

Gulf of Mexico News



NOAA Ocean Service, Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management

July 2008

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>NOAA Gulf of Mexico News</i> | 4 |
| Aerosol Toxins from Red Tides May Cause Long-Term Health Threat..... | 4 |
| NOAA Responds to New Orleans Barge Collision Oil Spill | 5 |
| Hurricane Dolly Offers Silver Lining to Some Drought Stricken Texas Counties..... | 6 |
| Survey Cruise Records Second-Largest "Dead Zone" in Gulf of Mexico Since Measurements Began in 1985 | 7 |
| NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Seeks Applicants for Advisory Council Seats..... | 8 |
| NOAA Sentinels Installed at Shell Beach, Louisiana and Waveland, Mississippi..... | 9 |
| NCCOS and NERRS Work Together to Characterize Ecosystem Condition and Public Health Status of Research Reserve Sites..... | 9 |
| Cruise Continues Assessment of Marine Protected Areas as Coral Reef Management Strategy ... | 9 |
| NOAA Releases Coral Status Report..... | 10 |
| Mississippi Joins Phytoplankton Monitoring Network to Fill Data Gaps for Early Warning of Harmful Algal Blooms in the Gulf of Mexico | 10 |
| Public Health and Optical Data Incorporated into HAB Forecasting System..... | 10 |
| NOS and Federal Partners Respond to Hurricane Dolly..... | 11 |
| NOS and Partners Respond to Tropical Storm Edouard | 11 |
| <i>Other NOAA News</i> | 11 |
| July Issue of Coastal Management News Released..... | 11 |
| Historical Hurricane Tracks Updated for 2008 Hurricane Season..... | 12 |
| New Coastal Ecosystem Effects of Climate Change Web Site Launched..... | 12 |
| Community Focus Groups Foster Public Engagement to Enhance Prevention, Control, and Mitigation of HABs in Florida..... | 12 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Digital Coast Data, Tool, and Information Web site Released..... | 12 |
| New Web Site for Shoreline Data and Information Goes Live..... | 13 |
| Updates to NERRS Education Web Site | 13 |
| Recreational Catch Down Slightly, Remains Second Highest Catch in Decade | 13 |
| <i>In the Gulf States</i> | 14 |
| Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center Nears Completion..... | 14 |
| NOAA Partners with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Gulf of Mexico Alliance..... | 15 |
| DEP Receives \$2.57 Million Grant for Florida Coasts..... | 16 |
| Reestablishing Bay Scallop Populations in Pine Island Sound..... | 17 |
| Real-time Beach Conditions Report Now Available..... | 17 |
| DEP Applauds Florida Forever Legislation..... | 18 |
| Governor Crist Addresses International Coral Reef Symposium..... | 18 |
| DEP Celebrates 'Clean Marinas' in Florida for National Marina Day | 20 |
| Atchafalaya Basin Board Adopts New Project Rules..... | 21 |
| Oil and Gas Seminar to be Held in September in New Orleans..... | 22 |
| 'Dead Zone' Again Rivals Record Size | 22 |
| Louisiana Issues Two Action Plan Amendments Seeking Public Comment | 24 |
| Sea Grant Law Center Publishes New Journal | 24 |
| EPA Awards More Than \$21 Million to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources | 25 |
| EPA Awards More Than \$20 Million to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for Whiskey Island Restoration..... | 25 |
| MMS Awards \$1.3 Million Grant to Louisiana for Coastal Restoration | 25 |
| New Saltwater Fishing Regulations Book Now Available..... | 26 |
| Three CMR Members Sworn-in, Officers Selected | 26 |
| Mississippi Seafood Crowned King in Great American Seafood Cook-Off..... | 27 |
| More Eyes Than Ever on Safer, Cleaner Texas Beaches | 28 |
| Mapping Texas Habitats by Land, Sea, and Air..... | 29 |
| New Instrument Monitors Texas Bays for Dangerous Algae Blooms..... | 30 |
| Texas Builders Working to Prevent Storm Water Pollution..... | 30 |
| <i>Energy</i> | 31 |
| MMS Proposes Offshore Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Regulations | 31 |
| MMS Elevates Alternative Energy Office, Expands Authority | 32 |
| MMS Moving Forward With Alternative Energy Leases on the Outer Continental Shelf | 33 |
| Interior Department Initiates New Five Year Oil and Gas Leasing Program for Outer Continental Shelf Seeks Public Comment to Address Changed Energy Situation..... | 35 |

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Other News</i> | 36 |
| New City Park Data Released | 36 |
| EPA Releases Greenhouse Gas Document for Public Comment | 37 |
| EPA Releases Report on Climate Change and Health | 37 |
| DHS Marks 5th Annual National Preparedness Month This September | 38 |
| <i>Grant Opportunities</i> | 39 |
| NOAA Restoration Center Announces Funding Opportunities for 2009 | 39 |
| Water Quality Trading Funding: Proposals Due September 9, 2008 | 39 |
| Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES) – 2008 | 40 |
| <i>Training and Conferences</i> | 40 |
| Gulf of Mexico Alliance Implementation & Integration Workshop | 40 |
| Submerged Aquatic Vegetation/Sea Grasses: Ecology, Regulation and Restoration Basics Workshop | 41 |
| Bays and Bayous Symposium | 41 |
| Gulf Coast Hurricane Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Rebuilding Conference | 41 |

NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

Aerosol Toxins from Red Tides May Cause Long-Term Health Threat

July 9, 2008

NOAA scientists reported in the current issue of the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* that an algal toxin commonly inhaled in sea spray, attacks and damages DNA in the lungs of laboratory rats. The findings document how the body's way of disposing the toxin inadvertently converts it to a molecule that damages DNA. Human inhalation of brevetoxins produced by the red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, is an increasing public health concern.

The scientists, led by John Ramsdell of [NOAA's Center for Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research](#) in Charleston, S.C., determined that brevetoxins react with DNA of lung tissue and attach to the DNA-bases that code genetic information. The linkage of chemicals in the environment to DNA is a first step for many cancer causing agents and can lead to mutations in genes that normally prevent the formation of cancers.



Red tide.

[High resolution](#) (credit: NOAA)

The red tide toxin, brevetoxin, has long been recognized as a cause of both neurotoxic poisoning after both consumption of toxic shellfish as well as a respiratory irritation after inhalation of toxic sea spray. Groundbreaking research, leading to this third potential form of poisoning, identified that metabolism produces chemically reactive forms of the toxin. Recognizing the potential of these metabolites to attack DNA, NOAA scientists analyzed the DNA after the toxin was metabolized in the lung. Scientists have not yet determined if brevetoxin damaged DNA accurately repairs itself or if gene mutations result.

Brevetoxin has been measured in air during red tide events and human exposure levels have been reported; however, the long-term health risk associated with inhalation of brevetoxins remains to be defined. Individuals are continually exposed to environmental chemicals capable of damaging DNA like carcinogens found in tobacco smoke and air pollution. It is possible that exposure to brevetoxins can add to the cumulative amount of chemically altered DNA in the lungs; an indicator of cancer risk.

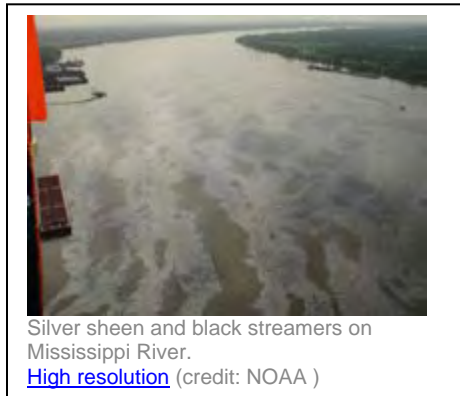
"This represents a significant breakthrough in defining the metabolic transformation of brevetoxins and the potential long-term health effects of red tides. It should change perceptions of risk and management of inhalation exposure to harmful algal blooms," notes Ramsdell.

Red tides in the Gulf of Mexico are common, and often persistent, naturally occurring events that release toxins into sea spray aerosols. These aerosols are a particular problem at beaches, as they can cause respiratory distress to lifeguards and beachgoers. Although these shorter-term effects of the airborne toxin are well characterized, potential longer-term effects remain a concern to health officials and coastal communities.

Scientists, in [NOAA's Oceans and Human Health Initiative](#), are studying long term health consequences of harmful algal blooms, to predict how the condition of the coastal waters affect human health and how to reduce or eliminate health risks.

NOAA Responds to New Orleans Barge Collision Oil Spill

July 24, 2008



[NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration](#) and the [NOAA National Weather Service](#) are on scene in New Orleans aiding in the response to the estimated 419,000 gallons of #6 fuel oil spilled early on the morning of July 23 when a 600-foot chemical tanker and 200-foot fuel barge collided on the Mississippi River just north of the Crescent City Connector Bridge in New Orleans, La. The spill is approximately eight times larger than the 53,000 gallons of fuel oil spilled in November, 2007 from the Cosco Busan in San Francisco Bay.

While the incident occurred north of the Crescent City Bridge, the spill is now showing impact signs more than 80 miles south of New Orleans and the slick will reach the Gulf of Mexico as it

moves south with the river's current.

NOAA is providing trajectory predictions to the Unified Command, which is led by the U.S. Coast Guard and also includes the state, and the shipping company. NOAA, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Louisiana State Department of Environmental Quality are also supporting the response as co-trustees for marine and coastal waters.

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration provided its first spill trajectory predictions to the Unified Command within two and a half hours of the spill and continues to provide overall scientific on-scene support. The NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator for the Gulf of Mexico region is on scene to support the response from the Incident Command Center and is being assisted by five members of the NOAA Scientific Support Team. Additional staff are en-route.

NOAA's National Weather Service Incident Meteorologists are providing on-site weather support including wind forecasts which are being used in the spill trajectory models. Weather information will be updated continuously throughout the coming days and integrated into both trajectory predictions and planning of response operations.

Preliminary chemical analysis of the oil shows it to be near the density of fresh water, but light enough to float initially on the surface. As the oil picks up river sediment it may become heavy enough to be drawn into drinking water intake pipes in New Orleans and downriver communities.

More than 85 miles of the lower Mississippi River remains closed to marine traffic and will be closed for at least several days. Over 70 ships and barge tows are waiting to transit the closed area and that number is likely to grow. Heavy shoreline impacts are reported by NOAA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff despite the deployment of more than 11,000 feet of oil booms to contain the original spill. River levels are continuing to slowly drop from earlier flood water highs, increasing the potential for stranding oil.

NOAA personnel are helping to organize preliminary shoreline assessment activities in anticipation that over 100 miles of river shoreline may need to be surveyed and prioritized for clean-up. This information will also be useful for Natural Resource Damage Assessment- the process by which the federal and state resource agencies will identify, document and quantify injuries to natural resources and services. From

that they will determine appropriate restoration activities to compensate the public for any loss of natural resources resulting from the spill.

Other NOAA assets that may be called on in response to the spill include [NOAA Fisheries Protected Resources Division](#), which is responsible for conservation and management of native and migratory marine mammals and endangered species, and the [NOAA Marine Debris Program](#), which seeks to mitigate marine pollution impacts.

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration protects the public's natural resources, responds to hazardous material releases, and restores injured and contaminated marine and coastal environments. The [NOAA Emergency Response Division](#) consists of an interdisciplinary scientific team that responds to oil and chemical spills in U.S. waters and helps the On-Scene Coordinator make timely operational decisions. NOAA's Scientific Support Coordinators, located around the country, lead the team at spills, drawing on the team's spill trajectory estimates, chemical hazards analyses, and assessments of the sensitivity of biological and human-use resources.



Oil in vegetated river bank.

[High resolution](#) (credit: NOAA)

Hurricane Dolly Offers Silver Lining to Some Drought Stricken Texas Counties

July 25, 2008

The remnants of Hurricane Dolly have provided a mixed bag of damaging floods and welcome drought relief for residents of south Texas. The state's Lower Rio Grande Valley received the storm system's highest concentrations with isolated areas receiving as much as a foot of rainfall. Estimated rainfall between five and 12 inches in Cameron County caused widespread flooding of poor drainage areas from Brownsville to Port Isabel and South Padre Island. Numerous roads were covered in water and some locations were impassible.

However, that was not the region in need of relief. Recent heavy rains had already taken the southernmost counties of Cameron, Willacy and Hidalgo from abnormally dry and moderate to non-drought conditions. An influx of tropical moisture during the first week of July ended the drought in the lower Rio Grande Valley.

