



NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF OF MEXICO COASTAL OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

GCOOS NEWS AND UPDATES FOR 13 JULY 2012

GULF OF MEXICO REGIONAL NEWS

Implementing the IOOS Biological Observations Project in the South East United States

The [IOOS Biological Observations Project](#) (BDP) workshop involving GCOOS-RA and SECOORA was held in St. Petersburg from 25-26 June 2012. The goal of this workshop was to review project requirements and develop a consensus execution plan. The meeting was hosted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission/Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWC/FWRI). Attendees included the US IOOS Program, GCOOS-RA, SECOORA, NOAA Fisheries (SEFSC Galveston Lab), USGS/OBIS USA, FWC/FWRI, Atlantic States Fisheries Management Commission, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The group made progress on the reviewing data originators and customers' requirements and now are moving forward with the project implementation planning. The workshop generated a list of tasks for the next 60 days and the project's high-level goals were reviewed. Additionally IOOS met with Mike Murphy and Eddie Matheson of FWC/FWRI in St. Petersburg, FL, on 27 June to discuss FWC/FWRI fishery independent survey data from the Gulf of Mexico as an additional data set in the IOOS BDP and evaluation of project outcomes. GCOOS-RA will participate in the IOOS 2012 BDP pilot project by making trawl data from the five Gulf of Mexico states available online through a GCOOS ERDDAP data portal. These data currently reside in the Comparative Analysis of Gulf Estuarine ecoSystems (CAGES) relational database created by Harmon Brown of the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Galveston, TX. Harmon Brown will map the CAGES vocabulary to the IOOS BDP vocabulary with assistance of Philip Goldstein (OBIS) and Matt Howard (GCOOS). Matthew Howard will install an ERDDAP server, provide visualizations, and work with the project team and consumers. Potential consumers include Mitch Roffer and Cam Ainsworth (USF) who are running the Atlantis Ecosystem model for the Gulf of Mexico.

http://www.ioos.gov/biological_observations/welcome.html

Update from SURA Gulf of Mexico Shelf Hypoxia Group

A goal of the SURA Gulf of Mexico Shelf Hypoxia group was to run Dr. Katja Fennel's model within NGOFS for 2009. After addressing numerous issues, IOOS completed three months of the initial run of hindcasts with FVCOM. There is still an issue with reproducing the model results with the identical model configuration and forcing, which IOOS is addressing with the assistance of the FVCOM model developers. In addition, there are some limitations of the FVCOM modeling system that IOOS is addressing with the help of the FVCOM development team. Their target is to finish the hindcast by mid-July. To be consistent with the needs of the user community in the northern Gulf, the annual NCCOS-supported hypoxia monitoring program, and federal responsibility under the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABHRCA), the primary metric will be the hypoxic area and, although not required by HABHRCA, hypoxia volume.

Florida Institute of Oceanography and the U.S. Coast Guard signs MOU

The Florida Institute of Oceanography and the U.S. Coast Guard have signed an agreement to involve marine scientists in disaster response when additional scientific expertise is needed, addressing one of the concerns stemming from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The memorandum of understanding between FIO, a consortium of 27 public and private marine science institutes, including two state agencies, throughout Florida, and the Coast Guard was signed at a ceremony on Friday, 29 June, by Rear

Admiral William D. Baumgartner, Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District and FIO Director Dr. William Hogarth at a FIO Advisory Council meeting at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. The effort paves the way for the Coast Guard and Florida's marine science community to work together with NOAA and other agencies in disaster planning and response, providing the federal government with needed data and scientific insight while allowing independent researchers greater access to information as disasters happen. FIO and the USCG will hold workshops to look at the state-of-the-art ocean modeling and to assess the baseline information needed along the south and eastern coasts of Florida. Additionally, FIO and the Coast Guard will work to ensure that accurate scientific information on events are made public in a timely manner, with academic scientists retaining their independence in communicating, publishing and disseminating research results. The agreement covers both natural and manmade disasters in the Gulf of Mexico and the southeast Atlantic Ocean, with a specific focus on oil and hazardous material spills. The Coast Guard is the lead response agency for spills in coastal and deeper waters and ports. Additional information on the MOU will be featured in the next GCOOS News and on the website.

Study Finds Gulf Oil Spill might have Lasting Impact

According to an Associated Press release, new research by an Auburn University professor and other scientists suggests that the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill may have affected microscopic life in ways that might not become apparent for years. Auburn professor Ken Halanych and scientists from the University of New Hampshire, the University of California Davis Genome Center, and the University of Texas at San Antonio published their work last month in the scientific journal PLoS ONE. "When the samples were taken, there wasn't any obvious oil on the beaches, wasn't anything obvious to indicate that the oil spill had happened," Halanych said. "When you went outside and looked at it, it looked rather normal. There was clearly (microscopic) community change and hidden effects." The Press-Register of Mobile reports that researchers collected soil samples from five spots around Alabama's Dauphin Island and Mobile Bay, as well as a persistently oiled beach in Grand Isle, La. What they found, according to their report, was that diverse communities of microscopic animals had given way to fungi, some of which are associated with oil spills. Halanych said the long-term effects could be dramatic because the organisms that lost ground after the spill form the base of the food chain. He noted the collapse of the herring population in Prince William Sound after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska. It didn't happen until several years after the 1989 spill, and it has been traced to changes at the microscopic level.

