

# Gulf of Mexico News



NOAA Ocean Service, Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management

October 13, 2006

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## NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

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### ***CICEET-Funded Technology Enhances Field-To-Lab Communication***

Transferring water quality data from field to lab can be expensive and technically challenging. Radio signal transmission has limited range, cellular phone coverage is not always available, and the use of some satellite systems can send monitoring costs into orbit. With a grant from CICEET, North Star Science and Technology, LLC, has developed the Remote Access Satellite Sensor Link (RASSL), an affordable data communications system that provides real-time communication with water-quality sensor platforms in the field. To learn more visit [http://ciceet.unh.edu/briefs/henke\\_brief/index.html](http://ciceet.unh.edu/briefs/henke_brief/index.html). For more information, contact [Dwight Trueblood](#).

### ***Coastal Programs Summarizes State Assessments and Strategies - National Summary Reports Available***

The OCRM Coastal Programs Division has completed a national summary of state coastal program self assessments and strategies. These assessments and strategies are completed by the states every five years under the Coastal Zone Management Act, Coastal Zone Enhancement Program and focus on nine enhancement areas, including: coastal hazards, cumulative and secondary impacts, wetlands, ocean and Great Lakes resources, energy and government facility siting, marine and lake debris, special area management planning, public access, and aquaculture. The national summary identifies findings and trends, needs and information gaps, and provides examples of recent state successes as well as proposed strategies to improve management in each of the nine areas. To view the summaries visit the OCRM website. For more information, contact [Kris Wall](#).

### ***Coastal Services Center Develops Socioeconomic Maps for Florida Report***

The NOAA Coastal Services Center and the National Ocean Economics Program (NOEP) recently released a report, "Florida Oceans and Coastal Economies." The Center produced a series of maps for this report illustrating demographic and economic trends in Florida since 1990. Sponsored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and produced with data from NOEP, this report was the first product in a broader study of Florida's ocean and coastal economies. Maps can be viewed by selecting "Florida Economic Maps" under the "Quick Links" heading at [www.floridaoceanscouncil.org](http://www.floridaoceanscouncil.org). For more information, contact [Steven O'Shields](#).

### ***Extensive Post-Katrina/Rita Sampling Stirs Debate Over Sediment and Management Strategies for Wetland Restoration***

A National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)-supported study, funded through the [Barataria Multiple Stressor Research Program](#), estimated that deposition from hurricanes is the dominant process supplying inorganic sediments to Louisiana coastal wetlands. This conclusion suggests that sedimentation

from hurricanes should be factored into evaluating the effectiveness of management strategies for restoring Louisiana's wetlands. Using deposition rates derived from an extensive sampling of Louisiana's coastal watersheds shortly after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the amount of storm-transported material was estimated to be much greater than that introduced to wetlands via the historical overbank flow, levee breaks, or river diversions. Louisiana's coastal marshes are rapidly disappearing, and Mississippi River diversion is a key management practice for wetland restoration. These results, recently published in *Science* (22 September 2006: Vol. 313, no. 5794, p. 1713), have generated a significant amount of debate and press coverage—making it all the way to “News of the Week” on the virtual [Science Xpress](http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/313/5794/1713) web site at <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/313/5794/1713>. For more information, please contact Alan Lewitus at (301) 713-3338 or [Alan.Lewitus@noaa.gov](mailto:Alan.Lewitus@noaa.gov).

## ***NMSP Launches New Education Evaluation Web Page***

The National Marine Sanctuary Program has launched a new website focused on the evaluation of environmental and marine education programs. The web site, <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation>, includes information on how to create and samples of program evaluation plans, an environmental education literature review, tools and techniques for evaluation, examples of objectives and goals, an evaluation glossary, an on line resource guide to evaluation, and a California based evaluator directory. For more information, contact [Seaberry Nachbar](mailto:Seaberry.Nachbar@noaa.gov).

## ***Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary - Scoping Meetings***

The FGBNMS is beginning its Management Plan Review (MPR). A sanctuary management plan is a site-specific planning and management document, which is periodically reviewed, that describes the objectives, policies and activities for a sanctuary and guides future management. In conjunction with the MPR process, the sanctuary has just released the **State of the Sanctuary Report**. This report details the sanctuary's natural resources, research, education programs and current issues and invites public involvement in the MPR process. An electronic copy of the report is available on the website: <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>. The FGBNMS will hold public meetings to get input from resources users, interest groups, government agencies, and other members of the public on resource management issues. This input will help define the range of issues that the program needs to address during the management plan review.

Scoping meetings provide an opportunity for people to directly comment on issues related to management of the sanctuary's natural and cultural resources and overall administration. The meetings will follow an open-house style format where sanctuary staff will be on hand to provide information and answer questions. We encourage interested members of the public to attend and provide comments at a scoping meeting. Those unable to attend can mail, fax or email written comments directly to the sanctuary. (See information below for dates, locations, and contacts). The sanctuary will work with its Advisory Council and other members of the public to help prioritize issues that will be addressed during this management plan review, and later to develop a draft management plan.

### **Scoping Meetings**

**October 17, 2006 Webster, TX (Houston/Galveston) 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.**

Webster Civic Center  
311 Pennsylvania Street  
Webster, TX 77598

**October 19, 2006 Corpus Christi, TX 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.**

Harte Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies  
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi  
6300 Ocean Drive  
Corpus Christi, TX 78412

**October 24, 2006 New Orleans, LA 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.**

Audubon Zoo – Dominion Learning Center  
6500 Magazine Street  
New Orleans, LA 70118

For more information contact:

Jennifer Morgan, Program Coordinator,

[jennifer.morgan@noaa.gov](mailto:jennifer.morgan@noaa.gov)

Phone: 409-621-5151 ext. 103 Fax: 409-621-1316

Email comments to: [fgbmanagementplan@noaa.gov](mailto:fgbmanagementplan@noaa.gov)

## ***Sampling at Calcasieu Estuary***

NOAA's Assessment and Restoration Division and the State of Louisiana have just completed an ambitious program to evaluate sediment contamination, toxicity, and biota exposure from Citgo's June 19 oil spill in the Calcasieu Estuary. The spill released approximately three million gallons of waste oil, of which roughly one million gallons reached the Calcasieu River. NOAA and its state and federal counterparts, continue to work on natural resource damage assessments of other impacts due to the spill, including its effects on birds, the water column, habitats, and recreational use. For more information, contact: [Troy Baker](#).

## ***Flower Garden Banks Featured in Award Winning IMAX Movie***

Spectacular images of coral spawning in the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary are featured in Deep Sea 3D, the recently released IMAX® film. The movie won five awards during an international screening event in Galveston, TX, last week, where nearly 500 giant-screen filmmakers converged. The Galveston Daily News described the event as the "industry's equivalent of the Academy Awards and Cannes Film Festival rolled into one." For more information, contact: Emma Hickerson.

## ***Grand Bay NERR and University of South Carolina Report on Post-Hurricane Research***

Mark Woodrey, research coordinator at Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, recently gave a presentation in Charleston, S.C., about a collaboration effort between the reserve and the Coastal Resiliency Information System in the Southeast (CRISIS) program. The collaboration effort was initiated by the University of South Carolina, post Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Woodrey teamed with Sam Walker of the University of South Carolina to present "After the Storm: Examining Post-Catastrophe Impacts to Mississippi Estuaries." The university's Baruch Institute worked with the reserve to examine the storms' impacts to estuarine environments along the Mississippi coast, including sampling and assessment of water quality and vegetation communities, and designing an effective template for other reserves to address post-catastrophe issues. The presentation covered the research plan and initial results

from the project with the Grand Bay NERR. The second portion of the presentation included subsequent efforts within Grand Bay NERR and future expectations for the ongoing collaboration. Implications for other coastal communities were also discussed. For more information, please contact [Susan White](#).

### ***NCCOS Develops DNA Barcode for Harmful Algal Bloom Species***

National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) scientists have produced a deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) bar coding system to discriminate between morphologically similar toxic and non-toxic phytoplankton species. This enables researchers and managers to identify algal species harmful to human health in field samples. These findings will be published in a Journal of Phycology article entitled "Recognizing Dinoflagellate Species Using its DNA Sequences." For more information, contact: [Wayne Litaker](#).

### ***NOS Magazine Features NERRS-IOOS Connection***

The availability of near-real-time weather data from National Estuarine Research Reserve weather stations is the feature story for August on [NOAA's National Ocean Service Web site](#). All 27 reserves have weather stations as part of the System-wide Monitoring Program. The story describes how the reserve system has begun telemetering data from existing weather stations via satellite to the National Weather Service's Hydrometeorological Automated Data System, which in turn makes the data available to weather forecasters around the country. All NERRS sites are scheduled to be providing near-real time weather and water quality data by the end of 2006, but officials decided to provide the capability first to reserves in hurricane-prone areas in the Southeast and the Gulf of Mexico. Reserve weather stations add a previously missing component to the weather forecasting toolbox, which will result in more accurate and timely forecasts, particularly in coastal areas. The near-real-time capability also enhances the value of the SWMP to the burgeoning Integrated Ocean Observing System.

### ***Grand Bay NERR Selected as Atmospheric Mercury Monitoring Site***

NOAA's [Air Resources Laboratory](#) (ARL) has announced it will establish a long term atmospheric mercury monitoring site at the [Grand Bay reserve](#) in Moss Point, Miss., to study the emission, transport, and atmospheric deposition of mercury compounds in coastal waters, as part of the response to recommendations from the National Science and Technology Council for expanded research and monitoring efforts on mercury deposition. The Grand Bay NERR was selected for the site because of its existing meteorological and water quality monitoring infrastructure, which is part of the System-wide Monitoring Program, as well as its location relative to the Gulf and potential sources of airborne mercury.

