

NOAA REPORT



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Surf the Web for Beach Temps: Before you surf the waves at the beach this summer, surf the Internet to find out just how warm or cold the ocean water might be.

NOAA's National Oceanographic Data Center has now put average water temperatures for the country's beaches on line, to provide useful information for planning beach activities such as swimming, fishing or surfing. The data can be found on the Internet at <http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/NODC-WNew/wtg.shtml>

News Briefs

NMFS Calls for No-Net-Loss for Columbia Basin Irrigation: A proposal to build an irrigation intake in Oregon along the Columbia River would add to the already unacceptably high volume of water being withdrawn from the river, NMFS officials said last month. This would jeopardize several stocks of Snake River salmon protected under the Endangered Species Act, they added.

In a biological opinion it recently signed, NMFS said the Army Corps of Engineers could not issue a permit to Inland Land Corp. to construct a 196 million gallons per day intake pipe at John Day Reservoir.

"The whole system is already overloaded," said William Stelle, NMFS Northwest region chief. "Without fully offsetting new water withdrawals so there is no net loss from the river, we simply can't allow additional water to be removed from the Columbia River." ☺



In Hytop, Ala., the newest NEXRAD weather radar site is crowned, completing the installation of the state-of-the-art network.

Ala. Dome Raising Completes Weather Radar Network

A special "Dome Raising" ceremony heralded the installation of the National Weather Service's newest Doppler radar at Hytop, Ala., thus completing the network of state-of-the-art weather radars across the southern United States.

On hand to celebrate the system's dedication during a picture perfect Spring day were Congressman Bud Cramer of Alabama, Congressman Zach Wamp of Tennessee, and Lou Boezi, NWS Deputy Director for

continued on page 3

Great American Fish Count Needs Volunteers

Fish Count to Add to Scientific Knowledge

If counting sheep puts you to sleep in no time, you've got some of the skills NOAA needs for you to count fish—and help out in an important ecological cause.

The Great American Fish Count takes place over a two-week period each year from July 1 through July 14, using a network of volunteers to provide ongoing documentation of fish diversity and population trends. The information gathered by volunteers is then made available to the scientific community. Scientists from NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program are among the users of this data. Divers and snorkelers will concentrate their fish-sighting efforts in National Marine Sanctuary communities.

"I'm here today to challenge divers to get in the water with me and help count fish," said renowned marine explorer and scientist Jean-Michel Cousteau. "The Great American Fish Count is an excellent way for divers and snorkelers to put their skills to use for an important cause. This is an exciting opportunity to learn more about our local underwater wildlife and at the same time participate in an important environmental benchmarking effort."

The Great American Fish Count was started in 1992 in southern California by Channel Islands National Sanctuary biologists, who were accompanied by 50 volunteers, as a way to encourage divers to report fish sightings. Year-round fish sighting activities are conducted by the Reef Environmental Education Foundation, which will coordinate the data gathering efforts of the Great American Fish Count and

make the information available to scientists on its website.



Volunteers who wish to participate in Great American Fish Count activities must receive training in fish identification and survey methods. For a nominal fee divers will receive the training, the necessary survey materials and a national Great American Fish Count t-shirt. Fish count seminars will be held this month in California, Florida and Texas. For locations and more information, contact the Marine Conservation Network on the Pacific coast (510-838-2544) or the Reef Environmental Education Foundation on the south Atlantic and Gulf coasts (305-451-0312). ☺

NOAA's TWA Disaster Team Efforts Recognized in New York

At its fifth annual Night of Heroes at New York's India House, the Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey honored NOAA for its role in the TWA Flight 800 disaster search and recovery efforts last year. The event highlights the accomplishments of average Americans, thrust by circumstances into perilous situations, who exhibit heroism and concern for their fellow man.

According a program distributed during the April 8 event, "The maritime industry presents them as role models at a time when traditional entertainment, political and sports heroes have let us down in the areas of integrity, class and character." ☺



Len Butler (left) of the Maritime Association of the Port of NY & NJ presents NOAA representative Cmdr. Sam De Bow of the NOAA Corps with the association's heroism award. De Bow was commanding officer of the NOAA ship Rude, which located the major aircraft wreckage within 24 hours of the crash.

Commerce Honors Management Innovation

April 21 was Management Change Day in Commerce, a day to look back at and honor successes as NOAA and all Federal agencies continue to rethink how they do business, using technology to improve management.

Future issues of NOAA Report will highlight ways technology is allowing NOAA to fulfill its responsibilities more efficiently than ever before. ☺



One of the exhibits at Management Change Day was for the NOAA Franchise Program, which will make administrative services available for a fee to Commerce and other Federal agencies.

