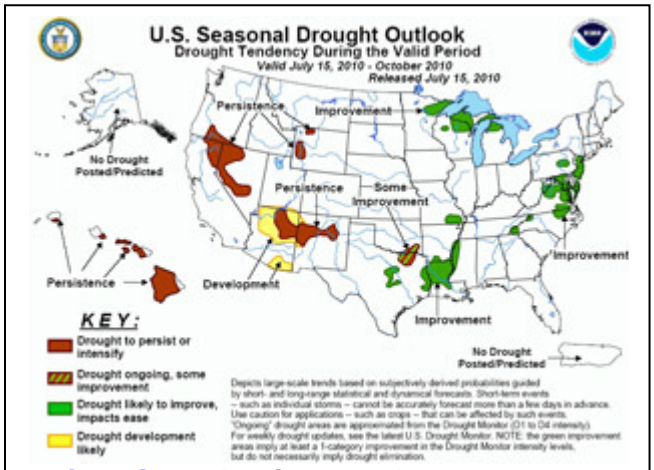
"The mini-games in 'Quest to Nest' help students understand the most important issues facing loggerhead sea turtles on land and in the ocean and give them practice making difficult decisions involving multiple stakeholders," said John Oliver, deputy assistant administrator of NOAA's Fisheries Service. "Helping our future leaders grasp the importance of conserving our marine resources is crucial to developing an informed citizenry prepared to take action to protect our nation's living marine resources."

"Quest to Nest" was developed through a partnership with Montgomery College's Computer Gaming and Simulation Program based in Rockville, Md.

"Developing this game was a wonderful opportunity for our college students to learn new skills while helping the environment," said Professor Deborah Solomon, coordinator of the gaming program at Montgomery College. "The project gave them the experience of working on a professional, year-long project and gave them the satisfaction of knowing that their work will educate others about the simple things they can do to protect sea turtles."

NOAA Predicts Drought Conditions in Southwest U.S. to Worsen

July 16, 2010



High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA's National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center released its seasonal drought outlook today for the period from August through October. The outlook indicates already dry conditions across parts of Arizona and New Mexico are likely to worsen in coming months. The official outlook calls for current severe drought conditions to persist across north-central portions of New Mexico and northeast Arizona while developing across much of the remainder of Arizona and extreme western parts of New Mexico.

Through mid-July, the summer monsoon has started fairly weak and little rainfall has been observed. The monsoon typically peaks during the month of August. Official Climate Prediction Center precipitation outlooks favor below average precipitation in these areas August through October.

"If the monsoon remains erratic during the next few weeks, then the drought development area may be expanded on the updated outlook scheduled for August 5," said Wayne Higgins, director of the NOAA Climate Prediction Center.

Factors leading to the forecast of enhanced chances for drier-than-normal conditions in the Southwest during the above periods include coupled ocean-atmosphere global climate forecasts and historical conditions during the late summer when transitioning from El Niño to La Niña.

"Beyond this time period, expected dryness associated with established La Niña conditions may bring further expansion of drought conditions in the Southwest during the 2010-11 winter season," Higgins said. La Niña may also provide wetter-than-normal conditions in the Pacific Northwest during fall 2010 and winter 2010-2011.

Other important areas highlighted in this outlook include continued severe to exceptional drought conditions across many areas of Hawaii and forecasts for improvement across moderate drought areas in the mid-Atlantic and severe/extreme drought areas of the upper Great Lakes and lower Mississippi Valley respectively.

July 2010 Edition of Coastal Management News Available

Checkout the newsletter online at http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/news/docs/czmnewsjul10.pdf. Inside you'll find the following stories:

* Gulf CZM Programs Respond to Deepwater Horizon Spill
* Guam Outreach Campaign Helps Citizens Respond to Military Buildup
* Delaware Surveys Citizens on Perceptions of Climate Change
* NOAA Recognizes Excellence in Coastal and Ocean Management
* South Carolina Assesses Management of Shoreline Change
* CELCP Updates
* Save the Date for Coastal Zone 2011!
* NOAA Programs to Consider Climate Change in Investments
* NOAA Spotlight: The Digital Coast Provides the Complete Coastal Package

If you are aware of anyone else who would like to be added to the newsletter distribution list to receive this newsletter directly, please have them contact Allison Castellan at allison.castellan@noaa.gov.

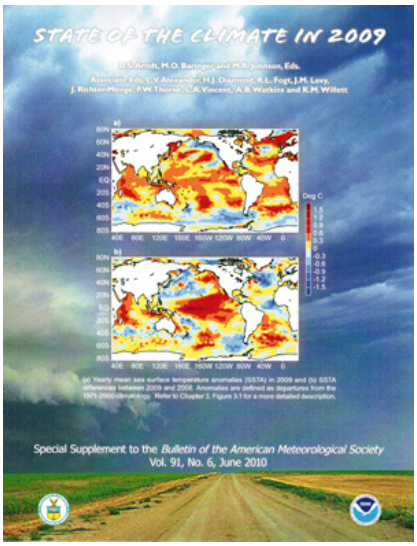
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Awards FY 2010 Grants

NOAA has awarded grants to fund 15 top-ranked projects selected for FY 2010 funding through the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). The projects will protect more than 6,000 acres of high priority coastal land in 11 states and enable state, commonwealth, and local partners to purchase, or put under easement, properties from willing sellers for permanent protection. The grants totaled more than $23 million, $4.75 million of which was funded through EPA's interagency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Projects were chosen based on their contribution to ecological conservation, recreational opportunities, aesthetic and historical significance, and technical and scientific merit. The 2010 projects will help conserve land in Washington, Hawaii, California, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Maryland, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Puerto Rico. Contact: Elaine.Vaudreuil@noaa.gov

Past Decade Warmest on Record According to Scientists in 48 Countries

July 28, 2010

The 2009 State of the Climate report released today draws on data for 10 key climate indicators that all point to the same finding: the scientific evidence that our world is warming is unmistakable. More than 300 scientists from 160 research groups in 48 countries contributed to the report, which confirms that the past decade was the warmest on record and that the Earth has been growing warmer over the last 50 years.



State of the Climate in 2009: Report Cover. High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

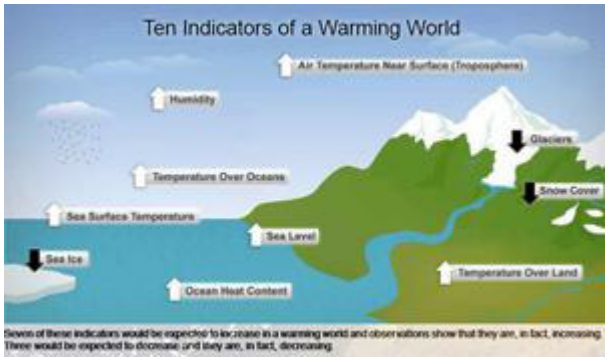
Based on comprehensive data from multiple sources, the report defines 10 measurable planet-wide features used to gauge global temperature changes. The relative movement of each of these indicators proves consistent with a warming world. Seven indicators are rising: air temperature over land, sea-surface temperature, air temperature over oceans, sea level, ocean heat, humidity and tropospheric temperature in the "active-weather" layer of the atmosphere closest to the Earth's surface. Three indicators are declining: Arctic sea ice, glaciers and spring snow cover in the Northern hemisphere.

"For the first time, and in a single compelling comparison, the analysis brings together multiple observational records from the top of the atmosphere to the depths of the ocean," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "The records come from many institutions worldwide. They use data collected from diverse sources, including satellites, weather balloons, weather stations, ships, buoys and field surveys. These independently produced lines of evidence all point to the same conclusion: our planet is warming,"

The report emphasizes that human society has developed for thousands of years under one climatic state, and now a new set of climatic conditions are taking shape. These conditions are consistently warmer, and some areas are likely to see more extreme events like severe drought, torrential rain and violent storms.

"Despite the variability caused by short-term changes, the analysis conducted for this report illustrates why we are so confident the world is warming," said Peter Stott, Ph.D., contributor to the report and head of Climate Monitoring and Attribution of the United Kingdom Met Office Hadley Centre. "When we look at air temperature and other indicators of climate, we see highs and lows in the data from year to year because of natural variability. Understanding climate change requires looking at the longer-term record. When we follow decade-to-decade trends using multiple data sets and independent analyses from around the world, we see clear and unmistakable signs of a warming world."

