

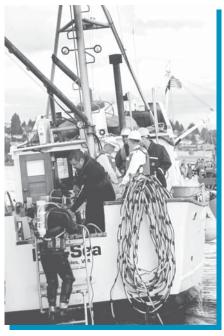
# COASTAL AMERICA UPDATE

JULY-SEPTEMBER SUMMER 2004

# Partnership Expands Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Project

Tho would have guessed that the vertical representation vertical values of derelict fishing gear from Puget Sound on September 13, 2004 would expand into a Navy training tool? To highlight this growing environmental and safety issue, the Northwest Straits Commission and NOAA's Restoration Center hosted a demonstration for James L. Connaughton, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Coastal America, and Vice-Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Also on board were Bob Lohn, NOAA Fisheries; Tom Cowan and Jeff June, NW Straits Commission; and Navy Senior Chief Raymond Kayona and Navy diver Eugene Jahrling.

The NOAA ship Karluk ferried passengers to the gear removal boat, Bet-Sea, where passengers were briefed on the project's history and Puget Sound's habitat restoration. The Principals watched the successful removal of a 130-foot gillnet from Shilshoe Bay. Removal is environmentally sensitive, often dangerous, and requires highly skilled workers. Mr. Connaughton expressed enthusiasm that this effort will expand because the Navy views it as a great teaching tool to train Navy divers and restore the environment. Coastal America is working with the Navy in facilitating use of the Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training Program to develop the training program.



Navy divers demonstrate derelict fishing gear removal.

# What's in the Nets?



Navy Senior Chief Kayona, Navy diver Jahrling, and CEQ Chairman Connaughton discuss the derelict fishing gear removal project.

Coastal America Principals are very encouraged about the work of the Puget Sound Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Project. Hundreds of tons of abandoned gear remains underwater and can cause entanglement and even death for fish, birds, crabs, and marine mammals. Passengers aboard the *Bet-Sea* witnessed struggling rockfish and lingcod trapped in the recovered abandoned-mesh net. The same peril faces divers and swimmers.

The 2003 Coastal America award-winning project is led by the Northwest Straits Commission and financed by NOAA and local partners who provided matching funds. To date, the Project removal team has recovered 482 derelict crab, shrimp and octopus pots and traps, 173 gillnets that would cover about 35 acres and three other large nets totaling about 18,000 pounds. The nets contained 161 salmon, 62 birds, 170 other fish, more than 2,000 crabs, and three dead harbor seals that were tangled in the nets.

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# **Congratulations Award Winners!**



Breaux Team receives Coastal America Award: (l-r)
S. Scott Sewell, U.S. Minerals Management Service; Sam D. Hamilton,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Colonel Peter J. Rowan, U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers; U.S. Senator John Breaux, author of the CWPPRA legislation; Sidney
Coffee, Louisiana Governor's Office; Miguel Flores, Environmental Protection
Agency; Erik Zobrist, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service and
Don Gobmert, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

# Partnership Awards

The season for honoring our outstanding environmental stewards and partnerships has begun. Three 2004 Coastal America Partnership awards were presented with eleven scheduled this fall.

### Breaux Task Force

On August 18, 2004, the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force (Breaux Act Task Force) received the first of the Coastal America 2004 Partnership Awards for its work in restoring and protecting the coastal wetlands of Louisiana. Virginia Tippie, Director of Coastal America, read a letter on behalf of President Bush and presented the award to the Breaux Act Task Force, its associated committees, and 19 coastal parishes for their part in the program. The Task Force is chaired by Colonel Peter Rowan, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Enacted in 1990, the Breaux Act has provided over \$1 billion for projects that create, protect, restore or enhance Louisiana's coastal wetlands. The task force oversees the implementation of the Breaux Act in Louisiana. One hundred twenty-nine restoration projects are currently authorized through the Act, with over 60 projects completed. The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources is the local cost-share partner for the Breaux Act.

# Skagit River Basin Group

The Coastal America Partnership presented a 2004 Partnership Award to the Skagit River Basin Group at the Restore America's Estuaries Conference. The Skagit River Basin Group is a partnership of 40 government and nongovernment organizations. The Group has been forged over the past 15 years to plan, develop, and implement ecosystembased programs and projects within the Skagit River Basin.

Over the past 10 years, 100 miles of roads were decommissioned, up to 300 road miles storm-proofed, 5,000 acres of riparian areas re-vegetated, and up to 50 road culverts repaired to provide unrestricted fish passage. In addition, numerous salmon habitat restoration projects are underway.

