



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

### GCOOS NEWS AND UPDATES FOR 31 MAY 2013

#### GULF OF MEXICO REGIONAL NEWS

##### **Texas Sues BP, Transocean and Others over 2010 Gulf Oil Spill**

Texas sued British Petroleum, Transocean Ltd., Haliburton Co. and Anadarko Petroleum Corp. for violating Texas environmental laws and is seeking damages for economic losses resulting from the Macando *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill in 2010. Texas has asked for civil penalties for every day of oil discharge and every barrel that was dumped in the Gulf. The complaint was filed in U.S. District Court in Beaumont on 17 May 2013.

##### **Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council releases Draft Initial Comprehensive Plan: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy**

The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council marked significant progress with the public release of the Draft Initial Comprehensive Plan: Restoring the Gulf Coast's Ecosystem and Economy and accompanying Draft Environmental Assessment for formal public comment. The Draft Plan provides a framework to implement a coordinated region-wide restoration effort in a way that restores, protects, and revitalizes the Gulf Coast region following the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. The Council expects to release a Final Plan this summer. The Council is hosting a series of public engagement sessions in each of the five impacted Gulf States in June to give the public the opportunity to provide input on the Draft Plan and the Council's restoration planning efforts. The 30-day [formal public comment](#) period for the Draft Plan and associated documents began on 23 May and ends 24 June. Public meetings to discuss the Draft Plan are scheduled for the following dates and locations:

- 3 June 2013: Pensacola, Florida
- 5 June 2013: Spanish Fort, Alabama
- 10 June 2013: Galveston, Texas
- 11 June 2013: Biloxi, Mississippi
- 12 June 2013: Belle Chasse, Louisiana
- 17 June 2013: St. Petersburg, Florida

<http://www.restorethegulf.gov/release/2013/05/23/gulf-coast-ecosystem-restoration-council-releases-draft-initial-comprehensive-pla>

Gulf Coast Educators: Please read and comment on the education objective #6 "Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education".

##### **Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference Solicits Proposals**

Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference organizers are soliciting proposals from the scientific community that address conference themes (physical processes, GOM ecosystems, technology, socioeconomic conditions and public health, management and policy, education and outreach) and integrative topics. Guidelines can be found at <http://gulfofmexicoconference.org/program/scientific-sessions/>. This year's conference will be held at the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile, AL. from 27-29 January 2014. Conference registration and abstract submission will open in mid-June.

##### **Endangered Sea Turtle Feeding Grounds Discovered in Gulf**

The favored feeding grounds of the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle coincide with some Gulf of Mexico waters that are subject to oil spills, extensive commercial fishing and oxygen depletion. These first-of-their-kind details on foraging locations and migration patterns of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle are from a new

National Park Service and U.S. Geological Survey [study](#), providing resource managers new information on how best to manage the species. Scientists do not know why the turtles feed where they do, how human influences may affect turtle health or behavior, or whether human impacts on their chosen feeding areas might change their future foraging behavior. The researchers identified the feeding grounds of the Kemp's ridley, considered the most endangered and smallest hard-shelled sea turtle in the world, by analyzing 13 years of satellite-tracking data. The researchers tagged turtles at nesting sites between 1998 and 2011 and tracked them as they went on to foraging locations throughout the Gulf. Turtles from two major nesting sites in the study fed at specific locations off the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi and at other locations in the Gulf.  
<http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=3602-.UaUAsetyc78>

## IOOS/NATIONAL/LEGISLATIVE NEWS

### NOAA's Predicts Active 2013 Atlantic Hurricane Season

[NOAA's Climate Prediction Center](#) is forecasting an active or extremely active season this year in its 2013 Atlantic hurricane season outlook. For the six-month hurricane season, which begins 1 June, NOAA's Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook says there is a 70 percent likelihood of 13 to 20 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which seven to eleven could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including three to six major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5; winds of 111 mph or higher). These ranges are well above the seasonal average of twelve named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes. New for this hurricane season are improvements to forecast models, data gathering, and the [National Hurricane Center](#) communication procedure for post-tropical cyclones. In July, NOAA plans to bring online a new supercomputer that will run an upgraded Hurricane Weather Research and Forecasting (HWRF) model that provides significantly enhanced depictions of storm structure and improved storm intensity forecast guidance.  
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>  
<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

### New NOAA Report Examines National Oil Pollution Threat from Shipwrecks

NOAA presented the U.S. Coast Guard with a new report that finds that 36 sunken vessels scattered across the U.S. seafloor could pose an oil pollution threat to the nation's coastal marine resources. Of those, 17 were recommended for further assessment and potential removal of both fuel oil and oil cargo. The sunken vessels are a legacy of more than a century of U.S. commerce and warfare. To see a list of the ships and their locations, visit: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/protect/ppw/>.