Hundreds Celebrate NEXRAD Dome Raising, Completing the National Weather Radio Network

continued from page 3

Modernization. Joining them were meteorologists in charge of the NWS forecast offices that will use the Doppler data in their mission of protecting life and property from severe weather: Gary Petti of the NWS forecast office in Birmingham, Jerry McDuffie of Knoxville/Tri-Cities, and Nashville's Derrel Martin.

"National Weather Service Day"

Proclamations declaring the date "National Weather Service Day" were delivered by representatives of Alabama's Governor Fob James. The Emergency Management Coordinator for Jackson County, Jim McCamy, served as host of the event, which also featured many other local officials and special guests. The nationally acclaimed Scottsboro High School Band gave the event a festive air by playing a wide selection of patriotic songs.

At precisely 12:30 p.m. the crowd of more than 250 watched as the radar's huge protective dome was flawlessly placed atop its 90-meter tower.

The radar, constructed after Commerce Department officials and the Clinton Administration agreed with local residents and officials regarding the need for an additional Doppler facility, is expected to be fully operational this summer. It will provide much needed supplementary weather radar coverage to areas of northern Alabama, southeast Tennessee and northwest Georgia.

—Robert
Chartuk and
Chris Smith ☺



An audience of more than 250 looks on as the radome is lowered atop the last NEXRAD radar to be installed in the South.

Focus On...

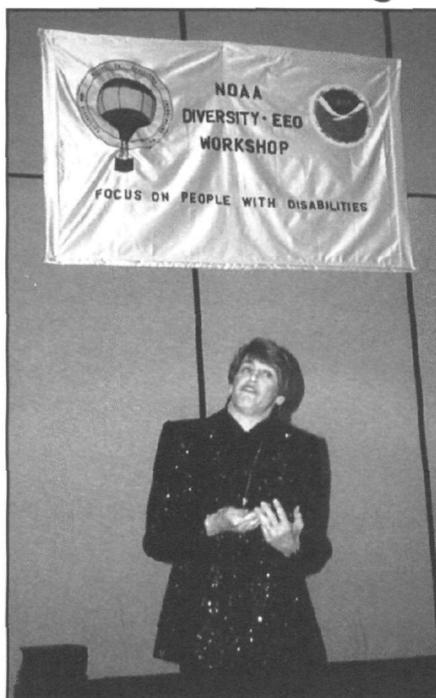
Diversity in NOAA

Disability Workshop Becomes a Meeting of Minds

NOAA employees from across the Nation joined to attend the NOAA Workshop for People with Disabilities in late March. This NOAA-wide conference was a continuation of a series originally sponsored by the National Weather Service. Previous workshops addressed concerns of women, African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic employees.

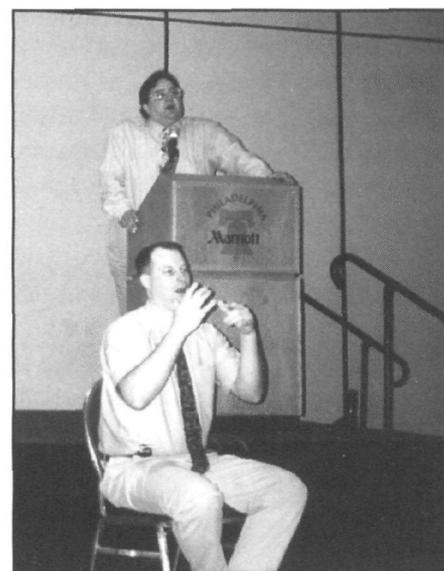
Technology was the focus of the first formal reception. A large gathering listened to a diverse array of adaptive computer hardware and software vendors, as well as advocacy organizations. Co-chairs Betty Dodds and Holly Turri introduced plenary session speakers. Keynote presenter Richard Penmentel, a prominent public speaker and senior partner at Milt Wright & Associates, received rousing applause and a standing ovation following his entertaining and enlightening positive history of and future trends for Americans who are disabled. Luncheon participants learned practical strategies for hiring, integrating, and advancing staff individuals from Dick Sheppard, representing the President's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities; Carolyn Lopez-Dematteo, Administrative Services Division, OFA; and, Henry Frey, National Oceanic Data Center, NESDIS.

