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## 22ND MEETING OF THE U.S. CORAL REEF TASK FORCE HELD IN SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

The 22nd meeting of the [U.S. Coral Reef Task Force](#) (CRTF) was held from October 30-November 5 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Established by [Executive Order 13089](#) in 1998, the CRTF's mission is to lead, coordinate, and strengthen U.S. government actions to better preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. Co-chaired by DOI and the Department of Commerce, Task Force members include leaders of 12 federal agencies, seven U.S. states and territories, and three freely associated states. Eileen Sobeck, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and Anthony Babauta, Assistant Secretary for the Interior for Insular Areas represented DOI at the meeting.

The San Juan meeting provided an opportunity for CRTF members to focus on issues, initiatives, and partnerships in the Caribbean region. The meeting was preceded by a free workshop on sustainable marine tourism that gave local marine tourism professionals, resource managers, and local conservation groups the opportunity to learn about local coral reef issues and see examples of strategies that are working in other areas while developing their own local responses to reduce reef threats from marine recreation. Additional workshops included: Watersheds and Partnerships; *Acropora* and *Montastrea* Restoration; and Using Socioeconomic Information for Management in the US Caribbean. The business meeting agenda included passing two decision items. One, to implement a framework for action for CRTF coral conservation efforts and the other a resolution to establish a working group to review and recommend best management



*A garita or sentry box at Castillo San Felipe del Morro, part of the San Juan National Historic Site. Credit: Bret Wolfe*

practices for roadway design and construction in coral reef watersheds.

A field trip to the Guanica Bay watershed on Puerto Rico's southern coast highlighted a highly successful federal/state/local partnership initiated by the CRTF. The Guanica Project reduces sediment and nutrient run-off from the watershed to help protect near shore coral reef ecosystems. Attendees met with local users, state, and federal managers, scientists, and others to discuss the current status of Guanica, its near shore reefs, response plans, lessons learned, and planning for future projects. Also, USDA, [announced](#) that they will dedicate \$1 million from the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) in Fiscal Year 2010 to the Guanica watershed.

The CRTF holds biannual meetings in Washington, D.C. in the spring and, on a rotational basis, in each of the member jurisdictions in early fall. The next DC meeting is scheduled for February 2010. Other information about the San Juan meeting including text of public comments will be posted on the CRTF website ([www.coralreef.gov](http://www.coralreef.gov)).

## SECRETARY SALAZAR ATTENDS COPENHAGEN CLIMATE CONFERENCE

On December 10, Secretary Salazar gave a [keynote address](#) at the global climate change conference in Copenhagen, Denmark titled “New Energy Future: The Role of Public Lands in Clean Energy Production and Carbon Capture.” The Secretary’s speech connected DOI’s renewable energy efforts with the challenges of climate change saying, “We must manage our lands and oceans for these three new functions – renewable energy production, carbon capture and storage, and climate adaptation – if we are to tackle the climate crisis.”

While touring the nearby Middelgrunden wind farm the day before the address, the Secretary [announced](#) that MMS will establish a new regional office in 2010 to support

renewable energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off the Atlantic seaboard. “Given the enormous potential for renewable energy development, especially wind energy, in the Mid- and North Atlantic,” Secretary Salazar said, “MMS needs a dedicated Atlantic Region office as we plan for offshore renewable energy commercial leasing.”

The Atlantic OCS Region will be responsible for evaluating permits for renewable energy activities in an effective, efficient, and consistent manner while being responsive to the States, developers and other stakeholders. The new office will implement and manage the offshore renewable energy program, including



Secretary Salazar gets an up close at one of the turbines at the Middelgrunden offshore wind farm near Copenhagen. (Photo by Jacob Nielsen)

leasing, environmental programs, the formation of task forces, State consultation, and post-lease permitting in Federal waters off the East Coast.

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## USGS LED RESEARCH COULD IMPROVE CLIMATE PROJECTIONS

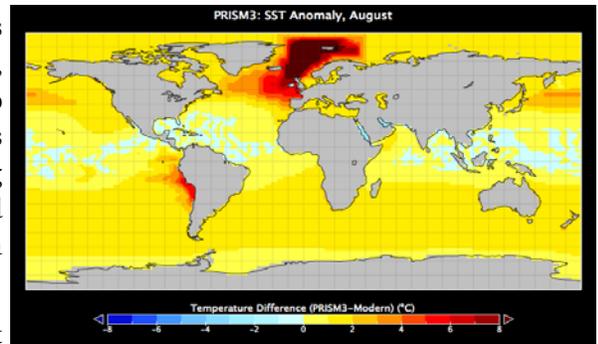
From [USGS Press Release](#):

New discoveries about the deep ocean’s temperature variability and circulation system could help improve projections of future climate conditions. The deep ocean is affected more by surface warming than previously thought, and this understanding allows for more accurate predictions of factors such as sea level rise and ice volume changes. High ocean surface temperatures have also been found to result in a more vigorous deep ocean circulation system. This increase results in a faster transport of large quantities of warm water, with possible impacts including reduction of sea ice extent and overall warming of the Arctic.

