



## NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF OF MEXICO COASTAL OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

### GCOOS NEWS AND UPDATES FOR 16 NOVEMBER 2012

#### GULF OF MEXICO REGIONAL NEWS

##### **Dedication Ceremony Held to Launch Two Exhibits Highlighting the Gulf of Mexico**

A Dedication Ceremony, followed by a reception, was held on 5 November 2012 at the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies (IMMS) Center for Marine Education and Research in Gulfport, MS to announce the opening of two new interactive exhibits. One exhibit, funded by the GCOOS-RA and created by the GCOOS Education and Outreach Council, is an interactive "Eco Hero" game involving creatures in the Gulf of Mexico and how this body of water serves as a nursery for many recreational and commercial fishes and invertebrates. The game, which weaves the need for sustained, integrated ocean monitoring throughout, has been designed to track answers to questions that will provide metrics on the public's understanding of critical science issues. The second exhibit, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency-Gulf of Mexico Program (EPA-GOMP) contains short videos and PSAs focused on the six, Gulf of Mexico Alliance priorities to help visitors become more aware and understand the environmental value of the Gulf of Mexico. These exhibits "bridge the gap" between research being conducted within the Gulf and the relevance of scientists' findings to our everyday lives. The IMMS interactive exhibit represents one of five similar exhibits being developed in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico states. Locations of the four additional exhibits include: the FL Aquarium in Tampa; the Dauphin Island Sea Lab south of Mobile, AL; the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas in New Orleans, LA; and the TX State Aquarium in Corpus Christi. Excepting IMMS, the others are representatives of Coastal America's Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers.

GCOOS Board of Directors members Joe Swaykos, Branch Chief, National Data Buoy Center, and Dr. Sharon Walker, IMMS Director of Education and Outreach, and Education and Outreach Coordinator Dr. Chris Simoniello, spoke on behalf of GCOOS. Mr. Ben Scaggs, Director of the EPA-GOMP, commented that, "creating opportunities for enhanced environmental education is essential in promoting a resilient and healthy Gulf Coast. The Gulf of Mexico Kiosk Exhibits will leave users with a heightened awareness of their role in preserving the Gulf of Mexico and will stimulate an interest in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEMs)." Simoniello stated, "balancing the ecological health of the Gulf of Mexico with activities that generate in excess of \$2 trillion of the Gross Domestic Product is a real challenge. The 'Eco Hero' game is intended to be a fun way to help people make the connection between the health of the ocean and the quality of their lives." Dr. Moby Solangi, IMMS President, and Walker both think these interactive exhibits will help guests become more responsible stewards and better understand the interconnectedness of all species.

##### **Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Trustees Call for Public Input on Next Round of Gulf Restoration**

The *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) trustees have released the *Deepwater Horizon Phase II Draft Early Restoration Plan & Environmental Review* (DERP/ER) for public review and comment. The plan includes two proposed projects totaling about \$9 million that focus on restoring nesting habitat for birds and sea turtles. Response efforts resulting from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill caused injuries to this natural habitat. The trustees held a public meeting on 13 November 2012 in Pensacola, FL, to obtain comments on the DERP/ER. The DERP/ER and a list of public repositories are available at <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov> and <http://www.doi.gov/deepwaterhorizon>. Comments will be taken until 10 December 2012. Comments may be submitted in the following ways: via the web at <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov>, for electronic submission of comments containing attachments

email to [fw4coastalDERPcomments@fws.gov](mailto:fw4coastalDERPcomments@fws.gov) or for U.S. Postal Mail send comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P. O. Box 2099, Fairhope, AL 36533. See [http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2012/pdfs/Press\\_Release\\_Draft%20Phase%20II\\_FINAL\\_7Nov%2012%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2012/pdfs/Press_Release_Draft%20Phase%20II_FINAL_7Nov%2012%20(1).pdf) for more information.