### ***Tiny Dust Specks Could Have Big Effect on Hurricanes***

Never underestimate the power of something small. Researchers are finding that Saharan dust storms containing tiny specks of dust are linked to suppressed hurricane activity in the Atlantic. Jason Dunion, a hurricane researcher at the NOAA Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory's Hurricane Research Division in Miami, Fla., and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studied the past 25 years of satellite data. They found that during times of intense hurricane activity, the large clouds of dust that periodically blow westward from the Saharan Desert are relatively scarce. In years when there

were fewer hurricanes, the dust storms were stronger and tended to spread over much of the Atlantic and Caribbean Sea. Read the [Full Story](#).

## ***NOAA'S Ocean Education Curricula and Teacher Professional Development Programs***

Ocean literacy and science education are important to NOAA not only because the agency needs experienced and talented scientists to fulfill its mission, but because every individual across the nation, whether living in a coastal or inland state, is affected by the oceans and atmosphere — everyday. NOAA's mission is to serve the nation's need for oceanic and atmospheric information, but doing so also means helping to ensure that the general public understands how NOAA science impacts their daily lives and future prosperity. Unfortunately, many Americans have little knowledge about the oceans and atmosphere. NOAA related curricula and professional development opportunities for teachers are helping to promote ocean literacy by improving education opportunities for students — and the entire population. Read [--MORE--](#).

## ***NOAA Team Assesses Marine Debris Impacts in Gulf Region***

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration and Office of Coast Survey, working with the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal and state agencies, are assisting with Gulf of Mexico recovery efforts by performing hydrographic surveys and risk assessments of underwater debris left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The mapping aspect of the project will aid in the risk assessment and prioritization of the removal of debris to restore safe navigation and re-establish commercial fishing in the regions. The survey work will include sounding measurements to determine the depth of the debris, as well as the use of side scan sonar — a towed device capable of scanning over 600 feet of seafloor side to side — to provide imagery of the seafloor and marine debris. NOAA's Office of Coast Survey will utilize the survey data to update nautical charts in the region, providing mariners with more accurate and up-to-date navigational information.

“In addition to the surveys and mapping, the team will work with the public to facilitate the development of debris risk assessment criteria,” said Holly Bamford, director, NOAA's Marine Debris Program. “This public information program is designed to ensure that all parties are aware of NOAA's activities and to ensure that we address the needs and concerns of the public.”

After the 2005 hurricane season, the coastal zones of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and the near shore environment, were littered with debris hazardous to safe navigation, commercial fishing, recreational boating, and other normal activities. Storm surge, retreating flood-waters, and wrecked and lost recreational and commercial vessels were major sources of the debris.

The Office of Response and Restoration is leading the public information program effort, which also includes the development of an integrated project Web site that includes GIS interface to serve as a conduit between survey data from the field and those with a stake in the results of the surveys. The site also will include a marine debris risk assessment job evaluation aid for use by parties tasked to remove submerged debris in the future. Collaboration with local stakeholders and state agencies will be essential as NOAA works to determine their data needs through a series of workshops and develops methods of disseminating these data in a useful and effective manner.

To assist in the coordination efforts, the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project team recently opened a field coordination office in New Orleans' Hale Boggs Federal Complex to work with stakeholders in the region for at least one year.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program works with other NOAA offices, as well as other federal, state and local agencies, and private sector partners to support national, state, local, and international efforts to protect and conserve our nation's natural resources and coastal waterways from marine debris.

## ***New Research Strategy Report Aims to Reduce Human Impacts of Harmful Algal Blooms***

### **Research Targets Public Health and Economic Impacts of Harmful Algal Blooms**

Sept. 25, 2006 — A new report, [Harmful Algal Research and Response: A Human Dimensions Strategy](#), proposes a detailed implementation plan for the research necessary to reduce the public health, sociocultural and economic impacts of harmful algal blooms, or HABS. The report was the result of a workshop coordinated by the [NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science](#) and provides guidance for implementation of the President's Ocean Action Plan. Harmful algal blooms are proliferations of microscopic algae that harm the environment and humans by producing toxins that accumulate in shellfish and fish, pollute drinking and swimming water, and contaminate coastal air. Increases in the number, frequency and type of harmful algal blooms have become a critical issue in near shore marine waters and freshwater environments globally. Direct economic impacts of HABS in the United States average \$75 million annually, including impacts on public health costs, commercial fishing closures, recreation and tourism losses, and in management and monitoring costs.

"A major goal of the President's Ocean Action Plan is to develop ocean and coastal research priorities. This report provides a coordinated national commitment to harmful algal bloom research, research that is a significant part of the NOAA mission to enhance our understanding of ecosystems and with the impact of human populations on them," said retired Navy Vice Adm. [Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.](#), Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

Specific research needs identified in the report include assessing the socio-cultural and economic impacts of harmful algal blooms; developing outreach strategies that reduce public exposure; identifying susceptible populations; enhancing interagency and stakeholder coordination; and identifying strategies to reduce the impacts of algal toxins in recreational and drinking waters. The report serves as a framework for research on the human dimensions of coastal ecosystems, research that will promote resilience of coastal communities to other hazards such as pollution and hurricanes.

Human dimensions research provides a research strategy that expands on the public health and socioeconomic impacts critically needed to reduce environmental and human impacts of harmful algal blooms. The [report](#) is available on the NOAA Web site. The human health impacts of harmful algal blooms are profound. Exposure to certain toxins by inhaling sea spray, consuming contaminated fish or shellfish, or swimming in contaminated waters can cause rashes, respiratory distress, other illnesses and death in susceptible individuals.

Closure of beaches and fisheries can result in significant lost revenue for coastal and linked economies dependent on seafood harvest or tourism. Sociocultural impacts include disruption of subsistence activities, loss of community identity tied to coastal resource use, and disruption of social relationships and cultural practices.

The report was developed by NOAA and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in association with researchers from Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of Texas at San Antonio, Yuxi Teachers College (China), Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, East Carolina University, Bowdoin College, Mote Marine Laboratory, the University of New Hampshire, Cornell University, University of Maryland, Central Washington University, and the Chesapeake Research Consortium.

## **NOAA Awards Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission \$4.7 Million Over Five Years to Study the Role of Nutrients in State Red Tide Events**

NOAA has awarded \$813,998 to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute for the first year of funding of a \$4.7 million, five-year grant to examine the underlying causes of the red tide blooms along Florida's Gulf Coast. The grant, from the Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algal Blooms (ECOHAB) program, managed by NOAA Ocean Service's Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research, will support research, conducted by a multidisciplinary team of scientists led by the institute. The team will seek to better understand the causes of red tide (*K. brevis*) along Florida's Gulf Coast, especially how and what types of nutrients fuel the blooms.

"A better understanding of the underlying causes of *K. brevis* blooms is essential for predicting when blooms will occur and evaluating what prevention options may be available to coastal managers," said retired Navy Vice Adm. [Conrad C. Lautenbacher](#), Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA's partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute will help provide a more thorough understanding than is currently available."

At a July 2006 NOAA-supported red tide workshop held in Sarasota, Fla., national and international red tide experts agreed that not enough is known about the nutrient sources that support growth of the red tide organism in the Gulf. Public input to this workshop also provided strong support for the need to understand the relationship between nutrients and these blooms. The new research, which will combine biological, chemical, and physical measurements with predictive modeling efforts, seeks to address a critical knowledge gap using both experimental and modeling approaches, as well as retrospective data analysis. Investigators also will seek to identify alternatives for coastal managers.

The red tide organism blooms in Florida almost annually, leading to severe economic and environmental impacts. Annual economic impacts in Florida from the blooms have been estimated to be at least \$15 million to \$25 million. The red tide is currently affecting shore areas from Pinellas to northern Collier County. Last year, an unusually large and persistent bloom occurred, lasting from January 2005 to February 2006. *K. brevis* produces neurotoxins that can kill marine mammals, fish, and other marine creatures, cause shellfish to be unfit for human consumption, and sicken humans with chronic respiratory problems such as asthma.

NOAA supports research to understand how, when, and why blooms occur through its Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algae Blooms program in order to develop better methods of detecting and predicting blooms, and to find ways to reduce or prevent impacts on humans, coastal economies, and ecosystems. In fiscal year 2006, the NOAA Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research provided approximately \$10 million in competitive grants to institutions of higher education, state, local, and tribal governments, and other non-profit research institutions to advance the understanding of major national coastal management issues, including harmful algal blooms. NOAA-sponsored competitive research programs, such as ECOHAB, demonstrate NOAA's commitment to its historic responsibilities of science and service to the nation for the past 35 years.

## **NOAA Implements Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast System for Texas Gulf Coast**

A new harmful algal bloom forecast system developed by NOAA is now in place along the Gulf coast of Texas. The announcement of the ecological forecast program was made at today's meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, a federal-state partnership to address critical coastal issues facing the Gulf states. The system generates forecasts weekly to determine the current and future location and intensity of blooms, and the likely impacts to the environment.

“Because these blooms contain neurotoxins, they threaten human and ecosystem health, and can substantially impact coastal economies,” said Margaret A. Davidson, director of NOAA's Coastal Services Center and the NOAA delegate to the alliance. “Using a combination of satellite and in place ocean and coastal observational data for ecological forecast systems shows the value and need for the development of an integrated ocean observing system, one that can assist in addressing the threats to our health and our economy caused by harmful algal blooms.”

