



Coastal and Ocean Observing News for the Southeast

Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association

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Letter from the Director

As we welcome in 2010, which promises to be another productive year for SECOORA, it is time to take a look back at what we have accomplished over the past year. On the National level, the passage of the IOOS Authorization bill in March 2009 was a major step forward for IOOS, establishing it as a formal program with recognition of the critical role regional-level systems play. Regionally, SECOORA worked closely with stakeholders to identify priorities, which has directed SECOORA's efforts and will determine future funding allocations. These priorities are documented in a Strategic Priorities Plan that will be finalized in a few weeks. In 2009, we also placed a lot of effort into getting our "house in order." This involved work to transition SECOORA into an independent non-profit organization that serves as a voice for users and providers of coastal and ocean observing data and information.

Another primary focus this past year has been on improving communications. To this end, we have implemented a weekly news update and also this quarterly newsletter, which will highlight ongoing work in the region by our members, and discuss issues of significance for coastal and ocean observing. Finally, despite the difficult budget situation in all sectors, we have maintained our membership, even expanded slightly by adding two new members and gaining two sustaining members.

We eagerly await the challenges in 2010. Some things we will be focusing on this year are:

Conducting more organized outreach to local stakeholders, and Congressional members and staff to gain support for our strategic goals.

Improving SECOORA's website and data portal to make information more readily available to decision-makers, as well as re-envisioning our data management and communication enterprise.

Focusing on key stakeholders, including fisheries managers; beach communities; emergency responders and managers; mariners and boaters; weather forecasters; and local and state planners. These efforts will result in the delivery of products and tools that save lives, conserve natural resources, support local economies, and make our coastal communities more resilient to hazards.

Finalizing the fiscal transition process and development of the FY2011-2015 IOOS proposal.

Thank you for your support of SECOORA. We look forward to your continuing collaboration and championship in 2010. Please contact me at any time with questions or ideas.

Debra Hernandez, SECOORA Executive Director

Project Spotlight: St. John's River Accord Partnership

Contributed by Pat Welsh, University of North Florida

While many SECOORA estuaries have degraded water quality due to excess nutrients that cause eutrophication, a condition of imbalance in the ecosystem that is linked to excessive algal blooms, the city of Jacksonville, Florida is tackling the problem head-on.

The St. Johns River which flows through Jacksonville and enters the Atlantic at Mayport, Florida is a semitropical blackwater river that flows northward through 310 miles of Florida. It is bordered with extensive wetlands, and has been designated one of only fourteen American Heritage Rivers by the EPA under Executive Order 13061¹. Under Mayor John Delaney, the city matched with \$3 million a Federal effort to acquire critical parcels within and adjacent to the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve and developed many other projects to improve the river and public access to it.



*Buckman Bridge during a recent algal bloom on St. Johns river.
Photo: Copyright Gerry Pinto 2009*

In 2006, Mayor John Peyton led the formation of the St. Johns River Accord, an agreement among local agencies to seek funding for a massive effort to clean up the river expected to cost \$700 million over ten years².

As part of this effort, the City of Jacksonville's Environmental Protection Board funded two years of study by SECOORA-member universities, Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida, to produce a compilation of the known science about the river in an online-accessible public report (River Accord Annual Report, page 4). The result was a 195-page report on the health of the river titled the "State of the River Report for the Lower St. Johns River Basin" and a short public brochure. A second part of the River Accord is a joint effort with the River Accord agencies and University of North Florida's Environmental Center in a project to deploy real-time monitors to track the amount of silt in the water (River Accord Annual Report, page 14). The University of North Florida Environmental Monitoring, Mapping Analysis and Planning Systems (EMMAPS) Laboratory (affiliated with the Environmental Center) has received a \$250,000 grant from the Florida Legislature to initiate this effort. The monitoring buoy developed for this project may someday be used by other water quality studies in the SECOORA domain.

Resources:

State of the River Report for the Lower St. Johns River Basin: <http://www.sjrreport.com/thereport>

Brochure for the State of the River for the Lower St. Johns River Basin: <http://www.sjrreport.com/thebrochure>

