



## DOI Ocean and Coastal Update *From Continental Divide to Continental Shelf*

September 2007

[DOI Ocean Link](#)

Dear Members of DOI's Ocean and Coastal Community:

In an ongoing effort to share ocean and coastal program related activities among bureaus, we continue to offer the DOI Ocean Update and are continuing to build the DOI Oceans Calendar. We welcome your feedback and ask for suggestions on items to include in future newsletters and on the calendar. Please contact [Leonard.Pace@fws.gov](mailto:Leonard.Pace@fws.gov) with any suggestions.

### NEWS WAVE

**18<sup>th</sup> Biannual U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting:** The meeting, co-chaired by Department of the Interior (DOI) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) took place August 20-23 in Pago Pago, American Samoa. The Task Force brings together representatives from 12 federal agencies, 7 states and territories, and the 3 Freely Associated States to coordinate and strengthen actions to better preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. The meeting focused on climate change, local action strategies, the strategic plan developed by the All Islands Committee, and the International Year of the Reef 2008 renewed call to action. Resolutions supporting these four items passed. Special sessions focused on translating traditional knowledge, coral reef ecosystems in a changing climate, and regional approaches to coral reef management. Additionally, updates were given on improved monitoring for remote coral reef protected area holdings and the partnerships and resources necessary to bring about that improvement. The next meeting is scheduled for late winter/early spring 2007 in Washington DC. For more information visit, [www.coralreef.gov](http://www.coralreef.gov).

**National Park Service employees recognized for outstanding contributions:** Nominated by the Territorial Government, two employees of the National Park of American Samoa received awards from the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force for Community Stewardship work in the Territory. In addition, the Park received 2 group awards, one from the Task Force and one from NOAA. Both were accepted on behalf of the Park by Superintendent Roger Moder.

National Park terrestrial biologist Tavita Togia was cited for tireless work in combating the

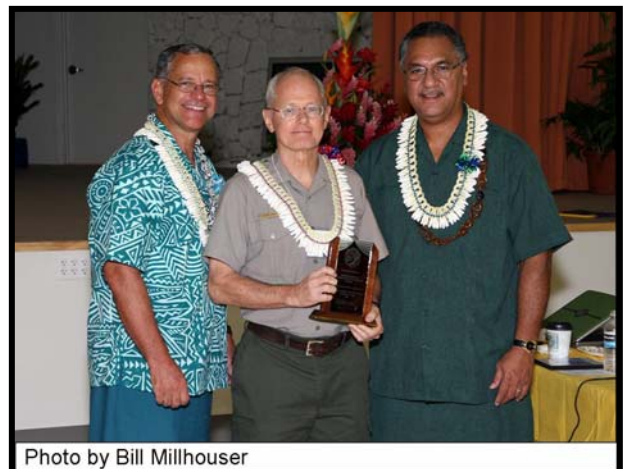
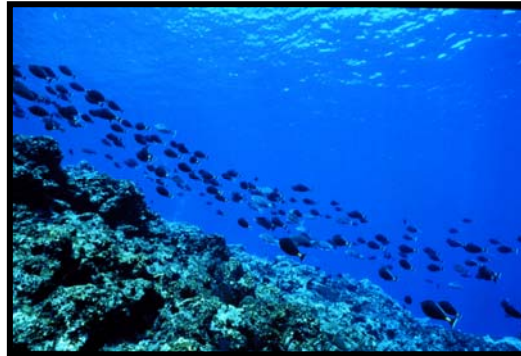


Photo by Bill Millhouser

threat of invasive species. He and his crew have reclaimed over 1,000 acres of rain forest in and adjacent to the Park from invasive tamligi trees, and are fighting a variety of other threats, including “mile-a-minute” vines. He was also cited for innovative efforts at securing funding for the work.

National Park Service marine biologist Peter Craig was cited for his work above and beyond the requirements of his job to protect the coral reefs of American Samoa, both in and outside of the Park. He serves on the Governor’s Coral Reef Advisory Committee, provided ideas and technical justification for the Governor’s 2003 Executive Order designating territorial waters as sanctuaries for marine mammals, and generally advises the Governor on marine issues. His presentation at the Task Force meeting on the impacts of fishing on large reef fish in Samoa was cited by NOAA co-chair Tim Keeney as the “most interesting presentation” at the meeting, and was cited by the Territorial Fish and Wildlife Department as a key part of the basis for an order announced at the meeting banning fishing for these species in territorial waters.

The group award recognized the American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group for its diligence and leadership in protecting the coral reefs of American Samoa. The Advisory Group, established in 1997, provides scientific advice to the Governor of American Samoa to ensure the well-being of the coral reef ecosystem. The group consists of American Samoan Department of Commerce, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources and Environmental Protection Agency, the American Samoa Community College, and the National Park of American Samoa. The participating agencies, with the Governor, also established the American Samoa Marine Protected Area Network Program that will improve efforts to protect and manage the coral reef ecosystem through local and regional coordination and by incorporating traditional knowledge and management practices.