Five working group sessions dealt with such topics as mentoring, career



Comedian and actress Geri Jewell, herself disabled, appeared at the workshop.

advancement, adaptive technology, the spectrum of disabilities, access laws/regulations, reasonable accommodation and program/facility accessibility. The group discussions were organized and facilitated by Working Group Chairs Deanne Bengston, OAR; Al Corea, OFA; Betty Dodds, NWS; Valarie S. Hackman, NOS; Dr. Caroline Preston, NMFS; Robert A. Robie, NESDIS; Iris A. Shockley, SAO; Holly Turri, OFA; James F. Wantz, NWS; and Carol A. Werner, OAR. Specific recognition is due to those who provided valuable travel assistance and coordinated personal accommodations for those with



Richard Pinmentel, the workshop's keynote presenter (at podium) had his presentation signed for the hearing impaired.

special needs: Necolle Mayhew-Eimas, NWS; and Michelle Moore, OFA.

On a lighter note, actress/comedian Geri Jewell's touchingly funny and empathetic banquet presentation was the perfect climax to three days of learning, growing, and creating. Jewell, who has cerebral palsy, is a nationally touring performer.

Focus groups concentrated on the excellent ideas exchanged in a recommendation creation forum. A draft report developed from these focus groups was presented at the closing session; the final report will be available later this spring.

"This is the first workshop of its
continued on page 7

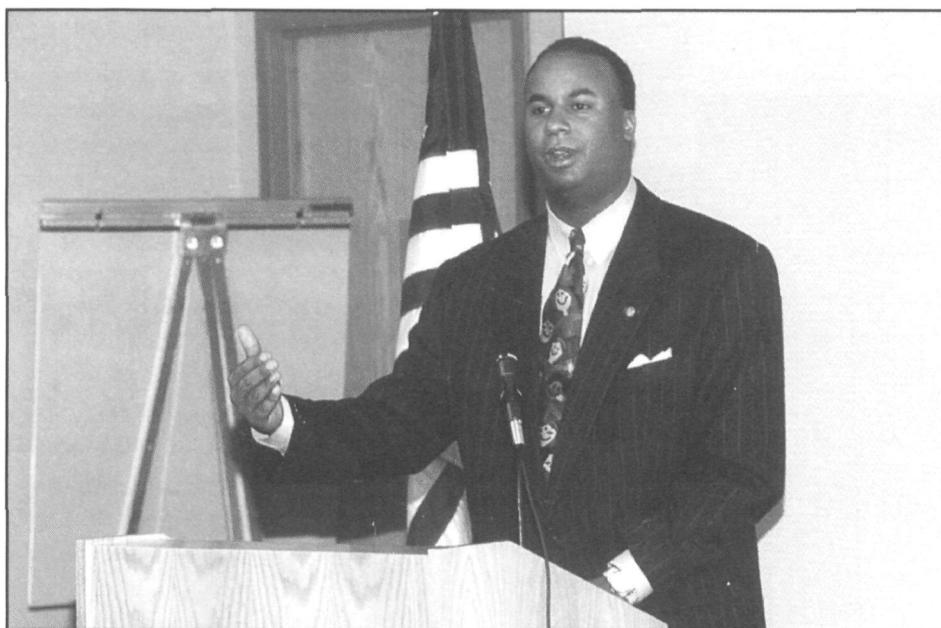
NWS Sponsors King Awards for Students

In commemoration of Black History Month earlier this year, the National Weather Service sponsored the fourth annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest and awards ceremony. This contest included an essay that focused on the theme "Americans and Civil Rights." An awards ceremony to recognize the 11 student winners was held at NWS headquarters in Silver Spring, Md.

"These students represent the best qualities of our youth today, and all of us here at the Weather Service are impressed with their enthusiasm and their vision for tomorrow. We are hoping that many of them will consider future employment with



Barbara Tobe, NWS program manager (far left) and Michael Brown (back row, right) and the 11 student winners of the fourth annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest. They include (front row, left to right), Ronnie Gorham, Marwa Rasheed, Britney McCoy, Erica Johnson, Lauren Vonderpool, Yodit Tuquabo, Shannon Edwards, Kristy Smith, and Kimberly Reyes; (back row, left to right) James Kelly and Nolen Wren.



Michael Brown, son of the late Commerce Secretary and president of the Ronald H. Brown Foundation, was the feature speaker at the event.

NOAA or the NWS," said Barbara Tobe, NWS African American program manager.

