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OCEAN TASK FORCE HOLDS FIRST PUBLIC HEARING IN ALASKA

On Friday, August 21, President Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force held its first public hearing in Anchorage, AK. Attending the hearing were Nancy Sutley, chair of CEQ; David Hayes, Deputy Secretary of the Interior; Adm. Thad Allen, the Coast Guard commandant; and NOAA administrator Jane Lubchenco. Before the hearing, the Task Force members had been on an Arctic Observance tour to learn more about how climate change is affecting the Arctic region. Read Nancy Sutley's blog about the Arctic tour at www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Touring-the-Arctic/.

At the hearing, the Task Force explained their mission, listened to public comments, and answered questions. Sutley started by stating, "Each agency has statutory responsibility over pieces that will become ocean policy. So the first step is to try to set an overall framework. We need to look at how the federal government organizes itself in dealing with ocean marine resources and then attempt to set some priorities."

The Task Force listened to the concerns of about 60 Alaskans, including tribal leaders, environmentalists and industry groups, on issues including offshore oil and gas development, recreational and commercial fishing, traditional tribal and subsistence uses, and the recent troubled salmon runs. A common topic concerned the significantly reduced sea ice in the Arctic that will bring increased ship traffic and potentially open up huge areas to use and development.

NOAA Administrator Lubchenco said,



Nancy Sutley, Thad Allen, Jane Lubchenco and David Hayes in Anchorage, Alaska.

"Many are anticipating a new Arctic gold rush eventually involving fishing, energy development, shipping and tourism. While the changing Arctic environment may well open up new opportunities for use, the challenge is to learn from the mistakes of the past and use the ocean's resources wisely. This is not to say we can't use the ocean. We need to be able to use it, just not use it up."

With more than 33,000 miles the state has a longer coastline than the all other states' combined. Alaskan waters account for \$5.8 billion a year worth of seafood, about 60% of the U.S. total catch. Their continental shelf holds about a third of all U.S. coastal oil reserves, and about a fourth of the available gas. The DOI has significant responsibilities in the marine and coastal areas of Alaska including 9 National Parks and 10 National Wildlife Refuges. MMS responsibilities include managing the resources of Alaska's outer continental shelf and oil spill response and research.

The next four public hearings are listed below:

- Sept. 17 in San Francisco, CA
- Sept. 24 in Providence, RI
- Oct. 19 in New Orleans, LA
- Oct. 29 in Cleveland, OH

MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING AROUND THE WORLD

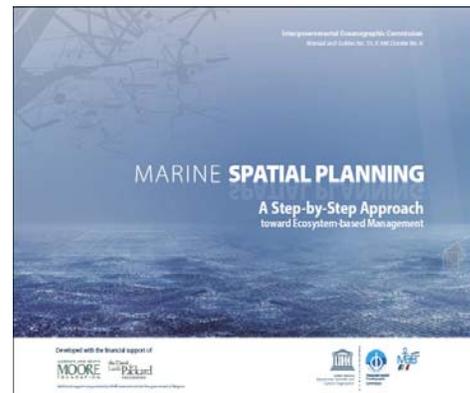
On June 12, 2009, President Obama called for the formation of an Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force to complete four key tasks, including development of a recommended framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning. President Obama requested that this framework be a “comprehensive, integrated, ecosystem-based approach that addresses conservation, economic activity, user conflict, and sustainable use of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources.”

Various countries have implemented marine spatial planning at specific areas (including the US as the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary), while others (such as Australia) have

already integrated marine spatial planning into the management of nearly all marine regions.

Between November 2007 and May 2009, UNESCO developed a guide that uses a clear, straightforward step-by-step approach to show how marine spatial planning can be developed and implemented. Most steps are illustrated with relevant examples from the real world. Throughout the text references are made to other resources and further readings.

The guide, titled "Step-by-Step Approach for Marine Spatial Planning toward Ecosystem-based Management", was released at the [International Marine](#)



[Conservation Congress](#) held this last May in Washington, D.C.

For a pdf copy of the guide and to learn more about the Marine Spatial Planning Initiative visit <http://www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/>.

