

GULF OF MEXICO

B-WET BAY WATERSHED EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAM

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program offers competitive grants to promote locally relevant environmental education opportunities to students in grades K through 12, as well as related professional development for educators. All B-WET funded projects emphasize sustained, hands-on, experimental activities that are aligned with academic learning standards.

B-WET Activities Show an Increase in:

- Teachers' confidence in their ability and their intentions to implement experiential learning in their classroom
- Students' enjoyment of learning about the ocean and protecting the ocean
- Students' and teachers ability to identify ways watersheds and the ocean become polluted and ways to prevent this pollution

Priority Areas: NOAA B-WET responds to regional educational and environmental priorities through local implementation. The Gulf of Mexico B-WET program is locally administered by the NOAA Fisheries Service southeast regional office in St. Petersburg, Florida. Applicants are asked to employ meaningful watershed educational experiences that address the coastal resource priorities outlined by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a partnership of the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, with the goal of significantly increasing regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. Priority areas include:

- Water quality for healthy beaches and shellfish beds
- Wetland and coastal conservation and restoration
- Environmental education
- Identification and characterization of Gulf habitats
- Reducing nutrient inputs to coastal ecosystems
- Coastal community resiliency

Eligible Applicants: K-through-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, and Indian tribal governments.

Available funding: In general, the Gulf B-WET program offers \$25,000-\$100,000 awards for projects one to two years in duration.

To learn more about the Gulf of Mexico B-WET Program contact Amy Clark at Amy.Clark@noaa.gov (228-688-1520), or visit our website at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/outreach/B-WETmainpage.htm>



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Regional Highlight:

Gulf B-WET Program Leads to Increased Stewardship at School

Submitted by: Rick Ranew, Education Specialist K12, Grand Bay NERR
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In late 2011 the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR), a Gulf of Mexico B-WET grant recipient, sponsored their first B-WET Professional Teacher Development Workshop at the Grand Bay Coastal Resources Center, and it was a hit! The goals of the workshop were to engage teachers in hands-on experiences that teach about the Mississippi coastal watersheds and to assist them in integrating lesson plans compiled by the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain into their classrooms. After the workshop, several teachers requested follow-up assistance and further instruction from the Grand Bay NERR on topics such as marine litter and watershed stewardship. As a result, many teachers have implemented lessons and activities learned from the B-WET workshop. One teacher, Ms. Miller at Lucedale Intermediate School, was so inspired by the B-WET workshop and follow up instruction that she began a recycling program for her entire school. Ms. Miller says her students were quite excited about the material taught. "The words that my students were using to describe the program were awesome and a lot of fun. These students are so eager to learn and [Grand Bay NERR] has helped me so much in motivating them." says Miller. This is just one example of how B-WET is impacting teachers and students and resulting in greater stewardship for the Gulf of Mexico.