“The deep ocean is relatively unexplored, and we need a true understanding of its many complex processes,” said USGS Director Marcia McNutt. “An understanding

of climate change and its impacts based on sound, objective data is a keystone to the type of long-term strategies and solutions that are being discussed now at the United Nations conference in Copenhagen.”

USGS scientists created the first ever 3-D reconstruction of an ocean during a past warm period, focusing on the mid-Pliocene warm period 3.3 to 3 million years ago. “Our findings are significant because they improve our previous understanding that the deep ocean stayed at relatively constant, cold temperatures and that the deep ocean circulation system would slow down as surface temperatures increased,” said USGS scientist Harry Dowsett. “By looking at conditions in the past, we acquire real data that allow us to see the global climate



Pliocene vs. modern sea surface temperature anomaly. Credit: USGS PRISM3D Project.

system as it actually functioned.”

Read the full article, [published in Climate of the Past](#).

This research utilizes data from [PRISM](#) (Pliocene Research, Interpretation and Synoptic Mapping), a collaborative data analysis and climate modeling effort led by USGS.

Submitted by Jessica Robertson / USGS.

## NPS RECEIVES \$1.25 MILLION GRANT FOR RESEARCH CENTER IN ST. CROIX

On November 23, Assistant Secretary for the Interior for Insular Areas Anthony Babauta presented a \$1,250,000 grant to the NPS and the Joint Institute for Caribbean Marine Studies (JICMS) to begin the design phase of the Salt River Bay Marine Research and Education Center (MREC) Project on St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). USVI Delegate to Congress Donna M. Christensen and Governor John P. de Jongh Jr. attended the ceremony.

The grant will support a partnership between the NPS, the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) and JICMS, a consortium of universities including Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey; the University of North Carolina, Wilmington; the University of the Virgin Islands and the University of South Carolina.

When completed, the MREC will support science-based management for two marine parks in St. Croix, the East End Marine Park, USVI's first territorial park, and Buck Island National Park. The Center will also provide education to USVI students, promote public awareness of the economic and cultural heritage of the tropical oceans, address the rapidly declining health of coral reef ecosystems throughout the Caribbean and other tropical regions of the world.

Delegate Christensen said she hopes that St. Croix becomes the research hub of the Caribbean saying, "In years to come, I foresee the center being critical to re-establishing baselines needed to truly assess the state of our marine and coastal environment and carry out the public education campaigns needed to ensure that all



*Elkhorn coral at Buck Island National Park. Credit NPS.*

aspects of our community are partners in the process." Asst. Sec. Babauta noted that the MREC will be built as a center of excellence for marine research and education and also as a "green demonstration project" for the NPS and the insular areas.

Read Asst. Sec. Babauta's full comments from the ceremony: [www.doi.gov/oia/press/2009/11302009.html](http://www.doi.gov/oia/press/2009/11302009.html)

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## NPS PARTNERS WITH NOAA TO MONITOR CORAL REEFS IN PARKS

Implementation of successful management and monitoring strategies for NPS Caribbean and Pacific National Park units is predicated on having complete inventory of past and present datasets and information.

To address these needs, the NPS's Inventory and Monitoring Program, in partnership with NOAA's Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment's (CCMA) Biogeography Branch, has launched an effort to create a marine geospatial system to support monitoring and management of the more than 250,000 acres of coral reefs in the ten National Parks in the Pacific and Caribbean.

The primary objective of the project is to identify and synthesize relevant biological, physical, socioeconomic, and remote sensing data sets for each

Park Unit and incorporate them into a common geographic information system (GIS) framework. This information will be incorporated into a web-based mapping and database portal to provide security enabled access to the data and metadata. When completed, this system will be used to identify information gaps and additional data needs.

The synthesis of existing geospatial data will provide the most contemporary compilation of data within the network of NPS managed marine ocean parks. These products will provide spatial information on shallow-water coral reef habitats, distribution of marine flora and fauna, and socioeconomic information as it relates to the status of marine resources for the identified park units. The results of these efforts will provide NPS increased technical



*Coral heads at Ofu Lagoon in the National Park of American Samoa. Credit: Peter Craig*

capacity for ocean exploration, monitoring, management, and stewardship.

