



Coastal and Environmental Research Program Update – Summer 2010

LEADING A SUPER-REGIONAL MODELING TEST-BED

SURA received the official contract from NOAA on June 10, 2010 for our one-year, \$4M Project, “**A Super-Regional Testbed to Improve Models of Environmental Processes on the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Coasts.**” The approved start date is retroactive to June 1, 2010, and SURA has issued subcontract agreements to our test bed partners. The kickoff meeting of all test-bed participants and other Federal partners was held June 23-24, 2010 at SURA HQ with over sixty five scientists in attendance.

The goal of this activity is to create a multi-disciplinary, community-based modeling test-bed that facilitates improved coastal ocean prediction and leads to improved, science-based decision-making. The test-bed will allow scientists to share models, observations, and tools needed to elucidate, prioritize, and, ultimately, link models so they can be evaluated in an interoperable environment. The specific objectives include improving and evaluating models already in operational use within the Atlantic and Gulf Coast super-region, assessing system performance, and facilitating the transition of models from research to operations. Pilot testbed projects will address three recurrent issues within the super region: (1) *coastal inundation*; (2) *estuarine hypoxia*; and (3) *shelf hypoxia*. An overarching theme will involve the design and implementation of cyber infrastructure (CI) to support the three coastal themes. It is intended that five related objectives will be achieved in the *first year*: (1) develop skill assessment tools and performance metrics to enable modelers to improve prediction of key coastal processes; (2) develop an overarching cyber infrastructure to support multiple model testbed activities; (3) plan and conduct pilot testbed projects that address inundation and hypoxia; (4) as a demonstration of the pilot testbed, define and transition, into a federal operational facility one or more models, tools or toolkits to predict acute or chronic environmental conditions and (5) in collaboration with federal partners, develop protocols to evaluate the feasibility, costs and benefits of improving existing operational capabilities and transitioning new models into operational facilities. From the outset, an unstated goal was for this project to become a showcase for federal-academia-industry collaboration. As the team has come together, it now appears that we are well on track to realizing that goal. The project involves 20 universities, 11 federal centers and programs and 2 private corporations.

Since the June kickoff meeting, the modeling teams and cyberinfrastructure team have all met via teleconference a number of times to coordinate their activities. SURA is providing overall project coordination and facilitation, and conducts monthly conferences among the project team leaders and members of the Testbed Advisory and Evaluation Group. A dedicated SURA server has been set up at LSU and a web site has been created to facilitate communication and information exchange: <http://testbed.sura.org>.



SURA is exploring funding opportunities for sustaining this important modeling testbed, and will be sending invitations for participation when the appropriate funding vehicle has been identified.

LUIS BERMUDEZ and SURA IT TRANSITIONS

Luis Bermudez departed SURA to take a new position at the Open Geospatial Consortium beginning August 1, 2010. We are very sorry to lose Luis but we are pleased that this represents a positive career move for him. Effective August 1, Linda Akli, SURA's Manager for IT Applications & Outreach, assumed Luis's duties within the testbed project. Gary Crane, SURA's Director of Information Technology will assist with guidance and oversight. The transition of duties has already begun and we expect the staffing change to have no negative impact on the testbed project. Linda and Gary will continue to facilitate communications between the CI team and the other teams and will ensure that the SURA server and web services function smoothly.

COASTAL PROGRAM MANAGER

Elizabeth Smith officially began working as SURA's Coastal Program Manager on June 15. Liz was previously Principle Investigator and Project Coordinator for the Chesapeake Inundation Prediction System and Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Observing System based at Old Dominion University. She received her B.S. in Marine Science from the University of South Carolina in 1982 and her M.Sc. in Physical Oceanography from Florida State University in 1987.

Joanne Bintz

Sadly, our friend and colleague, Dr. Joanne Bintz, SURA's former Coastal Program Manager, lost her valiant battle with cancer and passed away on June 28. Those who knew Joanne, knew her to be an exceptional team builder and communicator and a delightful, caring and insightful person. Since October of last year, Joanne had been at the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL) where she continued to serve the ocean sciences within the OOI project office. Joanne's untimely passing is a tragic loss for the coastal and ocean science community and for all of her many friends and family. Joanne received her B.S. in Oceanography from Florida Institute of Technology in 1995 and her PhD in Biological Oceanography from the University of Rhode Island in 2002. Prior to coming to SURA in 2004, Joanne spent three years as a Program Officer with the Ocean Studies Board of the National Research Council in Washington. During that period, she received the National Academies Award of Professional Excellence in 2004.

For more information about the Super-Regional Modeling Test-bed or other SURA Coastal and Environmental Research Projects please contact Don Wright (wright@sura.org) or Elizabeth (Liz) Smith (lsmith@sura.org)