

LA Wetland Education Coalition Wetland News, #25, April 1, 2005

<http://www.lacoast.gov/education/lawec/>



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1. Hurricane Expert: New Orleans 'scary place'

By JOE GYAN JR.

The Baton Rouge Advocate, New Orleans bureau

NEW ORLEANS -- National Hurricane Center Director Max Mayfield showed slide after slide of destruction that Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne heaped on Florida last year. Then he showed scenes of flooding that a mere tropical storm named Matthew caused in southeastern Louisiana in October, and issued a somber -- but familiar -- warning.

"This is really a scary place," Mayfield said Wednesday, adding that the New Orleans area is "still our biggest nightmare anywhere on the Gulf Coast."

Mayfield, again referring to the New Orleans area while speaking at the 27th annual National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans, said there will be a "very, very high loss of life if people don't make the right decisions."

The 2004 Atlantic hurricane season produced 15 named storms, including nine hurricanes, six of which were major hurricanes, and resulted in 3,100 direct deaths. Jeanne caused roughly 3,000 of those deaths in Haiti. The United States suffered 60 direct deaths.

"That's regrettable," Mayfield said. "It's too many."

Last year's hurricane season, which Mayfield called "one of the most active and destructive seasons on record," caused an estimated \$45 billion in damage in the United States.

"Behind those numbers are some very real people," he said.

Ed Buikema, acting response division director for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said last year's tropical storms and hurricanes affected 15 U.S. states and led to 27 presidential disaster declarations in 612 counties. FEMA, which coordinated the national response, provided 10.8 million gallons of water, 163 million pounds of ice and 14 million ready-to-eat meals, he said.

"It was a record year," Buikema said. "It was a challenge for all of us. It has not been easy."

Mayfield suggested a few reasons for the active 2004 hurricane season. Sea surface temperatures in the main region for tropical weather development in the Atlantic and Caribbean were warmer than normal in the peak months of August and September, he said, and a high pressure ridge off the southeastern U.S. coast helped steer hurricanes toward Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

"We're in this warm (water temperature) period right now," he said.

Last year's named storms also produced 321 tornadoes in the United States that killed eight people, Mayfield said. Death and destruction spread into the Carolinas, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

"A hurricane is not just a coastal event," he said.

Mayfield also said the four hurricanes that hit Florida last year -- a single-season record for one state -- resulted in 92 indirect deaths in the Sunshine State. "Most of those people (36) were killed during cleanup," he said.

Mayfield said the National Hurricane Center is getting better at predicting the paths that tropical weather systems will take, but cautioned that 100 percent accuracy will never be achieved.

"We try to teach over and over and over that we can't give a perfect forecast," he said.

Mayfield acknowledged that "we don't do a good job" of predicting when a hurricane will rapidly intensify before striking a coast, and said his biggest fear is that the public will be sleeping when a hurricane undergoes rapid intensification just before making landfall.

One of Mayfield's slides showed two houses in southern Florida across the street from each other. One was virtually destroyed by one of the hurricanes that hit the state, while the other was left virtually unscathed.

"Wouldn't it be nice if we could buy a house in this country and be told it's been built to withstand a major hurricane," said Mayfield, an advocate of tougher building codes.

The Atlantic hurricane season begins June 1 and ends Nov. 30. Mayfield said meetings and conferences such as the National Hurricane Conference held in advance of the season are beneficial.

"The battle against the hurricane is won now before the season starts," he said.

2. NOAA launches nowCoast, a real-time Internet site for NOAA forecasts

In January, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration launched a powerful new Web mapping portal. NOAA's nowCoast, at <http://nowcoast.noaa.gov>, is like the Weather Channel on steroids, giving anyone with a Web browser real-time access to thousands of observing stations worldwide. Scientists, hobbyists, boating enthusiasts and commercial mariners can pull up a wealth of data, covering marine and weather forecasts, water quality observations and more. Just be sure to disable your pop-up blocker to view updated information.

From: Government Computer News, 03/07/05; Vol. 24 No. 5, < http://www.gcn.com/24_5/log-off/35237-1.html >

3. NOAA launches new Environmental Literacy Grants Program

NOAA's Office of Education and Sustainable Development expects to publish the Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity and the Federal Register Notice (FRN) for this new grant program in March 2005. The due date for applications/

proposals will be 45 days from the date the FRN is published.