Offshore Lease Sale in Gulf of Mexico Generates \$115 Million

On Aug. 19, MMS held the Western Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Lease Sale 210 in New Orleans. MMS received 189 bids from 27 companies for 162 federal tracts on the Outer Continental Shelf. The high bid for each block will go through a strict evaluation process to ensure the public receives fair market value before a lease is awarded.

“The responsible development of oil and gas resources on U.S. public lands is an integral part of President Obama’s comprehensive energy strategy for the nation,” Secretary Salazar said. “A domestic energy plan that balances the development of conventional and renewable energy resources – both onshore and offshore – is essential to reducing our country’s dependence on foreign oil, building a clean-energy economy, and

addressing the challenges of climate change.”

MMS has held two offshore lease sales this year. Central Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 208 on March 18 offered 6,458 parcels, encompassing 34.5 million acres; leased 1,784,242 of those acres in 328 parcels; and collected revenue of \$690,163,194. Lease Sale 210 offered 3,435 parcels, encompassing 18.4 million acres, and generated \$115 million in revenue.

The Western Gulf of Mexico Sale 210 statistics are posted on the MMS website at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/1sesale/210/wgom210.html>



Photo credit: MMS

PARTNERSHIPS MAKE FOR CLEANER BEACHES IN ALASKA

Kenai Fjords National Park has partnered with The Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance (RBCA), a local conservation organization experienced in marine debris removal, to address the issue of marine debris in the Park. Taking advantage of the National Park Service's "Challenge Cost Share Program," the NPS was able to match this non-profit's contributions of labor, expertise, and supplies. The cleanup effort was also directly tied to objectives of the NPS "Ocean Park Stewardship Action Plan," engaging the public in stewardship, protecting parks and other areas across boundaries, and leveraging agency stewardship capacity.

This summer's 'net' result was approximately 18,960 pounds of marine debris removed from 6.25



Marine debris accumulated on the beach of Thunder Bay, Kenai Fjords National Park. Credit: NPS

miles of remote and rugged beaches along the Kenai Peninsula. The majority of this debris fell into one of two main categories: fishing related gear (lines, buoys, floats, nets, etc.) and household/recreational trash (plastic, bleach, soap, and water bottles; polystyrene; etc.). Trash collected from beaches on the outer coast, furthest from the community of Seward, Alaska, consisted of 75% fishing related trash and 25% household trash; while the beaches closest to town had the opposite ratio (75% household trash to 25% fishing related trash). Beaches on the outer coast also had a much higher volume of trash, presumably due to storm patterns and a historic buildup of trash.

NPS Ocean Alaska Science and Learning Center staff participated in this summer's efforts and will prepare educational materials summarizing the impacts of marine debris and how we can help reduce it.

RBCA has been coordinating annual marine debris cleanups around the park since the group was established in 2005. This summer's effort was conducted over three different weekends and involved a total of 44 volunteers. Six marine vessels were employed for the cleanups, ranging



Crew with an afternoon's catch of debris.

Credit: NPS

from a 108' research vessel (tender) to inflatable skiffs. Support was provided by R/V Norseman, Seward Marine Center, Alaska Waste, Alaskans for Litter Prevention and Recycling (ALPAR), Alaska State Parks, City of Seward, and Icele Seafoods.

For information about Kenai Fjords National Park visit www.nps.gov/kefj, the NPS Challenge Cost Share Program visit www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/ccsp/, and the Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance visit www.rbca-alaska.org/.

Story submitted by Fritz Klasner / NPS.

SEC. SALAZAR APPLAUDS PRESIDENT OBAMA'S INTENT TO NOMINATE MARCIA MCNUTT AS DIRECTOR OF THE USGS

Secretary Salazar praised President Obama's announcement that he intends to nominate Dr. Marcia McNutt as Director of the USGS and Science Advisor to the Secretary. McNutt would be the first woman director of the agency since its establishment in 1879. The nomination is subject to Senate confirmation.

Dr. McNutt currently serves as

President and Chief Executive Officer of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute in California. She worked for USGS at the start of her career.