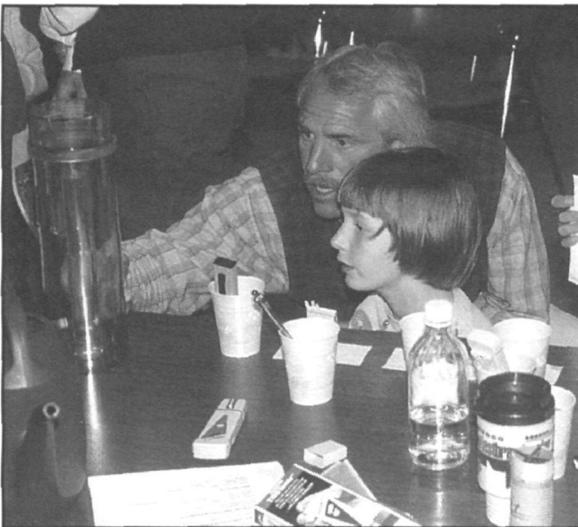
This year, the National Weather Service awarded over \$1,000 in U.S. Savings Bonds to the 11 winners. Each essay was to be a maximum of three typewritten pages. A panel of NOAA employees judged the essays.

Dr. Elbert W. Friday, assistant administrator for weather services, was one of the keynote speakers at the event. He encouraged students to continue their work toward understanding the history of civil rights, emphasizing his own commitment to promoting diversity within NWS.

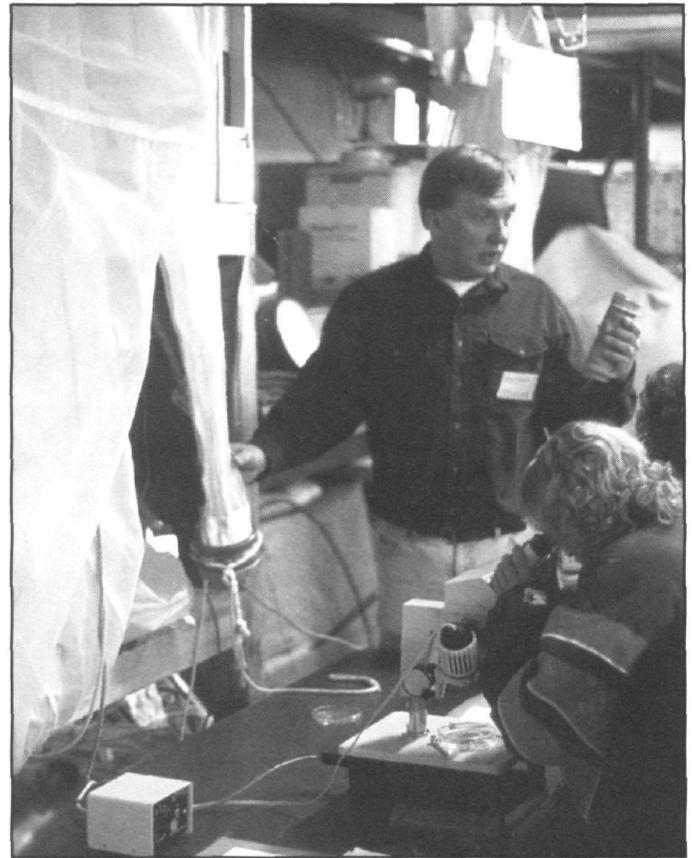
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Earth Day... and Other Events

As an environmental agency, NOAA usually does itself proud every Earth Day, holding open houses, exhibits and other events, both in the Washington area and around the country. Here's a sampling of NOAA Earth Day celebrations in the field, as well as a new look at another special day. ☺



NOAA's Boulder labs did a different take on a new tradition this year. Here, a NOAA scientist shows off his knowledge on *Bring Your Child to Work Day*, a spinoff of *Take Our Daughters to Work Day*.



Foodwebs, exotic species, lake bottom mapping displays, and views of the Great Lakes from space were featured during Earth Day open house events at the Lake Michigan Field Station (LMFS), Muskegon, Michigan. Here, Gary Fahnenstiel (above), a scientist at LMFS, describes Lake Michigan foodwebs and sampling gear for visiting Muskegon students. The facility supports lab and vessel operations on the lake by NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The field station exhibits were open to the general public in mid-April. LMFS/GLERL hosted a series of class tours for students from Muskegon-area schools.



Personnel from NOAA's Aeronomy Laboratory in Boulder, Colo., participate in Earth Day activities at the Earth Day Community Fair in Evergreen, Colo.

La. Recommits to Saving Coastal Wetlands

Louisiana Governor Mike Foster recommitted his state to saving its coastal wetlands, which are receding at a rate of more than 25 square miles a year, at a May Day ceremony in Baton Rouge.

Rolland Schmitten, NOAA's assistant administrator for fisheries, who attended the event, applauded Foster's actions.

In his remarks to the audience, Schmitten agreed with Foster that these essential wetlands habitats were important to future generations of fishermen and hunters - and everyone who would benefit from healthy essential marine habitat.