NOAA encourages applicants to submit applications electronically via <http://www.grants.gov>. Each institution applying for funding will need to register their institution on grants.gov. Go to the "Getting Started" section and begin the registration process. It can take up to 3 weeks to complete the registration process therefore NOAA urges prospective applicants to begin this process now. Applicants will be asked to address how their project relates to the NOAA Education Plan in their proposal. Find the NOAA Education Plan at: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/NOAA_Ed_Plan.pdf

4. NOAA launches new Estuaries Discovery Kit

It gives us great pleasure to announce the launch of the new Estuaries Discovery Kit on NOAA's Ocean Service Education Discovery Center. To view the Estuaries Discovery Kit, point your browser to <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/kits/estuaries>.

The Estuaries Discovery Kit discusses: how estuaries are classified by their geology and water circulation patterns, the various ecosystem services estuaries perform, how organisms have adapted to the unique environmental conditions found in estuaries, the many disturbances that estuaries face from nature and human activities, and finally, the essential work that the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and its many partners conduct to monitor, preserve, and restore estuarine ecosystems throughout the United States.

The Estuaries Discovery Kit is the fourth in a series of online materials that include Corals, Global Positioning, and Tides and Water Levels. In coming months this series of materials will be joined with a Discovery Kit on Marine Archaeology. Discovery Kits describe the basic scientific principles underlying the applied science and activities of NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS). They are designed for educators and students at the high school level, and contain interactive tutorials, roadmaps to data resources, and formal lesson plans. The tutorials, roadmaps, and lesson plans in each Discovery Kit are designed to work together, but are comprehensive enough to be used on their own.

In addition to Discovery Kits, NOAA's National Ocean Service Education Discovery Center

contains Discovery Stories and the Discovery Classroom.

Discovery Stories are case studies in coastal and ocean science drawn from research conducted by NOS. They are opportunities to learn through inquiry and are accompanied by a set of supporting resources, including student and teacher guides, interactive quizzes, exercises with real data, and interviews with NOS scientists that explore how scientists think. In addition, a "For Teachers" section provides materials and resources for use in the classroom. To view Discovery Stories, point your browser to:

<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/stories>

The Discovery Classroom is a collection of inquiry-based, formal lesson plans based on the major thematic areas found on the NOS Web site. All of the lessons emphasize hands-on activities using on-line NOS data resources, and are correlated to National Science Education Standards and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Benchmarks for Science Literacy. To view the new Discovery Classroom, point your browser to:

<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/classroom>

5. JASON Summer Institute

The JASON Summer Institute will be held July 12-19! As the institute participants travels through southern LA, they will interact with local experts:

- Don Davis & Rod Emmer
- Susan Horton & Susan Bergeron
- Mark Schexnayder
- Rachel Sweeney
- Earl Melancon, Jr.
- Jay Grymes
- Denise Reed
- Deborah Schultz
- Kerry St. Pe

As you can see by the list, quite a number of these experts are also JASON Host Researchers. Institute members will be on boats, on the beaches, in the marshes, and in the labs with these scientists as well as with other local experts. Lodging will range from hotels in New Orleans and Lafayette, to the field station on Grand Terre Island to LUMCON's dormitory/research facility at Cocodrie. Participants also will be learning about the culture: Destrehan plantation, Vermilionville (Cajun), and United Houma Nation (crafts, history/impact, and drumming/dancing). And, they will sample the foods of Louisiana: Randol's, Old Tyme Grocery,

snowcones, and a seafood boil! The institute will be a great opportunity for Louisiana folks to experience the state's "Disappearing Wetlands" - JASON style! Cost is \$1400 for the week. Lodging and most meals are covered in the fee. Register online at <http://www.jason.org/PDreg>

6. JASON Online Survey – ends today!

REMINDER!! The online survey for *JASON Expedition: Disappearing Wetlands* curriculum will close on **March 31, 2005**. If you **have not** completed the survey yet, Take a few minutes to help the JASON Foundation out! It should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Once the results are tabulated, the JASON Foundation hopes to be able to publish a summary in April.

7. Comprehensive Guide of K-12 Environmental Monitoring Programs

Lynna Kaucke, a graduate student at Florida Institute of Technology under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Marcinkowski, assembled a comprehensive guide of environmental monitoring programs for K-12 students in the United States. This included monitoring programs specifically designed for K-12 students as well as those that allow their participation. The monitoring programs had to be available to students/teachers at least at a state level. The monitoring programs also had to focus on one of the following taxonomic groups: fish, avians, amphibians, mammals, insects, reptiles, as well as a program that monitors plants. If you would like a copy of the information, contact Lynna Kaucke at <lynnakaucke@yahoo.com>.