Much of south Texas stood to benefit when Dolly moved inland. The most recent U.S. Drought Monitor indicated portions of south Texas within an area from Corpus Christi to Galveston to Austin/San Antonio and west to Laredo were in extreme drought — with a core area of exceptional drought along Interstate 10 from the San Antonio area to just west of Houston.

Core rainfall amounts of at least two to five inches associated with Hurricane Dolly fell across portions of Texas south of a line from Laredo to Corpus Christi, essentially ending drought conditions in this area. As an example, Corpus Christi received only 7.83 inches of precipitation during the first six months of the year — but added another 5.47 inches during two days of Dolly.

Dolly's outer rain bands also brought needed precipitation to parts of south Texas — east of Interstate 35 and south of Interstate 10. Portions of this area received amounts of one-half to five inches, improving conditions to the remainder of drought stricken south Texas.

Rainfall amounts to the north, including the San Antonio and Austin area, were far too light to make much of a dent in the drought, year-to-date totals in San Antonio are still around a foot below normal. Austin has measured less than one-half inch so far this month.

Some rainfall amounts over the two days within the area of extreme to exceptional drought include:

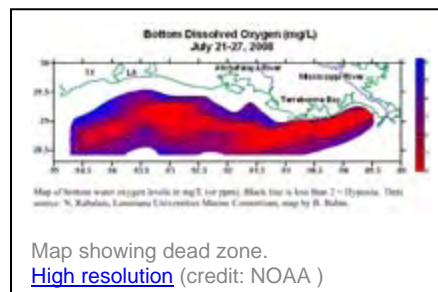
| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Kingsville | 5.48" |
| Rockport | 4.68" |
| Freeport | 2.81" |
| Angleton | 2.55" |
| Palacios | 2.34" |
| Alice | 2.21" |
| Rockport | 2.08" |
| Beeville | 2.08" |
| Sugarland | 2.03" |
| Houston Hobby Airport | 2.02" |
| Wharton | 1.53" |
| San Antonio | 1.03" |

A complete drought assessment for Texas and the nation may be found on the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), which is updated every Thursday. NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.

Survey Cruise Records Second-Largest "Dead Zone" in Gulf of Mexico Since Measurements Began in 1985

July 28, 2008

NOAA-supported scientists from the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium found the size of this year's Gulf of Mexico [dead zone](#) to be 7,988 square miles, slightly smaller than the predicted record size of 8,800 square miles and similar to the area measured in 2007. Scientists think Hurricane Dolly's wind and waves may have added oxygen to the zone to reduce its size.

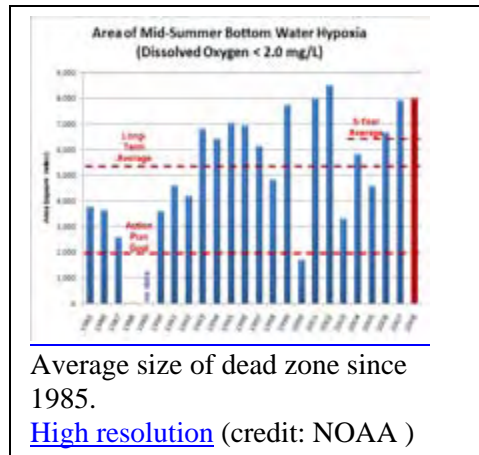


The research cruise, led by [LUMCON's](#) Nancy Rabalais, PhD., found this year's dead zone is the second largest on record since measurements began in 1985 and is larger than the land area of the state of Massachusetts. The average size of the dead zone over the past five years has been 6,600 square miles, much larger than the interagency Gulf of Mexico/Mississippi River Watershed Nutrient Task force goal of reducing the Zone to 2,000 square miles.

“The continuing presence of a large dead zone highlights the need to implement ways to reduce the amount of nutrients coming from the Mississippi River watershed which have contributed the dead zone growth in recent years,” said Rob Magnien, director of [NOAA's Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research](#). “Reducing nutrient pollution to protect coastal resources is one of the greatest ecosystem management challenges that we face nation-wide.”

The dead zone is an area in the Gulf of Mexico where seasonal oxygen levels drop too low to support most life in bottom and near-bottom waters. This low oxygen, or hypoxic, area is primarily caused by high nutrient levels, which stimulate an overgrowth of algae that sinks and decomposes. The decomposition process in turn depletes dissolved oxygen in the water. The dead zone is of particular concern because it threatens valuable commercial and recreational Gulf fisheries.

Earlier this summer, a NOAA-sponsored forecast model developed by Dr. R. Eugene Turner of Louisiana State University, predicted a record-breaking dead zone area of 8,800 square miles. A similar NOAA-sponsored forecast by Donald Scavia, PhD. of the University of Michigan, predicted a dead zone size of approximately 8,300 to 8,700 square miles. Both forecasts were driven primarily by the high nitrate loads and high freshwater flows from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers in spring 2008.



Rabalais and Turner conclude that the difference between predicted and observed areas was due to weather conditions associated with Hurricane Dolly that partially disrupted the dead zone that earlier cruises had already shown to extend well into waters off of Texas.

"Hurricane Dolly's winds and waves caused reaeration of parts of the dead zone, especially along its western and shoreward edges, just before measurements were taken," said Rabalais. "Had the cruise been a few days earlier the measured extent would have been substantially larger."

NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Seeks Applicants for Advisory Council Seats

July 30, 2008

[NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary](#) is seeking to fill four seats and four alternate positions on its advisory council, which ensures public participation in sanctuary management and provides advice to the sanctuary superintendent.

The sanctuary is accepting applications for the following advisory council seats: diving operations, recreational fishing, research and conservation. One primary member and one alternate will be selected for each seat. Alternates attend meetings when members are not available, but are encouraged to attend all other meetings and participate in all council activities.

The Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary Advisory Council consists of 11 members, including eight voting seats representing recreational diving, diving operations, oil and gas production, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, research, education, and conservation, and three non-voting seats representing the Minerals Management Service, U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA Fisheries.

Applicants will be chosen based on their expertise and experience in relation to the seat for which they are applying. Consideration includes knowledge of sanctuary resources, community and professional affiliations, residency in the sanctuary area, and views regarding the protection and management of

marine resources. Applicants who are chosen as members should expect to serve three-year terms. The council usually meets at least quarterly throughout the year. Current seat holders may re-apply.

Applications are due by Sept. 12, 2008. To receive an application kit, or for further information please contact [Jennifer Morgan](#) at 409-621-5151, ext. 103 or by writing to: Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, 4700 Avenue U, Bldg. 216, Galveston, TX 77551. Application packages are also available for download on the sanctuary web site, <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>. Completed applications should be mailed to the above address.

Located in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary includes three separate areas: East Flower Garden, West Flower Garden and Stetson banks. The sanctuary, designated Jan. 17, 1992, harbors the northernmost coral reefs in the continental United States and serves as a regional reservoir of shallow-water reef fishes and invertebrates.

NOAA Sentinels Installed at Shell Beach, Louisiana and Waveland, Mississippi

The Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS) installed NOAA Sentinels at Shell Beach, LA and Bay Waveland, Mississippi. NOAA Sentinels are water-level observing stations which have been strengthened to deliver real-time storm tide data during severe coastal events. Built to withstand category four hurricanes, CO-OPS has declared these hardened stations to be “NOAA’s Sentinels of the Coast” for their strength and ability to watch over our Nation’s waters. NOAA Sentinels measure and disseminate real-time water level and weather observations. These observations help coastal authorities prepare for, mitigate, and respond to storm tides generated by severe coastal storms, helping to develop vulnerability assessments; provide more accurate marine weather and flood forecasts, evacuation planning, and execution; determine when to open and close locks; and facilitate the reopening of ports after storms pass. For more information, contact [Bruce Servary](#).

NCCOS and NERRS Work Together to Characterize Ecosystem Condition and Public Health Status of Research Reserve Sites

During July, a research team from the Center for Human Health Risk (Hollings Marine Laboratory) is sampling in tidal creeks located within the Weeks Bay (Alabama) and Grand Bay (Mississippi) National Estuarine Research Reserves. In 2006, the team sampled within the North Carolina and Sapelo Island (Georgia) Reserves. This work is part of an ongoing investigation by NCCOS into linkages between land use and the environmental quality of sentinel habitats (e.g., tidal creeks), including the resulting effect on human health and well-being. For more information, contact Guy.DiDonato@noaa.gov, or Anne.Blair@noaa.gov.

Cruise Continues Assessment of Marine Protected Areas as Coral Reef Management Strategy

Scientists from the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) will conduct their eighth research cruise at Tortugas North Ecological Reserve to determine the ecological and economic consequences of establishing marine protected areas. This ecosystem management strategy was implemented in 2001 to protect and enhance coral reef and soft bottom communities of the Dry Tortugas,

FL. Results to date show an increase in commercially important fish. An increased large predator population is expected to impact prey populations as well as the benthic habitat structure of the Tortugas. To further test these expectations, and to quantify the efficacy of this ecosystem management tool, scientists aboard the NOAA Ship NANCY FOSTER will conduct diver and remote sonar surveys of benthic habitat and fishes from July 25-August 5. For more information, visit the cruise web site at <http://www.ccfhr.noaa.gov/ecosystems/sanctuaries/tortugas2008/welcome.html>, or contact John.Burke@noaa.gov, or Shay.Viehman@noaa.gov.

NOAA Releases Coral Status Report

[The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the United States and Pacific Freely Associated States: 2008](#) was released by NOAA at the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium in Fort Lauderdale, FL. The report represents an evolving effort to assess the condition of coral reef ecosystems at local, regional, and national scales, and serves as a vehicle for the dissemination of information about data collection activities in the U.S. and Pacific Freely Associated States. It is structured to provide information according to the primary threats, topics, and goals outlined in the National Coral Reef Action Strategy and other guidance documents. The report graded coral ecosystems on a five-tier scale: excellent, good, fair, poor, and unknown; nearly half of U.S. coral reef ecosystems are considered to be in poor or fair condition according to this scale. For more information, contact [Jenny Waddell](#).

Mississippi Joins Phytoplankton Monitoring Network to Fill Data Gaps for Early Warning of Harmful Algal Blooms in the Gulf of Mexico

Additional volunteer network sites along the Mississippi coast of the Gulf of Mexico have been incorporated into the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science Southeast Phytoplankton Monitoring Network (SEPMN). Volunteer monitoring and sampling sites within the Gulf are now in place from southern Texas to the Florida Panhandle, providing an expanded capability to collect phytoplankton distribution and trend data critical for validation of harmful algal bloom (HAB) forecasts. The expansion of SEPMN into Mississippi was facilitated through partnerships with the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Cooperative Institute, NOAA's National Coastal Data Development Center, and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. Data generated by the SEPMN support the NOAA HAB Forecasting System that provides information on the location and extent of, and the potential for, HABs in the Gulf of Mexico, using satellite imagery, buoy data, and field observations. This information is used to give advance warning of blooms to coastal managers, thereby reducing health risks to the public and more effectively targeting sampling efforts. The SEPMN enhances the awareness of harmful algae and directly engages volunteers in coastal stewardship, with 92 groups monitoring over 105 sites along the coast of Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Texas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Hawaii. For more information, contact Steve.Morton@noaa.gov.

Public Health and Optical Data Incorporated into HAB Forecasting System

The Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Forecasting System is incorporating new data sources for the Gulf of Mexico region, including near real-time optical data and reports of dead fish and respiratory irritation collected by beach lifeguards. This additional information will improve the capabilities of the system for detection and prediction and help users understand HAB impacts. These new data sources will improve

the HAB forecasts that are provided to over 40 agencies in the Gulf of Mexico. This project is a collaborative effort of NOAA's Coastal Services Center (CSC), Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS), National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), and CoastWatch. For more information, contact hab@noaa.gov.

NOS and Federal Partners Respond to Hurricane Dolly

The Office of Coast Survey (OCS) was instrumental in responding to Hurricane Dolly's landfall in Brownsville, TX. Navigation Response Team (NRT) personnel and the Navigation Manager for the Western Gulf of Mexico worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Texas Joint Hurricane Team to plan the response. For the first time, NRT personnel were able to utilize a portable "fly-away" survey system, including side scan sonar, and a vessel of opportunity, secured at the response site. The Brownsville Shipping Channel and surrounding area were surveyed for debris that would be hazardous to navigation, including granite blocks from the jetty, sunken vessels, and missing aids to navigation. Results were used to help make the determination to re-open the Port of Brownsville to ship traffic. For more information, contact [Commander Larry Krepp](#).