While year-to-year changes in temperature often reflect natural climatic variations such as El Niño/La Niña events, changes in average temperature from decade-to-decade reveal long-term trends such as global warming. Each of the last three decades has been much warmer than the decade before. At the time, the 1980s was the hottest decade on record. In the 1990s, every year was warmer than the average of the previous decade. The 2000s were warmer still.



Ten Indicators of a Warming World. High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

"The temperature increase of one degree Fahrenheit over the past 50 years may seem small, but it has already altered our planet," said Deke Arndt, co-editor of the report and chief of the Climate Monitoring Branch of NOAA's National Climatic Data Center. "Glaciers and sea ice are melting, heavy rainfall is intensifying and heat waves are

more common. And, as the new report tells us, there is now evidence that over 90 percent of warming over the past 50 years has gone into our ocean."

More and more, Americans are witnessing the impacts of climate change in their own backyards, including sea-level rise, longer growing seasons, changes in river flows, increases in heavy downpours, earlier snowmelt and extended ice-free seasons in our waters. People are searching for relevant and timely information about these changes to inform decision-making about virtually all aspects of their lives. To help keep citizens and businesses informed about climate, NOAA created the Climate Portal at http://www.climate.gov. The portal features a short video that summarizes some of the highlights of the State of the Climate Report.

State of the Climate is published as a special supplement to the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society and is edited by D.S. Arndt, M.O. Baringer, and M.R. Johnson. The full report and an online media packet with graphics is available online: http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/bams-state-of-the-climate.

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Meeting Report Released

The Coastal Response Research Center at the University of New Hampshire recently released a report on the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management-sponsored "Technical Readiness of Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC)" workshop held in Durham, NH, November 2009. The report provides a qualitative analysis of the technical readiness of the key technical components of OTEC technology and identifies key research needs. The report can be found at http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/otec/docs/otectech1109.pdf. For more information, contact Whitney Blanchard.

America's Coasts: View from the States Podcasts

NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management partners with state programs to protect and responsibly develop our coastal areas, and promote stewardship, research and education at estuarine reserves. Join us as state Coastal Zone Program and National Estuarine Research Reserve managers share their perspectives on the value of and challenges facing our nation's coasts. Here they describe their unique coastal areas.

A Glimpse of the Coasts
One reason coastal areas are so important to Americans is because of their natural beauty and importance to wildlife. For example, estuaries, places where rivers enter the ocean, are crucial spawning areas for many commercial and recreational fish and shellfish. They also buffer upland areas from flooding and shoreline erosion.

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System is a network of 27 estuarine areas established across the nation for long-term stewardship, research, and education. The sites within the estuarine reserve system protect more than 1.3 million acres of land and water in 23 states and Puerto Rico. Reserves range in size from the 365,000-acre Kachemak Bay in Alaska to the 571-acre Old Woman Creek in Erie County, Ohio.

In the Gulf States

Alabama's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates

For information about Alabama oil spill response activities, visit http://adem.alabama.gov/newsEvents/pressreleases/2010/OilSpill.cnt.

Websites Help Clarify Water-access Legal Issues

The Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center and the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium have created two websites to provide technical information on Mississippi and Alabama coastal access laws.

The sites, http://www.accessingtheMScoast.masgc.org and http://www.accessingtheALcoast.masgc.org, contain legal information to help government and public entities, private waterfront land owners and waterfront users understand legal issues related to coastal access. They include information on zoning for coastal access, eminent domain and takings, environmental regulations, planning for access and land trusts.

The projects were funded by a grant from the Maine Sea Grant College Program. The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program provided the legal content. The websites also provide tools to communities to help them locally address coastal access issues, possibly reducing the need for litigation.

Transcripts of Oil-spill Forums Available Online

July 16, 2010

Transcripts of three community forums about the oil spill held in Biloxi, Miss., and Mobile, Ala., in early June are now available online at http://gulfseagrant.tamu.edu/oilspill/transcripts.htm. The forums were question-and-answer sessions that covered several topics: wildlife and fisheries; technological disasters and mental health; business and personal finance; data and monitoring; and legal perspectives.

Florida's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been designated the lead state agency for responding to potential impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill along Florida's shoreline. This website will serve as the primary location for updates and information on response actions and impacts to the state of Florida.

On Tuesday, April 20, 2010 an offshore oil drilling platform, Deepwater Horizon, exploded in the Gulf of Mexico near Louisiana. The rig, owned by Transocean Ltd, was under contract to BP. Submerged at the bottom of the Gulf, the rig continues to discharge in the range of 35,000 to 60,000 barrels per day. BP, the United States Coast Guard and the Minerals Management Service are the lead response agencies on the oil spill. For information, please visit www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com.

Governor Charlie Crist has made Florida's preparation and response for impacts of the oil spill a top priority. Since Governor Crist's first flyover of the oil spill on Tuesday, April 27, 2010, he has worked to ensure that Florida is vigilant to take every necessary action to protect the Sunshine State's beaches and the health and well-being of both residents and visitors. For regular updates, visit http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm.

Scallop Search: Results Reported

CHNEP Harbor Happenings Summer 2010

Volunteers have been snorkeling to find bay scallops in our estuaries. Their efforts help monitor and document the health and status of the bay scallop population. Local organizations coordinating the volunteers include Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (Lee County), Florida Sea Grant (Charlotte County) and Sarasota County.

The Fish & Wildlife Research Institute began monitoring bay scallops in 1994. Their Bay Scallop Project 2009 Annual Report is available at www.CHNEP.org. Information about bay scallops was included in the spring 2010 issue of Harbor Happenings and some local efforts were described in the fall 2009 issue of Harbor Happenings. Issues of the newsletter are posted as PDF fi les at www.CHNEP.org.

The Florida bay scallop population is comprised of many small, discrete, local populations along the Gulf Coast that are in large part limited to the near-shore, shallow water seagrass beds.

River Estuary Coastal Observing Network: Water Quality Monitoring Network

CHNEP Harbor Happenings Summer 2010

This past May, the Army Corps of Engineers began pulse releases from Lake Okeechobee to lower lake levels before the start of the summer rainy season. In late 2007, the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) Marine Laboratory launched the River Estuary Coastal Observing Network (RECON) system to track key water quality parameters from Lake Okeechobee to the Gulf of Mexico. The system was funded by private donations and is maintained by marine lab staff.

RECON is a fully integrated, portable, realtime water quality monitoring system. The data generated from RECON is helping with research that can illuminate specific biological and physical processes and related resource management questions/concerns such as:

- Alteration of light that sustains seagrass habitats with changes in color and turbidity.
- Rapid pulses of fresh water from runoff, low dissolved oxygen (DO) and hypoxia (low oxygen zones) that make habitats unsuitable for many species, resulting in reduced biodiversity.
- High nitrate and chlorophyll concentrations indicative of enhanced nutrient levels and algal blooms that can result in stressful low DO and hypoxic zones.

Currently there are eight RECON sensors, six of which are deployed in fixed locations spanning almost 90 miles from Moore Haven west of Lake Okeechobee to Redfish Pass (separates the islands of Captiva and North Captiva).

- Three stations are on the Caloosahatchee River at Moore Haven, Fort Myers and Shell Point.
- Two stations are in the Pine Island Sound Aquatic Preserve at Redfish Pass and Blind Pass.
- One station is at San Carlos Bay off Fort Myers Beach in the Gulf of Mexico.

- One RECON is configured as a "mobile unit, which is transported to specific research sites as "areas of interest" are identified.
- Each of the six deployed sensors is removed annually for six to eight weeks of servicing and recalibration. The eighth sensor is used while each sensor is being maintained.

The sensors transmit real-time data on 10 key water quality parameters, which are sampled and uploaded hourly. The parameters include salinity (conductivity), water temperature, chlorophyll a (an indicator of the presence of blooms of microalgae), nitrate, colored dissolved organic matter (CDOM), currents (at the Gulf of Mexico), depth, DO and turbidity (concentration of suspended sediments). The data is available at www.recon.sccf.org or by smart phone at http://recon.sccf.org/wireless/index.shtml. Additionally, the website allows plotting and downloading of archived historical data at http://recon.sccf.org/loboviz/index.shtml through its flexible graphing capabilities.

Since its launch, RECON sensors have tracked numerous natural events, including the arrival and impact of 2008's Tropical Storm Fay with its associated heavy rains (see p. 10). They also showed the extensive impacts of historically cold temperatures this past winter (December 2009 to January 2010), which significantly affected marine mammals, turtles and fish across the south.

