



## DOI OCEAN AND COASTAL NEWSLETTER

*FROM CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TO CONTINENTAL SHELF*

July, 2 2007

[DOI Oceans Link](#)

Dear Members of DOI's Ocean and Coastal Community:

In an ongoing effort to share ocean and coastal related activities among bureaus, we offer this second edition of the Ocean and Coastal Newsletter for DOI's ocean and coastal community. We welcome your feedback and ask for suggestions on items to include in future newsletters. Please contact [Leonard.Pace@fws.gov](mailto:Leonard.Pace@fws.gov) with any suggestions. We are delighted to have Leonard on our DOI Ocean Team for this year. He is a Sea Grant Fellow, working on Ocean issues, including the Coral Reef Task Force.

### NEWS WAVE

**65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Midway:** On June 4, Secretary Kempthorne gave the keynote address at a ceremony recognizing veterans of the historic Battle of Midway, calling their valor and sacrifices decisive in turning the tide of World War II in the Pacific and an inspiration in the continuing struggle against fascism and tyranny around the world. Midway Atoll is a National Wildlife Refuge and is one of two refuges included in the world's largest marine protected area, the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Midway is home to 2 million nesting seabirds, including the



world's largest population of Laysan albatross, endangered Hawaiian monk seals, threatened green sea turtles and spinner dolphins. Kempthorne's remarks highlighted the day's activities for more than 2,000 guests, including veterans of the battle. "These men were, and are, true men of valor "American heroes," Kempthorne said. "I am honored to be in your presence. All Americans owe you a debt of gratitude for

your service and your sacrifice for our nation and on behalf of freedom and democracy." To read more [click here](#)

**Secretary Kempthorne's Visit to the Pacific Islands:** In June, the Secretary met leaders of the island nations of; American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. In his visits he discussed topics of local importance ranging from; long-term viability of tuna canneries in American Samoa, to implementation of FSM's Compact of Free Association with the United States, to environmental tourism and economic development in the Republic of Palau, to the opportunities and challenges posed by the redeployment of 8,000 U.S. Marines and 9,000 military dependents to Guam, to the fiscal and economic challenges facing CNMI from recently passed federal minimum wage legislation and proposals to federalize the commonwealth's immigration system.

**MMS 5 Year Plan:** On Friday, June 29, Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne approved the Minerals Management Service's 2007-2012 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program, which becomes effective July 1, 2007, schedules 21 lease sales in eight planning areas. The Minerals Management Service estimates that the program could produce 10 billion barrels of oil and 45 trillion cubic feet of natural gas over 40 years, generating almost \$170 billion, in today's dollars, in net benefits for the nation. The department will conduct additional environmental reviews and consultations before deciding whether to proceed with each sale. "This energy production will create jobs, provide greater economic and energy security for America and can be accomplished in a safe and environmentally sound manner," Kempthorne said. "The approval and implementation of this new program mark the culmination of almost two years of extensive consultation by the Department of the Interior with coastal states, the public at large, the environmental community and the natural gas and oil industry. The new program balances the critical need for domestic energy resources with protection of human, marine and coastal environments." To read more about the 5 Year Plan, [click here](#).

**Coastal America Designation:** In a ceremony on June 14, Coastal America designated the Acuario de Veracruz as its first International Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center. The prestigious designation was presented by Lynn Scarlett, Deputy Secretary of DOI. The Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center network was established in 1996 by Coastal America, an interagency federal partnership that works to protect, preserve and restore the nation's coastal ecosystems. Scarlett said, "As a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center, the Acuario de Veracruz will join a network of aquaria delivering a strong public message about the importance of our coastal resources. The Coastal America Partnership created this innovative network so that the general public, especially younger citizens as future stewards of our coasts, can better understand how human activities can affect the environment along our shorelines". Ms. Scarlett welcomed the Acuario de Veracruz to the Learning Center network, noting that: "The Administration is firmly committed to ocean and coastal issues. The Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center network connects with more than 25 million people each year, educating them about the function and value of coastal resources." To read more about Coastal America, [click here](#).

**Award-Winning Deep Water Gulf of Mexico Study:** A collaboration of two federal agencies through the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) has resulted in an award-winning study focusing on the potential of deep water oil and gas structures to create suitable habitat for marine life. The study, *Archaeological and Biological Analysis of World War II Shipwrecks in the Gulf of Mexico: Artificial Reef Effect in Deep*

*Water*, was contracted by the Minerals Management Service (MMS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This study has earned two awards as a meaningful contribution to the Gulf of Mexico historical, archaeological and biological bodies of knowledge. The first honor presented in 2006 was the Department of the Interior's Cooperative Conservation Award. The second honor presented on May 17, 2007 is the NOPP's Excellence in Partnering Award. This award, which was presented at a meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, recognizes successful NOPP partnering efforts which impact and contribute to the ocean sciences community. To read the full article [click here](#).