### Barn Island

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and their partners received the 2004 Coastal America Partnership Award at a ceremony on September 10, 2004 at the Barn Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Stonington, Connecticut. P. Lynn Scarlett, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget, Department of the Interior, presented the award.

The partners worked together to apply for a \$1 million Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant from the Fish and Wildlife Service, which enabled the purchase of a 144-acre addition to the WMA. With this new wetland and upland habitat protected, Barn Island became the State's largest coastal landholding at 1,013 acres. Other partners were recognized for their long-term and nationally recognized history of successful tidal marsh restoration and research at the WMA.



James Connaughton, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, and Vice-Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, presented the Coastal America Award to the Skagit River Basin Group.



Lynn Scarlett, Assistant Secretary, Department of Interior, presents award to Barn Island Project Team.

# Ocean Commission Releases Final Report to the President



USCOP Chairman Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret.) (left) and U.S. Senator Fritz Hollings (podium) release Final Report at the Dirksen Building on September 20, 2004.

n September 20, 2004, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP) presented its final report to the President and Congressional Leaders as required by the Oceans Act of 2000. The report contains over 200 recommendations largely targeted at the executive and legislative branches of government. Ocean-related activities contribute over \$117 billion to our economy and support over two million jobs.

### Commission's Recommendations

The Commission recommends moving toward an ecosystem-based management approach by focusing on three crosscutting themes: (1) a new, coordinated national ocean policy framework to improve decision-making; (2) cutting edge ocean data and science translated into high-quality information for managers; and (3) lifelong ocean-related education to create well-informed citizens with a strong stewardship ethic. USCOP recommends establishing an Ocean Policy Trust Fund based on unallocated revenues from offshore oil and gas development and new offshore activities to implement recommendations.

# President Receives Ocean Commission Report

President Bush welcomed the Final Report and commended the members of

the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy for their hard work. The President has 90 days to submit to Congress a statement of proposals that respond to the Commission's recommendations.

# CEQ Assembles Team for Administration Response

To consider USCOP's recommendations and help formulate the Administration's response, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) assembled the Interagency Ocean Policy Group (IOPG). The IOPG is a representative body of Executive Branch programs dedicated to the management and conservation of our oceans and coasts. The IOPG was assembled in 2003 in preparation of the USCOP Report and will function through the completion of the President's response to the Commission's recommendations.

An Ocean Policy Task Force provides staffing assistance. The team is comprised of seven interagency groups, consisting of experts from federal agencies to address the policy aspects of the report. The groups include: Watersheds, Education, International, Research, Water Quality Monitoring, Living Marine Resources, and Energy.

To obtain more information about the CEQ Interagency Ocean Policy Group, visit their website at: http://

ocean.ceq.gov/. Also visit Jim Connaughton hosts Ask the White House at http://www.whitehouse.gov/ask/20040920.

### Freedom Corps Effort to Promote Ocean Conservation

In a September 14, 2004 letter, the White House Council on Environmental Quality and USA Freedom Corps announced their partnering to promote volunteer service in the Nation's coastal area. The letter noted that the Commission's Preliminary Report called for increasing community awareness and participation in the conservation of our ocean and coastal resources. CEQ Chairman Jim Connaughton, and Desiree Sayle, Director USA Freedom Corps and Deputy Assistant to the President, commended the thousands of non-profit organizations already participating in the volunteer network and encouraged other ocean and education partners to list their volunteer opportunities on the Internet network. For additional information, visit www.usa freedom corps.gov.

# Target Watersheds Grant Program Exemplifies USCOP Recommendations

On July 19, 2004, EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt announced 14 watersheds -representing 17 states-eligible for \$15 million from EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program. The selected areas represent more than 20,000 square miles of rivers, lakes and streams across the United States. Leavitt stated that the Ocean Commission's Preliminary Report highlighted the effects of upland watersheds on coastal and ocean areas in its preliminary report. USCOP endorsed programs like the Targeted Watersheds Grant Program to provide technical and financial assistance to states and communities for watershed initiatives that will ultimately protect our oceans and coasts.

# Coastal America Principals' Meeting



Coastal America Principals at White House Conference Center discussing Learning Center designations and Coastal America Strategic Plan.