### **Texas A&M Oceanography Cruises Forward with Slocum Gliders (from TAMU Geosciences News)**

Texas A&M University's recent acquisition of two Slocum Gliders, a new, great tool in oceanography, means one thing: the TAMU Department of Oceanography is ready to move to the next level in ocean observing. Scientists will deploy the cylindrical-shaped devices to glide through the ocean collecting thousands of bits of data on their predetermined routes. "These gliders bring us into 21<sup>st</sup> century oceanography," said Dr. Steve DiMarco, an associate professor of Oceanography at TAMU. The gliders will greatly expand the College of Geosciences capabilities for research and ocean observing, say scientists in the Oceanography department and the Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG). These assets complement the College's other observing activities such as the Texas Automated Buoy System, Southern Ocean observations, and participation in the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System. The first test will come in spring 2013 when researchers will send the gliders from Galveston to the Flower Gardens coral reef about 100 miles southeast of their starting point.

### **Upcoming Seminar on Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Impacts**

Dr. Kim de Mutsert will be giving a NOAA video-accessible seminar on 27 November at 12 PM EST on "[Using Ecospace to Model Effects of Hypoxia on the Biomass of Living Marine Resources in the Northern Gulf of Mexico](#)". Additional information, including instructions for viewing the seminar remotely, can be found by clicking the seminar title. Dr. de Mutsert will be discussing advances to EcoSpace and Ewe software that are improving capabilities for assessing hypoxia impacts.

**Abstract:** The Northern Gulf of Mexico (NGOMEX) has the most prominent hypoxic zone in the U.S. as a result of Mississippi River water input. Given the high economic value of NGOMEX fisheries, it is important to investigate the effect of hypoxia on nekton communities, and to determine the need to include potential impacts of hypoxia on fisheries species in management efforts. To this purpose, a temporal and spatially dynamic ecosystem model (Ecospace) is developed using EwE software that includes key fisheries species, e.g. gulf shrimp, menhaden and red snapper, and the components of their food web (e.g. phyto- and zooplankton and other fish species). This presentation is an overview of the progress made developing Ecospace scenarios. This will include the introduction of some new capabilities in Ecospace that have been developed in conjunction with this project. This project is part of a larger effort to study the effects of hypoxia on living marine resources in the Gulf of Mexico (the CSCOR NGOMEX project), and is a product of collaboration.

### **BOEM Seeks Comments on Environmental Review for Central and Western Gulf of Mexico Lease Sales**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has completed a draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), providing updated environmental and socioeconomic analysis to support two proposed lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico. Western Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 233 is tentatively scheduled for 2013 in the Western Planning Area (WPA), offshore Texas; and Central Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 231 is scheduled for 2014 in the Central Planning Area (CPA), offshore the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. BOEM will hold public hearings to provide an opportunity for interested citizens and organizations to comment on the environmental impact statement. Comments will be used to prepare the final SEIS.

Public hearings on the environmental impact statements will be held at the following locations:

**Houston, Texas:** December 03, 2012, Houston Airport Marriott at George Bush Intercontinental, 18700 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77032, beginning at 1:00 p.m. CST;

**New Orleans, Louisiana:** December 04, 2012, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123, beginning at 1:00 p.m. CST;

**Gulfport, Mississippi:** December 05, 2012, Courtyard by Marriott Gulfport Beachfront MS Hotel, 1600 East Beach Boulevard, Gulfport, Mississippi 39501, beginning at 1:00 CST;

**Mobile, Alabama:** December 06, 2012, Five Rivers-Alabama's Delta Resource Center, 30945 Five Rivers Boulevard, Spanish Fort, Alabama 36527, beginning at 1:00 p.m. CST.

BOEM will also accept written comments on the SEIS from federal, state and local government agencies and other interested groups or individuals by email at [LS\\_233-231SEIS@boem.gov](mailto:LS_233-231SEIS@boem.gov), or by mail at:

Mr. Gary D. Goeke

Chief, Regional Assessment Section

Office of Environment (GM 623E)  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region  
1201 Elmwood Park Blvd.  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394

Comments should be submitted no later than 45 days following the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on 9 November 2012. The SEIS is available for review online at <http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Environmental-Assessment/NEPA/nepaprocess.aspx>. Copies are available from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Public Information Office (GM 250G), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 250, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF).

