



# Seagrass-Watch E-Bulletin

**30 April 2011**

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## **Green group fears seagrass gone (QLD, Australia)**

18 April 2011, ABC Wide Bay

A Fraser Coast environmental group says it is concerned a build-up of silt from the floods has washed away seagrass in the region.

Gordon Cottle from the Great Sandy Strait Flora and Fauna Watch says endangered dugongs feed on the seagrass and may be at risk if it has been destroyed. Mr Cottle says a recent survey at Poona, south-east of Maryborough, found some areas were devastated.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

## **Seagrass health at all-time low (QLD, Australia)**

14 April 2011, Gladstone Observer

Seagrass levels in parts of Gladstone Harbour are at their lowest levels since surveys began under a Gladstone Ports Corporation assessment program.

GPC CEO Leo Zussino said the decline in seagrass levels was caused by factors related to the La Nina weather pattern. Mr Zussino said while many areas had unusually low levels, other large areas of seagrass remained in Port Curtis and Rodds Bay and included the Pelican Banks meadow.

He said the health of seagrass meadows in Pelican Banks was particularly important, because it is a known feeding ground for dugongs.

Mr Zussino said seagrass beds had been badly affected by two big wet seasons in a row and were not related to dredging activities in the harbour. He also said the lower levels were connected to seasonal patterns. Quarterly GPC surveys are monitoring seagrass at seven locations in the Gladstone area. The surveys' findings will be closely watched by environmental groups, which are concerned the planned dredging operations in the harbour might damage seagrass meadows – a crucial source of food for the area's dugongs.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

## **Survey shows seagrass decline (QLD, Australia)**

12 April 2011, Gladstone Observer

A new Fisheries Queensland report shows a large decline in seagrass in the Gladstone region recently. The report, based on seagrass surveys taken in February, said the decline was partly expected due to the impacts of the La Nina cycle. High rainfall, low light and high turbidity within Gladstone Harbour during the past three months caused the decline.

The news of low seagrass levels will concern local environmental groups, who have campaigned for the conservation of seagrass meadows to help protect the region's dugong population. Seagrass meadows were examined at Fishermans Landing, Pelican Banks, Wiggins Island, Facing Island, Rodds Bay and Redcliffe. Many of the areas had no seagrass at all, while others had extremely low seagrass coverage. In a statement yesterday, Fisheries Queensland acknowledged that seagrass levels were unusually low in Port Curtis.

[more..... http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html)

## **Conservation key to turtle/dugong future (Torres Strait, Australia)**

08 April 2011, By Grant Banks, Torres News

Even third-world countries manage their fisheries better than Australia, an internationally recognised conservation activist has told a meeting in Cairns. Pete Bethune, founder of Earthrace Conservation and former Sea Shepard 'whale warrior', also told the Torres News: "The Solomon Islands - on Australia's doorstep and a great deal poorer - has recognised the need for protection for these species and has already banned the hunting of [turtle and dugong]."

Conservationist, politicians and animal rights groups met in Cairns last Thursday to discuss the hunting and trade of sea turtles and dugong in north Queensland and the Torres Strait. Although at first not all those at the meeting could agree on what action should be taken, a final resolution was made that aims to ensure Native Title rights are preserved while protecting the long-term future of sea turtle and dugong.

Mr Bethune said: "There's a gaping wound in this country today, and, those with the power to change things, need to address it urgently before Australia loses any more respect around the world," he said. "The Native Title Act and Animal Care Act are failing endangered species entirely; that dugongs and sea turtles continue to be hunted in Australian waters and killed using such disgusting methods under the guise of customary rights is a disgrace."

Greg Hunt, Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage, asked for an immediate voluntary 90% reduction in dugong and turtle hunting numbers, and failing that, said that a total ban on the hunting of all turtles and dugongs would be the only solution.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

### **Dugong washes up on beach (Qld, Australia)**

*28 March 2011, by Emma Mcbryde, Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*

Dennis Bryant found a 2.9m long dugong washed up on the main beach on Saturday. Dennis Bryant said he had never seen anything like it before.

The Keppel Sands resident of 11 years found a 2.9m long dugong washed up on the main beach on Saturday. Dennis believes the dugong may have died after it got caught in a net. "It had marks underneath its flippers that looked like it had been struggling to get out of a net," he said. "We've seen dolphins and turtles washed up on the beach before, but never a dugong. It was an adult female and it looked like it had recently given birth because of the enlarged size of the teats. "There must be a calf out there, but it will be dead by now."

Dennis said Queensland Wildlife and Parks took a skin sample of the adult mammal on Saturday. A fully grown dugong can be up to three metres in length and weigh about 400kg. "Rocky Council came this morning (Sunday) and dug a hole to bury the dugong, it would have been very heavy," Dennis said.