The quarterly meeting of the Coastal America Principals was held on September 17, 2004 at the White House Conference Center in Washington, DC. Chairman James L. Connaughton, who also is Chairman of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, convened the meeting. The Principals approved the designation of the John G. Shedd Aquarium (Chicago) as a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center. The designation ceremony will take place at the Aquarium in late October. The Principals also approved designation of the North Carolina Aquariums complex (three aquaria) as a Coastal Ecosystem

Learning Center. The designation ceremony is expected in January 2005. The Principals requested that Coastal America's Strategic Assessment examine the potential relationship of the Coastal America Partnership to the findings and recommendations developed by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. They approved use of the Strategic Assessment (presented at the June 14 meeting) as an operating guide for the Partnership. Each partnering agency will tailor its involvement within a region to prevailing issues and interests, consistent with its missions, presence and capabilities.



## National Advisory Council

The CWRP National Advisory Council (NAC) convened its quarterly meeting on Thursday, September 9, 2004, at the National Association of Manufacturers in Washington, D.C. Coastal America Director Virginia Tippie and CWRP Coordinator Patmarie Nedelka met with corporate leaders to discuss the status of CWRP around the country, as well as discuss ideas for enhancing the role of the NAC. A not-for-profit lawyer also participated in the discussion, offering advice and suggestions for a more clearly defined legal structure for the Corporate Partnership. The NAC will be working to implement the meeting's outcomes by conducting a series of conference calls throughout the fall. Further information on the meeting is available by contacting Patmarie Nedelka at (202) 401-9808 or patmarie.nedelka@usda.gov.

### Massachusetts CWRP

Massachusetts CWRP assisted with the restoration of a portion of the Mary Chase Marsh. Specialized, low-impact construction equipment redistributed boulders in the Abelino Creek channel to stabilize the bottom of the channel that crossed Mary Chase Marsh. The

# **CWRP Updates**



Eastbam, Massachusetts school group studying the Mary Chase Marsh adjacent to the Cape Cod National Seasbore.

result will allow greater tidal flows to reduce Phragmites and will establish a natural salt marsh vegetation community. A grant from the KeySpan Foundation to MA-CWRP funded the purchase of field study instruments and supplies for school groups to use in their marsh studies. Eighth graders visited the study site on separate days to collect vegetation data and to measure the marsh channel width upstream of the crossing. Fourth graders did a marsh animal study and a vegetation study with two National Park Rangers. After the field work, 4th graders hiked the Nauset Marsh area to learn about historical cultural connections to the marsh and make further observations about *Phragmites* growing near freshwater seeps and marshes.

### CWRP Presentation for EPA Wetlands Office

On Tuesday, July 27, Patmarie Nedelka, Coastal America's Deputy Director for Policy, briefed personnel at the EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds on the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP). Ms. Nedelka presented an overview of how the CWRP functions, along with several on-theground case studies highlighting the effectiveness of involving private sector support in restoration projects. The presentation was well received by EPA staff and a lively discussion resulted. Coastal America welcomes EPA's support of the CWRP and looks forward to future collaboration.

# **CELC Updates**

# Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers



## New York Aquarium

In the summer of 2004, the New York Aquarium Docent Program in collaboration with the N.Y. City Parks Department conducted a pre-restoration research project in a salt marsh at Coney Island.



New York Aquarium Staff and Docents in Coney Island.

The Department of Soil and Water designated Coney Island Creek a priority waterbody for restoration. The site is composed of rubble and illegally dumped gravel, which converted the environment from a sandy salt marsh to a rocky habitat.

Fifty teen-volunteers and two Aquarium instructors counted fish populations,

measured their length, identified the species, and then released them back in the salt marsh. Inter-tidal crab studies were conducted to identify species and determine their sex. The work includes removing debris with each site visit.

From this preliminary study, the team determined that the invasive Japanese shore crabs have dominated over local crabs due to the change of habitat.

### Hatfield Marine Science Center

The Hatfield Learning Center hosted the first of three professional development workshops entitled The Ocean Science and Math Collaborative Project. Oregon State University faculty are helping to integrate ocean sciences into the science, math, and critical thinking curriculum of Oregon adult education and workforce development. Hatfield CELC used this opportunity to present Estuary-Live! to the Adult Education Instructors and encouraged them to consider the program in their student curriculums. Hatfield CELC partnered with NOAA in broadcasting Estuary-Live! in their auditorium for the public and participated in National Estuary Day activities, featuring an estuary walk and a stream table demonstration. Good Going Hatfield!

