



COASTAL AMERICA UPDATE

Winter-Summer Issue

2009

WELCOME NANCY H. SUTLEY, CHAIR, WHITE HOUSE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Coastal America welcomes our new Coastal America Partnership Chair, Nancy H. Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and senior environmental advisor to the President.

In her role as Coastal America Chair, Ms. Sutley will provide guidance to the Partnership as our members work to achieve coastal and marine restoration and protection goals.

On February 11, Coastal America federal, corporate and nongovernmental partners had the opportunity to meet with her and discuss the Partnership and her new role as Chair of Coastal America. Following the meeting, Chair Sutley provided a letter of support to the Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership (CWRP) Executive Board Chair, Pat Hester. Her letter of support may be viewed at www.coastalamerica.gov.



Coastal America partners meet with Nancy H. Sutley (standing, left), Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality.

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2009 PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

Since 1997, the Coastal America Awards Program has recognized outstanding collaborative projects and excellence in leadership for protecting, preserving and restoring the nation's coastal resources and ecosystems.

Partners are encouraged to submit nominations for Partnership, Spirit, and Special Recognition awards. The 2009 call for Partnership Award nominations **closes July 31**. Nomination forms and information can be found at our awards page at www.coastalamerica.gov.

“I applaud and support you in your efforts to bring together collective resources to meet common goals and better our coastal environment.”

*President Barack Obama
April 14, 2009
Coastal America Partnership Award
Letter of Congratulations*

Helping Achieve Collaborative and Open Government through the Coastal America Partnership

In the first days of his Presidency, Barack Obama issued a memorandum to the heads of all executive departments and agencies clearly stating his desire that government be transparent, participatory and collaborative. This memorandum was followed in June by his proclamation of Oceans Month, 2009.

The Coastal America Partnership was originally created as a way to foster more efficient and open government, allowing for collaboration among federal and state government agencies, corporations, citizens, and nonprofits. Seventeen years ago, the original architects of the Partnership set out to design an innovative process to achieve mutual goals of protecting, preserving and restoring the coastal and marine environment. Coastal America's partners can reflect proudly on our long and successful history practicing the elements of collaborative government in service of our most important coastal and marine resources.

The Partnership looks forward to working with our new leadership to support implementation of the President's directive.

Virginia K. Tippie
Director, Coastal America

Coastal America's 2005-2008 Progress Report Now Available

Our most recent Progress Report may be downloaded from our website at www.coastalamerica.gov or paper copies are available by contacting coastalamerica@usda.gov.

Presidential Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

“Government should be collaborative. Collaboration actively engages Americans in the work of their Government. Executive departments and agencies should use innovative tools, methods, and systems to cooperate among themselves, across all levels of Government, and with nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals in the private sector. Executive departments and agencies should solicit public feedback to assess and improve their level of collaboration and to identify new opportunities for cooperation.”

*Barack Obama
January 21, 2009*

Coastal America Director Participates in ‘America Speaks’

Thirty-four managers from 23 different federal agencies and departments came together on March 30-31 to develop recommendations for the President's Open Government Directive. Virginia K. Tippie, Director of Coastal America, was among the invited participants. Those at the working session shared a deep commitment to engaging and empowering the nation's citizens. Together, they brought to the discussion a wealth of experience in public participation, collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution.

During the working meeting, participants discussed their hopes and concerns for the President's Open Government Directive and developed key indicators for evaluating the Directive's progress. They also identified opportunities and barriers to be addressed by the Directive, and developed recommendations, as well as potential pilot implementation projects.

“Champions of Participation” was convened by AmericaSpeaks, Demos,

Everyday Democracy, and The Ash Institute of Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The working session was made possible by a generous grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Updating Coastal America's Memorandum of Understanding

Coastal America's national team has begun the process of developing recommendations for revisiting Coastal America's foundational Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A work group composed of national team members is developing proposed elements for both a new foundational mission MOU among federal and non-federal partners, as well as a second, more detailed, federal partner commitments MOU, outlining agency and departmental roles and renewing commitments to the Partnership. Draft MOU recommendations reflecting the President's commitments to open and collaborative government, and his ocean and coastal priorities, will be readied for review this fall.



New Coastal America Website

Coastal America's website, www.coastalamerica.gov is new and improved! The brand new website, under development for some time, went live earlier this year. The website's redesign and more frequent updates have attracted increasing visitor traffic. Among the many upgrades that make the new website worth visiting are a more accessible and user friendly interface, an updated mission statement and a popular new section called "Latest News and Events." The new home page carries an inspirational quotation from President Obama's January 21, 2009 memorandum on Open Government, directing federal agencies to act collaboratively – a defining characteristic of the Coastal America partnership!