Harmful algal blooms occur in the waters of almost every U.S. coastal state. Direct economic impacts of blooms in the United States have been estimated to average \$75 million annually, including impacts on public health costs, commercial fishing closures, recreation and tourism losses, and in management and monitoring costs.

NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science operates the system geared to predict harmful algal blooms (HABs, or “red tides”) caused by the highly toxic algae [\*Karenia brevis\*](#). The blooms are known to cause fish kills, shellfish toxicity, water discoloration, and respiratory distress in humans. Texas coastal community managers will be notified of bloom status through a weekly e-mail bulletin NOAA will send to state natural resource managers. Advance warning of blooms increases the ability to mitigate the impacts of these events. The harmful algal bloom forecasting system works with observations made by Texas state agencies with NOAA imagery and models to supply improved information on the location, extent, and potential for development or movement of the blooms in the Gulf of Mexico.

Since 1999, under a research program designed to develop informational tools to assist coastal managers, NOAA has been working with agencies managing harmful algal bloom monitoring and impacts in the Gulf of Mexico. NOAA has been providing advisory bulletins to identify blooms before they are reported at the shore, and has provided assessments of the extent of the blooms allowing for more effective sampling and monitoring.

The bulletins are developed by integrating data from various ocean-observing systems, including imagery from commercial and government satellites; meteorological data from NOAA observing stations; and field data collected by state and university monitoring programs. This information is then synthesized and interpreted by an expert analyst, in order to determine the current and future location and intensity of *Karenia brevis* blooms, as well as their potential impacts on humans, marine mammals, and fish. Conditions are posted to the forecasting system Web page once a week during non-bloom periods and twice a week during bloom periods. When NOAA detects a possible bloom, Texas state managers are notified to conduct field sampling. If state managers confirm the bloom, then the public is informed through the forecasting Web page, the news media, and other appropriate outlets.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, NOAA, and scientists from the Coastal Services Center met during the summer with local resource managers, tourism groups, and Chambers of Commerce in Galveston, Corpus Christi and South Padre Island to provide information on the development of the Texas forecast system. The system created for Texas was based on the detection system that NOAA

designed for Florida's Gulf coast in 2004. While the organisms are the same, Florida experiences multiple blooms annually. Texas has only experienced two bloom events since 2000 but previously bloom events occurred no more than once a decade.

## **In the Gulf States**

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### ***Alabama DEM: Beaches Getting Cleaner***

MONTGOMERY – The 2006 beach swimming season officially ended Sept. 30 with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management reporting a reduced number of swimming advisories issued for public recreational sites along the Gulf Coast and Mobile Bay. ADEM collected approximately 500 water samples from June through September resulting in just six advisories. The advisories at five different sites lasted a total of only 17 days, down from an average of 26 days over the last three years.

“Our environmental programs are working,” said ADEM Director Trey Glenn. “We’ve implemented this program to increase public awareness and provide accurate, timely water quality information. The program helps the public make informed decisions concerning their recreational use of Alabama’s beautiful coastal waters.”

ADEM implements numerous programs to ensure clean water. The beach monitoring program is a gauge as to how well the department’s other programs are working. ADEM conducts routine water sampling at 26 public beaches from Perdido Bay to Dauphin Island. The selection of sites and frequency of sampling are determined using a risk-based evaluation and ranking process to determine if water quality standards are being met.

### ***Alabama DEM Receives International Environmental Award***

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has been selected for the 2006 Green Apple Award for environmental best practices. The Green Organization, an independent environmental group in Northampton, England, dedicated to promoting positive environmental endeavors, recognized ADEM for its Qualified Credentialed Inspector Program.

The program unites the concepts of construction-based economic growth and environmental management. Under the program, builders and developers review and discuss water quality regulations and environmental best management practices with ADEM to guarantee compliance with regulations and to secure long-term protection of the state’s water resources. Augmented by comprehensive coursework, written exams, and required annual training the program prepares builders and developers to take stronger roles in water quality protection.

“I am proud of our department and the programs we implement,” said ADEM Director Trey Glenn. “I appreciate the Green Organization for recognizing our success.” ADEM’s QCI program has been recognized by the National Association of Homebuilders for best Community Service Program and Best Governmental Affairs Program and has become a model for adoption by regulatory agencies in several states. The department competed with many others in the U.S. and Europe to win the award and will receive recognition in Parliament Nov. 20.

## ***Alabama DEM Sponsoring Redevelopment Workshop***

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is sponsoring a Brownsfields workshop to provide technical assistance and training for redevelopment. The workshop is scheduled for Oct. 18 at Montgomery's Faulkner University. ADEM will host the session in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is designed to give cities, counties, contractors, non-profit organizations and consultants insight and assistance with redevelopment issues and applications.

“Cities and counties are realizing that redeveloping older industrial sites is a cost-effective means of revitalization,” said ADEM Director Trey Glenn. “We encourage the utilization of previously developed land instead of using valuable forests, agricultural areas, and green spaces. We are pleased to join EPA in providing information and assistance to those wanting to learn more about the Brownfields program.” Brownfields are defined as any real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Highlights of the workshop will include an overview of environmental assessments, grant applications, and ADEM's voluntary clean up program. To register contact ADEM at (334) 271-7700 or visit [www.adem.alabama.gov](http://www.adem.alabama.gov).

## ***Dauphin Island Sea Lab Scientist Seeks Improved Method to Detect Microalgae in Coastal Waters***

Dr. Hugh MacIntyre, Senior Marine Scientist at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Alabama, and colleague Richard Cox of Kaitech Inc. have been awarded \$270,274 to develop a tool for improved detection of microalgae by the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET).

Microalgae are the foundation of the aquatic food web. However, 'blooms', which are very dense populations, lead to low oxygen "dead zones," fish kills, and depending on the species-human health risks. To protect their communities, coastal managers must monitor and characterize algal populations that change quickly over space and time. In vogue are fluorescence-based optical monitors that 'see' chlorophyll a, a plant pigment that is present in all algal species. However, these tools are less effective in turbid coastal waters and do not identify alternative pigments, so cannot distinguish between different types of algal species.

The researchers will build on a previous CICEET project to develop a field stage prototype of a laser fluorometer that detects multiple target pigments and can differentiate between different types of algae. "Knowledge is power. We hope this instrument will characterize microalgal populations rapidly and easily, for instance for pre-screening samples for the potentially-harmful types during a red tide," said Dr. MacIntyre. "This fluorometer could be of enormous use for those who monitor our waters to determine their safety, as well as an effective tool for scientists and researchers."

Dr. MacIntyre will work closely with the Weeks Bay, AL.; Grand Bay, MS; and North Inlet-Winyah Bay, SC, National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs).

## ***Are Man-made Barriers Aiding the Proliferation of Invasive Aquatic Vegetation? A Salinity Study in the Mobile Delta Region***

Oct 12, 2006--Habitat modifications are among mankind's most pervasive alterations of our nation's estuarine ecosystems. When such modifications are extensive, as is the case for the Mobile Bay Causeway, they can alter patterns of natural hydrography. Among the possible consequences of the Causeway is the reduction of water exchange between the fresh water in the lower reaches of Mobile-Tensaw Delta, and the saltier waters of the Gulf of Mexico. If true, this barrier may have created persistent low salinity conditions that local conservationists believe have provided refuge for an exotic species of submerged aquatic vegetation, the Eurasian Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) to survive in during periods when salinity is high throughout this estuary.

When salinity is low, milfoil fragments from these freshwater refuges end up in nearby estuarine grassbeds, where they subsequently outgrow and competitively displace native submerged grasses.

To test these hypotheses, Dr. John Valentine and Marine Technician Susan Sklenar, both of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) in Alabama, are currently comparing the results of salinity tolerance experiments they have conducted using milfoil at the DISL with two years of field data which document salinity patterns within the upper reaches of Mobile Bay.

The preliminary results of these experiments suggest that only the most extreme salinities, those observed during hurricane landfalls in the northern Gulf of Mexico, are lethal to milfoil. "Right after Hurricane Katrina, we noticed that milfoil was not as abundant in those places where it used to be plentiful," recounts Dr. Valentine. "Whether it was the turbidity from the storm or the salinity from waters crashing over the MBC, we're hoping these experiments will be able to help determine the cause."

In the coming year, Dr. Valentine and his colleagues will be conducting additional field experiments to determine if in fact milfoil will outcompete native grasses for habitat within this estuary. It is hoped that these experiments, when completed, will allow DISL to make data-based recommendations for habitat restoration later next year. Dr. John Valentine – [jvalentine@disl.org](mailto:jvalentine@disl.org).

## ***Florida Recognizes October as Energy Awareness Month***

--State joins the nation to highlight importance of renewable energy sources--

**TALLAHASSEE** – Recognizing of the importance of conserving energy, Governor Jeb Bush signed a proclamation recognizing October as Energy Awareness Month. Florida joins federal and state partners nationwide to encourage Americans to conserve energy at home and in the workplace. "Florida's growing economy and quality of life depend on a secure, reliable supply of energy," said Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Colleen M. Castille. "The 2006 Florida Energy Act passed just this year provides incentives for conservation and promotes the development of alternative energy technologies such as ethanol, solar and hydrogen through grant programs and targeted investments."

During Energy Awareness Month, Florida is celebrating its first sales tax holiday for energy efficient products during Energy Efficient Week, October 5 – 11, 2006. Part of the 2006 Florida Energy Act, Energy Efficient Week encourages Floridians to invest in energy efficient products by providing relief from sales tax for approved products and appliances for up to \$1,500. Qualifying energy efficient products include a dishwasher, clothes washer, air conditioner, ceiling fan, incandescent or fluorescent

light bulb, dehumidifier, programmable thermostat, or refrigerator that meets all requirements of the ENERGY STAR program.

