

## **SEACURE CHARTER:**

### **NOAA UNDERSEA RESEARCH CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT WILMINGTON**

#### ***SOUTHEAST ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR UNDERSEA RESEARCH & EDUCATION (SEACURE)***

Andrew Shepard, Director, NURC at UNCW, Southeast and Gulf of Mexico Regions  
Thomas Potts, Associate Director (S. Atlantic Bight and Gulf of Mexico)  
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#### **NEW NURC/UNCW ADVISORY BOARD:**

The NOAA Undersea Research Center at UNCW (NURC) began as a consortium of experts from institutions across the southeast region. The consortium also served as an advisory board, providing advice to the center and the NOAA Undersea Research Program on regional priority issues, technology developments, and future directions. From 1982 to 1995, NURP funding doubled and the center grew by 400 percent. The advisory board helped this growth. When NURP funding was significantly reduced in 1996, the center terminated its advisory board.

As part of the center's new strategic plan for 2005-2010, the **SouthEast Advisory Council for Undersea Research and Education (SEACURE)** will be reformed to primarily serve the mission of **advocacy and promotion of undersea research and education, and their importance to the regional and national ocean science and education agenda.** SEACURE will include:

- Science, technology, and education experts (voting members) from states across the southeast region;
- Regional NOAA sanctuary representatives (non-voting, ex-officio); and
- Regional Fishery Management Council representatives (non-voting, ex-officio).

The council will accomplish its mission through information and advocacy. Following are the main elements of SEACURE and its annual schedule, including:

- Membership
- Annual Meeting
- Advocacy Briefings
- Web Site

#### **Membership:**

##### Ex-Officio Sanctuary Partners:

Several recent national panels recommend using a regional approach to carry out the ocean agenda. The Ocean Commission report and NRC report on Sustained Ocean Observations, for example, reinforce the advantages of regional coordination and advice for implementing a coordinated, nationwide Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). The National Marine Sanctuary program is similarly pursuing a regional structure to increase the connectivity and relevance of its sanctuaries to the regional seascapes in which they reside. Billy Causey will be regional superintendent for the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean and

Southeast regions. We will ask Mr. Causey and other regional sanctuary representatives to attend SEACURE meetings as non-voting, ex-officio members and to review resulting plans and recommendations.

### Ex-Officio Fishery Management Council (FMC) Partners:

Another major partner and stakeholder in NURP and NOAA research are the regional Fishery Management Councils in the Gulf of Mexico and Southeast (US east coast, NC-FL). Representatives from both councils will also be invited to attend the annual meetings as non-voting members and review resulting plans and recommendations.

### Council Members:

Initial council members were nominated by NURC and its sanctuary partners. In addition to meeting the overall criteria of national expertise and willingness to serve, voting council members represent: 1) various states across the regions and 2) various disciplines related to undersea science and education. Most important, we seek members with the will and talent for conveying undersea research results to high-level program stakeholders, including Congress, NOAA management, and other federal agency partners.

### **Annual Meeting:**

NURC will convene an annual meeting to educate the council on center accomplishments and plans. The council will, in turn, educate the center on national and regional priorities. Their advice will be folded into center proposal guidelines. They will then help us develop relevant products and presentations, including a national information campaign. NURC will cover travel costs for all voting members.

### **Advocacy Briefings:**

NURC will ask appropriate council experts to join us in making presentations on national undersea science and education priorities identified during meetings to stakeholders. For example, in 2002, NURP investigators gave presentations at a House Ocean Caucus luncheon on deep sea corals (DSC). This effort contributed to the subsequent Deep Sea Coral Protection Act, NOAA DSC Working Group, and an international NOAA-led DSC workshop. Besides the House Ocean caucus [Thomas Allen (ME), 202-225-6116] there are several other caucuses that relate to NURP business, including:

- Biotechnology—Cal Dooley (CA), 202-225-3341
- Coast Guard—Howard Coble (NC), 202-225-3065
- Sportsman—Mike Thompson (CA), 202-225-3311
- Boating—Gene Taylor (MS), 202-225-5772
- Climate Change—Wayne Gilchrist (MD), 202-225-5311
- Coastal—Frank Pallone (NJ), 202-225-4671
- Travel/tourism—Mark Foley (FL), 202-225-5792
- Research and Development—Holt (NJ)

All represent possible venues for NURP promotional events.

### **Web Site:**

The NURC Web site will include a dedicated SEACURE page that provides access to annual meeting minutes and resulting products, briefings, and other relevant information. The site will also facilitate review of center activities prior to meetings and provide an open communications forum between regional partners.

Spring, 2005 annual meeting: presentations