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/rivers/98rivers/>

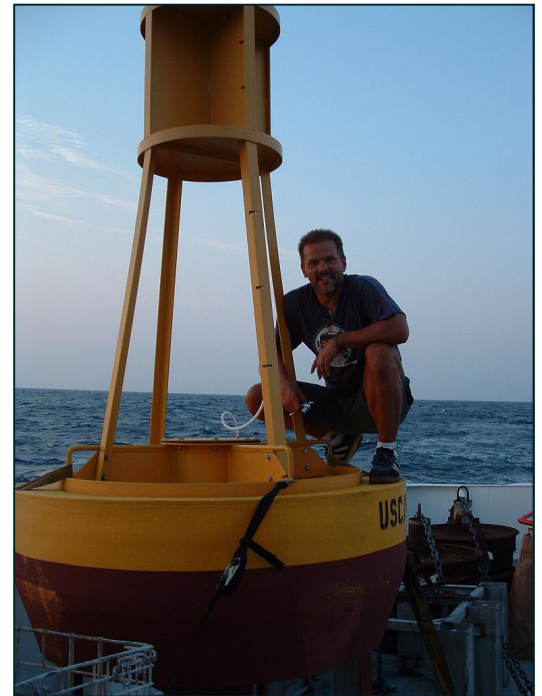
² River Accord Annual Report 2009: <http://www.coj.net/Mayor/River+Accord/default.htm>

Member Spotlight: Jeff Kinder

Jeff Kinder has been involved in the ocean observing community since long before the emergence of SECOORA as an organization. As the owner and president of Down East Instrumentation, LLC, an engineering firm specializing in sensor-based control systems, Jeff has a vested interest in promoting the advancement of observing technologies and applications and is committed to doing just that. Jeff Kinder is a member of SECOORA and serves on the Operations & Maintenance Committee.

Jeff began his career at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. While there he helped in the development of the acoustic tomographic transceiver and, as lead technical advisor, participated in several trans-oceanic hydrographic cruises, most notably the World Ocean Circulation Experiment (WOCE), as well as the Joint Global Ocean Flux Study (JGOFS). Following that, he was the chief engineer responsible for designing, building and maintaining the near real-time buoy array segment of both the Carolinas Coastal Ocean Observing & Prediction System (CaroCOOPS) and the Coastal Ocean Research & Monitoring Program (CORMP). Both programs have combined and evolved into a sub-regional component of SECOORA.

Jeff's current research efforts in the region include providing ocean observing systems and support to the Carolinas Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System (Carolinas RCOOS), a sub-regional component of SECOORA administered by the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and the University of South Carolina at Columbia. Carolinas RCOOS evolved from the combination and integration of both CaroCOOPS & CORMP. His involvement in both of these programs allows him to be an important asset to the ongoing development of Carolinas RCOOS as a sub-regional ocean observing system within SECOORA.



*Another day at sea...preparing a CaroCOOPS buoy for deployment.
Photo: Jeff Kinder*

It is critical for SECOORA to maintain the momentum created by its predecessors if we're going to realize a true integrated ocean observing function in the southeast.

*Jeff Kinder
Managing Director
Down East Instrumentation, LLC*

notes that in his experience, being involved in pre-IOOS ocean observing programs, it requires a tremendous amount of resources including experienced personnel, specialized equipment and sea-going assets, as well as the ability to coordinate all of these in concert to deploy and maintain an ocean observing system. The importance of funding these components needs to be realized at the national level in order to execute an effective regional program.

Jeff believes SECOORA is vital in the southeast for maintaining continuity in ocean observations with the programs that preceded it such as CaroCOOPS, CORMP, SEACOOS, COMPS, etc. Jeff says, "These programs laid the foundation for the efforts that SECOORA is charged with and it is critical for SECOORA to maintain the momentum created by its predecessors if we're going to realize a true integrated ocean observing function in the southeast". Down East will aid SECOORA in this mission by leveraging its extensive experience in ocean observing operations in the region.

As for what Jeff thinks it will take to maintain the current efforts and move ocean observing ahead -- funding, funding, funding! He

For more information, contact Jeff Kinder at down.east@hotmail.com, or visit Down East Instrumentation Web site at: www.downeastinst.com.

The Buzz: Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning

The Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, chaired by the White House Council on Environmental Quality, just released a report on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). *Scientific American* had an article about it in their December 2009 issue. The Nature Conservancy recently hosted a workshop in the South Atlantic to discuss MSP principles and opportunities.

So, what is Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning and why all the buzz about it? According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), MSP is a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that have been specified through a political process (<http://www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/>). Many compare MSP to land use planning, although there are significant differences. MSP does allow decision makers to integrate information on a variety of factors when making decisions about resource management and planning in the ocean environment.

There are a variety of tools and data that are used in MSP. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) allow users to easily visualize data to see overlaps, conflicts, and potential impacts of decisions. Many organizations have expanded the basic capabilities of a GIS to create decision support tools that let MSP participants see the results that would occur under varying scenarios. Data such as marine regulatory boundaries, oceanographic processes, chemical information, habitat, geology, and human use data are critical to the process.