For more information visit: [http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/coralreef/nps\\_gap.html](http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/coralreef/nps_gap.html).

To view the project work plan go to: [http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/coralreef/NPS\\_GAP\\_Analysis\\_workplan.pdf](http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/coralreef/NPS_GAP_Analysis_workplan.pdf).

## SECRETARY SALAZAR ANNOUNCES REMOVAL OF BROWN PELICAN FROM THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Tom Strickland and FWS Director Sam Hamilton announced that the [brown pelican](#) has been recovered and will be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species. "At a time when so many species of wildlife are threatened, we once in a while have an opportunity to celebrate an amazing success story," Salazar said. "Today is such a day. The brown pelican is back!"

The brown pelican was first declared endangered in 1970. Since then, thanks to a ban on DDT and efforts by states, conservation organizations, private citizens and many other partners, the bird has recovered. There are now more than 650,000

brown pelicans found across Florida and the Gulf and Pacific Coasts, as well as in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Past efforts to protect the brown pelican led to the birth of the National Wildlife Refuge System more than a century ago in central Florida. German immigrant Paul Kroegel approached President Theodore Roosevelt about the indiscriminate slaughter of pelicans for their feathers. This led Roosevelt to create the first National Wildlife Refuge at Pelican Island in 1903, where Kroegel was named the first refuge manager.

The FWS has developed a [Post-Delisting Monitoring Plan](#) designed to monitor and verify that the recovered population remains secure from the



*Brown Pelican Credit: USFWS*

risk of extinction once the protections of the Endangered Species Act are removed. The FWS can relist the brown pelican if future monitoring or other information shows it is necessary to prevent a significant risk to the species.

FWS News Release: <http://www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=E48D2BF8-CEFA-7C31-385D2BIC2CF97CC0>

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## FWS WORKS WITH SOUTH CAROLINA TO DEVELOP REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

The FWS's Charleston Field Office is working with the [South Carolina Energy Office](#) (SCEO) and other partners to develop a regulatory framework for the development of wind energy. Supported by a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy and oversight by MMS, the SCEO is investigating the potential and feasibility for a offshore wind farm off the coast of South Carolina. South Carolina coastal waters are attractive to the industry due to shallow depths, few coastal military installations, low population densities and lack of winter icing conditions.

Despite a promising offshore wind environment, much more information is needed before a wind energy project can be initiated. SCEO will attempt to confirm winds speeds through the installation of Sonic Detection and Ranging (SODAR) units on offshore platforms. The

SODAR units will 'ground truth' wind estimates and provide better data on wind trends including direction, speed and consistency.

The SCEO must also consider that there are currently no specific policies or guidelines governing the construction of offshore wind turbines in South Carolina. The SCEO will form a regulatory task force to review the existing Federal and State regulatory framework concerning offshore projects and formulate new regulations as necessary.

The regulatory task force will be a composite group of federal and state agency representatives along with stakeholders invited from the educational arena as well as commercial entities. Additional issues to be studied include integration of the generated power into the existing power grid, siting of



*Credit: South Carolina Energy Office*

future transmission lines and the effects of wave and tidal forces upon wind turbine foundations.

At this stage the main concern is the impacts to migratory seabirds. Additional concerns for threatened and endangered species or critical habitat may arise when the SCEO gets further along in the process and determines landfall of transmission and distribution lines.

*Submitted by Mark Caldwell/USFWS*

## OCEAN POLICY TASK FORCE: INTERIM FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE COASTAL AND MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING

On December 14, 2009, President Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force released its [Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning](#) (Interim Framework) for a 60-day public review and comment period. With competing interests in the ocean, our coasts and the Great Lakes, the Interim Framework offers a comprehensive, integrated approach to planning and managing uses and activities. Under the Framework, coastal and marine spatial planning would be regional in scope, developed cooperatively among Federal, State, tribal, local authorities, and regional governance structures, with substantial stakeholder and public input.

The Interim Framework includes a number of important provisions that would significantly overhaul the Federal Government's approach to coastal and marine planning, including:

- A New Approach to How We Use and Protect the Ocean, Coast, and Great Lakes
- Moves us Away From Sector-by-Sector and Statute-by-Statute Decision-Making
- Brings Federal, State, and Tribal Partners Together in an Unprecedented Manner to Jointly Plan for the Future
- Places Science-Based Information at the Heart of Decision-Making, and
- Emphasizes Stakeholder and Public Participation.

