

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance- Environmental Education Network's Quarterly
Information Call- May 4th, 2009**

Notes

Acronyms

BTNEP= Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
BWET= Bay Watershed Education and Training
CHOW= Capitol Hill Ocean's Week
DEP= Department of Environmental Protection
EPA= Environmental Protection Agency
GCOOS= Gulf Coast Ocean Observing System
GOMA= Gulf of Mexico Alliance
HABs= Harmful Algal Blooms
NOAA= National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association
SLAM: Sea Level Rise Affecting Marshes Model
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
UUP=Underserved & Underrepresented Populations

I. Introduction and objectives- Valerie Kleinschmidt

1. "Hello everyone and welcome to the 2nd GOMA EEN Quarterly Information Call. These calls were started to expand our outreach. The purpose of this call is to reach new people with the latest activities of GOMA and environmental education activities in the Gulf States. It's meant to be like a radio program where speakers give updates and if listeners have any questions they are encouraged to e-mail the speakers rather than discuss during the call. Guest speakers are selected to give insight on the different types of environmental programs being carried out in the Gulf states; for GOMA and others to learn about the successes and challenges in working on environmental education. Hopefully, from hearing from others we will find ways to improve the education we carry out."
2. Now I'd like to go ahead and give a brief introduction about our speaker. Karla Klay is the executive director of Artist Boat, a non-profit organization in Galveston, TX. She earned a Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Drawing from Southern Methodist University and a Bachelor's of Science in Marine Biology from Texas A&M University at Galveston. Artist Boat started in 2003 and meshes the sciences with art in an effort to preserve the marine environment. And now as long as Karla's ready, I'd like for her to go ahead and let us know what her organization is all about."

II. Guest Speaker-Karla Klay: Director of Artist Boat in Galveston, TX

1. Mission “Artist Boat is dedicated to promoting awareness and preservation of coastal margins and the marine environment through the disciplines of the sciences and the arts.” The programs we offer are product driven, meaning that a child produces a piece of art that shares the knowledge they learned with others. For the Eco-Art workshops, they last two hours and teach students about Galveston Bay, non-point source pollution, salinity and their effect on the bay. They create a watercolor picture of species that are native to the region.
2. Students can also participate in Eco-Adventures which include travel by vessel, kayak or walking. If they do the walking adventure then they bird watch with binoculars. Vessel travel gives the students a chance to see the busy Houston ship channel and by kayak they get to see the Trinity River Delta.
3. Some of our grants include: EPA, NOAA, Texas Environmental Education Agency, and BWET. Unfortunately we weren’t able to conduct our programs due to Hurricanes Gustav & Ike, which put us behind for 5 months. We had to get extensions on our grants and May was supposed to be our big month to get things rolling again. I even hired 5 new people, but then the swine flu came and postponed everything. Not sure what the next steps will be, we are currently trying to find out how this swine flu scare pans out. These are some difficulties with being grant based and not have any funding through a board, members, etc. If you can’t conduct your programs then there’s really no money available. This has been our biggest challenge yet, the Hurricane and now swine flu-I’ve never had to deal with anything like this before.
4. They conduct professional development for teachers that includes 5 components- “I smell something fishy,” etc. The teachers receive 40 hours of professional development for lessons related to Galveston Bay and then they are required to do a workshop for their peers. They also have professional development for kayakers that teaches them how to fish from their kayak. And they offer Eco-Adventures to the public as well.
5. Artist Boat also has a residency program on two local campuses with a full time instructor at each school. Students take part in 1 hour of art and 2 hours of science daily-the residencies can take 28-100 hours of time with the students per year. The photos in the PowerPoint depict different projects including murals: Texas ecosystem, photosynthesis & water cycle, the ocean zones, etc. Students choose a marine topic to focus on for their art project. Students also stay after-school to beautify the campus and the public is welcome to visit.

