

**General Meeting Notes**  
**Southern Association of Marine Laboratories**  
**2009 Annual Meeting**  
**27-29 March 2009**

**28 March 2009**  
**Estuarine Research Center**  
**Morgan State University**  
**10545 MacKall Road**  
**St. Leonard, MD. 20685**  
**(Local Host: Kelly Clark)**

**29 March 2009**  
**Smithsonian Environmental Research**  
**Center**  
**647 Contees Wharf Road**  
**Edgewater, MD 21037**  
**(Local Host: Tuck Hines)**

**28 March 2009**

**Introductions and Welcome – W. Tunnell and K. Clark**

**SAML Laboratory Updates – All Directors (3 min each)**

<b>Nancy N. Rabalais</b>	<b>Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium</b>
<b>Sylvia B. Galloway</b>	<b>NOAA/NOS/NCCOS/CCEHBR</b>
	No report.
<b>Roger Zimmerman</b>	<b>NOAA Fisheries Galveston Laboratory</b>
	New SEFC Director Bonnie Ponwith
<b>Carl H. (Woody) Hobbs, III</b>	<b>Virginia Institute of Marine Science</b>
<b>Robert Hueter</b>	<b>Mote Marine Laboratory</b>
<b>James G. Sanders</b>	<b>Skidaway Institute of Oceanography</b>
<b>William E. Hawkins</b>	<b>Gulf Coast Research Laboratory</b>
<b>Steve Jordan</b>	<b>USEPA, Gulf Ecology Division</b>
	Research lab strictly; budget down due to salary increases and decreased funding; have good student contractor program; physical plant, full recovery from storm damage; personnel 63 FTE; lost 12 over past few years mostly administrative personnel.
<b>John W. (Wes) Tunnell, Jr.</b>	<b>Texas A&amp;M University-Corpus Christi</b> <b>Harte Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies and Center for Coastal Studies</b>
	Wes resigned from the Center for Coastal Studies; special item funding has declined steadily; hired the 6 <sup>th</sup> endowed chair at HRI (Economics); running on endowment that has been declining; Harte Inst. book series on the Gulf of Mexico coast is of general interest...have 15 titles in the book series; have new book series

	named after Harte Inst. -- science based series focused on Gulf of Mexico; Larry McKinney Director of Harte Inst.
<b>Kelton Clark</b>	<b>Morgan State University Estuarine Research Center</b>
	Budget cuts led to furloughs; phytoplankton biomonitoring program is in danger of being cut. EPA not interested anymore; no changes in physical plant; research oyster hatchery—work with local watermen; construction of oyster hatchery facility and will hire 3 persons; full time education coordinator hired in past year; increase of 3 to 20 groups visiting supporting 3-10 interns; initiating environmental track in biology program on main campus; need to develop student housing.
<b>Anson (Tuck) Hines</b>	<b>Smithsonian Environmental Research Center</b>
<b>Joel Thompson</b>	<b>Galbraith Marine Science Laboratory Eckerd College</b>
<b>John Rummel</b>	<b>East Carolina University</b>
<b>Eric R. Lacy</b>	<b>Marine Biomedicine and Environmental Sciences Center Oceans and Human Health Training Program Medical University of South Carolina</b>
	Completed another 15K sqft addition to HML; marine genomics endowed chair search on; loss of faculty (3) thus in rebuilding mode; have OHH training grant to develop new curriculum in ocean human health; working with Matt Gilligan on minority educational programs.
<b>Jim Morris</b>	<b>Belle W. Baruch Institute for Marine &amp; Coastal Sciences</b>
	Cut of 20% state budget; institute is level funded; not able to replace folks who retire; lab about to open a new building that will house NERRs central data management system, classroom.
<b>Beth Ebersole</b>	<b>Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine</b>
	Research Reserve in Maryland (CBNERR-MD)
<b>Ray Highsmith</b>	<b>The University of Mississippi</b>
	National Institute for Undersea Science & Technology
	Unable to attend.
<b>Dennis Hanisak</b>	<b>Florida Atlantic University</b>
	Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute
	Became part of state university system; received \$ for demolition and some construction due to hurricane impacts; renovating one building and constructing a new one; recurring allocation down 3x due to poor Florida economy; marine environmental health big program; education program via FAU; have satellite high school on campus...20% of their science courses are taught by Harbor Branch scientists; ship in the Pacific; down to one ship (used to have 3).
<b>Lou Burnett</b>	<b>Grice Marine Laboratory College of Charleston and HML</b>
	Lost couple faculty but have 2 searches going, marine genomics and bioinformatics; in the final stages for renovating our oldest building

