PANEL: Embedded Librarianship

COMMUNICATING SPILL SCIENCE: COAST AT THE GULF COAST RESEARCH LABORATORY (GCRL)

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Abstract:
COAST (Community Outreach for Accurate Science Translation) is a project developed by the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory’s Marine Education Center to serve as the public outreach component of an EPA grant “Uptake and Effects of Dispersed Oil Droplets and Emulsified Oil by Estuarine Crustaceans in the Gulf of Mexico” shared by Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, GCRL, and the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. The mission of the COAST team is to enhance public understanding of the effects of the Deepwater Horizon 2010 oil spill and to build trust in the process of science by engaging a group of citizens to work with the researchers. Team members learn the biological processes that govern how and where spill and clean-up products make their way into the food chain as they learn the steps involved in conducting the research and work with researchers to complete some of those steps. The team is drawn from the oil-affected area along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and includes commercial and recreational fishers, community volunteers, staff members from state and federal agencies, college students, master naturalists, and teachers. There are also two GCRL “Advisors, the website developer and the head librarian. This is the first example of an “embedded librarian” at GCRL.

Keywords: Community outreach, marine education EPA, crustaceans, oil spill, Deepwater Horizon, Mississippi.