6. They conduct a radio program at Browning Elementary called “The Deep” and hope to expand to 8 more campuses. Harvard Elementary has built a new park, Spark Park, which is 140 sq. ft. and has murals focusing on stewardship efforts and local animals. The murals are throughout the park and include a sign for description. Students have also built a new Habitat at Fonville Middle School. This is part of the Habitat Restoration & Creation Program which has restored 5 acres of marshes. It include dune planting which has restored 10,000 sq. ft. of restoration and is funded through the GOMA-BTNEP mini-diversity grant. www.artistboat.org offers all their curricula on-line which is all site specific, including where we paddle, how plankton works, etc.
7. The last slides show the effect of the Hurricane and Artist Boat’s office had 4 feet of water. Lee asked if there was anything we could do to help? Karla said she couldn’t think of anything besides donations. Due to being grant based and not being able to conduct programs makes the organization’s money very tight. She also mentioned the local community is very supportive.

III. State Lead Updates

1. Alabama **Lee Yokel** lyokel@disl.org

- a. Check the Weeks Bay Website <http://www.weeksbay.org/> for summer activities.
- b. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab offers many workshops including: Sharks & Rays, Coastal Connection, Submerged Grasses and COSEE. Check the website <http://www.disl.org/dhp>
- c. “Traveling Pants” exhibit is going on at the Eastern Shore Art Center and features children’s art on jeans, focused on environmental themes, including a write-up from students. These pants come from as far as NY & NJ.
- d. On June 3rd-5th BTNEP will be hosting a Diversity Symposium-visit <http://www.gulfalliancediversity.org> if you’d like to attend.
- e. June 2nd the UUP group will be having a conference call. E-mail Greg Ira at Greg.Ira@dep.state.fl.us if interested.
- f. The GOMA All Hands meeting will be in Mobile on August 4th-6th and information will be posted on the Alliance website as the date comes closer.

2. Louisiana **Dianne Lindstedt** dlindst@lsu.edu

- a. Earth Day was very successful for LA! Baton Rouge had 80,000 people involved in events. There was a wetlands tent featuring invasive species. NOAA sent a response group from Seattle to attend.
 - b. New Orleans Zoo is taking field trips from 5th graders in the parish for them to go through 30 exhibits. Funded by a partnership of industries and non-profits.
 - c. There is a visual and language arts contest for saving the wetlands and I will be judging 1,100 entries all morning. The winners will have their work displayed in a calendar which is distribute to 10,000 people and also featured on a local billboard.
 - d. The Cannon Envirothon will be held on June 16th-17th and is centered on Invasive Species.
3. Florida **Tabitha Stadler** Tabitha.Stadler@dep.state.fl.us
- a. Florida DEP is the lead on GOMA's "Green Schools Initiative" which includes a curriculum and already has 100 schools involved in the program.
 - b. The UUP call will be featuring an interview with the Senior Council for an environmental justice group and discussions will center on the aftermath of Katrina.
 - c. Southwest Florida will be having its fourth Latino Environmental Education Workshop and will be sending out information through the listserv.
4. Mississippi **Sheila Brown** Shelia.Brown@usm.edu
- a. J.L. Scott Marine Education held an Earth Day event at the Gulf Islands National Seashore.
 - b. On June 22nd at the Environmental Center in Mobile there will be an Ocean Exploration Workshop for teachers. It includes \$100 stipends, 4 videos, and 2 CDs; it is a part of the Globe Program which has a local to national approach.
 - c. Jennifer Buchanan and I will be attending the Diversity Symposium in LA to report on our project which paralleled Estuaries Live. Two schools from Moss Point were involved in the project. They are hoping to apply for another grant to work with UUP.
 - d. The Sea Camp program at J.L. Scott will be starting soon and is a non-residential camp focused on marine science where students work with researchers aboard

a vessel.