NOS and Partners Respond to Tropical Storm Edouard

Following the recent passage of Tropical Storm Edouard, the Office of Coast Survey (OCS) was instrumental in providing survey support in Galveston, TX, to search navigation channels for objects hazardous to navigation. Navigation Response Team (NRT) personnel and the Navigation Manager for the Western Gulf of Mexico worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Coast Guard to plan the response and determine where NOAA personnel and assets would be most beneficial and have the most impact. Side scan survey capability was provided by the flyaway system used in the response to Hurricane Dolly. OCS also used its Autonomous Underwater Vehicle for the first time to assist in clearing a channel, with support provided by the Hydrographic Systems and Technology Programs. For more information, contact [Commander Alan Bunn](#).

Other NOAA News

July Issue of Coastal Management News Released

The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) announces the availability of the July issue of the online newsletter, [Coastal Management News](#). The quarterly newsletter was developed to improve communication and lesson sharing among state and territory coastal management programs and to inform them about relevant NOAA projects. This issue features the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve nomination in Wisconsin, the StormSmart Program in Massachusetts, invasive species collaboration in New Hampshire, improved beach management efforts in Texas and California, and a new "Thank You Delaware Bay" outreach campaign in Delaware. The issue also discusses the multi-purpose marine cadastre effort the NOAA Coastal Services Center is leading and highlights Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program acquisitions during the past quarter. For more information, contact [Allison Castellan](#).

Historical Hurricane Tracks Updated for 2008 Hurricane Season

New features added to [Historical Hurricane Tracks](#), a mapping application, can help resource and emergency managers prepare for the 2008 hurricane season. This NOAA Coastal Services Center product enables users to search and display Atlantic Basin and eastern North Pacific Basin tropical cyclone data. The following features have been added: posting of the official 2007 hurricane season tracks from the National Hurricane Center; an interactive search-and-display tool combining population data with data on hurricane strikes for coastal counties from Maine to Texas; National Hurricane Center storm reports for the Atlantic Basin and eastern North Pacific Basin; and a tool allowing users to expedite queries by linking directly to on-line mapping applications with storm tracks of specific geographic areas. Mapping applications such as Historical Hurricane Tracks can help to lessen disaster-related impacts. For more information, contact [Ethan Gibney](#).

New Coastal Ecosystem Effects of Climate Change Web Site Launched

The National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science's Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (CSCOR) has launched a new climate change program web site, Coastal Ecosystem Effects of Climate Change (CEECC). This site will be used to inform coastal managers, Congress, and the general public about the climate change programs being run at CSCOR. The goal of CSCOR's CEECC program is to develop a predictive understanding of coastal ecosystem responses to climate, in order to inform and facilitate management of the impact of climate change. For more information about CSCOR's climate change programs, visit the site at <http://www.cop.noaa.gov/stressors/climatechange/welcome.html>.

Community Focus Groups Foster Public Engagement to Enhance Prevention, Control, and Mitigation of HABs in Florida

A stakeholder forum and community focus groups held in several Florida locations from June 23-27 will help scientists and managers develop communication messages and strategies that foster public trust, understanding, and participation in decisionmaking regarding harmful algal bloom prevention, control, and mitigation. These activities are part of a nine-member interdisciplinary risk communication research project funded by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Data gathered on stakeholder attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs will be used to develop state-wide surveys, the results of which will inform the development of improved communication approaches for stakeholder engagement. For more information, contact Marybeth.Bauer@noaa.gov, or Pat.Tester@noaa.gov.

Digital Coast Data, Tool, and Information Web site Released

The [Digital Coast](#), a new way to deliver coastal management data, tools, and information, is now available. Phase one is currently available and serves data and information from the NOAA Coastal Services Center. Phase two, scheduled for release in early 2009, will include additional partner data and information. Current Digital Coast partners include the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the Coastal States Organization, the National Association of Counties, the National States Geographic

Information Council, and The Nature Conservancy. Digital Coast was envisioned as a data delivery system that could efficiently serve not only data, but also the training, tools, and examples needed to turn data into useful information. In this way, Digital Coast is designed to play a pivotal role in ensuring the wise use and management of coastal resources. For more information, contact [Nicholas Schmidt](#).

New Web Site for Shoreline Data and Information Goes Live

The [NOAA Shoreline Web site](#) is a comprehensive guide to national shoreline data and terms and is the first site to allow vector shoreline data from NOAA and other federal agencies to be conveniently accessed and compared in one place. Supporting context is also included via frequently asked questions, common uses of shoreline data, shoreline terms, and references. Many NOAA branches and offices have a stake in developing shoreline data, but this is the first-ever NOAA Web site to provide access to all NOAA shorelines, plus data from other federal agencies. The site is a culmination of efforts of NOAA and several offices within NOS (including NOAA's Coastal Services Center, National Geodetic Survey, Office of Coast Survey, Special Projects Office, and Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management) and other federal agencies to provide coastal resource managers with accurate and useful shoreline data. For more information, contact [Tara Miller](#).

Updates to NERRS Education Web Site

[Estuaries.gov](#), the educational Web site of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), has a brand new look and a host of new functions to help students and teachers understand the complexities of coastal and estuarine science. The newly designed site was released as a beta version last week for the National Marine Educators Conference. Additions to the site include a searchable video database, animated interpretations of live water quality and weather data from the System-Wide Monitoring Program, and a complete high-school level estuarine science curriculum. The new site is the result of extensive partnerships between the Estuarine Reserves Division and TERC; MarineGrafics; Tellus Applied Sciences; NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office; NOS Communications and Education Division; National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources; NOAA's Office of Education; Reserve Educators; and the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association. For more information, contact [Atziri Ibanez](#).

Recreational Catch Down Slightly, Remains Second Highest Catch in Decade

July 17, 2008

Marine recreational anglers caught more than 468 million fish in 2007, down slightly from last year's historic high of 475 million fish, but still the second highest recreational catch total in the last ten years. The overall number of fish caught and kept also declined slightly, from 214 million to 196 million fish, according to [NOAA's Fisheries Service](#).

The 2007 data demonstrates a widespread turn toward "catch and release" among recreational anglers. While anglers are catching about 27 percent more fish than a decade ago, they are also releasing more fish than they keep. Of the 468 million fish caught by anglers in 2007, 272 million or 58 percent were released alive. The percentage of fish released into the environment has increased steadily from about 51 percent in 1993.

Spotted seatrout was the most popular catch among marine recreational anglers. The species is caught in the Gulf of Mexico and the south Atlantic regions, which have the highest combined concentration of saltwater anglers in the nation. The top catches in other regions were lane snapper (Caribbean), striped bass (North Atlantic), Atlantic croaker (Mid-Atlantic), chub mackerel (Pacific), black rockfish (Pacific Northwest), and bigeye scad (Western Pacific).

“We rely on data from both the recreational and commercial fishing communities to ensure we’re making informed conservation decisions,” said Jim Balsiger, acting NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA’s Fisheries Service. “As we move towards an ecosystem approach to managing fisheries, the need for timely and accurate data on recreational fishing has never been greater.”

Recreational fishing continues to be one of the most popular outdoor sports. Participation rates remain largely unchanged from previous years. Anglers took 86.7 million saltwater trips in 2007, a slight 1.2 percent increase over the previous year, according to the NOAA report.

These statistics are compiled by NOAA’s Fisheries Service from in-person and telephone interviews with recreational fishermen. Currently, the agency is engaged in a joint state-federal initiative to redesign its surveys to provide a more complete picture of saltwater anglers’ catch and effort and improve the conservation of our shared ocean resources.

In the Gulf States

Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center Nears Completion

July 11, 2008

With completion only weeks away, new buildings at the head of Weeks Bay will add valuable educational space to the Weeks Bay Reserve complex and will also carry a new name. In a ceremony at the recent Forever Wild Board meeting, the facility, which replaces structures damaged by Hurricane Ivan, was officially named the Arthur C. (Skipper) Tonsmeire III Weeks Bay Resource Center by proclamation of Alabama Governor Bob Riley.

Once complete, the buildings will support conservation programs largely for education, stewardship and outreach - in particular the Coastal Training Program. Dr. John Borom, avid conservationist and president of the Mobile Bay Audubon Society, cited the tireless efforts of Fairhope’s Tonsmeire in the creation and ongoing support of programs like the Forever Wild Land Trust, Coastal Land Trust, Weeks Bay Foundation, Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge and Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

“There are many other significant and good accomplishments I could have mentioned that have made life better for us all,” Borom said of Tonsmeire. “However, the one thing in all these endeavors is that a key person worked hard behind the scenes to set things in motion. This person understands the Native American proverb, ‘We did not inherit the Earth from our forefathers. We hold it in trust for future generations.’ He has helped forge partnerships with local firms, public agencies and conservation organizations to protect thousands of acres of Gulf Coast wetlands that safeguard wildlife habitat, increase outdoor recreation opportunities and safeguard seafood productivity.”

The new facility includes sister buildings that will complement activities in each, according to L.G. Adams, Manager of Weeks Bay Reserve. The Education Building will provide a classroom that will be used for a variety of activities. These will be directed toward many different audiences that include K-12 to graduate students and researchers, continuing education groups, environmental organizations and enthusiasts, conservation partners, non-profit organizations, and the local community and public at large. Activities will include K-12 local and regional school class visits, formal workshops and conservation class and course work, internet-based learning opportunities, field-based experiential learning activities, summer estuary camps, local and regional conferences, research symposia, and public and community meetings.

“The Coastal Training Program at the Reserve will utilize the site for programs that transfer technical information to coastal managers for the purpose of making best management decisions that will better conserve and protect natural resources in coastal Alabama,” Adams said. “The educational classroom will provide an opportunity to highlight natural resources of the Weeks Bay estuary and raise public awareness of conservation in coastal Alabama.”

The Multi-Purpose Building will be used to support activities in the Education Building, as well as provide space for research, stewardship and outreach activities at Weeks Bay Reserve. Visit <http://www.outdooralabama.com/public-lands/stateLands/WeeksBay/> for more information on the facilities and programs at Weeks Bay Reserve.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama’s natural resources through five divisions: Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Parks, State Lands, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. To learn more about ADCNR visit www.outdooralabama.com.

NOAA Partners with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Gulf of Mexico Alliance

By Lee Yokel

Dr. John Dindo and Lee Yokel have secured a NOAA Coastal Services Center grant for \$790,000 to address the Implementation of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) Environmental Education Priorities and Actions. The funding application was written on behalf of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources who requested DISL prepare the application for the State of Alabama. Six GOMA grants were issued to the five U.S. Gulf states, each addressing a specific action of the Alliance.

What is so exciting about this NOAA CSC opportunity is that funding will specifically address environmental education. As long as appropriations hold, the grant is expected to repeat for up to three years. Working with ADCNR and the Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, DISL hopes to issue contracts and competitive grants around the Gulf to recipients for concrete educational programs. The grant also contains a \$120,000 project that will be jointly administered through the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Weeks Bay Foundation. The program will address specific coastal training program activities in all five U.S. Gulf states.

With the release of the US Commission on Ocean Policy and the President's U.S. Ocean Plan, The Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) was initiated in 2004 by then Florida Governor Jeb Bush. GOMA is a regional collaborative among federal, state, and other interests to address shared issues of coastal ecosystems. The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as well as DISL have played a key role in the development of environmental education actions that are being addressed Gulf wide. In March of

2006, all five Gulf of Mexico Governors signed the Governors' Action Plan for a Healthy and Resilient Coast. The Action Plan identified five major issues that need to be addressed. These included:

- Water Quality for Healthy Beaches and Shellfish Beds
- Wetland and Coastal Conservation and Restoration
- Identification and Characterization of Gulf Habitats
- Reducing Nutrient Inputs to Coastal Ecosystems
- Environmental Education

Each U.S. Gulf state took leadership of an issue, Alabama championing environmental education. Issues within the thematic areas contain goals, major actions, and identified partners with commitments to implement various sections of the plan. A sixth issue, Coastal Community Resiliency, was added in 2007. Working through a Steering Committee and volunteers around the Gulf, many of the initial 36-month actions are complete or well under way to completion. A second, five-year plan is currently in development.

In July 2006, Lee Yokel began working at DISL as the only GOMA related employee as the Environmental Education Coordinator funded by a NOAA Office of Education grant written by Drs, John Dindo and Sharon Walker. Lee works under Dr. John Dindo, who is the designated GOMA state lead for education in Alabama. Together, they have secured over one million dollars toward Alliance education initiatives.

DEP Receives \$2.57 Million Grant for Florida Coasts

-Federal award will help restore coastal resources and assist coastal communities-

TALLAHASSEE - The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been awarded a \$2.57 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to continue and increase protection for Florida's coastal resources and to further the state's work in revitalizing coastal communities.

