COASTAL AMERICA UPDATE

Summer Issue 2012

Inspiring Ocean Stewardship Through the Arts

On June 7, 2012, Coastal America hosted over 200 people for a special evening program, "Inspiring Ocean Stewardship through Art, Photography and Film" at the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. The event highlighted the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center (CELC) Network Student Ocean Art Contest and Marine Protected Areas (MPA) outreach effort. It also served as a kick-off for World Oceans Day 2012, "Youth: The Next Wave for Change."

Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator, with contest winner Annika McFarlane

The evening's keynote speaker, Dr. Jane Lubchenco began her remarks by reminding the audience that marine protected areas are one of the most important tools we have for managing our ocean resources. Energizing the audience with stories about the value of marine systems and the critters that inhabit them, the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator was well received and proved to be quite inspirational. She closed by saying, "No matter what your preferred medium, art is a means to catalyze action towards marine conservation. Art can transcend language barriers, be universal in scope, and can evoke emotions from people that science and data cannot. The winning student artists and our group of esteemed panelists--each artists in their own right--are proof positive of this. I congratulate each and every one of you on your award…"

Art contest winner Joyce Lee receives congratulations from panelists Barton Seaver, Brian Skerry and Jim Toomey

Expanding the Coastal America partnership network, the Commission on Environmental Cooperation collaborated with the CELCs and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in producing five brief videos about the value of marine protected areas. Four of the videos were premiered at this event.

Immediately following the films, a panel discussion ensued with eminent ocean artists and experts who discussed how we can encourage the public to care about ocean and coastal issues by using creative self expression and innovative artistic medium. Distinguished panelists included Dr. Sylvia Earle, also known as 'Her Deepness,' a world renowned oceanographer and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence; Barton Seaver, National Geographic Fellow, acclaimed chef and author of *For Cod and Country* and an influential voice in the culinary world because of his commitment to seafood sustainability; Brian Skerry, an underwater photojournalist who has worked extensively for National Geographic Magazine; and Jim Toomey, an impassioned defender of the ocean and creator of the marine-themed cartoon strip, "*Sherman's Lagoon*."

Art contest winners, panelists and special guests at the awards ceremony at the National Geographic Society

NGS EVENT, continued

Finally, it was time to recognize the Student Ocean Art contest winners, who were flown to DC with their chaperones, from distant corners of the continent, including Alaska, California, Florida and Vancouver, Canada. Awards were presented by Dr. Lubchenco with help from Dr. Jerry Schubel, co-chair of the Learning Center network and President of Aquarium of the Pacific. Twenty of the Coastal America CELCs participated in the 2012 contest, which yielded over 1,500 submissions from across North America. In some schools, as a result of the art contest challenge, new curriculum was created to teach the Ocean Principles.

The evening concluded with a reception sponsored by the Coastal America Foundation, where interactive exhibits, visual art displays and a sustainable menu were enjoyed by all. Winning student ocean art & photography was displayed; videos produced for the Coastal America 2011 Student Summit on the Ocean & Coasts were also shown, along with other engaging multi-media booths, book signings and more.

2012 Coastal America Partners Meeting

June 6th, CWRP Annual Meeting

CWRP Corporate Coordinator John Mackenzie presented the 2012 CWRP Report which summarized CWRP performance through 2011, including a total expenditure of $4,942,000; 1,069 stream miles protected; and 64,756 acres of wetlands protected or restored. CWRP is revisiting how they are developing metrics reporting for projects so they can better demonstrate the value of their work. Discussion also focused on how to improve recruitment and retention of corporate members to increase the base funds for these efforts. For example, in the Gulf of Mexico, private companies are contributing funds to restorative projects, but may not be involved with CWRP activities. Reaching out to those companies to interest them in CWRP might be valuable. The group agreed that funding of the National CWRP committee operations are vital to enhancing CWRP creditability.

Looking forward to 2013, the CWRP anticipates rebuilding activities for a number of state chapters, noting that the New York CWRP, under the leadership of Arcadis, has re-established their advisory board, is meeting to discuss options and will soon be in a position to support regional projects. The National CWRP has agreed to focus its resources on helping the Alaska, California, and Virginia chapters get re-established. John Mackenzie will work with the Rhode Island, Maine, and Connecticut chapters to develop events focused on recruitment and retention.

June 7th, Partnership Working Session

On the morning of June 7th, Coastal America partners gathered for the annual meeting at the Capitol Hilton where many

NGS EVENT, continued

out-of-town partners were staying. Those who were able to arrive early enough joined student Art Contest winners and their families for breakfast and an informal chat. Bidding the students goodbye as they left for their exclusive tour of DC, the meeting began with Pat Hester, Chair of the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Project (CWRP) describing his previous day's meeting with representatives from the White House Council on Environmental Quality. They discussed the National Ocean Policy implementation strategy and what role CWRP might play. The Partnership has been pursuing written recognition of CWRP successes from the Administration as a means to help promote & retain corporate involvement in CWRP. Steve Coan, President of Sea Research Foundation and CEO of Mystic Aquarium suggested that each of the 22 U.S. Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCs) could write separate letters of support to the administration, encouraging them to take action to recognize the CWRP's efforts.

Switching to CELCs, Jerry Schubel, President and CEO of Aquarium of the Pacific talked about the budget declines hitting agencies such as NOAA and NSF, and its impact on informal education. He stressed the need to make progress developing "Coastal Conversations," because they can be such a valuable forum for discussing coastal concerns. A discussion ensued about the positive power of video and social media as tools for engaging the public, in particular youth, since they've grown up with Facebook and Twitter as a part of their daily lives. With the help of a white paper developed prior to the meeting (by Bill Hubbard, NERIT Chair and Tai-Ming Chang, MARIT Chair), a discussion began about the National Ocean Policy (NOP), specifically how the partnership might support the milestones in the NOP. This key outcome of the discussion, once updated to include ideas advanced at the meeting, will help guide the Partnership in the near future.

