



DOI'S Oceans and Coastal Newsletter
From Continental Divide to Continental Shelf

Dear Members of DOI's Ocean and Coastal Community:

With the goal of enhancing cooperation between DOI bureaus, *NewsWave* is a forum to share news, information, and upcoming events related to ocean and coastal issues. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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Top Story

19th Meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force

The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force ([USCRTF](#)), co-chaired by DOI and NOAA, hosted its 19th meeting on February 27, 2008 in the Baird Auditorium at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. The USCRTF celebrated the International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008) and discussed the priority threats facing coral reef ecosystems and what actions and commitments are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of these valuable ecosystems.



Wyland's "Year of the Reef" unveiled at the U.S. CRTF meeting February 27, 2008

Dr. Nancy Knowlton, the Smithsonian Sant Chair of Marine Science, gave the keynote address and challenged the USCRTF to focus on outcomes that have tangible and measurable impacts on coral reef health. Special guest, President H.E. Tommy Remengesau Jr. of the Republic of Palau, gave an inspiring address that highlighted the successes possible when we work beyond traditional political and ecological boundaries. He described how despite the catastrophic bleaching event that occurred in 1998, the coral reefs of Palau have shown incredible resilience and bounced back magnificently. The official artist of IYOR 2008, Wyland, most renowned for his large murals of whales and other ocean life on the sides of buildings, unveiled his original painting "Year of the Reef".

New England Regional Seamless Network Workshop

The New England Regional Seamless Network Workshop, hosted by the [Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) (NERR) in conjunction with the [Rachel Carson NWR](#), was held on March 6-7, 2008 in Wells, Maine. The 2-day event was the first in a series of regionally planned meetings. Among those attending were program managers and staff, field biologists, cultural resource specialists, and national program leads from the NWRS, NPS, and NMSP. The workshops goal was to identify and discuss local priorities and projects, consistent with the NOAA-DOI Seamless Network Interagency General Agreement. The General Agreement, signed in August 2006, provides a vehicle for the agencies to attain greater operational and administrative efficiencies through the exchange of financial and programmatic resources and increased collaboration between state, public, and private partners. This will result in an increased understanding of important natural and cultural resources, increased effectiveness of joint resource planning, enhanced public awareness and education, cooperative conservation, and improved law enforcement and rescue capabilities. The General Agreement is an important component of the President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan. The next event, the New York/New Jersey Bight Oceans Initiative:



Creating a Seamless Network of Protected Shores Workshop, will be hosted by Rutgers University Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences on May 13 and 14, 2008. Upcoming events will include South Florida and Chesapeake Bay workshops to be held in the summer and fall of 2008. To learn more about the national effort to build an effective national system of marine protected areas visit www.mpa.gov.

NOPP Requests Proposals for the Exploration of Northern Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Bottom Habitats



The National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) is soliciting proposals for the exploration and research of deepwater habitats in the northern Gulf of Mexico. This interagency study will focus on the exploration and investigation of non-chemosynthetic biological communities that have developed on both natural and artificial hard substrates including platforms and shipwrecks with emphasis on deepwater coral habitats. An additional aspect includes exploration of unidentified shipwreck sites in the deep Gulf with both historical and biological objectives. NOPP facilitates interactions among fifteen Federal agencies to provide leadership and coordination of national oceanographic research and education programs. Through NOPP, the public and private sectors are brought together to support larger, more comprehensive projects, to promote sharing of resources, and to foster community-wide innovative advances in ocean science, technology, and education. Since 1997, NOPP has invested more than \$244M to support 120 research and education projects involving more than 200 public and private institutions. A comparable amount of in-kind support has been committed by the research and education community. To learn more about NOPP visit their website at www.nopp.org. To view the proposals go to <http://www.fbo.gov/spg/DOI/MMS/PO/M08PS00032/SynopsisR.html>.

2008 Coast Salish Gathering: USGS-Coast Salish Partnership

The Tulalip Tribe hosted the 3rd annual Coast Salish Gathering February 27-29, 2008. The goals of the Gathering were to integrate the diverse indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea under one Coast Salish entity (and voice) and to adopt an environmental science and policy agenda that will help them sustain their environment and marine resources which are inherently linked to their culture and identity. Tribal elders and scientists highlighted critical impacts to near-shore ecosystems that mirror problems identified by the [Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership](#) including historical changes in fish, bird, plant, and invertebrate community structure, increases in parasites (sea lice) and invasive species, sedimentation impacts to shellfish harvest areas and fish migratory pathways, impacts of trawling on benthic ecosystem structure and function, and increases in pollution from point and non-point sources, especially wood pulp mills, metal refineries, and dairy farms. Improving our understanding of and ability



Members of the Salish tribe assist USGS scientists with monitoring instruments

to predict the extent of these impacts to nearshore habitats, estuarine processes, and marine resources is the principal mission of the USGS's Coastal Habitats in Puget Sound Project (<http://puget.usgs.gov/>) in cooperation with its many partners. Special thanks to Eric Grossman, USGS/Western Region Coastal and Marine Geology for submitting this story.

