

LA Wetland Education Coalition Wetland News, #27, May 2, 2005

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



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1. ***It's the Write On! Wetlands Challenge!***

Environmental Concern is celebrating American Wetlands Month this May by creating a children's book about wetlands. We already have the authors - eighth graders in Maryland submitted stories, and the story we've selected is posted online at http://www.wetland.org/edu_writeon.htm.

Now, we need illustrators! **Elementary students** from around the country are invited to submit drawings - **before May 13th**. Each drawing must be colorful, original, and must correspond to a particular page of the book, as indicated on the webpage. Please submit artwork on 8.5" x 11" paper in "portrait" orientation, with the page number, the artist's name, grade, school, and address on the back, to **Environmental Concern, PO Box P, St. Michaels, MD 21663**. Young artists may use any medium - paints, crayons, colored pencils ... Pictures will be chosen for their creativity, artistic quality, and correlation to the story. Submitted pictures will not be returned; they will become the property of EC, and may be used for other purposes. Students whose drawings are chosen will have their names printed in the book as contributors.

For more information, visit www.wetland.org or contact Suzie Hershberger at 410-745-9620 or pow@wetland.org.

2. **Water Quality Online Crossword Puzzle!**

EPA's Office of Science and Technology has issued a new crossword puzzle for youngsters titled "Healthy Waters Start with Water Quality Standards" which will appear in the May 2005 issue of "Scholastic News", a monthly magazine for elementary school students. The crossword puzzle is available for downloading at the following addresses:

<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/training.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/new.htm>
<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/KidsStuff/>
For more information about the puzzle, contact: Frances A. Desselle, EPA, Office of Science and Technology [desselle.frances@epa.gov].

3. **Documentary Targets Coastal Crisis; to be broadcast June 11th**

By AMY WOLD, **BATON ROUGE ADVOCATE**,
April 21, 2005

The science of coastal restoration and why people should care about it are the subjects of an upcoming documentary **to be broadcast at 8 p.m. June 11 on the Discovery Science Channel**.

News media representatives got a sneak preview of the video Wednesday at the Louisiana Arts and Science Museum in Baton Rouge.

Entitled "**Coastal Crisis: The Vanishing Lands**," the video explains how the coastal area of Louisiana was formed over thousands of years from the flooding and changing course of the Mississippi River.

Flood waters brought in fresh water and dirt that kept the coastal marshes healthy and growing.

After the Mississippi River flood of 1927, however, that natural process of building the marsh came to an end as the federal and local governments stepped in to build flood protection levees. In the late 1880s, there were 6,000 square miles of wetlands in Louisiana. More than 100 years later, a third of that land is gone, according to the documentary.

The broadcast date was selected to coincide with the start of hurricane season June 1, according to Rannah Gray with America's WETLAND, a private nonprofit organization started three years ago by the Louisiana Governor's Office to raise awareness about coastal loss.

"We see this film as an opportunity to find a worldwide audience," Gray said. "What basically allowed us to attract a national cable network was the science involved helping the seventh largest delta in the world survive."

The video was produced by the Virginia-based company 62 Blue Productions LLC. The America's WETLAND foundation paid \$170,000 toward the production while the Discovery Science Channel is covering the cost of distribution and marketing, Gray said.

The video highlights the dangers that the loss of 25 square miles of land a year poses to the people who live along the coast and to the industries the coast supports.

The video notes that with fewer acres of marsh separating New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico, the city known for good food and good times is at risk for flooding. A heavy rain can flood streets in the sinking city, but a direct hit from a hurricane could prove devastating.

"With every hurricane season, Louisiana gets more vulnerable," said Greg Stone, director of the Coastal Studies Institute at LSU.

Coastal restoration science highlighted in the 1-hour documentary include:

- ☞ Denise Reed, a professor at the University of New Orleans, talks about determining the health of marsh by measuring marsh height.
- ☞ A physical model of the Mississippi River at LSU that is helping scientists determine how diverting portions of the river might affect surrounding marsh.
- ☞ Robert Twilley, director of Wetland Biogeochemistry Institute at LSU, talks about investigating how marsh plants react to nutrients in Mississippi River water. These same nutrients play a part every summer in creating the low-oxygen areas called the "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico.
- ☞ Gary Fine, director of the Golden Meadow Plant Material Center, talks about researching what types of plants work best for various coastal-restoration projects.