June 8th, Ocean Literacy and the CELCs

Before the partnership's World Ocean Day activities really got moving at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, Coastal America took advantage of the plethora of ocean educators in town for Ocean Week activities by holding a meeting to discuss improving ocean literacy. A cross section of federal agency representatives, CELC educators and directors and other special guests met to identify the best ways to reach the public with messages about our oceans and coasts. Jerry Enzler, Director of the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium emphasized that the members of the CELC Network are eager to form collaborations in their regions as well as with the federal government. The subject of "Coastal Conversations" was again raised as a technique to engage the public in a policy dialog about coastal concerns. Participants discussed recent findings that show that the public trusts that aquariums are reliable sources of information—but the data also shows that the public doesn't realize that the ocean is in trouble. Aquariums are essential to ensure that the public receives the best available, unbiased and quality information from reliable sources. Jill Karsten from the National Science Foundation emphasized that youth are far more engaged when they are co-creators of their knowledge—a technique that's already been put into practice at some CELCs.

Social media as interactive tools for reach the public was also a topic of great interest at this meeting, as it provides a unique way to reach audiences that might otherwise not be paying attention to ocean and coastal concerns. Through social media, the CELC network can collaborate, share resources and skills, and reach the public. Citizen science, podcasts, field trips, stories that engage, the arts—including film, music, dance--as a means to reach a greater audience were all part of this far-ranging discussion. There also was strong interest in connecting Marine Protected Areas with the Learning Centers to help give staff experience in the field.

Eileen Sobeck, Frank Sweet, John Bowie, Pat Hester and George Olson discuss ideas at the June 6th CWRP annual meeting

Art Contest winners and their families on Capitol Hill

The 2011-2012 Coastal America Ocean Art Contest Winners Visit Washington, D.C.

The 2012 Ocean Art contest winners were treated to a whirlwind of events during their stay in Washington DC. On Thursday June 7th, the winners were recognized at **The National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation's** Annual Capitol Hill Oceans Week *Shaping the Nation's Future: Land and Sea* lecture. There, they listened to U.S. Senator Mary L. Landrieu (D-LA), speak for ocean and coastal policy, planning, and investment, and to the value of our relationship with the sea. Afterwards, the winners and their family were treated to the **National Geographic Society's** *Titanic Exhibit* where photographs of the ship that has captured the world's interest for a century enticed their imaginations. An 18-foot replica model of the ship that sank on April 15, 1912 is also on display. In the evening, the winners were presented with their awards at the Coastal America 2012 Student Ocean Art Contest Award Ceremony. There was a screening of a series of short films about marine protected areas, produced in collaboration between Coastal America's Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center Network and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation. Furthermore, Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of NOAA, made keynote remarks and helped present awards to the contest winners along with prominent artists and ocean supporters. On Friday, June 8th, the winners enjoyed a "Behind the Scenes Tour" at the National Aquarium in D.C. Bill Simpkins, Director of Education, hosted the group, explaining that each of the tanks featured a National Marine Seashore or Sanctuary from different parts of the United States. Finally, the art contest winners attended and helped Coastal America host a set of exciting activities to celebrate World Oceans Day 2012.

Learning about shark teeth at the National Aquarium in Washington, D.C.

CWRP Meets with Director of NOC & NOC Federal Partners

On June 6, 2012, the National CWRP Executive Committee and several state chapter representatives met with National Ocean Council (NOC) Director Deerin Babb-Brott and several of the NOC federal partners in Washington DC. NOC federal partners attending the meeting included the Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Interior, Department of the Army for Civil Works and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Topics discussed at the meeting included:

- An overview of the National Ocean Policy Implementation Strategy and how ocean, coastal and Great Lakes restoration and coastal marine spatial planning (CMSP) might fit with CWRP interests
- NOC federal partners' perspective on the NOC/CWRP collaboration
- Several proposed projects, including marine debris in Alaska and along the West Coast of the U.S., St. John River restoration projects in Maine, and several NRCS projects in Florida, Vermont, Maine , and the Mississippi River Basin.

The CWRP and NOC plan to meet with NOC staff in the early fall to finalize a forward strategy.

Partners Produce Exciting Marine Protected Area Videos

Through a unique collaboration of marine protected area (MPA) agencies and Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCs) in the US, Canada and Mexico, a new series of vibrant, short films premiered on June 7th, the eve of World Ocean Day, at an exciting event at the National Geographic Society, coordinated by Coastal America. These collaborative videos highlight the vital role played by North America's MPAs to: support communities that depend on marine resources, provide exciting recreational experiences, enhance our scientific understanding, protect a large number of species, restore fisheries, and conserve key habitats. Over the past decade, MPA experts in the three countries have worked together through the North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN) to help connect and protect ecologically and economically important marine areas, develop and share effective conservation approaches and address common issues and challenges. These short films are one result of a process that began several years ago at some of the CELCs. Many of the Learning Centers held forums on MPAs, to encourage discussion and community input. It was evident from these forums that there was a need for much greater communication among stakeholders. These exciting and visually compelling films were created to help everyone understand the far-reaching benefits of MPAs. They are posted on the Ocean Today Kiosks and have been screened at a number of aquariums and nature centers. They are available for viewing online, and can also be made available for educational screenings (contact Coastal America). The films and supporting information, including a Google Earth map of North America's MPAs can be viewed at www.cec.org/mpa. The films can also be viewed at: http://www.mpa.gov

View the films at http://www.mpa.gov

Coastal America Celebrates World Oceans Day 2012

The Coastal America Partnership helped Washington, DC and the nation celebrate World Ocean Day on June 8. With a multitude of activities and appearances by special guests, CA strove to educate the public about problems in the ocean, and to encourage ocean stewardship, all while having some fun at Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Special events included:

Meet the Ocean Experts
Otter 501 Film
"Drawing Inspiration from the Sea'" with Jim Toomey
Marine Protected Area Films
"Live from the Galapagos Islands" Webcast Conversation
Youth Ocean Leaders Panel Discussion

3rd place art contest winners, Grace Zhang of Group 3 and Joyce Zhang of Group 2 from the National Aquarium in Baltimore, show off their MPA posters signed by cartoonist Jim Toomey

Dr. Sylvia Earle drew an octopus to add to the mural

Hands-on learning experience with Ocean experts in Sant Ocean Hall

Cartoonist Jim Toomey with his children and United Nation's Environmental Programme staff at the premiere of the short film, "Blue Carbon."