Obama Administration Moves Forward to Implement New Five-Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program

As part of the Obama Administration's all-of-the-above energy strategy to expand safe and responsible domestic energy production, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) today issued a Call for Information and Nominations (Call), requesting stakeholder input regarding eight planned oil and gas lease sales scheduled in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico (GOM) over the next five year period - an important step in implementing the new offshore oil and gas leasing program that the Department of the Interior released last week. Consistent with the President's direction, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced last week that the Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2012-2017 makes all areas with the highest-known resource potential available for oil and gas leasing in order to further reduce America's dependence on foreign oil. It schedules 15 potential lease sales for the five year period, including 12 in the Gulf of Mexico and three off the coast of Alaska. A map of the Call area is available via the BOEM website at: <http://www.boem.gov/Oil-and-Gas-Energy-Program/Leasing/Regional-Leasing/Gulf-of-Mexico-Region/Call-for-Info-and-Nominations-CPA-WPA-bufferarea.aspx>. Comments for the Call must be received in envelopes labeled "Comments on the Call for Information and Nominations for Proposed CPA and WPA Lease Sales tentatively beginning with Lease Sale 233, in light of the United States/Mexico Agreement," Attention: Mr. Carrol Williams, Leasing and Financial Responsibility Unit, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394.

Written comments on the NOI should be received within 30 days following publication in the Federal Register in one of the following two ways:

- In an envelope labeled "Comments on Scoping for the Supplemental EIS" to Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief, Regional Assessment Section, Office of Environment (Mail Stop 5410), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394.
- BOEM email address: LS_233-231SEIS@boem.gov

The documents to be published in the Federal Register can be viewed today at <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/public-inspection/index.html>

Congress Passes the RESTORE Act, a Conservation Solution that Makes Economic Sense

Recently Congress stood up for the Gulf and for common-sense conservation by passing the RESTORE Act as part of the Surface Transportation Act. RESTORE directs fines paid as a result of the 2010 Gulf oil spill to projects that will revitalize the economies and ecosystems in the communities most impacted by the disaster. These projects will create jobs, boost local economies, and restore valuable natural resources across the region. In a recent [op-ed](#) published in the Miami Herald, Scott Burns, Director, Environmental Focus Area, on behalf of the Walton Family Foundation, applauded the passage of this critical legislation and praised Congress for coming together across the aisle to back a good idea. Gulf restoration projects like the ones the RESTORE Act will support, are a critical piece of the foundation's strategy for protecting our freshwater and marine resources while sustaining the communities, industries and economies that depend on them. The Walton Family Foundation look forward to seeing Gulf communities and economies thrive as these projects get underway. Passage of this legislation provides further evidence that the conservation solutions that will last are the ones that make economic sense.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/07/05/2880409/unconventional-wisdom-in-washington.html>

Experts Predict 2012 Brown Shrimp Season Harvest to be Above Average

Experts in the Gulf of Mexico say the brown shrimp harvest should be well above average. The news is good for both shrimpers and consumers as the price of shrimp is relatively low. The harvest estimates were provided by state and federal agencies. Dr. Greg Stunz of the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi predicts that shrimpers may be able to harvest 60 million pounds of shrimp this season.

<http://www.kiiitv.com/story/19005251/gulf-shrimpers-looking-forward-to-a-good-season>

IOOS/NATIONAL/LEGISLATIVE NEWS

NOAA Reports on Weather and Climate

NOAA recently released a report [2011 State of the Climate](#). The peer-reviewed report, issued in collaboration with the American Meteorological Society (AMS), was compiled by 378 scientists from 48 countries around the world. It provides a detailed update on global climate indicators, notable weather events, and other data collected by environmental monitoring stations and instruments on land, sea, ice, and sky. One of the notable weather events that they noted was that La Niña-related heat waves, like that experienced in Texas in 2011, are now 20 times more likely to occur during La Niña years today than La Niña years fifty years ago.

<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/bams-state-of-the-climate/2011.php>

New NOAA Website Offers Tips to Prepare for Coastal Flooding

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey has announced a new website, www.stormsurge.noaa.gov, designed to provide vital information to help protect communities, people, and property from the devastation of coastal flooding. "NOAA's meteorologists and oceanographers observe coastal conditions and predict when storm surge may occur," said Jesse Feyen, a storm surge expert with NOAA's Office of Coast Survey. "This website gives people important information to help them prepare for storm surge. With this advance understanding and knowledge, people will know how to respond to coastal flooding from a storm."

<http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/>

<http://www.stormsurge.noaa.gov/>

New Classification Standard for Marine Planning, Habitat Monitoring, and Management

NOAA and its partners have developed a comprehensive national framework for organizing information about coasts, oceans, and their living systems. The [Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard](#) (CMECS) provides a unifying framework for planning, habitat monitoring, and management of our coasts and Great Lakes. Now local, state, federal, and international entities can make comparisons among data collected from different sources and in different locations. CMECS will help scientists speak the same language whether they are trying to manage marine protected areas, protect coral reefs, or conduct natural resource assessments. The [Federal Geographic Data Committee](#) (FGDC) recently endorsed CMECS as the first national standard for coastal and marine ecosystems. The standard underwent an extensive public and peer review as part of the FGDC endorsement process.