How is the IOOS community involved? According to Debra Hernandez, Executive Director of SECOORA, "We are collecting data that is critical to understanding and managing the ocean environment - temperature, salinity, water level, currents, ocean color, winds, and waves. Providing this data in a management framework and making it accessible via a regional portal that decision makers can access is a key role SECOORA can play in the process of Marine Spatial Planning." SECOORA plans to continue involvement in MSP in the southeast by supporting the South Atlantic Governors' Alliance, funding collection of biological as well as physical data on the marine environment, and improving SECOORA's website and data portal to make the information readily available to state and regional decision-makers.

Providing data in a management framework and making it accessible via a regional portal that decision makers can access is a key role SECOORA can play in the process of Marine Spatial Planning.

Resources:

- ▶ Ocean Policy Task Force: Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans/interim-framework>
- ▶ UNESCO Marine Spatial Planning Initiative: <http://www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/>
- ▶ NOAA's Marine Spatial Planning: <http://www.msp.noaa.gov/>
- ▶ Nature Conservancy's Southeast Marine Spatial Planning Workshop: <http://www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/southcarolina/marine/art29940.html>
- ▶ Governors' South Atlantic Alliance: <http://www.southatlanticalliance.org/>

Announcements

SECOORA's Strategic Priorities

SECOORA is finalizing a plan that presents our priorities for contributing to understanding, management, and sustainment of our valued ocean and coastal resources. It defines how, with additional funding, SECOORA can sustain and build upon existing regional assets to make a significantly greater contribution. This document is geared towards SECOORA members; regional stakeholders and potential members; and decision-makers, including elected officials. Watch the SECOORA Web site for more information.

BOB Workshop Announcement

In January 2009, twenty people from SECOORA, including faculty and students from eight universities, informal and formal educators, worked with Doug Levin from NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office to improve the prototype for the Basic Observation Buoy (BOB). March 17-19, 2010 a second BOB workshop will be held at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington Center for Marine Science, sponsored by NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office, SECOORA and COSEE SE. The goal is to reveal the next generation of BOBs with a focus on instrumentation. The objective of this workshop is to introduce water quality sensor manufacturers to the BOB concept, discuss the future of small monitoring buoys, and develop regional strategies for outreach. There are still a few openings left in the workshop. If you are interested in attending, please email megan.treml@gmail.com.

SECOORA Staff Update

In December, SECOORA bid farewell to Sam Walker, who joined the NOAA IOOS Program for a 12-month Interagency Personnel Agreement to lead key aspects of DMAC development. Sam will bring a valuable regional perspective to the IOOS Program and will be working closely with the Regional Associations and other IOOS partners to more effectively integrate and implement DMAC elements, including helping to develop the next iteration of the IWGOO's DMAC Steering Team.

Welcome Robert McGuinn, SECOORA's new Program Support Contractor. Robert was trained at North Carolina State University (B.S.), University of California at Davis (M.S.), and Duke University (M.A.). He has 12 years of experience in the environmental sciences with the last 7 focused on coastal and ocean sciences, extension, and leadership at the NOAA Coastal Services Center in Charleston, SC. His expertise and professional interest

lies in the areas of landscape and seascape ecology as they apply to strategic conservation planning.

Welcome Charlton Galvarino, SECOORA's new Data Management and Communication Support Contractor. Galvarino has spent much of his professional career applying his software development and database design expertise to create end-to-end, web-accessible GIS applications for a variety of clients and users. He leverages his active involvement and leadership in regional and national data management committees to find, implement, and sometimes create the best-fit solution for oceanographic data packaging.

SECOORA Membership Update

SECOORA has 41 dues-paying members as well as 4 affiliate members: 36 institutional, 4 affiliate, 3 individual, and 2 sustaining.

Welcome!

New member CSnet, Int'l, represented by Andy Clark.

CSnet offers a turnkey modular seafloor communications network, the Offshore Communications Backbone, deployable in depths to 3,000 meters for hydrocarbon exploration and site assessment; monitoring activities; scientific ocean observing systems; tsunami and seismic warning systems; pipeline and infrastructure security monitoring.

"RPI has been working closely with the MMS Renewable Energy Program since its inception and hopes to make sure that SECOORA's information and knowledge are integrated into MMS's work in the region."

Jaqui Michel

President, Research Planning, Inc.

New member RPI, represented by Jaqui Michel.

Research Planning, Inc. (RPI) is a science technology company that has worked in coastal and marine systems in over 50 countries. They are currently conducting a data search and literature synthesis of the geological, physical, chemical, and biological resources of the South Atlantic Bight for the Minerals Management Service.

New designated representative for FLCOOS Consortium, Michael Kindel.