"The help of federal grant funding means that Florida can continue our commitment to restore marine habitat and safeguard vital coastal areas," said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. "By working with other agencies as well as local governments and nonprofit organizations, we can protect the sandy beaches and coastal communities that attract millions of visitors every year and provide an outstanding quality of life for residents."

The grant will be used for a variety of state priorities including investigating Florida's offshore springs and archaeological sites; continue the agency's understanding and research with non-point source pollution such as fertilizers, oil and grease runoff from roadways, or faulty septic systems; developing plans for post-disaster redevelopment and harmful algal bloom response; restoring seagrasses; developing a statewide program for reporting seagrass status and trends; and developing a beach sediment atlas. In addition, five coastal communities and non-profit groups will receive funds to improve public access to public lands, restore coastal habitats, revitalize waterfront areas, promote shoreline stewardship and develop a maritime museum. These five subgrants, totaling almost \$200,000 and distributed by DEP to the local communities, support the larger mission of the federal grant and contribute to the state's environmental priorities.

DEP's Florida Coastal Management Program administers the annual cooperative grant from NOAA. The Program includes a network of agencies that protect and enhance the state's natural, cultural and economic coastal resources and helps sustain viable waterfront communities. The program coordinates

local, state and federal agency activities using existing laws to ensure that Florida's coast remains a valuable resource for future generations. The Program also provides beach safety and access materials to coastal communities, such as the state's beach safety flag system and rip current awareness signs. For more information on the Florida Coastal Management Program, including information on applying for local grant funding, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/programs/cmp.htm>.

Reestablishing Bay Scallop Populations in Pine Island Sound

Mote Marine Laboratory and CHNEP

CHNEP Harbor Happenings Summer 2008, 12(2):2008

The success of two recent bay scallop restoration projects in Pine Island Sound will be expanded by this project. A two order magnitude increase in bay scallop abundance at the restoration site compared to background scallop density in the surrounding estuary was obtained in the first project. The following summer, the entire north Pine Island Sound basin showed a 100-time increase in bay scallop abundance. Based on this discovery, in 2005, restoration efforts were expanded to include south Pine Island Sound. Recruitment success with and without the use of containment booms was compared during two larval release events. In this project, adult bay scallops will be collected from Pine Island Sound and transferred to Bay Shellfish Company, a commercial shellfish aquaculture facility. They will be conditioned and induced to spawn.

Larvae will be reared until metamorphosis, when they will be transferred to the Mote Marine Laboratory Demere Key facility and prepared for release. The larvae will be released at one location within North Pine Island Sound near the site of the earlier restoration. Larval settlement and recruitment will be immediately assessed. Juvenile abundance will be evaluated during the winter, and adult abundance will be assessed the next summer. The density of scallops at each restoration site will be compared to scallop densities before the restoration was initiated. The CHNEP, through the South Florida Water Management District, is providing \$19,926 toward this \$52,945 project.

Real-time Beach Conditions Report Now Available

Residents and visitors now have a tool that provides frequent updates on conditions at beaches. Mote Marine Laboratory's Beach Conditions Report provides online, real-time information about the presence of red tide and other conditions at 23 locations along the west coast daily. Reports are updated at 10 A.M. and 3 P.M.

The system provides updates on the presence of red tide and whether it is affecting beachgoers. The reports are collected by lifeguards, parks personnel and other beach monitors, and then input on wireless handheld computers and automatically updated on the Web. The Beach Conditions Report is available to the public online at www.mote.org/beaches. A telephone update is also available for those without Internet access at 941-BEACHES.

All of the information in the reports is date and time stamped so the public knows how recently a report was made. The information gathered is also shared with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which formulates a harmful algal bloom forecast. The Beach Conditions Report should help enhance NOAA's forecast ability. Additional information, including the creators and funders of this project, is posted on the website at www.CHNEP.org.

DEP Applauds Florida Forever Legislation

--New law extends successful land acquisition program for another decade--

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Michael W. Sole today applauded Senate Bill 542, legislation signed into law yesterday by Governor Crist relating to land acquisition and management.

“I applaud Governor Crist and the Florida Legislature for their leadership and commitment to Florida’s environment, recognizing the importance of our landmark land preservation program,” said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. “Acquiring environmentally-sensitive lands is conserving diverse natural habitats, protecting lands for recreation and preserving natural and historical resources.”

Senate Bill 542, sponsored by Representative Stan Mayfield and Senator Burt Saunders, extends the state’s premier land acquisition program, Florida Forever, for another decade. The law builds upon the successful conservation program by improving land management activities, increasing monitoring and reporting requirements and encouraging and accelerating public recreational access on state-owned lands.

“Thanks to the support of stakeholders, particularly the Florida Forever Coalition, the nation’s largest land acquisition program will continue the important work of protecting the best of Florida’s natural resource lands and recreational opportunities for future generations,” said DEP Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation Bob Ballard. “Through Florida Forever, we are preserving vital habitat for threatened and endangered species and providing unmatched opportunities for education and recreation in our state’s natural environment.”

Originally established in 1999, the 10-year, \$3 billion Florida Forever program is the largest land-buying initiative in the nation, conserving environmentally sensitive land, restoring water resources and preserving important cultural and historical sites. More than two million acres throughout the state have been placed in public ownership under Florida Forever and its predecessor program, Preservation 2000 (P2000). For more information on the Florida Forever program, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/acquisition/FloridaForever/>.

Governor Crist Addresses International Coral Reef Symposium

-Worldwide gathering of leaders discuss coral reef protection strategies, research priorities-

FT. LAUDERDALE – Governor Charlie Crist today joined Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Michael W. Sole and more than 2,500 scientists and federal, state and local officials to speak at the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium. Hosted by the United States and Florida, the conference is being held on the mainland United States for the first time in more than 30 years.

Governor Crist held a bill signing ceremony for Senate Bill 1302, which will eliminate the use of ocean outfalls for wastewater disposal in southeast Florida. The Governor discussed the importance of coral reef habitats for our environment and our economy as well as the state’s actions to protect these threatened habitats.

“Coral reefs are extraordinary living ecosystems that draw visitors, support our economy and protect our beaches and homes from erosion and storm surge,” said Governor Crist. “Florida will continue to take

steps, such as new legislation reducing nutrients and other pollutants in the ocean, which will protect these sensitive ecosystems for residents and visitors for generations to come.”

Furthering protection for Florida’s marine environment, the new legislation, sponsored by Senator Burt Saunders and Representative Stan Mayfield, requires each wastewater facility to develop a detailed plan by 2013 to decrease by 2018 nutrients discharged through the outfalls and by 2025, to eliminate the use of outfalls as the primary disposal method for wastewater. The law prohibits the construction of new ocean outfall pipes or the expansion of the existing outfalls on the southeast Florida coast. Additionally, 60 percent of the water previously discharged from these outfalls will be required to be beneficially reused.

About the International Coral Reef Symposium

Taking place during the International Year of the Reef, the International Coral Reef Symposium convenes every four years and is the largest and most important scientific conference relating to coral reefs worldwide. Sponsored in part by the symposium as well as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the International Coral Reef Initiative, the International Year of the Reef is a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their sustainability.

“With this year recognized as the International Year of the Reef, it is a good opportunity to raise awareness, educate and motivate people about the importance and vulnerability of coral reefs,” said DEP Secretary Sole. “Florida is committed to preserving the biodiversity, health, heritage and social and economic value of coral reef ecosystems.”

Reefs for the Future is the theme of this symposium, highlighting the importance of the world’s coral reefs as well as the need for heightened awareness and action to protect them. Degradation and destruction of coral reefs from pollution, overfishing, coastal development and climate change threatens these ecosystems on a global scale. Scientists, policymakers, conservationists, and managers are developing knowledge and implementing science-based strategies to improve and increase coral reef protection. The symposium will focus on current science addressing concepts such as reef structure and function, ecological processes, ecosystem-based management, and human interactions. Field trips and workshops will provide hands-on experience and participation with leaders in the marine science field.

About Florida’s Coral Reefs

An extensive, beautiful coral reef ecosystem stretches more than 100 miles along the southeast Florida coast, from Miami-Dade to Martin County. These reefs are part of the third longest reef system in the world and are one of the greatest natural resources in Florida and the United States. Southeast Florida’s reefs lie just a few hundred yards off the beaches of one of the most highly urbanized coastal communities. Roughly one third of Florida’s 18 million residents live within this region, which attracts more than 25 million visitors a year.

Fishing, diving and boating on Florida’s coral reefs provide a tremendous source of income for Florida and its coastal communities. A study of natural and artificial reefs in Florida showed that reef-related expenditures generate \$6.3 billion in sales and income and sustain more than 71,000 jobs annually.

Leading up to the International Coral Reef Symposium this summer, DEP’s Coral Reef Conservation Program has encouraged public awareness of coral reefs and their importance to Florida’s coastal environment, the commercial and recreational fishing industry and the economy. The Coral Reef Conservation Program leads the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative, a coalition of more than 70 state, local and federal partners working to protect Florida’s coral reefs. The initiative is a local action strategy

implementing priority actions needed to reduce threats to coral reef resources, including research, monitoring, education and best management practices.

The State of Florida, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, also manages the world-renowned coral reefs in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. This partnership has helped monitor and protect this fragile coral ecosystem for 30 years.

For more information, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/.

DEP Celebrates 'Clean Marinas' in Florida for National Marina Day

-Events this weekend at 'Clean Marina' facilities statewide promote environmental stewardship-

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Governor Charlie Crist recently signed a proclamation honoring August 9 as National Marina Day. To celebrate the day, designated Clean Marinas with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are hosting special events across the state to highlight the importance of protecting Florida's waterways at their environmentally-friendly marine facilities.

“With more than 2,000 facilities and a \$14 billion marine industry, Florida's marinas are an integral part of protecting Florida's environment,” said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. “By celebrating National Marina Day and adopting eco-friendly practices year-round, Clean Marinas help to raise awareness of the importance of preserving Florida's waterways.”

Since 2001, the second Saturday in August has been recognized as National Marina Day by the National Marine Manufacturers Association and the Association of Marine Industries. With the primary mission being public education, National Marina Day emphasizes the importance of the marine industry as a family-friendly gateway to our rivers, lakes and oceans, and highlights the importance of being a steward of the environment. Recognizing the importance of waterways, designated Clean Marinas in St. Petersburg, Miami, Punta Gorda, Fort Myers, Hollywood and Amelia Island are providing clean boating outreach and information along with events and activities.

“National Marina Day is an excellent time to recognize the hard work of Florida's Clean Marinas in protecting the environment,” said Clean Boating Partnership Chair John Naybor of Pensacola. “Members of DEP's Clean Marina Program stand out as environmental leaders.”

In conjunction with DEP, the Clean Boating Partnership developed Florida's Clean Marina, Clean Boatyard, Clean Marine Retailer and Clean Boater Programs in 1996 to protect Florida's waterways. The Florida Clean Marina Program designated its first member in 2000 and now has 170 Clean Marinas, 29 Clean Boatyards and four Clean Marine Retailers.

The Clean Boating Partnership is a consortium of industry leaders who contribute time and input to the Clean Marina, Clean Boatyard, Clean Marine Retailer and Clean Boater programs, which DEP's Office of Sustainable Initiatives administers, to protect Florida's waterways. The partnership includes DEP, Marine Industries Association of Florida, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, University of Florida Sea Grant Program, United States Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary. Through sponsored workshops, technical assistance, conferences and dedication ceremonies, the partnership educates the boating community about pollution prevention and protecting Florida's waterways.

DEP's Office of Sustainable Initiatives is comprised of three voluntary, non-regulatory programs that assist Florida industry and citizens in protecting the environment. The Clean Marina Program, the Florida Green Lodging Program and the Florida Pollution Prevention Program offer a variety of services

including on-site assessments, consultations, speakers and workshops, all at no cost to citizens or organizations. The goal of the Sustainable Initiatives programs is to meet the needs of the present population without compromising resources for future generations. To learn more about DEP's Sustainable Initiatives, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/green/.

For more information on National Marina Day events, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina/marina_day.htm. For more information on DEP's Clean Marina Program, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina/default.htm. To view the Governor's proclamation, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina/files/marinadayproclamation_2008.pdf.

Atchafalaya Basin Board Adopts New Project Rules

The Atchafalaya Basin Program's Research and Promotion Board this week adopted rules on how it will choose projects to fund under law changes passed in the recent state legislative session. Those projects could draw on up to \$100 million in new funding over the next decade if voters this fall approve Constitutional Amendment 4, which would in part re-direct 50 percent of the funds from oil and gas severance tax dollars from state-owned lands in the basin.