Spearheaded by Governor Bush and the Florida Legislature, the 2006 Florida Energy Act takes the first comprehensive step toward a diverse, reliable and secure energy future by reducing regulatory barriers to expedite electric generation capacity and providing rebates, grants and tax incentives to drive the development of alternative fuel technologies. The four year, \$100 million plan will diversify the state's fuel supply, reduce Florida's dependence on imported oil, spur economic growth and promote energy conservation and efficiency.

As part of the 2006 Florida Energy Act, the State is encouraging the use of hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles, including biodiesel and ethanol, shaping the market for fuel-efficient travel and clean air technology. With a growing fleet, more than 25 percent of DEP's fleet is comprised of clean energy transportation, including 125 hybrid vehicles and more than 290 alternative fuel vehicles.

The Florida Energy Office is the state's primary center for energy policy under Governor Bush. In addition to developing and implementing Florida's energy policy, the Energy Office coordinates all federal energy programs delegated to the state, including energy supply, demand, conservation and allocation. For more information on energy in Florida, visit [www.floridaenergy.org](http://www.floridaenergy.org). To view the Governor's proclamation, visit [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/news/2006/proc/energy\\_month.pdf](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/news/2006/proc/energy_month.pdf)

## ***To Save Louisiana, Course of Mississippi Must be Altered***

Source: New York Times Date of Story: September 19, 2006

Summary by: Jon Stockwell

It appears the scientific community is in agreement that the only way to preserve Louisiana's fragile coastal wetland ecosystem is a large-scale diversion of the Mississippi River. The river deposits approximately 120 million tons of sediment into the Gulf of Mexico annually, sediment that use to settled and form land in the fragile delta system. The current process has decimated the state's marshes by nearly 1,500 square miles in the last 70 years. A proposed diversion would deposit the sediment in shallower coastal water allowing the natural coastal waves and currents to bring it back to land. The impact of the diversion on the human population in coastal Louisiana will be a major factor in determining which course of action to take. Property rights and oil and gas rights along Louisiana's coast must be taken into account. It would take at least ten years before the diversion produces visible results, there is significant uncertainty over the long-term effects of any diversion.

## ***CPRA & Louisiana Speaks Working to Develop Regional Solutions to Coastal Restoration & Hurricane Protection***

*Bringing people to gather data and feedback through Louisiana Speaks*

BATON ROUGE, La. (October 5, 2006)- Today representatives from a team of expert planners from Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and Louisiana Speaks provided an update to the Louisiana Recovery Authority's Long-Term Planning Task Force on their efforts to develop regional solutions to preserve and restore Louisiana's coastal wetlands.

"The CPRA has been mandated by the legislature to fully integrate hurricane protection and coastal restoration in a comprehensive, coastal protection master plan, key to our state's long term recovery and rebuilding efforts," Sidney Coffee, Chair of the CPRA, said. "By coordinating with Louisiana Speaks, the

plan will be informed by the public's wants and needs. Those needs can then be factored in with the science and engineering guiding our efforts so we have a sound, technical plan in the end."

Created by Act 8 of the 2005 Special Legislative Session, CPRA is charged with creating a master plan that fully integrates Louisiana's coastal restoration and hurricane protection efforts. Louisiana Speaks is supporting the development of the CPRA master plan by sharing data, computer modeling results and public feedback that is collected from stakeholders, elected officials and citizens through various outreach initiatives.

"A new study from the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wetlands Research Center now shows that hurricanes Katrina and Rita consumed 217 square miles of Louisiana's coastal lands last year," said Donna Fraiche, chair of the Long-Term Community Planning Task Force. "This tremendous loss underscores the critical role that coastal restoration and storm protection will play in South Louisiana's long-term recovery."

"We cannot afford to lose one more inch of our precious wetlands, which serve as 'speed bumps' to slow down approaching storms and help protect our critical oil and gas infrastructure. I am encouraged by the collaborative efforts of CPRA and our Louisiana Speaks planners and the progress they are making toward the development of a regional plan to that addresses coastal restoration and hurricane protection that incorporates the thoughts and ideas of Louisiana citizens. Because of their work, we are now one step closer to fulfilling the vision of a safer, stronger, smarter Louisiana," she continued.

Louisiana Speaks is the long-term planning initiative of the LRA. With support from the LRA Support Foundation, Louisiana Speaks has engaged a team of top local and national planning experts to gather public input and support the work of CPRA and others toward the development of a regional vision for South Louisiana that will guide recovery and long-term growth.

Over the last year, Louisiana Speaks has surveyed more than 2,500 Louisiana citizens, including residents who are back home and those who are displaced, and brought together nearly 1,000 stakeholders for a series of hands-on workshops. Through these initiatives, Louisianians have provided critical feedback and input for shaping policies on regional issues such as: coastal restoration and storm protection; community growth and transportation infrastructure; and economic development and equity.

Research, data collection and analysis for Louisiana Speaks are provided by a team of top national and local planning experts including: Calthorpe Associates, Fregonese Calthorpe Associates, Dr. Robert Twilley, director of LSU's Wetland Biogeochemistry Institute, ABMB Engineers, Inc., The Brookings Institution, Brown+Danos landdesign, Inc., Collective Strength, Enterprise Community Partners, Jonathan Rose Companies LLC, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., PolicyLink, and Coastal Louisiana Ecosystem Assessment and Restoration (CLEAR). For more information about Louisiana Speaks, please visit [www.louisianaspeaks.org](http://www.louisianaspeaks.org). For more information about the Coastal Restoration and Protection Authority, please visit [www.louisianacoastalplanning.org](http://www.louisianacoastalplanning.org).

## ***Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Celebrates Passage of Amendments, Makes Plans for Levee Boards***

BATON ROUGE - Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco issued the following statement regarding the passage of Constitutional Amendments Numbers 1 - 4 in the September 30 election: "Saturday, our citizens stood strongly with us in stating that there is no room for politics, cronyism and corruption in hurricane protection and coastal restoration.

"To move our levee reforms forward, I have taken two steps today. I have sent a letter to Secretary of State Al Ater asking him to begin the critical process of establishing the nominating committee that will recommend professionals for our new regional flood protection authorities. I have also instructed the Division of Administration to conduct a survey of current levee board assets and accounts.

"I thank everyone who joined me in supporting these important constitutional amendments. The Louisiana Legislature, Women of the Storm, Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, Coast Guardians and other grass roots organizations across our state worked tirelessly to advocate for reform and fiscal responsibility and today we stand victorious in our fight. "We've done our part; we're ensuring a mechanism is in place to shore up our coast and our future. It is time for Congress to join us and complete this effort. Our coastline is critical to the nation's economy, ecology and energy security.

"A comprehensive coastal protection system requires a significant and sustained commitment of funding. We will continue to play hardball with Washington and the courts to get our fair share as we now dedicate future funds to our coast. I will not stop fighting for Louisiana until we get what is rightfully ours."

To view a copy of Governor Blanco's Letter to Secretary Ater, click here:

[www.gov.state.la.us/assets/docs/PDFs/AIAterletter10-02-06.pdf](http://www.gov.state.la.us/assets/docs/PDFs/AIAterletter10-02-06.pdf)

## ***Complete Demographic Data Reports Now Available for Four Katrina-affected Parishes***

**BATON ROUGE, La. (October 9, 2006)** - The complete results of a new door-to-door survey of people living in Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes are now available online at [www.popest.org](http://www.popest.org). The full reports for these four initial parishes include data on age and gender make-up, as well as information on the black, white and Hispanic populations. In addition, there is information on home ownership, mental health and health insurance coverage.

The study, done with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Census Bureau, is the first of its kind since hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005. As of August 2006, the survey estimated the population of Orleans Parish to be 187,525 residents. Jefferson Parish had 435,786 residents, Plaquemines Parish had 20,024 residents and St. Bernard Parish had 25,016 residents.

The comprehensive household survey was conducted by the Louisiana Public Health Institute on behalf of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA). Work began in June with technical assistance provided by the CDC and the U.S. Census Bureau. "We were pleased to join the state of Louisiana in this substantial undertaking," said Alden Henderson, chief of the Health Investigations Branch at CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. "We used a Census Bureau method to select neighborhoods, housing units and individuals to survey. We adapted this method to address the unique challenges facing the New Orleans area following Hurricane Katrina," Henderson said.

The CDC assisted by helping to train the surveyors, design the survey protocol, determine when and how to revisit households and how to capture the data. Like the decennial census conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, it does not include those who commute into the city. In addition, the survey does not include institutionalized populations such as prisons and dormitories and has no projection of those that plan to return. Funding for the 2006 Louisiana Health and Population Survey was from the CDC, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals - Office of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control Foundation.

The survey process began in June of this year, when survey teams visited neighborhoods and left behind survey information packets on doors. The packets included instructions, the survey form and a letter from Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco and Dr. Cerise. The letter explained the project and its importance. The teams later returned to the homes where packets had been left in order to survey residents in person. Throughout the process, survey team members wore project t-shirts and carried official badges identifying them as members of 2006 Louisiana Health and Population Survey team. To discuss the methodology, reporters should contact Dr. Henderson from the CDC at (404) 498-0070.

## ***DMR Seafood Marketing Program to be Featured in “Southern Living” Magazine***

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Seafood Marketing Program will be featured in the November issue of Southern Living Magazine. The article will showcase “Certified Wild American Shrimp” from the eight southern states and will include a recipe for Eggplant Casserole with Mississippi Gulf Shrimp.