We are especially excited to report that the Ocean Art Contest page has received thousands of hits since it was launched. The Art Contest has proven

to be a very effective way to convey ocean literacy principles as the students' work continues to attract, inspire and educate. Work will soon begin on the second Student Art Contest. Check the website for updates as we move forward on this exciting project!

Ocean Today Kiosk Expansion



The Governor of Veracruz (center), with the U.S. delegation at the Ocean Today Kiosk.

On April 22, the Governor of Veracruz, Fidel Herrera Beltran, unveiled the Aquarium's newest exhibit, the Ocean Today Kiosk (Kiosk). The Veracruz

Aquarium is the first of Coastal America's Learning Center network members to install a Kiosk following the five pilot sites launched in September 2008. The expansion of the Ocean Today Kiosk project was made possible by a generous hardware donation from the Panasonic Corporation. Shipment of the Kiosk hardware for the expansion was provided by the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP).

The Veracruz Kiosk is a stunning addition to the Aquarium, inspiring and educating visitors and generating positive feedback. The new installation allows U.S. government institutions to reach an important international audience with relevant ocean and coastal messages, data and information. In addition, Veracruz Aquarium staff have translated several videos into Spanish. These Spanish translations are now being made available to all of the Kiosks in the Learning Center network, greatly expanding their reach and impact.

Regional Implementation Team Updates

Northeast (NERIT)

In early 2009, the NERIT coordinated the identification of new projects throughout New England that align with the Northeast Regional Ocean Council Ecosystem Health Subcommittee Guidelines. The team especially sought projects utilizing two or three of Coastal America's tools (e.g., CWRP and Learning Centers). Some of the identified projects were eligible for federal stimulus (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA) funds; others will go through the traditional federal agency funding processes. The NERIT will continue working closely with the CWRP and Learning Center network to encourage continued funding for environmental education projects, to implement dam removals, restore anadromous fisheries and fund salt

marsh education/restoration projects. Several of the projects are expected to also align with the military's innovative readiness training (IRT) program which provides training opportunities for the military while also accomplishing important habitat work.

In addition, several exciting projects are underway in the Northeast region that are ecological priorities for both state and federal resources agencies. An ambitious and significant collaborative effort to restore the Herring River watershed on Cape Cod, MA is being led by the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and

Environment, with the support of multiple town organizations. In a second project, University of Rhode Island researchers are transplanting oysters into Town Pond to help restore the natural system. Both the Herring River and Town Pond projects are also being supported by their states' CWRP Chapters.

Two other projects of interest include the EPA Ocean Survey Vessel Bold visit, as well as another construction ready project, Broad Meadows Marsh. This summer, the NERIT will coordinate with the Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration to host an educational day onboard the Bold where students will explore the vessel and interact with Coastal America's partner agency

(see page 4 – Regional Updates)



(from page 3 – Regional Updates)

representatives. The Broad Meadows Marsh project will restore an 80 acre dredged material disposal site to salt marsh and coastal grassland in Quincy, MA.

Gulf of Mexico (GMRIT)

On April 22, Bryon Griffith, GMRIT Chair and Director of EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program Office (GMPO) signed a vital new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and the Veracruz Aquarium Learning Center. Also in attendance were GMPO staff and representatives from NOAA and the Northern Gulf Institute, and officials from Veracruz, Mexico, including Governor Fidel Herrera Beltran, the Secretary of Health; as well as other state officials and leadership from the Veracruz Aquarium. The agreement formalizes a partnership to share information regarding water quality and harmful algal bloom evaluation methodologies, research and data. With the agreement in place, plans are now underway to install three water quality monitoring station buoys off the coast of Veracruz. As a result of the MOU, government researchers from the U.S. and Mexico will be equipped to work together to analyze important harmful algal blooms information and other data.

Mid-Atlantic Governors Form New Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO)

On June 4, the Governors of five Mid-Atlantic states signed a pact to create the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO), articulating mutual priorities, guiding principles, and shared actions. MARCO members will work to maintain and improve the health of Mid-Atlantic ocean and coastal resources from New York to Virginia. The Governors also agreed to collaborate to improve energy security and independence in the region through development of offshore

renewable energy. Other MARCO priorities include: increased protection of unique and sensitive offshore habitats; climate change and sea level rise; increasing federal support for water quality infrastructure improvements; and reducing marine debris. Representatives of both MARIT North and South attended the event. Visit the MARCO website to view the agreement at: <http://www.midatlanticocean.org/index.htm>.