### Seattle Aquarium

On September 23rd, the Seattle Aquarium co-sponsored an event with the

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in northwestern Washington. The Reserve staff conducted live interviews with scientists doing estuarine research. Students had the opportunity for email interactions with tour guides and the scientists. Teachers obtained contents and teaching aides online. Teachers were identified by the Seattle Aquarium through CELC endorsed mailouts.

# Florida Aquarium

The Flordia Aquarium hosted an evening for educators during the National Marine Educators Association annual meeting. Deb Berger, CELC Education Director, organized dozens of outstanding field trips, including one to NOAA's Restoration project involving Tampa Bay Watch and a schoolyard *Spartina* program and oyster reef project.

## Mystic Aquarium

Mystic Aquarium CELC hosted its annual National Estuaries Day celebration in conjunction with the Narraganset Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The CELC's activities included: Exhibitors (CT Sea Grant; CT DEP; USCG; NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center, and others); estuary talks at exhibits; an Owl program by the Audobon Society; distribution of educational materials such as Long Island Sound coloring books; estuary talks at exhibits; crafts and water-related activities; and selected *Estuaries-Livel* programs in their Immersion Theater.

# National Coordinating Office

Coastal America facilitated monthly conference calls with 16 Learning Centers, including national and regional education points-of-contact in federal agencies. A speakers program has been added to the conference calls for CELCs to learn about current educational tools and to discuss partnering opportunities. Examples include presentations about award-winning educational workbooks on oceans; a regulatory enforcement workshop for wetlands violators; and the 6th International Aquarium Congress.

# Events, Programs, and Other News

### National Marine Educators Association

July 18-22, 2004, eight Learning Center Directors participated in the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) Annual Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida, along with Coastal America's National Coordinating Office. The event was well attended by over 400 teachers, government officials, and NGOs. The highlights of the conference were many and included: opening remarks by Ocean Explorer Sylvia Earle; computer workshops on hypoxia and dead zones in the Gulf of Mexico; NOAA-sponsored Tampa Bay Watch schoolyard Spartina program and oyster reef reconstruction projects; and Estuary-Live! Presentations. CELC representatives met throughout the program to share information about concurrent sessions; Learning Center needs; and the possibility of a Learning Center panel at NMEA 2005.

# The 2nd National Conference on Coastal & Estuarine Habitat Restoration

The Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP) and Coastal America participated in the 2nd National Conference on Coastal & Estuarine Habitat Restoration, held in Seattle from September 12-15, 2004. The Conference was hosted by Restore America's Estuaries. Virginia Tippie, Director of the Coastal America Partnership, chaired a panel during the conference on the CWRP. Speakers from the Massachusetts and Maine state governments, private companies, and The Nature Conservancy expanded on the value of corporate involvement in restoration projects. Kevin Goldstein, Program Specialist with the Coastal America National Coordinating Office, manned the CWRP exhibit during the conference, and he spoke with a variety of public and private representatives about involving the corporate community in restoration projects. The panel was very successful and Coastal America/CWRP intends to



Virginia Tippie (right) moderates a panel on the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership at the Restore America's Estuaries Conference in Seattle.

conduct similar sessions at other meetings in the near future.

# U.S. EPA Environmental Education Grants

The Office of Environmental Education's Environmental Education Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2005 has posted grant information on their website www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html. Those interested may obtain information about funding for 2005 and the new Solicitation Notice for the Environmental Education grants which will also be printed in the Federal Register.

# Combined Federal Campaign

This year, the Coastal America Foundation is included in the Combined Federal Campaign (National Charity -#2690). The Coastal America Foundation is an IRS recognized 501(c)3 Public Charity that supports the activities of the Coastal America partnership. The Foundation Board of Directors will disperse the funds received to support the Regional Implementation Teams of Coastal America, including restoration projects, Corporate Wetlands Restoration Projects (state, national and international), Innovative Readiness Training projects, and Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (education and outreach). The Coastal America Partnership encourages everyone to participate in the Combined Federal Campaign. Together we can make a difference.

# Ship-Naming Contest

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is sponsoring a contest to "Name NOAA's New Ship for Exploration" for student teams in grades 6-12. This contest will begin on October 15, 2004, and posters with guidelines and a prize list will be mailed to U.S. science teachers in grades 6-12 who are in the 2003-2004 NSTA Teacher Registry.

Complete information about the contest will be posted on the NOAA Education website: www.education.noaa.gov on October 15, 2004. Joyce Gross, of NOAA, made a presentation to Coastal America Learning Centers during a September conference call. CELC Directors will work with their area schools and teachers on this contest.

