# Gulf of Mexico News

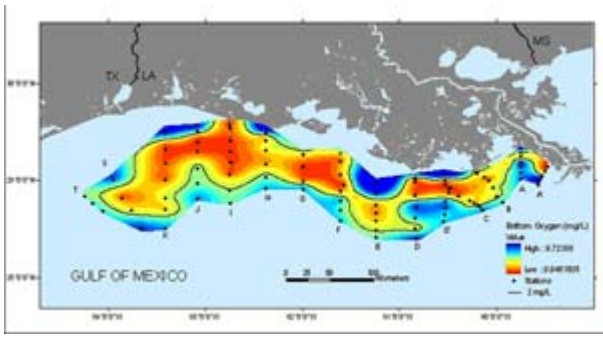
NOAA Ocean Service, Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management

July 2007

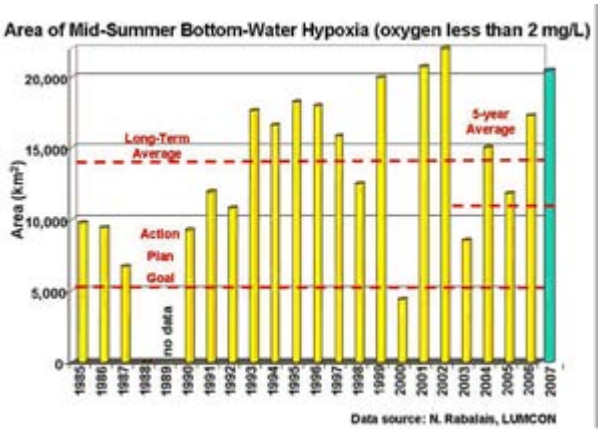
# NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

## *Survey Cruise Records Third-Largest "Dead Zone" Since 1985*

**Area Size of New Jersey Close to NOAA-LSU Prediction**




August 1, 2007 — Scientists from the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, led by Nancy Rabalais, Ph.D., after completing a NOAA-sponsored survey cruise to measure the actual size of the northern Gulf of Mexico hypoxic zone have indicated an actual Dead Zone of 7,900 square miles, a difference from the predicted value of only seven percent. **(Click image for a larger view of bottom-water dissolved oxygen concentrations in the Gulf of Mexico from July 21-28, 2007. Click here for high resolution version. Please credit "NOAA/A. Sapp, Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium.")**




The result is the third largest on record since measurements began in 1985 and represents an area approximately the size of the state of New Jersey. It also is more than one and a half times the average annual Dead Zone area measured since 1990 (4,800 square miles). The largest "dead zone" ever recorded 8,494 square miles in 2002. **(Click image for a larger view of graph showing total area of seasonal dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico from 1985 to the present. Click here for high resolution version. Please credit "NOAA/N. Rabalais, LUMCOM)**

Earlier this summer, a NOAA-sponsored forecast model developed by Eugene Turner, PH.D. at Louisiana State University, predicted that the “Dead Zone,” a large area of low oxygen (hypoxic) bottom water located in the northern Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Louisiana and Texas, could have reached 8,500 square miles. This would have been the largest area measured since mapping began in 1985. The forecast was based on nitrate loads from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers in May 2007 (provided by the U.S. Geological Survey) and also incorporated data on 2006 loads.

Scientists say that the difference between predicted and observed areas may have been due to weather conditions that partially disrupted the hypoxia area prior to measurement. These included stormy conditions in early July and a tropical low pressure disturbance near the western boundary of the Dead Zone.

The weather-dependent variability in hypoxic zone area emphasizes the need for greater temporal coverage through monitoring, and NOAA is leading efforts to develop a long-term sustainable and integrative monitoring plan for the Dead Zone that would link closely with the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS). However,

the closeness of Turner's model predictions in this and previous years suggests a consistent association between springtime nitrate loading and hypoxic zone area in the absence of major weather disturbances. NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

**Relevant Web Sites**
NOAA National Ocean Service
NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
NOAA Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment
NCCOS Gulf of Mexico Ecosystems & Hypoxia Assessment:
http://www.cop.noaa.gov/stressors/extremeevents/hab/features/hypoxiafs_report1206.html

**Media Contact:**
Ben Sherman, NOAA Ocean Service, 301-713-3066 ext. 178

## *NOAA Proposes Stringent Limits to Sandbar Shark Fishing*

NOAA Fisheries Service is proposing that commercial and recreational fishing for sandbar sharks be significantly reduced and limited to only those commercial vessels that take part in a shark research program. This proposal is open to public comment.

"Because sandbar sharks as well as dusky sharks have been severely depleted, we must take strong measures to stop overfishing and allow these species to rebuild," said William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "Even with these measures, it will take a long time to rebuild the population of these sharks because of their unique biology."

Sandbar and dusky sharks, like other shark species, mature late, grow slowly and produce relatively few young. This makes them particularly vulnerable to overexploitation. NOAA banned the fishing of dusky sharks in 2000, after stock assessments showed severe depletion.

There are approximately 529 commercial fishing permits for shark fishing in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Sandbar sharks, because of their large fins, are the most valuable species among the large coastal sharks. The fins are considered a delicacy and are a main ingredient in ethnic food dishes such as shark fin soup.

The proposed amendment to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan would reduce the quota for sandbar sharks by 80 percent as part of the rebuilding plan. The measures would help NOAA Fisheries meet the Congressional mandate of the newly reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to end all overfishing.

NOAA Fisheries would also establish a shark research fishery of between five and 10 vessels that could land sandbar and other sharks. The vessels would have observers on board and meet other criteria to be part of the program. The research would be designed to gain more information about the status, mobility, migration, habitat, ecology, and age and growth characteristics of sandbar sharks.

Other measures in the proposed amendment are the closing of some areas to shark fishing as recommended by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; establishing a limit per trip on the amount of other large coastal sharks a fishermen can keep; requiring that fins be attached to any shark that is commercially landed; and reducing the shark species that recreational fishermen can keep.
During the months of August and September, NOAA Fisheries Service will hold several hearings along the Atlantic Coast and Gulf of Mexico to gather public comments on the proposed amendment. The schedule follows:

| **Date** | **Time** | **Hearing Location** | **Hearing Address** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2007 | 6:00 - 8:50 p.m. | Manahawkin Public Library | 129 North Main Street<br>Manahawkin, NJ 08050 |
| Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2007 | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. | SEFSC, Panama City Laboratory | 3500 Delwood Beach Drive<br>Panama City, FL 32408 |
| Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2007 | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. | Bayou Black Recreational Center | 3688 Southdown Mandalay Road, Houma, LA 70360 |
| Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2007 | 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. | City of Madeira Beach | 300 Municipal Drive<br>Madeira Beach, FL 33708 |
| Thursday, Aug. 23, 2007 | 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. | Fort Pierce Library | 101 Melody Lane<br>Fort Pierce, FL 34950 |
| Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2007 | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. | Ocean Pines Public Library | 11107 Cathell Road<br>Berlin, MD 21811 |
| Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2007 | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. | University of Texas, Marine Science Institute | Visitor's Center<br>750 Channel View Drive<br>Port Aransas, TX 78373 |
| Thursday, Sept. 6, 2007 | 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. | Islamorada Public Library | 81500 Overseas Highway<br>Islamorada, FL 33036 |
| Monday, Sept. 10, 2007 | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. | Manteo Town Hall | 407 Budleigh Street<br>Manteo, NC 27954 |
| Monday, Sept. 17, 2007 | 5:30-8:30 p.m. | Portsmouth Public Library | 175 Parrott Avenue<br>Portsmouth, NH 03801 |

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

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## *NOAA Partners with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Help Sharks Keep Their Fins*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have joined forces to expand their ability to analyze dried shark fins and identify the species from which they were removed. This new partnership will support efforts to curtail shark finning, the practice of removing a shark's fins at sea and throwing the carcass overboard. Shark finning is prohibited in federal waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

"NOAA is pleased to partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this effort to promote the protection and conservation of marine resources," said John H. Dunnigan, NOAA's assistant administrator for the National Ocean Service. "This new collaboration will greatly improve our ability to aid law enforcement in determining whether protected shark species are being harvested for fins."

Shark fins are dried for use in shark fin soup, considered an Asian delicacy, making fins the most valuable part of a shark. The soup can sell for $100 a bowl or more in some restaurants. Shark finning is a growing concern as worldwide fishing pressure increases and scientists learn more about the biology of these long-lived, slow-to-reproduce species.

Though fishermen cannot legally discard finned carcasses at sea, they are allowed to possess cut fins as long as the fins make up no more than five percent of the weight of the carcasses on board. The species of sharks with the most valuable fins are not always the same as the shark species with the most valuable meat.

The discrepancy between the value of fins and carcasses can lead to deceitful fishing practices. In some instances, landed fins and carcasses were found to be from different species, indicating that some fins were removed illegally and the corresponding carcasses were discarded at sea.

NOAA researchers developed the currently-used method for shark species identification, which uses DNA to distinguish the most common and commercially important 35 of the 73 species in U.S. waters. Without DNA testing, it can be difficult to identify a shark's species based on visual inspection of its fin, especially after it has been dried for use in soup.

"Working together, NOAA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be able to increase the efficiency and speed with which shark fin samples can be analyzed to determine the source species," said Katherine Moore, a marine biologist with the NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science. The shark fin identification research will be performed by the NOAA Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research in Charleston, S.C., which is one of the NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, and by the USFWS National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Ore.

**On the Web:**
NOAA Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research: http://www.chbr.noaa.gov/
USFWS National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory: http://www.lab.fws.gov/

## *Seafood Consumption Increases in 2006*

Americans ate 16.5 pounds of fish and shellfish per person in 2006, a two percent increase over the 2005 consumption figure of 16.2 pounds, according to a study released by NOAA Fisheries Service. The increase brings seafood consumption up to slightly under the 2004 record of 16.6 pounds. Americans consumed a total of 4.9 billion pounds of seafood in 2006. The nation imports roughly 83 percent of its seafood and remains the third largest global consumer of fish and shellfish, behind Japan and China.

"The National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2007 would provide American consumers with greater choice and confidence in the sustainability and safety of their seafood selections," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. "This legislation is an important step toward increasing our supply of home-grown seafood."