They have also been critical in following the changes in Pine Island Sound with the opening of Blind Pass in 2009. Sensors currently show the dramatic impact on the Caloosahatchee estuary of the high-volume Lake Okeechobee releases initiated in early May (see p. 10).

RECON data has played a supporting role in the weekly water management meetings between the South Florida Water Management District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local governments. During the dry season, the Caloosahatchee estuary often needs low-volume releases of fresh water to prevent salinity levels from becoming too high.

During the rainy season, the Caloosahatchee often receives too much fresh water, causing salinity levels to become too low to support a healthy ecosystem. City of Sanibel staff use the readings from the RECON sensor at Shell Point as a gauge of water conditions.

During the extended drought periods in the past several years, salinities in the Caloosahatchee River were quite high. After several storms in March 2010, salinities dropped significantly and began climbing before more late April rains. Once the Lake Okeechobee releases started, salinities dropped to zero until mid-June, when the releases slowed a little. Salinities dropped back to zero as lake releases resumed.

Harbor Happenings Editor's note: Salinity (saltiness) in the estuaries fluctuates naturally. Releases of fresh water into the system can change the salinity too much, affecting the health of seagrasses.

Louisiana's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates

For information about Louisiana oil spill response activities, visit: http://emergency.louisiana.gov/.

Louisiana Coastal Zone Management Program Draft Section 309 Assessment and Strategy Public Meeting

Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act establishes a voluntary coastal zone enhancement grants program to encourage states and territories to develop program changes in one or more of nine pre-identified enhancement areas. The enhancement areas are: public access, coastal hazards, ocean resources, wetlands, cumulative and secondary impacts, marine debris, special area management plans, government and facility siting, and aquaculture.

The Louisiana Coastal Zone Management Program will conduct a public meeting for the purpose of receiving comments relative to its Draft Section 309 Assessment and Strategy Grant at 6:00 PM on Monday, August 30, 2010 in the Griffon Room on the first floor of the LaSalle Building at 617 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA.

A copy of the draft 309 Assessment and Strategy report is available for review at the Coastal Management Division office, LaSalle Building, 10th floor and on the DNR Website here. Oral and or written comments will be accepted at the public meeting and before by sending to Mr. Jon A. Truxillo at the information below.

Correspondence or requests for additional information should be directed to Jon A. Truxillo, LDNR/CMD, P.O. Box 44487 Baton Rouge, LA 70804. Phone Numbers 225.342.3394 or 800.267.4019. Email address jon.truxillo@la.gov

Video Shows Consumers How Oil Tainted Seafood is Detected

July 7, 2010

In response to consumer concerns about oil contaminated seafood from the Gulf of Mexico reaching the marketplace, Louisiana Sea Grant has produced a short video outlining the precautions taken to ensure tainted shell and finfish don't end up on the table.

"Nearly every day we hear stories of people afraid to eat shrimp or fish because of the oil spill," said Chuck Wilson, LSG executive director. "The seafood making it to restaurants and grocery stores remains safe. State and federal waters affected by the spill are closed to fishing, and dockside measures are in place that add an additional level of safety."

The one-minute video – available for viewing at www.youtube.com/user/LouisianaSeaGrant – demonstrates how trained inspectors detect oil contaminated seafood as part of the daily screening process. A high-definition version of the video also can be viewed or downloaded from Louisiana Sea Grant's website at www.laseagrant.org/comm/media.htm.

Media outlets wanting a copy of the video file, or the audio file, should contact Roy Kron at rkron@lsu.edu. Several Louisiana Sea Grant personnel also have been trained to detect oil contaminated seafood and are available for interviews.

Mississippi's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response Updates

For information about Mississippi oil spill response, visit http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/DMR/oil-spill.htm.

Peer Listeners Prepare to Lend an Ear

Everyone needs someone to talk to from time to time. For people dealing with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, having friends to talk to about day-to-day stresses can lead them toward healing and coping. About 90 Gulf Coast residents attended two training sessions July 14 and 15 to become volunteer peer listeners in a program coordinated by the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension, Auburn University Marine Center, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team, NOAA Gulf Coast Services Center and Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Peer listeners learned how to make people feel at ease and talk about what they are feeling. They also learned characteristics of a good listener. Other topics included communications skills, managing anger, identifying depression and assessing suicide risk. They were encouraged to use the skills to bloom where they are planted and work with friends, family, co-workers and neighbors.

"Peer listening is effective because many people who need help may be reluctant to seek out mental health professionals after a technological disaster," said LaDon Swann, director of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium. "This training gives people skills to help them create a social safety net in their communities."

Sociologist Steven Picou of the University of South Alabama, who implemented the peer listener training in Alaska after the Exxon Valdez oil spill and has performed extensive research on communities and disasters, conducted the training. During the four-hour training sessions, Picou told volunteers to use attentive silence to listen to people who are expressing anger, guilt or frustration over the oil spill. He said a good peer listener is not judgmental and does not try to change peoples' paths; peer listeners simply commit to accompanying others on their journeys. He offered many real-life examples from his research and experiences regarding the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

"I think this is a great opportunity for people to get involved," said Kay Baggett, a retired biology teacher from Ocean Springs, Miss., who attended a training session at The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Lab in Ocean Springs. "It made me aware of people who really do have concerns (about the oil spill)."

About 175 people have said they would like to become peer listeners, and mental health and disaster relief organizations have expressed interest in partnering and coordinating efforts to reach more people in the Gulf of Mexico region. The groups coordinating the peer listening program are working to secure funding to train hundreds of peer listeners in the region. To show your interest in attending a future training session, go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Peer_Listening_Registration.

Website Seeks Information on Oil-spill Research, Monitoring Activities

July 9, 2010

Scientists performing oil spill-related research and monitoring activities are encouraged to enter their information into the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Research and Monitoring Activities database (http://gulfseagrant.org/oilspill/database.htm). Researchers may enter their projects in less than 5 minutes per activity. People interested in viewing the information can perform queries or view all activities on the website. Numerous organizations have provided input and endorse this online clearinghouse, which contains brief descriptions of oil spill-related research, monitoring and restoration activities that are occurring at or funded by universities and state and federal agencies.

In addition to coordinating existing research activities, a webpage has been developed to list opportunities for researchers and others to find oil-spill-related research, monitoring and restoration funding opportunities. That site is available at: http://gulfseagrant.org/oilspill/rfp.htm.

Several groups identified the need for this database to improve coordination and identify research and monitoring gaps. The National Sea Grant Office and Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant programs initiated the effort. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Coastal Data Development Center (NCDDC) built and designed the database to meet these goals. For more information about these activities, contact Steve Sempier (stephen.sempier@usm.edu).

The Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant College Programs include Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, Florida Sea Grant College Program and Texas Sea Grant College Program. Sea Grant College Programs are NOAA-state partnerships that are based at universities and support coastal resource use and conservation. Sea Grant research and outreach programs promote better understanding, conservation and use of America's coastal resources. The NOAA National Coastal Data Development Center is based at Stennis Space Center in Mississippi and supports national and regional data management needs for NOAA and its partners. NCDDC is dedicated to building the long-term coastal data record to support environmental prediction, scientific analyses and formulation of public policy.

DMR Offers Mississippi Shrimp Fishermen Free TED Gear for Their Skimmer Trawls

BILOXI, Miss. – Due to reports of unusually high numbers of endangered sea turtle sightings and strandings in Mississippi, an effort is being made to increase the survivability of any sea turtles that may become captured in a skimmer shrimp trawl. To support this effort, the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is partnering with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, through the BP Recovered Oil for Wildlife Fund, to provide free of charge turtle excluder device (TED) gear and installation instruction to Mississippi commercial shrimpers who agree to voluntarily use TEDs in their skimmer trawls.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has indicated that TED gear for Gulf of Mexico shrimpers using skimmer trawls may be required in the near future. This gear update would relieve skimmer trawl shrimpers from tow-time restrictions. If you are interested in receiving free TED gear and installation instructions for your Mississippi commercial skimmer trawl, please contact the DMR Shrimp and Crab Bureau at 228-374-5000. For questions about the potential federal TED gear requirement for skimmer trawls, please contact the NMFS Regional Office at 727-824-5312.