Certified Wild American Shrimp are:

- Warm-water shrimp pulled straight from their natural habitat;
- Wild caught from U.S. waters, not imported from overseas;
- Delivered to the dock by dedicated shrimpers from Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas;
- Processed to meet standards developed and maintained by Wild American Shrimp Inc; and
- Inspected to confirm the product meets these standards.

“We are pleased to have this national coverage in support of certified Wild American Shrimp,” said Irvin Jackson DMR Seafood Marketing Program Director. “We hope that this exposure will encourage consumers to get hooked on Wild Mississippi Gulf Shrimp.”

The DMR Seafood Marketing Program is dedicated to promoting Wild Mississippi Gulf Shrimp. Wild American Shrimp Certified suppliers in Mississippi are C.F. Gollott & Son Seafood, Inc., Golden Gulf Coast Packaging Co., Inc. and Gollott’s Oil Dock & Ice House, Inc. For more information, visit [www.shrimp.mississippi.gov](http://www.shrimp.mississippi.gov). For a free set of Wild Mississippi Shrimp recipe cards featuring Eggplant Casserole, stop by the DMR at 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The DMR Seafood Marketing Program will also be featured in future issues of Wild Catch, a national business-to-business publication focused on the selling, buying, marketing and preparation of wild catch seafood.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the State by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at [www.dmr.state.ms.us](http://www.dmr.state.ms.us).

## **8,500 Adopt-A-Beach volunteers clean the Texas coast**

*20<sup>th</sup> Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Fall Cleanup nets 130 tons of trash*

AUSTIN — More than 8,500 volunteers removed 130 tons of trash from Texas beaches last weekend. “I want to thank each and every person who joined us on the beach Saturday,” said Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. “It was a great day to clean the beach. The turnout was excellent and because of the hard work of beach lovers across the state we gathered more than 130 tons of trash.”

The Texas General Land Office’s 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. Statewide, 8,509 volunteers removed more than 130 tons, or 260,744 pounds, of trash from about 194 miles of Texas coast. Most of the trash consisted of typical items, such as cigarette butts, soda cans, beer bottles, beach toys and tires. Among the less typical items found were a computer monitor, a credit card, a toilet, a flare gun, a completely full 5-gallon can of diesel fuel, shotgun shells, a bra, a pregnancy test, a tennis racket, a hairpiece, a Viagra bottle, a dead stingray and a refrigerator.

Texas beaches receive large amounts of marine debris due to a convergence of currents in the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1986, more than 348,000 Adopt-A-Beach volunteers have picked up more than 6,500 tons of this debris, some of it originating from as far away as Greece. 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 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. Shell Oil Company donated \$20,000 to fund the “Twenty for Twenty” program. This special program was designed to celebrate 20 years of volunteer environmentalism while raising the visibility and reach of the Adopt-A-Beach Program. To learn how you can participate in the next beach cleanup, or for additional information on the Adopt-A-Beach Program, please visit [www.texasadoptabeach.org](http://www.texasadoptabeach.org), or contact the GLO at 1-877-TX COAST.

## **Red Tide Observed Along Coastal Bend**

*Oct. 3, 2006*

AUSTIN, Texas — A red tide bloom has been confirmed along the Texas coastal bend, with associated minor fish kills near Port Aransas, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Coastal Fisheries officials say there is no evidence at this time that there will be a major bloom impacting Texas beaches, but TPWD will continue to monitor the area. Biologists are monitoring the effects of a red tide bloom first reported Sept. 29 near the University of Texas Marine Science Institute on the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.

Fish kills and human respiratory irritation caused by red tide have been reported in Mesquite Bay along San Jose Island and Matagorda Island beaches, and in the Cedar Bayou pass separating the islands. The kills comprise mostly baitfish, such as menhaden and mullet, but some gamefish species have also been impacted.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, scientists know little about how breathing the air near red tides or swimming in red tides may affect human health. People who are near the water during red tide may experience irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, as well as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. People with existing respiratory illness, such as asthma, may experience these symptoms more severely. If you have concerns or questions about human health effects of red tide or symptoms you are experiencing, consult a physician. Although some travelers may be concerned with how the red tide may affect their vacation plans, there are miles of clean beaches to enjoy on the Texas coast.

Red tide is a higher-than-normal concentration of the microscopic alga *Karenia brevis*. This organism produces a toxin that affects the central nervous system of fish so that they are paralyzed and cannot breathe. Red tide blooms can result in dead fish washing up on Gulf beaches. Red tide is a naturally-occurring phenomenon whose causes and controls are currently being researched. When red tide algae reproduce in dense concentrations, or “blooms,” they are visible as discolored patches of ocean water, often reddish in color.

To report dead fish or suspected red tide, phone the Kills and Spills hotline at (512) 389-4848. For the current status of red tide in Texas, see the department Web site (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/environconcerns/hab/redtide>) or phone (800) 792-1112, select fishing and then select red tide. Harmful Algal Blooms: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hab>.

## ***Public Hearings Set for Offshore Aquaculture and Private Artificial Reef Regs***

*Oct. 12, 2006*

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will host public meetings in Dickinson and Corpus Christi Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss proposed changes to regulations affecting offshore aquaculture and the deployment of artificial reef materials by private individuals, groups or associations. Interested individuals are invited to comment on the proposed changes at the meetings, or to comment online through the department’s Web site.

The new rules concerning offshore aquaculture would repeal §§ 57.251-57.257 and introduce new §§ 57.251-57.259 of the Parks and Wildlife Code, concerning the introduction of fish, shellfish and aquatic plants. The changes would implement safeguards against the introduction of invasive species into Texas’ coastal waters and would work to minimize impacts on native and wild stocks in the state. The new rules would establish a \$1,500 licensing fee for each offshore aquaculture permit.

The new rules concerning artificial reefs would create new §§ 59.950-59.955 of the TPW Code, establishing a mechanism to govern the deployment of artificial reef materials in coastal waters by private individuals or entities. The proposed changes give TPWD the authority to inspect, approve and mark artificial reef materials.

An explanation of the new rules and public comment is slated for:

**Oct. 17, 7-9 p.m., Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Galveston County, 5115 Highway 3, Dickinson, TX 77539**

**Oct. 18, 7-9 p.m., Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Natural Resources Center, Room 1003, 6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412**

To read the complete proposals and register comments online, please visit the TPWD Web site.

On the Net:

[http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/feedback/public\\_comment/proposals/200611\\_offshore.phtml](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/feedback/public_comment/proposals/200611_offshore.phtml)

[http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/feedback/public\\_comment/proposals/200611\\_reef.phtml](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/feedback/public_comment/proposals/200611_reef.phtml)

## Other News

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### ***Southeast Estuaries May Be Joining the Hypoxia Club***

The textbook description of estuarine hypoxia development says that excess inorganic nutrient loading into surface waters of stratified systems fuels explosive algal growth. As this abundant production dies off, it sinks, decays, and thereby depletes oxygen in bottom waters. Conventional wisdom says that well-mixed estuaries, such as those in the southeast U.S., are immune to hypoxia because oxygen easily mixes to the bottom from the surface. However, an examination of long-term monitoring data reveals that well-mixed Georgia estuaries are in fact becoming more hypoxic. The data, the best of which came from the Skidaway estuary, reveal a decrease in both surface and bottom O<sub>2</sub> concentration and saturation, and a concomitant rise in nutrient concentration – the ingredients of “traditional” hypoxia development. The authors conclude that nutrients, particularly organic nutrients, entering these estuaries from watershed runoff exceed the coastal systems’ ability to absorb them. Because bacterial concentrations also rose over the same time period, they further postulated that heterotrophs (bacteria, flagellates, and other small organisms) may be the ones using the organic nutrients, at a rate faster than new oxygen could be mixed in.

If eutrophication can impact well-mixed systems previously considered “pristine,” some management strategies may need to be adjusted. For one thing, bacterial and other heterotrophic pathways may be more important than previously thought for understanding and managing some estuaries. The authors also recommend more systematic monitoring of organic nitrogen levels.

Source: Verity, P. G., M. Alber, and S. B. Bricker. 2006. Development of hypoxia in well-mixed subtropical estuaries in the southeastern USA. *Estuaries and Coasts* 29(4): 665-673. (View Abstract: <http://erf.org/cesn/vol29n4r4.html>)

### ***Critical Habitat Designated for Three Endangered Beach Mice***

*October 12, 2006*

**Contacts:** Janet Mizzi, 850/769-0552, ext. 247, Tom MacKenzie, 404/679-7291

The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) published today a final rule designating approximately 6,193 acres of critical habitat for three endangered beach mouse subspecies—the [Perdido Key beach mouse](#), [Choctawhatchee beach mouse](#) and [St. Andrew beach mouse](#). Areas designated as critical habitat include coastal dunes in southern Alabama and the panhandle of Florida.

The Service designated 13 units along portions of coastal dunes in southern Alabama and the panhandle of Florida as critical habitat for the three subspecies of beach mice. These include five units totaling 1,300 acres for the Perdido Key beach mouse in Escambia County, Florida, and Baldwin County, Alabama; five units totaling 2,404 acres for the Choctawhatchee beach mouse in Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay counties, Florida; and three units totaling 2,490 acres for the St. Andrew beach mouse in Bay and Gulf counties, Florida. The final rule designating critical habitat includes a revision of the Perdido Key beach mouse and

Choctawhatchee beach mouse critical habitat. Impacts associated with conservation activities for the three beach mouse sub-species are estimated to range from approximately \$93.4 to \$174.9 million over the next 20 years. Ninety five to ninety-seven percent of the estimated costs is from effects on the commercial development industry.