Mid-Atlantic North (MARIT – North)

MARIT-North welcomes Roselle Henn, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), as new co-chair of the Team, and welcomes back John Wright, former founding MARIT co-chair. Roselle is Environmental Team Leader with the North Atlantic Division. John Wright, who retired from the USACE in 2008, has accepted a contract with the Corps that will allow him to continue to represent the Corps on MARIT matters.

Mid-Atlantic South (MARIT-South)

MARIT-South is working with the MD CWRP on the Hail Cove Living Shoreline Restoration project on Maryland's Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. This project will reduce erosion while preserving prime habitat for the waterfowl and shellfish vital to the Chesapeake Bay's natural functioning, culture and economy. The seventeen project partners include some of the Chesapeake Bay's most capable shoreline restoration and wetland conservation groups. The project also includes planting of marsh grasses by volunteers from the National Aquarium, a Coastal America Learning Center. A celebratory event for the project is being planned for September 10.

In addition, the EPA Bold was opened to the public on July 14 while visiting Philadelphia, PA. The public visitation followed a 2-week EPA Region III

ocean survey operation originating in Norfolk, VA.

Southeast (SERIT)

The Coastal America SERIT membership list has recently been updated, and a full meeting of the SERIT is being planned for late July or early August.



OSV Bold visits Savannah, Georgia.

The meeting will be held at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, one of the region's Learning Centers.

On April 9 and 10, an open house was held aboard EPA's Bold, while docked along River Street in Savannah, Georgia. The public was invited aboard the ship to tour, meet EPA divers and researchers, look at dive gear, laboratories, the information center, and ship's bridge. This event was well received, with approximately 750 people visiting the ship.

Southwest (SWRIT)

On June 10, the States of California, Oregon and Washington released eight draft work plans for the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health (WCGA), inviting public comment by July 10. In addition, the West Coast Governors also submitted letters to the President, Senate and House as well as the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee requesting \$5M in the FY 2010 appropriation bill to support and implement on-the-ground actions identified in the WCGA Action Plans.

The draft WCGA Action Plans were developed by Action Coordination Teams

(ACTs) comprised of representatives from federal, state, and tribal governments, industry, and academia. Actions planned by the ACTs teams address the following: climate change, polluted runoff, marine debris, Spartina eradication, renewable ocean energy, ocean awareness and literacy, seafloor mapping and sediment management. WCGA plans can be found at: <http://westcoastoceans.gov/teams/>.

Northwest (NWRIT)

The NWRIT is actively building a vibrant partnership with the Vancouver Aquarium in British Columbia, Canada, including work to add the Aquarium to the international network of Learning Centers. A site visit to the Aquarium by several of the Coastal America partner agencies is scheduled in July, as part of the Learning Center designation process targeted for completion this fall.

The NWRIT has been meeting regularly to discuss potential projects with active participation of representatives from the following: USACE, Army National Guard Oregon, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bonneville Power Administration, USEPA, Minerals Management Service, Oregon's Hatfield Marine Science Center, NOAA, NRCS, Seattle Aquarium, Forest Service, USFWS, US Geological Survey and the Navy.

Identified NWRIT priorities include: building robust CWRP chapters in both Oregon and Washington, creating a Coastal America webpage within the EPA Region 10 website to complement the Coastal America website, and a firm commitment to completing a "Summer of Service" project focused on coastal restoration in the Lower Columbia River Estuary. Summer of Service is a national coalition of major youth-serving organizations that are committed to engaging youth during the summer months in recognition of the potential of youth service to identify issues, develop projects, and provide lasting

benefits to the communities in which they live. <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/initiatives/summer.asp>.

Alaska (AKRIT)

The AKRIT met with the Alaska Regional Principals in conjunction with the Alaska Forum on the Environment (AFE) in Anchorage on February 5th. Presentations included recent Coastal America activities at the national level and status of the 15 AKRIT-endorsed projects. An all-day workshop dealing with marine debris was also held. The Ocean Today Kiosk at the Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC) was also endorsed as a new partnership project.

After the AKRIT meeting, at the AFE plenary luncheon session, the Coastal America National Spirit Award was presented for the ASLC Sea Train educational project to Ron Goertz and Jess Ryan, ASLC by USFWS Alaska Regional Director, Geoff Haskett.



Geoffrey Haskett, Regional Director, USFWS presents a Spirit Award to Alaska SeaLife Center.

