

Gulf of Mexico Alliance
Environmental Education Network
Quarterly Information Call 2/2/09

NOTES

Acronyms (found throughout notes)

AMT = Alliance Management Team
COSEE= Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence
CELC = Coastal Environmental Learning Center
DEQ = Department of Environmental Quality
EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
GOMA = Gulf of Mexico Alliance
EEN = Environmental Education Network
EEC = Environmental Education Coordinator
NERR = National Estuarine Research Reserve
NOAA = National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NSTA = National Science Teachers Association
PITs = Priority Issue Teams
RFP = Request for Proposal
NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration
UUP = Underserved and Underrepresented Populations
COPUS= Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science
BWET= Bay Watershed Education & Training
NOSB=National Ocean Sciences Bowl
GCOOS=Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System
DISL=Dauphin Island Sea Lab
USM-University of Southern Mississippi
HAB=Harmful Algal Bloom
LIFE=Learns in Florida's Environment

- I. **Ann Weaver from NOAA GCSC gives an introduction:** she discussed history of Environmental Education Network (EEN) and explained objectives of call.
 - a. "In an effort to inform more people around the Gulf regarding Environmental Education activities, these calls will be held quarterly for anyone interested. Like a radio program, these will be listening sessions and not intended for in-depth discussion. The goal is to provide information on Gulf of Mexico Alliance and environmental education activities within the Gulf region."

- II. **Ann introduces Valerie Kleinschmidt-New GOMA Educational Specialist**
 - a. Valerie introduces Guest Speaker-Sheri Potter

III. **Guest Speaker:** Featured Talk: Year of Science 2009 and the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS) Sheri Potter

1. Sheri Potter is the Project Manager for COPUS, which is located in D.C., but she works from home in Sarasota, FL.
2. The purpose of COPUS is to foster communication and collaboration through a grassroots network from the science and education world. Academic, university, art, museum, etc. - all work together to get the word out about science. There are 20 regional hubs of activity that are locally based. Year of Science 2009 is a 12 month celebration of science and monthly themes highlight different aspects. Each theme tries to answer the question- How do we know what we know? The scientific community needs to get the word out on what they're doing and discovering.
3. Through this program scientists are learning the importance of being inclusive, in order to get the public involved in science. The Year of Science is using a grassroots approach to get science in community- encouraging people to get outdoors, promotion of science through newspaper articles, scientists visiting classrooms & sharing knowledge. Events are being held throughout the year to celebrate science. Check out <http://www.copusproject.org/yearofscience2009/> for event information.
4. COPUS has developed a new paradigm of the scientific method. They think science is much more dynamic than the current scientific method. Miller Levine is using the new method in their new Biology Text Book that is used by 27,000 educators. The method is so far seen as very effective. Visit: www.understandingscience.org for more information.
5. The Year of Science kicked off 2009 with an opening event in Boston. They also launched their Public Portal Website. It has 6 Pages and they are updated regularly with new content. Writers from Popular Science are contributing by producing content for site. Overall website purpose is to show how science is related to our society and affects our every-day lives.
6. For any questions regarding COPUS Year of Science 2009 please contact Sheri Potter at spotter@copusproject.org

IV. **State Lead Updates:**

1. **Mississippi update- Sharon Walker** Sharon.walker@usm.edu
 - Just began B-WET Project. They started in Jan. 2009 with a "changing landscapes" curriculum which includes geology and oral histories.
 - They are recruiting teachers for workshops which they have received 2 grants to fund.
 - JL Scott Marine Education Center will be hosting a Hurricane Bowl (part of NOSB) -17 Teams will be participating in a round robin question format.

Competition is for High School students in the 10th and 11th grade and there are 5 students per team. Students come from FL, LA, AL and MS. Hurricane Bowl being held 2/6-2/7, 2009.

-Grand Bay NERR- workshop is underway. Workshop centers on professional development for teachers. Science fairs for students are being hosted as well.