## **ENHANCING OCEAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION**

### **Department's Senior Policy Team for Oceans and Coastal Program Integration:**

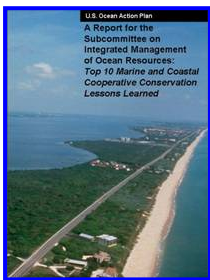
The Department's senior policy team continues to meet on a regular basis. As you may know, this team is made up of the Deputy Assistant Secretary's and Deputy Directors from the ocean and coastal bureaus (FWS, NPS, USGS, and MMS). It's co-chaired by Assistant Deputy Secretary, Kameran Onley, and Deputy Assistant Secretary, Chris Kearney.

After the retreat last September, the Senior Policy Team established teams to implement action items identified at the retreat. The Departmental Priorities and Institutionalization Team gave its final report to Deputy Secretary Scarlett at its May meeting. The Senior Policy Team also created a communications team and a partnership team. Both teams are working to develop recommendations for the Senior Policy Team and we will provide that information as it becomes available.

### **Interagency Committee on Science and Resource Management Integration**

**(ICOSRMI):** At its April meeting, the ICOSRMI established the Extended Continental Shelf Task Force to coordinate the collection and analysis of all relevant data, and to prepare the necessary documentation, to establish the outer limit of the United States extended continental shelf (ECS) in accordance with international law. The State Department is chairing this task force. DOI and NOAA are co-vice chairs. The U.S. ECS is estimated to exceed 1 million square kilometers and includes energy and mineral resources with an estimated value in excess of \$1 trillion.

### **A Report for the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR): Top 10 Marine and Coastal Cooperative Conservation Lessons Learned.**



As one of the implementation subcommittees of the Interagency Committee on Ocean Policy, SIMOR identified developed a workplan that set four priorities as initial focus areas. One of the action items was to look at existing partnership and collaborations in marine and coastal areas and identify important lessons that could be applied to future partnerships. Kudos to the team, lead by Hannibal Bolton and Lauren Ris at the Fish and Wildlife Service for developing this very useful report. To read more [click here](#).

## **ADVANCING OCEAN AND COASTAL PARTNERSHIPS**

DOI continues to actively participate in the regional and multi-state alliances. Here is an update on some of them.

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance:** The Alliance is hosting an Implementation and Integration Workshop, July 10-13 in St. Petersburg. This is sponsored by the States. The workshop will highlight successes and discuss next steps after completion of the Governor's Plan. The workshop will also focus attention to areas that should be moving forward. To read more, [click here](#).

**West Coast Ocean Alliance:** On September 18, 2006, the West Coast Governor's announced a collaborative effort to address critical ocean and coastal protection and manage issues facing the three states. A Federal work group has been established to support the Governor's effort. Three Federal co-leads were identified (DOI, EPA, NOAA) to work with the three states. SIMOR will continue in an oversight capacity to track the progress of the alliance. Dr. Fred Piltz, Senior Environmental Scientist, Minerals Management Service, Pacific OCS Region is the DOI co-lead. The co-leads have agreed to participate in public meetings along with the States in this effort. The next public meeting will be July 25 in Portland, Oregon. To read more, [click here](#).

**Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC):** NROC held its first Ocean Congress on May 24, in New Hampshire. Over 60 state, federal, academic, industry and non-profit regional representatives were in attendance. Representatives discussed the four issue areas identified by the Governor-initiated Council: ocean energy siting and planning, maritime security, ocean and coastal ecosystem health, and coastal hazard response and resiliency. Since the meeting, state representatives have met to draft issue papers which will be presented to the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers at the annual meeting June 27-28.

**Puget Sound Partnership:** The Partnership is a state agency designed to bring together citizens, governments, tribes and businesses towards its mission of leading the recovery of Puget Sound by 2020. The Partnership, is governed by a Leadership Council of distinguished citizens from around the Sound; which is advised by an Ecosystem Coordination Board made up of diverse representative interests from the area and a Science Panel made up of leading scientists. The Partnership's work can be broken down into five main areas: build a long-term plan for Puget Sound's recovery by 2008; oversee ongoing work to protect and restore Puget Sound; ensure that the best science informs Puget Sound work; hold all parties accountable; and engage and involve the public.

## **ENHANCING THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF OCEAN AND COASTAL RESOURCES**

**USFWS Grants to Conserve Coastal Wetlands:** Earlier this year Deputy Secretary Scarlett announced \$18.8 million in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grants to 14 states, including: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

These grants under the National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program will help conserve, restore and protect coastal wetlands for long-term conservation benefits to wildlife and habitat. They will provide funding for 25 projects and will be supplemented with more than \$54 million from partners including state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups. Including the 2007 grants, the Service has awarded more than \$182 million to states and insular areas since the program began in 1992; when the 2007 projects are complete, they will have protected, restored or enhanced more than 39,000 acres of coastal habitat. A total of more than 235,000 acres will have been protected or restored since the grant program's inception.