Students Win Scholarships to Talk Oil Spill, Environment in Alaska

East Central High School Senior Cierra Martin of Hurley and Mississippi School for Math and Science Senior Bobby Glenn of Moss Point have been selected to receive $1,500 scholarships to attend the Ocean Science and Leadership Expedition in Cordova, Alaska. The two students will share their experiences with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill with peers from Alaska and across the county during a 10-day summer intensive learning experience Aug. 5-14.

Martin and Glenn will work with local marine scientists and educators in Alaska while learning about oceanographic principles and issues, such as oil spills, marine debris and climate change. Experts at the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council will teach them about the Exxon Valdez oil spill and see what is being done to prevent future spills. They will engage in a simulated oil-spill scenario to learn the decision-making process of responding to environmental emergencies. Martin and Glenn will observe ocean science principles firsthand, camp on remote beaches and paddle among icebergs during a four-day sea kayaking expedition in Prince William Sound. Upon their return, both students will share their experiences with their schools and their communities.

The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium is sponsoring the scholarships, which include tuition and some travel expenses. The Prince William Sound Science Center, which conducts the Ocean Science and Leadership Expedition, also granted two scholarships to Gulf of Mexico students Danielle Wall of Sarasota, Fla., and Grant Curry of Lubbock, Texas. Ten students are allowed into the program. For more information about the Ocean Science & Leadership Expedition, visit http://www.thesca.org/node/29350.

Mississippi Prepares Boom Removal Plan with Cities and Counties

Boom washed ashore at Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Jackson County. Displaced boom will be removed from all Mississippi marsh and shoreline areas as soon as possible. Photo Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources/Grand Bay NERR

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) and Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) met with Coast mayors and county officials on Tuesday to solicit their input on a plan to remove boom from Mississippi waters as hurricane season heats up and oil spill response operations in Mississippi move into recovery mode.

"The boom poses a greater threat to the marshes and shoreline from a significant storm event than the oil," said DMR Executive Director Bill Walker. "BP has committed to staying until all Mississippi beaches and marshes are cleaned."

"While we will continue to see tar balls come on shore, they are scattered events that are cleaned up by BP contractors, and they maintain the capability to quickly remove tar balls. Boom does not stop tar balls most of the time, and the placement of some boom could cause severe damage to our marshes and property damage if we have a storm. We are developing a transition plan with input from

local officials to phase out the removal of boom in several weeks so that the areas the counties are most concerned about will come out last. These decisions are being made with much discussion among MDEQ, DMR, the Governor's Office, and with input from local officials," said Trudy Fisher, MDEQ Executive Director.

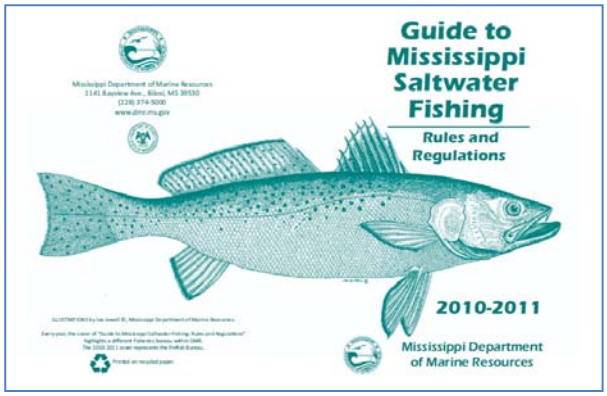
Walker asked cities and counties to submit their input to him in writing, indicating what boom should be removed and when it should be removed. Fabric fencing that is already in place is not included in the boom removal task.

Walker said he will inform county EOCs of boom removal locations in advance of their removal. The goal is to remove all boom from Mississippi waters by August 31. Boom removal will proceed as follows:

- The first 20 percent to 40 percent of boom to be removed will be ineffective boom and secondary boom.
- The next 40 percent of boom to be removed will be boom at the mouths of bays and safe harbor locations.
- The final 20 percent of boom to be removed will be the Magnolia boom and boom in sensitive marsh areas.

More information and links about MDEQ's and MDMR's roles in oil spill response are available at www.deq.state.ms.us/oilspill and www.dmr.state.ms.us/DMR/oil-spill.htm. Water sampling information available at: http://opcgis.deq.state.ms.us/oilspillmap and air monitoring data at: http://gulfcoast.airnowtech.org. Join MDEQ on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/MDEQ/118172664880239?v=wall. Follow MDEQ on Twitter: http://twitter.com/MDEQ.

New Saltwater Fishing Regulations Book Now Available



BILOXI, Miss. – The 2010-2011 edition of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) free Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing Rules and Regulations is now available at the DMR office located at 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi. The guide incorporates new and revised saltwater fishing regulations for the state of Mississippi. The guides are also being distributed to bait shops along the Coast and anywhere you can buy a saltwater fishing license.

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 proper venting procedures, 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 2010-2011 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 under publications.

Mississippi DMR Using Grant to Protect Sea Turtles in Mississippi Sound

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) has received a $107,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in a partnership effort to protect sea turtle populations at risk from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. NFWF's Recovered Oil Fund for Wildlife was made possible with proceeds from BP's share of net revenue from oil recovered from the Deepwater Horizon site. The fund will support immediate actions to safeguard the populations of species most at risk from the Gulf oil spill, notably shorebirds, waterfowl, marsh birds and sea turtles.

"Since the Deepwater Horizon spill, the Mississippi Sound has seen an unusually high number of sea turtle sightings and strandings," said DMR Fisheries Director Dale Diaz. "We are grateful for the opportunity this grant provides to protect this at-risk and endangered population that has moved into our waters."

The DMR is taking many management actions through the Recovered Oil Fund for Wildlife to protect sea turtles in the Mississippi Sound, including the following:

- Conducting observer programs onboard shrimp vessels. DMR staff members will observe operations onboard traditional shrimp trawl vessels and skimmer trawl vessels.
- Offering free turtle excluder device (TED) gear and information on proper installation to commercial skimmer trawl shrimpers who volunteer to use TEDs in lieu of tow time restrictions. So far through this program, the DMR has given out 124 TEDs to 62 boats and is securing additional TEDs to distribute.
- Mailing to all commercial and recreational license holders literature, prepared by the NOAA Fisheries Service, about what to do in case of interaction with sea turtles. New license holders will be given literature when they purchase a license at the DMR office.
- Conducting seminars for commercial and recreational fishermen about how to avoid interaction with turtles and what to do if a turtle encounters their gear.

In addition to these measures, DMR reduced maximum tow times from 55 minutes to 30 minutes for vessels using skimmer trawls without TEDs. Anyone who encounters a stranded or injured sea turtle or who snares a turtle with fishing gear should call the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies at 888-SOS-DOLPHIN (888-767-3657) or the NOAA Fisheries Service Stranding HOTLINE at 978-281-9351.

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.

Tarballs from Deepwater Horizon Found on Bolivar and Galveston Island

July 5, 2010

AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today announced the Texas General Land Office's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program is working closely with the U.S. Coast Guard for a coordinated response to the state's first confirmed impact from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Coast Guard reported five gallons of tarballs from the Deepwater Horizon spill were found on Bolivar Peninsula and Galveston Island yesterday.

"We've said since day one that if and when we have an impact from Deepwater Horizon, it would be in the form of tarballs," Patterson said. "This shows that our modeling is accurate. Any Texas shores impacted by the Deepwater spill will be cleaned up quickly and BP will be picking up the tab."

Two crews are removing tarballs today. Responders have recovered about 35 gallons of waste material at Crystal Beach on Bolivar Peninsula and East Beach on Galveston Island. Of the 35 gallons of waste material removed, about five gallons are composed of small tar balls, with most of the material consisting of seaweed and sand swept up during cleanup operations.

About one gallon of tar balls was recovered along Crystal Beach on Bolivar Peninsula and about four gallons of tar balls were collected at East Beach on Galveston Island. An approximately 1.5-mile stretch along Crystal Beach is still being cleaned, with nothing remaining but small tar balls ranging from about three-eighths of an inch in diameter to just over an inch in diameter.

East Beach has been cleaned on Galveston Island, and Stewart Beach will be cleaned Tuesday after high tide and before the influx of beachgoers. The number of beachgoers today prevented operations on Stewart Beach.

Because tarballs don't float on the water surface, protective booms won't stop them from making landfall, which means workers with shovels and rakes must remove them. Any tarballs found are being sent for testing to determine their source.