-2 Coastal Impact Programs received funding- \$24 million to rebuild J.L. Scott Marine Education Center. A marine debris program grant received as well.

- Coastal Storms program- An adult audience working with local policymakers for resiliency.

-EPA Mini-grants are open and MS/AL Sea Grant has sent in a proposal.

-NOAA GCOOS- Workshop is being held for LA & TX at the Harte Institute- Occurring at the end of April and early May. MS & AL workshop is being held at DISL at the end of May.

-2 Year Rotating Exhibit of kiosks at all CELC's- much work is being done on this right now. First exhibit is to be at Veracruz Aquarium.

-NSTA conference to be held in mid-March.

<http://www.nsta.org/conferences/2009new/>

2. **Alabama update- Lee Yokel** lyokel@disl.org

-Dauphin Island Sea Lab-Discovery Hall Programs are in its planning phases for spring and summer teacher workshops and k-12 community activities & camps.

Go onto www.disl.org for program schedule.

-RFP due this Thursday 2/5 at 4 pm CST. E-mail for more information.

-GOMA Public Input for next draft Plan will be an on-line survey through MASGC's survey monkey and should be starting in next couple of weeks.

-Pat Byington with BAMA Environmental News- lists activities coming up.

www.bamanews.com

-Environmental Education Association of Alabama (EEAA) will be holding their "Woods & Water: Connections in Nature" workshop on March 19th-24th.

-Rivers Alliance Meeting being held on March 20th-22nd.

3. **Florida update- Greg Ira** Greg.Ira@dep.state.fl.us

-LIFE- program now has 4 NEW sites. Okaloosa County site received funding from DISL. Central Gulf Coast has location at Salt Springs State Park.

-BWET Proposal- waiting to hear results.

-Underserved and Underrepresented Call tomorrow 2/3- Member Updates will be given, but there's no Speaker

-Marine Science Education Station will be held at FL Sea Grant.

- Bridget Washburn also gave updates- 'Bridget.Washburn@dep.state.fl.us'

-Public Input workshops for FL are complete; information was sent to NOAA and will be going down the chain.

-Spanish Community Leaders Workshop being held for 35 people. They will discuss how to do better outreach to Latino population. The next one is being held in March in Arcadia.

-Local NPR station is hosting 5 minute environmental blurbs.

4. **Louisiana update- Ann Wilson** ann.wilson@la.gov

-Clearinghouse ongoing for environmental education.

-BTNEP- Has an upcoming project on sediments.

-Coastal Roots project is ongoing. They are working with classrooms and community groups to plant seedlings to prevent erosion on coastline. Education on danger of plastic bags is being done and people are promoting using re-usable bags for groceries-

-Levy school was held on Jan. 27th and everything went well.

-Audubon Zoo having an Earth Day celebration on March 15th & 16th.

-Bayou side Classroom for teachers was held on Jan. 24th-25th.

-Preparing for NSTA Conference being held on March 19th-22nd; host organization is Louisiana Department of Education.

-Texas Instruments will be producing technology for schools.

5. **Texas update- Ericka McCauley** emccauley@tceq.state.tx.us

-Save the Bay Symposium was a success-They centered on impacts of Hurricane Ike and restoration efforts.

-Earth Day event for 20 cities to reach 500,000 people is currently being organized. Key Issues-Habitat, water quality.

-Trash Bash coming up.

-Public Awareness Campaign underway- Outreach efforts related to priorities of GOMA.

-TX State Aquarium hosting a program with kids that was modeled after Greg Ira's LIFE program. Blog for their website is a work in progress.

-Richard Gonzales also spoke richard@gulfmex.org

-Discussed his Science & Spanish Club Network. There are now 17 total sites. 2 new high schools have joined the club. They participate in video conferencing.

-Coastal Expos have been translated from English to Spanish. School Campus's now holding Expos in evenings from 4-7 pm to show parents activities of network.