<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/publications/cmecs>

<http://www.fgdc.gov/>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Developing and Testing Potential Indicators for the National Climate Assessment

On 2 July 2012 NASA announced a new funding opportunity in ROSES 2012 (Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences) pertaining to the U.S. Global Change Research Program's (USGCRP) National Climate Assessment (NCA). This ROSES element solicits contributions to enhance the use of NASA's observation and modeling products in future NCAs by encouraging the developing and testing of potential indicators that address the needs expressed in the NCA indicators vision. The NCA operates under the auspices of the Global Change Research Act of 1990, acting as a generator of status reports on climate change science and impacts. These reports are based on observations made across the country, and reports compare these observations to predictions from climate system models. The assessments also analyze current patterns in global change and project major trends for the subsequent 25 to 100 years. NASA-supported research on potential indicators will contribute to the NCA's effort to develop a robust indicator system that informs decisions related to impacts, adaptation, vulnerability, and mitigation associated with climate and global change. NASA is requesting that Notices of Intent be submitted by 3 August 2012. Official proposals are due on 5 October 2012. For more information on this research opportunity please visit the [NASA's](#) ROSES website and view [appendix A.47](#).

COMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

July

["5th Annual International Ecosystem Services Partnership \(ESP\) Conference"](#) 31 July – 4 August 2012, Portland, OR.
http://www.esconference.org/ESP_Conference/78852/5/0/60

August

["Oceans in Action 2012: Marine Technology Advances in the Wake of *Deepwater Horizon*"](#), 13-14 August 2012, IP Resort, Biloxi, MS
<https://www.mtsociety.org/conferences/Oceansinaction2012.aspx>

September

"GCOOS-RA Board of Directors Meeting" 26-27 September 2012, Corpus Christi, TX.

October

["Restore America's Estuaries 6th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration"](#) 20-24 October 2012, Tampa, FL.
<http://www.estuaries.org/conference/>

"OCEANS '12 MTS/IEEE" 15-19 October 2012, Hampton Roads, VA.
<http://www.oceans12mtsieeehamptonroads.org/>

November

"IOOS Summit 2012 - A new Decade of Integrated and Sustained Ocean Observing" 13-16 November 2012, Herndon, VA. WE NEED YOUR HELP - Please visit <http://www.iooc.us/summit/ioos-summit/> to see how you can help.

"Bays and Bayous Symposium" 14-15 November 2012, Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center, Biloxi, MS
<http://masgc.org/page.asp?id=717>

December

2012 American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, 3-7 December 2012, San Francisco, CA.

<http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2012/>

2013

January

American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting, 6-10 January 2013, Austin, TX.

<http://annual.ametsoc.org/2013/?CFID=420872&CFTOKEN=99740603>

“[2013 National Conference: Environmental Disasters](http://ncseonline.org/2013-national-conference-environmental-disasters)”, 15-17 January 2013, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the National Council for Science and the Environment.

<http://ncseonline.org/2013-national-conference-environmental-disasters>

“[Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference](http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/news-and-events/gulf-of-mexico-oil-spill-ecosystem-science-conference/)”, 21-23 January 2012, New Orleans Marriott Hotel, New Orleans, LA.

<http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/news-and-events/gulf-of-mexico-oil-spill-ecosystem-science-conference/>

EMPLOYMENT

Coastal States Organization Seeks Executive Director

The Coastal States Organization (CSO) is seeking an Executive Director. CSO is a small, 501(c) 4 nonprofit, non-partisan organization founded in 1970 that represents the interests of the Governors of the nation’s 35 coastal States and Territories on legislative, regulatory, policy and program matters related to the conservation, development and management of coastal and ocean resources. The Executive Director is responsible for advancing CSO’s mission by advocating for the shared state interests. This position also assures the sound fiscal management of CSO and manages a small office of professional staff and contractors. The Executive Director reports to a Board of Directors and Executive Committee comprised of Delegates appointed by the Governors of the coastal states and territories. Submit cover letter, including short statement of interest and relevant experience, salary requirements, and resume by 5:00 pm EDT, 13 August 2012. Electronic applications strongly preferred. To ensure proper receipt, please submit materials with “Executive Director Search” in the subject line to: jobs@coastalstates.org. The full position announcement is available at www.coastalstates.org.



GCOOS is the Gulf of Mexico regional component of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). Our mission is to provide timely, reliable, and accurate information on the open and coastal ocean waters of the Gulf of Mexico to ensure a healthy, clean, productive ocean and resilient coastal zone. Your input, guidance, support, and membership are important to the development of the data, products and services that you need.

Contact GCOOS Executive Director, Ann Jochens (ajochens@tamu.edu), to become a GCOOS member and for more information.

We welcome your feedback. If you have an item that you would like to share with others, please email that item to Laura Caldwell (lcaldwell@geos.tamu.edu).