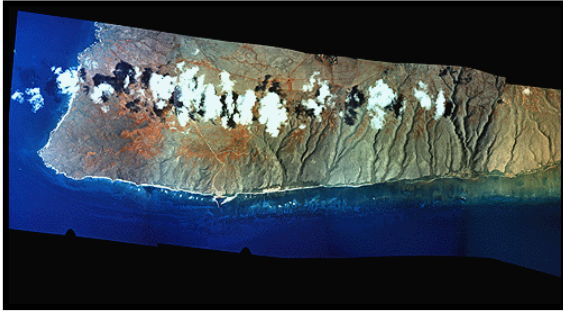


In addition, NOAA’s National Geodetic Survey formally recognized Superintendent Roger Moder and marine ecologist Paul Brown for their support and assistance with the establishment of the Aua Geodetic Mark, installed during the week, to signify the second oldest coral reef monitoring transect in the Pacific. Paul led the underwater camera work for the team.

## **ADVANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OCEANS, COASTS, AND GREAT LAKES**

**US Geological Survey Conducts Science from Ridge to Reef with Data from Space to Seafloor:** There is compelling evidence that sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants from human activities have negative effects on many coral reef ecosystems. By examining the pathways and concentrations of sediment and other pollutants that move

from land high points to sea floor, Survey scientists are learning how these contaminants cause stress and intensify deterioration of reef communities. Current studies include the



use of remotely sensed satellite and airborne imagery, on-land and shallow coastal water lidar systems, as well as on-the-reef instruments to measure turbidity, waves, currents, temperature, salinity, and light penetration. Other land-based field instruments measure water and sediment runoff. Laboratory and field studies of coral response to varying levels of sedimentation

and decreased light availability will help guide government officials and land managers in setting goals for acceptable levels of sedimentation from adjacent watersheds. For more on remote sensing, [click here](#).

**Marine Turtle Conservation Fund Grants:** Under the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded a grant in the amount of \$10,000 with matching resources from them totaling \$2,500. These funds will support marine turtle conservation capacity building in the Western Hemisphere and Asian regions through workshops and by providing scientific and technical support for Scientific Committee meetings and business of the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention and Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle Agreement. The project will benefit all five species including Hawksbill, Leatherback, Olive Ridley and Green turtles. Project activities will take place in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Peru, USA, Jamaica and Ecuador.



## **ADVANCING OCEAN AND COASTAL PARTNERING**

**West Coast Governors Agreement on Ocean Health – Federal Working Group:** The Federal co-leads for the West Coast Governors Agreement on Ocean Health have been working diligently with their counterparts from California, Oregon, and Washington since the close of the public comment period August 1 to outline actions to be included in the goals and strategies white paper being written by the states. An early draft of the actions was presented to the three Governors on September 14, for their review and guidance. A public draft is planned to be released in early October for further review and comment. The agencies of the Department of the Interior will play a crucial role in several of the actions proposed by the states. Habitat mapping of the oceans coastal zone and planning for future offshore alternative energy will require the active involvement of the U. S. Geological Survey, the Minerals Management Service, National Park Service

and other DOI agencies. The states are looking to the DOI agencies and other Federal agencies including NOAA and EPA for scientific expertise and in some cases to further state ocean health goals through existing or newly developing Federal programs. For further information, contact Dr. Fred Piltz, MMS.

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance:** On August 25, principles from the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration met with the Gulf State Governor's to discuss the status of the Action Plan and begin discussing the next phase of the Alliance. Kameran Onley represented the Department and met with the Interior Working Group to hear of progress DOI has made in fulfilling its obligations under the Plan. The Alliance reported that after 16 months, about 22 per cent of its work is complete and about 70 per cent is underway.



**National Oceanographic Partnership Program:** On August 21 the Office of Naval Research published the FY 2008 National Oceanographic Partnership Program, Broad Agency Announcement on behalf of the Joint Subcommittee of Ocean Science and Technology, Interagency Working Group on Ocean Partnering. This Announcement focused on 3 of the 4 Near Term Priorities of the Subcommittee's Ocean Research Priorities Plan. DOI, through its USGS and MMS membership on the Subcommittee was involved in the preparation of the Announcement and will be involved in the review and potential funding of proposals. See the NOPP website [www.nopp.org](http://www.nopp.org) for further details.

This FY 08 Announcement immediately follows the announcement of projects awarded for FY 07. Projects were solicited under two themes: *Coastal Effects of a Diminished-Ice Arctic Ocean* and *Marine Mammals*. Out of nearly 70 submitted proposal, 10 were funded totaling nearly \$15 million with support provide by the Office of Naval Research, the National Science Foundation, NOAA, and MMS. Additional resources are being provided by a coalition of oil and gas companies through the National Fish and Wildlife Fund.

Sincerely yours,

**Kameran Onley**  
Assistant Deputy Secretary

**Chris Kearney**  
Deputy Assistant Secretary