Pacific (PIRIT)

The PIRIT continues to sponsor activities in collaboration with the Hawaii Nature Center at Pouhala Marsh, Oahu, and the Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve in partnership with Maui Land &

Pineapple Company on Maui. The Team is also working to convene a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Summit Meeting in Hawaii in the latter part of 2009. The event is tentatively targeted for the Big Island of Hawaii, and will involve a gathering of elders from native indigenous people representing the Pacific Islands, Alaska Native, Native American, and First Nation communities. The Summit will be supported by funding, services and resources from NOAA's Pacific Services Center, the National Marine Fisheries Service Pacific Islands Region, the National Park Service's Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail, and the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Ongoing activities with the Waikiki Aquarium, a Learning Center network member, involve public exhibits and plans for the development of a TEK-oriented kiosk. Additionally, other possible Learning Center "satellites" to the Aquarium are being considered in an effort to broadcast both ocean literacy and local TEK issues to Pacific areas beyond Honolulu and the state of Hawaii.

PIRIT will also partner with the Hakipu'u Learning Center, a public charter school, to support students in the comprehensive study of mangrove communities in Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, including mangroves' ecological benefits and historical impacts on native fisheries. In conjunction with the Ala Kahakai, the PIRIT plans to explore additional partnerships for developing community-based marine resources management plans in Honaunau and Ho'okena on the Big Island.

"Off-shore" activities (non-Hawaii) are planned in the coming six months with American Samoa, focusing on the possible use of AmeriCorps volunteers in village wetlands restoration projects. PIRIT has also been asked to introduce its programs in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands this fall.

CWRP Updates

National Overview

The CWRP Management Subcommittee meeting was held on February 11 in the DC law offices of Hunton & Williams, LLP. Members of the Subcommittee discussed the political transition and appointments relative to Coastal America agencies. In addition, CWRP members reported on recruitment and retention efforts nationwide, as well as an overview of restoration funding opportunities in the stimulus (ARRA) package. Subsequently, CWRP members joined Coastal America's National Team meeting at CEQ, and were introduced to Nancy H. Sutley.

Following the meeting, CWRP Management Subcommittee Chair Pat Hester wrote a letter of thanks to Chair Sutley, who in turn wrote a letter of support to the CWRP (see the story accompanying her picture on page 1).

“This unique public/private partnership is evidence that government and private industry can work effectively together to produce tangible results for a better environment and a more environmentally-conscious public.”

*Nancy H. Sutley
Letter to CWRP Chair, Pat Hester
April 3, 2009*

CWRP 10-Year Anniversary

CWRP is reaching a significant milestone; its 10th anniversary! In May 1999, the Massachusetts CWRP was formally launched as the first state chapter, and in the fall of 1999, Coastal America Principals approved establishment of a national CWRP. Massachusetts CWRP

is planning a state celebration of 10 years of collaborative projects to benefit the environment. Plans for a DC-based national CWRP 10-year celebration are also underway.

At the Coastal America National Coordinating Office, Carli Bertrand has been named federal Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership Coordinator. Carli was recruited from NOAA Fisheries Service to serve as policy advisor for the Partnership and has been on detail with Coastal America since March of 2007.

John MacKenzie, Coastal America's National Corporate Coordinator, and Carli Bertrand both participated in the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) One-Year-Out Workshop June 23-25 in Lansdowne, Virginia. John MacKenzie addressed conference participants in a panel session regarding potential funding support for the NFHAP vision.

California

The Coastal America Foundation accepted a check for \$22,000 from NRG Energy, Carlsbad, California. Funds from NRG were targeted for youth ocean education and literacy. Recipients of the Foundation grants were the Aqua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation, Pepperdine University to support Grunion Greeters, and the Aquarium of the Pacific.

Georgia

The Georgia CWRP reached a key milestone in June, Phase II of its Johnson Ferry project, thanks to the assistance from corporate resources including Brent Scarbrough & Company, from Fayetteville, GA and Colonial Pipeline Company from Alpharetta, GA. The Johnson Ferry Project, located at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area of the National Park Service, targets the restoration of

several eroding drainages along the Chattahoochee River.

The project's leaders include the GA CWRP team of CH2M HILL, ENSR/AECOM, Oldcastle and others, including USEPA, USACE, and the National Park Service. Partner efforts have included invasive plant removals, topography surveys, and surface water and wetland surveys. This final project phase sets the stage for landscaping next spring along the restored channels. Details of the project and names of other participants in the project can be found at www.gacwrp.org.