Sea Grant Fellows volunteered to wear the mascot costumes: Sherman the Shark, Otter 501 and Seagull Sam

Teen Scubanauts helped kids draw marine animals for murals

Dr. Sylvia Earle discussed coral reef research via Skype with scientists aboard the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation research ship Golden Shadow in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador.

Youth Ocean leaders participated in a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Sylvia Earle. From left to right: Noura Aljurdi, Ocean for Life alumna, Qatar; Cole Kolasa, Scubanaut, FL; Ashley Hilbert, Scubanaut, Girl Scout, Master Diver, FL; Tejay French, New York Harbor School, NY; Michael Parent, JASON student Argonaut, VA

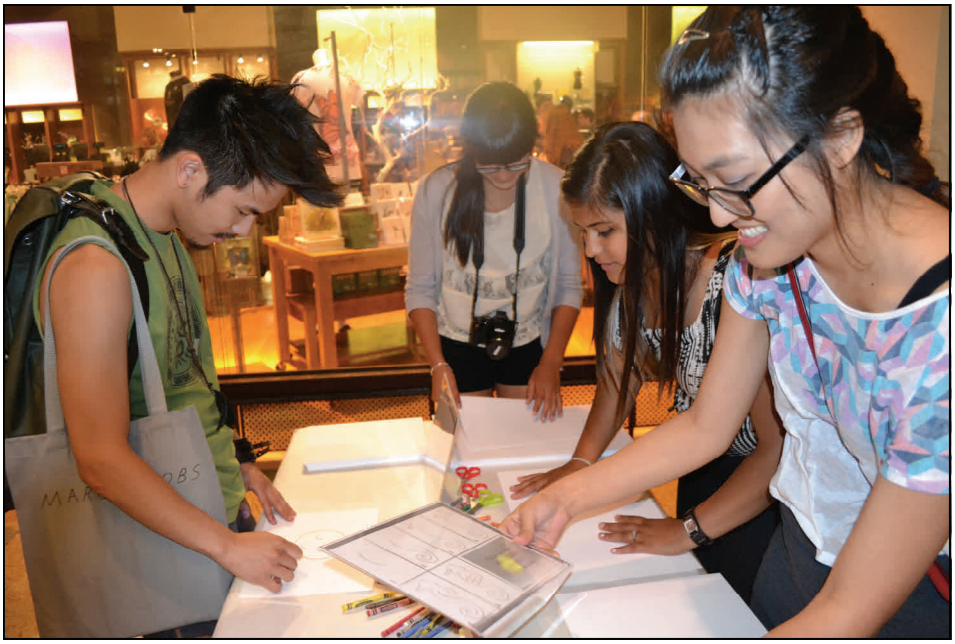
Dr. Sylvia Earle with one of the many girl scout troops visiting Washington, DC on World Oceans Day

Complete coral reef mural with kids' artwork

Ocean experts answered questions from the public

Cartoonist Jim Toomey talked about the inspiration behind his comic strip, 'Sherman's Lagoon'

Otter 501 film's storyteller and star, Katie Pofahl, with Otter 501 mascot



Ocean art contest winners drew marine animals to add to the murals drawn by cartoonist Jim Toomey

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

NORTHWEST

On Wednesday, February 8th the **Middle Watsonville Slough Wetland Protection and Water Quality Partnership Team** received a Coastal America Partnership Award at a ceremony on site in Watsonville, California. The project team was recognized for working collaboratively for over 4 years to acquire 490 acres and initiate numerous restoration projects within the Watsonville slough complex. The team is working to improve water quality and improve habitat for coastal species while simultaneously maintaining the agricultural heritage and economic viability of the community in the Monterey Bay region. Partners in this project team include; The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, California State Coastal Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, California Wildlife Conservation Board, State Water Resources Control Board, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Fitz Wetland Education Resource Center, The Nature Conservancy and The California Department of Fish and Game. Congratulations team Watsonville!

The Middle Watsonville Slough Wetland Protection and Water Quality Partnership Team

Each week from July through mid-August, **Oregon Sea Grant** offers ocean themed day camps for youth and families at Oregon State University's **Hatfield Marine Science Center** (HMSC). Located in Newport, Oregon on the Yaquina Bay, HMSC provides an ideal location for exploration of the estuary and nearby habitats, as well as access to wet labs and a diverse group of researchers. By attending one of these camps, participants have the unique opportunity to connect with local researchers, engage in hands-on activities, and become immersed in ocean education.

Youth learning about aquatic environments with HMSC

Camp themes vary from year to year and this year's topics range from coastal ecology to fisheries. These dynamic programs focus on coastal and marine habitats with emphasis on the challenges of life in marine environments, emerging ocean issues, and current research. Activities for this year's camps include tide pool explorations, dissections, plankton sampling, DNA isolation, tagging of steelhead, and building remotely operated vehicles (ROVs). Attendees have the opportunity to interact with experts from a variety of resource agencies and institutes such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon State University, and Oregon State Parks. For more information on these and other programs, please visit the Center's website at http://hmsc.oregonstate.edu/visitor/education-programs

What does it mean to be part of a community? During the 2012 summer, 50 high school students from Watsonville, California found out in a program sponsored by **Monterey Bay Aquarium**. They explored their local watershed and talked to community stakeholders and scientists, hearing their concerns and issues about the Pajaro River. They mapped and monitored the sloughs, dunes and streams, visit organic farms and historic sites and participated in local restoration efforts.