# **Acting Director**

Many thanks to Bryon Griffith, who served as Coastal America Acting Director for several weeks in July. Bryon is Co-Chair of the Gulf of Mexico Regional Implementation Team. His permanent position is Director of the Gulf of Mexico Program in Mississippi. While Acting Director, Bryon was able to personally meet with Coastal America Principals and to advance the Strategic Assessment for Coastal America's regional teams. With all the hurricanes in the Gulf area this season, the Gulf Program is thankful for his return.

# Cooperative Conservation Executive Order

n August 26, 2004, President Bush Issued Executive Order 13352, entitled Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation. E.O.13352 directs federal agencies that oversee environmental and natural resource programs to ensure cooperation among federal, state, local, and tribal governments and various local nongovernmental entities and individuals as policy decisions are being

made. E.O. 13552 seeks to ensure that agencies "implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participation in federal decisionmaking." For further information go to: <a href="https://www.ofee.gov/eo13352.pdf">www.ofee.gov/eo13352.pdf</a>.

# **Regional Updates**

# Northeast Regional Implementation Team

The Northeast Regional Implementation Team of Coastal America has been busy supporting new restoration projects, honoring awardees and providing technical expertise to the five New England Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnerships. The USFWS serves as lead on the Education and Outreach NERIT Sub-committee and the Navy Reserve Command and other military units support the Innovative Readiness Training program sub-committee.

Projects moving toward construction this year include dam removals, salt marsh restorations and riparian buffer zone improvements. An award ceremony for the Barn Island project was held this summer in Connecticut. Military projects submitted for consideration include the EPA-led Ballard Street Salt Marsh Restoration project and the East Sandwich Game Farm project, both in Massachusetts.

# Gulf of Mexico Regional Implementation Team

Florida's Project GreenShores, a 2003 Coastal America Partnership Award winner, has been honored with a First Place Gulf Guardian Award. The Gulf Guardian Award, presented by EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program, recognizes outstanding projects that restore and protect the nation's Gulf of Mexico coastal environment.

Project GreenShores is the \$2 million public-private partnership to restore marine habitat in Pensacola Bay, Florida. Project GreenShores was launched in 2001 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and ERSO, Inc. to replace estuarine habitat destroyed decades ago. More than 60 partners have contributed funding and/or services to Project GreenShores. Over 20,000 tons of recycled concrete and limestone rock form a man-made reef, which safeguards aquatic plants from wave damage and provides the foundation for seven acres of oyster habitat. The reef also provides a rest stop for migratory and local birds and shelters a diversity of marine life. Located along Bayfront Parkway in Pensacola, it is highly visible to the public. Site I, completed in the fall of 2003, provides 15 acres of restored habitat. Site II, an additional 25 acres, is in the planning and fundraising stages.

# **Calendar of Events**

### October 3-5

Environmental Council of States Annual Meeting Oklahoma City, OK

### October 5

2004 Great Lakes Commission Annual Meeting Toronto, ON

### October 12-15

Coastal States Organization Annual Meeting MI

#### October 18

World Monitoring Day

### October 17-20

National Association of Estuarine Research Reserves Annual Meeting Location: TBD

### October 17-20

Association of National Estuary Programs Annual Meeting Corpus Christi, TX

#### October 19-20

Association of State Wetland Managers Kansas City, MO

### November 15-17

Wildlife Habitat Council Annual Symposium Baltimore, MD

### November 17-20

International Conference on Shellfish Restoration Charleston, SC

### December 5-10

6th International Aquarium Congress Monterey, CA

### December 6-10

First National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration Orlando, FL

# COASTAL AMERICA UPDATE

"The [Ocean] Commissioners wisely took a broad view of their mission. They recognized the importance of the oceans for the transport of goods, for food and recreation, and for the legacy of wondrous natural and cultural resources they hold. In addition, they recognized, as do we in the Administration, that actions taken far inland can have effects that reach oceans through the streams and rivers and even through the air. That is why the Commissioners asked for comment from all 50 governors. We are all in this together."

James L. Connaughton Chair, Council on Environmental Quality September 27, 2004 Ask the White House

(See related story on Page 3.)

# **Regional Chairs**

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Judy Beck ...... 312–353–3849

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: Departments of Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Navy, State, Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency and The Executive Office of the President.



# **COASTAL AMERICA UPDATE**

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