The United Nations is projecting a 40 million ton global seafood shortage by 2030, unless something is done. While NOAA works to end overfishing and rebuild wild stocks, the United States still needs aquaculture to narrow the trade gap and to keep up with consumer demand. Of the total 16.5 pounds consumed per person, Americans consumed a record 12.3 pounds of fresh and frozen finfish and shellfish, up 0.7 pounds from last year. Canned seafood consumption dropped 0.4 pounds to 3.9 pounds per capita. We consumed a record 5.2 pounds of fillets and steaks, up 0.2 pounds. Shrimp continues to be the top consumed seafood in the United States at a record 4.4 pounds of shrimp consumed in 2006, up 0.3 pounds from 2005.

Increased seafood consumption is due in part to the growth in imports of farmed fish and shellfish. The United States can become more self-sufficient at producing seafood with expanded aquaculture, the topic of legislation currently pending in Congress. NOAA Fisheries' calculation of per capita consumption is based on a "disappearance" model. The total U.S. supply is calculated as the sum of imports and landings minus exports, converted to edible weight. This total is divided by the total U.S. population to estimate per capita consumption.

NOAA Fisheries has been calculating the nation's seafood consumption rates since 1910 to keep consumers and the industry informed about trends in seafood consumption and trade. This information is published every year in the NOAA Fisheries Service annual report, "Fisheries of the United States."

**On the Web:**
NOAA Fisheries Service Statistics: http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/index.html

## *Smithsonian Exhibit Celebrates 200th Anniversary of NOAA Predecessor*

**Exhibit at Port of New Orleans' Administration Building**

Every day, cruise ships sail from New Orleans; coal ships deliver to power plants along the shores of the Great Lakes; crabbing boats harvest Alaskan king crab in the Bering Sea; and weekenders prepare their boats for leisurely afternoons on the Lake Pontchartrain. Each one of these mariners uses the resources of NOAA's Navigation Services to safely navigate U.S. coastal waters.

In recognition of the landmark 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Survey of the Coast, NOAA and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service have created the exhibit, "From Sea to

Shining Sea: 200 Years of Charting America's Coasts," which opens July 26 at the Port of New Orleans administration building, one of over 200 venues nationwide where the exhibit will be seen this year. Central to the New Orleans exhibit is an engraved copper map plate that was created in 1862 that is on loan to the Port from NOAA for a period of five years. The plate was used to print the first navigational charts of the approaches to New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico.

Additionally, the exhibit will feature photographs from the Port of New Orleans archives of maritime activity in New Orleans from past and present called "A Legacy of Commerce: Images of the Port of New Orleans." The exhibit includes the work of Charles Franck, a renowned New Orleans photographer who worked for the Port from 1900 to 1930. Those images of the Port's maritime history contrast with modern ship operations captured by the Port's current photographer, Donn Young.

The exhibit will be located in the lobby of the Port Administration Building at 1350 Port of New Orleans Place, directly behind the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. It is free and available for viewing weekdays during normal business hours. The exhibit will open on July 26th during a short reception following the 10:30 a.m. meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

"The Port of New Orleans and the Mississippi River corridor is a great example of ports and waterways serving this nation and supporting the national economy." said John H. Dunnigan, assistant administrator for NOAA's National Ocean Service.

"The history of NOAA's charting and navigation mission is as historic as the Port of New Orleans." said Gary Lagrange, executive director of the Port of New Orleans. "Having the exhibit here is significant in showing how we, as one of the world's largest ports, have a huge impact on the nation's economy and it's access to world markets."

As the world's largest port area and with hundreds of thousands of jobs tied to the Port of New Orleans and associated port areas of the Mississippi River, the exhibit of NOAA's 200th years of service highlights the development and work to create and maintain NOAA's wide range of navigation charts and products and services.

The exhibit includes an education component, featuring a variety of educational materials and activities to help teachers, students, and parents learn about our ocean, coasts, and skies. These resources cover many aspects of NOAA's ocean stewardship, such as deep sea corals and coral reefs, ocean expeditions, and geodesy—the science of measuring and monitoring the size and shape of the Earth and the location of points on its surface. The lesson plans, available at the NOAA 200th Celebration education Web pages, http://celebrating200years.noaa.gov/edufun/resources.html, adhere to national science education standards and the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Benchmarks for Science Literacy.
In 1807, President Thomas Jefferson recognized the need to chart the coastal waters of this country as vital to the independence and prosperity of the economy and to the security of this fledgling nation. With his foresight, Jefferson compelled Congress to pass an act establishing the Survey of the Coast, a predecessor agency of today's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Survey of the Coast charted the nation's ports and waterways, researched physical characteristics of the ocean bottom, and explored many of the world's oceans. The organization was known for a tradition of perseverance, scientific integrity, engraving and charting skills, and courage.

This exhibit, which will be shown in maritime museums, ports, aquaria, nature centers, schools, libraries and lighthouses, celebrates the history, accomplishments and scientific contributions of the nation's first science agency. The 20 colorful posters are illustrated with photos, charts and artwork from the Survey's archives.

"This year we are proud to be holding a year-long celebration of 200 years of science, service, and stewardship to the nation originating with the Survey of the Coast," said Captain Steven R. Barnum, director of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, which is one of the four offices that continues to carry out the original agency's mission. "We are honored that our partnership with the Smithsonian Institution has produced this vibrant depiction of our history to help us commemorate this distinguished occasion." Today, waterborne commerce remains the backbone of the U.S. economy, contributing approximately 13 million jobs and $1 trillion annually. In the past two centuries, the Survey has mapped more than 95,000 miles of coastline, produced more than 20,000 nautical maps and charts, installed more than 6,000 tide stations, helped predict the movement of oil spills, established the Pacific Tsunami Warning System and maintained the national network of more than 1,000 GPS reference sites. Though the methods have changed throughout time, Jefferson's legacy lives on in NOAA's navigation services as they continue to benefit safety, national security and economic competitiveness.

In 2007 NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870's, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA. NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play.

The Port of New Orleans is a leading entry point for steel, rubber, forest products, non-ferrous metals and coffee entering the United States. The Port serves inland markets in the American heartland because it is connected to 14,500 miles of inland waterways via the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Additionally, connections to six class one railroads provide addition avenues for getting cargo to and from the Port.

## *Northern Gulf Institute Hosts Unmanned Aircraft Systems Workshop*

The Northern Gulf Institute recently hosted a workshop on the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to collect hurricane data. The UAS Gulf Region Stakeholder Workshop occurred on July 17 and 18 at the High Performance Computing Collaboratory at Mississippi State University in Starkville. Twenty-eight scientists, researchers, developers and government officials participated in the workshop. The University of Miami, University of Alaska, Northup Grumman, Aurora Flight Sciences, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Aeronautics and Space Administration were among those represented.

Unmanned planes have the potential to fly farther and stay with a hurricane longer to give hurricane predictors more data. More data is the key to better prediction of hurricane strength and direction. Scientists would also like several different types of aircraft for different missions—some to fly above or through the hurricane and others to fly near the surface of the ocean to get a variety of data, without endangering pilots.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has tested and used several unmanned planes. But in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the agency has focused more on unmanned planes and other methods to

improve data collection. The NGI-sponsored workshop allowed participants to talk about the difficulties, needs and direction for developing new unmanned data collectors.

The Northern Gulf Institute is a newly created NOAA Cooperative Institute, and is a consortium of universities that offers research and education for the Northern Gulf Region. For more information, please contact David Shaw, PhD, NGI Director at dshaw@ngi.msstate.edu.

## *NCCOS Data to Improve Research Natural Area Plan for Dry Tortugas National Park*

In July 2007 the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) provided the National Park Service (NPS) a summary report documenting trends in reef and shelf fish communities within the Dry Tortugas National Park (2001-2005) to assist in the design of the Research Natural Area (RNA) to be established this summer. The RNA, approximately 46 percent of the Park's 100-square mile extent, will complement the Tortugas Ecological Reserve (TER) of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The RNA is considered an important component of this system of reserves because it adds shallow-water habitat to the deeper waters of the TER and provides both spawning and nursery habitat for economically important fisheries. Included in the NPS management plan for the RNA is a research monitoring component to inventory the marine life, monitor the ecology and study the efficacy of the reserve. For more information, contact John.Burke@noaa.gov.

## *Texas Publication Highlights NCCOS Sponsored Research*

The National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) sponsored Aquatic Research Consortium (ARC) is highlighted in a Spring 2007 magazine *Research Texas, Inc*. The purpose of the magazine is to bring to light the great strides made by Texas universities and corporations in scientific research to develop cutting edge technology. ARC's forward looking research is uncovering the molecular responses of fish species exposed to aquatic zones depleted of oxygen. The goal is to identify molecular genetic/protein profiles that will allow scientists to make accurate predictions of the onset, duration and the severity of chronic and intermittent hypoxia and the effect of hypoxic stress on organisms. The future use of such molecular genetic profiling is powerful for a wide variety of applications in environmental research and management. For more information on the ARC, contact Carol.Auer@noaa.gov.

## *NCCOS Finds that Derelict Traps are a Major Submerged Debris in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary*

The National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) has found that derelict spiny lobster and stone crab traps and trap fragments comprised the majority of marine debris observed during towed-diver visual surveys initiated June 11. To date, over 0.624 km2 of submerged habitats have been surveyed from Key Largo to Key West, including sand, seagrass meadows, algae beds, hardbottom communities and low-relief coral. The surveys, continuing through July, are part of an ongoing study funded by NOAA's Marine Debris Program to examine the distribution of trap debris, the impact of this debris on Essential Fish Habitat, and lobster and incidental mortality resulting from derelict traps that are still 'fishing' the habitats. The work is a cooperative effort with researchers from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. For more information, contact Amy.Uhrin@noaa.gov.

## *New Topographic and Bathymetric Data Available for Florida*

Lidar-derived topography and bathymetry data covering a large section of Florida's western coast are now available for download from NOAA's Coastal Services Center at www.csc.noaa.gov/ldart/. This data set, collected in May and June 2006, spans Pasco County to Collier County and covers the immediate coastal and offshore area to a depth of approximately 30 feet. The data were collected by the Joint Airborne Lidar Bathymetry Center of Technical Expertise, which is a joint program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Naval Oceanographic Office, and NOAA. For more information, contact Keil.Schmid.