The Atchafalaya Basin is the nation's largest river swamp and represents the largest contiguous bottomland hardwood forest in the U.S. The Atchafalaya Basin Floodway system encompasses about 838,000 acres, with approximately 400,000 of that being publicly owned.

Whether the amendment passes or fails, the legislative changes to how the board manages basin projects will stand. If that amendment passes, the language mandates that 85 percent of the funding intended for basin programs would be allocated to water management and access projects in the basin, with the rest going to recreation projects in the area.

"Today marks the beginning of a new era in the implementation of the master plan for the Atchafalaya Basin," said Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Secretary Scott Angelle. He said the new rules on approving and funding projects in the basin have been crafted to put management of water and other basin resources first.

"Our goal is to build a program that is viewed as a top resources management program in the nation," Angelle said. "The legislation adopted this past session, introduced at our request and with the assistance of state Rep. Karen St. Germain and state Sen. Rob Marionneau and numerous co-authors, makes a seismic shift in the structure and processes of the basin program."

Angelle noted that the legislation was passed with the strong support of Gov. Bobby Jindal.

"The new law brings transparency to the basin program and focuses on the resources of the basin. I will also actively support the constitutional amendment that helps fund the future work in the basin," Jindal said.

Representatives of several groups with an interest in the basin area backed the new legislation when it went before the state Legislature, including Randy Lanctot with the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Darrell Hunt and Harold Schoeffler with the Sierra Club, St. Martin Parish President Guy Cormier, Wil Courtney with the Louisiana Bass Federation, Mike Bienvenu with LCPA-West and Karen Gautreaux with the Nature Conservancy.

The new law has created a Technical Advisory Group to be chaired by a representative of the state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and made up of representatives from the departments of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Fisheries, Environmental Quality, Agriculture and Forestry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geologic Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and LSU School of Renewable Resources. The advisory group will review all water management project proposals. The members of the group will also hold public meetings and public hearings to get comments and proposed projects for review, and will forward recommendations on to the Research and Promotion Board.

Water management project proposals must meet basic criteria of being within the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, having the potential to directly address water quality and/or sedimentation problems in the floodway, addressing conservation, protection and/or restoration of the basin ecosystem, and enhancing the natural resources of the basin, including fisheries, wildlife and/or forest resources. The board will then decide which projects to include in its annual plan, which will be presented to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to determine whether it is consistent with the coastal master plan.

Angelle said that connection is important, because the overload of sediment that is a problem in the basin could be part of the solution to problems on the coast. After the CPRA reviews the annual plan, it must then be approved by the state Legislature. The first set of public meetings to hear project ideas is set for Sept. 9 through Sept. 11. The Sept. 9 meeting will be held in the city of Plaquemine, the Sept. 10 meeting will be held in Henderson and the Sept. 11 meeting will be held in Morgan City.

Oil and Gas Seminar to be Held in September in New Orleans

The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will hold an "Oil and Gas in Louisiana: From SONRIS to Sunset" seminar in New Orleans on September 22-23. This is a reprise of a comprehensive series of oil and gas workshops that were presented last year that outlined Louisiana policies and procedures aimed at educating and informing energy industry professionals. SONRIS is the department's online database and records system.

Some of the topics covered will be how to obtain drilling, coastal use and injection well permits; what industry should know about regulatory and legislative updates; procedures dealing with mineral leasing; and royalty and severance tax reporting and payments. The seminar will be held at the Marriott Hotel in New Orleans located at 555 Canal St. in the French Quarter.

The link for online registration is www.regonline.com/oilandgas2008. Or for additional information about the seminar, contact DNR Office of Mineral Resources, Gay Lynn Brown at 225-342-9148 or gaylynn.brown@la.gov. Related: [Seminar Agenda](#) 

'Dead Zone' Again Rivals Record Size

July 28, 2008, Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)

The size of the low oxygen "Dead Zone" off the Louisiana/Texas coast again rivals the largest ever, reported Nancy Rabalais and a team of scientists from aboard the research vessel. The "Dead Zone" is an area in the Gulf of Mexico where seasonal oxygen levels drop too low to support most life in bottom and near-bottom waters. It is caused when phytoplankton growth, stimulated by nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, settles and decays

in the bottom waters. The decomposition of these algae consumes oxygen faster than it can be replenished from the surface, leading to decreased levels of dissolved oxygen.

Hypoxia began to develop early in 2008 with above average Mississippi River discharge in February and near maximum flooding in April. The recent June floods in the mid West just aggravated an already worsening situation offshore. "Low oxygen conditions were present off Terrebonne and Barataria Bays since March, and continued to increase through the spring and summer," reported Nancy Rabalais of Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium.

This year's area of low oxygen was predicted by Dr. R. Eugene Turner of Louisiana State University to be the largest to date (8,800 square miles) based on the flux of nitrate-nitrogen from the Mississippi River in the May preceding the July mapping cruise. Another forecast by Dr. Donald Scavia of the University of Michigan was to fall between 8,300 and 8,700 square miles. Both forecasts are driven by the high nitrate loads from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers. The nitrogen loading to the Gulf of Mexico in May of this year was 37% higher than 2007 and the highest since measurements began in 1970. "The intensive farming of more land, including crops used for biofuels, has definitely contributed to this high nitrogen loading rate," reported Turner.

Tropical storms and hurricanes have the potential to disrupt hypoxia and aerate the bottom waters, which is exactly what Hurricane Dolly did as it crossed the Gulf of Mexico from Yucatan to Brownsville, Texas on July 21-23. "Hurricane Dolly's winds and waves caused reaeration of parts of the Dead Zone, especially along its western and shoreward edges," said Dr. Rabalais. "If it were not for Hurricane Dolly, the size of the Dead Zone would have been substantially larger." Still, "an amazingly large area of hypoxia persisted" despite the mixing from the hurricane. A similar large area was mapped during groundfish surveys by the National Marine Fisheries Service during June 11 – July 16, 2008.

The 12-member research team of scientists and graduate students from the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON), Louisiana State University (LSU) and the University of Iowa mapped the ever-present 'Dead Zone' along with conducting scientific experiments and collecting data for several research and modeling programs. Funding for the research program is provided by the NOAA Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research, Coastal Ocean Program, Grant No. NA06NOS4780197 to Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium and Louisiana State University.

Pelican, as they sailed back to port in Cocodrie, Louisiana on Monday evening. The area of low oxygen expands over 20,720 square kilometers or 8,000 square miles of Gulf of Mexico seabed, similar to last year's size, but slightly smaller than the prediction of a record size of 8,800 square miles. The 2008 size ranks 2nd in size, along with that of 2001, for the area of hypoxia since mapping began in 1985.

Contacts:

Nancy N. Rabalais, nrabalais@lumcon.edu
R. Eugene Turner, eeturne@lsu.edu

Links:

- General Information: <http://www.gulfhypoxia.net>
- Forecast: <http://www.gulfhypoxia.net/news/documents/HypoxiaForecast13July2008.pdf> and http://www.sitemaker.umich.edu/scavia/files/2008_gulf_of_mexico_hypoxic_forecast.pdf
- NOAA/NCCOS/CSCOR Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Research: http://www.cop.noaa.gov/stressors/extremeevents/hab/features/hypoxiafs_report1206.html
- NOAA National Marine Fisheries Groundfish Surveys Hypoxia Watch: <http://ecowatch.ncddc.noaa.gov/hypoxia>.

Louisiana Issues Two Action Plan Amendments Seeking Public Comment

Baton Rouge, LA (July 25, 2008) - Today the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Office of Community Development's Disaster Recovery Unit, published two action plans for public comment. The first proposed amendment will allocate \$9.75 million to commercial projects unfunded in the first phase of the state's Fisheries Infrastructure Program.

This past spring the state committed \$19 million to 15 infrastructure improvement projects to repair the heavily damaged fisheries industry. After the second round, a total of \$28.5 million will have been allocated for fisheries infrastructure projects across south Louisiana. Many of these projects address a continuing urgent need for the commercial fishing industry.

A separate action plan published this week will provide local governments with the required matching dollars for emergency infrastructure projects. In addition to the match for eligible FEMA Public Assistance grants, the state will also use these funds to provide the non-federal match for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds.

Upon approval of this action plan the state will also pay for repairs that are ineligible under the FEMA Public Assistance program, including but not limited to uninsured and underinsured damages, insurance deductibles and improvements for code compliance, if they are determined to be critical to continued delivery and or protection of vital public services by state and local government entities in accordance with criteria established by the state. These criteria shall take into account the areas where the hurricane damages were most severe.

Following approval by the LRA's board and the Louisiana Legislature, action plans must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for final approval. Citizens, community leaders and elected officials can access the plans and submit comments online by visiting <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/dractionplans.htm> and opening Proposed Action Plan Amendment No. 25 or No. 26, or a copy can be requested by calling (225) 342-1700.

Sea Grant Law Center Publishes New Journal

The inaugural issue of the National Sea Grant Law Center's "Sea Grant Law and Policy Journal" is available online. The journal provides a forum for the timely discussion and exploration of legal topics of relevance to the Sea Grant network of extension agents, coastal managers and users, scientists and local decision-makers. The current issue features seven articles presented at the Law Center's March 2008 Symposium on Coastal Resiliency. It is available at <http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/SGLC/National/SGLPJ/SGLPJ.htm>.

The journal features concise articles on a range of subjects including fisheries, coastal development, coastal access and pollution. Unlike traditional law reviews, the 30- to 35-page journal features more applied research and case studies. Due to their timeliness and brevity, Sea Grant Law and Policy Journal articles are of interest to anyone involved in coastal management, lawyer and non-lawyer alike.

The journal is published online on a biannual basis and access is free. Each spring, the National Sea Grant Law Center will sponsor a symposium and invite papers from academics and practitioners for publication

in June. The fall issue, published in December, will feature law student articles submitted in response to a yearly request for papers. The journal's editorial board and outside experts, as needed, will review all articles prior to publication. The theme of the journal's 2009 symposium will be Water Quantity: Emerging Problems and Innovative Solutions. The call for abstracts will be released in August 2008. Stephanie Showalter, director of the National Sea Grant Law Center and an adjunct faculty member of the University of Mississippi School of Law, serves as the journal's editor.

EPA Awards More Than \$21 Million to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

Release date: 07/17/2008

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

(Dallas, Texas – July 17, 2008) The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$21,375,446 to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) to implement a project to restore and protect Louisiana's coastal wetlands. The goal of the Mississippi River Sediment Delivery System project is to rebuild 493 acres of emergent marsh and help demonstrate the feasibility of using Mississippi River sediment as a resource in the restoration of marsh communities and transporting the sediment by pipeline. Under the guidelines of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act and in partnership with EPA Region 6, LDNR will implement projects that create, protect, restore and enhance wetlands in coastal Louisiana. Additional information on EPA grants: <http://www.epa.gov/region6/gandf/index.htm>.

EPA Awards More Than \$20 Million to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for Whiskey Island Restoration

Release date: 07/18/2008

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

(Dallas, Texas – July 18, 2008) The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$20,678,580 to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) to restore and protect the marshes at Whiskey Island in Terrebonne Parish. The Whiskey Island Back Barrier Marsh Creation, TE-50 project will serve several functions including the creation of a back barrier platform on which the island can migrate approximately 300 acres of coastal habitat, a minimum of three one-acre tidal ponds, 5,800 feet of tidal creeks, approximately 13,000 feet of dune, and vegetation of the completed project with smooth cordgrass. Under the guidelines of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act and in partnership with EPA Region 6, LDNR will implement projects that create, protect, restore and enhance wetlands in coastal Louisiana.

MMS Awards \$1.3 Million Grant to Louisiana for Coastal Restoration

Louisiana Receives Grant for Orleans Land Bridge Shoreline Protection and Marsh Creation Project
NEW ORLEANS — The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has awarded a \$1.3 million grant to the State of Louisiana through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) for the Orleans Land Bridge Shoreline Protection and Marsh Creation project. The project will build approximately 50,000 feet of rock breakwater and restore approximately 220 acres of marsh with dredged material in the Golden Triangle area bounded by the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, the Intracoastal Waterway and the western shore of Lake Borgne in Orleans Parish. The project was included in Louisiana's final CIAP plan approved by

MMS in November, 2007. This grant is for Phase I of the project, which includes pre-construction engineering and design and identification of landrights.