During the 2012-2013 school year, the same students will develop and conduct their own research projects based on what sparked their interest in the summer. Aquarium staff, teachers, scientists and community members will mentor, advise and offer encouragement. Coastal America federal partners in the region have the opportunity to be involved as well by providing talks or tours of facilities, etc. for the group. At the end of the year, Watsonville Area Teens Conserving Habitat (WATCH) students will not only know their community, they'll see the effect of their voice on the community.
More young adults are getting involved! Over 100 Teen Conservation Leaders (TCLs) are volunteering their time at Monterey Bay Aquarium this summer. After a fun and intensive two-week training, where they learn basic marine biology and ocean conservation, they spread out across the Aquarium and help wherever they can. TCL volunteers provide exhibit interpretation for guests, support summer camp programs and assist with teacher institutes. Some help husbandry staff and others even get to

Monterey Bay Aquarium students planting native coastal grasses

NORTHWEST, continued

work with the sea otter research team. In the process, students develop important job and life skills, build self-confidence and earn community service hours. Regular conservation experiences connect students with local scientists and ocean conservation experts of all kinds.

Vancouver Aquarium had two young ocean artists go to the national level of the Coastal America Ocean Art Contest. Annika McFarlane, a ninth grade winner from Windsor Secondary School in North Vancouver enthused that, "It's good that art can impact something as important as the ocean, and I hope others are inspired!"

Concern for the ocean also fueled 6th grade winner Alyssa Cheung's desire to participate in the contest.

Interview with Alyssa Cheung, 1st place winner of Group 3 from Vancouver Aquarium

"When I saw what was happening to the ocean, I just wanted to do something about it," she said.

Aquarium of the Pacific recently contributed four of the eight 2012 Coastal America Ocean Art Contest winners. Not surprisingly, they also had the highest number of regional entries to their contest; 262. The aquarium has very active ocean education and youth programs, as exemplified by their high proportion of winners. "For both the current and previous Student Ocean Art Contests, the Aquarium of the Pacific has had more winning entries than any other institution in Coastal America's national network of learning centers. The high quality of the entries in the aquarium's regional contest highlights Southern California's distinctive ocean ethic and the understanding by its youth of the importance of the ocean," said Virginia Tippie, Director of Coastal America.

Carmen Pacheco, 1st place Photography winner of Group 3 from Aquarium of the Pacific

GULF OF MEXICO

The **Texas State Aquarium** received entries from around the State of Texas for Coastal America's National Ocean Art Contest. Texas regional winners were announced at a special ceremony at the Aquarium on March 28, 2012 and their artwork was on display during the month of April.

The aquarium coordinates the South Texas Oyster Restoration and Awareness (STORA) project which engages high school students in efforts led by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and

Students from the Texas Aquarium handling recycled oyster shells

Harte Research Institute (HRI) to restore valuable oyster habitat. HRI's habitat restoration efforts include the "Sink Your Shucks" program that recruits local restaurants to recycle oyster shells which are then used to build new oyster reefs. The students' interest in "Sink Your Shucks" started in 2010 when they learned about HRI's habitat research and restoration efforts and then presented this locally significant project at the 3rd National Student Summit on Oceans and Coasts in Washington, DC. Since the Summit, they have interacted with the public at community events and participated in three restoration events. In June, the students shared their experience with stakeholders at the Gulf of Mexico Alliance annual meeting in Corpus Christi. STORA is funded by a grant to the Texas State Aquarium by the State Farm Youth Advisory Board service-learning grants program.

On June 23 the **Veracruz Aquarium** was honored with a visit from leaders from Latin America Zoos and Aquariums from Guatemala, Chile, Argentina, Venezuela and Peru. This visit was part of the Latin America Congress of Parks, Zoos and Aquariums conference that was celebrated from June 19-22 in the City of Puebla,

GULF OF MEXICO, continued

Mexico. During their stay, these special guests checked out kiosks and exhibits, learned about the Coastal America Partnership, had a behind the scenes tour of Veracruz's technical facilities and took a nautical tour to the Veracruz Reef System National Park.

Guests take a boat tour of the Veracruz Reef System National Park

SOUTHEAST

The Florida Aquarium is immersed in climate change education! With several grants ongoing, as well as several more beginning in 2013, The Climate Change Community Outreach Initiative (CCCOI) is progressing well throughout the Gulf of Mexico region. CCCOI is a five-year NOAA-funded grant for six CELC facilities: The Florida Aquarium, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, and Institute for Marine Mammal Studies, Texas State Aquarium, and the Veracruz Aquarium. In the spring of 2012, the partners launched community outreach focused on climate change and individual behaviors. Additionally, work on an online digital game, produced by Mindclay Creative, has led to a prototype climate change education game: Ocean and Climate Defender.
The Florida Aquarium's capital campaign, Rising Tides, continues with several more announcements of recent large gifts totaling $2.5 million. This brings the total campaign gifts to more than $8 million, which includes a $2.5-million leadership gift from The Mosaic Company for creation of an education, conference and event facility. Groundbreaking for Phase 1 of the multi-year expansion will commence this September (2012), with sequenced and consecutive construction projects to be underway for four years. Rising Tides will include a state-of-the-art education center with five innovative classrooms, a new exhibit hall for traveling exhibits, new dive facilities to enhance and expand guest dive/swim programs, a lobby re-design to immerse visitors into an underwater experience the minute they walk through the doors, an off-site education and research facility, and the Mosaic Center.

The **IGFA** Summer Fishing Camp recently started back up for another great year of introducing the next generation of anglers to the sport of fishing. Spread out over ten week-long sessions, the IGFA's Summer

Campers learn about native marine life

Fishing Camp educates children about the basics of fishing such as knot tying, fly casting, fish biology, conserving habitats, and much more. The camp also emphasizes the importance of conserving our aquatic resources through the program's curricula, which has been adapted from other Coastal America Learning Centers with similar interests. The campers travel all over South Florida on various field trips and fish in several different environments using techniques they learned during camp. The camp attracts young anglers from countries as far away as Spain and Guatemala who come to experience and learn the fishing techniques used in Florida.

