

Note: This month's issue MPA Connections is shorter than usual due to preparations for the upcoming MPA Federal Advisory Committee meeting. We look forward to presenting you with the regular size version of the newsletter in July.

M P A C O N N E C T I O N S

Newsletter of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

June 2003

The mission of the National Marine Protected Areas Center is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas. *MPA Connections* was launched to meet continuing calls by agency and external stakeholders for information about MPA Center and other select MPA-related activities.

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Managing Visitor Use in Coastal and Marine Protected Areas

Staff from the NOAA Coastal Services Center and the MPA Center's Training and Technical Assistance Institute in Charleston, South Carolina have been conducting visitor use management workshops for coastal and marine protected area resource managers and associated environmental professionals at different locations around the United States.

The series of workshops began in Ohio in May 2001 with an invited group of coastal and marine protected area managers from across the United States and has continued with workshops held in North Carolina, Hawaii, and Florida.

The one to two day workshops are hosted by one or more local resource management agencies in cooperation with affiliated citizen support organizations. Workshop facilitators work closely with local hosts to develop fact-based scenarios built around local or regional visitor use issues. The workshop format includes presentations by recreation resource management experts and local managers and uses hands-on exercises to familiarize participants with tools for detailed problem identification, development of indicators and standards for visitor impact monitoring, strategies and tactics for balancing visitor experiences and resource protection, and visitor use management planning.

The workshops are one component in the revision of a visitor use management handbook originally written for National Park Service resource managers. The revised handbook will include instructions for the exercises presented in the workshop and case studies and example applications of numerous strategies and tactics for managing visitor use and associated biophysical and social impacts in coastal and marine ecosystems.

Upcoming workshops are scheduled for Oregon, St. Croix (U.S. Virgin Islands), and California, and an abbreviated half-day workshop at the Coastal Zone '03 conference in Baltimore in July. For additional information, please contact Tom Fish at the Coastal Services Center: Tom.Fish@noaa.gov.

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee Scheduled to Meet June 24-25

The first meeting of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee will take place from June 24-25, 2003 in Washington, D.C. The meeting will be open to the public and will be held at:

The Department of Commerce's Auditorium
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
(please use the entrance on 14th Street)
Washington, D.C. 20230

More information on the meeting is available in the Federal Register Notice (a link is provide on www.mpa.gov).

During the first day of the meeting, the Advisory Committee will hear presentations and have the opportunity to discuss various issues, including the history and context of Executive Order 13158, the MPA Center's goals and activities, and areas of focus for the Committee. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Sam Bodman and Deputy Secretary of the Interior Steven Griles will provide opening remarks.

On the second day of the meeting, the Committee will begin to get organized and continue to develop the foundation to conduct its work.

A public comment period will be included on the second day of the meeting. For more details see the draft meeting agenda, which is available on <http://mpa.gov/>

**Aquarius, World's Only Underwater Laboratory,
Studies Coral Reefs During 2003 Mission Season**

What looks like a bright yellow school bus that took a wrong turn and ended up in the ocean is really the world's only underwater habitat and laboratory where scientists studying coral reef health and resources can work and live for up to 10 days underwater. Owned by the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and operated by the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Aquarius begins its 2003 research schedule May 19 after successfully completing two short training missions in March and April. NOAA is an agency of the Commerce Department.

"There is no better situation for coral reef researchers than to live among their subjects," said Barbara Moore, director of NOAA's National Undersea Research program (NURP). "Aquarius provides unique opportunities for the study of coral reefs to help us make better decisions about these valuable marine resources."

Located at a depth of 60 feet in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary three and a half miles offshore, Aquarius also has been in used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to prepare astronauts for shuttle missions and to evaluate medical aspects of space flight.

Those topside can read daily logs from the scientists, view live web cameras that display marine life near Aquarius and aquanauts living inside, and take a virtual tour of the habitat at: <http://www.uncw.edu/nurc/aquarius>.