	that provides housing for visiting scientists and students; have new building in final planning stages and is highest priority for CoC president; have long-term summer student program still ongoing integrating marine genomics and OHH focus; blue crabs and shrimp walking tread mills; Hollings marine laboratory director retired (Fred Holland) –search for new director, unsuccessful; new wing will open soon, budget level; reinvigorated the genomics core facility and NMR facility is working well; looking at developing proteomics core.
<b>Bob Van Dolah</b>	<b>Marine Resources Research Institute</b>
	Significant budget cuts; finished 2\$KK renovation of serious facilities damage; got \$5kk for repairs that will give a energy efficiency boost; hired 2 new staff; advertising for a fishery ecologist; MARMAP hiring associate scientist.

**Internal Issue I: Hurricane Ike – SAML Disaster Relief**

Discussion led by: Nancy Rabalais, Roger Zimmerman

Wes drew upon the draft document that Kelly put together.

Nancy provided 2 staff with repair \$ from SAML...roofing and driveway repair to access house; made huge difference to the staff who received funds; were there hard feelings from other staff; Nancy made unilateral decision; \$2kk SAML send a check to Director who deposited to the personal account and dispersed to staff for repairs with 2 checks.

Roger did same \$2k dispersed to 4 staff 4 checks; consulted 2 division chiefs; good will from other labs was greatly appreciated; Galveston Lab was spared water damage...able to bring into operation quickly and provide a base for staff to work out of...able to serve as base for supplies being brought in for the staff...source of communication network; emergency power not operable due to natural gas being cut off...need transfer switches to plug in portable generators; had damage to culture facility- NOAA provided funding for repair/upgrade.

Nancy indicated that without A/C lot of equipment was ruined due to heat/humidity.

Woody indicated that there is a Chesapeake Bay-wide plan to monitor the health of the Bay...trigger event monitoring before and after designed into plan.

Bob indicated that research vessels were used to house staff that lost homes.

Steve indicated that his lab has a designated recovery team that can access the lab by boat

Roger indicated that it is important to have a designated site for administrative activities; suggested that labs partner to make this type of facility available to each other.

Bill Hawkins indicated he thinks that being able to assure staff that they have a job no matter what the level of damage, is very important; be prepared for latent effects to equipment; gave insight into how FEMA operates in dealing with damage to buildings/vehicles.

Bill Seitz consulted with the graduate student association for advice on how to distribute SAML disaster funds.

**Internal Issue II: Operating Marine Labs in Tight Economic Times**

Discussion led by: Nancy Rabalais, Kumar Mahadevan, Bob Van Dolah

Bob made a PowerPoint presentation; budget reduction approach – status 42% of 2000 budget currently; freeze new hires and job actions (raises, promotions, no COLA); forced reallocation of staff to support grant activities; freeze on travel; suspended equipment purchases

and service contracts; freeze on budget; increased effort to obtain external funding; looking for alternative funding sources outside state resources; Bob suggested that you need to consider what is mission critical thus in seeking new funding, an increase in grants may take you away from mission critical goals.

Coping with storm recovery, Nancy mentioned other items: received \$10kk with \$3.1kk from state \$3.3kk external funds, rest from revenues; Slush fund has decreased...since Katrina have less beds available for rental; big cost is energy overruns; considered getting rid of one security guards...but have people on site that have to be cared for in case of fire alarm; developed a furlough scheme based on pay; able to generate funds from the ships – if staff has activity associated with ship going to pay from this fund; drop subscriptions for library, may even get rid of library; got rid of special water resources; Bob suggested an energy audit...biggest expenditure was fluorescent lighting; deleted science writer position, thus putting additional burden on staff; renting space – never did previously; downsizing or getting rid of programs; can add surcharge related to fuel costs on boat rentals;

Kumar --\$23kk down to \$20kk this year...25% of budget from donations, endowments (loss of \$4kk over year from \$11kk endowment)...25% of income from aquarium...usually generates excess revenue, but attendance is down due to reduction in tourism; 50% research grants and contracts...indirect cost recovery-if reduce this source it has a big impact on whole operation; trying to increase the number of volunteer hours to accomplish tasks without expending funds;

Bill Hawkins suggested that retirements with reemployment at 50% effort assists in cutting costs and retains talent.