### Mark Schaeffer Nominated for NOAA Post

On 23 May, President Obama nominated Dr. Mark Schaeffer to fill the post of Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, Department of Commerce. Dr. Schaeffer served as assistant director for the environment in the Office of Science and Technology Policy from 1993 to 1996. Currently he serves as Deputy Executive Director for environmental conflict resolution at the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation.

### Presentations Available from the National Climate Assessment Workshop

Many of the [presentations](#) from the National Climate Assessment workshop held in Washington, D.C. in April are now available on-line. The major themes from this workshop were:

- Learning about National Climate Assessment, discussing key findings in the Oceans and Marine Resources chapter and the Coastal Zone Development and Ecosystems chapter of the draft Third National Climate Assessment Report, and learning about the goals of sustaining the National Climate Assessment;
- Sharing knowledge and information about local, regional, and national efforts to study and responding to the impacts of climate change in the oceans and coasts;
- Collaborating with other meeting participants to identify ways to participate in the long-term National Climate Assessment process; and
- Identifying useful and practical pathways for which sustained assessments of coasts and oceans will benefit individuals and their communities.

<https://sites.google.com/a/usgcrp.gov/nca-workshop-on-sustaining-national-climate-assessments-of-oceans-and-coasts/agenda>

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

GIS Coordinator, Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve  
<http://grandbaynerr.org/archives/2076>

## COMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

### June

[EPA Webinar Series on Climate Change Adaptation](http://climate-adaptation-symposium.org/index.html), 3-12 June 2013.  
<http://climate-adaptation-symposium.org/index.html>

["Capitol Hill Oceans Week"](http://nmsfocean.org/CHOW-2013), 4-6 June 2013, Knight Conference Center, Washington, D.C.  
<http://nmsfocean.org/CHOW-2013>

["OCEANS'13 MTS/IEEE Bergen"](http://www.oceans13mtsieeebergen.org), 13-15 June 2013, Bergen, Norway  
<http://www.oceans13mtsieeebergen.org>

["2013 Rising Seas Summit"](http://www.sealevelrisesummit.org), 18-20 June 2013, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
<http://www.sealevelrisesummit.org>

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

["Gulf of Mexico Alliance All-Hands Meeting"](http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e6w82a9z0205fc34&llr=thgzaleab), 25-27 June 2013, Tampa Bay, FL  
<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e6w82a9z0205fc34&llr=thgzaleab>

["AGU Science Policy Conference"](http://spc.agu.org/2013/), 24-26 June 2013, Washington, DC. Registration deadline 31 May 2013  
<http://spc.agu.org/2013/>

### July

["2013 Gulf Coast Restoration Summit"](http://www.gulfcoastrestorationsummit.org/about-the-summit/) 1 July 2013, New Orleans, LA.  
<http://www.gulfcoastrestorationsummit.org/about-the-summit/>

["National Marine Educators Association"](http://nmea.disl.org/), 22-26 July 2013, Mobile, AL.  
<http://nmea.disl.org/>

### September

"GCOOS-RA Board of Directors Meeting" 25-26 September 2013, University of Alabama at Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

["ADCs in Action Conference"](http://www.rdinstruments.com/AIA_abstract_submission.aspx), 29 September – 2 October 2013, San Diego, CA  
[http://www.rdinstruments.com/AIA\\_abstract\\_submission.aspx](http://www.rdinstruments.com/AIA_abstract_submission.aspx)

### October

["OCEANS'13 MTS/IEEE" San Diego](http://www.oceans13mtsieeesandiego.org/), 23 – 26 September, San Diego, CA  
<http://www.oceans13mtsieeesandiego.org/>

### December

["AGU 2013 Fall Meeting"](http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2013/), 9-13 December 2013, San Francisco, CA.  
<http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2013/>

2014

January

"Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference", 27-29 January 2014, Mobile, AL  
<http://gulfofmexicoconference.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)).