"Louisiana is faced with a challenge greater than perhaps anywhere else in the country...the preservation of its coastal wetlands which is very much a foundation of the culture, the history and, in a very important way, the future of the state," Schmitten told the audience.

The governor spoke to an audience of environmentalists, federal and state wetlands restoration partners, and the general public who filled the Louisiana Old Statehouse auditorium, telling them as a hunter and fisherman he had always taken a personal interest in Louisiana's coast.

Foster also told the audience that his administration was committed,

Disabilities Workshop

continued from page 4

kind where constructive ideas were discussed that can be put into practice immediately," said Dr. Thomas Potter, Director, NWS Western Region, who believes the workshop was a positive experience.

Practical, cost effective solutions to employee questions brought realiza-



A barge-mounted drag line crane transports limestone rock from the loading barge to an articulated dump truck on shore. Approximately 13,000 tons of rock were used to help protect 250 acres of Louisiana wetlands.

despite a lean budget year, to participating in programs to save and restore crucial wetlands and barrier islands that protect cities and towns and provide homes for fish and animals.

Louisiana contains approximately 80 percent of the continental U.S. wetlands that are important habitat for marine fisheries. Commercial fishing in Louisiana exceeded \$290 million in 1995. The state's commercial fishing industry creates 90,000 jobs in the economy. For recreational

continued on page 8

tion to the workshop's vision statement, "To nourish and support a workplace where our diversities become our strengths and our strengths become our successes by replacing negatives of ignorance and indifference with positives of understanding and involvement, so that we may move forward in accomplishing NOAA's mission." ☺

King Awards

continued from page 5

"They forget that children were on the front lines of the movement," one student wrote. "Students were the ones who integrated the schools, which was one of the major steps in the civil rights movement." Another student highlighted the contributions of women and other minorities to the civil rights movement.

Michael Brown, son of the late Secretary of Commerce and president of the Ronald H. Brown Foundation, was the feature speaker at the event. "These students are an example to every single one of us. By recognizing the contributions that people have made to the Civil Rights movement, these students have shown us their commitment to diversity. I am encouraged that my country is in the hands of these future leaders."

—Paul Kinville ☺

Louisiana Recommits to Saving its Wetlands

continued from page 7

fishing, more than 900,000 people spent \$600 million fishing in Louisiana's waters, supporting another 18,000 jobs.

Stating he was proud to participate in the May Day event, Schmitt said, "Through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act, better known as the Breaux Act in honor of Louisiana Senator John Breaux, along with other state and Federal programs, I would like to state the commitment of the National Marine Fisheries Service to working with Louisiana on the preservation and restoration of its coastal wetlands."

Approximately \$130 million in Breaux Act fund are targeted for current or future restoration and preservation projects in Louisiana.

Pacific Americans, Asians Feted at DOC

May was Asian Pacific American Heritage Month at Commerce and NOAA, and a special program held in the Commerce Department lobby helped kick off the celebration, while emphasizing the Clinton Administration's commitment to diversity.

Many NOAA employees spoke during the May 1 program, voicing their praise of Commerce's diversity initiative. Weather Service employee Nancy Huang, chief information officer and part of the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Planning Committee, observed, "Diversity, to me, is not about race or religion. It is not about defining what makes one person different from another. It is about recognizing the different strengths and talents of all the individuals within Commerce to make a more productive team."

—Paul Kinville



A tracked backhoe tamps stone in place over a two-layer bed of filter cloth and geogrid material. The filter cloth is used to keep sand from washing away from underneath the structure, while the geogrid provides a firm foundation for the rock.

The fisheries service has projects totaling \$40 million in construction or planning this year. One recently completed project on Point au Fer island, a barrier island south of New Orleans, repaired damaged coastline along an abandoned canal that had been used for oil production. Erosion and storms had narrowed the beach to a thin strip that had been broached, causing salt water to begin entering coastal wetlands behind the canal.

The fisheries service has recently made the protection of coastal habitats a top priority for the agency. This priority is documented in its recently released National Habitat Plan which identifies specific actions which the fisheries service will take in the area of protection, restoration, research and improved outreach. The priority is also firmly documented in the Essential Fish Habitat provision of the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act signed into law last year.

"Our involvement in the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act program is a visible demonstration of our commitment to saving our coastal habitats,"

Schmitt said. "An important lesson we all have learned in recent years is that only a cooperative, and very concerted, effort of state and Federal agencies working with the public can have any real chance of success in coastal restoration. The fate and extent of our coastal wetlands in the next century will depend on the actions we take today."

—Gordon Helm

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