## *Teachers Experience Immersion in the Gulf of Mexico*

The annual Down Under, Out Yonder educator professional development workshop is underway at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. This unique workshop not only introduces educators to information about the sanctuary, its habitats and inhabitants, but also gives them an immersion experience by taking them offshore to dive in sanctuary waters and help conduct REEF fish counts. Fourteen participants from Texas, California, Washington, Georgia, Maryland, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Oregon and New Jersey will take back to the classroom their first hand experiences doing basic science in the sanctuary. The workshop is sponsored by long-time sanctuary partner the Gulf of Mexico Foundation. For more information, contact Kelly.Drinnen.

# Other NOAA News

## *NOAA Report on Nutrient Pollution Forecasts Worsening Health for Nation's Estuaries*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration today released a comprehensive assessment of estuarine eutrophication, or nutrient pollution that clearly indicates linkages between upstream activities and coastal ecosystem health. The report shows that the majority of U.S. estuaries assessed are highly influenced by human-related activities and points out that eutrophication is a widespread problem globally. "Observations have confirmed that our nation's coastal waters are stressed," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "One thing we have learned from this study is that while the accumulation of nutrients in our estuaries has been stable in most of our estuaries, conditions are likely to worsen. The potential for serious degradation in most of our estuaries necessitates that we reinvigorate efforts to address nutrient pollution, and this study helps to confirm that an ecosystem approach is required for improving the health of our estuaries."

Eutrophication is caused by excess nutrients in the water, which can result in increased blooms of algae, decreased dissolved oxygen and loss of seagrasses. The end result is loss of critical marine life habitat. The NOAA report, "Effects of Nutrient Enrichment in the Nation's Estuaries: A Decade of Change, National Estuarine Eutrophication Assessment Update" is an update of the 1999 National Estuarine Eutrophication Assessment, examining eutrophic conditions in 141 U.S. estuaries, and how and why conditions have changed in the decade between the early 1990s and early 2000s. Of the 99 estuaries that had adequate data for evaluation, 64 estuaries have moderate to high level nutrient related impacts.

"The team of scientists that worked on this assessment concluded that most of the problems in the estuaries are related to human activities," said lead report author Suzanne Bricker, Ph.D., of NOAA's Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment. "These impacts are occurring in a watershed that currently supports 53 percent of the nation's population, and excluding Alaska accounts for only 17 percent of the nation's land mass. The scientists' assessment is that the ecological health of our coastal waters is seriously threatened by nutrient pollution. We need to comprehensively address the influx of excess nutrients from upland watersheds to protect our nation's estuaries."

While moderate-to-high-level nutrient-related impacts were reported in systems from all coasts, the Mid-Atlantic region, stretching south from Cape Cod to the Chesapeake Bay, is the most impaired. The North Atlantic region, from Maine to Cape Cod, was the least impaired proportionally. From North Carolina to Florida, a majority of estuaries have moderate or low eutrophic conditions. The Gulf of Mexico estuaries have very large watersheds with low to moderate populations. They are poorly flushed, and as a result have high level of factors that can cause eutrophication. Regardless, Gulf of Mexico estuaries are proportionally less impacted than those in the heavily populated Mid-Atlantic. The Pacific region has very little nutrient load data available, making it difficult to provide an overall assessment.

In looking ahead, the report predicts that conditions in 65 percent of the nation's estuaries are likely to worsen in the next decade, while only 20 percent will improve. The remaining 15 percent will remain unchanged. The report's authors did point to several case studies where there is cause for optimism that aggressive management can reverse the trend, citing the Tampa Bay estuary. The bay's water conditions have improved due to regulations that have significantly reduced nutrient loading, thereby clearing the water and allowing seagrasses to rebounded.

This report highlights the need for increased federal, state, local and industry partnerships to work together to find well-balanced solutions that provide measurable benefits to all involved. The report states "reducing eutropic conditions in estuaries requires coordinated and integrated action that balances management action, efficient monitoring to assess the effectiveness of the management, targeted research and a communications campaign aimed at engaging the broader community." These results will help NOAA and its partners develop appropriate management actions to guide the recovery of affected systems and to protect the nation's coastal resources from further degradation.

The scientists specifically suggest taking advantage of the developing integrated ocean observing systems, remote sensing technology and web resources to establish an on-going regular assessment of estuaries nationally. They cite the Pacific Northwest as one area where there currently is insufficient data to make accurate forecast of nutrient inputs.

The report was completed in partnership with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science with input from a wide array of state, federal, non-governmental, and academic partners. Data and information were acquired from more than 150 scientists and coastal managers through an on-line survey tool and at a national eutrophication workshop in May, 2006.

**On the Web:**
National Estuarine Eutrophication Assessment Report

## *July* "Coastal Management News" *Highlights Climate Change*

The July 2007 edition of *Coastal Management News* is now available online at http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/news/czmnewsletter.html. This newsletter includes the following stories and a special section on climate change:

- Florida Supports Shipwreck Interpretation and National Register Nomination
- Rhode Island CRMC Adopts New SAV Regulations
- Coordinated Stormwater Training and Education along Lake Superior
- Exploring Lake Michigan's Ancient Shorelines
- American Samoa to Host Coral Reef Task Force and All Islands CZM Meetings
- New Design Handbooks Make San Francisco Bay Better
- Alabama CZM Leads GOMA Environmental Education Priorities
- Special Section: Coastal Managers Adapting to Climate Change
    - Maryland's Commission on Climate Change
    - BCDC Planning for Climate Change
    - NOAA's Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise Research Program
    - NOAA's RISA Program-Climate Impacts Group
    - A NOAA Climate Change Funding and Partnership Opportunity

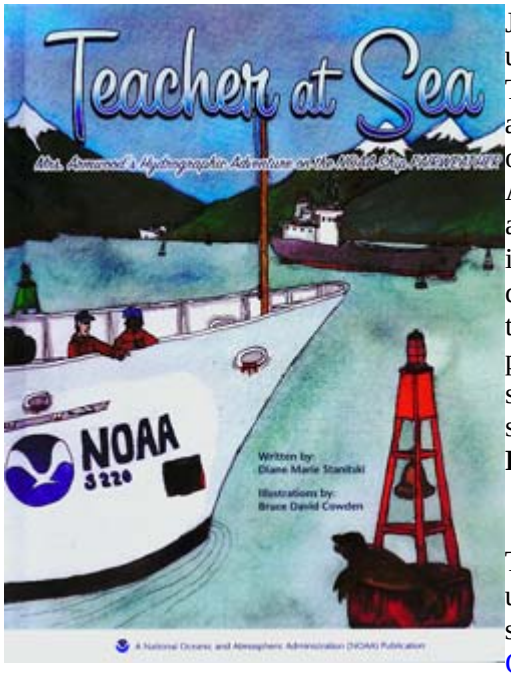
## *NCCOS Report Transfers Technology for Measuring Contaminant Impacts in Estuarine Communities*

National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) scientists have produced a technical report which describes in detail the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Replicated Modular Estuarine Mesocosm. This document describes a consistent and standardized method for building and operating mesocosm systems such as those located at the NCCOS Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research (CCEHBR) at Charleston, SC. This document serves to transfer the technology, knowledge and experience gained from the past 11 years of research at CCEHBR to other Federal and state agencies, colleges and universities, and the private sector. For more information, contact Paul.Pennington@noaa.gov.

## *Workshop Develops Priorities for Implementing HAB Prediction and Response Strategies to Protect Human and Ecosystem Health*

A National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)-supported workshop convened forty-nine experts, including scientists, coastal and inland resource and human health managers, communication experts, and social scientists, to develop a strategy for improving and implementing Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) prediction and response. Findings of the workshop held June 25-28 in Woods Hole, MA, will be published in a report on priorities for improving critical infrastructure, developing and implementing prevention, control, and mitigation strategies, and improving "rapid" event response capabilities. The diverse backgrounds of participants allowed the integration of scientific expertise with that of managers and human dimensions researchers. The report will form the basis of the National Scientific Research, Development, Demonstration, and Technology Transfer Plan on Reducing Impacts from HABs (http://www.cop.noaa.gov/stressors/extremeevents/hab/habhrca/Reports_2004.html#report2), required by the 2004 reauthorization of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act. For more information, contact Libby.Jewett@noaa.gov or Cary.Lopez@noaa.gov.

## *NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program Unveils its Latest Children's Book*




July 26, 2007 — NOAA's Teacher at Sea program has unveiled its third in a series of four planned children's books. The book is about the experiences of teacher Linda Armwood aboard NOAA ship *Fairweather*, a hydrographic survey ship operating in Alaskan waters. At the time of her voyage, Armwood taught geospatial and environmental science courses at George Wythe High School in Richmond, Va.; currently, she is an educational consultant in Richmond. Fairweather collects data on water depth, obstructions, and navigational hazards for the nation's nautical charts as part of NOAA's mission to promote safe maritime navigation. Armwood worked side by side with the ship's surveyors and crew for two weeks in the spring of 2006. (**Click here for high resolution version. Please credit "NOAA.")**

The book was written by Diane Stanitski, Ph.D., a former university professor and NOAA Teacher at Sea, who has also served as a consultant for NOAA. It was illustrated by Bruce Cowden, chief boatswain of *Ronald H. Brown*, a NOAA oceanographic research ship. Both Stanitski and Cowden collaborated on the previous two books in the series. They joined Armwood at the unveiling of the Teacher at Sea book, and all three signed books by the hundreds for distribution.

**(Click on NOAA image for large view of teacher Linda Armwood (foreground), author Diane M. Stanitski and illustrator Bruce D. Cowden autographing copies of the latest NOAA Teacher at Sea children's book in Alexandria, Va. Click here for high resolution version. Please credit "NOAA.")**

"We hope that this book will enlighten students and the public about the significance of coastal surveying to our nation's economy and maritime safety," Stanitski said. "We're excited that publication of the children's hydrography book coincides with NOAA's 200th celebration."