"As always, the Land Office and Coast Guard will work closely together to protect our Texas coastline," Patterson said. "We have a lot of experience dealing with tarballs. Typically, they're not hard to remove."

Texas Tarballs Underscore Need for Perry's Gulf Project

July 7, 2010

AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today said the Deepwater Horizon tarballs washing up on Texas shores underscore the need for the Gulf Project, a public-private coalition of energy and environmental experts organized by Governor Rick Perry to promote research and development of safer offshore drilling.

"Offshore exploration and production is essential to not only our state's economy but to our national security, and Texans know that," Patterson said. "The Gulf Project will bring some Texas know-how to the table in an effort to make offshore drilling safer for all."

Patterson, who oversees the state's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program at the Texas General Land Office, notes that most technology for responding to oil spills hasn't advanced in 30 years.

"The Gulf Project will kick-start the research and development that's needed to improve our ability to respond when there's a problem," Patterson said.

The University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, the University of Houston, Rice University, Texas Tech University, Southern Methodist University, the Research Partnership to Secure Energy for America, the Texas General Land Office and the Railroad Commission of Texas are participating in the effort, and other experts and institutions of higher education may join later.

Texas' energy industry continues to fuel the nation, supplying 20 percent of the nation's oil production, 25 percent of its natural gas production, 25 percent of its refining capacity, and nearly 60 percent of the nation's chemical manufacturing. Additionally, Texas' energy industry employs 200,000 to 300,000 Texans, with $35 billion in total wages.

"Texans are practical — they know we must continue to drill offshore — but they also expect that everything possible is being done to protect our environment," Patterson said. "The Gulf Project will help us continue to do both."

Ironically, the State Most Prepared is the Least Affected by Spill

July 8, 2010

AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today announced the rapid response to remove Deepwater Horizon tarballs from the upper Texas coast this week won't affect the state's $20 million fund set aside for oil spill cleanups.

"In Texas, we're ready," Patterson said. "I think the rest of the nation could learn a few lessons from us when it comes to planning ahead and preparing for oil spills."

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division of the Texas General Land Office is funded with a 1.3 cent per barrel fee assessed on oil passing through Texas ports. That fund pays for prepositioned equipment such as skimmers, air boats and oil boom at five offices along the Texas coast, staffed full-time by GLO oil spill response experts who have spent years working with local contractors, local governments and the U.S. Coast Guard preparing to respond to any oil spill in Texas waters.

"In Texas, our oil spill folks already know their federal and industry counterparts when there's an emergency because they've worked together before, in drills or responding to an actual spill," Patterson said. "Responding to a crisis is not the time to be meeting your partners or determining who is in charge."

Patterson said this level of cooperation between industry, local, state and federal responders in Texas ensures a quick and effective response. Funds are available when it comes to oil spill response in Texas, thanks to the Texas Legislature's foresight in passing the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act of 1991, shortly after the Exxon Valdez spill. In the case of an oil spill from an unknown source, Texas has $20 million set aside for cleanup costs. That $20 million fund is from the 1.3 cent tax on imported oil coming through Texas ports.

"For spills where the responsible party is known, such as the Deepwater Horizon spill, we don't have to touch that fund," Patterson said. "We just bill the responsible party, such as BP, directly for all cleanup costs."

The cost to the consumer for this fund is negligible: About 7/1,000 of a penny per gallon of gasoline refined in Texas. "I think the Texas response to oil spills in general shows that it really pays to plan ahead," Patterson said.

To find information on the Deepwater Horizon spill and its impact on the Texas coast, visit http://www.glo.state.tx.us/Deepwater.

Beach Watch Keeping Even Closer Eye on Nueces County

July 14, 2010

AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today unveiled a new and expanded Texas Beach Watch website that allows users to see real-time data on beach conditions in Nueces County. "This pilot project puts more eyes than ever on Coastal Bend beaches," Patterson said. "At TexasBeachWatch.com you're just a mouse click away from knowing if the surf's up or not."

To find a map of the five beaches participating in the pilot program, just click on the Beach Conditions tab at the top of the Texas Beach Watch page. Next, click on the icon of a beach to get the most up-to-date report on conditions there.

The site monitors overall beach conditions, water color, wind direction and the type and height of the surf. It also notes if there are any algal blooms, which can cause respiratory issues for some, and reports on any beach flags to alert swimmers of any risks. Volunteers collect the data daily and send it to the website via Blackberries provided to them for real-time reporting.

TexasBeachWatch.com allows beachgoers to subscribe to and receive e-mails about their favorite beaches when updates are posted online. "If this works out, we hope to expand this effort all along the Texas coast," Patterson said.

TexasBeachWatch.com is user-friendly, allowing beachgoers to simply click on a map of the Texas coast for a pop-up window showing water quality data or the latest beach conditions. The site takes the mystery out of what's in the water and helps coastal communities identify areas needing focused improvement.

Texas Beach Watch monitors water quality at all of Texas' top recreational beaches by testing for the presence of the Enterococcus bacteria, which is found in the intestinal tracts of animals and humans and indicates fecal contamination, usually by storm water runoff. When bacteria levels in the water exceed the acceptable standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Land Office works with local officials to issue advisories warning the public not to swim in the affected waters. Under the Texas Beach Watch program, the Land Office manages a network of universities, local governments and laboratories to collect water samples and test for harmful bacteria.

"Short of taking along a microbiologist, TexasBeachWatch.com is the best way to know that the water's fine," Patterson said. For additional information on Texas Beach Watch, call 1-800-998-4GLO, or visit the Texas Beach Watch website at www.TexasBeachWatch.com.

Other News

Obama Administration Officials Announce the Final Recommendations of the Ocean Policy Task Force

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

July 19, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC – Obama Administration officials today released the Final Recommendations of the Ocean Policy Task Force, which would establish a National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes (National Policy) and create a National Ocean Council (NOC) to strengthen ocean governance and coordination. The Final Recommendations prioritize actions for the NOC to pursue, and call for a flexible framework for coastal and marine spatial planning to address conservation, economic activity, user conflict, and sustainable use of the ocean, our coasts and the Great Lakes.

The NOC would coordinate across the Federal Government to implement the National Policy. The Final Recommendations also call for the establishment of a Governance Coordinating Committee to formally engage with state, tribal, and local authorities. The Final Recommendations are expected to be adopted into an Executive Order by President Obama.

"President Obama recognized that our uses of the ocean are expanding at a rate that challenges our ability to manage significant and often competing demands," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "With a growing number of recreational, scientific, energy, and security activities, we need a national policy that sets the United States on a new path for the conservation and sustainable use of these critical natural resources."

Dr. John P. Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, lauded the policy as a significant step towards securing the sustained well-being of America's waters and coastal regions.

"A National Ocean Policy reflects and affirms the invaluable role that science plays in the stewardship of these cherished resources," said Dr. Holdren. "The work of the National Ocean Council will ensure that future generations of Americans are able to reap the immeasurable and undeniable benefits of healthy ocean, coastal, and Great Lake ecosystems."

"This first-of-its kind framework will help our nation plan wisely for the future of our oceans and coastlines, so that we can continue to experience their beauty and bounty for generations to come," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. "With 2 billion acres we help oversee on the Outer Continental Shelf, Interior is a proud partner in this initiative, and we look forward to helping coordinate the science, policies and management of how we use, conserve, and protect these public treasures."

"Protecting our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes is critical to the health of our communities, vibrancy of our economy and overall security of our nation," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "The new National Policy provides a clear road map for all federal agencies to work together, with local partners, to protect our vital waters for future generations. EPA is proud to have played a role in the development of this plan and the continued protection of our treasured natural resources."

"Today, possibly more so than any point in our nation's history, we appreciate that healthy oceans matter," said Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Today we extend our nation's proud conservation ethic beyond our shores and into our coasts, oceans and Great Lakes."

"The Department of Homeland Security and Coast Guard applaud the Oceans Policy Task Force's efforts to fulfill President Obama's vision for a national approach to maintaining the health and vibrancy of the world's maritime regions," said Admiral Bob Papp, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. "The Task Force's Final Recommendations provide a balance between protecting and preserving the marine environment, and promoting economic progress. The framework protects the interests of all users, improves ocean stewardship, and provides the foundation for improving maritime governance at the international, regional, state, and local levels."

"The Department of the Navy strongly supports the principles and framework laid out in this new Executive Order," said Donald Schregardus, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Environment. "Strengthening the vital link between our global maritime mission and our responsibility to safeguard the environment is a key component to our environmental strategy. The establishment of the National Ocean Council will be important in advancing this strategic priority."

