



NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF OF MEXICO COASTAL OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

GCOOS NEWS AND UPDATES FOR 16 DECEMBER 2013

GULF OF MEXICO REGIONAL NEWS

Happy Holidays from GCOOS

With sincere appreciation for your commitment to all who live, work, and play in the Gulf of Mexico, the GCOOS-RA wishes you and yours a joyous holiday season and a New Year filled with peace, health, and happiness. We are thankful for all you do and look forward to continued collaborations in the coming year.

GCOOS Granted Federal Non-profit Status

The GCOOS-RA is pleased to announce that we have received federal tax-exempt status as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation, retroactive to 24 February 2012. The incorporation means that the GCOOS-RA will have new opportunities to build on existing infrastructure and capabilities to create a comprehensive, regional ocean observing system in the Gulf of Mexico. Jan Van Smirren, President, GCOOS-RA Board of Directors, stated, "Receiving 501 (c) (3) status will allow GCOOS the agility, efficiency and flexibility going forward to more effectively represent the needs of our stakeholders, and reflects that true goals of the association: to build an effective and sustainable observing system in the Gulf of Mexico for the public good."

The GCOOS-RA is the fifth U.S. IOOS Regional Association to achieve non-profit status; NERACOOS, MARACOOS, SECOORA, and GLOS are all non-profit corporations. Debra Hernandez, Executive Director of SECOORA, stated, "being a nonprofit conveys an inherent message that your primary mission relates to advancing public good, and that you are not a direct competitor with industry or academic institutions. Rather, the culture is to be inclusive and seek partnerships to advance common goals related to coastal and ocean observations." The GCOOS-RA has a long history of assessing the ocean monitoring needs of diverse stakeholders and developing partnerships to implement solutions. The non-profit status will reinforce that the sole purpose of a regional ocean monitoring system is to benefit the public.

Request for Nominations of Directors of the GCOOS-RA Board

The Membership Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System Regional Association (GCOOS-RA) is seeking nominations of persons willing to serve on our Board of Directors. We are seeking individuals interested in and committed to working within an organization dedicated to provide data, information and products on a non-discriminatory basis to the Gulf of Mexico "stakeholder" community that includes, but is not limited to, the private sector, governmental agencies at all levels, academia and researchers, non-governmental organizations, and the general public. We believe that this goal will help improve the quality of life of residents and visitors to the Gulf of Mexico, improve safety and efficiency of marine operations, improve resilience to natural hazards and environmental disasters, preserve and restore healthy marine ecosystems, maintain homeland security and sustain renewable and non-renewable marine resources. The Corporation can only be effective and meet stakeholder needs if the 15-member Board is comprised of energetic persons committed to achieving the Corporation's goals. For more information, visit <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=5878>.

BOEM and Louisiana Coastal Marine Institute Begin Economic Study in the Gulf of Mexico

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), in partnership with the Coastal Marine Institute at Louisiana State University (LSU), has launched an three-year economic study of the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS). The three-year cooperative project between BOEM and the LSU will enhance our

understanding of the social and economic value of GCOOS, while providing decision makers the data necessary to plan for future changes to the system.

Having fully aggregated, integrated and searchable ocean and atmospheric information available prior to, during, and following catastrophic events has significant implications for the forecasts directed at saving lives, property, and ecosystem function. This was demonstrated repeatedly by events such as Hurricanes Ike, Isaac, Katrina, Rita, Sandy, and the Macondo oil spill. From an economic perspective, the nominal investment made to date in observing systems has great value to society. Yet, the benefits the system provides to both direct users of the data and the public-at-large have not been accurately quantified. Activities associated with the Gulf of Mexico account for more than \$2.2 trillion in ocean-related revenue.

The current study will not only assess the value of GCOOS during catastrophic events, but for routine operations of U.S. Gulf of Mexico activities that include 11 of the top 15 U.S. tonnage ports, four of the top seven fishing ports by weight, 20% of domestic crude oil and about 5% of natural gas production, and a tourism industry exceeding \$34 billion annually. For more on this story please visit <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=5861>.

GCOOS Member Highlight – Navarre Beach Marine Science Station

This month's highlight focuses on the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station in Florida. In late 2008, marine science students in the local Pensacola community held a town hall meeting and presented the need for an educational environment for marine sciences to the Santa Rosa County (SRC) Board of Commissioners and the SRC School Board. The students' efforts were successful and generated a large, positive community response, which led to obtaining the Navarre Beach Marine Station in spring 2009. Since the official opening in August 2009, the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station hosted over 4,000 students and community members for programs and activities concerning the local marine environments in the Pensacola area. Click here to read more about the types of programs, including the many environmental improvement programs, now offered to students from K-12 to university and community members!

Find the entire showcase at <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=5831>.