The unveiling of the book was held in conjunction with the July 25-26 port call in Old Town, Alexandria, Va., of another NOAA hydrographic survey ship, *Thomas Jefferson*, as part of NOAA's celebration of the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Survey of the Coast by President Thomas Jefferson.
The hard-cover book is written at the middle school science level. Its content includes science and math activities, a glossary of terms, and full color images. Teachers may request a free copy by contacting the NOAA Outreach Unit at noaa-outreach@noaa.gov.

Since its inception in 1990, NOAA's Teacher at Sea program has offered educators around the country the opportunity to see NOAA's exciting scientific research first hand. In the past 16 years, more than 500 teachers have participated in the program. The program provides kindergarten through college level

teachers the chance to live and work side-by-side, day and night, with those who contribute to the world's body of scientific knowledge, and then take that experience back to the classroom.

**Relevant Web Sites**
NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program
NOAA Teacher at Sea Children's Books

**Media Contact:**
Jeanne Kouhestani, NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, (301) 713-3431 ext. 220

# In the Gulf States

## *Governor Riley Attends Rail Ferry Dedication; Bringing 150 New Jobs to Mobile*

MOBILE—Governor Bob Riley today joined local officals and executives from International Shipholding Corporation to dedicate the new CG Rail Ferry Terminal in Mobile. The new ferry system will transport Alabama products, loaded in railcars, into Mexican ports without having to be rehandled at either port, making Alabama products and jobs more competitive in the growing Mexican market.

"This project will add an entirely new dimension to what the port can do," said Governor Riley. "This is the type of investment that gives us options we have never had before. It allows our port to be more competitive going forward."

The rail ferry terminal represents a $27 million capital investment and will bring with it 150 new jobs. International Shipholding Corporation also brought their headquarters to Mobile. During the dedication ceremony, rail cars were loaded into the BALI SEA vessel, a unique ship that has two decks configured to carry fully loaded rail cars. The Port of Mobile and the Port of Coatzacoalcos, Mexico are both home to a one of a kind, dual ramp rail ferry system that can load rail cars to two decks of a ship. The rail ferry service provides local and regional shippers quicker and more cost effective shipping services to Mexico than traditional land based rail. The service will export Alabama products such are forest products, metals, chemicals and durable goods, and will import Mexican products, like beer, forest products, chemicals and plastics.

## *Governor Riley Urges Preparation at Joint Alabama/Mississippi Hurricane Conference*

BILOXI, MS—Speaking to a group of emergency management officials, law enforcement, and first responders at the Second Annual Alabama/Mississippi Hurricane Conference on Wednesday, Governor Bob Riley stressed the importance of preparation in the event of a major hurricane.

"We have to convince people of the realities of what can happen when a Category 3, 4, or 5 hurricane hits their area. Hurricane Katrina was a Category 3, and we all remember the massive damage it caused. All of us have to do a better job when it comes to making people aware of the real dangers these hurricanes present," Governor Riley said.

U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff attended the conference and echoed Governor Riley's concerns, saying, "We all have to take personal responsibility during a hurricane. First responders can only get to so many people at a time. Therefore, people who can help themselves, need to do so. That will take some of the burden off of the shoulders of the first responders, allowing them to help those who are homebound and without transportation first."

Governor Riley also stressed the importance of the two states working together. He told attendees that the states need to not only work together for Alabama and Mississippi, but to expand that thinking to include the entire Southeastern region.

This is the second hurricane conference the two states have shared. Mississippi hosted this year's Alabama/Mississippi Hurricane Conference, Alabama hosted it last year. The purpose of the conference is for the two states to exchange ideas to better serve the citizens and local governments in the event of a major hurricane.

## *Is Nutrient Loading a Smaller Problem Than We Think?*

Coastal science gospel states that eutrophication caused by elevated nutrient loadings has triggered major alterations of coastal ecosystem structure and function. A recent journal article in Estuaries and Coasts, authored by Dauphin Island Sea Lab scientists Dr. Ken Heck and Dr. John Valentine, turns this conventional wisdom on its head, making the case that the cause of these problems can be found at the top, rather than the bottom, of the food web. The authors assert that rather than nutrient loadings, the more likely culprit is the depletion of top-level consumers in coastal and estuarine ecosystems. Indirect effects of the removal of large consumers are often indistinguishable from effects of nutrient loading, they argue, and they present evidence gathered from more than 100 studies of coral reefs, rocky intertidal areas, and sea grass beds to support the claim.

For example, the authors report that studies evaluating the relative effects of consumers and nutrient supplies on algal biomass have often concluded that consumer (top-down) effects are greater or equal to those of nutrients. One example they cite takes on the classic model of loss of estuarine seagrass. While common understanding holds that nutrient enrichment leads to epiphytic growth on seagrass, killing the plants by blocking sunlight, cascading trophic effects are likely have just as much influence. Epiphytic abundance is also controlled by grazers, the absence of which would have the same overgrowth effect as nutrient enrichment.

This paradigm could have major repercussions for management of coastal ecosystems, considering the research and management emphasis of recent decades on nutrient control. Especially if upper trophic levels have been altered, nutrient reduction is unlikely to help restore benthic habitats, note the authors.

Source: Heck, K. L. Jr. and J. F. Valentine. 2007. The primacy of top-down effects in shallow benthic ecosystems. Estuaries and Coasts 30(3): 371-381.

## *Florida DEP Publishes Annual Water Supply Planning Report*

--Report highlights long term planning and investment in Florida's water future--

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recently released Tapping New Sources: Meeting 2025 Water Supply Needs. The report documents Florida's progress in ensuring water for the future, while at the same time protecting wetlands, rivers and springs. With incentive funding from the state, projects are underway to produce 725 million gallons per day of alternative water supply to meet the additional two billion gallons a day expected to be needed in 2025.

The annual report summarizes the progress of the water management districts' regional water supply plans and the development of alternative water sources through funding provided by the Water Protection and Sustainability Program. The report provides information on the trends statewide and in Florida's five water management districts. "Florida's water is a priority and we have statewide cooperation, long-term planning, and significant investments in place to protect our water," said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. "The strategies detailed in this report address the state's water needs through new approaches to water supply development."

Two years ago, Florida revolutionized its growth management laws by requiring local governments to incorporate water supply planning in their future development plans. In support, the State and the five regional water management districts are providing funding through the Water Protection and Sustainability Program to build alternative water supply projects. In the last two years, the state and the water management districts have invested almost $292 million toward the $2.5 billion construction costs for projects for "new" supplies of water.

"Florida will soon be the third most populous state," said Secretary Sole. "Visionary planning, public cooperation and environmental commitment will ensure we remain strong economically and a model of sustainability." Through planning, Florida will be better equipped to meet challenges such as the current drought conditions and growth. In the Northwest part of the state, water supply plans focus on shifting the demand from coastal well fields to inland well fields and the development of surface water resources. In the remaining areas of the state, the development of reclaimed water and brackish water sources is emphasized. Conservation is an integral part of each water supply plan and DEP and all five water management districts are participants in the Conserve Florida program, established to provide tools to develop and improve water conservation.

The Water Protection and Sustainability Program was established in 2005 to help water suppliers fund alternative water supply projects. About 66 percent of the projects funded in the first two years of the program involved reuse of reclaimed water. An additional 19 percent of the alternative water supply projects were for brackish groundwater projects. During the first two years of the program, the water management districts helped fund 238 projects. To view the report, please visit www.dep.state.fl.us/water/waterpolicy/rwsp.htm.

## *State Park Hosts Rain Garden Workshop*

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park hosted a Rain Garden Workshop as a part of the City of Tallahassee's TAPP (Think About Personal Pollution) campaign. The interpretive program provided area residents with information on creating and maintaining a healthy and environmentally-friendly rain garden.

"Today's event was a great opportunity for this community to learn how to contribute on a personal level to our environment's heath," said Florida State Parks Director Mike Bullock. "The preservation and protection of the environment is the first priority of our state parks and we encourage everyone to come out to our state parks and learn more about what they can do to ensure our environment's health."

The two-hour workshop utilized the knowledge and expertise of state park employee and master gardener Pam Sawyer, who guided participants through rain garden planting and upkeep techniques. The City of Tallahassee is offering grants to city residents of up to $175 as reimbursement for the purchase of plants, compost and mulch for installing a rain garden.

"Rain gardens are not only beautiful places that anyone can learn to plant, but they can also help to reduce flooding by allowing water to filter into the soil instead of flowing off the yard," said Project Coordinator for the City of Tallahassee's TAPP Campaign Nancy Miller. "They are relatively easy to install and create nice areas that attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife to the yard."

The TAPP Campaign helps educate individuals on ways that small personal changes in home and yard practices can help keep local lakes, sinks and streams cleaner. The campaign helps individuals understand their impact on water quality and encourages people to take action by adopting slightly different approaches to daily activities. The TAPP program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to the City of Tallahassee through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

"Participants brought photos and measurements of low sloped areas in their home gardens that might be a possible location for a rain garden," said Maclay Gardens State Park Master Gardener Pam Sawyer. "With this information we were able to assist individuals in the grant application process offered by the City of Tallahassee through the TAPP campaign."

The park's beautiful ornamental gardens were first planted in 1923 by Alfred B. and Louise Maclay after purchasing the property for their winter home. A masterpiece of floral architecture, the gardens feature a picturesque brick walkway, a secret garden, a reflection pool, a walled garden, and hundreds of azaleas and camellias. Lake Hall provides opportunities for swimming, fishing, canoeing and kayaking, and the park's Lake Overstreet tract is popular for recreational hiking, biking and horseback riding. Traveling the paths is a walk through history, as the gently rolling hills lead are part of the history of the region. African-American communities with ties to the historic sites still exist adjacent to the park, representing the journey to freedom, the rise and fall of agriculture and the rich cultural heritage of the area.

The first two-time Gold Medal winner honoring the nation's best state park service, Florida's state park system is one of the largest in the country with 160 parks spanning 700,000 acres and 100 miles of sandy white beach. From swimming and diving in Florida's rivers and springs to birding and fishing or hiking and riding on natural scenic trails, Florida's state parks offer year-round outdoor activities for all ages. Battle reenactments and Native American festivals celebrate Florida's unique history, while art shows, museums and lighthouses offer a window into Florida's cultural heritage.

