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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September 2009

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NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

Making Waves

Subscribe to Making Waves

Making Waves is a bi-weekly audio podcast reporting on the latest National Ocean Service news and information.

Making Waves Episode 34: High-Water Mystery; nowCOAST; Wetlands Restoration — Sep. 2, 2009

A High Tide Mystery off the Atlantic Coast
NOAA's Tides and Currents office is investigating the causes behind an unusually high tide in June that stretched from Maine to Florida.

nowCOAST
We discuss an online interactive map from NOAA's Office of Coast Survey that provides a mind-blowing amount of near real-time weather forecasts and ocean surface observations for all of the U.S.

Texas Wetlands Restoration Project Completed
NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation and Restoration Program just completed shepherding a major coastal restoration project — over 2,500 acres of wetlands — near Port Arthur, Texas.

NOAA's Fisheries Service Cracks Down on Charter Boat Companies Operating Illegally

September 4, 2009

Charter boat companies feeling the sting of unfair competition have looked to NOAA's Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement for help. After receiving multiple complaints about allegedly illegal charter boat trips undercutting legal businesses, undercover agents with NOAA OLE's southeast enforcement division and state special operations divisions from Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas chartered trips on vessels across the Gulf of Mexico and documented numerous violations for operating without federal charter boat moratorium permits.

NOAA's Office of General Counsel has sent notices of violation and assessment to owners and operators of 15 charter boats, detailing alleged violations of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

"The goal of this type of investigation is not only to document illegal activity for prosecution, but also to protect law-abiding charter operations from unfair competition," said Hal Robbins, special agent in charge of the NOAA division in St. Petersburg, Fla.

On June 16, 2003, NOAA's Fisheries Service placed a moratorium on charter boat permits for both the Gulf reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics fisheries in an effort to maintain sustainability of the species there, including red snapper, one of the most over-fished resources in the Gulf of Mexico. Since this moratorium, the only way to obtain a permit is to purchase one from an existing holder, which has raised the value of the permits to between $8,000 and $10,000.

"Business is being taken away from legal charter boat companies because the illegal companies, who do not obtain permits, can charge much less for trips," explained OLE special agent Charles Tyer of the Galveston, Texas, field office.

Also documented during the one-year operation were several other federal fisheries violations, including undersize fish, harvesting fish during a closed season, filleting fish at sea, concealing fish from enforcement, and failure to use venting tools, dehookers and circle hooks to fish for reef fish. Multiple state and U.S. Coast Guard violations were detected as well.

"With the current status of the red snapper fishery, law enforcement plays an essential part ensuring that all participants play by the same rules," said Robby Byers, executive director of Coastal Conservation Association of Texas. "It is unfortunate that there are always a few that feel the laws do not apply to them. Violating regulations only hurts the ones that are trying to do the right thing. CCA commends the special agents of NOAA that are tasked with catching those who jeopardize our public resources."

The mission of NOAA OLE is to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations enacted to conserve and protect our nation's marine resources. Anyone with information regarding illegal charter fishing should contact the national hotline at 1-800-853-1964.

NOAA Scientists Catch Rare Giant Squid

September 21, 2009

Giant squid collected by NOAA on July 30 off the Louisiana coast in the Gulf of Mexico.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

Scientists from NOAA's Fisheries Service have captured a giant squid while conducting research off the Louisiana coast in the Gulf of Mexico. This is only the second known giant squid obtained from the Gulf of Mexico – the first was collected in 1954 off the Mississippi Delta where it was found floating dead at the surface.

This giant squid was collected on July 30, during a 60-day scientific study where scientists from NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service were studying the availability and diversity of sperm whale prey.

The scientists were aboard the NOAA research vessel Gordon Gunter when the squid was caught in a trawl pulled behind the research vessel at a depth of more than 1,500 feet.

"As the trawl net rose out of the water, I could see that we had something big in there…really big," said Anthony Martinez, marine mammal scientist for NOAA's Fisheries Service and chief scientist for this research cruise. "We knew there was a remote possibility of encountering a giant squid on this cruise, but it was not something we were realistically expecting."

This giant squid was preserved and sent to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum for Natural History for further study. It measures just over 19½ feet long and weighs more than 103 pounds. Photographs of the specimen were sent from the research vessel to squid experts at NOAA's National Systematics Laboratory, which is housed at the Smithsonian museum. Other experts at Smithsonian, the University of Miami, and Texas A&M University also confirmed the specimen was in fact a giant squid.

"This is an incredibly rare find in the Gulf of Mexico," said Dr. Michael Vecchione, director for NOAA's Fisheries Service's National Systemics Laboratory and a giant squid expert. "Giant squid have been found more commonly in areas of the world where there are deep-water fisheries, such as Spain and New Zealand, but this is the first time one has actually been captured during scientific research in the Gulf of Mexico."

According to Vecchione, scientists have known giant squid are in the Gulf because remnants of them have been found in the stomachs of predators (such as sperm whales) from Gulf waters, as well as from nearby waters of the Caribbean and Florida Keys. This find illustrates how little we know about what is swimming around in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Giant squid are difficult to capture, but they are usually found in continental-slope areas, where the relatively shallow water near the continent drops off into the deep sea. They seem to be concentrated in places where undersea canyons cut into the slope, where they feed on fishes and other squids. At the National Museum of Natural History, the giant squid will be archived and studied by Vecchione and other interested researchers. Vecchione noted that it will be an important addition to the worldwide study of giant squids and their biology.

NOAA Awards Contract for Gulf of Mexico Disaster Response Center

September 23, 2009

Rendering of NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Disaster Response Center.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA announced a $4.4 million award to Complete Building Corporation from Charleston, S.C. for construction of NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Disaster Response Center in Mobile, Ala. The facility will be the regional home to the agency's Office of Response and Restoration — the NOAA organization charged with responding to oil spills, hazardous material releases, and marine debris.

Construction is scheduled to begin later this year with completion of the project in spring 2011. The 15,000-square foot facility housing up to 25 personnel will be constructed to withstand a major hurricane. NOAA acquired the site through a long-term, no-cost ground lease with Mobile County.

"More than 20 million people living in Gulf coastal areas are vulnerable to natural disasters such as hurricanes and the resulting oil spills, hazardous materials incidents and marine debris that have

devastating effects on coastal economies," said John H. Dunnigan, assistant administrator for NOAA's National Ocean Service. "This center's support for disaster planning, response, and recovery efforts in the region will provide services that will enhance the resilience of coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems to these and other hazards."

During Hurricane Katrina NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration assisted the Coast Guard, EPA, and the Gulf coast states with nearly 400 reported releases of hazardous materials and 16 significant pollution spills. The office also conducted offshore flights to identify and document offshore sources of spilled oil and prepared guidance to help minimize physical injury to shoreline habitats during vessel salvage.

"We learned during Hurricane Katrina that coordination between agencies and across every level of government is critical," said U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby. "NOAA will be able to consolidate its Gulf Region disaster efforts under one roof and better address the needs of affected communities following a disaster."

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration is a federal leader in preparedness, response, damage assessment, and restoration for oil spills, chemical spills, and hazardous waste sites. As a natural resource trustee, OR&R's mission is to minimize harm to the environment during an incident response, and protect and restore coastal ecosystems. OR&R works with federal, state, local, and tribal agencies to develop best practices and decision making tools for cleanup and assessment of oil spills and hazardous waste sites. NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.

NOAA Announces $1.3 Million Recovery Act Contract to Repair Galveston Laboratory

September 29, 2009

NOAA announced a $1.3 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act contract to Complete Building Corporation from Charleston, S.C. to repair and replace parts of the NOAA Galveston laboratory that were damaged in Hurricane Ike in September 2008. The project, which is expected to be concluded by October 2010, will build a new NOAA Marine Mammal Stranding Network Building to replace the structure that was completely destroyed by the hurricane.

"This project allows us to take another step towards full restoration of our Galveston facility so seriously damaged by Hurricane Ike," said William Broglie, NOAA's Chief Administrative Officer, who is responsible for NOAA's facility program. "This Recovery Act funded project will allow NOAA to continue its critical research and conservation efforts in the Gulf, including protection of threatened and endangered marine species."

The Galveston Laboratory is part of the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center and provides scientific information on the management of commercial and recreational shellfish and finfish, conservation of coastal habitats, and protection of threatened and endangered marine species of the Gulf of Mexico.

The laboratory conducts research on sea turtles, including the highly endangered Kemp's Riley sea turtle, and is the only federal facility in the nation dedicated to the captive rearing of sea turtles. The NOAA supported marine mammal stranding network not only rehabilitates marine mammals, but supports critical research at the laboratory.

NOAA Awards Funds to Improve Toxic Algal Bloom Predictions in the Western Gulf of Mexico

September 30, 2009

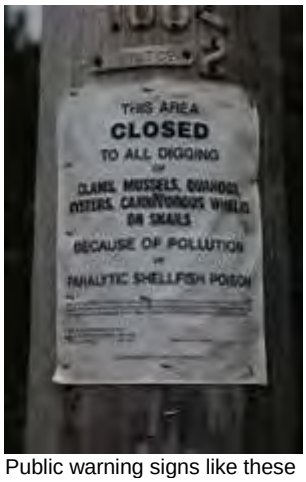
Developing harmful algal bloom detection tools and forecasting models can lessen the effects on human health and coastal economies.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA is awarding $178,358 for the first year of a project to improve predictions of toxic algal blooms in the western Gulf of Mexico as part of an evolving national ecological forecasting capability. NOAA anticipates a nearly $1 million investment in this large-scale regional project over the next four years. The project is funded by the interagency Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algal Blooms, or ECOHAB, program. Funded partners in this project include Texas A&M University, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and NOAA's Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment.

The toxin producing the alga Karenia brevis is the most prevalent harmful algal bloom, or HAB, species in the Gulf of Mexico. K. brevis blooms have significant impacts on human health, and cause mass mortality of fish and protected species, such as manatees, dolphins and turtles, which have major economic ramifications.

"This project meets a critical need in the Gulf, and is specifically targeted in our Gulf of Mexico Governor's Alliance Action Plan," said William Walker, Ph.D., executive director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and chair of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Management Team. "The Gulf Alliance aims to ensure that coastal managers from all the Gulf states and Mexico are made aware of these HAB predictions that will help to protect the health and economies of coastal communities."

In 2000, a K. brevis outbreak in Texas waters caused widespread fish kills and shellfish harvest closures to protect human consumers from neurotoxic shellfish poisoning. Estimated economic impacts were $9.9 million in Galveston County alone due to commercial oyster fishery closures, lost tourism and costs of beach cleanup.



Public warning signs like these appear in areas that have been closed due to high levels of toxin in shellfish.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

"Presently there is no model for bloom prediction in Texas. A major goal of this project is the development of new approaches for the detection, monitoring, prediction, control, and mitigation of harmful algae and their impacts in Texas coastal waters," said lead Texas A&M University investigator Lisa Campbell. "Our project directly addresses this goal and will provide critical data on the mechanism of bloom formation."

Developing better HAB detection tools and forecasting models can reduce the impacts on human health and coastal economies by allowing state resource and public health managers to identify and quantify K. brevis in coastal waters at an earlier stage and to predict bloom formation.

Specifically, this multi-investigator, interdisciplinary project seeks to determine how blooms form in the western Gulf and uses a computer model to develop predictions based on wind and current conditions, which can concentrate Karenia cells.

Real-time Dissolved Oxygen Data Now Available for Texas

National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science-funded scientists at Texas A&M University have built and deployed an instrument which measures dissolved oxygen, salinity, temperature, and nutrients in deep waters off the Texas coast. Hypoxia is a serious problem in the Gulf of Mexico, notably in the form of a large dead zone at the mouth of the Mississippi river, but also at the mouths of many of the estuaries, and can cause serious problems for fisheries and local economies. Data from this instrument will help coastal managers monitor water quality offshore of Galveston Bay. The observing system was deployed in the summer of 2009, 10 nautical miles south of Galveston, TX, on an experimental wind farm platform operated by Wind Energy System Technologies Inc. Hypoxia has been observed at this station intermittently over the summer season including most recently from September 4-6. For more information, contact Libby Jewett.