NPS and Grand Portage Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa Approve VHS Prevention and Response Plan

The four units of the NPS on Lake Superior and the Grand Portage Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa have approved a plan to protect park and tribal fishery resources from the deadly viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) virus. VHS was first detected in the lower Great Lakes in 2003 and is thought to have been initially introduced by contaminated ballast water. Although it continues to spread each year it has yet to be found in Lake Superior. VHS is known to infect at least 28 species of fish, including many popular for both commercial and recreational fishing, and has been blamed for large fish kills in other parts of the Great Lakes. Park and tribal fishery biologists believe the virus has significant potential to impact the ecological integrity of fishery resources in protected areas. The plan developed by the partnership outlines 16 recommended prevention actions including an aggressive education and outreach campaign, restrictions on the use of certain fish bait thought to be a vector of VHS, decontamination of boats before launching within NPS waters, prohibiting the exchange of ballast water, and closer collaboration between federal, state, and local agencies.

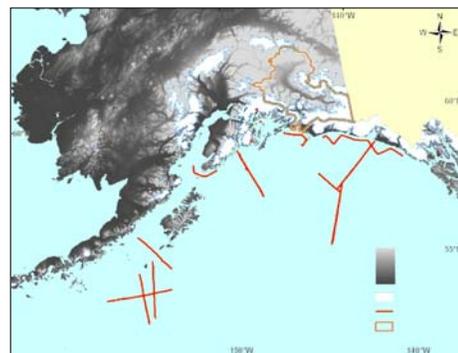
To learn more about VHS and to view the full plan visit the NPS VHS webpage at <http://www.nps.gov/apis/parkmgmt/vhs.htm>.



Ships entering Lake Superior containing ballast water

USGS Scientists Study How Iron Stimulates Growth of Phytoplankton

During August and September 2007, USGS scientists participated in a research cruise funded by the NSF that focused on the effect of iron enrichment on the growth of phytoplankton in the northwestern Gulf of Alaska. Some of the specific research objectives of the cruise were to measure the iron content in waters, examine how mixing of iron-rich coastal waters with high-nutrient, low-chlorophyll waters leads to enhanced phytoplankton biomass, and to assess what fraction of the particulate iron is “reactive” or bioavailable. The cruise involved extensive water sampling in both the coastal and offshore marine waters of the Gulf of Alaska. Once in the gulf, the cruise tracked in and out of the sediment-laden



Red lines show tracks where water samples were collected

Alaska Coastal Current and the offshore waters of the Alaska Gyre, while the scientists collected both surface samples and depth profiles and made various shipboard measurements. To learn more about the samples collected during the cruise and what the scientists are thinking about processes that deliver iron from the land to the ocean, read the full article at <http://soundwaves.usgs.gov/>.

Central Gulf of Mexico Sale 205 Nets over \$2.8 Billion in High Bids

MMS has accepted high bids valued at \$2,829,926,881 and awarded 683 leases to the successful high bidders who participated in Central Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Lease Sale 205. Funds from the total high bids will be distributed to the general fund of the U.S. Treasury, shared with the affected States, and set aside for special uses that benefit the fifty states. The leases were awarded following the completion of an extensive, two-phase bid evaluation process to ensure that the Federal government receives a fair monetary return for the public. View the full press release at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/whatsnew/newsreal/2008/080229.pdf>

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Upcoming Meetings around the Nation

Ocean Education Workshop: March 25-26, Quincy Marriot Hotel - Boston, Massachusetts. National Park Service staff is conducting a two-day workshop focused on interpreting critical natural resource issues related to ocean education. Invited speakers will share effective interpretive programming, partnership strategies, and examples of integrating research into interpretive programs for the public. Featured programs include: Channel Islands Live; junior ranger programs on cruise ships within Glacier Bay; strategies for establishing and communicating about Marine Protected Areas; and cultural history case studies. This training is provided by the Natural Resource Program Center and participants will be able to apply through DOI Learn. Contact: Lynne Murdock, NRPC Interpretive Liaison, 202-513-7195

20th Salt Water Intrusion Meeting: June 23-27, Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club - Naples, Florida, USA <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/SWIM>. USGS is cosponsoring this meeting. The purpose is to provide a forum for scientists, engineers, water resource managers, and planners to share their research, ideas, and recommendations. Meeting topics include: field studies of saltwater intrusion; geochemistry; geophysics; management of coastal aquifers; submarine groundwater discharge; optimization modeling; effects of sea level rise and climate change.

11th International Coral Reef Symposium: July 7-11 at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida USA. The world's major coral reef science meeting, sanctioned by the International Society of Reef Studies, is held every 4 years. The ICRS is devoted to the best reef science available, with the purpose of sharing scientific findings with government agencies, resource management, and non-government organizations throughout the world. The previous ICRS was held in Okinawa in 2004. Cosponsors of this year's event include: DOI, FWS, MMS, NPS, USGS, OIA, and NOAA. For more information go to <http://www.nova.edu/ncri/11icrs/index.html>.

Sincerely,

Kameran Onley
Assistant Deputy Secretary

Chris Kearney
Deputy Assistant Secretary

To submit a story for next month's NewsWave contact bret_wolfe@fws.gov. Suggestions and comments are also welcome. We are also producing a DOI Oceans calendar to be accessed via the DOI oceans [website](#). Please forward details of any upcoming meetings or events concerning ocean, estuarine, or coastal issues.

To learn more about the ocean and coastal activities of the participating agencies visit their websites:



Department of Interior



U.S. Geological Survey



National Park Service



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