The **Georgia Aquarium** had an exciting spring in education! More than 120,000 students from Georgia and the rest of the United States visited during the 2011- 2012 school year. Students also visited from Canada, Colombia, Mexico and the United Kingdom. The Georgia Aquarium also held a regional contest for the Coastal America Art Contest. One of the winners, Carol Zhou, placed second in the 3rd – 5th grade category in the national contest. A display of the regional winning artwork is featured in the Kids Cove exhibit area.

In April, the Georgia Aquarium hosted a "Get to Know Your Wild Neighbor" Earth Day event and launched a second art contest in partnership with "Get To Know." The day-long event included exhibitors representing nine nature and art organizations. Guests discovered how to connect with nature from onsite representatives of the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia State Parks, Georgia Department of Natural Resources' "Go Fish Georgia Program," the National Wildlife Federation, Center for Puppetry Arts, City of Atlanta Parks – Office of Cultural Affairs, One More Generation, and Chattahoochee River National Recreational Area. In addition, Georgia Aquarium

A camper explores the touch tank with the help of a Georgia Aquarium volunteer

SOUTHEAST, continued

displayed the winning artwork from the Atlanta Regional 2012 Coastal America Art Contest. The purpose of the "Get to Know" Program is to encourage youth to explore the outdoors and connect with nature.

The aquarium had an exciting summer camp season. It kicked off in June with a Special Needs Camp for children diagnosed with autism and/or nonverbal learning disabilities aged 5-8. Modeled after the Aquarium's successful Camp H2O program, the aquarium is able to the meet the specific needs of these campers. To date, 50 children have participated in this camp over the last three years.

The **Georgia Chapter of the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership**, led by Tom Simpson of CMH2 Hill, in close collaboration with the Coastal America regional team, led by Drew Kendall, Coastal America Chair and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 have a really efficient technique to identify and prioritize restoration projects in that region. In lieu of 'starting from scratch' to collect the list of administration's priority projects for partnership involvement, the GA CWRP have joined with EPA to advance the Five Star Restoration Program.

The Five Star Restoration Program was established by EPA to work with its partners through community-based wetlands restoration projects in watersheds across the U.S. Funding for the program is provided by EPA's Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds, and by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service's Community-based Restoration Program for selected projects in coastal areas. The program provides challenge grants, technical support and opportunities for information exchange to enable community-based restoration projects. Funding levels for these are modest, averaging about $20,000 per project. However, when combined with the contributions of partners such as the CWRP, these endeavors make meaningful contributions to communities. In the Southeast, Five Star Funding is supplemented by an annual donation of $200,000 by the Southern Company.

Members of the Georgia Coastal America Team are working with select project managers to assist them in navigating the Five Star Restoration application process, greatly increasing the number and quality of requests from that region. Because of the close collaboration afforded by the Coastal America network, upon selection of these projects by EPA, they are already pre-screened and would receive the necessary matching funds from the GA CWRP. On average, for each dollar of federal sponsor funds offered by the Five Star program, five additional dollars in matching contributions must be provided by restoration partners in the form of funding, labor, materials, equipment or in-kind services. The National CWRP has been meeting this need for a non-federal match for over a decade; thus far nationwide, the CWRP has leveraged over $118 million in funding for over 300 projects; collaborating on the Five Star program is one more opportunity to enhance the CWRP's reach.
By promoting the use of this program, the Georgia CWRP is not only supporting the restoration goals of the federal government but is also helping communities achieve real results for their environment, bringing partners together to strategize and prioritize projects. Aggregating over time and space, these smaller grassroots efforts make a significant contribution to our environmental landscape and to the understanding of the importance of healthy wetlands and streams in our communities.

Aquarium guests using the new Ocean Today Kiosk

The new Ocean Today Kiosk at the **North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores** complements the summer's biggest attraction, "Penguin Plunge," featuring four African penguins. Located in the high-traffic area adjacent to the penguin exhibit entrance, the kiosk engages and educates visitors on coastal issues and conservation actions. The new Ocean Today format, unveiled on World Oceans Day June 8, helps reinforce the visiting penguin exhibit's key messages on the effects of climate change, overfishing and habitat loss. "The Ocean Today kiosk brings the Aquarium an additional dimension to engage our visitors about our coastal environment and what they can do to help

SOUTHEAST, continued

protect it," said Aquarium Director Allen Monroe. "The interactive, touch-screen technology lets our visitors select the topics that interest them. With Internet connectivity, the news stories and research information can be continuously updated with the most relevant conservation stories."

The Ocean Today kiosk is a permanent feature at the Aquarium. Penguin Plunge runs through September 30, 2012.

MID-ATLANTIC

In honor of their designation as the 24th Coastal America Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) presented the Adventure Aquarium and New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences (NJAAS), with a piece of deep-sea coral lophelia pertusa. The coral is from an expansive coral habitat 58 miles east of the Mississippi River in the Gulf of Mexico delta and was collected as part of a study funded by BOEM and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Ocean Exploration and Research. The coral had been archived at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History before its donation to the Adventure Aquarium.

In another exciting development, the Adventure Aquarium and NJAAS installed an 'Ocean Today Kiosk' on World Oceans Day, June 8. Guests of Adventure Aquarium will be able to interact with a touch screen and 50" video monitor to access a wide range of content from NOAA, including documentary and kid-friendly videos educating people on global and national conservation efforts. In addition, guests can find out about locally-based efforts by the Aquarium and NJAAS to fight marine pollution, overfishing and habitat destruction in nearby waterways.