In June 2009, President Obama created the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force and charged it with developing recommendations to enhance national stewardship of the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes and promote the long term conservation and use of these resources. The Task Force was led by CEQ and included 24 senior-level policy officials from across the Federal Government.

At the President's direction, the Task Force released an Interim Report in September 2009 and an Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning in December 2009. Each of these reports was made available online for public comment. The Task Force received and reviewed close to 5,000 written comments from Congress, stakeholders, and the public before finalizing its recommendations. The Task Force's Final Recommendations combine and update the proposals contained in the two earlier reports.

The National Policy includes a set of guiding principles for management decisions and actions toward stewardship that ensures that the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured so as to promote the well-being, prosperity, and security of present and future generations. It prioritizes actions, including ecosystem-based management, regional ecosystem protection and restoration, and strengthened and integrated observing systems, that seek to address some of the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. These strategies and objectives provide a bridge between the National Policy and action on the ground.

The National Policy identifies coastal and marine spatial planning as a priority. Marine spatial planning offers a comprehensive, integrated approach to planning and managing uses and activities over the long term. Under the National Policy, coastal and marine spatial planning would be regional in scope, developed cooperatively among Federal, state, tribal, and local authorities, and include substantial stakeholder, scientific, and public input. The coastal and marine spatial planning framework:

- Establishes a new regional approach to how we use and protect the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes to decrease user conflicts, improve planning and regulatory efficiencies and decrease costs and delays, and preserve critical ecosystem services.
- Creates a comprehensive alternative to sector-by-sector and statute-by-statute decision-making.

- Establishes regional planning bodies, bringing Federal, state, and tribal partners together in an unprecedented manner to jointly plan for the future of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.
- Ensures science-based information is at the heart of decision-making.
- Emphasizes stakeholder and public participation.

The National Ocean Council would plan to hold its first meeting later this summer to begin the immediate work of implementing the National Policy. The full text of the National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes is available at www.whitehouse.gov/oceans.

USGS Releases Coastal Vulnerability Assessment

Coastal Vulnerability Assessment of the Northern Gulf of Mexico to Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Change, By E.A. Pendleton, J.A. Barras, S.J. Williams, and D.C. Twichell

A coastal vulnerability index (CVI) was used to map the relative vulnerability of the coast to future sea-level rise along the Northern Gulf of Mexico from Galveston, TX, to Panama City, FL. The CVI ranks the following in terms of their physical contribution to sea-level rise-related coastal change: geomorphology, regional coastal slope, rate of relative sea-level rise, historical shoreline change rate, mean tidal range, and mean significant wave height. The rankings for each variable are combined and an index value is calculated for 1-kilometer grid cells along the coast.

The CVI highlights those regions where the physical effects of sea-level rise might be the greatest. The CVI assessment presented here builds on an earlier assessment conducted for the Gulf of Mexico. Recent higher resolution shoreline change, land loss, elevation, and subsidence data provide the foundation for a better assessment for the Northern Gulf of Mexico. The areas along the Northern Gulf of Mexico that are likely to be most vulnerable to sea-level rise are parts of the Louisiana Chenier Plain, Teche-Vermillion Basin, and the Mississippi barrier islands, as well as most of the Terrebonne and Barataria Bay region and the Chandeleur Islands. These very high vulnerability areas have the highest rates of relative sea-level rise and the highest rates of shoreline change or land area loss. The information provided by coastal vulnerability assessments can be used in long-term coastal management and policy decision making.

EPA Gulf of Mexico Program FY2010 Projects Announced

The U.S. EPA Gulf of Mexico Program announced the following Cooperative Agreements awarded in FY 10:

- Habitat Conservation and Restoration -Continuation and Advancement of the HCRT Priority Issue Team
- GAME (Geospatial Assessment of Marine Ecosystems)
- Dissemination and Evaluation of a Coastal Community Resilience Index
- Assessment and Prioritization of Gulf Coastal Ecosystems Affected by Alterations in FW Inflow
- Effects of Nutrients on Downstream Ecological Processes in the Galveston Bay Estuary
- StormSmart Coasts and Homeowner Handbooks
- Binational Training Workshops on Harmful Algal Blooms in Support of HABSOS
- Building Cultural Competency in Experiential Environmental Education

- Enhanced Public Awareness and Understanding of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Priority
- Mercury Risks and Selenium Benefits Related to Consumption of Selected Estuarine and Marine Fishes in the Northern Gulf of Mexico
- Achieving Gulf-wide Data Comparability through Round Robins
- Development of Pilot Nutrient Criteria for an Estuary in the Western Gulf of Mexico
- A Northern Gulf Coastal Observing System

Please visit the following Gulf of Mexico Program website for detailed information about these projects.

Director Bromwich to Host Public Meetings Nationwide to Discuss Deepwater Drilling Safety, Containment and Spill Response

07/19/2010 Contact: Nicholas Pardi, BOEM (202) 208-3985

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Michael R. Bromwich, Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEM), announced today that he will be leading a series of public meetings to collect information and views about deepwater drilling safety reforms, blowout containment, and oil spill response. Bromwich will be soliciting input from the general public, state and local leaders, and experts from academia, the environmental community, and the oil and gas industry.

“We will engage the public and experts on these issues to determine what additional measures are needed so that deepwater drilling can proceed in a manner that is safe for crews, the environment, and coastal communities,” Bromwich said. “It’s important that we hear from those who have been directly affected by the BP Oil Spill, as well as from other stakeholders, including the conservation community and the oil and gas industry itself.”

“We need to know that industry got the message,” Bromwich continued, “and that they are quickly taking steps to ensure deepwater drilling operations are safe. They also have to demonstrate to us that they can contain a catastrophic blowout similar to BP Oil Spill as well as respond appropriately in the event of another oil spill.”

The suspensions announced last week established a temporary pause of deepwater drilling in order to address issues related to drilling, blowout containment, and oil spill response, including to allow time to collect additional information regarding these issues through public outreach and ongoing investigations into the Deepwater Horizon incident. The suspensions are set to last until November 30, 2010, or until such earlier time that the Secretary determines that deepwater drilling operations can proceed safely.

“Because we’re interested in getting input from a variety of sources, we plan to hold the meetings in seven states – Alabama, Alaska, California, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas,” Bromwich said. “We’re working on finalizing the planning for these meetings, including the specific locations and dates, and will have another announcement with those details very soon.”

Meetings are currently being scheduled to occur in August in the following cities: New Orleans, LA, Lafayette, LA, Mobile, AL, Pensacola, FL, Santa Barbara, CA, and Anchorage, AK. Meetings will be held in early September in the following cities: Biloxi, MS and Houston, TX.

The meeting format planned is one that will allow representatives from academia, industry, and environmental organizations to serve as panel members to provide testimony, combined with the

opportunity for audience members to provide public comment during the meeting. Additionally, the public will be able to submit comments in person at the meetings, online, and by mail.

Mackey's Creek Joins 10 Waters To Watch

Restoration and new spawing site.

Mackey's Creek, Mississippi has been listed as one of the National Fish Habitat Partnership's (NFHAP) 10 Waters To Watch in 2010. "We are honored that this project was recognized by the NFHAP as one of the 10 Waters to Watch for 2010. We are hopeful that this is just the beginning of a larger effort to restore Gulf Coast strain walleye habitat in the Tombigbee River Basin, and we are grateful for the support from SARP, without whom projects like this would not be possible" said Larry Pugh, Assistant Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Fisheries Bureau. Mackey's Creek was the only water body in the Southeast to make the 2010 list.

The restoration project on Mackey's Creek, which was funded by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and other partners in 2009, is a cooperative effort between Southeast Aquatics Resources Partnership (SARP), the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) District 1 Fisheries, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Pvt. John Allen National Fish Hatchery.

The goal of the project is to stabilize a section of stream bank and improve habitat for Gulf Coast Strain (GCS) walleye on Mackey's Creek in Prentiss County. Future plans include creating or enhancing additional GCS walleye spawning habitat, and stocking hatchery-reared fingerling walleye. For more information about the Mackey's Creek project click here.