NFRA News

NFRA Releases Document

NFRA's document "Providing Coastal Information in a Changing Climate: The Regional Contribution to the National Integrated Ocean Observing System" outlines the high-level products and services that the national network of RAs will provide in the coming years. The products address 5 key themes that have been identified as priorities by regional users and stakeholders: Marine Operations, Climate Variability and Change, Ecosystems, Fisheries, and Water Quality, Coastal Hazards and Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning.

<http://www.usnfra.org/RegDocFINAL-Feb2010small.pdf>

President's Budget Released Feb 1, 2010

The FY11 President's request has been released. IOOS is funded at \$14.55 for regional IOOS and \$6.5 for national IOOS. It also calls for more than \$2 billion to develop and implement NOAA's polar orbiting and geo-stationary weather satellite systems, satellite-borne measurements of sea level and other climate variables, and other space-based observations; supports enhancements to climate science and services, including improved modeling and assessments at global and regional levels; \$100 million for coastal and marine spatial planning, competitive grants in support of regional ocean partnerships, integrated ecosystem assessments, catch-share based fisheries management, and research on ocean acidification.

NFRA Board Meeting: Feb 17, 2010

The NFRA Board of Directors will meet on Wed. Feb 17th in Washington DC. The agenda includes briefings and discussions with David Kennedy, the Acting AA of NOS, Zdenka Willis, NOAA IOOS Program Director, Linda Lillycrop from the USACOE, and Don Wright from SURA.

The Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force on Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning

In December, the Interagency Task Force released a draft framework for how the nation should move forward with Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP). The framework lays out a comprehensive approach to marine spatial planning at the regional and national scale. NFRA endorses the framework's recognition for a robust data management and integration system to support the spatial planning effort and encourages the Task Force to

build on the foundation established by IOOS for this purpose. Comments on the Framework for Marine and Coastal Spatial Planning are due Feb. 8. For more information see:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans/interim-framework>

NFRA Executive Committee Continues Visits to Washington D.C.

Throughout the fall and winter, members of the NFRA Executive Committee have been traveling to Washington D.C. to meet IOOS partners. In January, Committee members met with Steve Gallagher and his staff at the NOAA Budget Office to discuss how to develop effective performance measures for IOOS. They also met with David Kennedy, Acting NOS AA, Bob Gaugosian, Kevin Wheeler and Mel Briscoe of Ocean Leadership, Don Wright of SURA, and Zdenka Willis and members of the IOOS Program Office. These meetings are critical for highlighting the work of the RAs and to forge relationships with partners at the national level.

NFRA Briefs NMFS Science Directors

On January 21, Josie Quintrell, Josh Kohut (MACOORA/Rutgers), John Manderson (NMFS/NEFSC) and Dan Rudnick (SCCOOS/Scripps) briefed the NMFS Science Directors. Many of the RAs have identified fisheries as a priority issue and are working with NMFS and other fisheries organizations in integrating oceanographic data with fisheries data. Some RAs are developing decision-support tools such as the NE Shrimp Interactive Mapping Tool that allows shrimp managers to access model and observing data along with their catch data while others are working on collaborative projects with NMFS. Dan Rudnick discussed how scientists with SCCOOS are expanding work in the CalCOFI line and Josh Kohut and John Manderson discussed their project that analyzed the relationship between oceanographic data and fish distribution. Most of the Science Directors were aware of the RAs in their regions and were interested in further collaborations.

Ocean Observing Calendar

View the NFRA Calendar which has events happening in all the RAs, IOOS, and NFRA:

<http://www.usnfra.org/calendar.html>

Calendar of Events

February 10, 2010 SECOORA Board Conference Call

February 17-18, 2010 NFRA Board Meeting

February 17-18, 2010 Rip Current Symposium

March 23-24, 2010 IOOS Regional DMAC Workshop

April 21-22 2010 NOAA in the Carolinas Meeting

April 29-30, 2010 OOI Science Workshop

May 11, 2010 SECOORA Board Meeting

May 12-13, 2010 SECOORA Members Meeting

June 13-16, 2010 International Conference of The Coastal Society

June 15-17, 2010 World Ocean Council Sustainable Ocean Summit (Belfast, UK)

September 20-23, 2010 OCEANS 2010 MTS/IEEE

November 13-17, 2010 5th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration



SECOORA is a not-for-profit membership organization of academia, industry, government agencies, and NGOs, many of which are data and information providers and users. SECOORA is committed to providing the most reliable marine data and information to help ensure protection of people and property, a healthy marine economy, and sustainable natural coastal and ocean resources.

Join SECOORA

Commitment to ocean observing technologies in our region is critical. Your input, guidance, support, and membership will insure that SECOORA continues to develop the products and services that you need. Join SECOORA and be a part of the Southeast's future.

Contact Executive Director Debra Hernandez (debra@secoora.org) for more information.

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If you have news to contribute, email communications@secoora.org.