For more information, visit www.FloridaStateParks.org. To learn more about the TAPP program and the new campaign, visit www.TAPPwater.org or call 850-224-TAPP (8277). Photos available upon request.

## *Gulf States and Federal Officials Unite to Protect Gulf of Mexico*

--Workshops build on successes of Gulf of Mexico Action Plan--

ST. PETERSBURG – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) this week joined environmental officials from the five Gulf Coast states, the federal government and Mexico for a workshop to help strengthen the health of the Gulf of Mexico's ecosystem and economy. The workshop was designed to build upon the first year successes of the Gulf Mexico Alliance and identify high-priority actions still needed to move forward with restoration and conservation of the Gulf.

"Collaborative partnerships at the local, state and federal levels are essential to protecting and restoring the Gulf of Mexico for future generations," said DEP Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas Director Stephanie Bailenson. "Through sharing science, coastal management expertise and financial resources, the Alliance is a national model for regional stewardship."

The Governors' Action Plan Implementation and Integration Workshop outlined several achievements of the Alliance including the deployment of five new red tide sensors off the coast of Florida to improve monitoring and forecasting and the implementation of a three-state environmental education pilot project led by DEP's LIFE (Learning in Florida's Environment) program. In addition, as part of an effort to enhance local government use of scientific information in their decision-making, Florida coastal managers at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve are working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide Franklin County officials with greater access to the latest tools and technology.

Fifteen months into the 36-month Governor's Action Plan, 88 percent of the defined actions are already complete or underway. As a result of these early successes, many new partners participated in the workshop. St. Petersburg's three-day meetings advance the work of the Action Plan by including technical workshops on water quality monitoring parameter standardization, understanding nutrient dynamics and effects, coastal restoration and habitat identification.

Part of a coordinated response to President George W. Bush's Ocean Action Plan, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance includes the five Gulf Coast states, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas; federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and representatives from Mexico. Last year, the Alliance unveiled The Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts, providing a three-year framework for meaningful and sustained progress in the shared stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico by the American Gulf States.

The Gulf of Mexico is the ninth largest water body in the world, accounting for half the wetlands in the United States and teeming with sea life, ranging from killer whales to unexplored deepwater corals living thousands of feet below the surface. With some 3,400 miles of shoreline from Cape Sable, Florida to the tip of the Yucatan peninsula, the Gulf is bordered by Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas to the north, Mexico to the west and the island of Cuba to the southeast. For more information, or to read the Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts, visit www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.

## *Research Reserve Co-Hosts Ecotour Workshops*

-Annual ecotour workshops focus on sustainability-

NAPLES, FL – The Coastal Training Program at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, together with the Society for Ethical Ecotourism, are hosting the 2007 Ecotour Operator Series for the fifth consecutive year. This year's series of free workshops focus on "Sustainability and Our Treasured Waters."

"Making sure that our environment's spokespeople are well informed and using the best environmental practices is a priority of the Rookery Bay Research Reserve and the Society for Ethical Ecotourism," said Tabitha Stadler, coordinator of the Rookery Bay Coastal Training Program. "We want our educators utilizing the most accurate and up to date information available."

Offered in both Lee and Collier County, the programs are geared toward individuals and businesses that lead outdoor or nature-based excursions as part of their job or volunteer work. Every year, ecotour operators and nature guides educate thousands of people about Florida's natural and cultural resources. The ecotour series provides science-based information on coastal resources, helps participants enhance their interpretive skills and provides tips on educating the public while promoting stewardship of Florida's natural environment. Both Lee and Collier County have already held their first session of the season, What Does it Mean to be Green?

The workshops take place from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. The remaining schedule is as follows:

**Just Enough Water in Southwest Florida:**
Lee County — August 14, Lee County Parks and Recreation Support Services facility at Rutenberg Park, 6490 South Pointe Boulevard in Fort Myers.
Collier County — August 16, Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center located at 300 Tower Road in Naples.

**Sea Level Rise: Impacts on Southwest Florida:**
Lee County — September 11, Lee County Parks and Recreation Support Services facility at Rutenberg Park, 6490 South Pointe Boulevard in Fort Myers.
Collier County — September 20, Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center located at 300 Tower Road in Naples.

Although free of charge, registration is necessary to attend the workshops. Participants and businesses completing at least three of the four summer series sessions receive a certificate of participation. Workshops are sponsored in Collier County by the Collier County Marine Industries Association Foundation and in Lee County by Lee County Parks and Recreation. For more information or to register, please call the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve at 239-417-6310 ext. 231 or e-mail, alberto.chavez@dep.state.fl.us. More information can be found online at http://www.rookerybay.org/CTP-Classes.html.

## *Florida's Military Partnership Highlighted at National Environmental and Lands Conference on Sustainability*

**ORLANDO** – Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Michael W. Sole today joined Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp and military officials at the U.S. Department of Defense's 2007 Sustaining Military Readiness Conference. The conference, which began Monday, July 30, continues through Friday, August 3 at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, and highlights the unique partnership between Florida and the U.S. Department of Defense.

"The Florida Department of Environmental Protection values the strong and long-standing rapport we have enjoyed over many decades with the 21 military installations and 3 unified commands in Florida, and the men and women based in our state serving our country," said DEP Secretary Sole. "Innovative partnerships between Florida and the military installations based here are a model for sustaining the environment, increasing national security and strengthening our economy." Secretary Sole is a former U.S. Marine and has continued the tradition of having a direct liaison from the DEP Secretary's leadership team for military sustainability issues.

To strengthen national security and protect natural resources, Florida is preserving land around military installations through *Florida Forever*, the state's premier land acquisition program. To date, Florida has invested about $843 million to preserve more than half a million acres around military bases. Florida plans to acquire an additional 630,000 acres to preserve wildlife habitat and reduce encroachment on military operations.

Florida was the first state in the nation to partner with the U.S. Department of Defense for the dual purpose of environmental protection and national defense. The Panhandle alone is home to five U.S. Air Force and Navy installations and represents one of the largest open air military training areas in the United States. Strategically important for homeland security, the region is also a known biological "hot spot" ideal for preservation and recreation. More than 100,000 acres within the Northwest Florida Greenway corridor already have been protected.

In addition to conserving land to buffer installations, military bases are pairing with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to achieve ecological protection and environmental compliance. Through compliance agreements, Florida's environmental agency is providing bases with technical and regulatory assistance to use the latest innovations and prevent pollution at defense installations.

The 2007 Sustaining Military Readiness Conference is sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment, and the Office of the Deputy Director for Operational Test and Evaluation. DoD Personnel and partners from the operational, planning, and cultural and natural resources conservation communities are engaging in discussions and training to promote military readiness through conservation, compatible land use planning, and encroachment mitigation. To learn more about environmental protection in Florida and the *Florida Forever* land conservation program administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, visit www.dep.state.fl.us.

## *Louisiana CIAP Plan: First Plan to get Federal Completeness Review*

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Scott Angelle announced today that officials with the U.S. Department of Interior, Minerals Management Service (MMS) have given a stamp of approval on the "completeness review" of the state's Coastal Impact Assistance Plan or CIAP Plan. Angelle said this means that Louisiana is the first eligible coastal state to achieve plan completeness.

"Over the next 90-days, the state's CIAP Plan will be considered for final approval, the last step in the process required by MMS," Angelle noted. "Now that MMS considers Louisiana's plan complete, we are well on our way to becoming the first state to reach the finish line," Angelle said. Louisiana and five other oil and gas producing states are required to submit CIAP plans to the federal government in order to receive federal dollars from offshore oil and gas operations, as provided in the U.S. Energy Policy Act of 2005.

The CIAP program allocations for FY 2007 and 2008 have been determined to about $127.6 million a year, and FY 2009 and 2010 allocations are expected to be announced in April of 2009. The four-year program is based on calculations by the MMS on Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas revenues.

Angelle said that beside the state-only projects, the 19 coastal parishes have project proposals within the plan which comprise 35 percent of the federal funding to be used for conservation, restoration, and infrastructure projects to mitigate the onshore impacts of OCS oil and gas exploration and production activities. "I am pleased to see Louisiana leading the way, once final approval is obtained, the CIAP grant applications can be submitted in October," Angelle said.

## *New Louisiana Shrimp Task Force Prioritizes Quality and Safety Control*

The Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board (LSPMB) and the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force are in the beginning stages of developing a Louisiana Certified Shrimp Program. "The board formed the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force first of all to facilitate the development of the Louisiana Certified Shrimp Program," said LSPMB Chairman Harlon Pearce said. LSPMB Executive Director Ewell Smith said, "Big seafood buyers in this country are asking for certified, quality-controlled products. The timing is right to make this happen in Louisiana and we are starting with shrimp." Commissioner of Agriculture Bob Odom is working with LSPMB and the Louisiana State University Food Science Department to develop criteria to justify a premium quality label for use by Louisiana shrimp suppliers.

"The board also wants to broaden the discussion on Louisiana shrimp. We have a chance to create new marketing strategies," said Pearce. He explained that the task force brings every sector of the shrimp industry to the table: shrimpers, retailers, restaurateurs, processors, brokers, and the quality control experts. Pearce expressed appreciation on behalf of the board to John Williams of the Southern Shrimp Alliance and to Bill Hogarth of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the funds to initiate this important effort.

Pete Gerica, a New Orleans fisherman and vice chairman of the LSPMB, was named chairman of the newly formed Louisiana Shrimp Task Force. Gerica said the first meeting will be in two weeks.
For more information, contact Ewell Smith at 504-283-8150 or Harlon Pearce at 504-467-3809.

## *Crawfish Virus Widespread but So Far No Threat to Industry*

MAMOU – More than half of 135 Louisiana crawfish ponds tested for White Spot Syndrome Virus so far have shown up positive, according to an LSU AgCenter aquaculture expert. “This means it’s much more widespread than anyone thought,” said Dr. Ray McClain, crawfish researcher at the LSU AgCenter Rice Research Station, who was among speakers at the Evangeline Parish Rice Field Day on July 10.

The virus has been detected in more than 88 samples. But McClain said fewer than 10 ponds reported dying crawfish. It also has been found in three of nine samples from Atchafalaya Basin crawfish. In addition, McClain said, crawfish tissue samples at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine from two years ago tested positive, he said. “It looks as if it’s been around awhile,” McClain said. “It does not appear to be as devastating in crawfish farms as it was in shrimp farms.”