Florida Governor Tours National Hurricane Center

Dennis Feltgen, NOAA NHC Communications

Bill Read, National Hurricane Center director, explains to Florida Gov. Charlie Crist (in blue) how emergency managers are briefed during a land-falling hurricane event. The center's FEMA liaison Matt Green (left) listens in. Photo credit: Dennis Feltgen, NOAA NHC.

September 16, 2009 — Florida Gov. Charlie Crist made a well-timed visit to both the National Hurricane Center and the co-located Miami National Weather Service forecast office on Sept. 4. Bill Read, director of NOAA's National Hurricane Center, guided the governor during his 45-minute visit, which included a press event.

Speaking to the media shortly after his arrival, the governor reminded Florida residents that the peak of the hurricane season is here and, despite a quiet season for the state so far, they must remain prepared.

Gov. Crist was briefed on the demise of Tropical Storm Erika, the only active storm in the Atlantic basin for Labor Day weekend. He toured the renovated FEMA briefing room, where he learned how state and federal emergency managers are briefed when a hurricane threatens the coastal United States. The governor also learned how the group positions NOAA and U.S. Air Force Hurricane Hunter aircraft to collect the best data in a storm.

The tour also included a stop at the Tropical Analysis and Forecast Branch unit of the Hurricane Center, where he was briefed about their mission and responsibility keeping ships safe on the open ocean. The governor's tour concluded at the Miami National Weather Service Forecast Office, where he heard the Labor Day weekend weather outlook, which delivered on its promise of scattered thunderstorms.

Mississippi River Diversions May Increase Frequency of Toxic Algal Blooms in Louisiana Barataria Basin

Diversions of Mississippi River waters, which are high in nitrogen, into the Barataria basin through the Davis Diversion Pond, may result in both an increase in algal biomass and a shift in species composition. National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science supported researchers caution that diversions into the Barataria may have unintended consequences, similar to what has been observed in Lake Pontchartrain, where diversion of Mississippi River waters have led to toxic cyanobacterial blooms. Results of the Barataria basin research, published in the current issue of *Estuaries and Coasts*, indicate that phytoplankton communities in the Barataria basin on the Louisiana coasts are primarily nitrogen limited while only occasionally phosphorus co-limited. This limitation means that the introduction of additional nitrogen will provide fuel for blooms of algae and cyanobacteria. For more information contact David Kidwell at David.Kidwell@noaa.gov.

Other NOAA News

Improving Engagement with the Recreational Fishing Community

September 2, 2009

Saltwater recreational fishing is among the most popular outdoor sports in America with anglers representing one of NOAA's largest organized constituencies. Not only are anglers stewards of our ocean, they contribute greatly to the economic vitality of our coastal communities. For these reasons, I believe it is in NOAA's best interests to adopt polices and practices that will protect ocean ecosystems and ensure one of America's most treasured pastimes endures for future generations.

NOAA is entrusted with ensuring the long-term sustainability and use of America's living marine resources. Our policies are framed by congressional mandates and the president's priorities and based on sound science. We take a comprehensive, ecosystem-based approach to management and we strive to work in partnership with our natural allies: those who use and enjoy living marine resources.

Since becoming NOAA Administrator, it has become obvious to me that although NOAA and recreational anglers should be allies in ecosystem management, we are all too frequently at odds over policy and process. Following a number of conversations with members of the recreational fishing industry and media, it is clear that while we have a lot of common interests and goals, we have some long-standing issues that get in the way of a more productive partnership. Strengthening our relationship will require sustained interaction built on a solid foundation of trust and respect. In short, we need to have more and better conversations.

To that end, I'm announcing my commitment to take a fresh look at our relationship with the angling community. As a first step, I will create a new position of senior policy advisor for recreational fishing that will report directly to the assistant administrator for NOAA Fisheries and be charged with addressing the interests of the recreational community within the agency as we consider policy. The advisor will help coordinate recreational fisheries policy. In addition, the position will facilitate dialogue with recreational fishermen to better understand the options that exist to improve support for recreational fishing. NOAA Fisheries will also identify coordinators within each regional office and science center and appropriate headquarters offices to work closely with the advisor. The goal is to ensure that there is a network of knowledgeable staff and resources within NOAA Fisheries that is focused on recreational fishing issues.

Additionally, I intend to task Andrew Winer, NOAA's new director of external affairs, to work closely with NOAA Fisheries on recreational fishing issues.

As a first task, the advisor will coordinate, in cooperation with the angling community, a recreational fishing summit to identify issues of concern and possible solutions. This national meeting will be followed by a series of joint problem-solving roundtables to identify roadblocks to an improved relationship and to design reasonable solutions. Suggested specific topics include data and resources needed to incorporate the economic value of recreational fishing into NOAA's information and reports, recreational fish habitat considerations, a review of NOAA's implementation of the Magnuson-Stevens requirements for closure of areas to fishing, expectations for NOAA's new Marine Recreational Information Program, marine spatial planning, catch shares, NOAA's strategic plans and the role of recreational fisheries, and how NOAA Fisheries can focus personnel and financial resources on the recreational sector. No issue will be off limits. However, the end product must be a practical improvement or series of improvements that are reasonable and useful. Additionally, we will task NOAA's Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee to organize and provide authoritative and comprehensive national policy advice from marine recreational stakeholders.

This process is intended to significantly improve NOAA's ability to work productively with the recreational fishing community while managing all fisheries sustainably.

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator

NOAA to Pursue National Policy for Sustainable Marine Aquaculture

September 3, 2009

NOAA today announced its intent to develop a comprehensive national policy for sustainable marine aquaculture in the coming months, providing a framework for addressing aquaculture activity in federal waters. Marine aquaculture is the cultivation of marine organisms, such as finfish and shellfish, that are consumed by Americans on a daily basis.

Submersible cage sitting on the surface for cleaning and inspection.
High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

The national policy also will provide context for the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Regulating Offshore Aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico, which took effect today.

"We will develop a national policy that focuses on the protection of ocean resources and marine ecosystems, addresses the fisheries management issues posed by aquaculture, and allows U.S. aquaculture to proceed in a sustainable way," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA Administrator.

The national policy will build on NOAA's significant work to date to safeguard U.S. coastal and ocean environments, while enabling sustainable domestic aquaculture that adds to the U.S. seafood supply and supports important commercial and recreational fisheries. The policy also will include development of coordinated federal standards for permitting aquaculture facilities in federal waters and strategies to provide the scientific information needed for permitting decisions.

Domestic U.S. aquaculture is a safe and critical component of the U.S. seafood supply. A more robust sustainable aquaculture industry will increase the locally grown seafood supply and provide new economic opportunities for U.S. coastal communities. Currently, 84 percent of the U.S. seafood supply is imported, and about half of those imports are from aquaculture.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council recommended its plan to NOAA earlier this year as a way to provide a structured regional approach for potential aquaculture operations in Gulf of Mexico federal waters.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, if the Secretary of Commerce, acting through NOAA, does not notify the council within a certain time period that he has approved, partially approved, or disapproved the action, the statute provides that the plan shall take effect. Because the statutory period has passed without Secretarial action, the Gulf of Mexico Aquaculture FMP has entered into effect by operation of law. Although the plan took effect, implementing regulations must be published before permits can be issued under the plan.

Some have argued that NOAA should reject the plan outright on the grounds that NOAA lacked jurisdictional authority to regulate aquaculture in federal waters. However, NOAA's longstanding position has been that existing federal fisheries laws provide adequate authority to regulate aquaculture. Rejecting the plan on the grounds of a lack of authority would have created an unacceptable regulatory gap in which no agency would have the ability to address both the environmental and fishery concerns regarding aquaculture operations, potentially allowing significant expansion in federal waters.

"Our options in a case like this are very limited and I believe this is the best approach to the situation," said Lubchenco. "This plan is far broader in scope than any aquaculture measures previously submitted for Secretarial review. We believe that permitting plans of this scope should be governed by a national policy. In the absence of a consistent national policy, it was not prudent to take action on the plan at this time."

"The Gulf council's plan raised important issues of national policy for how offshore aquaculture should be regulated," said Jim Balsiger, acting NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "NOAA will work closely with the Gulf council and Congress to ensure a smooth transition to a national approach for regulating offshore aquaculture activities."

NOAA Offers Smart Growth Help for Coastal and Waterfront Communities

A new guide brings smart growth to coastal and waterfront communities.

Compact, historic, pedestrian-friendly development patterns provide a strong sense of place in Annapolis, Maryland.

NOAA, along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the International City/County Management Association, and Rhode Island Sea Grant, developed the new guide and a companion Web site to respond to a need cited by local decision makers for more coastal-specific smart growth approaches. This partnership unites NOAA's experience working with coastal communities and EPA's expertise in Smart Growth.

Living near the water has historically been, and is expected to remain, desirable. The water, beaches, cliffs, rocky shores, and other natural features attract people and spur development. But many coastal and waterfront communities have found that conventional development patterns threaten the assets they treasure most. Smart growth approaches—guided by a set of principles that help communities grow in ways that expand economic opportunity, protect public health and the environment, and enhance places that people care about—can help these communities accommodate development while protecting their traditional sense of place.

The new guidebook, Smart Growth for Coastal and Waterfront Communities, offers a winning playbook for coastal communities — an opportunity to address a community's need to prosper, while at the same time protecting their unique sense of place. This guidebook is based on principles established by the Smart Growth Network and focuses on coastal and waterfront specific applications.

Among its recommendations, the report suggests that communities:

- Use natural buffers to protect people and property from potential hazards;
- Preserve and restore critical environmental areas; and
- Plan for public access to waterfront and coastal waters.

A revitalized waterfront can be a catalyst for increased commercial and recreational activities in coastal communities.

"Coastal and waterfront communities face development pressures that could affect their economy, environment, and quality of life for decades to come,"said Jack Dunnigan, NOS Assistant Administrator. "These coastal and waterfront smart growth guidelines will help communities plan for growth and development while protecting their natural and economic resources, maritime heritage, and traditional sense of place."

The elements presented in this guidebook complement the existing smart growth principles to reflect the challenges and opportunities characterizing the waterfront – whether it be a coast, river, or lake. These elements will help communities grow in ways that are compatible with their natural assets – creating great places for residents, visitors, and businesses.

For More Information

Coastal and Waterfront Smart Growth Web site

Smart Growth for Coastal and Waterfront Communities (pdf, 2.52 mb)

New Model to Improve Prediction of Algal Bloom Response to Environmental Change

A new plankton growth model developed by scientists from the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science should greatly improve capabilities to forecast algal blooms that influence global climate or are impacted by climate change. Ecological plankton models needed to predict blooms of specific algal species are dependent on sub-models that simulate complex relationships for competing algal species. There have been no experimental data for such relationships for the major nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) that limit microalgal growth rates in most of the ocean. Thus, previous models have been based largely on guesswork. The present models are the first to be based entirely on measured empirical data. They represent a substantial improvement over previous models and should greatly strengthen our ability to predict the impact of climate change or other environmental stresses on harmful or beneficial algal blooms. An article discussing the model was published in the July issue of Marine Ecology Progress Series. For more information, contact Bill Sunda at Bill.Sunda@noaa.gov.

New Participatory Mapping Publication Now Available

The NOAA Coastal Services Center just released a new publication, Stakeholder Engagement Strategies for Participatory Mapping. Participatory mapping can help communities make land-use decisions by going beyond the physical features portrayed in traditional maps. Some of the most challenging decisions in coastal management stem from the relationship between people and the environment. Nearly everything valued by the community can be expressed in spatial terms and represented on a participatory map including social, cultural, and economic features. This publication provides some simple strategies for facilitators leading a participatory mapping process. It also includes some case study applications of participatory mapping used to enhance coastal management.