The first research mission May 19-28 will be "A Study of Population Dynamics of Hard Corals on Conch Reef: A Demographic and Population Genetics Approach." The principal investigator is Mary Alice Coffroth of SUNY-Buffalo. Coffroth's work, part of a two-year study, investigates the growth and reproductive biology of important reef building corals. The work is designed to help predict the future condition of Conch Reef, home to Aquarius, and how marine protected areas might act to sustain coral populations throughout Florida.

Aquarius' other scheduled missions are:

- June 16-29: Space Simulation and Training Project: NEEMO V.
Principal Investigator: Bill Todd, NASA/United Space Alliance.

- July 14-23: Flow Modulated Metabolism: Connection with Coral Bleaching and Reef Oxygen Crises. Principal Investigator: Dr. Mark Patterson, College of William and Mary.
- Aug. 11-20: Responses of benthic macroalgae to high frequency upwelling on the Florida reef tract. Principal Investigator: Dr. James Leichter, Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
- Sept. 15-24: Biogeochemical control on the stable carbon and nitrogen isotopic composition of marine sponges along natural environmental gradients. Principal Investigator: Dr. Chris Martens, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Nov. 10-19: Herbivore resistance to seaweed defenses and the effects on reef community structure. Principal Investigator: Dr. Mark Hay, Georgia Institute of Technology.

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through research to better understand weather and climate-related events and to manage wisely our nation's coastal and marine resources.

For more information, go to NOAA at: <http://www.noaa.gov>

MPA Library Summary of Recent Report on Marine Reserves

Fiona R. Gell and Callum M. Roberts have written a review article on the science behind marine reserves and fishery closures entitled, “The fishery effects of marine reserves and fishery closures.”

From prior research, they claim that there is much evidence that fishery output is benefited by marine reserves, even soon after the reserves are created. The benefits are generally found within five years of the closure, in most cases. Success of marine reserves is not dependent upon habitat, fishery type, geographics, or management type; benefits have been demonstrated in tropical, warm and cold waters, coral reefs, rocky reefs, kelp forests, seagrass beds, mangroves, estuaries, lobster beds, scallop beds, and flatfish grounds.

A variety of managerial methods have worked, as well, from self-policing to satellite monitoring. Evidence has been found that recreational fisheries as well as professional fishery sites have benefited by closures.

The article cites 16 case studies that document reserve effects internationally:

1. The Nabq Managed Resource Protected Area, South Sinai, Egyptian Red Sea
2. Apo and Sumilon Islands, the Philippines
3. The Leigh Marine Reserve and the Long Island-Kokomohua Reserve, Marlborough Sound, New Zealand
4. Tsitsikamma National Park and De Hoop Marine Reserve, South Africa

5. Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland, Canada
6. Georges Bank, Gulf of Maine, USA
7. Virgin Islands National Park, St. John, and Buck Island National Reef Monument, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
8. Ucunivanua Village, Fiji
9. Sambos Ecological Reserve, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, USA
10. Nosy Atafana Marine Park, Madagascar
11. Mombasa and Kisite Marine Parks, Kenya
12. The Soufrière Marine Management Area, St. Lucia, West Indies
13. Gulf of Castellammare, Sicily
14. Tabarca Marine Reserve, Spain
15. Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Cape Canaveral, Florida, USA
16. Isle of Man southwest coast, Great Britain

The 90-page report was written by Fiona R. Gell and Callum M. Roberts, and published by the World Wildlife Fund-U.S.

For more information, contact Lea Wade-Torres, NOAA MPA Librarian, at Lea.Torres@noaa.gov.

Clyde Brown Receives NOAA Environmental Hero Award

Clyde Brown received the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Environmental Hero Award at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve today. The award was presented by Eldon Hout, director of NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, during a ceremony to dedicate a boat ramp at the reserve. NOAA is an agency of the Commerce Department.

The award honors NOAA volunteers for their "tireless efforts to preserve and protect our nation's environment." Brown was recognized for his long-term efforts to protect the fragile, natural resources of coastal Mississippi.