The Ocean Today Kiosk will provide a new and exciting dimension of learning opportunity here at Adventure Aquarium," said Brian DuVall, president and chief executive officer of the New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences. "The NOAA content changes regularly and there is even the opportunity for us to participate in production of new content relating to our own conservation activities that can be streamed throughout North America. We are very proud to have the opportunity to include this important informational tool in the offerings of the Aquarium."

Sample of deep-sea coral 'lophelia pertusa'

The **New Jersey CWRP** (NJ CWRP) is actively working with restoration partners on an array of projects. A recent highlight was a celebration held on May 2, 2012 recognizing the NJ CWRP and other partners for their support for the Nature Conservancy's restoration project at Minisink Valley Preserve in Montague Township, NJ. This project will protect the integrity of the Clove Brook, its associated marshes, and the overall health of the area. It involves the restoration of a former quarry site in the headwaters of a category 1 stream which drains into the wild and scenic Delaware River. By stabilizing soil and establishing a mixture of herbaceous and woody vegetation, it will reduce the runoff of sediment downstream into the Clove Brook and neighboring wetlands. The project will create early successional habitat for important species like the rapidly declining golden winged warbler.

Another recent success is the completion of the main phase of the Cox Hall Creek Project in Lower Township, Cape May County, N.J. On June 20, 2012, a dedication ceremony was held (and a sign will later be erected) to recognize the cooperation of the many partners that worked together to make it possible. This project restores 87 acres of coastal nursery habitat for estuarine forage fishes, improving water quality, providing forage habitat for avian predators, reducing mosquito habitat, and removing invasive common reed. The culvert that reintroduced free tidal exchange into the wetland would not have been possible without the assistance of the NJ CWRP. The community has been pursuing restoration of the basin since May of 2001 through the Cape May County Watershed Management Working Group.

NJ CWRP provided financial and volunteer support to *Project PORTS,* Promoting Oyster Restoration through Schools. To help revitalize Delaware Bay oyster populations and the important fish habitat their reefs provide, students throughout South Jersey made shell bags for the 6th straight year. The bagged shells are then placed in a location in the Lower Bay where they will serve as a settling surface for young oysters. Later in the season the spat will be hauled out and transported onto restoration and fishery sites in the Upper Bay, where the oysters will continue to grow and form reefs.

MID-ATLANTIC, continued

NJ CWRP has expanded its outreach efforts with the launch of its new website. Included is a link that provides guidance for submitting projects for funding consideration. Please visit www.NJCWRP.org

NORTHEAST

Close to 400 years ago, on November 19th, 1620 the Pilgrims landed on Cape Cod, in a town now called Plymouth, MA. After the arduous journey and months at sea, the wayward pioneers were in desperate need of fresh water and food and they found both in a small stream that they named "Town Brook." The Brook's headwaters are the Billington Sea, a 269 acre freshwater pond that was a source not only of essential water but also of fish protein, as herring and alewife are native to the stream.

In the years that passed, the Brook was slowly degraded, riparian wetlands were compromised and habitat was lost, due largely to the five-

Native alewife and river herring return to the stream after removal of the dam

major obstacles to fish passage that were built on the stream. Since identification of the issue by the Town in the late 1990's, **Coastal America's North East Regional Team** (NERIT), **Massachusetts Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership** (MA CWRP) members, the Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration and others have worked together to restore this historic brook. In 2002, Coastal America bestowed a Partnership Award on the Town and other partners for their efforts, which included the first proactively planned dam removal for anadromous fish passage in the state, the *Billington Street Dam*. Restoration also included the installation of an "Alaskan Steep Pass" fish ladder. As a result of these efforts, the herring run increased in size from 7,000 to 100,000 total fish.

Today the Brook is much more productive but there are still impediments to fish passage, and Coastal America partners are still working together to improve it. For example, the project team is now removing two more large dams, the Plymco Dam *and* associated structures and the Off Billington Street Dam. Through the MA CWRP Chapter, Moran Environmental Recovery (MRE) provided in-kind services; the expert demolition of the derelict Plymco building which is adjacent to the Dam. MRE also loaded the debris materials for appropriate disposal and regraded the site in anticipation of a second phase of soil remediation. Due to the migratory routes of these anadromous fish, ecological benefits from this project are being realized all the way down to the southern mid-Atlantic region.

The **New England Aquarium** celebrated World Oceans Day on Sunday, June 3rd with 28 partnering organizations. Event activities featured sustainable seafood cooking demonstrations and tastings led by several guest chefs from Boston area restaurants. Activities also included hands-on demonstrations of a remote-controlled underwater vehicle with the MIT Sea Grant College Program, composting exercises with the Green Team from the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, chemistry demonstrations and color-changing kelp experiments with Ocean Approved LLC, and a 3D interactive watershed model to help visitors understand runoff in a watershed environment with the Charles River Watershed Association. More than 4,000 visitors engaged in dialog about

Youth studying marine organisms at New England Aquarium World Oceans Day event

Congratulations to the **Long Beach West Restoration Team** for winning a Coastal America Partnership Award! The team was honored in a ceremony on June 4, in Stratford, Connecticut with Eileen Sobeck, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, as the keynote speaker. The Long Beach West Restoration Project Team completed the restoration of a significant barrier beach. A total of 37 abandoned cottages, 25 outbuildings, 4 docks, retaining walls, debris, and trash including hazardous materials, which consisted of lead, asbestos, and PCBs were removed on 35 acres. A significant amount of the debris was also recycled. This project prevented contaminants from being dispersed on the Great Meadows Unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding environment which could have occurred during a large coastal storm.

The restored beach is now accessible to residents for recreational use and is protected nesting ground for Piping Plovers and other marine and coastal wildlife.