Waters that receive designation on the 10 Waters To Watch list include rivers, streams and coastal areas, as well as lakes and reservoirs from across the nation that have been selected by a group of the nation's top authorities on aquatic conservation as benefitting from strategic conservation efforts that result in cleaner and healthier habitats for fish, wildlife species and humans. It is hoped that the successful restoration of waters listed today will serve as models for future restoration projects and initiatives. SARP congratulates its partners involved in the success of this significant project.

Grant Opportunities

Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration Partnership

Year 10 Proposal Guidelines
Submittal Due Date: September 1, 2010

The Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration Partnership (GCRP) invites proposals for its tenth round of citizen-driven habitat restoration projects. The partnership is seeking to fund on-the-ground projects to restore marine, estuarine, and riparian habitats to benefit living marine resources and to provide educational and social benefits by significantly involving the community. Please refer to the proposal guidelines for detailed information on submission requirements.

The GCRP is a multi-year, regional partnership between the Gulf of Mexico Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program (CRP), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Gulf of Mexico Program (GoMP), and the Gulf States and Caribbean Territories. The purpose of this partnership is to strengthen the conservation efforts of the NOAA CRP and EPA GoMP by supporting on-the-ground restoration activities and fostering local stewardship of ecologically significant areas.

Funding:
Proposals will be evaluated and selected by the GCRP steering committee, which consists of Gulf of Mexico Foundation staff, NOAA Restoration Center, US EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and natural resource agency technical staff from each of the Gulf States and US Territories in the Caribbean. Subject to available funding, approximately $660,000 is available for Year 2011 projects. Project funding levels will typically fall within the range of $25,000 - $100,000. All projects must provide a 1:1 match of the grant amount. Matching funds cannot be federal dollars.

Proposal Submission:
Proposals must be received by the Gulf of Mexico Foundation office no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT September 1, 2010.

Proposals should be no more than five (5) pages in length, not including Attachments. Proposals must include all of the information requested in, and be formatted as shown in, Attachment A of the proposal guidelines.
It is recommended that a draft proposal be submitted to the resource manager in the project area (see table in proposal guidelines) for review and comment prior to submission of a final proposal to the Gulf of Mexico Foundation.

For questions about the application process, or if you do not receive a return email within 24 hours after submitting your proposal, please contact:

Ryan Fikes, Deputy Director
Gulf of Mexico Foundation
ryan@gulfmex.org

For additional technical assistance, please contact the Gulf of Mexico Foundation or the NOAA Restoration Center Employee and/or Resource Manager in your state. Additional information can be found online at:

- Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration Partnership Year 10 Proposal Guidelines
- USEPA Gulf of Mexico Program/Gulf Ecological Management Sites Program

- NOAA Restoration Center Community-based Restoration Program
- Gulf of Mexico Foundation

Call for Gulf of Mexico Environmental Education Proposals

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 help to support regional education and environmental priorities in the Gulf of Mexico.

Link to Full Announcement
If you have difficulty accessing the full announcement electronically, please contact:
Steve Drescher, Policy Advisor: For application download issues only

NOAA's Office of Education (OEd) has issued a request for applications for Formal K-12 Education Projects that advance inquiry-based Earth System Science learning and stewardship directly tied to the school curriculum, with a particular interest in increasing climate literacy.

To address this goal, this solicitation will support service-learning and professional development projects related to NOAA's mission in the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather and climate sciences and stewardship. *Please note that projects related to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill are encouraged. A successful project will catalyze change in K-12 education at the state, regional and national level through development of new programs and/or revision of existing programs to improve the environmental literacy of K-12 teachers and their students. A successful project will also leverage NOAA assets, although use of non-NOAA assets is also encouraged.

The target audiences for the projects that will be supported through this funding opportunity are K-12 students, pre- and in-service teachers, and providers of pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher professional development. There is a special interest in projects that address reaching groups traditionally underserved and/or underrepresented in Earth System science, including elementary students and teachers.

Deadlines
The deadline for pre-proposals (which are required) is 5:00 PM EDT **September 8, 2010**.

The deadline for full applications is 5:00 PM EST on **January 12, 2011**. For further information please visit: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/funding_opps.html

For automated updates on this funding opportunity, we recommend you subscribe to our RSS feed at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/funding_opps_feed.xml.

NOAA Climate Program Announcement of Funding Opportunity

Announcement of FY2011 Funding Opportunity

The NOAA Climate Program Office's Announcement of FY2011 Funding Opportunity is now available, as well as information on how to submit a proposal. Full applications for all Competitions must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on **September 10, 2010**.

In addition, the fiscal year 2011 funding opportunity is organized around a new structure for the Climate Program Office's grants programs. Applicants will find activities organized under four programs: Climate Observations and Monitoring; Earth System Science; Modeling Analysis, Predictions, and Projections; and Climate and Societal Interactions. The Climate Program Office is also introducing a new cross-cutting initiative focusing on "Improving NOAA's Climate services for the Coastal Zone."

"This new structure will make it easier for applicants to see where their project will fit into NOAA's climate research needs," said Chester Koblinsky, Director of the NOAA Climate Program Office.

NOAA's Climate Program Office supports research that is conducted in regions across the United States, as well as globally. The office also provides strategic guidance and oversight for the agency's climate science and services program and is helping to lead the development of a proposed NOAA Climate Service.

Coastal Habitat Restoration Funding Opportunities

The NOAA Restoration Center has two new funding opportunities available for coastal habitat restoration projects:

Open Rivers Initiative

Through this program, the NOAA Restoration Center provides technical expertise and financial assistance to remove dams and barriers and restore habitat for the many species that migrate between the ocean and the nation's freshwater rivers and streams. Proposed projects should directly benefit migratory species such as salmon, sturgeon, shad, river herring, striped bass, and American eel. They should also improve community vitality and public safety and encourage economic growth. The deadline to apply for this opportunity is **November 17, 2010**. To learn more, click here.

Marine Debris Program

With funding from NOAA's Marine Debris Program, the NOAA Restoration Center administers the Community-based Marine Debris Removal Grants competition. This funding supports locally driven, community-based marine debris removal projects that benefit coastal habitat, waterways, and wildlife including migratory fish. Proposed projects should have strong on-the-ground habitat components involving the removal of marine debris and derelict fishing gear, as well as activities that provide social benefits for people and their communities and long-term ecological habitat improvements. The deadline to apply for this opportunity is **November 1, 2010**. To learn more, click here.

FY 2011 Funding Opportunity: Regional Ecosystem Prediction Program

Understanding Coral Ecosystem Connectivity in the Gulf of Mexico – Pulley Ridge to the Florida Keys

Due Date: Full proposals are due October 21, 2010 at 3 p.m. Eastern Time.

NOAA's Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (NOAA/CSCOR), in partnership with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (NOAA/OER), National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office, and Gulf of Mexico Regional Collaboration Team, is soliciting proposals for a project under the Regional Ecosystem Prediction Program of up to 5 years in duration to conduct research to improve the understanding of population connectivity of key species between the southernmost portion of Pulley Ridge on the West Florida continental shelf and downstream to the coral ecosystems of the Florida Keys. Coral ecosystems upstream of Pulley Ridge can be considered if directly relevant to population connectivity or to provide context to the overall study.

This information will be used to improve the ability of Gulf of Mexico resource managers to proactively develop strategies to manage and protect poorly understood mesophotic coral ecosystems, including coastal and marine spatial planning and the siting of marine protected areas and marine protected area networks for shallow and mesophotic coral ecosystems.

One project is expected to be supported for up to 5 years, with an annual budget up to $1,000,000. At no additional cost, up to 15 days per year for two years of time using the MolaMola AUV will be provided by the NOAA/OER National Institute for Undersea Science and Technology.

Additionally, NOAA/CSCOR has partnered once again with NOAA/OER to provide their expertise in administering appropriate technologies for field-based research to support your proposal such as advanced technical diving, autonomous underwater vehicles and remotely operated vehicles. Operational costs for conducting the research must be included in the proposal.

The full funding opportunity and information on how to apply can be found on grants.gov by clicking on this link or by searching for CFDA #11.478. For more information, please contact Kimberly Puglise, NOAA/CSCOR, 301-713-3338 x140 or kimberly.puglise@noaa.gov.

Texas Coastal Management Program Call for Proposals

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

The deadline for pre-proposals was June 23, 2010 by 5:00 p.m; however, submission of the pre-proposal is optional and is only necessary if written comments are desired. The full application is due **October 13,** 2010 by 5:00 p.m. Visit http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/grants/cycle16.html for more information.