"Clyde had dedicated more than 35 years of his life to volunteer projects that address coastal resource issues in Mississippi," states Hout. "His only motivation has been to better his community and the coastal environment. This type of commitment is critical to the preservation of our coastal resources."

Brown is a life-long resident of eastern Jackson County, Mississippi. He is retired from nearly 40 years of employment at the International Paper Company and is a part-time oysterman and processor. Brown has been involved in a number of volunteer efforts that range from serving on citizen advisory councils to establishing the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

David Ruple, manager of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve says, “Clyde Brown is soft-spoken yet determined in his efforts to conserve and restore the resources of the Mississippi coast. He serves as the pulse of the local community and has been the sounding board for local residents inquiring about federal and state conservation initiatives over the years. Clyde is a true environmental hero and I am proud to have had the opportunity to work with him.”

Established in 1995 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Earth Day, the Environmental Hero award is presented to individuals and organizations that volunteer their time and energy to help NOAA carry out its mission. Previous recipients include oceanographers Jean-Michel Cousteau and Sylvia Earle, and actor Ted Danson, head of the American Oceans Campaign.

“On behalf of the 12,500 men and women working for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, I am pleased to present you with this 2003 Environmental Hero Award,” retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator, wrote in a letter to the recipients “Your dedicated efforts and outstanding accomplishments greatly benefit the environment and make our nation a better place for all Americans.”

There are a total of 36 winners—35 individuals and one organization for the 2003 NOAA Environmental Heroes Award.

Upcoming Events and Conferences

June

13-14: International Coastal Management: Tools for Successful Regional Partnerships and Initiatives, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia;

<http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/SGLC/conference.htm>

17: Managing Visitor Use in Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, Oregon. For more information, contact Tom Fish at the NOAA Coastal Services Center: (843) 740-1271, or Tom.Fish@noaa.gov.

24-25: MPA Federal Advisory Committee, Washington, D.C.

July

13-17: Coastal Zone '03, Baltimore, Maryland. Theme is coastal zone management through time; <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz2003>

20-22: Second Annual Public Participation GIS Conference, Portland, Oregon; <http://www.ursia.org/ppgis.htm> (Smillie)

20-24: National Marine Educators Association, Wilmington, North Carolina;
<http://www.marine-ed.org/nmea2003>

August

10-14: American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Quebec City, Canada. Theme is aquatic protected areas as fishery management tools;
http://www.fisheries.org/apa_symposium/homepage.htm

September

4-6: Centre for Maritime Research (MARE) announces its second international conference entitled “People and the Sea II – Conflicts, Threats and Opportunities,” Amsterdam, the Netherlands;
http://www.marecentre.nl/people_and_the_sea_2/index.html

8-17: World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa; <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/>

14-18: Estuarine Research Federation’s 17th Biennial Conference: “Estuaries on the Edge: Convergence of Ocean, Land and Culture,” Seattle, Washington;
<http://fish.washington.edu/news/erf>

October

7-11: North American Association for Environmental Education, Anchorage, Alaska;
<http://naaee.org/>

9-10: Managing Visitor Use in Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, California. For more information, contact Tom Fish at the NOAA Coastal Services Center: (843) 740-1271, or Tom.Fish@noaa.gov.

18-22: Coastal States Organization, 33rd Annual Meeting, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

25-30: National Estuarine Research Reserves System (NERRS) and the National Estuarine Research Reserves Association (NERRA) Annual Meeting, Charleston, South Carolina

November

2-5: Eighth Estuarine and Coastal Modeling Conference, Monterey Hyatt, Monterey, California; <http://www.oce.uri.edu/ecm8/>.

8-12: National Association of Interpretation, Reno, Nevada:
<http://www.interpnet.com/niw2003/>

17-20: Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship, Los Angeles, California;
<http://www.partnerships2003.org/home.html>

TO SUBSCRIBE: Send an email to Dana.Topousis@noaa.gov.