The partners who made this project possible include: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Town of Stratford,

Eileen Sobeck, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, with partnership award winners during site tour

NORTHEAST, continued

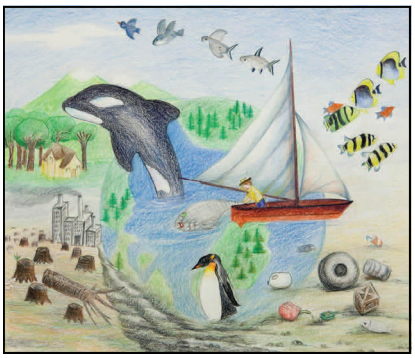
The Trust for Public Land, Audubon Connecticut, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fairfield County Community Foundation, Land-Tech Consultants, Inc., Ducks Unlimited and U.S. Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro. To see video of the event, please visit http://bit.ly/KXHeop.

GREAT LAKES

Selected from over 1,500 submissions, the artwork titled "Inextricably Interconnected" by sixth-grade student Timothy Li at **Shedd Aquarium** in December was awarded second place in Coastal America's Student Ocean Art Contest. Li's illustration creatively depicts the natural connection between humans and animals living in the ocean, showing how the actions of humans affect life in our waters.

The national contest sponsored by Coastal America and its network of 24 Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELC) challenged students – from kindergarten through college – to create pieces that best communicated one of the Essential Principles of Ocean Literacy. Organized by grade levels, the contest encourages learning about the National Ocean Policy through colorful entries of original artwork from students. Li's submission was one of several entries that Shedd received to represent the aquarium at the national level.

"Timothy's art is a beautiful expression of the important relationship that we have with the living world, resonating deeply with our mission at Shedd Aquarium," said Melissa Williams, Vice President of Learning. "Shedd is very proud of all the students that submitted their artistic visions to the aquarium for the contest and thrilled that Timothy's work was recognized nationally."



"Inextricably Interconnected" by 6th grade student, Timothy Li from Shedd Aquarium

The **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium** in Dubuque, Iowa finished a very busy spring of programming and tours for school groups. The museum & aquarium also held a new event called Boat Fest where boat building and nautical demonstrations were held along with water related contests, music, and boat exhibits.

The aquarium is currently hosting several summer youth camps and educational programs. New aviaries, a living stream, new outdoor pavilion, and a raft ride have opened this summer in the new plaza area connecting the museum & aquarium buildings. Planning is underway for a new turtle exhibit, fall student conferences, and new curriculum updates.

Wooden boat races at NMRMA's Boat Fest

ALASKA

Battelle, a long time member of the CWRP national board, recently opened an office in Anchorage, Alaska. As the world's largest independent research and development organization, Battelle's mission is to use science and technology as a positive force for change. The 2011 tsunami in Japan caused a marine debris problem along Alaska shores that presents a potential immediate opportunity for local companies to partner with Coastal America and the CWRP to assist in the cleanup. Consistent with Battelle's mission, Karen Johnson-Young (Battelle's representative to the CWRP national board) and Ted Rockwell (Battelle Anchorage Office) have begun consulting with John MacKenzie on the revitalization of the Alaska CWRP State Chapter. Karen and Ted will be working with John to identify a corporate lead for the Alaska Chapter to assist in the marine debris cleanup. Any companies with business in Alaska who are interested in more information regarding CWRP and the Alaska CWRP's potential role in being a part of the solution to the tsunami debris problem should contact John MacKenzie at johnmackenzie@cwrp.org

ALASKA, continued

On June 18, the **Alaska SeaLife Center** (ASLC) rescued a 2-day-old beluga whale from Bristol Bay, the first-known rescued beluga calf from U.S. waters since the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. With animal care a top priority, a world-class animal care and education community with extensive experience with beluga whales came together immediately in response to ASLC's call for additional help. ASLC staff worked alongside experts in marine mammal veterinary care and husbandry from two CELC partners (**Georgia Aquarium** and **John G. Shedd Aquarium**) and SeaWorld – San Diego, for three weeks to rehabilitate this very special marine mammal.

The young whale unfortunately succumbed to multiple infections, passing away on July 8. However, the whale would have never survived as long as he did had it not been for the incredible care this expert team was able to provide. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of this beluga calf," said Tara Riemer Jones, President and CEO of the Alaska SeaLife Center. "But we are incredibly proud of the care that the multi-institution animal and veterinary team provided. The knowledge they brought from the whales in their care at their home institutions allowed us to provide the best medical and animal care possible to this calf. There is more we will continue to learn about beluga whales as a result of this loss that will ultimately benefit beluga whales in the marine mammal community and in the wild."

The young whale's arrival at the Center also coincided with the filming of several episodes of "Ocean Mysteries with Jeff Corwin," a partnership with Georgia Aquarium. When the beluga whale arrived, Jeff Corwin and his crew were able to document the unique story and amazing teamwork behind caring for the stranded beluga whale.

Jeff Corwin and Alaska SeaLife Center staff member interacting with the baby beluga whale

Pacific

The **Waikiki Aquarium** received over 258 submissions to the 2012-2013 Coastal America Ocean Art Contest at the regional level. Of those entries, Joseph Payongayong won 2nd place in group three and Troy Souza won 3rd place in group four at the national level of the Ocean Art Contest. The student artwork will be exhibited at the Department of Commerce in Washington D.C. until mid-November. Artwork will then be highlighted at other prominent locations throughout the city.

Andrew Rossiter, Director of Waikiki Aquarium and Virginia Tippie, Director of Coastal America, in front of student ocean artwork displayed at the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Ocean Ball

Andrew Rossiter, Director of Waikiki Aquarium, attended Capitol Hill Oceans Week and partnership meetings.

Coastal America Partnership Awards Program

The Coastal America Awards Program, established in 1997, recognizes outstanding efforts and excellence in leadership for protecting, preserving and restoring the nation's coastal resources and ecosystems. Please help us recognize these worthy projects by nominating a team from your region today! Nomination and background information is available on the Coastal America website, www.coastalamerica.gov.

Although nominations for the 2012 season are closed, we are always interested in hearing about great partnership projects. Please contact Carli Bertrand at Carli.Bertrand@usda.gov with any updates.

Partnership Awards
Recognize outstanding Coastal America partnership efforts and/or multi-agency projects.