This publication is the fourth in a series of publications developed to bring information to coastal managers to help them understand the role that social science can play in their organizations. For more information, contact Russell Jackson.

NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program: A Free Teacher Research Experience

Now Accepting Applications for 2010 Field Season. Application Deadline: December 31, 2009.
For more information visit our website at http://teacheratsea.noaa.gov

Are you an educator interested in gaining first-hand research experience on an ocean research ship?
If so, we encourage you to explore the opportunities offered by the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Teacher at Sea program, now accepting applications until December 31, 2009.

About NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program
The mission of NOAA's Teacher at Sea program is to give teachers a clearer insight into our ocean planet, a greater understanding of maritime work and studies, and to increase their level of environmental literacy by fostering an interdisciplinary research experience.

Since 1990, NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program has enabled more than 550 teachers to gain first-hand experience of science and life at sea by working on research ships. Teachers have enriched their classroom curricula with a depth of understanding made possible by living and working side-by-side, day

and night, with those who contribute to the world's body of scientific knowledge. No matter which type of cruise you embark on, you are bound to learn an array of new things!

Who May Apply
NOAA's Teacher at Sea program accepts applications from currently employed, full-time educators in these categories: K-12 teachers and administrators; community college, college, and university teachers; museum and aquaria educators; and adult education teachers. We regret that we cannot accept applications from part-time, substitute, or pre-service teachers.

Types of Cruises
Participants are assigned a cruise aboard one of NOAA's 17 ships (or a chartered partner ship). NOAA conducts three main types of cruises. Fisheries research ships perform biological and physical science studies in support of fisheries research. Oceanographic and coastal research ships perform physical science studies in support of physical oceanography, atmospheric studies, and bathymetric mapping. Hydrographic survey ships scan the coastal sea floor with side-scan sonar and sophisticated bottom sounding systems to locate submerged obstructions and navigational hazards for the creation or update of the nation's nautical charts.

Time Commitment
Participants can expect to be at sea anywhere from one week to one month, with the average cruise lasting 12-14 days. Most of our participants try to sail on cruises offered during the summer vacation, but cruises take place throughout most of the year on a space-available basis.

Costs
All necessary travel costs are paid for by NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program. While airfare is paid for up front by the government, all other costs are reimbursed, including transportation costs, hotel costs, and per diem allowance.

CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update Posted

The Coastal Programs Division of NOAA’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management distributes the CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update to keep state and territory coastal program managers and climate change/coastal hazards staff informed about climate change (as it pertains to coastal hazards) and coastal hazards activities. If you would like to receive the CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update by e-mail, please contact christa.rabenold@noaa.gov.

Read the latest issue at:
Vol 8 CZMA Climate Change and Coastal Hazards E-News Update

In the Gulf States

80 Percent Met

Watershed management group collects data, works to stop siltation
By Jessica Jones, Contributing Writer
(Created: Wednesday, September 2, 2009 8:05 PM CDT)

DAPHNE, Ala. — With sediment filling waterways, culverts washing out and four-wheeler traffic destroying stream banks, some are happy to hear that nature has a new group on its side. On Thursday, members of organizations like the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Thompson Engineering, Lake Forest Property Owners Association, the city of Daphne, and Alabama Department of Transportation met to discuss plans to stop erosion problems in the D'Olive and Tiawassee watersheds.

State Rep. Randy Davis said data has been collected and funding is nearly complete to undertake projects to reduce the sediment load going into Mobile Bay. "We almost have all the funding to get started — about 80 percent (of planning costs reportedly totaling $125,000)" he said. "Now it's data-driven and there's some things we've had to do in the Legislature like with four-wheeler trespassing."

Roberta Swann, deputy director of the estuary program, said many organizations have helped with funding, including: Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Lake Forest Property Owners Association, city of Daphne, city of Spanish Fort, Alabama Department of Environmental Management and Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium.

She also commended the city of Daphne for hiring employees to help monitor sedimentation and erosion. The group has four goals it plans to work toward in the next four months, according to Glen Coffee, project manager with Thompson Engineering.

"(They are) data compilation, watershed characterization, wetland condition evaluation and watershed problem identification," he said.

Though much data has already been collected, he requested that members from the organizations present at the meeting send information such as historical studies, aerial photography, land-use plans, subdivisions and property-owners associations — within the watershed, commercial developments, existing detention and retention ponds, storm water and development ordinances and citizen concerns.

"We hope to be through gathering data by the end of September," he said. During watershed characterization, the group will delineate watershed management units; characterize streams, watershed lands and water quality; evaluate the condition of wetlands; assess storm-water management and sedimentation issues; develop future projected conditions; identify problem areas; and assess risks and future development, he said.

Through this research, they hope to find and prevent channel incisions and channel-head cutting; areas with accelerated surface runoff and of unwanted sedimentation; disturbed areas with high erosion rates; failed detention and retention ponds; absence of vegetation buffers along streams; and damage to wetland resources, he said. He said this data will help stop, "run off; altered hydrology is the key problem that we have."

They hope to begin field work in mid-September and end the watershed characterization portion of the project by October. Coffee mentioned that the group is still in the planning stage. "Nobody has suggested anything on prioritization," he said. "We (Thompson Engineering) will not make any decisions — we'll give our professional opinion, then the watershed leaders will make the decisions."

Swann cited that some action has already been taken at D'Olive Creek and other locations. "Some work has already started and we're going to continue to be aggressive," she said. "If we see a grant available we're going to go after it."

The funds will help bring the projects to fruition once the problem areas are identified, Coffee said. "Lake Forest Lake is a natural sedimentation trap; it's the only reason D'Olive Bay still exists — you'd be able to walk across it," he said. He added that the "Lake Forest golf course provides a lot of run-off because of the greens."

While most projects remain in the data collection and planning process, Ashley Campbell, Daphne's site containment inspector, said a few issues have been resolved. D'Olive Creek at U.S. Interstate 10 now has riprap — a wall of unorganized stones often used on an embankment slope to prevent erosion — at the heavy water-flow area culverts. The group also has placed erosion-control blankets and built grades to step the water down gradually.

AT&T worked to restore exposed fiber-optic lines in that area. "I think we have the I-10 culverts under control now with the 180 feet of linear restoration," Campbell said.

The group will meet on Dec. 9 to discuss problem identification and ranking, Coffee said. They'll also meet March 15 for the selection of conceptual corrective measures and May 18 for a public meeting on the draft of the comprehensive watershed management plan. For questions or concerns, call Campbell at 621-3080. Copyright © 2009 BaldwinCountyNOW.com

First Tagging of Manatee in Alabama Waters

Sep 9, 2009
News Release from The Dauphin Island Sea Lab and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

On Friday, 4 Sep 2009, Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Mobile Manatees Sighting Network (MMSN) successfully tagged a manatee in Alabama waters, the first for the state. This first Alabama capture, a female manatee weighing over 1,000 pounds, has been dubbed "Bama."

The capture and tagging effort was a collaboration among DISL, SeaWorld Orlando, Wildlife Trust Florida, US Fish and Wildlife Service Alabama Field Office, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Sea to Shore Alliance.

The two-day capture effort, which started on Friday morning, resulted in the successful tagging of two Alabama manatees, the female Bama and one male. The crew also captured a large female, named Ellie, who is known to be from Crystal River, Florida. Ellie was first identified as a visitor to Mobile Bay, Alabama in 2007 from photographs sent to the Mobile Manatees Sighting Network.

"It was very informative to find Ellie again and learn that she apparently travels between Mobile Bay and Crystal River, Florida, with some repetition," said Dr. Ruth Carmichael, Senior Marine Scientist at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Founder of the Mobile Manatees Sighting Network.

Researchers worked together smoothly and quickly to capture the animals and take the needed information about size and health before fitting the new tags. The specially designed tags will allow each manatee to be tracked continuously by satellite and radio telemetry. Each captured manatee weighed over 1000 lbs, with Ellie alone topping the scale at over 1600 pounds.

"It is a very powerful feeling to take a collaborative project like this one from a concept to reality. This is a real pioneering effort for manatee research in the northern Gulf of Mexico. I am very grateful to everyone who helped us make it happen," stated Dr. Carmichael.

The West Indian manatee is federally protected and the northern Gulf of Mexico is thought to be fringe habitat for these manatees. Data from this research will be used to help manage and conserve manatees in Alabama and other fringe areas.

"Historically, this is the first time we've ever tagged manatees in the state of Alabama," said USFWS biologist Dianne Ingram. "Our goal is to study their travel routes and get data on where they spend time in Alabama. Knowing this will help us learn about their migration patterns and habitat to aid in their recovery," said Ingram.

MMSN asks the public to observe the animals and report any sightings as soon as possible. A float is attached to the tag, which can be spotted when the animal is near the surface. If you see a tagged animal, do not try to lift, remove, or touch the tag. The tags are constructed to break away if an animal becomes entangled. Federal law prohibits interfering with the manatee's behavior, or harassing them in any way. The best rule is to stay at least 100 feet away and report the sighting to authorities at MMSN, 1-866-493-5803.

If you would like to support this study and other manatee research in Alabama, please commit to purchase a distinctive license plate. For more information visit http://manatee.disl.org.

NOAA Ocean Explorer Teacher Workshop Hosted at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

Sep 22, 2009

NOAA's annual workshop, Learning Ocean Science through Ocean Exploration, was held at the Sea Lab on Saturday, September 26, 2009, with the required follow-up session on Saturday, March 6, 2010. This professional development workshop for teachers introduces classroom activities spanning current scientific discoveries from bioluminescent corals to the Arctic Ocean floor. Teachers participating in both sessions are provided classroom resources and a stipend. These NOAA workshops allow teachers to pass along the excitement of NOAA Ocean Exploration to their students. Learn more about NOAA Ocean Explorer at http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/.

Florida DEP Awards City of Oldsmar $3 Million for Water Supply Project

~Federal stimulus funding to protect environment and stimulate economy through construction of new alternative water supply project~

OLDSMAR — The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today presented the city of Oldsmar $3 million in federal stimulus funding for the construction of a new alternative water supply project. Oldsmar's Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant, when complete, will have the ability to generate two million gallons of water a day and help reduce demand on the regional supply of fresh water.

The funds, part of DEP's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Program, will allow the city to be self sufficient in its drinking water supply and meet future demands removing the need to purchase water from the regional utility.

"It is great to see how Florida's communities are utilizing the funding from the federal government," said DEP Southwest District Director Deborah Getzoff. "The city of Oldsmar is investing in alternative water supply and investing in its future improving the local economy and its citizens' quality of life."

The funds awarded to Oldsmar are part of the approximately $217 million awarded to Florida from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to help local governments finance improvements to wastewater, stormwater and drinking water facilities essential to protecting public health and the environment across the state. Florida is one of the first states to have met all the requirements necessary to receive the full amount of ARRA funds to support both the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) as well as the DWSRF.

"In order to protect water quality and public health for our citizens, it is essential that we invest in our wastewater, stormwater and drinking water infrastructure. The stimulus funds support Oldsmar's Alternative Water Supply Project, a viable plan for water independence which will eliminate Oldsmar's demand on the regional utility, accommodate future growth and add quality drinking water capacity to the declining regional supply," said Oldsmar City Manager Bruce T. Haddock.

DEP has committed all $217 million in available CWSRF and DWSRF ARRA funding. Qualifying projects were selected for ARRA funding, based on their readiness and priority, at public hearings held on February 25, May 13 and August 12. DEP will also continue to work with all applicants to help them apply for other funding as it becomes available.

DEP received more than $850 million in requests for the $85 million of ARRA drinking water project funds and more than $1.5 billion in requests competing for $132.3 million in ARRA wastewater and stormwater funding.