Meet the GCOOS Board of Directors – Dr. Barbara Kirkpatrick, Mote Marine Laboratory

Each month, GCOOS is spotlighting a Board Member. December's spotlight is on Dr. Barbara Kirkpatrick, Senior Scientist and Program Manager at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida. Mote Marine Lab and Dr. Kirkpatrick have been GCOOS members since 2005. In addition to twice being a Board Member, first representing the Education and Outreach sector and currently as a Private Sector representative, Dr. Kirkpatrick serves on the GCOOS Education and Outreach Council and Public Health Task Team, and has been an instrumental leader in numerous GCOOS efforts, including the composition of the GCOOS Buildout Plan, publication of 'A Primer on Gulf of Mexico Harmful Algal Blooms', (http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?page_id=5609) and the creation of the GCOO*Eco Hero* game. Dr. Kirkpatrick's recent research efforts focus on harmful algal blooms and human health effects, specifically the development of tools to report beach conditions in Florida and the respiratory effects of red tide toxins.

Please visit <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=5824> to learn more about Dr. Kirkpatrick's background, research, and environmental activities in the Gulf and what she looks forward to most by serving on the GCOOS Board of Directors!

GCOOS Gulf Glider Showcase Part 3 – Mote Marine Laboratory

GCOOS is currently highlighting academic, government, and industry partners' glider operations in the Gulf of Mexico. The third part of the glider showcase focuses on a Florida research institution – Mote Marine Laboratory. Mote Marine Laboratory is an active GCOOS partner and leader in glider research to detect harmful algal blooms in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Gliders operated by Mote Marine Laboratory include state-of-the-art phytoplankton sensors, known as Optical Phytoplankton Discriminators or BreveBusters and glider missions are operated monthly to monitor potential and existing blooms in Florida coastal waters. Visit <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=5844> to read the entire showcase article and to learn more about Mote Marine Laboratory's current glider operations and plans for improving harmful algal bloom monitoring in the Gulf.

Special Note – Updates, including glider data plots, have been added to the Gulf Glider Showcase Part 2 – Gliders in Industry. Part 2 highlights Horizon Marine's glider operations in the Gulf. Visit <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=5807> to check out these great updates!

GCOOS Updating Regional Observing and Monitoring Plan – Ecosystem Monitoring Experts Needed

GCOOS is updating the Build-Out plan, a regional observing and monitoring plan. Among many updates to the plan, we are adding an ecosystem monitoring section. This section will cover many topics, including fish, sea turtles, marine mammals, plankton, habitats, and monitoring for restoration projects. If you are interested in helping write or review any of these sections, please contact Stephanie Watson at Watson.voparil@gmail.com.

Happy 40th Anniversary to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's Environmental Studies Program!

This month, GCOOS congratulates the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) on the 40th Anniversary of their Environmental Studies Program (ESP). In the last 40 years, BOEM's ESP has made significant contributions to the understanding of the Gulf of Mexico's ecosystem and economy. Since 1973, BOEM (and its predecessor agencies) has funded nearly \$1 billion in research nationwide, culminating in more than 3,300 research reports. BOEM's Gulf of Mexico OCS Region alone has funded more than \$350 million in research since the 1970's. BOEM funds studies from a broad variety of scientific disciplines and subjects related to offshore energy and marine mineral development such as: air quality, archaeology and cultural resources, biology, corals, chemosynthetic communities, the deepwater environment, ecology, fisheries, marine mammals and protected species, marine minerals, meteorology, oil spill research, physical oceanography, socioeconomics, and water quality. Read more at <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=5854>.

NRDA Trustees Propose \$627 Million in New Restoration Projects

The Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) Trustees have released a draft plan for the third phase of Early Restoration. The draft plan proposes more than \$625 million in new early restoration projects across the Gulf States—making this the largest phase of Early Restoration yet. The draft plan also outlines the Trustees' proposed programmatic approach to early restoration planning for Phase III and future early restoration plans. The draft plan is available for public review and comment through 4 February 2014. Included in the draft are 44 proposed projects that aim to restore barrier islands, dunes, marshes, shorelines, seagrasses, and oyster beds. They also begin to address lost recreational use of natural resources through boat ramps, park enhancements, and other projects. View the draft plan and fact sheets at (<http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration/early-restoration/phase-iii/>) for each project. For more, please see <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/2013/12/trustees-propose-627-million-in-new-restoration-projects/>

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Announces Funds for Restoration Projects on the Gulf Coast