“It is very encouraging to see the state’s important coastal restoration work continue with support from CIAP grants awarded by MMS,” said MMS Director, Randall Luthi. “We are very much looking forward to working with Louisiana to award the remaining money allocated for the state’s other projects.” This critical land bridge forms a barrier between Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne, which are hydrologically connected to the Gulf of Mexico. Along Lake Borgne between Bayou Bienvenue and Alligator Point, there has been continued loss of shoreline and inland ponds have widened.

The CIAP was created by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Through the program, MMS annually, from 2007 – 2010, will disburse \$250 million in grants to six eligible Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas producing states – Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, California, Mississippi and Texas. The funding to Louisiana includes \$127.5 million for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008, totaling \$255 million. Nineteen Coastal Political Subdivisions (parishes) will share in the funding for projects outlined in the state’s approved plan. Contact: [Eileen Angelico](#) or [Bill Lee](#).

New Saltwater Fishing Regulations Book Now Available

BILOXI, Miss. – The 2008-2009 edition of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources’ (DMR) free booklet “Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing Rules and Regulations” is now available at the DMR office, located at 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi. The guide incorporates new and revised saltwater fishing regulations for the state of Mississippi.

The 34-page fishing regulations book includes information on commercial and recreational saltwater fishing, license requirements, size and possession limits, and descriptions of fish, including a section on common sharks in Mississippi waters. The book also covers topics such as catch and release, protected species, marine litter and invasive species. The guide includes the original artwork of Joe Jewell, a member of the DMR’s Office of Marine Fisheries staff. Jewell has provided illustrations for the fishing regulations book since 1999.

The 2008-2009 edition of “Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing Rules and Regulations” is also available on the DMR Web site as an Adobe PDF file and can be downloaded free at dmr.ms.gov.

Three CMR Members Sworn-in, Officers Selected

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources (CMR) swore in three commissioners and elected officers for the new term at its July 15 meeting held at the Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi. Steve Bosarge of Pascagoula was appointed by Gov. Haley Barbour to represent commercial fishermen on the commission and was sworn in at the meeting, along with reappointed members Richard Gollott of Harrison County, representing commercial seafood processors and Shelby Drummond of Jackson County, representing recreational fishermen. Their terms will run July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2012. Also on the commission are Jimmy Taylor of Harrison County, representing charter boat operators and Dr. Vernon Asper of Hancock County, representing nonprofit environmental organizations. Also at the meeting, CMR members re-elected Dr. Vernon Asper as chairman and Richard Gollott as vice chairman.

Newly appointed commissioner Steve Bosarge is a third-generation commercial fisherman who was born and raised on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. He has been married to his wife, Sandra, for 29 years, and they have three daughters, Leann, Stephanie and Jessica. Bosarge is the owner of Bosarge Boats Inc. and B & B Boats Inc. He is a member of the Shrimp Advisory Panel for the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council and member of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Blue Crab Task Force. Bosarge also works with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the University of Mississippi on shrimp gear testing and volunteers his expertise to the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation on shrimp gear protocols. He has also cooperated with Johns Hopkins University in testing sonar equipment in the Gulf of Mexico and with dredging companies to relocate endangered marine life. He has a unique knowledge of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and is dedicated to balancing both its ecological preservation and its commercial and residential development.

The CMR is composed of five members appointed by the Governor for four-year terms to represent the following areas: commercial seafood processors, nonprofit environmental organizations, charter boat operators, recreational fishermen and commercial fishermen.

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 dmr.ms.gov.

Mississippi Seafood Crowned King in Great American Seafood Cook-Off

BILOXI, Miss. – Chef John Currence, owner and founder of City Grocery, Bouré and Big Bad Breakfast in Oxford, Miss., took top honors and was crowned King of Seafood in the fifth annual Great American Seafood Cook-Off held in New Orleans on Aug. 2 and 3.

Mississippi’s participation in this year’s event was organized through the Mississippi Seafood Marketing Program and Sarah McCullough with Mississippi Cultural and Heritage Tourism, under the Mississippi Development Authority.

“Of course, we are very proud of John, and he has brought our great Mississippi and Gulf seafood to the forefront,” said Irvin Jackson, director of the Mississippi Seafood Marketing Program with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. “The important thing to remember is that we all win when we support our domestic Mississippi seafood, the cultural way of life that has grown up around it, and the many businesses and fishermen who bring it to our table. I know Chef Currence will be a great ambassador for Mississippi seafood in the coming year.”



Photo credit: Mississippi Department of Marine Resources: Mississippi chef John Currence, left, crowned King of Seafood at the Great American Seafood Cook-Off in New Orleans, discusses the competition with well-know New Orleans chef John Besh, winner of the first-ever Great American Seafood Cook-Off.

Although originally from New Orleans, Currence has been owner and chef at City Grocery in Oxford since 1992 and represented Mississippi in this year's most prestigious seafood competition. Fifteen chefs from across the nation competed in the Great American Seafood Cook-Off held in New Orleans at the Morial Convention Center. Each chef, representing a different state, cooked dishes using seafood native to their state. Chef Currence's winning dishes were Mississippi Food Chain with redfish, smoked shrimp and corn macque choux topped with crabmeat, and Redfish Courtbouillon with Seafood Dirty Rice. Chef Currence's Redfish Courtbouillon stood out among dozens of savory dishes.

"It had a good hearty flavor to it," said judge Ed Meuller with Sante Magazine. "Using the judging criteria, it was truly a family-style dish." "What we did today was very soulful," Currence said after he won. "Courtbouillon is just a great vehicle for seafood."

More Eyes Than Ever on Safer, Cleaner Texas Beaches

AUSTIN — More eyes than ever watched the water quality improve at Texas beaches in 2007 Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson announced today. The Texas General Land Office's Beach Watch program collected weekly water samples from 167 sites along the coast from May through September, when most Texans enjoy the beaches. Beach Watch tests for the presence of the *Enterococcus* bacteria, an indicator organism which indicates fecal contamination, usually caused by storm water run off. Despite heavier rains, fewer beach advisories were required in 2007 than in 2006, according to Beach Watch data.

"Beach Watch is monitoring more Texas beaches than ever and this data shows what lots of Texans already know — if you're swimming, surfing, fishing or just splashing in the waves, Texas beaches are a great place to be," Patterson said. "But when the water has high levels of bacteria, the Texas Beach Watch Program lets the public know about it. This allows the public to make informed decisions."

Patterson oversaw the rapid growth of the Beach Watch program to ensure any Texan who wanted to enjoy the surf and sand would have up-to-the-minute details about local water quality. A review of the 2007 data shows advisories were issued just 5 percent of the time at Texas beaches during peak swim season. Beach Watch issues a water advisory when water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach. Signs at the beach display the advisory, which is also available online.

A total of 50 monitored beaches in Aransas, Brazoria, Cameron, Galveston, Jefferson, Kleberg, Matagorda, Nueces and San Patricio counties had at least one advisory issued during the 2007 swimming season. About 83 percent of these 236 water advisories lasted for two days or less.

Beach Watch monitors beaches weekly during peak beach season, May through September, as well as during March to coincide with Spring Break. Beach Watch tests the waters every other week from October to April.

Water quality is monitored by local contractors – local governmental agencies, universities or commercial laboratories – and the data forwarded to the GLO. Data is immediately available online at www.TexasBeachWatch.com. If you have a "pop-up blocker" on your computer, the online data application will not launch. To get around this, disable the pop-up blocker, or press the control key before pressing the OK button on the disclaimer.

Generally, if a sampling indicates high bacteria levels, a second sample is taken on the next day and usually shows the bacteria count is below advisory levels. For those beaches that have had advisories, most have only been slightly above standards.

The Web site is part of the state's ongoing efforts to meet the requirements of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000. The BEACH Act requires states to monitor popular beaches for the *Enterococcus* bacteria, and tell the public when the bacteriological concentrations are above federal standards. Since many pathogens are not easily detected, indicator organisms like *Enterococcus* are used to measure changes in water quality and the potential presence of more hard-to-detect pathogenic organisms. An indicator organism, like *Enterococcus*, is usually harmless itself but shows the potential presence or absence of a harmful organism that requires similar physical, chemical and nutrient conditions. EPA studies have found that *Enterococcus* and *E. coli* are the best available indicators for predicting the presence of gastrointestinal illness-causing pathogens. For coastal waters, *Enterococcus* is the most appropriate.

The Beach Watch program was started in August 1998 for 13 popular Texas beaches in Jefferson, Galveston, Brazoria, Matagorda, Nueces and Cameron counties. But in early 1999, Texas Beach Watch faced budgetary challenges that threatened the program. It was not until November 2000 that the program was resurrected, thanks to funding from the Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP). Further information on the Texas Beach Watch Program may be obtained by visiting the GLO's Texas Beach Watch Web page at www.TexasBeachWatch.com or by calling 1-800-998-4GLO (1-800-998-4456).

Mapping Texas Habitats by Land, Sea, and Air

During the week of July 14, 2008, the Mission-Aransas NERR and partner organizations commenced in a very large habitat mapping event the first of its kind. Professors, students, and technical staff came together from 11 organizations to sample habitats of the Mission-Aransas NERR. The project involved acquiring hyperspectral imagery from an aircraft and tying it to sample points on land and sea. A hyperspectral image contains information about not only visible light, but also light from the ultraviolet to infrared. Hyperspectral images enables scientists to classify different types of vegetation that all may appear as the same color to the human eye. Scientists can classify these different types because plants leave unique "spectral" signatures across the visible to infrared light spectrum. Scientists and students at the Mission-Aransas NERR conducted a large scale sampling effort around the same time as the aircraft acquired the hyperspectral images. This groundtruthing effort collected on-the-ground spectral signatures of plants, which will provide the information necessary to connect the images to the vegetation.

This project is the first of its kind, because it allows scientists to identify plant communities over a very large spatial scale. The habitat maps that will be created will be the most precise measure of vegetation in the NERR and the Coastal Bend. It can even identify invasive species and aid land managers in their locations and growth patterns. The research sites within the NERR that are being mapped include the whooping crane habitat at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, seagrass beds in Redfish Bay, Fennessey Ranch, thermal signatures in Mission Bay, and mangroves at Harbor Island.

At the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, scientists from the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology and the University of Nebraska are using these maps to aid in identification of vegetation and its relationship to invasive species and plant biomass. Seagrass beds will also be mapped by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Jackson State University and be compared to previous maps to determine change over time. Scientists from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi will be using these maps at

Fennessey Ranch to characterize the plant biodiversity of two biotic provinces, Texas to the north and Tamaulipan to the south. In the Mission Bay area, scientists from the University of Texas Marine Science Institute are using the maps with thermal signatures to determine if they can detect changes in water temperature that could be related to groundwater discharges or septic tank leakages. Abundances of black mangroves at Harbor Island will also be mapped by scientists from Creighton University and Texas A&M University-Galveston and be compared to previous maps to determine change over time. All of these projects were aided by field and boat support from our local Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

This project is made possible by a partnership with the NOAA Environmental Cooperative Science Center (ECSC) and funding support from the NOAA ECSC, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program. Click here for [more information](#).

New Instrument Monitors Texas Bays for Dangerous Algae Blooms

PORT ARANSAS, Texas—A new electronic sentinel is on the lookout for dangerous algal blooms in Texas bays. The new instrument, called the Imaging FlowCytobot, automatically takes images of and classifies species of phytoplankton in real-time. It heralds the development of a warning system for the presence of harmful algae, like those that cause red and brown tides.

The unique device has been deployed in Port Aransas waters by scientists from Texas A&M University in College Station, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and The University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute (MSI).

Strategic placement at MSI's pier allows the FlowCytobot to take continuous snapshots of phytoplankton entering the Port Aransas Channel, which connects Corpus Christi and Aransas Bays to the Gulf of Mexico. This provides for a novel view into the makeup of the phytoplankton population.

The study, led by Texas A&M Professor Lisa Campbell, Woods Hole scientists Rob Olsen and Heidi Sosik with assistance from MSI Professor Ed Buskey, has already yielded significant results.

They recently detected the dinoflagellate *Brachidinium* in the Port Aransas channel. *Brachidinium* was previously thought of as a rare species existing only in tropical Pacific Ocean waters off the coast of Japan and in the Mediterranean Sea.

The project, "Automated Imaging and Classification System for Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Detection" is funded by an award from The Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology.

Texas Builders Working to Prevent Storm Water Pollution

Release date: 07/31/2008

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

(Dallas, Texas – July 31, 2008) Keeping Texas waterways free of storm water pollution is the goal behind an agreement signed today by the Texas Association of Builders (TAB), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and Environmental Protection Agency. The agreement is a national first and commits Texas home building companies to work together with the state and federal agencies to take steps to prevent storm water pollution.