NASA Research Announcement

This National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Research Announcement (NRA), entitled *Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES) – 2010*, solicits basic and applied research in support of NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD).

The NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD) pursues NASA's strategic goals using a wide variety of space flight programs that enable the execution of both remote sensing and *in situ* investigations. These investigations are carried out through flight of space missions in Earth orbit, as well as to or even beyond objects in the Solar System, and also through ground-based research activities that directly support these space missions. This ROSES NASA Research Announcement (NRA) solicits proposals for the latter of these two types of programs, in particular, ground-based supporting research and technology (SR&T) investigations that seek to understand naturally occurring space and Earth phenomena, human-induced changes in the Earth system, and Earth and space sciencerelated technologies and to support the national goals for further robotic and human exploration of the Moon and Mars.

For information, visit the ROSES 2010 announcement website.

National Sea Grant Law Center Requests Proposals

The National Sea Grant Law Center is accepting proposals for one-year, legal research and outreach projects addressing coastal and marine issues. The Law Center, housed at the University of Mississippi, was established in 2002 to provide legal research, education, and outreach services to the 32 Sea Grant College programs and their constituents. For this grant season, approximately $250,000 in federal funds will be available. A funding request of $25,000 per proposed project is suggested, with the equivalent of 50% matching funds required. The deadline for letters of intent is Friday, September 13, 2010. For more information on funding priorities, eligible applicants, and submission format, please visit: http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/SGLC%202009%20RFP.pdf

Conferences and Workshops

Register for Submerged Lands Conference Webinar Series

The 29th International Submerged Lands Management Conference will hold a webinar series in the fall of 2010. Hosted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)'s Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (CAMA), the series will consist of eight sessions. Starting in September, a webinar session will convene bi-weekly, starting with *Sea Level Rise and Property Rights*, on September 9th from 3-4:30pm EST. Other topics include submerged lands with respect to the use of GIS, restoration, climate change, recreational boat use, cultural resources, conservation and management, and the oil spill. For more information, session topics and dates, and to register for a webinar, visit: http://www.submergedlandsconference.com/.

Project Design and Evaluation Workshop

October 5-6, 2010
Grand Bay NERR
Moss Point, MS 39562

NOAA Coastal Services Center, Mississippi Coastal Plain RC&D, Grand Bay NERR and Weeks Bay NERR announce a training opportunity for coastal resource, program and project managers. On October 5 & 6, 2010 at Grand Bay NERR, plan to attend the Program Design and Evaluation Workshop. This course provides participants with the knowledge, skills, and tools to design and implement projects that have measurable impacts on the intended audience. The interactive curriculum can help increase the effectiveness of projects by applying instructional design theory including logic modeling. The course includes an introduction to evaluation elements.

Registration is due by September 22, 2010. Fee for the workshop is $15.00. Space is limited, so early registration is recommended. The use of credit cards is permitted. Please call the Mississippi Coastal Plain RC&D, Inc. at 601-528-5133 for credit card details. For questions about registration, please contact Amanda Gaskin (601-528-5133). For questions about workshop content, please contact Avia Huisman (228-475-7047 & avia.huisman@dmr.ms.gov) or Michael Shelton (251-928-9792 & michael.shelton@dcnr.alabama.gov).

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Coastal Pathogens Risk Assessment Workshop

October 13-15, 2010

Improving how we assess risk to human health from pathogens in our coastal waters.

Keating Center, Mote Marine Laboratory
Sarasota, FL

Hotel Information
Lido Beach Resort 700 Ben Franklin Drive Sarasota, FL 34236
http://lidobeachresort.com/
$109 - Standard Room $159 - Upgraded Room Reservation cut-off date is September 23, 2010 Attendees can call hotel (800) 441-2113 to make reservations (Referring to GOMA or Gulf of Mexico Alliance)

Contact:
Cristin Phillips
850-245-2105
Cristin.m.phillips@dep.state.fl.us

Clean Gulf 2010

Tampa Bay Convention Center, Tampa, FL, USA
October 19-20, 2010
Early Registration Deadline: August 20, 2010
Home Page URL: http://www.cleangulf.org/

Companies from throughout the oil and chemical spill, maritime security industry and the marine salvage industry will be in attendance at the 20th Annual CLEAN GULF Training & Exhibition. Key focus areas for this year's training will be blow-out prevention, remote operated vehicles, deep offshore SONS/Spill of National Significance, oil spill containment, subsea technology, deep water oil spill response, in-situ burn, offshore dispersants and subsea dispersants on containment.

For more info and to register, please visit www.cleangulf.org. For info on sponsorship and exhibiting opportunities, please contact Kristian Copeland at 713-343-1886 or kcopeland@tradefairgroup.com. For info on speaking and advisory board opportunities, please contact Kayla Appelt at 713-343-1869 or kappelt@tradefairgroup.com. Organized by TradeFair Group, CLEAN GULF is the largest oil spill training event and exhibition in North America. Its training workshops and solutions exhibition are specifically designed for local, state and federal regulators and responders, companies involved in exploration, production, shipping, transportation or storage of petroleum, petrochemicals or hazardous materials in offshore, coastal or inland regions and the oil spill prevention and response community. Additional information is available at www.cleangulf.org.

5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration

November 13-17, 2010

RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES

© Restore America's Estuaries 2009

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

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

Location: Galveston, Texas, USA
Early Registration Deadline: September 30, 2010
Contact Information: ssimon@estuaries.org
Home Page URL: https://www.estuaries.org/conference/

Alabama-Mississippi Bays & Bayous Symposium

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program in partnership with the Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and their partners invite you to join them in the historic city of Mobile, Alabama to share information on the status of research, on-the-ground activities, and industry and citizen actions focused on the health of our Coastal Environment. Members of community action groups, scientists, resource managers, industry, public offices and others are invited to highlight their efforts and accomplishments through oral presentations or poster presentations at the Alabama-Mississippi Bays and Bayous Symposium 2010 in Mobile, Alabama, on December 1-2, 2010.

Call for Abstracts

The symposium will provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information and experiences regarding water quality, habitat management, living resources, and sustainable communities of the northern Gulf of Mexico. Oral presentations will be 15 minutes; a 5-minute question-and-answer session will follow each presentation.

Preference will be given to presentations and posters that complement the symposium's themes: the status of our understanding about the northern Gulf coastal ecosystem and processes that alter it; what industry is doing to sustain our coastal resources; and how citizen groups are participating in sustaining our coastal resources. Preference will also be given to presentations that apply to one of the four sessions:

Water Quality: Assessing and improving water in a changing coastal landscape
Living Resources: Understanding the flora and fauna of coastal ecosystems
Habitat Management: Conservation and restoration for sustainable ecosystems
Sustainable Communities: Advancing economic viability and hazard resiliency

Deepwater Horizon oil spill response, recovery and restoration activities cut across the four sessions, and we encourage you to consider submitting abstracts for posters or oral presentations that relate to the spill.

Abstracts are due by close of business September 15, 2010. The Program Committee will provide you with its recommendation by October 15, 2010. Presenters must register for the symposium and are responsible for registration costs. Online registration will begin July 23, 2010 at www.mobilebaynep.com/baysandbayous. Abstracts must be submitted via e-mail to ambbs@mobilebaynep.com. Questions regarding submissions should be directed to Sara Shields at sshields@mobilebaynep.com.

Coastal Zone 2011

Winds of Change: Great Lakes, Great Oceans, Great Communities
Chicago, Illinois, Hyatt Regency
July 17 to 21, 2011

Many factors are influencing change in our coastal, marine, estuarine, and Great Lakes communities. Problems such as the impacts of coastal development, conflicting use of resources, altered watersheds, and new threats such as those related to global climate change call for new approaches to ocean and coastal resource management. Coastal Zone 2011 (CZ11) will focus on exploring challenges, discussing ways to cooperate on collective issues and resources, sharing tools and information, and learning from the experiences of leaders from across the nation and around the world.

Attendees will have the opportunity to help shape strategies for the future with a range of coastal professionals, scientists, managers, policy makers, students, and tribal representatives. Opportunities are available to organize a special panel session with three to four papers, host a concurrent meeting, submit a presentation or a poster, display an exhibit, provide training and workshops, or become a conference partner.

Look for the CZ11 Call for Abstracts coming soon. Abstracts are due October 8, 2010. Please check the website for more information. http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/CZ11/index.htm. If you have any questions, please email cz11@noaa.gov.

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

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