



Contact: Ben Sherman
301-713-3066

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NOAA Announces Funding to Support Ocean Observing in the Southeast

The NOAA Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) has awarded \$2.8 million in 2009 competitive grant funding to support ocean observing efforts in the southeastern United States. The funds will be distributed in four related grant awards.

The Southeastern Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association will receive \$500,000 in grant funding. Debra Hernandez, Executive Director, and Harvey Seim, chairman of the SECOORA board of directors and associate professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will oversee the continued development of the Association and related activities, including data management.

The Carolinas Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System will receive an award of \$1.2 million to oversee coordination of observing efforts in North and South Carolina. Lynn Leonard, Ph.D., geology professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington's Center for Marine Science, will lead efforts.

Rick Luettich of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will coordinate a \$371,950 grant to develop a prototype operational modeling system for waves, coastal currents, inundation and hydrologic flooding for eastern North Carolina. In addition, the University of Florida will receive a \$372,000 grant to be coordinated by Peter Shang, Ph.D., for continued support of a regional storm surge and inundation model.

SECOORA is one recipient in a series of nationwide IOOS grant funded projects, totaling \$21 million this year. The goal of each regional observing system is to maintain and enhance ocean and coastal observations in the area, making data easier to access and giving planners and policymakers the information needed to improve safety, enhance the economy, and protect the environment. Data from each region will also be available to researchers throughout the country via the national IOOS.

"This award represents NOAA's commitment to implementing the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation Act of 2009 which recognizes the IOOS regional systems as key components of the national effort," said Zdenka Willis, NOAA IOOS program director. "These projects are crafted to meet local customer needs while also contributing to the success of the national effort."

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

On the Web:

NOAA IOOS: <http://www.ioos.gov>

Southeastern Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association: <http://www.secoora.org>