Spirit Awards
Recognize outstanding partnership efforts that demonstrate the "spirit" of Coastal America.

Special Recognition Awards
Recognize non-federal organizations for their demonstrated leadership in establishing partnerships.

Admiral James D. Watkins, Chafee Stewardship Award Winner

Presentation of the Senator John C. Chafee Coastal Stewardship Award to Admiral James D. Watkins at a Coastal America ceremony in 2005

Coastal America sadly notes the passing of our 2005 John H. Chafee Coastal Stewardship Award winner, Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret). Coastal America established this award in 1999 to recognize the late Senator Chafee for his lifetime commitment to restore and protect the coastal environment. Other award winners have included John Kerry and Leon Panetta. Admiral Watkins (1927-2012) received the award for his outstanding leadership in addressing the issues facing our oceans, coasts and great lakes. The Admiral served as the Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and led the effort to gain consensus on the critical ocean policy document, *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century*. He also served as President of the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE), President of the Joint Oceanographic Institutions (JOI), Chief of Naval Operations and Secretary of the Department of Energy.

Gene Cope Memorial Youth Ocean Education Fund Established

A longtime friend of the Coastal America Partnership, **Gene Cope** (1930-2012) served as the partnership's Education Outreach Coordinator from 1995-1996 and was instrumental in establishing the Learning Center Network. Over the years, he was actively involved in partnership projects as the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service representative. He was especially committed to youth ocean education efforts and coordinated Coastal America's first Student Ocean Summit. In addition to Gene's active involvement with the Learning Center Network he also supported the National Ocean Sciences Bowl as a judge and the "Environmentors" program as a mentor for at-risk youth in Washington, D.C.

Gene Cope at a past Coastal America event

The **Gene Cope Memorial Youth Ocean Education Fund has been established in his memory.** Contributions to the memorial fund will be used to support students involved in Learning Center youth initiatives such as the student summits and other activities focused on engaging youth in coastal & ocean stewardship and promoting STEM skills. To contribute to the fund online, please go to www.CoastalAmericaFoundation.org/donateonline.html and click on *Gene Cope Memorial Youth Ocean Education Fund*. A check can also be written to the Coastal America Foundation with a notation that it is for the Gene Cope Education Fund. The check should be mailed to Coastal America Foundation, 100 Muron Avenue, Bellingham, MA 02019-0221.

Coastal America Wishes All the Best to Two Retirees

Mario Del Vicario at his retirement party

Longtime MARIT-North co-chair Mario Del Vicario retired this June after 35 years of distinguished federal service at both the US Army Corps of Engineers, New York District and Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 offices. Mario was a tremendous advocate for all of Team's activities and enjoyed working closely with the CELC's and CWRP chapters in the Mid-Atlantic area since inception of Coastal America. Mario's infectious enthusiasm for all things Coastal America will be greatly missed.

We are also bidding farewell to Kelvin Char, Pacific Islands Regional Chair for 6 years. After 28 years with NOAA, Kelvin will retire on October 3, 2012. He plans to be even more engaged with Pacific island communities, and looks forward to spending much more time with family and friends.

A Student's Point of View

Coastal America is proud of all of the students who have participated in the three Student Summits. The passion and commitment they bring to the Summits is inspiring! We know that many return home even more determined to contribute to environmental awareness and to help improve ocean stewardship. Right now, the partnership is enmeshed in planning for the 4th Student Summit; we were particularly heartened to receive the following update from an outstanding participant in the 2006 Summit, who attended the 2011 Summit as a guest speaker.

After returning from the 2011 Student Summit I continued my studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) and my mentoring/tutoring work at Pajaro Valley High School in Watsonville, CA. In the summer of 2011 (June-Aug), I had the opportunity to travel to Bali, Indonesia to take part in an international integrative undergraduate research program for underrepresented students called the Diversity

Student Gina Carillo researching the organisms living in dead coral heads

Project. In Bali I worked closely with marine biologists/scientists from various organizations (including the Smithsonian) to learn more about the origin of the incredible biodiversity of the Coral Triangle using cutting edge genetics techniques.

Shortly after returning from Indonesia, I took part in the University of California Education Aboard Program and traveled to Coventry, U.K. to study at the University of Warwick during the Fall 2011 term. There I pursued my academic interest in education, as well as my personal interest in traveling as I was able to also visit Ireland, Poland, Scotland, and the Netherlands. After returning home in the winter, I continued to make progress on my degree in Environmental Studies and my minor in Education at UCSC. I am happy to report that in June of 2012, I completed my studies at UCSC with a Bachelors of Art in Environmental Studies and a minor in Education!

Gina examined a sea cucumber as part of her marine biodiversity research

Upon graduating I was offered a seasonal position with the Monterey Bay Aquarium to help with the completion of a longitudinal evaluation of their Watsonville Area Teens Conserving Habitats (WATCH) program. As an alumni of the program, it was quite amazing to be a part of a project that allowed me the opportunity to hear first-hand the incredibly positive impacts that this program has had on its participants. As my life passion lies in education, particularly environmental education, when an opening within the Monterey Bay Aquarium's education department became available this summer, I found it an opportunity that I simply could not let pass. My involvement with the Monterey Bay Aquarium has now come full circle as I am now working full-time as a Bilingual Education Specialist within their amazing education department. In this position I will be teaching Pre-K thru 12th grade students who participate in the various school programs that the Aquarium offers.

As a recent college graduate and advocate for environmental education, I could not imagine myself in a more fortunate position. I am ecstatic to begin this new chapter in life and look forward to staying in contact with the staff of Coastal America, as you all have played a significant role in helping me realize the immense importance of educating our youth about the environment and harnessing their incredible potential to create positive change!

Gina Carrillo

The Veracruz Aquarium student delegates at the third National Student Summit on Ocean and Coasts

Plans are underway for the Fourth Coastal America Student Summit on the Ocean and Coasts

Coming to Washington D.C. in Spring 2013!

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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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