"We look forward to welcoming Dr. McNutt, who is now a world-class scientist, back to the U.S. Geological Survey," Secretary Salazar said. "Not only does she offer sterling academic credentials, but she also has worked

in the field as chief scientist on many oceanographic expeditions and has been involved in government as chair of the President's Panel on Ocean Exploration convened by President Clinton. Her experience will be valuable in leading the government's premiere scientific agency."

Read the DOI Press Release:

http://www.doi.gov/news/09_News_Releases/070909b.html

RECORD OCEAN TEMPERATURES MAY RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT CORAL BLEACHING

The National Climatic Data Center has reported that the world's ocean surface temperature in June was the warmest since global records began in 1880. Preliminary analysis indicates that global ocean surface temperature for June was 1.06° F (0.59° C) above the 20th Century average of 61.5° F (16.4° C). The previous high mark was set in 2005. Additionally, the combined average global land and ocean surface temperature for June was the second-warmest on record. To learn more visit: http://www.noaa.news.noaa.gov/stories2009/20090717_juneglobalstats.html

Coral reefs are very sensitive to changes in water temperature. From 1997 until mid-1998 during one of the largest El Niño events this century, elevated sea surface temperatures resulted in a mass coral reef

bleaching event throughout the world. Coral Bleaching occurs when after prolonged exposure to elevated temperatures the symbiotic algae, called zooxanthellae, dissociates from the host coral organism. This causes the coral to lose its vibrant color as the underlying calcium carbonate skeleton shows through. Corals can recover from bleaching. However, long term or repeated exposure to temperature extremes or cumulative stress from other factors can cause coral mortality.

This year's record warm seawater is already affecting coral reefs. Bleaching has been reported in the Florida Keys, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and Guam. Typically, coral bleaching in the Caribbean occurs after weeks or months of prolonged high water temperatures usually in September or October. The early



This brain coral below has expelled the symbiotic zooxanthellae, that give it color, leaving it snow white. Photo: USGS.

signs of bleaching are a serious concern and scientists are bracing for the possibility of record bleaching by fall.

To follow the condition of the coral reefs around the world visit NOAA's Coral Reef Watch:

<http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/satellite/index.html>

FOLLOW-UP TO JULY ARTICLE:

SHARK FIN DEALER SENTENCED FOR ILLEGALLY DEALING IN FINS FROM PROTECTED SPECIES

On August 19, Mark L. Harrison of Southport, Florida was sentenced to probation for five years, ordered to pay a fine of \$5,000, and ordered to perform 150 hours of community service for multiple charges including illegal trafficking of shark fins. Harrison was also ordered to take out an advertisement in a publication of wide circulation within the fishing industry regarding compliance with shark fin reporting requirements.

James Gale, Special Agent in Charge for the USFWS, Office of Law Enforcement Southeast Region, said, "The sentences today were the result

of a lengthy and complex investigation conducted jointly by USFWS Special Agents, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement Special Agents, and FDA, Office of Criminal Investigation Special Agents. Hopefully, this sentence will raise the public's awareness of how unlawful commercialization impacts certain species of wildlife."

To read the press release go to: <http://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2009/sharkfinsentencingrelease.pdf>.



Dried shark fins slated for illegal export; the Federal probe began when a Service wildlife inspector in Atlanta noticed the shipment in an airport warehouse.

Photo credit: USFWS.

NEW USGS MENDENHALL POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS INCLUDE THREE WHO WILL RESEARCH COASTAL AND MARINE TOPICS

In October 2009, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) will welcome 18 new Mendenhall Postdoctoral Research Fellows for fiscal year 2010. These postdoctoral researchers will be the tenth group hired for 2-year appointments under the Fellowship Program, created by the USGS in October 2000 to honor the agency's fifth director, Walter C. Mendenhall. Each year since the program was established, more than 15 postdoctoral Fellows have been provided an opportunity to conduct in-depth research with selected USGS staff.

Of the 18 new Fellows, 3 will be conducting research on coastal or marine topics; their project titles are listed below:

- "Quantitative Evaluation of Tsunami Hazard to the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Coasts."
- "Exploring the Relationship Between Past Atmospheric Dust Composition, Climate, and Biological Productivity in the Northern Pacific Ocean."
- "Prediction of Coastal Response to Extreme Storms Using High-Resolution Modeling and Data Assimilation."