-Red Fish Bay Trash Parade and cleanup will be coming up.

- Science & Spanish Club Network named one of top 30 programs from Conservation National Forum on Children & Nature.

-Informal Science and Education-Conference being held this month.

-Professional development Workshops being held-1. Colorado River 2. Austin 3. Coast-Tracing paths of the river

-Mission Aransas NERR- New Wetland Demonstration Site is built.

V. Priority Team Liaison Updates

1. **Ecosystem update-Chris Simoniello** simo@marine.usf.edu- not available; emergency.
2. **Water Quality update- Linda Sedlacek** linda.selacek@dep.state.fl.us
 - Team is developing Gulf of Mexico Monitoring Catalog about different modeling practices. Team is looking for places that would be good to go to carry out nutrient studies.
 - Team is monitoring and recording mercury in shellfish. A pathogen detection and microbial source tracking forum is coming up next week.
 - In April there will be a Monitoring Forum
 - Currently finalizing Action Plan II and highlighting activities.
 - Developing a GOMA report card to assess the health of the gulf. There will be a public friendly website to explain why these report cards are important. Eco-check Chesapeake Bay is being used as a model: <http://www.eco-check.org/reportcard/chesapeake/2007/>
 - Currently collating exposure to mercury for citizens from shellfish- demographics are showing to be a very important component since different types of people eats different types of fish. Want to publicize data so the public is aware of fish with high mercury.
 - HAB Workshop with GCOOS- How far in advance would policy makers need to know when a HAB is coming to allow public to know dangers?
3. **Nutrients update- Kim Caviness** Kim.Caviness@deq.state.ms.us
 - Natalie Guedon gave update too.
 - Team is hoping to show how exposure to nutrients links to biological responses.
 - Workshop being held on March 10th, 11th, 12th in New Orleans to highlight research on the Gulf Coast for nutrients. Designing a template to reduce nutrients- which can be made applicable to any area in which people live.
 - Trying to bridge the gap to reach public with information on nutrients and data.
 - Team is promoting education about nutrient flux and transfer-given to the younger generation. Modules have been given to government. Better job reaching educators in this instance than in the past.
4. **Restoration update- Drew Puffer** puffer.drew@epamail.epa.gov
 - Freshwater Inflow Workshop delayed into fall or spring of next year. Topics include: Timing of flow? Changes in salinity?
 - Regional Sediment Master Plan is underway and team is working with U.S. Army of Engineers. This is meant for more beneficial use of sediments. First version will be complete in March and represents a gulf wide approach to better use of sediment. Larry Parsons of Mobile is heading that.
 - Wrapping up RFP Process at the EPA.
 - EPA is hoping to expand partnerships-looking to have more public & private partners.
 - Hoping to better develop format for grants so that Mexican states can get involved easier.

5. **Resilience update- Heidi Recksiek** Heidi.Recksiek@noaa.gov & **Rhonda Price** Rhonda.price@dmr.ms.gov

- Resilience Index was developed by team. MS/AL Sea Grant will look at communities to find out how resilient they are. So far six pilot groups in MS/AL have participated with local leaders to do a resilience assessment.
- Social Comment Survey measured people's resiliency. Wanted to see what resilience activities people participated in. They measured attitudes and perceptions. They will use results to design affective outreach tools.
- COPUS- Developing tables for land change and sea level rise.
- The Nature Conservancy is Using SLAM (Sea Level Rise Model) to measure at Grand Bay and Weeks Bay sometime soon.
- Team is implementing their web portal. Portal hosts handbooks for natural hazards.
- Cultural and Heritage Videos are finished highlighting communities.

VI. Ann Weaver Adjourns Call

- Thanked everyone for participation.
- Survey being sent; please fill out. Want to make call useful & effective so feedback is important.
- Spread the word about the call so more people can find out about Gulf Environmental Educational opportunities.
- Next call Monday, May 4th 1pm CST