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced today the award of more than \$100 million from its Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (Gulf Fund) to 22 projects in the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The projects, developed in consultation with state and federal resource agencies, are designed to remedy harm and reduce the risk of future harm to natural resources that were affected by the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. The announcement represents the initial obligation of funds available to support projects in each state from the first payments received by the Gulf Fund. NFWF created the Gulf Fund earlier this year as the vehicle to receive and administer funds resulting from remedial orders in the plea agreements between the U.S. Department of Justice and BP and Transocean. The plea agreements resolved certain criminal charges against both companies relating to the 2010 oil spill. Provisions within the agreements direct a total of \$2.544 billion to NFWF over a five-year period to be used to support projects that remedy harm to natural resources in the Gulf States. For more on this story go to [http://www.nfwf.org/whoware/mediacenter/pr/Pages/NFWF-Announces-\\$8-2-million-for-Gulf-Restoration-Projects-in-Mississippi.aspx](http://www.nfwf.org/whoware/mediacenter/pr/Pages/NFWF-Announces-$8-2-million-for-Gulf-Restoration-Projects-in-Mississippi.aspx)

NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program Completes Science Plan Framework

After receiving stakeholder input on the June 2013 draft, the NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program has completed its Science Plan Framework, (http://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/RESTOREScienceProgramFramework_Final_2013_12.pdf). The Framework describes NOAA's intent, purpose, and rationale for how the agency will implement the program authorized by the RESTORE Act. The Framework will help define the short-term priorities of the program and will provide the foundation for the development of a robust Science Plan to guide program implementation and map the long-term science of the program. The Science Plan will be developed over the next year. There will be many opportunities to provide feedback on the Science Plan over the course of its development through workshops, virtual engagement sessions, and a formal comment period. Additionally, NOAA always welcomes input at noaarestorescience@noaa.gov.

National Academy of Sciences' Gulf Research Program Virtual Input Meeting is On-line

If you were unable to participate in the National Academy of Sciences' Gulf Research Program's Virtual Input meeting on 5 December, you can stream a recording of the webinar at

<https://nasevents.webex.com/ec07011/eventcenter/recording/recordAction.do?theAction=poprecord&AT=pb&isurlact=true&renewticket=0&recordID=7885767&apiname=lsr.php&rKey=91e4367079045a46&needFilter=false&format=short&&SP=EC&rID=7885767&siteurl=nasevents&acta>

IOOS/NATIONAL/LEGISLATIVE NEWS

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Proposes Eastern Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Lease Sale

BOEM announced that it will hold Gulf of Mexico Eastern Planning Area oil and gas lease sale 225 in New Orleans on 19 March 2014, immediately following the proposed Central Planning Area (CPA) Sale 231. Proposed Sale 225 is the first lease sale proposed for the Eastern Planning Area under the 2012 - 2017 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Natural Gas Leasing Program, and the first sale offering acreage in that area since Sale 224, held in March of 2008. The proposed sale encompasses 134 whole or partial unleased blocks covering approximately 465,200 acres in the Eastern Planning Area. The blocks are located at least 125 statute miles offshore in water depths ranging from 2,657 feet (810 meters) to 10,213 feet (3,113 meters). The area is bordered by the Central Planning Area boundary on the West and the Military Mission Line (86° 41'W) on the East. It is south of eastern Alabama and western Florida; the nearest point of land is 125 miles northwest in Louisiana. BOEM estimates the proposed lease sale could result in the production of 71 million barrels of oil and 162 billion cubic feet of natural gas. For more please see <http://www.boem.gov/Press12032013/>

Science of Oil Spills Training Now Accepting Applications for Spring 2014

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, a leader in providing scientific information in response to marine pollution, has scheduled a Science of Oil Spills (SOS) class for the week of 3-7 March 2014, at NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Disaster Response Center in Mobile, Ala. Applications for this class will be accepted through Friday, 17 January 2014, and applicants will be notified regarding their participation status by Friday, 31 January 2014. SOS classes help spill responders increase their understanding of oil spill science when analyzing spills and making risk-based decisions. For more information, and to learn how to apply for the class, please see http://oceanleadership.org/science-oil-spills-training-now-accepting-applications-spring-2014/-utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+OceanLeadership+%28Consortium+for+Ocean+Leadership%29&utm_content=Facebook .

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Assistant Professor in Physical Oceanography, The University of Southern Mississippi

<https://jobs.usm.edu>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative RFP-IV – Pre-proposals Due 15 January 2014

The purpose of the 2015-2017 GoMRI Research Consortia RFP is to select the research activities for GoMRI Years 5-7 (1 January 2015-31 December 2017) involving Research Consortia, defined as a contractual arrangement between a PI and co-PIs at four or more institutions. The total funds available for distribution to Research Consortia through the 2015-2017 GoMRI Research Consortia RFP will be approximately \$35 million per year.