Visit the [Mendenhall Program Web site](#) for brief descriptions of the research being conducted, contact information, and products.

Ocean Quote of the Month

"The cure for everything is salt water - sweat, tears, or the sea"

Isak Dinesen

DON'T FEED THE DOLPHINS PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Dolphin SMART, a partnership developed by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and National Marine Fisheries Service, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, and the Dolphin Ecology Project, has released a PSA to educate the public about the dangers of feeding wild dolphins.

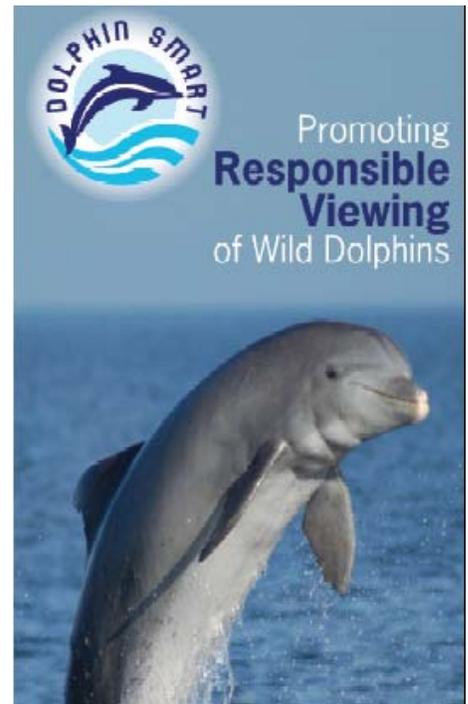
Feeding any wildlife can cause problems for both humans and the animals. Wild animals learn to associate humans with food and often become dependent on the handouts, become unhealthy due to the unnatural diet, or may even threaten people. This activity can also disrupt their social structure as the animals lose their wildness.

Just as in the NPS's Don't Feed the Bear campaign, the goal of Dolphin SMART is to convince tourists and businesses that keeping wildlife wild benefits everyone that enjoys viewing dolphins.

Help get the word out. Please distribute the link to the Don't Feed the Dolphins PSA to all relevant recipients.



Click on screen shot to view the PSA or go to www.dontfeedthedolphins.org.



To learn more about Dolphin SMART visit www.dolphinSMART.org.

For more information about ocean and coastal activities at DOI contact:

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DOI Ocean and Coastal Button Contest

Answer the question below to receive a prize. Submit your answer to DOINewswave@ios.doi.gov and be sure to include the mailing address where you'd like your prize sent.



This Month's Question.

What nation possesses the world's longest coastline?

Answer to last month's question: What is the world's largest fish?

Answer: The Whale Shark. Many people also added that the Mola Mola, also called the oceanic sunfish, is the largest boney fish.

The DOI Ocean and Coastal Activities Office has a new e-mail address. Please send your articles, questions, and comments to: DOINewswave@ios.doi.gov.

Announcements and Upcoming Meetings of Interest:

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee, Sept. 9-11, Anchorage, AK. Attendance at the meeting is open to any interested individuals, and there are two public comment periods scheduled. The meeting agenda can be found at www.mpa.gov. Contact Lauren Wenzel with any questions: Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov, (301) 563-1136.

2009 International Coastal Cleanup, Sept. 19 at a beach near you. Last year, nearly 400,000 volunteers collected more than 6.8 million pounds of trash in 104 countries and 42 U.S. states. To find a cleanup near you visit: www.oceanconservancy.org.

22nd U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting, Oct. 30-Nov. 5, San Juan, Puerto Rico. The meeting will include a public business meeting and public workshops on recreational stewardship, restoration of *Montastrea* and *Acropora* corals, watershed partnerships, coral bleaching, and socioeconomic assessments. For more information go to: <http://coralreef.gov>.



To access the DOI Ocean and Coastal calendar, click the attachments tab at the left of the Adobe pdf. If you have events to add to the calendar, send them to terry_holman@ios.doi.gov.



Click on the links above to learn more about the ocean and coastal activities at DOI bureaus.