“This critical habitat designation will provide benefits to the beach mice by informing the public of areas that are important to the species recovery and identifying where conservation actions would be most effective,” said Sam D. Hamilton, Southeast Regional Director for the Fish and Wildlife Service. A complete description of the critical habitat designation has been published in the Federal Register today. Copies of the final rule and maps are available by contacting Sandra Sneckenberger, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1601 Balboa Avenue, Panama City, Florida 32405 (telephone 850/769-0552, extension 239; facsimile 850/763-2177). The final rule and maps can also be found on our website at <http://www.fws.gov/panamacity/>.

This rule was prepared pursuant to a court order by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama requiring the Service to submit a final revision of critical habitat for the Perdido Key beach mouse and the Choctawhatchee beach mouse. This order also includes the Alabama beach mouse, which is being addressed in a separate rule. Additionally, this final rule responds to an order by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida to publish a new final decision with respect to the designation of critical habitat for the St. Andrew beach mouse on or before September 30, 2006. Critical habitat is a term used in the Endangered Species Act of 1973 that refers to specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection.

### ***Three Natural Resource Management Agencies Express Cautious Optimism about Researchers' Evidence Suggesting Ivory-billed Woodpeckers Persist in NW Florida***

*September 26, 2006*

**Contacts: Tom MacKenzie**, (FWS) 404-679-7291, **Sharon Lobello**, (FWC) 850-488-7677, **Georgann Penson**, (NFWFMD) 850-539-5999

Two Florida natural resource agencies and the federal agency overseeing the [Ivory-billed Woodpecker](#)'s recovery effort expressed interest in the latest results of work to find the elusive woodpecker in the Florida panhandle. At the same time, while the agencies indicated the evidence to date is promising, they said the bird's presence is not yet confirmed. The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (Service), the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) (FWC), and the [Northwest Florida Water Management District](#) (District) all expressed interest in research activities underway in Northwest Florida, part of the woodpecker's historic range.

Dr. Geoff Hill, a noted Auburn University professor and ornithologist, made public the results so far of his team's year-long search in the Florida panhandle in an article published today in the online journal *Avian Conservation and Ecology*. The report is based on a joint research venture with Dr. Daniel Mennill, a sound analysis expert and professor from the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada. Dr. Hill's article can be found at <http://www.ace-eco.org>.

“The evidence Dr. Hill and his team presented is worth more than a passing glance and we have been working with him in this area given what it suggests about the bird's potential presence,” said Sam Hamilton, who chairs the recovery team's executive committee. “We should keep looking there. That

said, at this time there's not enough here we believe to definitively confirm the Ivory-bill's presence in these woods."

The Service is providing limited financial support – roughly \$20,000 – for search activities on lands owned and managed by the District this year. The District owns more the 200,000 acres in Northwest Florida mostly along the Apalachicola, Choctawhatchee, Escambia, and Yellow River systems. The FWC, which continues to list the Ivory-billed Woodpecker as endangered under state law, also is supporting search activities in the area.

The Florida effort is part of a range-wide search effort that conservation partners initiated after the April 2005 announcement of the woodpecker's rediscovery in Arkansas. Organized state-led searches are being supported in Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Texas. These range-wide search activities were the subject of a recent workshop for scientists to share information and ensure coordination. Held in August at Congaree National Park near Columbia, South Carolina, the workshop brought together 60 representatives, including Dr. Hill, from natural resource organizations, universities, and state and Federal land management agencies.

The Service expects to publish this fall a draft recovery plan for this famed woodpecker, once called the "great chieftain of the woodpecker tribe" by John James Audubon. The plan is the work of a recovery team made up of nearly 75 of the nation's best wildlife biologists, forest ecologists, hydrologists, and ornithologists.

## **Secretary Kempthorne Announces \$67 Million in Grants to Support Land Acquisition and Conservation Planning for Endangered Species -- Southeastern States Get Nine Grants Totaling \$5.3 Million**

*September 26, 2006*

**Contacts: Tom MacKenzie, (FWS) 404-679-7291, Valerie Fellows, 202-208-5634**

Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne today announced more than \$67 million in grants to 27 states to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife and plants. The grants, awarded through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, will benefit species ranging from orchids to bull trout that are found across the United States. Here in the Southeast, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee have a total of \$5,332,819 for conservation projects.

"These grants are incredibly important tools to conserve threatened and endangered species," said Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne. "Our ability to successfully conserve habitat for imperiled species depends on long-term partnerships and voluntary landowner participation. These grants provide the means for States to work with landowners and communities to conserve habitat and foster conservation stewardship efforts for future generations." Authorized by Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, the grants enable States to work with private landowners, conservation groups and other agencies to initiate conservation planning efforts and acquire and protect habitat to support the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

The cooperative endangered species fund this year provides \$7.5 million through the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program, \$46 million through the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program and \$13.9 million through the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program. The three programs were established to help reduce potential conflicts between the conservation of threatened and endangered species and land development and use. For a complete list of the 2006 grant

awards for these programs (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 15.615), see the Service's Endangered Species Grants home page at <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/section6/index.html>.

### **Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants by State: Florida**

Development of a HCP for Shoreline Protection on Walton County Beaches (Walton County, FL): \$446,000. This grant will provide funding for the initiation of planning efforts for a coastal multi-species HCP for shoreline protection measures on approximately 250 acres of beach habitat important to 7 federally-listed species and 12 State protected species. Species that will be considered during the process include five species of sea turtles, the endangered Choctawhatchee beach mouse, and piping plovers. The Choctawhatchee beach mouse is endemic to this area, and the proposed project would aid in the recovery efforts for this species. This section of the Florida Gulf coast is particularly susceptible to hurricanes. Development of an HCP will allow the State to address the needs for shoreline protection while at the same time ensuring the conservation of endangered, threatened and at-risk species.

## ***Outreach Helps Mississippians Prepare for Disasters***

*October 13, 2006*

[» More Information on Mississippi Hurricane Katrina](#)

BILOXI, Miss. -- Herman Price remembers Hurricane Katrina victims he has met crisscrossing Mississippi. "We're trying to make sure this does not happen to us again," he said about hurricane preparedness. "We can't stop the next hurricane, but we can help people be ready to deal with it." In just over a year since Katrina, Herman Price, his wife Joyce, and their Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) colleagues have driven from Moss Point to Clarksdale and all points in between, preaching preparedness for every kind of emergency.

Assigned to the Community Education and Outreach (CEO) group of FEMA's Mitigation Division, the Prices are native Mississippians who began working for FEMA a month after Hurricane Katrina. FEMA community outreach preparedness seminar topics are diverse and can range from evacuation route planning, emergency kit preparation, getting a home ready before an evacuation to helping children deal with the stress of a disaster.

"The seminar FEMA did here was tremendously useful," said Melody Oakerson, activities committee chair for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints in Gulfport. "We had about 150 people at the lecture. The speakers let us know about all the dangers we might face in this area such as tornadoes and hazardous materials spills. It was very thorough, above and beyond what I expected," she added. In Flowood, Miss., where the Prices led a preparedness seminar at the local public library, the information was helpful to the participants.

"The FEMA speakers helped us understand the need for preparation not just for hurricanes on the coast, but for all sorts of disasters," said seminar organizer Pam Moore of Jackson. Moore is working on a series of television programs about preparedness and she hopes the Prices will be able to take part in those as well.

FEMA's CEO group makes presentations on preparedness at libraries, schools, community centers, to government entities as well as private corporations. The group also sets up educational displays at festivals, fairs, shopping malls, conventions and conferences, and building and supply stores. An extensive virtual library of preparedness material is available at the FEMA Web site, [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov). A web-based children's disaster education site is located at [www.FEMA.gov/kids](http://www.FEMA.gov/kids). For further

information or to have a FEMA preparedness representative come to your community meeting, call the FEMA news desk, 228-385-5611.

## ***Mitigate, Beautify with Mississippi Flora***

*October 10, 2006*

[» More Information on Mississippi Hurricane Katrina](#)

BILOXI, Miss. -- Landscaping may be a low priority on a Hurricane Katrina recovery checklist, but a few months after the disaster, returning foliage on Live oaks and the re-growth of ground vegetation were harbingers of recovery - and visual testimony to nature's tenacity. It's an example of survival that Mississippians may consider as they rebuild their homes and move forward to protect their environment from future severe weather events.

Katrina generated the biggest storm surge to inundate the Gulf Coast in recorded history. The barrier islands were hit hard. Thirty feet of water swept over and through Fort Massachusetts on West Ship Island. The areas designated by the Gulf Islands National Sea Shore as wilderness - Horn and Petis Bois islands – were also severely affected. "Many of the pine trees were significantly damaged," said Rick Clark, chief of science and resources management, Gulf Islands National Seashore. "But many of the sturdier hardwoods survived. Vegetation such as sea oats and other grasses that provide soil stability have rebounded." Despite the toll on the barrier islands, the damage is not viewed the same as that left by Katrina in the lower Mississippi counties. "While hurricanes are generally given a negative billing they are a natural phenomenon that historically are one of the primary forces that shape and affect the overall movement and migration of barrier islands," said Clark.

But there is a lesson the islands provide: vegetation that survives a storm also may play a role in mitigating the effects of future storms. And recovery officials have taken notice. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides program funding through its Public Assistance (PA) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to help pay for some projects that involve planting of vegetation. Such projects include those that help stabilize soils on river banks and repair beaches that have been previously maintained or re-nourished periodically with new sand. PA helps pay for repairs to public and certain nonprofit facilities damaged by a disaster. Those repairs may incorporate mitigation upgrades to protect the facility from future disaster damage.