“Small changes in the way builders do business can make a big difference when it comes to keeping pollution out of storm water,” said EPA Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene. “This project is another great example of how innovative partnerships between EPA, states, and businesses can lead to better ways to protect one of our most valuable liquid assets.”

Under the agreement, the three partners will work together on a pilot program to more fully educate, inform, and assist home builders with meeting federal and state storm water regulations. Building new homes requires moving a lot of dirt, often tons. When it rains, dirt and other pollutants from construction sites can get swept into storm drains. This runoff generally flows untreated to the nearest waterway, which can lead to water quality problems and harm to fish and plants. Education and assistance with storm water controls can help home builders reduce storm water pollution.

“It is gratifying to see government and industry working together voluntarily to protect the environment,” said TCEQ Chairman Buddy Garcia. “This agreement will mean better compliance, and that means better protection of our precious water resources.”

Today’s agreement is expected to be another successful collaboration between the three agencies. Previously, more than 1,300 Texas builders received storm water compliance training through initiatives developed by TAB, TCEQ and EPA in 2005 and 2007. TAB members that complete training and a self-assessment checklist will be able to display the “Storm Water Self-Certified” sticker on construction permits as part of the agreement. Sites that display the certification sticker would be a lower priority for routine inspections.

“Our membership has worked diligently to comply with state and federal storm water regulations, and we are honored that our successful training partnership with the EPA and TCEQ has resulted in this historic agreement,” said Ron Connally, Texas Association of Builders first vice president. “TAB is committed to providing continuing education to Texas builders to help further reduce storm water runoff and protect the environment.” Additional information about EPA’s [storm water](http://www.epa.gov/region6/water/npdes/sw/index.htm) programs is available at <http://www.epa.gov/region6/water/npdes/sw/index.htm>.

Energy

MMS Proposes Offshore Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Regulations

Public review and comments accepted through September 8, 2008

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) today published a proposed rule in the [Federal Register](#) (1 MB PDF file, 07/09/2008)¹ that will regulate alternative energy production activities and alternate uses of existing facilities on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The proposed rule is accompanied by a draft environmental assessment analyzing the potential environmental effects of the rulemaking in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The proposed regulations will establish a program to grant leases, easements, and rights-of-way (ROW) for orderly, safe, and environmentally responsible alternative energy project activities and alternate uses

of existing facilities on the OCS. The rule will also establish methods for sharing revenues generated by this program with nearby coastal States.

“This proposed rule would establish formally the framework for developing wind, wave, ocean current, solar and other renewable energy sources on America’s Outer Continental Shelf,” Assistant Secretary Stephen C. Allred said. “With this important step we can add to our ability to reduce our reliance on foreign energy by making the best use of our own domestic resources in a safe and environmentally sensitive way.”

The [Energy Policy Act of 2005](#) authorized MMS to establish the [OCS Alternative Energy and Alternate Use \(AEAU\) Program](#). Alternative energy includes, but is not limited to wind, wave, solar, ocean current and generation of hydrogen. Alternate uses of existing facilities may include aquaculture, research, education, recreation or support for offshore operations and facilities.

The process for completing the rulemaking began after the enactment of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was issued in December of 2005. The Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) was issued in November of 2007. This was followed by the release of the Record of Decision for the Final PEIS in January of 2008. The next step in the process, after the 60-day comment period on today’s proposed rule ends, will be the release of the Final Rule and final environmental assessment. The Final Rule is expected to be complete by December 2008.

The proposed rule and draft environmental assessment invite public comments from interested parties by one of two methods:

1. [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#). Under the tab “More Search Options,” click Advanced Docket Search, then select “Minerals Management Service” from the agency drop-down menu, then click “submit.” In the Docket ID column, select MMS-2008-OEMM-0012 to submit public comments and to view supporting and related materials available for this rulemaking.

2. Mailing your comments to the following address:
Minerals Management Service
Offshore Energy and Minerals Management
Alternative Energy and Alternate Use Team
381 Elden Street
Herndon, Virginia 20170-4817

[Draft Environmental Assessment Corresponding to the Proposed Rule](#) 07/08/2008: 753 KB PDF file)

MMS Elevates Alternative Energy Office, Expands Authority

WASHINGTON - The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has created a new organization to reflect the significance the agency places on alternative energy. The newly formed [Office of Offshore Alternative Energy Programs \(OAEP\)](#) raises the alternative energy program’s stature in the organization, and enhances the program’s ability to meet the new statutory mandates and respond to the unique needs of the regulated community. In a complimentary move, MMS renamed its Offshore Minerals Management program as the [Offshore Energy and Minerals Management \(OEMM\) Program](#). The name change reflects MMS’s expanded authority to regulate alternative energy on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), in accordance with Energy Policy Act of 2005. The new alternative energy office will now directly report to the [Associate Director for OEMM](#).

The alternative energy office, led by career employee Maureen Bornholdt, will develop and implement policy, analysis, and overall management of the OCS alternative energy leasing and operations program while ensuring compliance with departmental goals and philosophy.

“Adopting this new and more comprehensive program name of Offshore Energy and Minerals Management reflects MMS’s new authority to regulate offshore renewable energy sources, which are clearly not minerals, yet very important to our energy security,” said Chris Oynes, Associate Director for OEMM. “This structural change will help continue to reinforce MMS’s regulatory role to encourage alternative energy development on the [OCS](#). The organizational change will also raise the stature of the renewable energy program and provide management focus on this new area of energy development.” The [Energy Policy Act of 2005](#) authorized MMS to regulate alternative energy on the OCS including wind, wave, current, tidal, and hydrogen generation sources. MMS has developed comprehensive program regulations and published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Federal Register earlier this week.

MMS is also responsible for all phases of mineral resource management in Federal waters, about 1.76 billion acres of submerged lands. The OCS contributes approximately 27 percent of total U.S. oil production and approximately 15 percent of total U.S. natural gas production.

Contact: [Blossom Robinson](#) 202-208-3985

MMS Moving Forward With Alternative Energy Leases on the Outer Continental Shelf

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today that it is proceeding with the consultation and analyses necessary to move toward the issuance of limited leases under its interim policy for authorizing alternative energy data collection and technology testing activities on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

“This is another important step in the advancement in the [OCS Alternative Energy Program](#),” said MMS Director Randall Luthi. “I am excited about our progress and am looking forward to working with the states and communities to move forward with these proposed activities.”

MMS announced its interim policy in November 2007 to jumpstart basic information gathering efforts relating to development of OCS alternative energy resources such as wind, waves, and ocean currents as authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAct). The limited leases envisioned under the interim policy will be for a term of five years and will not convey any right or priority for commercial development.

Following the initial announcement, MMS received more than 40 nominations of areas proposed for limited leasing off the west and east coasts. In April MMS identified a subset of 16 proposed lease areas for priority consideration and provided public notice of those areas for the purpose of determining competitive interest as required by EPAct and for receiving relevant environmental or other information. The comment period on the April notice closed on June 30. A brief description of the information received and MMS’s decisions concerning the 16 proposed lease areas follows.

New Jersey, Delaware, and Georgia—the 10 lease areas (six off NJ, one off DE, and three off GA) proposed for site assessment activities relating to wind resources drew no competing nominations and no significant comment. MMS will proceed with a noncompetitive leasing process for these sites.

Florida—three of the four lease areas off the southeast coast proposed for site assessment or technology testing activities relating to ocean current resources received competing nominations, and comments concerning the areas were favorable. MMS will proceed with a noncompetitive leasing process for the one site that did not receive competing nominations. Due to timing constraints inherent in the interim policy, as well as bureau budget and staffing considerations, MMS has decided not to proceed with a competitive auction for the other areas. Instead, the competing nominators have been asked to collaborate in order to enable interested parties to jointly benefit in information gathering under leases issued noncompetitively.

California—neither of the two areas off Northern California (Humboldt and Mendocino Counties) proposed for site assessment and technology testing relating to wave resources drew new competing nominations. However, based on two original overlapping nominations in the Humboldt area from the initial Call for Nominations in Nov. 2007, MMS has determined that there is competitive interest in that proposed lease area. MMS also received numerous comments from local stakeholders concerned about potential use conflicts and environmental issues in both areas. For the Mendocino area, MMS has decided to proceed with a noncompetitive leasing process, working with the applicant and local stakeholders to refine the area and scope of proposed activities and to address other local concerns. For the Humboldt area, MMS has decided not to hold a competitive auction and to ask the competing nominators to collaborate. If they agree to collaborate, MMS will proceed with a noncompetitive leasing process as in the Mendocino area.

The process for issuing limited leases under the interim policy will entail thorough environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act and related laws, as well as close consultation with federal, state, and local government agencies as required by EPAct.

The limited leases that will be issued under the interim policy will enable the lessees to collect information that will be useful for potential commercial projects in the future under an MMS regulatory program that is in development.

MMS published a proposed OCS alternative energy rulemaking on July 9, 2008. When final, this rule will govern all future commercial OCS alternative energy activities and will apply to any future commercial development in the areas leased under the interim policy. Limited leaseholders wishing to conduct commercial activities will need separate authorization under the final rule that is adopted.

The MMS interim policy is ongoing pending the adoption of a final rule governing OCS alternative energy activity. Interested parties may continue to submit nominations, and MMS may act on other nominations that already have been received or are received in the future. There is one proposed lease area off California and three off Florida where there is overlapping interest. For those areas we are investigating whether the companies are interested in collaborating on resource data collection activities.

Relevant Web Site: [Office of Offshore Alternative Energy Programs](#)

Contact: [Blossom Robinson](#) 202-208-3985

Interior Department Initiates New Five Year Oil and Gas Leasing Program for Outer Continental Shelf Seeks Public Comment to Address Changed Energy Situation

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Saying the nation's energy situation has dramatically changed in the past year, [Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne](#) today jumpstarted the development of a new oil and natural gas leasing program for the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. The action could give the next administration a two-year head start in expanding energy production from federal offshore jurisdictions, including some areas where a congressional ban had prevented oil and gas development.

“When our [current five-year program](#) for Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas leasing was launched in July 2007, oil was selling for \$64 a barrel,” Kempthorne said. “Today a barrel of oil costs more than \$120, almost double the price a year ago. Clearly, today's escalating energy prices and the widening gap between U.S. energy consumption and supply have changed the fundamental assumptions on which many of our decisions were based.”

“Areas that were considered too expensive to develop a year ago are no longer necessarily out of reach based on improvements to technology and safety,” Kempthorne noted. “The American people and the President want action and this initiative can accelerate an offshore exploration and development program that can increase production from additional domestic energy resources.”

President Bush lifted the Executive Withdrawal on oil and gas leasing operations on the Outer Continental Shelf on July 14, calling on Congress to lift its ban that has been in place since 1982. He also urged Congress to enact legislation that would allow states to have a say regarding operations off their shores and to share in the resulting revenues.

“The President believes coastal states should have a voice in how Outer Continental Shelf resources are developed off their shores while ensuring those environments are protected. Also, Congress should provide a way for the federal government and states to participate in revenue sharing from those new leases,” Kempthorne said.

Because of the current energy situation and the President's action, Secretary Kempthorne has directed the Minerals Management Service to begin the initial steps for developing a [new five-year program](#) that accurately reflects the nation's needs. The multi-year process starts with a call for information from all parties on what a new five-year program should consider. MMS is also requesting comment to ensure that all interests and concerns are considered regarding oil and gas leasing and exploration and development resulting from a new five-year program. The governors of all 50 states will be specifically asked for their comments, particularly on issues unique to each state.

“This initiative could provide a significant advantage for the incoming administration, offering options it would not otherwise have had until at least 2010,” Kempthorne said. “Today's action would provide a 2-year head start for the next administration on developing a new five-year program.”

The current program runs from 2007-2012 and includes 21 lease sales in eight of the 26 Outer Continental Shelf planning areas in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska and the Atlantic. It does not include areas under a congressional ban, with the exception of Virginia. The new program, depending on public comment, can consider any area although any leasing in a banned area would need congressional action.

The [Outer Continental Shelf](#) currently provides 27 percent of U.S. domestic oil production and 15 percent of domestic natural gas production -- most of that from the Gulf of Mexico. The areas under a congressional ban contain an additional 18 billion barrels of oil and 76 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in yet-to-be-discovered fields.

Those numbers are considered conservative estimates because little exploration has been conducted in most of those areas during the past quarter of a century because of the congressional ban. Interior's estimates are based on available data. Estimates tend to increase dramatically as technology improves and exploration activities occur.