**MMS Protects Nation's Historic Treasures:** MMS, in partnership with Texas A&M has begun archaeological excavation of a historic shipwreck located in Federal waters 40 miles off the Louisiana.



The wreck is at a record water depth of 4,000 feet, making it the deepest shipwreck in the world ever to be scientifically excavated for a non-commercial purpose. "This wreck dates from an extremely fascinating and important time in the history of the Gulf of Mexico," said MMS Acting Regional Director Lars Herbst, "This ship likely sailed around the time of the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the infamous buccaneer Jean Lafitte. Its recovery will tell a story about what life at sea was like at that time

that cannot be found in the history books." What archaeologists have seen so far has caused them to speculate that the ship was a small merchant vessel or, possibly, a privateer and that it sank sometime between 1780 and 1820. The public will be able to view discoveries as they are made here: <http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/mardigras/>. To read the full article [click here](#).

**Workshop to Identify Alternative Energy Environmental Information Needs:** With the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the MMS acquired regulatory and management responsibilities for the production of alternative energy on the Outer Continental Shelf. MMS is hosted this workshop as an important step in developing a collaborative relationship with other Federal agencies, affected State and local groups, and industry. Members of groups with knowledge about existing offshore alternative energy development (i.e., academia or representatives from countries or states where development is already occurring,) were invited to share their expertise. The meeting was held June 26-28 in Herndon, Virginia, in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. To read more [click here](#).

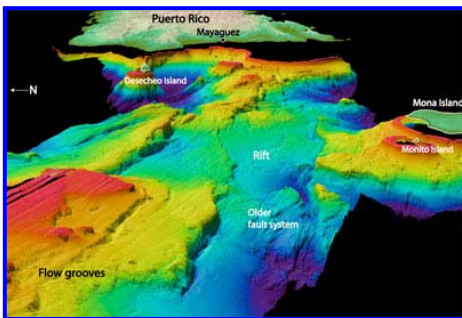
### **ADVANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OCEAN AND COASTS**

**USGS Strategic Science for Coral Ecosystems:** Last week USGS released this Plan summarizing threats, providing a synopsis of related research by USGS and partners, and outlining needed research that if fully implemented would provide resource managers with knowledge and tools to better understand and manage these changes adaptively.



The overarching outcome of this Plan, if fully implemented, would be in transferring relevant knowledge to decision-makers, enabling them to better protect and sustain coral ecosystem services. As funding permits, USGS coral ecosystem research will focus on three major research Themes and their associated research Actions during the next five years, including: Reef Structure, Ecological Integrity, and the Role of Marine Reserves; Land-based and Local Impacts; and Responses to Global Change.

**MMS Develops Hurricane Web Page:** To mark the beginning of Hurricane Season 2007, MMS activated a web site that brings together extensive hurricane-related information and resources. The web site contains a variety of information in many subject areas ranging from safety and evacuations to environmental studies and technological improvements. There is also historical hurricane data, a selection of pictures, statistics on energy resources shut in and subsequently returned to production during the 2005 storms, (the last active season in the Gulf) as well as terms, definitions, and fact sheets. To read more [click here](#).



**New Bathymetric Map of Mona Passage, Northeastern Caribbean, Aids in Earthquake- and Tsunami-Hazard Mitigation:** The Mona Passage between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in the northeastern Caribbean is an area long known for its strong and shifting currents, abundant marine mammals and fish, and pirates and smugglers. All are there because the Mona Passage is an area of shallow banks over which a vigorous exchange of waters takes place between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The Mona Passage is also the site of a devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit western Puerto Rico in 1918, and the site of frequent small earthquakes. Prompted by the likelihood of further tsunamis and earthquakes, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) undertook the task of mapping in detail the sea floor under the waters of the Mona Passage, to identify active faults and submarine landslides and to better understand their underlying causes. To read more [click here](#).

## **OTHER NEWS**

**Capitol Hill Oceans Week:** MMS helped to sponsor this annual event which brought together a wide-range of stakeholders to discuss current ocean and coastal issues. Panel speakers include Members of Congress, as well as representatives of federal and state governments, industry, academia, and nonprofit organizations. DOI participated in the opening and closing panel discussions. The first discussion was on the legislative agenda: Charting the Course. DOI's Deputy



Director, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs discussed our over all ocean portfolio and how our mission relates to the list of priorities for the 110th Congress. And in the Weeks closing panel, Assistant Deputy Secretary Kameran Onley further discussed DOI's ocean and coastal management responsibilities and planning for the future of ocean management. To read more, [click here](#).

We ask that you continue to keep us informed of your activities as we work to share our ocean and coastal program activities.

Yours Sincerely,

***Kameran Onley***  
Assistant Deputy Secretary

***Chris Kearney***  
Deputy Assistant Secretary