## IOOS/NATIONAL/LEGISLATIVE NEWS

### Weather Data From Nation's Largest Wind Farms Could Improve U.S. Models, Forecasts

Two of the nation's largest producers of wind-generated electric power will share privately-collected weather data with NOAA, providing agency scientists with additional observations from wind farms across the nation for research and operations. NOAA now has data sharing agreements with Iberdrola Renewables of Portland, OR, and NextEra Energy Resources of Juno Beach, FL—the country's two largest generators of wind-generated electric power, according to the American Wind Energy Association. The companies will provide valuable weather observations from instrumented towers in their wind farms and wind speed data from instruments atop wind turbines. Since 2011, Xcel Energy of Minneapolis, MN has provided similar observations to NOAA. [http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2012/20121114\\_windfarm.html](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2012/20121114_windfarm.html)

### Nominations Open for 2013 National Wetlands Awards

Since 1989, the National Wetlands Awards have brought national recognition and attention to over 150 outstanding individuals for their contributions to our nation's wetlands. You can nominate someone you know for these prestigious awards. Awards will be given to individuals in six categories. Nominees can only be nominated for one category in a given year. See <http://www.nationalwetlandsawards.org/> for more information.

### Webinar focuses on Wind Power in America

[Wind Powering America November Webinar: Offshore Wind Update](#) 21 November 2012, 3 p.m. ET This free webinar is part of the Energy Department's Wind Powering America 2012 webinar series. The webinar is free; no registration is required. Log-in information is below.

Audio access: [800-988-9387](tel:800-988-9387) Participant passcode: 5263973

Web access: <https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=RW9341550&p=5263973&t=c>

## EMPLOYMENT

### NOAA Climate Program Office, Director

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/329856500>

### Texas A&M University, Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG) and Oceanography Department:

GERG Director and Professor in Oceanography

Assistant Professor in Chemical Oceanography

<http://geosciences.tamu.edu/job-listing/faculty-jobs>

### College of William and Mary, Assistant Professor in Marine Chemistry

<https://jobs.wm.edu/>

### Maryland Sea Grant College Program, Assistant Director for Research

<http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/programs/about/employment/>

### Gulf Marine Research Institute, Front End Web Developer, Ocean Data Products

<http://www.gmri.org/about/careerItem.asp?c=18&ID=86>

## COMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

### 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 2013, New Orleans Marriott Hotel, New Orleans, LA.

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

### February

“[ASLO Aquatic Sciences Meeting](http://www.aslo.org/meetings/neworleans2013/)”, 17-22 February 2013, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA.

<http://www.aslo.org/meetings/neworleans2013/>

### March

GCOOS-RA Board of Directors Meeting, 13-14 March 2013, New Orleans, LA.

“[Coastal GeoTools Conference](http://geotools.csc.noaa.gov/default.aspx)”, 25-28 March 2013, Myrtle Beach, SC.

<http://geotools.csc.noaa.gov/default.aspx>

“[National Forum on Socioeconomic Research in Coastal Systems](http://www.cnrep.lsu.edu/)”, 24-26 November 2013, New Orleans, LA.

Abstracts are due 12 November 2012.

<http://www.cnrep.lsu.edu/>

### April

Inaugural National Adaptation Forum, 2-4 April 2013, Denver Marriott City Center, Denver, CO.

<http://www.nationaladaptationforum.org>

### May

“[Optimising Enhanced Oil Recovery](http://www.wplgroup.com/aci/conferences/eu-eor3.asp)”, 7-8 May 2013, Doha, Qatar.

<http://www.wplgroup.com/aci/conferences/eu-eor3.asp>

### June

“[World Conference on Disaster Management \(WCDM\)](http://www.wcdm.org/)”, 23-26 June 2013, Toronto, Canada.

<http://www.wcdm.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](mailto: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](mailto:lcaldwell@geos.tamu.edu)).