DEP established its SRF programs, under agreements with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to provide low-interest financing to plan, design and build wastewater, stormwater and drinking water systems. Funded by federal capitalization grants, state matching funds, loan repayments, interest earnings, and periodic bond issues, SRF loans are offered at interest rates substantially below current market rates and help make loans affordable. Repayments from earlier loans are used to make new loans, allowing the program to operate in perpetuity.

Since 1999, Florida has invested more than $3.7 billion to upgrade and improve water and wastewater facilities and clean up stormwater pollution, funding about 2,400 projects statewide. Since its inception, the Drinking Water SRF program has committed more than $430 million to plan, design and build drinking water facilities across the state, including more than $49 million last year.

For more information on the State Revolving Funds, visit: www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wff.
For complete list of communities scheduled to receive ARRA funding, visit:
www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wff/dwsrf/docs/arra-fundlist-dw.pdf and
www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/news/2009/05/files/cwsrf.pdf.

For more information about Florida's use of the federal recovery dollars made available through ARRA, please visit www.FlaRecovery.com.

Greening Florida's Future – State Recognizes National Pollution Prevention Week

~DEP invites Floridians to learn about conservation and green cleaning methods~

TALLAHASSEE – In an effort to promote green practices, Governor Charlie Crist recently signed a proclamation designating September 21-27, 2009, as Pollution Prevention (P2) Week. To celebrate the state and nationally recognized week, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is promoting methods for green cleaning, water conservation and energy conservation.

"Pollution prevention is a proactive approach that eliminates or reduces pollution at its source, through water and energy efficiency, minimizing the usage of raw materials and green cleaning."
Deas Bohn

"Pollution prevention is a proactive approach that eliminates or reduces pollution at its source, through water and energy efficiency, minimizing the usage of raw materials and green cleaning," said DEP Director of Sustainable Initiatives, Deas Bohn. "By providing education and outreach statewide, we hope to encourage all Floridians, business and guests to protect our state's natural resources and our citizens' health by preventing pollution."

National P2 Week is an annual education event that occurs the third full week of September. Florida's theme for this year's P2 Week is 'Greening Florida's Future' and is focused on water conservation, energy efficiency and green cleaning methods. DEP will also be distributing FREE conservation kits (while supplies last) at certain Vitamin Shoppe and The Fresh Market locations statewide during P2 Week. The conservation kits include two compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL), two low-flow sink aerators, two microfiber cloths, a conservation information sheet and green cleaning recipe card. Participating locations can be found at www.dep.state.fl.us/green/p2week.htm.

DEP is also giving away a green cleaning kit through its online green tip contest. To enter, participants should submit an original green tip, no more than 200 words, via email to DEP at Green.Tip.Contest@dep.state.fl.us. Entries will be accepted until October 31, 2009 and a winner will be announced on Friday, November 6, 2009. Some specific guidelines apply and entries are limited to one per email address. Additional information is available at www.dep.state.fl.us/green/tips/contest.htm.

P2 Week is administered by DEP's Office of Sustainable Initiatives, which is comprised of three voluntary, non-regulatory programs that assist Florida industry and citizens in protecting the environment. The Clean Marina Program, the Florida Green Lodging Program and the Clean Vessel Act Grant Program. The goal of the Sustainable Initiatives programs is to meet the needs of the present population without compromising resources for future generations.

For more information about Florida's Pollution Prevention Week and a list of events, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/green/p2week.htm. To view the Governor's proclamation for Pollution Prevention Week, visit http://www.dep.state.fl.us/green/doc/p2week_proclamation.pdf.

Coastal Dune Erosion & Restoration Workshop a Success

A publication of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Special Edition - Summer 2009
By Rosalyn Kilcollins, Coastal Training Program Coordinator

FSU research site at St. George Island State Park

The Apalachicola NERR Coastal Training Program was asked by Brian McGraw, with the Blountstown Service Center of the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to partner with him and the Franklin and Tupelo Soil & Water Conservation Districts, to sponsor a Coastal Dune Erosion and Restoration workshop.

This was a great partnership that brought an impressive group of speakers and participants together. The Franklin and Tupelo (Gulf County) Soil and Water Conservation Districts provided support and snacks. The workshop included discussion and presentations about research on and methods and materials for erosion control and restoration of dunes and sandy upland coastal areas. Lessons learned, sources of plant materials, permitting, research project highlights and financial assistance were also discussed. This was one of the best programs we have offered.

Janet Grabowski and Mimi Williams with the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Gainesville, Florida, gave presentations on their nursery program, how it fits in with coastal restoration, and coastal planting considerations and techniques. They provided an informative booklet on the coastal plants and set up a display with a number of coastal plants. The booklet, Native Plants for Coastal Dune Restoration: What, When, and How for Florida, is available on the Internet at ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/FL/news/publications/flpmc_coast07.pdf.

We plan to post the presentations and links to documents on the Florida Coastal Training Program website at http://appprod/ctp/pastclasses.asp and the Florida Coastal Strategies Website at http://floridacoastalstrategies.org/Workshops.html.

The diverse group of 42 participants from as far away as Santa Rosa County included public and private coastal land owners, developers, plant ecologists and researchers, consultants, coastal land managers, planners, regulatory and emergency management staff and local officials. Board members from three Soil and Water districts attended. Comments and evaluations indicate that most people learned a lot of valuable and useful information. There have already been some follow-up calls from participants and others who were not able to attend. The new course provides gratifying personal interaction with our estuarine resources. Read the full story at online.

Louisiana DEQ Announces Caddo Lake Protection Initiative

BATON ROUGE – In conjunction with the grand opening celebration for the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Harold Leggett announced that his agency has begun an initiative to protect the Caddo Lake watershed.

Caddo Lake is located along the Texas-Louisiana border just north of Shreveport, with half of the lake in Louisiana and half in Texas. It is the largest natural freshwater lake in the South. Its unique environment holds the distinction as being one of the best examples of a mature bald cypress forest in the southern United States. This area is known for its picturesque beauty and outstanding diversity of wildlife. The purpose of DEQ's Caddo Lake Protection Initiative is to help protect and preserve the significance of Caddo Lake, its associated wetlands and the surrounding environment.

To help advance this initiative, DEQ is working with non-governmental organizations interested in protecting Caddo Lake, as well as officials with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. DEQ has bolstered its attempts to curb illegal dumping and other illegal environmental activities throughout the state. The department will use its civil and criminal resources from its Northwest Regional Office to respond to complaints from citizens or agencies regarding possible discharges or dumping of pollutants in and around Caddo Lake.

"Environmental protection is about preserving our natural resources for the enjoyment of our citizens," Leggett said. "It is our duty to preserve this internationally acclaimed wetland habitat for future generations to enjoy and appreciate." Information concerning these activities be should be directed to DEQ's Single Point of Contact hotline at 1-888-763-5424, or CID agent Don Cowart at 318-676-7476.

October 1 Marks the Coastal Resources Program's Beginnings

It was October 1, 1980 when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) approved the state's coastal management program. So while, the history of the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program or LCRP began many years past, the present is marked with a formula of success and integrity. Simply put, the LCRP goal was to protect and restore and develop resources found in the state's coastal zone.

The program today is designed to balance the uses and users of Louisiana's coastal resources for the benefit of all citizens that live and work here. Over the past 29 years, the LCRP has developed a very responsive and robust management program that includes Permitting, Local Coastal Programs, Federal Consistency, Conservation Plan, and other programs which provide the means to accomplish specific objectives.

Because of its implementation, the state has a set of guidelines that protect coastal resources, restore damaged and/or lost coastal resources and provide cost-matching funding with the federal agencies to perform coastal restoration projects. The partnership with the coastal parishes as well as other state and federal agencies has been a hallmark for our similar programs.

The LCRP is also leading the way in addressing Governor Jindal's executive order mandating that all activities proposed to take place in the coastal zone be consistent with the Louisiana Master Plan for coastal protection and restoration.

Commission Plans Crab Trap Removal Program For 2010

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission approved a notice of intent to continue the abandoned crab trap removal program at their Sept. 3 meeting. A 10-day winter trap closure in portions of the Barataria Bay estuary is planned for 2010.

Since 2004, LDWF together with individual volunteers and volunteer organizations has successfully removed and disposed of 17,972 abandoned and derelict crabs. A diverse group of volunteers participated including commercial crab fishermen, recreational fishermen, concerned individuals, and representatives of conservation and environmental organizations, state and federal agencies, and universities.

The abandoned crab trap removal program is viewed as a positive approach to removing derelict crab traps from coastal waters. Funding for the 2010 crab trap clean up will come from increases in recreational and commercial crab trap gear license fees statutorily dedicated to support the abandoned crab trap removal program.

In the Barataria Bay estuary closure, the commission intends to prohibit the use of crab traps over a 10-day period from 6 a.m., Feb. 27, 2010 through 6 a.m., March 8, 2010 within that portion of Lafourche, Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes as described below:

From a point originating from the intersection of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and the northern shoreline of Hero Canal; thence due north to a point along the northern shoreline of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway; thence southward and then westward along the northern shoreline of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to a point opposite the western shoreline of Bayou Perot; thence due south to the western shoreline of Bayou Perot; thence southward along the western shoreline of Bayou Perot to Little Lake; thence southward along the western shoreline of Little Lake to 29 degrees, 30 minutes, 00 seconds north latitude; thence eastward along 29 degrees, 30 minutes, 00 seconds north latitude to the eastern shoreline of Wilkinson Canal; thence northward along the eastern shoreline of Wilkinson Canal to its termination; thence due north to the western shore of the Mississippi River; thence northwestward along the western shore of the Mississippi River to a point due east of the northern shoreline of Hero Canal; thence due west to the northern shoreline of Hero Canal; thence westward along the northern shoreline of Hero Canal and terminating at its intersection with the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

All crab traps remaining in the closed area during the specified period will be considered abandoned. These proposed trap removal regulations do not provide authorization for access to private property; authorization to access private property can only be provided by individual landowners. Crab traps may be removed only between one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Anyone may remove these abandoned crab traps from within the closed area. No person removing crab traps from the designated closed area may possess these traps outside of the closed areas. Abandoned traps must be brought to sites designated by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Secretary. LDWF will be coordinating the abandoned crab trap removal efforts, but the program will be volunteer-based. The abandoned crab trap removal program's success relies heavily on volunteer participation and any volunteers or organizations interested in participating in crab trap clean-ups are encouraged to contact LDWF. More information about volunteer participation will be provided at a later date.

Interested persons may submit written comments relative to the proposed rule to Vince Guillory, Marine Fisheries Biologist Manager, Office of Fisheries, P.O. Box 189, Bourg, LA 70343, prior to Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009. For more information contact Martin Bourgeois at 225-765-2401 or mbourgeos@wlf.la.gov.

Volunteer-based Cleanup Effort at Elmer's Island Results in Success

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and its many partners successfully removed thousands of pounds of debris from the shores of Elmer's Island at the Trash Bash event held this past weekend. Nearly 200 individuals dedicated their Saturday morning to the cleanup, an effort organized through the Ocean Conservancy to clean up coasts all over the globe.

LDWF joined forces with the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, East Ascension Sportsman?s League, Grand Isle Community Development Team, US Coast Guard-Grand Isle Station, Grand Isle Port Commission, Town of Grand Isle, Shaw Coastal, Jefferson Parish Environmental, Boy Scouts of America and the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office and Detention Center to organize the event.

"The success of the cleanup is attributed to a dedicated group of volunteers including civic organizations, youth groups, and businesses to individuals and families," said LDWF Assistant Secretary Randy Pausina. "With the dedication of these volunteers, we are working to keep this recreational resource clean, as well as raise awareness and promote recycling and proper trash disposal."