A crawfish pond where the virus was found earlier this year appears to have recovered somewhat, he said. The virus was first found in the United States among Texas shrimp farms in 1995, and the affected shrimp died rapidly. Several crawfish ponds were quarantined this spring after the virus was found in St. Martin and Vermilion Parish ponds, and crawfish from the affected ponds have to be tagged and sold only to a processor. McClain said the quarantine is still in effect, but that could change, depending on future decisions by state and federal agencies.

Symptoms of the virus include lethargic and sluggish crawfish that eventually die. Affected shrimp usually have a white spot, but not crawfish. The virus is not a threat to humans, McClain said. McClain said the virus was detected recently in crawfish from North Carolina where farmers keep the crustaceans in large holding tanks just before they are sold. He said the virus also was found in crabs and shrimp along the South Atlantic coast.

## *LRA Vice Chair Applauds Congress for Action to Provide an HMGP Fix for the Road Home*

BATON ROUGE, La. (August 1, 2007) - Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) Vice Chairman Walter Isaacson issued the following statement today in response to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' unanimous vote in favor of Senator Landrieu's Streamlining Mitigation Actions and Recovery Tools and Regional Evacuation and Sheltering Planning of Overarching Networks for Severe Emergencies (SMART RESPONSE) Act that includes provisions that will allow Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds to be used for home elevations and other safety measures consistent with the Road Home program.

"Today the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs took an important step toward cutting significant parts of the red tape that have kept Louisiana from being able to effectively utilize nearly $1.2 billion in hazard mitigation funds for the Road Home program. We thank the Committee Chair Senator Lieberman and Ranking Member Senator Collins, and we applaud Senator Landrieu in particular for her leadership on this issue, as Louisiana homeowners are counting on these funds for elevations and other mitigation measures that will help to rebuild our communities safer and stronger."

## *MDEQ Approves Grant for Four Pearl River County Projects*

(JACKSON, Miss.) – The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has approved a grant of $2,440,541 for planning and engineering costs for four infrastructure projects in Pearl River County. The grant is anticipated to be increased after the planning and engineering phase for construction which will amount to a total of $56,810,212. The funds provided for these projects are part of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding allocated by Governor Haley Barbour for water and wastewater enhancements in the Gulf Coast Region for hurricane recovery.

The four projects are:

- The Poplarville Regional Water Supply System.
- The Picayune Regional Water Supply System.
- The Poplarville Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility and Transmission System.
- The Picayune Wastewater Treatment Facility and Transmission System.

"We appreciate the efforts of the Pearl River County Utility Authority and other local officials in Pearl River County who have worked with us on the planning for these needed projects. We anticipate moving through the planning stage and entering the construction phase as quickly as possible," said Trudy Fisher, MDEQ Executive Director.

These projects are part of the Gulf Region Water and Wastewater Plan that provided recommendations for the use of $641 million in disaster recovery funds to enhance water and wastewater infrastructure in Pearl River, Stone, Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties. Governor Barbour and Mississippi's Congressional Delegation obtained appropriations of more than $5 billion through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in hurricane recovery. The Mississippi Gulf Region Water and Wastewater Plan was prepared by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality for improvements intended to support existing and future growth patterns, particularly as realized through new housing construction, and to promote economic development.

## *Digital Aerial Photography Presented to 50 MS Counties*

(JACKSON, Miss.) -- The Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems along with the Mississippi Association of Supervisors recently presented 50 counties with up-to-date aerial photography. Officials expect all 82 counties to have the information soon. The counties will be able to use this data for tax mapping, land use planning, emergency response, and economic development activities. The new imagery is up-to-date, high resolution, and in a digital format – allowing the counties to easily move the data from computer to computer. Digital aerial photography also allows the county to use the latest computer-based mapping software. Training for use of the data is available from the GeoResources Institute at Mississippi State University. The data is available to citizens on the Council's website: www.giscouncil.ms.gov.

"The mapping data currently being developed is of great benefit for counties for long-range planning work, and we're pleased to present them with this information. It will enable officials to make more informed decisions in a variety of areas," said Trudy Fisher, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. Fisher is also Chair of the Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems.

"We appreciate the tireless efforts of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors helping us determine the

counties' needs and interacting with officials as we move to provide this aerial photography to each county in the state," she added.

The Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems was created by the Mississippi Legislature in 2003 and is comprised of state and local officials and government associations' representatives. The coordinating council is responsible for coordination of remote sensing and geographic information system activities within the state. The coordination council's authority covers all local, regional, and state governmental agencies in Mississippi except for institutions of higher learning.

## *GSMFC Presents MS CMR with $2.8 Million Check for Oyster Reef Restoration*

BILOXI, Miss. – Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Executive Director Larry Simpson presented the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources (CMR) with a $2.8 million check to be used for oyster reef rehabilitation projects at the CMR's July 17 meeting in Biloxi. More than 90 percent of Mississippi's oyster reefs were destroyed as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

The $2,889,154 is part of the Congressionally approved $37 million to be distributed to Mississippi over the next five years as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service Fisheries Disaster Recovery Program whose funds can be utilized to assist in the restoration of oyster beds and shrimping grounds rehabilitation, as well as monitor the recovery of Gulf fisheries. To date, Mississippi has received about $11 million.

"These funds are vital to the recovery of Mississippi's oyster reefs which were so badly damaged by Hurricane Katrina," said William "Corky" Perret. "We would like to give special thanks to our Mississippi delegation for recognizing these extensive damages, the need for rehabilitating these reefs in a timely fashion and for making the funds available for this work to be accomplished."

## *MS DMR Wins National Communication Awards*

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) received two awards in the 2007 Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Awards competition held by the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) to recognize the government's best in print, video and multimedia communications. NAGC is a national organization for communications professionals at the national, state and local levels of government. Members include editors, writers, graphic artists, video professionals, broadcasters, photographers, information specialists and agency spokespersons. Blue Pencil Awards honor outstanding print materials while Gold Screen Awards recognize excellence in Web, audio, video and other multimedia.

The DMR received an Award of Excellence for the "Preserving and Enjoying Mississippi's Coastal Resources" 2006 Marine Information Calendar and an Award of Excellence for the Coastal Markers newsletter at the annual National Association of Government Communicators Communications School held April 26 in Oak Brook, Ill. The DMR is one of about 85 government agencies in the United States to earn the prestigious Blue Pencil Award. More than 550 entries were submitted. Judging was done across the nation by both governmental and nongovernmental information professionals who volunteer their time to judge and give peer feedback on entries. Entries were judged on production,

writing, editorial content, layout and design, and quality and creativity. Entries were also reviewed to determine that they achieved the purpose for which they were produced, that they served the needs of their target audiences and that they represented a cost-effective use of financial and other resources.

"We're honored with this recognition from our peers and with the increasing public response to our communications activities," DMR Public Relations Director Lauren Thompson said. "As an agency and as communicators we're working hard to inform the public about the exciting efforts under way to enhance our marine resources and will continue to develop creative print and electronic products that educate and provide timely and valuable information to the public."

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.

## *Seafood Business Start-Up Guide Available at MS DMR*

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Seafood Technology Bureau has developed a publication on "How To Start A Seafood Business in South Mississippi." The guide, a contribution to the rebuilding efforts of the seafood industry of Mississippi, contains information to assist anyone interested in starting a seafood business in Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, George, Pearl River and Stone counties. The guides are free and are available at the DMR, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

For each city included in the guide, there is a written description of the proper procedures for developing a seafood business as well as a flow chart for easy reading. The guide addresses businesses such as seafood processors, seafood dealers and seafood retail facilities. The appendix of the guide includes important information for any business including:

- County, state and federal agencies requiring certification or licensing;
- Licensing, regulations, state laws and certification codes for the State of Mississippi;
- Available financing options; and
- Insurance requirements.

The guide will be sent to each city's building and/or planning department and all libraries within the six coastal counties, as well as to university libraries and any non-profit organizations dealing with business basics.

## *MS DMR Receives Keep Mississippi Beautiful Award for 2006 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup*

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) received two awards—an award in the State Government category for the 2006 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup and a Partnership Award—at the 15th annual Keep Mississippi Beautiful (KMB) awards luncheon held recently at the Country Club of Jackson.

Over 300 participants from across the state traveled to Jackson to attend the event. The KMB Statewide Awards Program recognizes those individuals, groups, companies and government agencies who, through ongoing efforts, are utilizing public/private partnerships to improve their community's waste-handling practices and its environment. KMB received 25 entries in this year's awards program.

"The Department of Marine Resources would like to thank Keep Mississippi Beautiful, the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force and our many community partners and volunteers with the Coastal Cleanup for all they have done and continue to do to improve our state," said Lauren Thompson, DMR Public Relations Director. "We will continue to work together to educate the public about litter prevention and the detrimental effects marine debris has on our state."

The 2006 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup was held on Sept. 16 in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup—the world's largest single-day volunteer effort to clean up the marine environment. More than 3,200 volunteers participated in the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, picking up 4,051 bags of trash along 147 miles of Coastal waterways in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties and the Barrier Islands. The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup takes place each year on the third Saturday in September.

## *Patterson Orders Immediate Removal of Abandoned Zeus*

First-ever use of new authority for Texas Land Commissioner AUSTIN —

Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office, today ordered the immediate removal of the Zeus, a towering and derelict jackup rig that has long threatened to topple into the Freeport Ship Channel and spill toxic sludge into the Gulf. The emergency order is the first ever by a Texas Land Commissioner under new authority to remove derelict structures from state waters. The 79 th Legislature granted Patterson the authority. The 80 th Legislature authorized $2 million for the removal of the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) Zeus and entrusted Patterson with the job.

"This has been a longtime coming," Patterson said. "What this order — and the $2 million — represent is good government, plain and simple. This is what happens when state and local government pull together to represent the will of the people. And I'm proud to be a part of that."