The major research themes to be addressed in RFP-IV are:

1. Physical distribution, dispersion, and dilution of petroleum (oil and gas), its constituents, and associated contaminants (e.g., dispersants) under the action of physical oceanographic processes, air-sea interactions, and tropical storms.
2. Chemical evolution and biological degradation of the petroleum/dispersant systems and subsequent interaction with coastal, open-ocean, and deep-water ecosystems.
3. Environmental effects of the petroleum/dispersant system on the sea floor, water column, coastal waters, beach sediments, wetlands, marshes, and organisms; and the science of ecosystem recovery.

4. Technology developments for improved response, mitigation, detection, characterization, and remediation associated with oil spills and gas releases.
5. Impact of oil spills on public health including behavioral, socioeconomic, environmental risk assessment, community capacity and other population health considerations and issues.

Each Research Consortium proposal is expected to develop and enunciate a clear plan to address any one of these themes or a cross-disciplinary program of work involving a grouping of some of these themes. For more on this please see <http://gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-iv/> .

Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Program 2014 Request for Proposals

The Five Star/Urban Waters Restoration Program (<http://www.nfwf.org/fivestar/Pages/2014rfp.aspx>) seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources for future generations by providing modest financial assistance to diverse local partnerships for wetland, forest, riparian and coastal habitat restoration, storm water management, outreach and stewardship with a particular focus on water quality, watersheds and the habitats they support. The National Association of Counties, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC), in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USDA Forest Service (USFS), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Southern Company, FedEx and PG&E, are pleased to solicit applications for the 2014 Five Star/Urban Waters Restoration Program. In 2014, NFWF anticipates that approximately \$1,800,000 in combined total Five Star/Urban Waters funding will be available. Each funder in this Request for Proposals has specific requirements for projects supported by their program. NFWF will match up every application to all funding sources applicable to that project's activities, location and project type. Please read each section carefully to ensure that your project will fit with one or more possible sources of funding. All projects must include diverse community partners, have an environmental conservation and stewardship focus and articulate measurable outcomes. NFWF may use a mix of public and private funding sources to support any grant made through this program. There is only one application through the NFWF Easygrants system. Applications can be accessed at www.nfwf.org/easygrants.

Georgetown Climate Center

The Georgetown Climate Center (GCC) is seeking applications from government entities (or NGOs working with government entities) that need legal or policy support to identify or implement adaptation policies. Examples of previous GCC projects include model codes, analyses of legal authority, toolkits, and more. Applications will be accepted through Friday, 3 January 2014, and they will be announcing selected projects by the end of January 2014. This assistance is made possible by the generous support of the Kresge Foundation. Applications can be found at <http://www.georgetownclimate.org/application-for-requesting-in-kind-legal-and-policy-support-for-adaptation-projects-from-the-georget>

SERDP Solicits Proposals for FY 2015 Funding

SERDP released solicitations on 7 November 2013, seeking proposals for FY 2015 funding. Through a Federal Call for Proposals and a Broad Agency Announcement, funds are available through a competitive process to both Federal and private sector organizations to perform basic and applied research and advanced technology development. Core SERDP projects vary in cost and duration, consistent with the scope of the work proposed. The Statements of Need (SON) referenced by this solicitation request proposals related to the SERDP program areas of Environmental Restoration (ER), Munitions Response (MR), Resource Conservation and Climate Change (RC), and Weapons Systems and Platforms (WP). All Core pre-proposals are due 9 January 2014. Detailed instructions and the SONs are available at www.serdp-estcp.org/Funding-Opportunities/SERDP-Solicitations.

COMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

January

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

February

"94th Annual Meeting of the American Meteorology Society", 2-6 February 2014, Atlanta, GA
<http://annual.ametsoc.org/2014/>

“2014 Ocean Science Meeting (with AGU, ASLO and TOS)”, 22-28 February 2014, Honolulu, HI.
<http://www.sgmeet.com/osm2014/default.asp>

“World Ocean Summit”, 24-26 February 2014, San Francisco, CA.
<http://www.economistconferences.asia/event/world-ocean-summit-2014>

March

“Summit 2014 –State of the Gulf of Mexico”, 24-27 March 2014, Omni Hotel Galleria, Houston, TX.
<http://www.sgsummit.org>

“GCOOS Board of Directors and Members Meeting”, 17 March 2014, Tallahassee, FL. Details TBD.

May

“2014 Coastal Bend Hurricane Conference”, 7-8 May 2014, Richard M. Borchard Regional Fairgrounds, Robstown, TX.

July

“Conference on Ecological and Ecosystem Restoration”, 28 July – 1 August 2014, Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, LA. <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/CEER2014/links.html>

November

“7th National Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration and 24th Biennial Meeting of the Coastal Society”, 1-5 November 2014, Gaylord National Convention Center, Washington, D.C.
<http://www.estuaries.org/summit>



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).