At the event, more than 6,000 pounds of debris was collected from a three mile stretch of beachfront property. Volunteers hauled debris to a dumpster to for disposal. A wide array of items was collected, ranging from pool liners to light bulbs.

"It was a long, hard day for the volunteers in the heat, but the sight of the overflowing dumpster reinforced the day's accomplishments and made it all worthwhile for everyone involved," described Mandy Tumlin, LDWF biologist and co-coordinator of the event.

The types and quantity of trash collected were recorded on data cards by students and staff from Nicholls State University and will be forwarded to the Ocean Conservancy, which compiles the information from all cleanups around the world. This information helps identify the source of the debris and focus efforts on eliminating or reducing it.

The department will continue the preservation and deposition process at Elmer's Island by planting cordgrass as well as installing vegetative protective fencing on the property over the course of the next few weeks. Funding for this project was provided by Daybrook Fisheries, Inc. and Omega Protein. Also, the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office and Detention Center has volunteered to schedule monthly visits to the island to continue the litter reduction effort.

LDWF wants to remind those wishing to utilize the island to recycle all eligible items and remove all trash when you leave the beach. In addition, please consider taking one piece of trash that someone may have left behind.

For more information, contact Ashley Wethey at 225-721-0489 or awethey@wlf.la.gov.

Using Video to Encourage Water Conservation in Louisiana

Coastal Services, September/October 2009
http://csc.noaa.gov/magazine/2009/05/article4.html

With about 50 percent of Louisiana's drinking water coming from groundwater, it is a concern to the whole state when one aquifer begins to show signs of depletion. But how do you communicate the problem and get people to change their behavior to begin conserving water? One of the most effective communications tools in Louisiana has been a video, "Our Lives...Our Water," aimed at increasing awareness of the need for water conservation and encouraging conservation actions.

"Everyone in Louisiana should be educated on where water comes from, how we use it, and why water resources and aquifers are so important," says James Welsh, commissioner of the state's Office of Conservation in the Department of Natural Resources.

The award-winning video was produced by the Department of Natural Resources as part of a broader water-conservation communications effort. Formatted as a 10-minute DVD, the video portrays an exchange between a grandfather and grandson about the importance of aquifers and caring for them, and then shows how the boy gets various members of his family to conserve water. The video was created in response to dropping water levels in the Sparta Aquifer, which covers southern Arkansas and northern Louisiana and dips into the central portion of the state, notes Tony Duplechin, public education and outreach coordinator for the Office of Conservation's Ground Water Resources Program.

For the past 50 years, water from the aquifer has been piped to 16 Louisiana parishes at a rate faster than can be replenished by rain. The Sparta can provide up to 56 million gallons per day, but current use is about 70 million gallons per day. An additional concern is the potential for salt water to intrude into an aquifer—something that could be an issue for overused aquifers in coastal areas in many parts of the U.S.

"People are starting to realize it's time to start taking some action," says Duplechin.

The agency took the outreach idea from an existing video focused on the Sparta Aquifer that was produced in northern Louisiana. To take the conservation message statewide, a new script was written. The agency saved money by hiring the same actors and using much of the original video footage.

Newcomer, Morris, and Young Productions, Inc., of Monroe produced the video, which received a Silver Addy in March from the American Advertising Federation. "We've done other videos, but this one seems to have the right blend of magic," says Welsh.

About 15,000 copies of the DVD have been distributed free to community groups, environmental groups, student groups, and teachers. It is also on the Department of Natural Resources' website, says Phyllis Darensbourg, the department's public information director and the writer of the DVD's script. Darensbourg adds, "This is one of the department's best products for education. Video makes a lasting impression."

To view the "Our Lives...Our Water" video, go to http://dnr.louisiana.gov/sec/execdiv/pubinfo/newsr/2008/0813con-gwater-video.ssi. For more information on the video's production, contact Phyllis Darensbourg at (225) 342-8955, or phyllisd@dnr.state.la.us

Mississippi Coastal Public Access Sites Now Available Online

BILOXI, Miss. – An updated list of Mississippi's coastal public access sites, such as boat launches, fishing piers and marinas, is available online on the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) Web site at http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/CMP/CRMP/pdfs/public-access-inventory-2009.pdf. A Geographic Information System (GIS) map also is available at http://gis.smpdd.com/dmrpublicaccess/ The project was funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management annual Coastal Zone Management Act funding DMR receives for coastal management projects.

Gov. Barbour Declares Oct. 17 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Day

Volunteers in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties are needed for the 21st annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup to be held from 8 a.m. – 11 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 17, in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup—the planet's largest volunteer cleanup effort on behalf of the marine environment. Gov. Haley Barbour recently signed a proclamation in support of the annual event organized by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force.

"Keeping our coastline clean and litter free is essential to protecting our marine wildlife and coastal wetlands," Governor Haley Barbour said. "The Mississippi Sound plays a vital role in our state's economy, especially through tourism. I know the 21st annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup will be a great success."

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is a Take Pride in America event. Part of the President's USA Freedom Corps call to service, the Take Pride in America program is a national partnership established by the U.S. Department of the Interior and is an excellent opportunity for citizens and communities to demonstrate local pride, initiative and stewardship.

Registration deadline for the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is Oct. 1. Register on-line at www.mscoastalcleanup.org, or to obtain a registration form and sign up to volunteer call: 467-9048 in Hancock County; 324-9640 in Harrison County; 762-3391 in Jackson County; 938-6612 in Pascagoula; and 230-4118 for the Barrier Islands (requires boat).

On cleanup day, zone captains will be stationed at each cleanup site in bright yellow T-shirts to direct volunteers and give them trash bags, data cards and pencils provided by Ocean Conservancy, bottled water compliments of the Beverage Association of Mississippi, and a free eco-friendly cooler tote provided by Chevron Pascagoula Refinery (while supplies last). Following the cleanup, volunteers must present their meal ticket for a free lunch at Courthouse Road Pier parking area in Gulfport courtesy of the High Cotton Grill from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. only on event day.

During the 2008 International Coastal Cleanup, more than 390,000 volunteers in 104 countries removed 6.8 million pounds of debris from the ocean, rivers, lakes and waterways.

"In Mississippi, 2,300 volunteers pitched in and removed 71 tons of trash from 55 sites along the shoreline and coastal waterways as part of last year's International Coastal Cleanup," Lauren Thompson, state coordinator for the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup said.

For more information visit the official Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Web site at www.mscoastalcleanup.org or call the info line at 1-877-BEACH 05 (1-877-232-2405). Volunteers under age 21 must have their parents sign the registration form and fax or mail it back to participate.

Mississippi DMR Develops Plan to Limit Oyster License Sales

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) announced today the development of a plan to limit the sale of oyster licenses for the 2009-2010 oyster season. The plan is a result of a motion passed at this months Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources (CMR) meeting. The CMR motion states:

If it is determined that there is an unusual increase in the oyster license sales, and it is determined that it is necessary to conserve the fishery resource, the executive director is authorized to suspend the issuance of oyster licenses through the end of the 2009-2010 oyster season. Furthermore, if such action is taken by the executive director, a report shall be presented to the commission at the following meeting, at which time the commission may take such action as deemed necessary.

The plan will limit the number of commercial oyster licenses available for sale in each of the four major categories: resident dredging, resident tonging, out-of-state dredging and out-of-state tonging. The license sales limits established, based on past license sales by category, had not been met through Thursday afternoon.

Oyster harvesters that have not already done so are encouraged to purchase a current license to ensure their continued ability to participate in this year's oyster season. All harvesters must provide current vessel documentation or registration, proof of residency of the boat owner (e.g., valid drivers license) and proper identification of boat captain. The DMR will only accept cash, money order, cashiers check or in-state checks as payment.

Grand Bay Reserve Issues New Plant Poster

BILOXI, Miss. – The last Saturday in September is National Estuaries Day—a celebration of the magical places where rivers meet the sea. This year National Estuaries Day occurs on Sept. 26. This celebration began in 1988 as part of Coast Weeks to educate the public on the importance of estuaries and the need to protect them. The annual event has matured into a national campaign with festivities across the country. To learn more about National Estuaries Day or estuaries in general, visit the Web site www.estuaries.gov.

In celebration of this annual event, the Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve will be hosting an annual meeting of the Mississippi Native Plant Society in the newly constructed Grand Bay Coastal Resources Center. Botanists from around the region who have an interest in the native flora of the state will be attending.

Additionally, the Reserve is issuing a new poster in the DMR's wildflower poster series entitled "Selected Plants of Mississippi's Wet Pine Flatwoods." This full color poster will make a wonderful wall hanging in a classroom, lobby or home. The posters are available at the Coastal Resources Center located at 6005 Bayou Heron Road in Jackson County, the main DMR office at 1141 Bayview Ave. in Biloxi and the Mississippi State Coastal Research and Extension Center office at 1815 Popp's Ferry Road in Biloxi. Unfortunately we will not be able to mail these posters but we will be setting up poster distribution points

based on requests that we receive. Please call Jennifer Buchanan at 228-475-7047 for information on how to obtain a poster.

The Reserve is located near the community of Pecan in southeast Jackson County and includes wetlands and waterways from Bang's Lake to the Alabama state line. A major goal of the Reserve is to provide for research coordination and dissemination of scientific data to the community and local decision-makers to provide sound information on which to base management decisions.

The 18,000-acre Reserve is home to several rare plant and animal species and serves as an essential nursery habitat for numerous important commercial and recreational fish species. The Reserve is managed through state-federal partnership between the DMR and its local partners: Mississippi Secretary of State's Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi State University, The Nature Conservancy, The University of Southern Mississippi and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Grand Bay Reserve to Celebrate Archeology Month with a Family Archeology/Paddling Adventure and Artifact ID

BILOXI, Miss. – October is Mississippi Archeology Month in Mississippi. In order to educate, cultivate and raise awareness of Mississippi's rich cultural heritage, the Department of Marine Resources' Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Department of Archives and History, Coastal Environments Inc. and others are hosting a FREE Family Archeology/Paddling Adventure and Artifact Identification Session on Saturday, Oct., 3, 2009, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Reserve. This activity is one in a series of the Reserve's My Coast community programs conducted in partnership with the J.L. Scott Marine Education Center and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

A small archeological interpretive area will be set up by members of the Mississippi Archeological Association under the pavilion located at the end of Bayou Heron Road in southeastern Jackson County, Miss. Information and artifacts from the early American Indians and European settlers of the region will be on display. Experts will be available to help you identify regional artifacts that you have in your own personal collections. Short, guided kayak trips will be made throughout the day to a nearby American Indian Midden on a first-come, first-served basis. Families are welcome, but you must bring your own life jacket for children under the age of 12.

For more information on the event, please contact Jennifer Buchanan, education coordinator, at 228-475-7047 or jen.buchanan@dmr.ms.gov. Please visit the Reserve's Web site at www.grandbaynerr.org for more information on the Reserve.

Texas Begins Historic, Coast-wide Assault on Erosion

Patterson turns $25 million in state funding into projects worth $135.4 million

AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today announced $135.4 million in coastal protection projects, an ambitious effort to take the fight against beach erosion coast-wide in a coordinated effort from South Padre Island to McFaddin Beach.

"We're fighting on all fronts now in the battle against erosion," Patterson said. "Critically needed projects from South Padre Island to McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge will begin immediately in an unprecedented effort to protect the Texas coast."

The $135.4 list of projects was made possible by $25 million the 81st Legislature appropriated to the state's Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act. "Thanks to the good work by my staff at the Texas

General Land Office, we're getting a more than 500 percent federal match with these projects," Patterson said. "That's what happens when people at all levels of government work together."

Patterson, standing at the end of the Galveston Seawall, presented the list of 26 projects. Rebuilding dunes flattened by Hurricane Ike and restoring beaches emaciated by erosion is an investment that will continue to pay returns well into the future.