8. Announcing the theme for Earth Science Week 2005: Geoscientists Explore our Earth

American Geophysical Institute is proud to announce the theme for Earth Science Week 2005. This year's theme, *Geoscientists Explore our Earth*, will focus on careers in the Earth Sciences and on the important contributions that geoscientists make to society.

What exactly does a geoscientist do? Many people can not answer that question. Most probably think they have never met a geoscientist, or do not understand how Earth Science has an impact on their daily lives. Geoscientists gather and interpret data about the Earth and other planets in a quest to solve some of societies most challenging problems,

from finding adequate natural resources (such as energy resources, water and metals), to reducing the effects of natural hazards on communities around the world.

There are different kinds of geoscientists: hydrologists, geochemists, astronauts, museum curators, soil scientists, sedimentologists, teachers and many more. Learn about careers in Earth Science by participating in Earth Science Week! Students and adults alike will learn about the exciting careers of those who explore our Earth!

Each year, AGI and its partners put together a packet of materials to help teachers, students and the general public celebrate Earth Science Week. We are already hard at work to collect materials for this year's Earth Science Week Information kits, which will be available in August, 2005. Here is a sneak peek of materials that will be included:

- The annual Earth Science Week poster with activities
- Careers information from the U.S. Geological Survey
- A stunning poster from NOAA
- An interactive CD ROM with teaching resources from the National Weather Service
- An informative poster about the NASA Earth Explorers Program

The kit will be filled with classroom activities and resources for elementary, middle school and high school teachers, as well as information for geoscientists who want to plan an event. Youth groups and home schoolers will also find resources for earning an activity patch, and information on local Earth Science Week events, plus experiments and activities to do at home. **Be sure to check the Earth Science Week website in August to get**

your kit. For additional information, visit <http://www.earthsciweek.org>.

9. Celebrate Earth Day!

"Imagine" the beauty of Louisiana's natural environment and learn how to become involved in preserving it at the 15th Annual Baton Rouge Earth Day environmental festival, downtown along North Boulevard. Baton Rouge Earth Day, one of the nation's largest environmental festivals, opens **Sunday, April 17th at noon**, beginning with the All Species Parade and ending the evening with Marsha Ball's southern style rock from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. This year's theme "**Imagine**," encourages festival attendees to use their imagination in learning about and interacting with the earth. Interactive and creative educational activities around key environmental themes are the backbone of the festival, encouraging children and adults to become involved in preserving the environment and the beauty of our world through daily activities. Visit the Louisiana Wetland Tent and see displays of interesting wetlands information and exhibits. For additional information, visit <http://www.earthdaybr.org>.

Other Earth Day Resources:

- Check out the EE-Link Earth Day Activities page with over 40 links to help you plan activities for the day, week, or celebrate all month! Visit <http://eelink.net/eeactivities-earthday.html>.
- National Science Teacher Association (NSTA) lists a number of Earth Day teaching materials and activities for students of all ages. Visit http://science.nsta.org/nstaexpress/nstaexpress_2005_02_28_esteme.htm

10. LAWEC-L LISTSERVE INFORMATION

- **Description of this listserve:** A listserve serving educators interested in LA wetlands.
 - **To send a message of your own to the listserv:** email LAWEC-L@LISTSERV.LSU.EDU and type your message into the body of the email. The message will be distributed to ALL PARTICIPANTS subscribing to the listserve. As a participant, you are welcome to send messages to educators subscribing to the LA Wetland Education Coalition listserve. We ask that participants focus their emails on educational opportunities and materials *directly related to wetland education*.
 - **To UNSUBSCRIBE from this listserve:** email LAWEC-L@LISTSERV.LSU.EDU and enclose the following single line in the body of the email
unsubscribe LAWEC-L
 - **To SUBSCRIBE to this listserv:** email LISTSERV@LISTSERV.LSU.EDU, with only the following line listed in the body of the email:
subscribe lawec-l YourFirstName YourLastName
For example:
subscribe lawec-l John Doe
- NOTE: You should not put anything in the subject line and should remove any automatic signatures from the email, otherwise the signup process will not work. You will get a return message indicating that you have been subscribed to the listserve along with information on other listserve operations you can perform (such as unsubscribe, etc.). If you have trouble, email Dr. Pam Blanchard at <pamb@lsu.edu>.

Please do not reply to the entire list unless you want everyone to read your message!