Johnson Ferry project restoration work in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

The project was feasible thanks to the large volumes of rock, gravel, and soil materials provided by Colonial Pipeline and the heavy equipment provided by Brent Scarbrough & Company to carefully recontour the eroded stream banks and place the rock and soil to stabilize the eroding banks. Special thanks are also due to Danny Huddleston for the donation and placement of all the materials required for this restoration. After final landscaping, this project will not only provide enhanced aesthetic benefits to the many people who walk the trails along the river in this part of the park system but will also provide enhanced shoreline habitat and significantly prevent erodible soils sediments from washing into the Chattahoochee River.

The GA CWRP has also been looking forward to future project activities with their Learning Center (Georgia Aquarium) and has recently held discussions with Bruce Carlson of the Aquarium, and Drew Kendall of EPA. Working with the other CWRP corporate and federal partners, the GA CWRP will soon identify new projects utilizing the capabilities and interests of the group.

Maryland

The MD Chapter was formally established at a January 29 meeting where MD CWRP adopted operating principles and agreed to seek additional corporate funding for projects. As a tool for recruiting project sponsors, MD CWRP has posted project fact sheets on their website: <http://www.cwrp.org/maryland.html>.

The MD CWRP is supporting the Hail Cove restoration project at the Eastern

Neck National Wildlife Refuge. An event to celebrate the project, featuring a volunteer planting day, is scheduled for September 10.

New Jersey

MARIT-North & NJ CWRP representatives attended and exhibited at the annual New Jersey Land Conservation Rally on March 6. This daylong event, one of the nation's largest land conservation rallies, was an excellent opportunity to meet & network with over 325 potential CWRP partners. Attendees included: representatives from nonprofit organizations including land trusts, watershed associations, conservation education organizations, and local citizen groups; local government including township committees, county freeholders, open space committees, environmental commissions, and planning boards; state and federal

government; foundations; and higher education institutions.

New York

The New York CWRP continues to address leadership transition in the NY chapter. NY CWRP members have expressed interest in establishing a set of regional co-chairs who would focus on smaller portions of the relatively large state, moving away from the traditional state-wide focus. Coordination among these regional chapters would require substantial effort, but would have greater impact and could attract more participants.

Work also continues on drafting a NY Chapter "project book" as a recruitment tool, patterned after the well-received recruitment document created by the Maryland CWRP Chapter last year.

Learning Center Updates

The Coastal America Learning Center network was established to educate and involve the public in protecting our nation's coastal and ocean ecosystems.

Most Learning Centers are aquariums, but marine science centers and laboratories are also part of this dynamic network. The Learning Centers continue to do outstanding work to implement the network's 2009-2010 Action Plan.

Aquarium of the Pacific President Briefs CEQ Associate Director on Learning Center Network

On March 30, Jerry Schubel and Virginia Tippie met with Mike Boots, CEQ's Associate Director for Land and Water Ecosystems, to discuss the Learning Center network and its capabilities for potential Administration outreach opportunities.

Learning Center Directors Sessions

A national gathering of Learning Center Education Directors was held at the



Jerry Schubel (right), President, Aquarium of the Pacific, meets Mike Boots (left), CEQ Associate Director, Land and Water Ecosystems.

National Marine Educators Association meeting in Pacific Grove, CA, July 1. Future plans for the Learning Center network were discussed.

Planning is also underway to conduct the annual Learning Center Directors

Meeting at the American Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Annual Conference in Portland, OR, September 12 -17.

Coastal America Celebrates Oceans Month with Ocean Art Exhibits and Calendar

On June 12, President Obama proclaimed June as "National Oceans Month, 2009". During June's Capitol Hill Oceans Week, June 8-12, the Coastal America Ocean Art Contest Calendar was distributed far and wide to participants and supporters of the 2008 Contest.

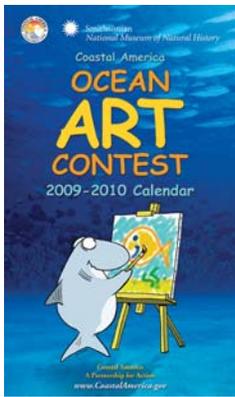
In addition, the winning art work was displayed this year in a number of venues including the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, and the Department of Commerce building in Washington, DC. The display in Commerce's main lobby was in recognition of World Ocean Day on June 8 and National Oceans Month.





Several Ocean Art Contest winners' art on display at Department of Commerce's Great Hall.

Although the Department of Commerce was the “last stop” for the Ocean Art Contest exhibit, the winners’ art work will receive continued exposure in the 2009-2010 Ocean Art Contest Calendar. Produced by the Coastal America Foundation, each of the 20 months beginning June 2009 features a different winner’s art work and essay topic. We are certain that the continued display of this art work both on our website and the calendars will continue to increase ocean literacy. Copies of the calendar may be ordered from the Coastal America Foundation website at www.coastalamericafoundation.org.