"Once a beach undergoes a renourishment by the Texas General Land Office, it becomes eligible for future federal funding under FEMA guidelines," Patterson said. "Doing these projects now will help protect the Texas coast long into the future."

"When I was in high school, you could walk off the end of the seawall on to the beach," Patterson said, pointing to the rocks and severely eroded beach beyond the seawall. "When we're done rebuilding the beach here, you will be able to do that again."

The largest single project on the list will be a massive beach renourishment that will stretch six miles west of the end of the Galveston Seawall. The $5,914,307 in state money devoted to the project leveraged an additional $40,500,724 for a total project budget of $46,415,031.

"Hurricane Ike dealt a devastating blow to this area, but now we're going to be able to build this beach back bigger and better than it has been in decades," Patterson said. "For each dollar Texas will spend on this project, the federal government will spend six. That's a good use of our Texas dollar."

Among the projects funded:

- A $32 million project to restore the dunes along 20 miles of beaches protecting the McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge
- An $18.3 million project to rebuild a dune system on Bolivar Peninsula, as well as a $1.2 million project to renourish beaches on the far west end of the Bolivar Peninsula
- An $11.7 million project to build more than seven miles of sand dunes, from the west end of Jamaica Beach to the Stavanger Beach subdivision
- A $200,000 beach renourishment at Rollover Pass
- A $1 million project to take sand from Park Road 100 and put it on critically eroding beaches in South Padre Island
- An $885,000 project to rebuild previously nourished beaches on the west end of Galveston Island
- A $1.6 million effort to rebuild dunes that once protected Quintana
- A $2.3 million project to stabilize the shoreline on Treasure Island
- A $1.5 million beach renourishment of South Padre Island beaches
- A $1.4 million estuarine habitat restoration at McAllis Point in Galveston

The list also includes a test project on South Padre Island, in which a series of low-profile stabilizers will be built underwater and perpendicular to the shoreline in an attempt to capture sand on a critically eroding beach. A complete list of the CEPRA Cycle 6 projects approved for funding is available at http://www.glo.state.tx.us/news/.

Patterson: Ike Cleanup Complete in the Bays

Texas General Land Office's removal of sunken vessels, beach and bay debris over

AUSTIN — The unprecedented effort to clear the Galveston-area bay system of debris from Hurricane Ike is over, on time and under budget, announced Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson.
"This was a huge job, but I'm proud to say that Galveston Bay, East Bay, West Bay and Trinity Bay are cleaner now than they were before Hurricane Ike," Patterson said.

After Hurricane Ike, the Land Office was faced with the huge logistical task of organizing the biggest beach and bay debris cleanup in state history. Patterson worked with Governor Rick Perry and Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst to obtain emergency funding from the existing state budget to begin the work.

The first priority was to clear the beach and the surf zone of potentially dangerous rubble left behind from homes blown away by the storm. Then sonar was shot in the bays and 8,051 individual debris targets were identified — everything from refrigerators to ambulances to yachts. The total cleanup costs: $10.9 million to clear the beaches and $14 million to clear the bays. “That’s millions less than the initial estimates,” Patterson said.

Overall, 136,743 cubic yards of debris were hauled from the beaches in the Hurricane Ike-affected area. More than 1 million cubic yards of sand were sifted clean and returned to the beach.
In the bays, 30,452 cubic yards of debris were removed from beneath the waters of Galveston Bay, East Bay, West Bay, Trinity Bay and Sabine Lake.

Work then began on the task of identifying and hauling out every sunken boat wrecked by the storm and identifying and finding the sunken vessels’ owners.

“Fortunately, we’ve been working for years to gain the authority to haul up and junk sunken vessels,” Patterson said. “In 2005, the Legislature gave the Texas General Land Office the authority we needed to get the job done after Ike.”

Crews working for the Texas General Land Office recovered a total of 124 boats, including everything from small skiffs to 70-foot steel hulled behemoths. The GLO’s efforts reunited eight lucky boat owners with their ships. Seven sunken vessels were too big or too stuck to be hauled up whole and were demolished in place. Another 116 recovered vessels were hauled up and sent to the landfill.

Adopt-A-Beach Volunteers Cleanup 217 Tons of Trash

23rd Annual Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Fall Cleanup draws 8,224 volunteers

AUSTIN — More than 8,200 volunteers joined forces Saturday for Operation Target Trash, the 23rd Annual Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Fall Cleanup. The volunteers removed nearly 217 tons of trash off more than 194 miles of Texas coast.

“The Adopt-A-Beach troops came out in full force, and I want to thank them all,” said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. “This program wouldn’t work without these dedicated Texans.”

At Adopt-A-Beach sites across the coast, volunteers reported discovering many odd and unusual items during the cleanup, including a military duffle bag full of camo and shotgun shells, two TV sets, a mattress, a washing machine, a carport, dentures, underwear, a plastic cup with “Don’t Litter, Keep Texas Clean” printed on it, a $5 bill, a teddy bear, a duck decoy and cell phone parts.

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

Since 1986, more than 390,000 Adopt-A-Beach volunteers have picked up more than 7,500 tons of trash from Texas beaches, some of it originating from as far away as South America. Volunteers record data on the trash to learn more about the causes of marine debris and to help mitigate pollution along Texas’ 367 miles of coastline.

The next coastwide cleanup will be the Spring Adopt-A-Beach effort scheduled for April 24, 2010. The success of the Adopt-A-Beach Program is made possible by the generous efforts of dedicated volunteers and the strong support of community leaders and sponsors across the state. This year the Adopt-A-Beach Program thanks its lead statewide Fall Cleanup sponsor, Shell Oil Company. Other statewide sponsors are the Newfield Foundation, the Ocean Conservancy, Flint Hills Resources Community Action Council, Halliburton and Johnson Controls.

To learn more about items collected at the cleanup, and for information on the health of the Texas coast, visit the Adopt-A-Beach Program Web site at www.texasadoptabeach.org, or contact the Texas General Land Office at 1-877-TXCOAST (1-877-892-6278). You can even become a friend of the Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Program on Facebook.

Other News

Obama Administration Officials Release Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force Interim Report

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

Contact: Christine Glunz
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC – Obama Administration officials today released the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force Interim Report for a 30-day public review and comment period. The Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, led by White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley, consists of 24 senior-level officials from Administration agencies, departments, and offices. The report provides proposals for a comprehensive national approach to uphold our stewardship responsibilities and ensure accountability for our actions.

“This Interim Report represents a wide spectrum of views and considerations, not just from within the federal government, but from members of the public, local officials, stakeholders and experts from coast to coast,” said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. “It delivers on President Obama’s request for recommendations that will move this country towards a more robust national policy for our oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes and recognizes that we have a responsibility to protect the oceans and coasts for the benefit of current and future generations.”

“America's oceans are vital to our prosperity, health, security and quality of life,” said Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. “This is a historic day -- for the first time, we as a nation say loudly and clearly that healthy oceans matter.”

“America's enduring maritime interests -- our reliance on the oceans and Great Lakes for commerce, sustenance, and security -- have not changed since our nation's founding. What has changed is the complexity of the pressures on these critical ecosystems and the demand for an effective and integrated national strategy to manage their use, protection, and sustainability," said Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad Allen. “The recommendations of this Interim Report chart a clear course to address the needs for an integrated national policy and governance structure that will better provide for the safety, security, and stewardship of the maritime environment, now and into the future."

"President Obama's vision for a sustainable and comprehensive strategy for our oceans is vital to the wise management of these critical resources," said Associate Deputy Secretary of the Interior Laura Davis. "With 1.7 billion acres in the Outer Continental Shelf -- including management responsibilities for offshore renewable and conventional energy resources, 35,000 miles of coastline, and millions of acres of marine-based parks, refuges and national monuments – the Department of Interior and its agencies are front and center in the effort to build the coordinated national ocean policy that our country needs."

"The Interim Report provides a clear road map for America's stewardship of the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes," said EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water Peter Silva. "EPA is proud to have played a key role in the development of this crucial report, which is inextricably linked with EPA's mission to protect and safeguard human health and the environment."

The Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force was created by Presidential Memorandum on June 12, 2009, to develop a national policy for the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. The Memorandum charged the Task Force with developing recommendations that include a national policy for our oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes, a framework for improved Federal policy coordination, and an implementation strategy to meet the objectives of a national ocean policy within 90 days. Within 180 days, the Task Force is charged with developing a recommended framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning.

The Interim Report provides proposals for a comprehensive national approach to uphold our stewardship responsibilities and ensure accountability for our actions. Additionally, the Interim Report outlines a more balanced, productive and sustainable approach to our ocean resources. Specifically, it highlights three key areas:

A National Policy: The Interim Report proposes a new National Policy that recognizes that America's stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes is intrinsically and intimately linked to environmental sustainability, human health and well-being, national prosperity, adaptation to climate and other environmental change, social justice, foreign policy, and national and homeland security.

A Robust Governance Structure: The Interim Report proposes modifications to the existing governance structure, including a stronger mandate and direction, and renewed and sustained high-level engagement. Under the proposal, the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Science and Technology Policy would lead an interagency National Ocean Council to coordinate ocean-related issues across the Federal Government and the implementation of the National Ocean Policy. Such a governance structure, combined with sustained high-level staff involvement, would ensure that these areas are a priority throughout the Federal Government.

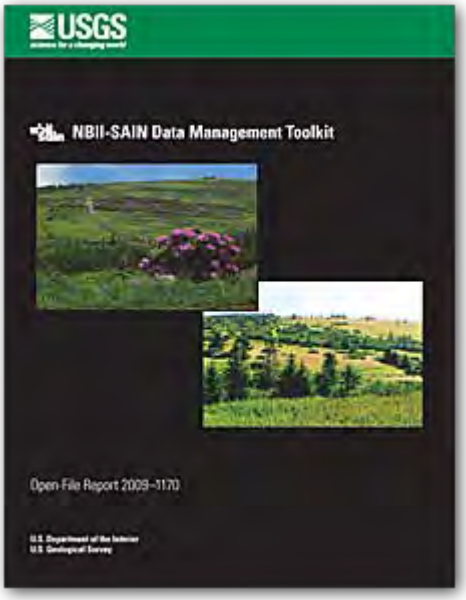
Categories for Action: The Interim Report prioritizes nine categories for action, including ecosystem-based management, regional ecosystem protection and restoration, and strengthened and integrated observing systems, that seek to address some of the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. These strategies and objectives provide a bridge between the National Policy and action on the ground.

The Task Force is now focusing its efforts on developing a recommended framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning as charged within 180 days. In addition, the Task Force continues its public engagement activities, including holding at least five more regional public meetings scheduled to take place in the following cities: San Francisco, California; Providence, Rhode Island; Cleveland, Ohio; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Honolulu, Hawaii. The initial meeting was held in Anchorage, Alaska on August 21, 2009. Expert briefings will continue while the Interim Report is available for review and public comment. The Interim Report may be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans. The Task Force will provide a final report with all of its recommendations later this year.