Unlike PA, HMGP may fund measures that affect properties that were not damaged by a recent disaster, but which remain vulnerable to future disasters. The HMGP also may be used for projects that protect private property from future disaster damage, as long as an eligible public or nonprofit organization applies for and administers the grant, and other program guidelines are met.

As Mississippians rebuild their homes and businesses, with or without federal assistance, they should know about the trees, shrubs and other plants that are native or adaptable to the areas they live in. Vegetation should be resistant to the forces of tropical storms. The correct choice can protect the plant and help retain the soil. "The right plant in the right place-that's the key," said Waveland resident, Jane McKinnon. A former professor of horticultural science at the University of Minnesota, the 87-year-old has consistently planted native materials on her property since she returned home in 1989.

Those choices paid off when Hurricane Katrina hit. Though more than three feet of water surged into her home, most of her native vegetation remained. "The Red Buckeye (a flowering shrub) did just fine," she said. So did other plants adaptable or native to this region such as oleander, Swamp rose and camellias.

McKinnon recommends two books to help choose the right plants: *A Concise Dictionary of Plants Cultivated in the United States and Canada* ( New York: MacMillan) and *Southern Plants for Landscape Design* ( Baton Rouge: Claitor's Pub. Division )

The Mississippi Forestry Commission, in partnership with other agencies, has produced a pamphlet with information about hurricane resistant landscapes. *A Homeowner's Guide for Coastal Landscapes* is available through the Mississippi Forestry Commission at <http://www.mfc.state.ms.us/hurricane/hurricane.htm> or, through the Mississippi Urban Forest Council at [www.msurbanforest.com](http://www.msurbanforest.com) or by calling 601-856-1660. The document is also available by email request to [dyowell@aol.com](mailto:dyowell@aol.com).

## **MMS Announces Availability of Coastal Impact Assistance Program Guidelines**

*Six States May Share \$250 million in each fiscal year 2007 through 2010*

**WASHINGTON** – The Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced in the Federal Register the availability of Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) Guidelines. The agency has provided the CIAP Guidelines to Governors and CIAP coordinators for the states of Alaska, California, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The guidelines are posted online at [www.mms.gov/offshore/CIAPmain.htm](http://www.mms.gov/offshore/CIAPmain.htm).

The CIAP was established under section 384 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT) and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior, as delegated to the MMS to distribute \$250 million annually to these six outer continental shelf (OCS) oil and gas producing states in fiscal years 2007 through 2010. The EPACT requires that all CIAP funding be used for projects and activities for the conservation, protection, or restoration of coastal areas, including wetland; mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, or natural resources; planning assistance and the administrative costs of complying with CIAP legislation; implementation of a federally-approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan; or mitigation of the impact of outer Continental Shelf activities through funding of onshore infrastructure projects and public service needs. The funds will be allocated to each producing state and eligible coastal subdivision (such as counties, parishes or boroughs) based upon allocation formulas prescribed by the Act. All funds will be disbursed through a grant process.

“We encourage eligible States to apply for and make full use of the CIAP funds,” said MMS Director Johnnie Burton. “These funds can be applied to projects and activities for the conservation, protection, or restoration of coastal and wetland areas as well as mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife, or natural resources from human or natural impacts.”

In order to receive CIAP funds, states are required to submit a coastal impact assistance plan. States may begin submitting plans with the issuance of these guidelines, and plans must be submitted no later than July 1, 2008. MMS must approve the State Plan before funds can be disbursed. In addition, states are required to submit individual grant applications as required and governed by DOI’s grant regulation. The CIAP Guidelines have been developed by the MMS in conjunction with the affected states to provide the information necessary for states to develop and submit their plans.

On March 7, 2006, the MMS sent Draft CIAP Guidelines to each of the six states and requested their written comments by April 27, 2006. The MMS then held a two-day workshop with State and coastal political subdivision representatives to discuss the draft guidelines and evaluate the written responses in Reston, Virginia July 17-18, 2006.

## Grant Opportunities

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### ***Environmental Technology Development Proposals Requested***

The Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET) invites proposals to its Environmental Technology Development (ETD) Program for funding in FY 2007.

Through this program, CICEET makes strategic investments in the development, demonstration, and application of tools to detect, prevent, and reverse the impacts of coastal pollution and habitat degradation to coastal ecosystems and communities. This Request for Proposals (RFP) is open to U.S. scientists and innovators from academia, private industry, and the public sector who seek to develop tools that meet the priority needs of coastal management. In this RFP, CICEET invites proposals to the following three funding opportunities:

- 1) Technologies to Assess Human Health Risks at Swimming Beaches: One-year technology demonstration projects to participate in the Doheny Beach Epidemiology study planned by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Authority.
- 2) Land Use Planning Tools to Improve Coastal & Estuarine Environmental Quality: Projects to demonstrate the innovative application of technology for land use planning as a means to improve the quality of coastal and estuarine waters and habitats.
- 3) General Environmental Technology Development/Demonstration: Projects that respond to the research priorities of the Environmental Technology Development/Demonstration funding opportunity.

Learn more about these funding opportunities in this RFP: [http://ciceet.unh.edu/rfp\\_2007](http://ciceet.unh.edu/rfp_2007)

CICEET, a partnership of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of New Hampshire, develops tools for clean water and healthy coastal environments nationwide: <http://ciceet.unh.edu>.

## Training and Conferences

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### ***Southern and Caribbean Coastal Management Regional Meeting***

The 9th Annual Southern and Caribbean Coastal Management Regional Meeting is hosted this year by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, [Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management](#).

This meeting will bring together coastal managers from the Southeast, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean, plus officials from NOAA, other federal agencies, and local governments. The meeting will allow coastal managers to share information and hear from their colleagues on pressing regional issues, including:

- Beach and island management;
- Coastal development: tools to assist local governments;

- Hurricane Recovery;
- Offshore energy;
- Sea level rise; and
- A 30-year vision for the future of coastal management

**Agenda:** A [Draft Agenda](#) is available. Please check back often for updates.

**Lodging:** The meeting will be held at the Hampton Inn Historic District in Charleston. Reservations can be made on the phone at (888) 759-4001 or via the web at [Charleston Hotels](#). Please use the code "OCR" to receive the government rate. Reservations must be made by **October 27, 2006**, to receive this rate.

**Registration:** Please download and print the [registration form](#). Registration forms may be mailed or faxed, and must be received by **October 27, 2006**.

### ***3rd Annual WETMAAP Conference***

**Oct 27-29, 2006**

National Wetland Research Center (NWRC) Lafayette, La

The 3rd Annual WETMAAP Conference will be held at the National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette, Louisiana on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 27th, 28th, and 29th, 2006. This conference provides an opportunity for educators to learn more about the WETMAAP Program, to network with other educators, and to have fun. WETMAAP is a cooperative project between the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wetland Research Center and Chadron State College. Invited presenters will share applications of WETMAAP methods and materials for the classroom and share information about other national educational programs. The conference begins with a Welcome Reception on Friday evening from 5:00 - 7:00 pm. Saturday is a day of presentations, with a dinner in the evening. A field experience to Avery Island, one of WETMAAP's most popular and accessible sites, is scheduled for Sunday morning. In true WETMAAP style, the conference will be a learning experience and in true Cajun style "laissez les bon temps roule" (Let the good times roll). The draft agenda will be available on the WETMAAP website shortly at [www.wetmaap.org/conference](http://www.wetmaap.org/conference).

For more information on fees & agenda, contact Larry Handley at [3rdconference@wetmaap.org](mailto:3rdconference@wetmaap.org) or 337-266-8691.

### ***From Stem to Stern: Boating and Waterways Management in Florida***

**November 1-3, 2006 Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront, FL**

Sponsored by: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Boating and Waterways Section; Florida Sea Grant College Program; University of Florida IFAS Extension; University of Florida Levin College of Law's Center for Governmental Responsibility

Florida's economic well-being is linked to its freshwater, coastal, and marine resources. Local and state governments face the difficult challenge of sustaining economic viability while maintaining the environmental integrity of their waterways. This challenge is driven by factors that include rapid population growth and an increase in recreational boating and other water-related activity. During the conference, experts will present innovative technologies and methods designed to address boating and waterways management issues faced by local and state government. The conference will also provide a forum for planners, managers, and policy makers to share accomplishments, discuss ideas, and consider priorities for future action.

Topics:

- A Legislative Update on Boating and Waterways Related Bills
- State and National Perspectives on Waterway Access and Solutions
- Characterizing Recreational Boating Access to Florida's Waterways
- Waterways Master Planning
- A Regional Waterway Management System
- The Department of Community Affairs Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program
- A Legal and Geographic Information System of Local Boating Regulations
- Mooring fields / Harbor Management Plans / Rights to Navigation
- Disaster Planning
- Derelict Vessel Management
- Permitting for Waterway Markers and Signs
- Funding Opportunities

Expected Results

Initiation of an biennial conference on boating and waterways management in Florida  
Prioritization of boating and waterway management issues in Florida and consideration of strategies, timelines, funding, and alliances to address them. Information sharing: case studies, lessons learned, and success stories.

More information is available at <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/boatsummit/>.

Regular Government Attendee Fee: \$175 if registered by Oct. 23, 2006; Onsite registration fee: \$200.  
[Online Registration](#).

## ***Science Symposium: Sources, Transport, and Fate of Nutrients in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya River Basins***

**Dates: November 7–9, 2006**

Location: Millennium Hotel Minneapolis, 1313 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55403

This symposium is the fourth in a series of symposiums sponsored by the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force ([www.epa.gov/msbasin/actionplan.html](http://www.epa.gov/msbasin/actionplan.html)). The symposia are part of the reassessment of the Action Plan for Reducing, Controlling, and Mitigating Hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico (Action Plan).