5. Texas **Tara Schultz** tschultz@txstateaq.org & **Ericka McCauley** emccaule@tceq.state.tx.us
 - a. Sharon Walker has received some funding for the CELC kiosks. All the CELCs met on March 20th to determine what Priority Issues their kiosk would feature and they will rotate among them all. They will be completed within 3 years.
 - b. Earth Day/Bay Day took place on April 18th and many conservation associations set up.
 - c. Adopt-a-Beach Cleanup took place the following weekend and 300 people were at the aquarium.
 - d. GCOOS sponsored a GPS Workshop on April 23rd-24th which was very valuable.
 - e. The SSCN will be postponing their Leadership Conference which was scheduled on May 12th-13th due to the Swine Flu. Schools are closed until the 13th of this month.
 - f. Estuary Day is having a “Green Party” theme focused on household cleaners, recycling, fertilizer use and native landscaping.

IV. Priority Team Liaison Updates

1. Ecosystem **Chris Simoniello** simo@marine.usf.edu

- a. Check out the Year of Science website for important events in the Gulf Coast area.
- b. Florida will be having a STEM meeting on May 15th.
- c. At the All Hands Meeting GCOOS will be having a joint meeting with the EEN to discuss the CELC kiosks. I have been working with Seneca on ideas for the EIA kiosk. During the GCOOS teacher workshops they have been getting great feedback for ideas to incorporate into the kiosks. It is challenging to make technical information into understandable formats for the general public.
- d. Check out the GCOOS portal for GIS application, lessons, and information.

2. Water Quality **Kris Shipman** Kris.Shipman@tpwd.state.tx.us

- a. Water Quality meeting was held on April 7th-8th to finalize Action Plan II.
- b. There was a GOMA/GCOOS HABS workshop on April 21st-23rd to see what types of information users need and how far in advance they need this

information. There will be standards set for monitoring HABs across the Gulf States and a monitoring forum for the database.

- c. There will be a Seagrass Conservation Workshop on June 11th.

3. Nutrients Richard Gonzales richard@gulfmex.org

- a. St. Louis Bay has been selected for the Nutrient study due to its' 2 freshwater inflows and new data is needed.
- b. Lori Brown's webinars feature state nutrient data updates and water quality.
- c. The team will be meeting in June and you can contact the coordinator Ann Porter if you're interested in attending. Ann_Porter@deq.state.ms.us

4. Restoration Drew Puffer puffer.drew@epamail.epa.gov

- a. The Habitat Conservation & Restoration team will be meeting in New Orleans at the la Pavilion Hotel on May 13th-14th to discuss the Sediment Master Plan.
- b. There will be a Freshwater In-Flow Workshop either this fall or next spring in Corpus Christi, TX. In-flows are the life blood for habitats.
- c. The team met in New Orleans a month ago to polish up Action Plan II, decided necessary workshops to accomplish actions, and discussed working with the resilience team for SLAM modeling in Louisiana and other Gulf States.

5. Resilience Rhonda Price Rhonda.price@dmr.ms.gov

- a. The team has been busy with Smart Growth Conferences and the Coastal IQ project. Wes Shaw from Seattle rolled out Storm Smart Coasts at the conference.
- b. Biloxi will be the first Gulf Coast area featured on the Storm Smart Network Database.
- c. The team is working on Sea Level Rise with Weeks Bay and Grand Bay to set up cores and elevation tables for monitoring and they are working on the paperwork. There will be a conference next week in Biloxi.

V. Federal Update

1. LaKeshia Robertson EPA- Robertson.Lakeshia@epa.gov

- i. There is a Gulf of Mexico Program RFP open until June 15th, contact coblentz.esthar@epa.gov or 228-6888-1281 if interested.
- ii. The AMT has been working hard to complete Action Plan II in time for Capitol Hill Ocean's Week on June 9th-11th. I need successes from all the teams to include in PowerPoint presentations at the event.

2. Ann Weaver NOAA- Ann.Weaver@noaa.gov

- i. No updates beyond what LaKeshia mentioned. She is doing an excellent job preparing for CHOW!

VI. Wrapping Up

1. Thank You Everyone!
2. Next Call: Scheduled for August 3rd, but may be rescheduled due to All Hands travel. Check e-mails for updates!