The Importance of Data Management

NBII-SAIN Data Management Toolkit

By Thomas E. Burley and John D. Peine



The Strategic Plan for the U.S. Geological Survey Biological Informatics Program (2005–2009) recognizes the need for effective data management:

> *Though the Federal government invests more than $600 million per year in biological data collection, it is difficult to address these issues because of limited accessibility and lack of standards for data and information...variable quality, sources, methods, and formats (for example observations in the field, museum specimens, and satellite images) present additional challenges. This is further complicated by the fast-moving target of emerging and changing technologies such as GPS and GIS. Even though these technologies offer new solutions, they also create new informatics challenges (Ruggiero and others, 2005).*

The USGS National Biological Information Infrastructure program, hereafter referred to as NBII, is charged with the mission to improve the way data and information are gathered, documented, stored, and accessed. The central objective of this project is a direct reflection of the purpose of NBII as described by John Mosesso, Program Manager of the U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Informatics Program-GAP Analysis:

> *At the outset, the reason for bringing about NBII was that there were significant amounts of data and information scattered all over the U.S., not accessible, in incompatible formats, and that NBII was tasked with addressing this problem….NBII's focus is to pull data together that truly matters to someone or communities. Essentially, the core questions are: 1) what are the issues, 2) where is the data, and 3) how can we make it usable and accessible (John Mosesso, U.S. Geological Survey, oral commun., 2006).*

Redundancy in data collection can be a major issue when multiple stakeholders are involved with a common effort. In 2001 the U.S. General Accounting Office (USGAO) estimated that about 50 percent of the Federal government's geospatial data at the time was redundant. In addition, approximately 80 percent of the cost of a spatial information system is associated with spatial data collection and management (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2003). These figures indicate that the resources (time, personnel, money) of many agencies and organizations could be used more efficiently and effectively. Dedicated and conscientious data management coordination and documentation is critical for reducing such redundancy. Substantial cost savings and increased efficiency are direct results of a pro-active data management approach. In addition, details of projects as well as data and information are frequently lost as a result of real-world occurrences such as the passing of time, job turnover, and equipment changes and failure. A standardized, well documented database allows resource managers to identify issues, analyze options, and ultimately make better decisions in the context of adaptive management (National Land and Water Resources Audit and the Australia New Zealand Land Information Council on behalf of the Australian National Government, 2003).

Many environmentally focused, scientific, or natural resource management organizations collect and create both spatial and non-spatial data in some form. Data management appropriate for those data will be contingent upon the project goal(s) and objectives and thus will vary on a case-by-case basis. This project and the resulting Data Management Toolkit, hereafter referred to as the Toolkit, is therefore not intended

to be comprehensive in terms of addressing all of the data management needs of all projects that contain biological, geospatial, and other types of data. The Toolkit emphasizes the idea of connecting a project's data and the related management needs to the defined project goals and objectives from the outset. In that context, the Toolkit presents and describes the fundamental components of sound data and information management that are common to projects involving biological, geospatial, and other related data. These components include project planning, standards, data stewardship, data modeling, quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC), metadata, geospatial data acquisition, critical elements of data, and free tools and resources. Also, where possible, it provides guidelines for addressing those various components based on industry, Federal, and international best practices and standards.

The effectiveness of planning and decision-making is closely related to the quality and completeness of available information. Quality information can only be derived from quality data. Global positioning systems (GPS) and geographic information systems (GIS) greatly contribute to improved resource management and decision making. However, efficiency and effectiveness in natural resource management and decision making are not direct results of using tools such as GPS and GIS. These tools must be implemented with adhered-to standard procedures and methodologies for data management and data documentation. Otherwise, management goals and objectives may never be fully realized and the effects from implemented decisions may never be fully quantifiable. The data management concepts presented herein are geared towards facilitating multi-agency efforts related to the adaptive management of Roan Mountain. Since these concepts are applicable to any project, however, the intention was to present them in such a way that the Toolkit can be applied and adapted to other scenarios. The ultimate goal is to allow for those engaged in a project to become better aware of fundamental data management issues that may be outside of their respective areas of expertise.

The greatest challenge of this project was helping natural resource managers, agency biologists and scientists, the non-government community (NGO), and the academic community to realize the importance of data and information management. Approaching this issue in a holistic and collaborative way will greatly enhance the value and utilization of data and information over the long term.

Mapping of Florida's Springs Coast Completed

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) is responsible for the protection and management of natural systems and water quality within its geographic boundaries. One component of evaluating the ecological health of coastal ecosystems is to map and monitor submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) communities. The Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Florida Wildlife Research Institute recently completed seagrass mapping of Florida's Springs Coast (southern half of the Big Bend).

The Springs Coast region is a very diverse system. Its complex system of estuaries, tidal creeks and flats, mangroves islands, oyster bars, and limestone shoals makes this system one of the most unique and diverse systems along the Gulf Coast. Due to the wide range of habitat types, mapping benthic habitats in this region is challenging. The project consisted of completion of a detailed geodatabase of seagrass beds and seagrass density across 525,000 acres of estuarine and marine waters. The project was completed as a collaborative effort with Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI). FWRI acquired the digital imagery for the project in April 2007 through a separate agreement with a consultant they selected. The District's responsibility was interpretation of the imagery and development of the seagrass coverage or maps.

The resulting maps used four categories including: 1) dense seagrass; 2) patchy seagrass; 3) sparse to medium seagrass; and 4) unvegetated bottom. Unvegetated areas were mapped as tidal flats, oyster bars or shoals, and open water with bare bottom. The results of the project revealed that dense seagrass comprised the largest area at 272,772 acres, sparse to medium seagrass covererd 87,393 acres, patchy

seagrass covered 18,851 acres, and unvegetated bottom covered 52,285 acres. The detailed spatial seagrass database will serve as a solid baseline to monitor changes in seagrass communities in the future with the next round of mapping scheduled in 2012 (every 5 years).

The project is a continuation of previous efforts to determine the status and trends of SAV resources in the coastal waters of the District. The results of this effort will be used to determine the performance of ongoing efforts to improve water quality in coastal waters of the District. For more information, contact Keith Kolasa at Keith.Kolasa@swfwmd.state.fl.us.

Interstate Governors Agreement on Coastal Issues

On June 4, the States of Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Virginia hosted the Mid-Atlantic Governors' Ocean Summit in Manhattan. The Summit resulted in an interstate agreement signed by the five Governors that created the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) and charged the States to collaboratively address shared priorities, including: coordinate protection of important habitats and sensitive and unique offshore areas; promote improvements in the region's coastal water quality; support the sustainable development of renewable energy in offshore areas; and prepare the region's coastal communities for the impact of climate change on ocean and coastal resources. The Summit also led to the identification of actions, timelines, and leadership that will advance the shared priorities. The set of actions framed by this document is intended to represent a first step towards regional action, rather than an attempt to capture all of the long-term objectives laid out by the States. This first step also presents significant opportunities for stakeholder engagement and partnership with the many diverse constituencies across the Mid-Atlantic region. To that end, the document is intended to be the foundation for the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Ocean Stakeholder Conference and to spark discussion and new ideas on moving forward. To access the documents, visit MARCO web site: http://www.midatlanticocean.org/ .

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

This week, at the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), announced the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin, including water quality and wildlife habitat. Through the initiative, NRCS and its partners will work with producers in selected watersheds to help them voluntarily implement conservation practices which avoid, control and trap nutrient runoff, improve wildlife habitat, and maintain agricultural productivity. To read about the announcement: http://wcco.com/local/conservation.effort.usda.2.1204975.html.

America's WETLAND Hosts Hearing on Innovative Technology

NEW ORLEANS- Alternative energy sources must be explored, but the United States for at least two more decades will be dependent almost totally on hydrocarbon fuels, experts said Tuesday. "The bottom line is the United States is going to need to maintain its oil and gas production for a long, long time," said Amy Jaffe of the Baker Institute of Rice University.

Jaffe was one of the speakers at a hearing called "Innovative Technology for Energy and Environmental Sustainability of America's Energy Coast (AEC)," hosted by the America's WETLAND Foundation (AWF) in New Orleans today.

Val Marmillion, AWF managing director, said the reality "is that a strong combination of conventional sources tied to alternative development is necessary for the foreseeable future. Because the Gulf region has the infrastructure to support a balanced domestic energy future, incentives for creating an alternative energy corridor here must be on the table along with expansion of technology to result in beneficial uses of CO2."

Mark Hurley, President of Shell Pipeline and Chair of the AEC Industry Council, opened the hearing by saying the AEC "brings together a very diverse group of stakeholders from Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. It is a group that historically hasn't agreed on many things, maybe very little. But we have come together." Coastal protection and cultural preservation "are critical issues," Hurley added.

The AEC is a diverse group of major U.S.- based businesses and industry, national environmental organizations, renowned scientists and researchers, and coastal interests from across the four energy-producing Gulf Coast states from Texas to Alabama.

"The Gulf coast- America's Energy Coast - is critically important to our nation's current and future energy security, but this region also represents ground zero for some of the challenging sustainability issues our nation faces over the next decade," said Sidney Coffee, AWF's Senior Policy Advisory on Climate, Energy and the Coast. "We have to find new, innovative ways to achieve energy and environmental sustainability."

Leaders from across the AEC joined researchers, scientists, and other experts to address topics such as deepwater exploration, the future of carbon sequestration, and the potential for alternative energy development in the Gulf Corridor.

Chris John, president of the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association said Americans began understanding why the nation needs to pay attention to the Gulf Coast when gasoline hit $4 last year. "Support is growing for rebuilding our coast," John said. "The oil and gas industry needs the coast as much as anyone else."

An initiative of the America's WETLAND Foundation, AEC's mission is to provide a balanced forum for many interests to work together toward the development of comprehensive solutions to sustain our vital economic region and the environment on which it depends.

Testimony received at the hearing will help form the work of the AEC's Domestic Energy Security and Development Task Force, which is co-chaired by Sandra Fury, manager of Chevron's Gulf of Mexico Business Unit, and Karen Gautreaux, governmental affairs director for The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana. The AEC is preparing for a national policy forum to be held November 4 in Washington.

To learn more visit www.americaswetland.com or www.americasenergycoast.org.

The America's WETLAND Foundation manages the largest, most comprehensive public education campaign in Louisiana's history. The campaign is raising public awareness about the impact of Louisiana's wetland loss on the state, nation and world. The initiative is supported by a growing coalition of world, national and state conservation and environmental organizations and has drawn private support from businesses that see wetlands protection as a key to economic growth.

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Conferences and Workshops

Obama Administration Officials to Hold Gulf Coast Regional Ocean Policy Task Force Public Meeting on October 19, 2009

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 9, 2009

NEW ORLEANS, LA – Obama Administration officials will hold a Gulf Coast Regional Ocean Policy Task Force Public Meeting in New Orleans on Monday, October 19, 2009. The Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, led by White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley, consists of senior-level officials from Administration agencies, departments, and offices.

The Task Force, established by President Obama via presidential memorandum on June 12, is charged with developing a recommendation for a national policy that ensures protection, maintenance, and restoration of oceans, our coasts and the Great Lakes. It will also recommend a framework for improved stewardship, and effective coastal and marine spatial planning. The meeting in New Orleans will be the fifth regional public meeting held since the Task Force was created. The public is encouraged to attend and an opportunity for public comment will be provided.

Members of the public can access the meeting in three ways: by attending in person at one of the sites listed below; by calling into the listen-only phone line (800-369-1897; participant code: 2495142); or via live webstream at http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans.

Who: Chair Nancy Sutley, White House Council on Environmental Quality
Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Peter Silva, Assistant Administrator for Water, Environmental Protection Agency
Associate Deputy Secretary Laura Davis, Department of Interior
Admiral Thad Allen, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant

What: Ocean Policy Task Force Public Meeting
When: Monday, October 19, 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. (CDT)
Where: Audubon Aquarium of the Americas & Entergy IMAX Theater, 1 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130. Live video-connections will be used at the following locations:

Texas State Aquarium
2710 North Shoreline Boulevard.
Corpus Christi, TX 78402
RSVP Contact: Rosanna Gossett
361-881-1204
rgossett@txstateaq.org

Dauphin Island Sea Lab
Wiese Marine Science Hall, Room 102W
101 Bienville Blvd.
Dauphin Island, AL 36528

RSVP Contact: Ms Lori Angelo
251-861-7507
langelo@disl.org

National Marine Fisheries Service (4:30-7:30 p.m. EDT)
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
RSVP Contact: Michael Henderson
727-824-5396
Michael.Henderson@noaa.gov

J. L. Scott Marine Education Center
703 East Beach Drive
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
RSVP Contact: Johnette Bosarge
228-818-8893
johnette.bosarge@usm.edu

Note: Public comment can also be submitted online at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans.