Short-term action item #11 from the Action Plan (p. 14) states that “By December 2005, and every five years thereafter, the Task Force will assess the nutrient load reductions achieved and the response of the hypoxic zone, water quality throughout the Basin, and economic and social effects. Based on this assessment, the Task Force will determine appropriate actions to continue to implement this strategy, or, if necessary, revise the strategy.”

This symposium will focus on recent scientific findings about the sources, transport, and fate of nutrients in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya River Basins. Key topics will be addressed at various scales from small watersheds to large rivers, including the effects of these processes on nutrient delivery to the Gulf of Mexico. This symposium is sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Department of

Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service; the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water.

For more information, contact:

Janice R. Ward, Senior Hydrologist  
US Geological Survey Denver Federal Center  
[jward@usgs.gov](mailto:jward@usgs.gov)  
303-236-1871 (office)

OR:

Katie Flahive  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
[Flahive.Katie@epa.gov](mailto:Flahive.Katie@epa.gov)  
202-566-1206 (office)

Visit the Web site: [www.epa.gov/msbasin/taskforce/reassess2005.htm](http://www.epa.gov/msbasin/taskforce/reassess2005.htm)

## ***Identification and Management of Invasive Terrestrial and Aquatic Plants Common to Coastal Mississippi***

This is a **FREE** 1.5 day invasive plant identification and management class. Day 1 will focus on common terrestrial invasives such as cogon grass, kudzu, popcorn trees, and torpedo grass (to name a few). The afternoon session will include demonstrations of best management practices in the field. **Lunch will be provided!!** Day 2 of the workshop will focus on aquatic invasive plants such as alligator weed, giant salvinia, and water hyacinth. Participants will be able to identify these invasives, understand why these species should be carefully managed, and learn best management practices to control the proliferation of these species.

**Date:** November 16-17, 2006

**Time:** November 16th 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (Terrestrial invasives and field management activity)

November 17th 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (Aquatic invasives)

**Location:** Gautier Convention Center

**Cost:** FREE [To register, click here](#)

## ***3<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration***

There is still time to get in on the Early Bird Registration for the 3rd National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration in New Orleans, December 9-13! Sign-up by October 17th at [www.estuaries.org/conference](http://www.estuaries.org/conference) and save \$100.

**RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM TODAY!**

The Conference is filling up, so be sure to reserve your room early! A block of rooms has been reserved for Saturday, December 9 through Wednesday, December 13 at \$109 per night + tax, single or double occupancy. Guests wishing to arrive early may do so starting Wednesday, December 6 and depart as late as Saturday, December 16 (based on availability).

### CITY PARK RESTORATION EVENT

Join with more than 250 local volunteers and conference participants from around the country to help plant native vegetation in New Orleans' City Park - one of the largest urban parks in the United States. For more information, go to <http://www.estuaries.org/?id=150>

### HELP US HAVE A CLIMATE-NEUTRAL CONFERENCE

By investing in carbon sequestration projects, Restore America's Estuaries will offset 100% of the carbon dioxide emitted due to Conference activities, and you can help by donating \$10, \$25 or \$50 to our Conference Climate Fund when you register. If you have already registered for the Conference and wish to make a donation, simply log back in on the registration page through [www.estuaries.org/conference](http://www.estuaries.org/conference), or contact Mindy Quinnette at 703-536-4992.

### FIELD SESSIONS ARE FILLING UP FAST

Don't miss your opportunity to learn about the restoration of Coastal Louisiana and Mississippi first-hand. Knowledgeable local leaders will guide field sessions on Saturday, December 9 and Sunday, December 10. For details, visit <http://www.estuaries.org/?id=150>. To register for a field session, access online registration at [www.estuaries.org/conference](http://www.estuaries.org/conference).

### SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABILITY - DEADLINE EXTENDED TO OCTOBER 13th

Restore America's Estuaries has limited funding available for partial scholarship assistance to Conference Attendees. Please email [apply@estuaries.org](mailto:apply@estuaries.org) to request further details.

### RESTORATION FINALE: CELEBRATING HUMAN INGENUITY AND NATURE'S RESILIENCE

Join us in celebration of our coasts, cultures and spirit! This special evening, sponsored by Evans-Graves Engineers, HDR and PBS&J, will feature the art, music, food and fun of New Orleans and Coastal Louisiana. Restore America's Estuaries 3rd National Conference - Forging the National Imperative - will bring timely national attention to the challenges and opportunities to comprehensive coastal ecosystem restoration throughout the U.S., and will emphasize the challenges ahead in strengthening a national commitment to coastal restoration.

Join 1,500 participants from all sectors of the restoration movement: community organizations; businesses and consultants; local, tribal, state and federal agencies; scientists and researchers; educators; and students and volunteers. For further information regarding registration, please contact Mindy Quinnette at (703) 536-4992 or [conference@estuaries.org](mailto:conference@estuaries.org).

## ***Ecosystem-Based Management Tools***

The [EBM Alliance website](#) provides a comprehensive source of information about Coastal-Marine Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) Tools, including:

- [Searchable on-line database of EBM Tools](#)
- EBM Tools [training](#) and [funding](#) opportunities
- [Coastal and marine data sources](#)
- [EBM Tools meetings and conferences](#)

One of the goals of the website is to catalyze the growth of an EBM tools user community. Users can sign up for EBM Tools updates at [www.ebmtools.org/contact.html](http://www.ebmtools.org/contact.html) or by following the link from the [homepage](#).

EBM Tools database includes:

- Decision Support Tools
- Conservation and Restoration Site Selection Tools
- Land Use Planning, Urban Planning, and Smart Growth Tools
- Watershed Models
- Marine Ecosystem Models
- Dispersal and Habitat Models
- Hazard Assessment and Resiliency Planning Tools
- Socioeconomic Tools
- Stakeholder Engagement, Communication, and Visualization Tools
- Fisheries Management Tools
- Model Development Tools
- Data and Project Management Tools

[Learn more about EBM Tools.](#) Brought to you by the EBM Tools Network, an alliance of EBM tool developers, practitioners, and training providers to develop EBM tools and support their use in EBM implementation in coastal and marine environments. Network members include Duke University, Ecotrust, The Nature Conservancy, NatureServe, NCEAS, NOAA, the Orton Family Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Pacific Marine Analysis and Research Association, Princeton University, the Sea Around Us Project, and the University of Queensland.

For more information about the website or EBM Tools Network, contact:

Sarah Carr, Ph.D., Program Coordinator  
Ecosystem-Based Management Tools Program

[NatureServe](#)

703.908.1892 Phone

[sarah\\_carr@natureserve.org](mailto:sarah_carr@natureserve.org)

## ***Eighth Biennial State of the Bay Symposium***

**Jan 23-25, 2007 - Galveston, TX**

The [Galveston Bay Estuary Program](#) invites oral and poster presentations and proposals for panel sessions for its Eighth Biennial State of the Bay Symposium to be held January 23-25, 2007 at the Galveston Island Convention Center at the San Luis Resort in Galveston, Texas. The Estuary Program, a non-regulatory program administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and its partners work together to implement The Galveston Bay Plan, a 20-year, science-based plan designed to protect and restore the bay.

The Estuary Program hosts the biennial symposium to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to interact and share successes, the latest monitoring and research findings, and challenges for the future. This year, the Estuary Program welcomes presentations and panel sessions of special interest to estuary business, industry, recreation, education, academic, local government, resource management, and environmental communities. The content of the presentations need not be limited to Galveston Bay, but applicable to estuarine systems such as the bay.

Presentations and panel sessions will focus on topics related to habitat and living resource conservation; balancing human uses and environmental needs of estuaries; water/sediment quality and pollutant loadings; public participation and education; the latest research needs and findings; environmental monitoring; and programmatic performance measures. Areas of interest as they relate to the topics noted

above include emerging threats; management successes and challenges; understanding physical and biological factors of estuarine ecosystems; and innovative tools, incentives, and techniques. Information about the symposium will be placed on the Estuary Program website at [www.gbep.state.tx.us](http://www.gbep.state.tx.us).

## ***Brewing Local Solutions to Your Coastal Issues – Coastal Zone 07 – Portland, Oregon***

**Coastal Zone 07** will be held in Portland, Oregon, July 22 to 26, 2007. The overall conference theme, “Brewing Local Solutions to Your Coastal Issues,” will be highlighted in oral and poster presentations that use case studies, lessons learned, and success stories. This conference is a great opportunity for the west coast to continue the conversations and information sharing from this month’s California and the World Ocean Conference. In addition, it’s another opportunity for California to showcase its coastal management issues and local solutions.

Sessions will be organized around the following conference themes:

- Restoring coastal habitats
- Understanding coastal hazards
- Applying ocean observing technologies
- Conserving our coastal heritage
- Promoting regional sediment strategies
- Managing as if ecosystems matter
- Developing new energy resources
- Creating livable coastal communities
- Applying science to decisions
- Understanding social economic drivers
- Protecting and restoring water quality
- Educating and involving communities
- Creating resilient coastal communities

The biennial Coastal Zone conference, now in its fifteenth edition, is the largest international gathering of ocean and coastal management professionals in the world. Nearly 1,000 people attend, representing federal, state, and local governments, academia, nonprofit organizations, and private industry. The conference gives these attendees a platform to discuss the issues facing our world’s coasts and oceans and a forum for discovering new strategies and solutions.

Did you find this edition useful? Please send suggestions, comments, and new items for publication to [Laurie.Rounds@noaa.gov](mailto:Laurie.Rounds@noaa.gov)