Work on the rig's removal may begin immediately. The owner of the Zeus, Brownsville based Sanship Inc., remains liable for the cost of its removal and cleanup. Emilio Sanchez is the sole owner of Sanship Inc. The rig's owner may also be subject to fines, penalties and fees. The state's $2 million allows for immediate action. "We're getting on this right now — the courts can decide ultimately who foots the bill," Patterson said. "But the quicker this work is done, the better. Texan's livelihood, and their safety, just can't wait." Already the Zeus has begun leaking an oily mix into coastal waters. But the greatest threat poised by the abandoned rig is its potential to collapse into the Freeport Ship Channel.

The U.S. Coast Guard inspected the jackup rig and determined a hurricane or tornado could easily cause its collapse. The collapse of the Zeus could wreck havoc with shipping, sending a ripple effect though the Brazosport, Texas and even national economy. Industries that depend on the Freeport Ship Channel include ConocoPhillips Freeport, Dow Chemical Freeport, BASF Freeport and the Port of Freeport.

Clean up and removal of the Zeus will take place under the guidance of Port Freeport. Commissioners have already approved an interlocal agreement with the Texas General Land Office under which the Port would contract for the job, which the Land Office would fund.

## *Texas Coastal Bend Bays Estuary Program Releases Water & Sediment Report*

The CBBEP's *Coastal Bend Bays Plan* includes a goal to conduct water and sediment quality monitoring to evaluate the health of our estuaries. Hence, the CBBEP has endeavored in a five-year Regional Coastal Assessment Program (RCAP) sampling effort to assess the physical, chemical, and biological condition of our local bays and estuaries.

This enormous effort included quarterly monitoring of selected bays during 2000 and 2001, and annual monitoring of the three estuary systems (Mission/Aransas Bay, Corpus Christi Bay and Baffin Bay) during 2002, 2003 and 2004.

So how did our estuaries fare during the latest sampling event completed in 2004? The following is a synopsis of results pertaining to certain parameters tested. Dissolved Oxygen measured at the surface was within Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) acceptable levels. Ammonia (nutrients) sampling throughout the three bay systems produced one result in Baffin Bay slightly above the TCEQ screening level. Orthophosphates and Dissolved Inorganic Phosphates (nutrients) remained at similar levels when compared to results from previous years. E. coli bacteria levels were found to be acceptable for the third straight year. Heavy metals and organic contaminants were all considered within the TCEQ acceptable range. Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) results were below detection limits.

So what does all this mean? The results from the monitoring efforts indicate that for the parameters measured, the bay systems in the Coastal Bend area appear to be in relatively good condition. For the full report, visit RCAP REPORT.

# Energy

## *Florida Governor Crist Signs Executive Orders to Reduce Greenhouse Gases*

-- Signs Partnership Agreements with Germany and the United Kingdom --

**MIAMI** – Governor Charlie Crist today signed three Executive Orders initiating Florida's energy policy. The Governor also signed partnership agreements with Germany and the United Kingdom outlining an agreement that focuses on climate policies and mutual economic benefits. The signing ceremony concluded the **Serve to Preserve** Florida Summit on Global Climate Change held at the Intercontinental Miami Hotel in Miami on July 12-13, 2007.

"Florida is providing the moral leadership needed to preserve our state's beautiful natural environment, and state government is leading by example by taking immediate action to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions," Governor Crist said. "However, our actions do not stop here. During the next few months, Florida's Action Team on Energy and Climate Change will develop further recommendations for our state's long-term climate-friendly efforts."

The Executive Orders carry out Governor Crist's commitment to reducing Florida's greenhouse gases and increasing energy efficiency. As a result, Florida will pursue renewable energy sources such as solar and

wind energy, as well as alternative energy such as ethanol and hydrogen. Governor Crist signed Executive Order 07-126, titled "Leadership by Example: Immediate Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Florida State Government"; Executive Order 07-127, "Immediate Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions within Florida"; and Executive Order 07-128, "Florida Governor's Action Team on Energy and Climate Change."

"Germany and the United Kingdom are recognized as worldwide leaders in actively addressing global climate change," said Governor Crist. "Florida is honored to join these great nations in calling for a post-Kyoto Protocol that protects the planet's climate systems by reducing emissions of greenhouse gasses beyond 2012." Governor Crist signed two partnerships agreements, "Partnership on Global Climate Change, Action between the United Kingdom and the State of Florida," and "Partnership on Global Climate Change, Action with the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Florida."

**Leadership by Example: Immediate Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Florida State Government**

State government will first measure greenhouse gas emissions and develop a Governmental Carbon Scorecard. State government will then work to reduce emissions 10 percent by 2012, 25 percent by 2017, and 40 percent by 2025. To achieve that goal, state buildings constructed in the future will be energy efficient and include solar panels whenever possible. Office space leased in the future must be in energy-efficient buildings as well. Any purchased state vehicles should be fuel efficient and use ethanol and biodiesel fuels when available. State government will also seek to partner with an energy-efficient rental-car company for the 2009 contract.

**Immediate Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions within Florida**

Governor Crist directed the adoption of maximum emission levels of greenhouse gases for electric utilities. The standard will require a reduction of emissions to 2000 levels by 2017, to 1990 levels by 2025, and by 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050. Florida will also adopt the California motor vehicle emission standards, pending approval of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency waiver. The standard is a 22-percent reduction in vehicle emissions by 2012 and a 30-percent reduction by 2016.

Florida will also require energy-efficient consumer appliances to increase efficiency by 15 percent of current standards. Governor Crist also requested that the Public Service Commission adopt a 20 percent Renewable Portfolio Standard by 2020, with a strong focus on solar and wind energy.

**Partnerships with Germany and the United Kingdom**

Governor Crist committed to partnering with Germany and the United Kingdom to discuss and promote initiatives that broaden the Kyoto Protocol and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases beyond 2012. The State of Florida will exchange delegations with Germany and with the United Kingdom to create a forum for sharing public policy experience and exchanging science and technology, placing a particular emphasis on the sharing of ideas and policies related to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. The individual partnership agreements will increase climate-friendly trade between the State of Florida and the Federal Republic of Germany and between the State of Florida and the United Kingdom.

**Florida Governor's Action Team on Energy and Climate Change**

Governor Crist will appoint diverse stakeholders to a Governor's Action Team on Energy and Climate Change. Team members will create a Florida Climate Change Action Plan that will include strategies beyond today's Executive Orders to reduce emissions, including recommendations for proposed legislation for consideration during the 2008 Legislative Session and beyond.

"Florida's economy, the health of our people, and the quality of our environment will be shaped by the bold action steps taken by Governor Crist today," said Secretary Michael W. Sole of the Florida

Department of Environmental Protection. “This summit is a watershed event in Florida’s history, and I applaud Governor Crist for his leadership on this important issue.”

Governor Crist was joined at the signing ceremony by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Governor Schwarzenegger, who was also the luncheon keynote speaker, is a national leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He has helped reduce traffic congestion and clean the air by establishing the California Hydrogen Highway. “Governor Schwarzenegger is truly a national and international leader on the issue of global climate change,” Governor Crist said. “I am honored that he has taken time out of his busy schedule to join us and share his expertise with us.”

**About the “Serve to Preserve Florida” Summit on Global Climate Change**
The summit brought together policy makers, academics, scientists, environmentalists and the business community to discuss the impact of climate change in Florida. These experts helped develop best practices related to alternative fuels and emission standards. The group's strongest recommendations helped shape procedures for state agencies and future legislation. For more information, visit www.MyFloridaClimate.com or www.flgov.com.

To offset the energy used for the summit, the State of Florida has worked with the non-profit CarbonFund.org to estimate the carbon emissions created by summit participants through their use of transportation, hotel operations and food preparation. Because carbon emissions have global impact, supporting renewable energy anywhere can compensate for the environmental impact of the summit. The State of Florida’s financial support of renewable wind energy in New Mexico will counterbalance the carbon emissions generated by the summit.

# Other News

## *Gulf of Mexico Observing Systems News*

Observing systems that are responsive to the needs of the fisheries communities are complex. Ann Jochens, Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS) Regional Coordinator, and Worth Nowlin, Board member, are pursuing assessment of the needs of fishery communities by meeting with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and various state agencies.

There are a number of initiatives within those organizations that are associated with assembly and utilization of data sets. The development of hypoxia each year over the Gulf’s continental shelf, particularly in Louisiana waters, is a process that is of great concern to many stakeholder sectors. NOAA has an effort underway to develop an implementation plan to monitor the hypoxic zone. On 30-31 January 2007, NOAA held a Summit on Long-Term Monitoring of the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic Zone: Developing the Implementation Plan for an Operational Observation System at Stennis Space Center, MS, to develop the basis for a long-term comprehensive monitoring plan for the hypoxic zone. GCOOS and IOOS representatives, including two GCOOS Board members (Nancy Rabalais and Worth Nowlin) and NOAA IOOS and Ocean.US members (Zdenka Willis and Tom Malone), participated in the summit.

A white paper on the results of this meeting is now available. Ann Jochens and Board members Mark Luther, Nancy Rabalais, Mike Spranger, and Sharon Walker attended the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Implementation and Integration Workshop, held in St. Petersburg, FL, on 10-12 July 2007. At the plenary

session on 10 July, Jochens presented a summary of what GCOOS is, common areas of interest with GoMA, and efforts already underway to integrate activities in the areas of commonality. GCOOS representatives participated in the various break-out sessions covering the GoMA priority issues: Water Quality, Nutrient Reduction, Environmental Education, Coastal Restoration, Habitat Mapping, and a new area Coastal Resiliency.

## *EPA Launches New Border Program Web Site*

Contact Information: Dave Bary or Tressa Tillman at 214-665-2200 or r6press@epa.gov

(Dallas, Texas – July 23, 2007) Today the Environmental Protection Agency launched a new Web site providing the public with current environmental news and information on the U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 program.

U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Web site: http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/index.html

The site includes:
* news and event information,
* publications and progress reports, and
* links to other organizations working in the border region.

The Border 2012 Program is a binational 10-year initiative focused on making measurable improvements in environmental quality and health along the U.S.-Mexico border. It represents a partnership among the federal governments of the United States, Mexico, ten border-states, 26 U.S. border tribes, local authorities, academia and the public and private sectors.