Alaska SeaLife Center

The Alaska SeaLife Center has embarked on a program to breed their Steller sea lions for the first time. Captive Steller sea lions are permanently housed at only four North American facilities. This would be the first successful North American breeding program in over 20 years.

Alaska SeaLife researchers are in the unique position of having a large dataset of background information about these animals covering most of their lives.

The captive breeding program is a tremendous opportunity to obtain an understanding of reproductive success and requirements that will enable researchers to identify critical stages during pregnancy and lactation in Steller sea lions. This in turn will help SeaLife Center researchers understand reproduction and maternal investment which may influence population declines among free-ranging individuals.



Woody, the Steller sea lion.

Aquarium of the Pacific

In May the Aquarium of the Pacific held a national workshop entitled, “*Ocean on the Edge Workshops: Communicating Ocean Issues.*” The workshop took advantage of the growing awareness and interest in global climate change to help frame issues. The workshop brought together leading marine scientists, film makers, educators, exhibit designers, representatives of governmental agencies, and experts in assessing public attitudes. Participants were tasked with raising public awareness about and promoting involvement in key ocean issues.

Four of the National Academies Ocean Science Series booklets served as the starting point on these 4 issues: Marine Ecosystems and Fisheries, Oceans and Human Health, Coastal Hazards, and Pollution in the Ocean. Prior to the workshop, small teams reviewed the booklets and made suggestions for updates. During the workshop, attendees focused on content and then identified key methods for effectively communicating these ocean issues to the public. The anticipated release of

the new ‘toolkits’ is late summer. The ultimate goal is for institutions around the world to take these products, enhance them with regional stories, and incorporate them into their programs, leading to a wave of ocean awareness and stewardship.

Dauphin Island Sea Lab

Thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous sponsor, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Estuarium is able to present its newest exhibit for visitors, “*Holy Mosasaur!*”, a journey back in time when dinosaurs and marine reptiles roamed the earth and swam the seas. The Estuarium’s new Paleogeology Exhibit features a striking twenty-eight foot replica of a mosasaur, a marine reptile that was abundant during the late Cretaceous Period, about 89-65 million years ago. Also in the exhibit is toxochelys, a once plentiful sea turtle of the period, depicted as fleeing from becoming the mosasaur’s next meal.

Rich in fossils, Alabama was an inland sea millions of years ago. Alabama fossils are on display at Dauphin Island, as are touchable specimens for curious fingers. Visitors can learn more about paleological history through the use of an advanced LCD touch screen.



Dauphin Island Sea Lab Estuarium's newest exhibit, “*Holy Mosasaur!*”

Florida Aquarium

The Florida Aquarium in Tampa unveiled its new Oceans Today Kiosk on June 8th. This event coincided with their three-

day World Oceans Day celebration that included family activities, Scout programs, costumed characters, Meet the Biologist sessions, and the launch of the Aquarium's summer AquaCamp season.



Florida Aquarium's new Ocean Today Kiosk.

The Florida Aquarium also joined the effort to draft a statewide environmental literacy plan for Florida through participation in the state network SCENE (State Committee for Environmental Education). SCENE established a web-based communication portal for updates and initiatives, as well as a face-to-face meeting to begin work on the process. A draft plan to increase environmental awareness at all levels will be presented to Florida's Department of Education.

In an effort to meet the increasing demand for eco-tours of Tampa Bay, the Aquarium welcomed a new catamaran during its World Oceans Day celebration. The Bay Spirit II replaces the Aquarium's previous vessel (Bay Spirit) and has a capacity of 149 passengers, 100 more than the previous craft. The new, larger Bay Spirit II is an exciting addition to estuarine education programming at the Florida Aquarium.

Georgia Aquarium

Since the early 1990's non-native lionfish have spread up the entire Atlantic seaboard, and now are expected to spread throughout the Caribbean. Scientists are convinced that eradication of lionfish is

impossible, given their rapid spread and huge population.

Research indicates that the lionfish is highly effective at removing commercially valuable native fish species and other ecologically important species such as cleaner gobies. With no natural predators to keep its numbers in check, the lionfish has already become a prime example of ecological havoc created by an invasive species.

Responding to this issue, NOAA and the Georgia Aquarium teamed up to develop a lionfish exhibit to help the public understand the gravity of the problem created when exotic animals are released into the marine environment. The exhibit opened in April and features more than two-dozen red lionfish collected off the Georgia coast earlier this year.



Georgia Aquarium's Lionfish exhibit.