Registration Open for the 28th Annual International Submerged Lands Management Conference Webinar Series

The 28th International Submerged Lands Management Conference will hold a webinar series from September through November of 2009. Hosted by the Florida's coastal management program, the series will consist of 6 sessions and will convene bimonthly. The webinar series is intended for coastal/natural resource managers, attorneys, consultants, academics and other professionals with particular expertise or experience related to some aspect of submerged lands, whether government, business, or the non-profit community. The series if free, but registration is required for each individual session. For more information on the sessions: www.submergedlandsconference.com .

The Coastal Society Call for Abstracts

The Coastal Society (TCS) is inviting submissions for papers, panels, and posters for its 22nd International Conference, *Shifting Shorelines: Adapting to the Future*, June 13-June 16, 2010 in Wilmington, North Carolina. Abstracts are due October 23 and are encouraged to complement the conference's theme of adapting to the changing landscape of ocean and coastal resource management and fit one of the five conference tracks: changing shorelines; climate change; coastal environments; coastal economies; and sociopolitical adaptation. Preference will be given to presentations, panels and posters that provide solutions relevant to solving contemporary coastal problems, integrate science, management, policy and decision-making, and spark interactive discussion among the conference session attendees. To view the full Call for Papers: http://www.thecoastalsociety.org/conference/tcs22/call.html. For the guidelines on abstract submission and detailed descriptions of each track: http://www.thecoastalsociety.org/conference/tcs22/abstract.html. For more information about the 22nd Conference of The Coastal Society: http://www.thecoastalsociety.org/conference/tcs22/index.html or e-mail us at coastalsoc@aol.com.

Alabama BirdFest

Oct. 15-18, 2009

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

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

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

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

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

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

Panhandle Habitat Series- Rivers and Floodplains

Wednesday, Oct 21, 2009, 8:45 am - 4:30 pm (Eastern Time)
Apalachicola NERR Education Center

Registration: $10 includes continental breakfast. Call to sign-up and request registration form, then mail form with check payable to Friends of the Reserve to Apalachicola NERR 261 Dr. Frederick S. Humphries St, Apalachicola, FL 323220 by October 14, 2009 deadline. Contact: Alan Knothe, at 850-653-8063 or Alan.knothe@dep.state.fl.us

Wetland and Transitional Habitats of the Louisiana Gulf Coast

Sponsored by: Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's Coastal Training Program (CTP), Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex, and the Weeks Bay Foundation

October 20-23, 2009
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Tuesday – Thursday)
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Friday)

Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge
61389 Highway 434
Lacombe, LA 70445

This is a 3.5 day field-intensive plant class taught by Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock, renowned botanist from Southern Illinois University. Dr. Mohlenbrock travels across the country studying wetland plants and teaching plant identification techniques to the staffs of various environmental agencies and organizations. Participants in this class will visit a number of field sites within the Big Branch Marsh Refuge and adjacent properties and learn to identify the key plant species of each habitat type. Target audiences for this event include federal and state agency regulatory personnel, ecotourism operators, natural resource managers, mitigation bank managers, and wetland professionals and consultants.

The fee for this class is $100. It includes class instruction, materials, and transportation to field sites. To register for this event, please contact Marian Hanisko at 228-475-7047 or Marian.Hanisko@dmr.ms.gov, or Amy Gohres at amy@weeksbay.org. Please note that only checks or Purchase Orders will be accepted, and they should be addressed to the Weeks Bay Foundation. The deadline for registration is Friday October 9, 2009 or as soon as the class is filled. The class is limited to 20 participants - EARLY REGISTRATION is recommended!

If you have questions about this event, please contact Marian Hanisko at 228-475-7047 or Marian.Hanisko@dmr.ms.gov, or Amy Gohres at amy@weeksbay.org.

Workshop to Help Nature-tourism Businesses Enhance Offerings

Registration open for Oct. 22 event

GULF SHORES and ORANGE BEACH, Ala. – The Nature Tourism Initiative along the Alabama Gulf Coast, under the leadership of Joanne McDonough, will host a 3-hour Business of Nature workshop starting at 8 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 22, at the Orange Beach Welcome Center (23685 Perdido Beach Blvd.). The workshop will include educational training, informative discussions and a preview of the new Coastal Nature Tour Guide Certification Program.

"We designed the workshop to help businesses improve their nature-based business by providing more information about the area's tourism industry and the guests who come to the Alabama Gulf Coast," McDonough said. "Leading experts in the fields of marketing, promotion and business will present tips and strategies on how to improve your nature tour business and enhance your customer's tour experience."

There will be several session topics:

- Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium projects update
- Economic overview of nature tourism along Alabama's Gulf Coast

- Coastal Nature Tour Guide Certification Program
- Coastal Scenic Byway update
- Theme-based destination packaging
- U.S. Coast Guard vessel requirements

This workshop is funded by Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Nature tourism business owners who would like to register for the Oct. 22 workshop may contact Joanne McDonough at 251-974-4634 or jmcdonough@gulfshores.com. Additional online resources may be found at www.agccvb.org/business-of-nature.

About the Nature Tourism Initiative:
In 2007, the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center joined forces to oversee the development of the Nature Tourism Initiative. This project is designed to evaluate the nature-based businesses in Baldwin and Mobile Counties (in Alabama) and provide resources to meet their needs. Charged with this mission, Joanne McDonough's task is two-fold: (1) to work with local businesses and communities to provide a quality nature experience for the guests (2) while also encouraging good stewardship and sustainability of the area's natural resources. Current partners include the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau and the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration. For more information, visit www.agccvb.org/business-of-nature.

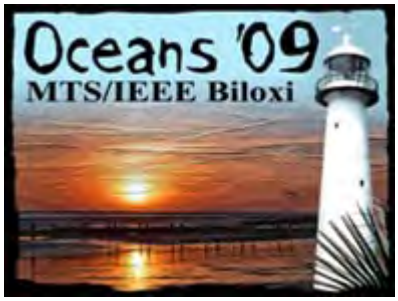
Announcing the 2009-2010 "From H-2-O" Water Quality Workshop for Teachers

When: October 23-25, 2009 (back-up dates January 22-24, 2010)
Where: Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium's W.J. Defelice Marine Center, Cocodrie LA
Who can apply: Louisiana middle school or high school teachers
Space Availability: 20
Hosted By: Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)
Funded By: Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

Have you ever wanted to teach your students science using meaningful hands-on scientific investigation, while at the same time teaching them environmental stewardship? Now you can. All you have to do is apply to be one of this year's From H-2-O workshop participants. From H-2-O is a training workshop for LUMCON's Bayouside Classroom program. Bayouside
Classroom is a student-based water quality monitoring program designed to teach students about the environment while practicing stewardship. For more information about Bayouside Classroom visit: www.lumcon.edu/bayousideclassroom.

From H-2-O is a comprehensive workshop with great networking opportunities. Teachers work with educators, scientists, and other professionals to learn how to teach water sampling in their classrooms. Each workshop participant will receive a free water sampling kit with all
the required equipment to collect and analyze water samples, free resources, and much, much more. Free meals and lodging are provided to all workshop participants during the workshop.
For more information about the Bayouside Classroom program, the From H-2-O workshop, or about how to apply, contact Murt Conover at: mconover@lumcon.edu or (985) 851-2860.

Oceans 2009



Marine Technology for our Future: Global and Local Challenges
MTS/IEEE Biloxi, Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center
October 26-29, 2009
Attendee Registration: Click Here
Schedule of Events

The conference theme "Marine Technology for our Future: Global and Local Challenges" reflects the focus of the oceans community acting locally to help globally. For this year's event, your Local OCEANS Committee has selected four local topics of global interest. Sessions on Operational Oceanography, Coastal Restoration, Ocean Observing Systems and Lessons Learned from Recent Hurricanes will join our traditional topic areas to highlight recent issues, concerns, and solutions that extend around the globe.

Ecological Restoration of Coastal Habitats

October 27-29, 2009
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Tuesday – Thursday)

Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Coastal Resources Center
6005 Bayou Heron Road
Moss Point, MS 39562

Sponsored by:
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands, Coastal Section;
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's Coastal Training Program;
Gulf of Mexico Alliance;
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources;
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA);
Society for Ecological Restoration International, Southeastern Chapter;
Weeks Bay Foundation;
Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Coastal Training Program

Please join us for Ecological Restoration of Coastal Habitats, a 3-day workshop taught by Dr. Andre Clewell! Dr. Clewell is an international leader in restoration science and expert in natural areas planning, plant taxonomy, and plant ecology. Attendees should expect to learn the principles of ecological restoration and explore strategies for monitoring and evaluating restoration projects. Special emphasis will be placed on habitats that are characteristic of the northern Gulf Coast such as pine savannas, tidal marsh, bottomland hardwoods, and bayhead drains. Field excursions will also be an important part of this event.

The fee for this event is $50. It includes class instruction, materials, transportation to field sites, lunch on October 27 and 28, and a copy of Andy Clewell's book, Ecological Restoration: Principles, Values, and Structure of an Emerging Profession. We will be in the field on October 29th so plan to bring your lunch or grab a quick meal on the road. To register or if you have questions about this event, please contact:

Marian Hanisko – (228) 475-7047 or Marian.Hanisko@dmr.ms.gov;
Michael Shelton – (251) 928-9792 or Michael.shelton@dcnr.alabama.gov;
Amy Gohres – (251) 990-5004 or amy@weeksbay.org

Legal Seminar to Focus on Post-Katrina Insurance, Other Issues

The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program will sponsor "Post-Katrina Insurance Developments and Other Legal Issues, " a continuing legal education (CLE) seminar for Mississippi attorneys and other interested people, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:15 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, at the Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center located at 1815 Popps Ferry Road in Biloxi.

Presenters will discuss the following topics:

- Business income coverage issues arising from Hurricane Katrina
- Insurance impacts to the oil and gas industry
- Katrina-related insurance litigation updates
- Legal issues with the National Flood Insurance Program
- Debris removal, emergency preparedness and federal agency coordination
- Ethical concerns in Post-Katrina housing recovery

Organizers have applied for 6 CLE hours, including one hour of ethics. Participants must register by Oct. 16 to receive the discounted registration rates of $50 for attorneys and $35 for non-attorneys. Visit http://masglp.olemiss.edu/postkatrinaCLE.pdf for a copy of the agenda and registration details. For more information, contact Niki Pace at nlpace@olemiss.edu or Waurene Roberson at 662-915-7697.

First Southeastern Water Trails Forum

REGISTRATION OPEN for the First Southeastern Water Trails Forum!

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

Featuring	Who Should Attend
More then 30 regional & national speakers	Marina & Boating Industries & Outfitters
Strategies for successful trail programs	Paddlers, Boaters & Blueway Organizations
Economic & tourism potentials	Tourism & Chamber of Commerce Reps.
Funding resources & marketing opportunities	Parks & Recreation Depts. & Planners
Nuts & bolts trail construction & maintenance	

Save the Date 2010

Galveston Island Convention Center, Galveston Island, Texas
November 13-17, 2010
"Preparing for Climate Change: Science, Practice, and Policy"

JOIN US for our 5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration on Galveston Island, Texas, November 13-17, 2010.

RAE's 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.

We expect more than 1,000 attendees, 150 exhibitors, 160 poster presentations, and 400 presenters in 80-plus, high-level sessions dealing with the best and newest approaches to coastal habitat preservation and restoration.

Our 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 our 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 our five-day conference; push Galveston's ongoing restoration needs to national attention through our press work and through the attendance of senior federal officials; and increase the direction and momentum of new resources to aid the Galveston area.

All conference proceedings will be held at the state-of-the-art Galveston Island Convention Center, 5600 Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Texas. Want to know more? Sign up here for Conference Updates.
Want to be an exhibitor or help sponsor the conference? Sign up here for Exhibition and Sponsorship Opportunities

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

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