For questions regarding the Border 2012 program, contact:
New Mexico and Texas Border region -- Gina Weber (214) 665-6787 Weber.Gina@epamail.epa.gov
Overall Border 2012 program in Washington, DC -- Lisa Almodovar, (202) 564-6401, Almodovar.Lisa@epamail.epa.gov. To learn more about activities in EPA Region 6, please visit www.epa.gov/region6.

## *EPA Releases the Draft of 2007 Report on the Environment: Highlights of National Trends*

(8/3/07) The draft 2007 Report on the Environment (ROE): Highlights of National Trends (2007 ROE HD) was released today for public comment and independent review. First issued in 2003, the ROE is a plain, easy-to-understand guide that provides the average citizen a resource to follow national trends in the condition of the air, water, and land in the United States. The ROE is also part of EPA's commitment to be transparent to citizens, and to encourage citizen participation. Through the ROE, the public will have a complete picture of where the most environmental progress has been made, and where America needs to do better.

Written for a general audience, the ROE HD features a subset of the findings from the more comprehensive report, EPA's 2007 Report on the Environment: Science Report which was released in draft for public comment and review in May 2007. The final 2007 ROE report will consist of both the science and highlights documents. The information will also be available on an interactive, searchable Web site called the "e-ROE." Read the draft and submit comments: epa.gov/roe/

## *Deadline for Gulf Guardian Award Applications Extended*

The Gulf of Mexico Program Partnership developed the Gulf Guardian awards as a way to recognize and honor the businesses, community groups, individuals, and agencies that are taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful and productive. The Gulf Guardian Award exemplifies what the Gulf of Mexico Program is all about; innovative solutions that come about when we pool resources and look for creative ways to positively impact our quality of life and economic well being. The partnership of the Gulf of Mexico Program seeks to improve the environmental health of the Gulf in concert with economic development. The Gulf Guardian Awards is an important way by which we recognize these valuable efforts. There are many companies, organizations, and individuals in the Gulf States that are "Gulf Guardians." The GMP partnership believes they should be awarded for their stewardship of this national resource from which we all derive so much benefit.

For more information regarding the 2007 Application Process, please visit http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/gulfguard.html. **2007 Application - deadline August 24, 2007**

# Grant Opportunities

## *CICEET Releases FY 2008 Funding Opportunities*

The Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET) invites proposals to its FY 2008 funding opportunity programs. Through these programs, 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.

1) CICEET's Mitigating Shoreline Erosion along Sheltered Coasts Funding Opportunity seeks to provide a better understanding of how to use different erosion prevention measures to protect sheltered coastlines from the impacts of rising sea levels and waves generated by extreme weather, as well as to protect, preserve, and restore ecosystem function.

2) CICEET's Environmental Technology Development and Demonstration Funding Opportunity has the following two goals, developed in support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's five-year strategic plan for research:

- Develop and/or demonstrate technology to detect and quantify the impacts of human activity on coastal water quality, species, and habitats.
- Develop and/or demonstrate technology to protect coastal water quality and/or restore coastal habitats.

Both funding opportunities reflect CICEET's approach to RFP development, one that incorporates an analysis of the technical and non-technical factors that influence coastal management problems, and mandates the active participation of intended end users in technology development and demonstration. Learn more on CICEET's web site: http://ciceet.unh.edu/funding/rfp_2008/. 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

## *Money Matters!! Maximize Funding for Coastal Resource Projects Part III*

**Friday August 17, 2007 8:30AM – 1:00 PM**

Coastal Resource Funding and Technical Assistance Fair presented by:
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (CRMP), Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center (CREC), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA),

Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center Auditorium
1815 Popps Ferry Road; Biloxi, MS 39532

The Coastal Resource Funding and Technical Assistance Fair is the grand finale to our grant workshop series!!! It is a FREE event designed to network local decision-makers with funding agency representatives who can provide information and technical assistance to support coastal resource projects in local communities.

Target audiences for this event include agency directors and program managers, city and county department heads and staff, elected and appointed officials, environmental nonprofit executive directors and staff, grant writers, and grant managers. Participants should expect to learn about funding opportunities that support efforts related to natural resource protection and management, enhancement of heritage and cultural resources, smart growth initiatives, and coastal hazard mitigation. Please see the attached brochure for a list of participating agencies.

Please note, that participation in the previous two grant workshops is not a pre-requisite for this event. To register, please complete the form in the attached brochure and fax it to Marian Dicas (228-475-8097). If you have questions about the event, please call 228-475-7047. The deadline for pre-registration is Friday, **August 10, 2007**. Space is limited; therefore, EARLY REGISTRATION is recommended! Feel free to forward this announcement to others who may be interested in this event.

## *'Wetlands Law and Regulation' Course Scheduled on Coast*

The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program, The University of Mississippi and the Center for Continuing Legal Education will present "Wetlands Law and Regulation" from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., **Friday, Aug. 24**, at the Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center at 1815 Popps Ferry Road in Biloxi.

The course will cover legal wetlands issues, such as federal regulation, litigation, major court cases and jurisdictional issues. The course has been approved by the Mississippi Commission on Continuing Legal Education for 6 CLE credits.

The cost is $150 for attorneys; $75 for non-attorneys. Call Renee Moore at (662) 915-7283 for registration information.

## *Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure: A Two-Day Workshop*

**Sept 4-5, 2007 - Fairhope, Alabama**

During this Coastal Training Program at Weeks Bay Reserve, participants will learn about the procedures and use of WRAP in the coastal area. Lectures will include functional variables, functional scoring procedures and applying procedures in the field and in the office. Additional information will examine the use of WRAP by US Army Corp of Engineers. On both workshop days, procedures will be applied in the field at both disturbed and undisturbed wetland sites.
Workshop Registration & Information (pdf 116 kb)
Weeks Bay Reserve Coastal Training Program website

## *2007 Annual Fall Meeting, South Central Chapter, Society of Wetland Scientists*

The 2007Annual Fall Meeting of the South Central Chapter of the Society of Wetland Scientists will be held in Memphis, TN and will be hosted by EnSafe Inc., an environmental consulting firm. The meeting will be held Thursday through Saturday, **4 - 6 October**. There will be a one-day workshop on the introduction of GPS/GIS on Thursday along with technical presentations addressing stream restoration, wetland restoration and mitigation banking. Paper presentations will be held on Friday and part of Saturday. Friday evening, there will be a social so that attendees and their guests can catch-up on old connections and make new ones.

A registration form and additional meeting information will be available soon at http://www.sws.org/regional/southcentral/ch_meetings.htm. For more information contact Andy Nyman 225 578-4220; http://www.rnr.lsu.edu/nyman/

## *ASBPA/GLO Fall Coastal Conference*

**Caring for the Coast: Protecting, Enhancing, Preserving October 22-24, Galveston, TX**

American Shore & Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) and the Texas General Land Office (GLO) invite you to register online for their joint 2007 Fall Coastal Conference at the Galveston Island Convention Center in Galveston Oct. 22-24.

All full registrations include all conference sessions on Oct. 22-24 as well as all breaks and any meals as part of the conference. All nonmember registrations include a one-year membership in ASBPA. Partial registration and sponsorships are also available. For more information:

- Program
- Registration (for conference and optional field trips)
- Sponsorship Opportunities
- Field Trip Descriptions
- Hotels
- Transportation
- Pre or Post Conference Cruise

## *Confronting the Cogongrass Crisis Across the South*

**Nov 7-8, 2007 - Mobile, Alabama**

The purpose of this conference is to convey the latest understanding in restoring lands, managing, controlling and eradicating cogongrass, and to explore existing and needed networks for coordinating strategies for successful cogongrass management. Cogongrass is a growing threat as it continues its rapid spread across the Southeast, reducing forest and pasture productivity, destroying wildlife habitat, impacting rights of ways and presenting an extreme fire hazard. For more information, click on the links below:

Conference Announcement (pdf 178 kb)
Conference Registration (pdf 93 kb)
Conference Agenda (pdf 23 kb)

## *Ecosystem Functions and the Dynamic Atchafalaya River from the Old River Control Structure to the Continental Shelf*

**January 10th, 2008**

ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

The Atchafalaya River stretches just 135 miles from its origin to its mouth, yet the water and sediment it conveys result in tremendous geomorphological, biological, and ecological impacts across thousands of square miles of southcentral Louisiana in the floodway, delta, coastal marshes, and coastal waters. Along its length, the river influences millions of acres of wetland forests and coastal marshes that yield tremendous benefits in the form of oil and gas resources, timber, commercial and recreational fishing, hunting and non-consumptive wildlife use, and regional navigation. The Atchafalaya River Basin is managed partly for navigation but primarily as a floodway that receives water from the Mississippi and Red Rivers, and is undergoing rapid geomorphic changes as it develops as a distributary. Understanding this complex system is difficult because it is being changed by the Atchafalaya River itself and by people, intentionally and otherwise. The purposes of this meeting are to review what is known about the river and its associated environments, to report on recent and ongoing research, and to identify information gaps that complicate decision making by land managers, water managers, and policy makers.

Program:

- Hydrology: flow, nutrient dynamics, and water quality
- Geomorphology: sedimentation especially in context of navigation and habitat change
- Ecology: status and trends of wildlife, fisheries, forests, marshes, exotic species, and human communities

Submit Abstracts: 250 words or less submitted in the text of an email by September 15, 2008 to Andy Nyman at jnyman@agcenter.lsu.edu. Conference Website: http://www.crcl.org/atchafalaya.html.

## *2008 Ocean Sciences Meeting: From the Watershed to the Global Ocean*

**March 2-7 2008 · Orlando, Florida, USA**

Co-sponsored by the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, the American Geophysical Union, The Oceanography Society and the Estuarine Research Federation.

**Abstract Submittal Now Open**
The abstract submission deadline is midnight (23:59 US, CDT) on Tuesday, 2 October 2007. In order for scheduling to be completed in a timely manner, all Internet and mailed submissions must be received by this date. An abstract submission fee of $50.00 USD is required for each submission, along with a full paid registration. This fee is non-refundable should it later be determined you are not able to attend and make your presentation. However, registration fees are refundable under the registration guidelines. Only one paper per first author will be accepted. Poster presentations are strongly encouraged and will play an important role in this meeting. Be sure to read the abstract guidelines and registration policies before submitting. Please click here to proceed to registration and abstract submittal.

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