This initiative uses the process mandated by the [Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978](#) (286.05 KB PDF file), which give the Secretary of the Interior authority to develop "out-of-cycle" leasing programs and requires various procedural steps, including several rounds of public comment and multiple environmental reviews.

The Call for Information will be published in the [Federal Register](#) on August 1, 2008. The public may submit comments during the next 45 days by using [MMS' Public Connect](#) online commenting system or by mail to:

Five-Year Program Manager
Minerals Management Service (MS-4010)
381 Elden Street
Herndon, VA 20170

The full text of the notice and details on submitting comments will be included in the register announcement. All comments must be received by September 15, 2008. More information is available at www.doi.gov and at www.mms.gov. Contact: [Chris Paolino](#), (202) 208-6416; [Dave Smith](#), (202) 208-3985.

• [What is the 5-Year Program: Frequently Asked Questions](#) (7/30/2008)

Other News

New City Park Data Released

The nation's 75 largest cities spent a record \$5 billion on their park systems in 2006 and added 5,375 new acres of parkland in 2007, according to numbers compiled by TPL's Center for City Park Excellence. However, this growth in parkland wasn't enough to match population growth in cities overall. The data is based on TPL's annual survey of city park systems, begun in 2000. The 2008 survey added 15 new cities and yielded extensive data on park system acreage, spending, and facilities of the nation's 75 largest cities. The survey's findings are summarized [here](#) with [complete data posted on TPL's website](#).

EPA Releases Greenhouse Gas Document for Public Comment

Release date: 07/11/2008

Contact Information: Jonathan Shradar, (202) 564-4355 / shradar.jonathan@epa.gov; En español: Lina Younes, (202) 564-4355 / younes.lina@epa.gov

(Washington, D.C. - July 11, 2008) Today EPA released an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) soliciting public input on the effects of climate change and the potential ramifications of the Clean Air Act in relation to greenhouse gas emissions. "The ANPR reflects the complexity and the magnitude of the question of whether and how greenhouse gases could be effectively controlled under the Clean Air Act," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson.

Today's action is in response to the April 2, 2007 Supreme Court decision in *Massachusetts v. EPA*, which found that greenhouse gas emissions could be regulated if EPA determines they cause or contribute to air pollution that may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare. With the ANPR, EPA is evaluating the broader ramifications of the decision throughout the Clean Air Act, which covers air pollution from both stationary and mobile sources.

The ANPR solicits public input as EPA considers the specific effects of climate change and potential regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. In the advance notice, EPA presents and requests comment on the best-available science, requests relevant data, and asks questions about the advantages and disadvantages of using the Clean Air Act to potentially regulate stationary and mobile sources of greenhouse gases. The ANPR also reviews various petitions, lawsuits and court deadlines before the agency, and the profound effect regulating under the Clean Air Act could have on the economy.

The notice's publication in the Federal Register begins a 120-day public comment period. Read the ANPR: <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/pdf/anpr20080711.pdf>. Fact sheet: <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/anprfs.htm>.

EPA Releases Report on Climate Change and Health

Release date: 07/17/2008

Contact Information: Roxanne Smith, (202) 564-4355 / smith.roxanne@epa.gov; Contacto en español: Lina Younes, (202) 564-4355 / younes.lina@epa.gov

(Washington, D.C. - July 17, 2008) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released a report that discusses the potential impacts of climate change on human health, human welfare, and communities in the U.S. The report, entitled "Analyses of the Effects of Global Change on Human Health and Welfare and Human Systems," also identifies adaptation strategies to help respond to the challenges of a changing climate and identifies near- and long-term research goals for addressing data and knowledge gaps.

The report discusses the challenges and potential effects of climate change, including unusual or unexpected weather, and how some individuals and communities may be disproportionately affected by climate change, including the elderly, the poor, children, and people with chronic medical conditions. However, the U.S. has well-developed public health infrastructures and environmental programs that protect our air and water, which can help minimize the impacts.

The Global Change Research Program in EPA's Office of Research and Development led the development of this report. It is one of 21 synthesis and assessment products commissioned by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program.

The peer-reviewed report is the most up-to-date synthesis and assessment of scientific literature on the impact of global change on human health, welfare and settlements in the United States. It was developed following the guidelines developed by the CCSP. The CCSP was established in 2002 to provide the Nation with science-based knowledge to manage the risks and opportunities of change in the climate and related environmental systems. The program is responsible for coordinating and integrating the research of 13 federal agencies on climate and global change.

- [Information on Analyses of the Effects of Global Change on Human Health and Welfare and Human Systems: http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recorddisplay.cfm?deid=197244](http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recorddisplay.cfm?deid=197244)
- [The Office of Research and Development's Global Change Research Program: epa.gov/ord/npd/globalresearch-intro.htm](http://epa.gov/ord/npd/globalresearch-intro.htm)
- [The U.S. Climate Change Science Program \(CCSP\): http://www.climate-science.gov/](http://www.climate-science.gov/)

DHS Marks 5th Annual National Preparedness Month This September

Release Date: July 2, 2008, Contact: 202-282-8010

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced today that more than 1,200 national, regional, state and local businesses and organizations have pledged their support and joined the 2008 National Preparedness Month Coalition. Sponsored by the department's Ready Campaign, National Preparedness Month helps to raise awareness and promote action by Americans, businesses, and communities on emergency preparedness.

“As we approach our fifth National Preparedness Month, I want to thank the hundreds of coalition members who are making a difference in their communities by helping raise the basic level of preparedness in our country,” said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. “Individual preparedness is the cornerstone of emergency preparedness. Experience shows that if Americans take steps ahead of time, they stand a much better chance of coming through an emergency unharmed and recovering more quickly.”

The Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps (www.citizencorps.gov) are specifically encouraging individuals across the nation to take important preparedness steps. These steps include: getting an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, being informed about the different emergencies that may affect them, as well as taking the necessary steps to get trained and become engaged in community preparedness and response efforts.

National Preparedness Month Coalition members have agreed to distribute emergency preparedness information and sponsor activities across the country that will promote emergency preparedness. Membership is open to all public and private sector organizations. Groups and individuals can register to become members by visiting www.ready.gov, and clicking on the National Preparedness Month banner. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Joseph I. Lieberman and Ranking Member Susan M. Collins, along with House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie G. Thompson and Ranking Member Peter T. King, will serve as honorary Congressional Co-Chairs of National Preparedness Month 2008. Together, they will lead the effort to increase public awareness about the importance of emergency preparedness on Capitol Hill and throughout the country.

For more information on the Ready Campaign and National Preparedness Month, please visit www.ready.gov or www.listo.gov. Information is also available by phone at 1-800-BE-READY or 1-888-SE-LISTO.

Grant Opportunities

NOAA Restoration Center Announces Funding Opportunities for 2009

The NOAA Restoration Center is happy to announce three new funding opportunities through its Community-based Restoration Program. The programs are:

[Open Rivers Initiative](#) - Through this program, NOAA provides funding and technical assistance to implement locally-driven projects to remove dams and other river barriers to benefit living marine and coastal resources, particularly diadromous fish. Applications are due by October 31, 2008. For more information, contact [Tisa Shostik](#). (Funding opportunity #NMFS-HCPO-2009-2001496)

[Community-based Marine Debris Prevention and Removal](#) - Through this program, NOAA provides funding and technical assistance to implement locally-driven, community-based marine debris prevention, assessment and removal projects that will benefit coastal habitat, waterways, and marine resources. Applications are due by October 31, 2008. For more information, contact [David Landsman](#). (Funding opportunity #NMFS-HCPO-2009-2001501)

Projects should feature strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components, as well as social and economic benefits for the impacted communities. To apply, or for more information, click the links above or visit <http://www.grants.gov> and search by funding opportunity number. You can also contact the Community-based Restoration Program's Program Manager, Robin Bruckner, robin.bruckner@noaa.gov.

Water Quality Trading Funding: Proposals Due September 9, 2008

EPA is now accepting proposals for water quality trading or other market-based projects through its [Targeted Watersheds Grants](#) Program. Projects must address reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, or other pollutant loadings that cause low oxygen levels in local waters and which enter the Mississippi River system. Projects must be located in one of the three Mississippi River sub-basins with the highest nutrient loads contributing to hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico: the Ohio River, the Upper Mississippi River, or the Lower Mississippi River. Proposals must be nominated by the governor of the state in which the project resides. EPA will award up to \$4.2 million to support approximately 15 to 25 outstanding proposals. Nominated proposals are due September 9, 2008.

[Request for Proposals: Targeted Watersheds Grants for Water Quality Trading or Other Market-Based Projects to Reduce the Hypoxic Zone in the Northern Gulf of Mexico \(PDF\)](#): (36 pp, 211K)—

Submissions are due September 9, 2008

[Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#) (2 pp, 60K)

[Questions and Answers - Updated July 10, 2008 \(PDF\)](#) (8 pp, 58K)

Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES) – 2008

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Research Announcement (NRA), entitled Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES) – 2008, solicits basic and applied research in support of NASA’s Science Mission Directorate (SMD). This NRA covers all aspects of basic and applied supporting research and technology in space and Earth sciences.

Awards range from under \$100K per year for focused, limited efforts (e.g., data analysis) to more than \$1M per year for extensive activities (e.g., development of science experiment hardware). The funds available for awards in each program element offered in this NRA range from less than one to several million dollars, which allow selection from a few to as many as several dozen proposals depending on the program objectives and the submission of proposals of merit. Awards will be made as grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and inter- or intra-agency transfers depending on the nature of the proposing organization and/or program requirements. The typical period of performance for an award is four years, although a few programs may specify shorter or longer (maximum of five years) periods. Organizations of every type, domestic and foreign, Government and private, for profit and not-for-profit, may submit proposals without restriction on number or teaming arrangements. Note that it is NASA policy that all investigations involving non-U.S. organizations will be conducted on the basis of no exchange of funds. Any changes or modifications to any of these guidelines will be specified in the descriptions of the relevant programs in the Appendices of the solicitation.

Details of the solicited programs are given in the [NRA](#). Proposal due dates are given in Tables 2 and 3 of the NRA. Interested proposers should monitor <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/> or subscribe to the SMD electronic notification system for additional new programs or amendments to this NRA through February 2009, at which time release of a subsequent ROSES NRA is planned.

Training and Conferences

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Implementation & Integration Workshop

August 19-21

Omni Marina Hotel,
Corpus Christi, TX

Please join your colleagues for the fourth annual “all hands” meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. This workshop provides an opportunity for the Alliance Priority Issue Teams to meet individually and in plenary to develop the first draft of Action Plan II, to share successes, network, and plan next steps.

[Click here to register!](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Logistics](#)

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation/Sea Grasses: Ecology, Regulation and Restoration Basics Workshop

October 7, 2008

5 Rivers Delta Center, Spanish Fort, Alabama

Please join us for a 1-Day Workshop on submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and sea grasses at the 5 Rivers Delta Center in Spanish Fort. Topics to be covered include:

- Area SAV/Sea Grasses
- SAV/Sea Grass Status & Trends in Coastal Alabama
- Sea Grasses: Local Species & Ecology
- Freshwater & Brackish SAV: Local Species & Ecology
- State and Federal Regulatory Requirements for Construction In, On & Over SAVs
- BMPs for Construction In, On, Over or in Close Proximity to SAVs
- SAV/Sea Grass Restoration Basics

Bays and Bayous Symposium

October 28-29, 2008

Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center, Biloxi, MS

<http://www.masgc.org/page.asp?id=208>

The two-day event will include oral and poster presentations, keynote speakers and networking opportunities. Bays and Bayous will provide a venue for non-technical individuals interested in coastal ecosystems, education and preservation to learn about the most relevant and contemporary issues facing Mississippi and Alabama. This year, presentations at the symposium will focus on living marine resources, natural hazards resiliency and the ocean's role in climate, community action and coastal stewardship, water quality and nutrient input, habitat management and restoration, and extension, outreach and education. Discussions related to extension, outreach, education and community action efforts will be new to the symposium.

Gulf Coast Hurricane Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Rebuilding Conference

November 11-14, 2008

Mobile, AL

The Gulf Coast Hurricane Preparedness, Response, Recovery & Rebuilding Conference is being organized by PIANC USA. The objectives of the event are: to learn from recent hurricane experiences and challenges; to develop proactive navigation preparedness, response and recovery plans on regional and watershed scales; to foster interagency learning, coordination and cooperation leading to community and ecosystem resiliency; and to provide technical experience and directions for engineering and environmental challenges. Home Page: http://www.pianc.iwr.usace.army.mil/2008_gulfcoast_conf.htm.

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