The planning process will be fully transparent and participatory – requiring frequent and robust stakeholder engagement throughout all steps of the process (i.e., development, adoption, implementation, adaptation and evaluation).

[View the report as PDF](#)

The Interim Framework is open for public comment through February 12, 2010. To submit a comment go to: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans/interim>

### Ocean Quote of the Month

**“I believe in individuality, but individuals are, to the mass, like waves to the ocean. The highest order of genius is as dependent as is the lowest. It, like the waves of the sea, derives its power and greatness from the grandeur and vastness of the ocean of which it forms a part. We differ as the waves, but are one as the sea.”**

**Frederick Douglas (1895)**

## USGS SCIENTISTS RESPOND TO DEADLY SAMOA TSUNAMI

From [USGS SoundWaves](#):

USGS tsunami scientists responded quickly after a magnitude 8.0 submarine earthquake occurred at 6:48 a.m. Samoa Standard Time on September 29, 2009, approximately 190 km (120 mi) south of Samoa. The earthquake triggered a tsunami that caused deaths and widespread damage in Samoa, American Samoa, and Tonga.

Thanks to educational efforts, residents of the affected islands evacuated to high ground after the earthquake. Had they not, the death toll would have been in the thousands. Nevertheless, some people were overtaken by the tsunami waves, which traveled very quickly through the deep water between the

epicenter and the nearest islands.

As news of the earthquake and tsunami broke, private citizens as well as numerous reporters from news agencies and radio and television stations contacted the USGS for additional information. Among the scientists who answered their questions were tsunami experts Eric Geist, a geophysicist who models the generation and propagation of tsunami waves; Bruce Jaffe, an oceanographer who studies sediment deposited by tsunamis for clues to tsunami history; and Uri ten Brink, a geophysicist who studies tsunami and earthquake hazards in the Caribbean region.

Plans were soon set in motion for a USGS rapid-response team from



Tsunami damage in a parking lot in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Credit: Gordon Yamasaki.

Menlo Park and Santa Cruz, California, to travel to American Samoa to collect geologic data expected to be quickly degraded or destroyed by recovery activities and natural processes.

To read the full story go to: <http://soundwaves.usgs.gov/2009/11/fieldwork2.html>

For more information about ocean and coastal activities at DOI contact:

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## DOI Ocean and Coastal Button Contest



Answer the question below to receive a prize. Submit your answer to [DOINewsWave@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOINewsWave@ios.doi.gov) and be sure to include the mailing address where you'd like your prize sent.

### This Month's Question

**Identify this species of sea turtle.**



This link may help:

<http://www.lab.fws.gov/idnotes/IDR912.PDF>

Answer to last month's question: What percentage of the world's fresh surface water is contained in the Great Lakes?

ANSWER: Approximately 20%.

Please send your articles, questions, and comments to: [DOINewsWave@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOINewsWave@ios.doi.gov).

2010 DOI Conference on the Environment, Portland, OR, April 26-30, 2010. Expected topics to be covered include: energy, transportation, environmental management systems, greenhouse gases and climate change, sustainable practices, stewardship, green procurement, solid waste management, NEPA, environmental liabilities, emergency response, environmental compliance. Conference website: <http://www.doi.gov/greening/conference/index.html>.

Alaska Marine Science Symposium, Anchorage, AK, Jan. 18-22, 2010. Alaska's premier interdisciplinary marine science conference. Provides opportunities for scientists from Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, the Nation, and beyond to inform each other about their research activities in the marine regions off Alaska. ([www.alaskamarinescience.org](http://www.alaskamarinescience.org))

2010 Ocean Sciences Meeting, Portland, OR. Feb. 22-26, 2010. Stewardship of marine resources in the 21st Century demands the development of predictive tools based on models and field observations. The challenge of developing these tools forms the theme of the 2010 Ocean Sciences meeting. (<http://www.agu.org/meetings/os10/>)

NEW Ocean Climate Forum Website: ([www.oceanclimate.org](http://www.oceanclimate.org)) This valuable resource for members of the world ocean community introduces some of the issues linked to climate change in the ocean and ocean acidification, and further gives options for responding to these impacts, including a special section for decision-makers.



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

The UN declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. It is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of biodiversity for our lives.

[Click the logo for more info.](#)

The DOI Ocean and Coastal Activities SharePoint site contains the activities calendar, background materials, presentations, and images. Email [DOINewsWave@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOINewsWave@ios.doi.gov) for access (DOI only).



Click on the links above to learn more about the ocean and coastal activities at DOI bureaus.