The exhibit features information about the biology of the red lionfish, precautions for handling this species (don't!), and a computer animated video that highlights the rapid spread of this invasive species. The USFWS also had a role in the project, providing information on its Habitattitude program, aimed at educating the public about how to properly dispose of unwanted aquatic pets.

International Game Fish Association Museum & Hall of Fame

On May 9th, the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) partnered with the Make A Difference Foundation to hold their annual "Special Angler's Tournament" where disabled children



Special Angler Tournament participants at IGFA.

are invited to participate in a day of fishing, face painting, fish printing and virtual fishing simulator tournaments. Each year this event attracts over 350 participants and this year was no exception. With equipment generously provided by Fish Florida, each angler was invited to take their new rod and reels with them to encourage their continued participation in the sport of fishing. Every child received a prize courtesy of the Make a Difference Foundation.

As part of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) 2009 National Youth Fishing and Boating Initiative, the IGFA Outreach and Education program was recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$88,732. This grant will fund many of the IGFA's outreach programs. With this funding, the RBFF has provided the IGFA the opportunity to reach thousands of children who would not typically have the chance to participate in these marine education programs. The grant will also allow the IGFA to start new projects that will help the organization fulfill its mission to educate the public, especially young people who are the future of the sport, on how to become better anglers and stewards of the marine environment.

National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium

The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium is working to complete its Great Rivers Center expansion project

in summer 2010. This expansion will double the size of its current 5-acre campus and include three new galleries, several new aquariums, a 3D/4D theater and a river research facility.

One of the new galleries, *Rivers to the Sea*, will focus upon connecting people from the 31-state Mississippi River watershed area to the Gulf of Mexico region. The exhibit will serve to better inform the public about policies and farming practices that can lead to better ecological health of the Mississippi and the Gulf.

Museum & Aquarium Executive Director Jerry Enzler discussed the *Rivers to the Sea* outreach plan during his presentation at the 2009 Capitol Hill Oceans Week, entitled, "All Farms are Coastal: The Link between Ocean and Agriculture". The outreach strategies include generating museum/aquarium messaging, creating meaningful engagements with the river, establishing a national communications plan, informing decision makers and promoting ocean-friendly agriculture practices. Activities will be carried out not only at the new Rivers to the Sea exhibit, but through the Museum & Aquarium's key partnerships with other organizations including: the 22 Coastal America Ecosystem Learning Centers (with an audience of 25 million), the Great River Road Network of 62 museums from Itasca to the Gulf (with an audience of 10 million), the Mississippi River to the Gulf Network of 35 nonprofits, and the Fishers & Farmers Partnership for the Upper Mississippi River Basin.

North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher

For the second year, the NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher offered their "Amphibians in the Classroom" program to foster environmental stewardship among students, while creating a better understanding of amphibians and the environment we share. Over 275 students in New Hanover County, NC helped raise thousands of Southern toads, eagerly watching and actively

participating in rearing the toads from eggs to adults. On May 20 and 26, students released their toads back into the habitat where the toad eggs were collected. Funding for this program was generously provided by the Cherbec Foundation.



Albino alligator at NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher.

The North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher has a new treasure in its collection, a female albino alligator named Luna. There are approximately 30-50 true albino alligators in existence. Given protection from the sun and proper care, an albino alligator is expected to live the average lifespan of a green alligator - up to 60 years and can reach 12 -16 feet in length. The North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher welcomes the new albino and looks forward to watching her grow up to a foot each year!

Shedd Aquarium

Shedd Aquarium's Great Lakes Conservation programs continue to leverage the Aquarium's core strengths in communication, exhibits, education, audience (2 million annual visitors), community reach, and location on the shore of Lake Michigan in the largest metropolitan area in the Great Lakes region. This year, the Aquarium reinvigorated its Listen To Your Lakes campaign. The campaign, based on months of market research and testing, provides the most effective images and messages to reach people about the threats facing the Great Lakes, and what they can do to help. The www.listentoyourlakes.org website continues to feature a blog that is updated several times each week. From January-May the Great Lakes program reached 18,183,343 people with Great Lakes information and tips on how they can help.

In addition, during January-May 2009, media buys in the Chicago marketplace reached more than 1 million people. Press releases and events, media interviews, and letters to the editor plus on-line placements resulted in numerous articles in print, television and radio, reaching an estimated audience of more than 17 million with Great Lakes messages.

Recent Coastal America Partnership Award Ceremonies

Carmans River Fish Ladder Award



Carmans River Fish Ladder awardees at site.

