

Media Alert

2nd ROV Building Workshop Monday



Area high school students are building water-worthy Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) modeled on real undersea exploratory tools during a three-part workshop sponsored jointly by NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary and the Savannah Science Seminar.

Approximately 27 students from area public and private schools started their own ROVs from PVC pipe and small motors last week. The building workshop continues Monday Feb. 13 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the main conference room at the Oatland Island Education Center. On Wednesday Feb 15, the students will demonstrate their ROVs from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Chatham Aquatic Center.

Gray's Reef uses a professional ROV to document the sanctuary. The student-built ROVs give the workshop participants an opportunity to learn how marine exploration is conducted as well as a hands-on opportunity to apply various principles in engineering, math and other technical fields.

Last spring, Gray's Reef sponsored an ROV building workshop for area teachers and recently sponsored another at the Georgia Aquarium. It is hoped that one or two teams from the Savannah area will build an ROV worthy of entering the southeastern regional ROV building competition to be held in Savannah in April. Winners of the regional meets go on to the national competition sponsored by the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center.

Gray's Reef was designated as a National Marine Sanctuary in January 1981. It is one of the largest near shore live-bottom reefs off the southeastern United States, encompassing approximately 17 square nautical miles. The area earned sanctuary designation in 1981. The sanctuary consists of a series of sandstone outcroppings and ledges up to ten feet in height, scattered across a predominantly sandy, flat-bottomed sea floor. The live bottom and ledge habitat support an abundant reef fish and invertebrate community. Loggerhead sea turtles, a threatened species, also use Gray's Reef year-round for foraging and resting, and the reef is near the only known calving ground for the highly endangered North Atlantic right whales.

The mission of the Savannah Science Seminar is to promote an understanding and appreciation for science through informative, participatory presentations and hands on workshops in the fields of engineering, technology, mathematics, and the medical practices, to our motivated and highly qualified secondary school students in Savannah and Chatham County. Through these endeavors, we are intending to encourage students to pursue careers in the science arena, and as they become professionally knowledgeable, strongly consider returning to the Savannah area to increase our community's ability to foster and enhance these professional practices.

To arrange media coverage of the ROV workshops, contact Gail Krueger Gray's Reef (912) 598-2397. Visit us at www.graysreef.noaa.gov



Coral Thompson, (left) Windsor Forest High School, Jessica Linblad and Lisa Sammons (right), both of Jenkins High School construct the frame of an ROV. The ROV must be able to move independently in a swimming pool by the end of the three workshops. The pool test will come February 15 at the Chatham County Aquatic Center.