The video also looks at the effects that coastal land loss has on the state, from potential losses of fisheries to the increasing vulnerability of the large oil and gas supply port at Port Fourchon.

4. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) has recently been put online. It is kind of a world health

report card. The assessment can be found at: <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx>

Below is an editorial published in new scientist magazine.

The issue of new scientist this is from will be in the NWRC library sometime in the next week or two if you want to read there detailed reviews of sections of the MA yourself.

Editorial: Save humanity by saving ecosystems 02 April 2005 NewScientist.com news service IF YOU were ever in any doubt that biodiversity matters, take a look at the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), a mammoth \$24 million multi-agency report published this week. It is a hard-nosed effort that hardly mentions the notion that biodiversity is good for its own sake. It focuses instead on the importance of ecosystems to people: how they feed and water us, clothe us and help us stay warm and dry. And though it contains few surprises - it is hardly hot news that we are destroying our ecosystems at an ever increasing rate - its message is explosive. The research underpinning the MA, all thoroughly peer-reviewed, amounts to the fullest ever assessment of the present state of ecosystems, and paints a portrait of what things will be like if we carry on with business as usual. It is not a pretty picture (see "The world can't go on living beyond its means"). The MA highlights the gulf between the way we run our world and what ecosystems need to flourish. It is self-evident that nature ignores national frontiers; yet policies are set mainly at the national level, so damage inflicted by one country may have huge impact in another. Policymakers' primary concern is economic growth, yet few assign economic values to their environment. As a result, policy on, say, logging takes no account of impacts such as the reductions in water capture, recreational value and rainfall that follow deforestation. There is also a mismatch between the four years or so during which democratic governments expect their policies to deliver and the much longer timescales on which many ecosystems work. So the full impact of a damaging change may not be seen for decades. Despite these difficulties, the MA has an upbeat conclusion: if we act now, we can turn the world's ailing ecosystems around. It presents examples of policies that will let people coexist more successfully with the life around them. These policies are extremely challenging. They require politicians to think not nationally but regionally or globally, to think long-term and to develop economic indicators for environmental health - or to

broaden their thinking beyond the economic. Many countries have started to think in these ways. European farmers are beginning to be paid not to produce food but to protect biodiversity, while trading of permits to emit sulphur dioxide has worked in the US to reduce acid rain. The MA shows that these measures are only a tiny step in the right direction. Politicians are not obliged to adopt the MA's recommendations. But ignoring them is not the smart option. The MA should do for ecosystems what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has done for global warming: make it a hot political issue. And if the ecosystem assessment is repeated at regular intervals, as intended, countries that are indifferent to their environment will be exposed. The most compelling reason for acting on the MA stems from one of its chief conclusions: there is a clear link between

healthy ecosystems and healthy humans. Destroy those ecosystems and our economies - and our quality of life - will suffer. **From issue 2493 of New Scientist magazine, 02 April 2005, page 5.**

5. Understanding the Effect of Climate Change on Coastal Communities

Coasts, "Of the world's 20 largest cities, 13 are located along a coast and more than one-third of the world's population now lives within 100 miles of a shoreline." from "Climate changes pose new challenges to coastal cities." Read the article from the Herald Democrat (Texas) Online at http://www.heralddemocrat.com/articles/2005/02/10/texas_news/iq_1742280.txt

6. LAWEC-L LISTSERVE INFORMATION

- **Description of this listserv:** A listserv 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 listserv. As a participant, you are welcome to send messages to educators subscribing to the LA Wetland Education Coalition listserv. We ask that participants focus their emails on educational opportunities and materials *directly related to wetland education*.
- **To UNSUBSCRIBE from this listserv:** 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 listserv along with information on other listserv 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!