On March 21, MARIT-North co-chair Mario DelVicario presented a Coastal America Spirit Award to the Carman's River Fish Ladder Partnership. The Carmans River hosts

the largest remaining population of native brook trout on Long Island. The Partnership was recognized at the ceremony for its unprecedented and broad collaboration.

Partners include federal, state, county and town governments, NY's Long Island South Shore Estuary Preserve, as well as nongovernmental organizations: Trout Unlimited, Environmental Defense Fund, and Seatuck Environmental Association. The Carman's team designed, funded, and constructed the ladder, the first permanent fish ladder

constructed on Long Island, in the Town of Brookhaven, NY. The ladder allows fish to move upstream beyond a previously impassable barrier into Hards Lake in Southaven County Park, once again connecting two isolated parts of the South Shore Estuary Reserve ecosystem. Alewife and sea-run brook trout once again have access to spawning areas above the Hards Lake Dam.

Carpinteria Salt Marsh Restoration Award

On May 6, Department of Interior’s SIMOR co-chair Terry Holman presented a Coastal America Partnership Award and a letter from the President to the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Restoration Partners, recognizing their contribution towards restoring 230-acres of wetland habitat in southern California. The Carpinteria Salt Marsh, just south of Santa Barbara, is one of the largest and most ecologically important coastal estuaries in Southern California.

With this project, the Carpinteria Marsh Partners achieved extensive restoration and protection of vastly improved wildlife habitat, opportunities for scientific research, and new ways for the people of California to visit and learn about the coastal environment.

Award recipients included Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, City of Carpinteria, University of California Natural Reserve System,



Matt Roberts, Parks Director, describes efforts to restore fish passage at Carpinteria Creek, California.

California Coastal Conservancy, USFWS, County of Santa Barbara, The Lennox Foundation, Sandyland Cove Homeowners Association, and Sandyland Protective Association. The NOAA Community-based Restoration Program provided supplementary funding for this project.

While in Southern California, the Coastal America delegation participated in multiple site visits to learn about restoration, protection and fish passage efforts in Santa Barbara County. The group also examined land protection activities along the largely undeveloped Gaviota Coast north of Santa Barbara and met with Russell Galipeau, Superintendent of the Channel Islands National Park for an educational visit to Santa Cruz Island.

South Coast Habitat Restoration Award

On June 8, Department of Commerce/ NOAA’s SIMOR co-chair Laura Furgione served as the awarding official for The South Coast Habitat Restoration Project Team award ceremony. U.S. Senator Jack Reed provided the opening keynote remarks. The Team was recognized for restoring 57 acres of submerged eelgrass habitat in three coastal lagoons along the Rhode Island shoreline. This project has been a collaborative effort between the USACE and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, with the R.I. Department of Environmental Management, the University of Rhode Island, the Salt Ponds Coalition and the towns of South Kingstown, Charlestown and Westerly.

The CRMC and its partners began work on the South Coast project in 1997 to restore habitat damaged beginning in 1952. At that time, the state widened and deepened the natural tidal inlet to Ninigret Pond to create the Charlestown Breachway, with stone jetties constructed along either side in order to maintain the breachway for navigation. The

construction of the jetties created a natural funnel effect that deposited large amounts of sand from the ocean floor inside the Ninigret Pond coastal lagoon. Over the years, formerly plentiful eelgrass beds covering the pond bottom were buried.

Within the first year of project monitoring, the eelgrass had regenerated successfully in both the seeded eelgrass beds and areas that were allowed to grow back naturally. Eelgrass growth has exceeded project expectations, and eelgrass meadows should cover the entire restoration area within a few years.



Senator Jack Reed (center left), and Laura Furgione (NOAA), with South Coast Habitat Restoration Team leaders.

Events Calendar

July 19-23

CZ’09 Conference and CWRP meeting
Boston, MA

August 12

Tire Reef Project Partnership Award,
Broward County, FL

September 10

Hail Cove Living Shoreline Celebration
at Eastern Neck
National Wildlife Refuge, MD

September 12- 17

Learning Center Directors Annual
Meeting at AZA Annual Conference,
Portland, OR

October 4

Delaware Bay Oyster Restoration
Project Partnership Award, DE

October 13-16

Coastal America Annual Meeting, WA

SAVE THE DATE!

The Coastal America Partnership Annual Conference will be held October 13-16, 2009 in Blaine, Washington on Puget Sound. The theme of this year's conference is Regional Partnerships for Action. Conference registration and information is available at www.coastalamerica.gov.



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Coastal America is a partnership among federal, state and local governments and private alliances to address environmental problems along our nation's coasts. The federal partners are: Executive Office of the President, Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration and The National Science Foundation .



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