### **Internal Issue III: New NAML Direction/Update**

Discussion led by: Jim Sanders

Jim gave overview of NAML; about 6 years ago a group of Directors laid out a plan to set goals for NAML; Joel Witter was hired to assist in the planning process; started getting the attention of the critical government agencies and Congress relative to needs of Marine Laboratories; see Jim's overview (Public Policy Agenda) he sent out prior to winter meeting...actually revised version was sent ~1 week ago. Having a legislative liaison really helped NAML; prepared white paper for the new administration. NAML brings a lot of Congressional districts to the table...many challenges ahead of NAML. We have spent ~\$100k per year to get the ear of the staffers. NAML can't afford to continue this type of expenditure. Annual dues bring in ~\$85-100k, so we are short. Dues structure is too complicated...NAML board has developed new structure and will dictate the dues to each Lab...NAML is too small to raise \$125k. Jim recommended to NAML board they suspend the Lewis-Burke contract in June and it was agreed to do this. The question is what do we want to do at the National level; Joel Witter has left Lewis-Burke. Sea Grant Association (SGA) also let Lewis-Burke go due to miscommunication with Shelby's staff. The question is does NAML want to be a player in Marine Public Policy decisions? Should NAML join in partnership with other like-minded groups to form a super-group? One logical partner is Ocean Leadership; Jim thought SGA was interested in being a partner, but they have gone to another contract. Tuck suggested that Ecological Research Centers Policy is set for the year, but we need to consider seriously how to proceed in the future. Jim encouraged all Directors to join the Public Policy calls. OBFS was preparing a submission describing the needs of field stations. What should marine labs look like in the future? What should the mission be for future marine labs?

Another issue- secretary and treasurer is voluntary service...includes website management; Allen is not a Director so website management is not really up to date. Need email-lists manager as well as a website manager, but it is essential to communication within NAML. President's keep the lists updated and send to Allen. Nancy suggested that Lumcon could take on the Website and email lists. Bob thinks that the activity should remain with the President-elect but just for SAML. Another issue is the dues lists. Bob thinks some of NAML dues should go to support the updating of website and email lists. Lou suggested that we need to institutionalize how lists are maintained and how website is managed. Critical that NAML make a decision on how important our presence in Washington is...and if needed how do we make it happen. Jim says that NAML has ~\$50k available for advocacy.

## **Tour of Facility at Morgan State U ERC**

**29 March 2009**

### **External Issue I:**

#### **a) Coastal Land Use/Land Change – Sam Brody**

Focus on Florida & Texas coasts; Florida and Texas contrast in their coastal planning; characteristics of land use change – population growth, increased impervious surface, wetland alteration; sprawling development patterns; intensity, change and pattern. Sam showed a ten year chart plotting of Florida permits to alter wetland, year by year and cumulative effect (intensity). He also showed a similar plot for Texas. He described the type of permits requested – estuarine, lacustrine, marine, riverine (location); Described consequences of land use change: loss water quality/quantity; loss air quality; fragmentation and loss of critical habitat; loss of ecosystem integrity; increased risk human exposure to risk from natural hazards, storm surge, wind damage, flooding. Conclusion is that alteration of naturally occurring wetlands a major factor in flooding...cumulative loss both large and small changes. Showed a plot of social vulnerability based on urban sprawl...model impact of storm effects overlayed on socially vulnerable areas. Discussed policy implications: avoid floodplain, increase non-structural mitigation (buffers, setbacks etc), sprawl reduction policies. Discussed several planning techniques. <http://epsru.tamu.edu> projects and papers available.

#### **b) Lessons and Opportunities for**

##### **Site Protection: SERC's 45-yr Experience – Tuck Hines**

Focus on land-sea interaction. Large scale long term study of Chesapeake Bay ecosystems, watersheds and landscapes. Robert Lee Forrest bequeathed 368 acre to Smithsonian along with funds. Increased acreage over years – 2650 acres (donations, life estates, purchases). Watershed concerns...discussed how public programs such as leased bottom impact their site; face conflicts in land-water use management/conservation versus community/public uses. Work with state and local strategies for land management.

Tour of SERC