*more..... <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/news.html>*

### **SunWest dredging project poised to get green light from DEP (Florida, USA)**

*28 April 2011, St. Petersburg Times*

The state Department of Environmental Protection is poised to recommend giving Pasco County a permit to dredge a 4-mile channel for a future county park near the SunWest development in Aripeka. Department staffers gave initial approval Tuesday after county officials and a private engineer presented a plan to mitigate the impact on seagrass. Next up is a May 17 meeting where the Florida Cabinet could give final approval to the county permit.

The channel would be shared by boaters launching from the park and the development that takes its name from a longtime limerock mining operation at the site. The county park would provide access to the gulf via seven boat ramps and 250 boat parking spaces. A permit for the channel also makes the proposed 2,500-home community more attractive as Carpenter's group looks for a buyer for the site.

The project will include dredging 33 acres to extend and deepen the current channel. That project is expected to cost \$10 million, paid by SunWest. Developers also will pay for a \$3.7 million mitigation plan. That plan includes restoring 106 acres along Pasco's coast to their natural state to allow seagrass to grow. Dirt from the channel project will be used, for example, to fill a 16-acre hole near the Anclote power plant to the correct depth where the grass gets enough sunlight to grow.

*Full story and source: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/localgovernment/sunwest-dredging-project-poised-to-get-green-light-from-dep/1166443>*

### **Port Manatee Kicks Off Biggest Expansion Ever (Florida, USA)**

*22 April 2011, by Joe Shea, The Bradenton Times*

Port of Manatee officials painted a bright picture for the county's single biggest investment, and all of the members of the Manatee County Port Authority are eager to see it come true. One is nervous, though. Port Chairman Larry Bustle, the former mayor of Palmetto, is not entirely sure that bright picture will happen. All of the major improvements surrounding Berth 12 at the Port are based on grants; the county will pay nothing more than the \$1.36-million cost of obtaining the grants and of its prescient planting of seagrass over the past decade.

But the big news was the start of dredging after what Port officials acknowledged was a "long struggle" to get all the permissions and money needed to do the job. It's taken 15 years to get to this point, and longtime observers and Port officials like McClash were jubilant. There are more than four acres of mitigation - more grass - for every acre of valuable, fish-friendly seagrasses destroyed in projects like this one, Port director David McDonald said.

Standing on the concrete apron of Berth 12 in Southport, McClash pointed to a distant offshore splash of green where seagrass had been planted in stages over 10 years to mitigate any loss from the dredged canal, which will be 41 feet deep and extended from 1,000 to 1,600 feet, vastly increasing the size of visiting container ships the Port can accommodate.

*Full story and source: [http://www.thebradentontimes.com/news/2011/04/22/local\\_news/port\\_manatee\\_kicks\\_off\\_biggest\\_expansion\\_ever/](http://www.thebradentontimes.com/news/2011/04/22/local_news/port_manatee_kicks_off_biggest_expansion_ever/)*

## **BP advances \$100M to Florida (USA)**

22 April 2011, by Kimberly Blair, Pensacola News Journal

A day after the first anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster, BP announced it will give Florida \$100 million to accelerate environmental and natural resource restoration important to the Gulf Coast's recovery. The early release of the funds will pay for beach renourishment and the restoration of seagrass beds, oyster reef and bird habitat.

The projects, identified in a Natural Resource Damage Assessment, even include improving access to beaches and waterways, said Mimi Drew, representative member of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. Florida's take is part of a \$1 billion voluntary payment to the affected states from the oil giant. Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas also will get \$100 million each, with the rest of the money to be doled out for various projects by federal environmental regulators.

The \$1 billion is a down payment for a much larger pot of money — estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars if not hundreds of billions of dollars — BP eventually will owe the five Gulf states after they complete damage assessment studies, which could be summer or fall, said Taylor "Chips" Kirschenfeld, Escambia's division manager and senior scientist for water quality division.

*Full story and source: <http://www.pnj.com/article/20110422/NEWS01/104220313/1006/BP-advances-100M-Florida>*

## **Environmentalists fight plan to weaken protection of Biscayne Bay (Florida, USA)**

20 April 2011, by Susan Cocking, MiamiHerald.com

Nearly 40 years ago, commercial fisherman Walter Kandrashoff stirred public outrage when he pointed out lesions and deformities on fish he caught in Biscayne Bay. The outcry led to creation of the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve — 67,000 acres of submerged lands set aside for protection for the enjoyment of future generations.

Today, the fate of the preserve is in jeopardy from the legislature's budget ax and from a little-noticed amendment before a state Senate committee. Those measures would strip the bay of some of its most vocal advocates and watchdogs and could weaken protection of natural resources such as seagrass, mangroves and manatees. "A bad idea," said Joan Browder, a leading scientist at NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center on Virginia Key who's been studying the bay since the 1970s.

The preserve staff and a loose collection of unpaid volunteers and interns educate local marine law enforcement officers and school children on fish, coral and aquatic plants identification and act as lookouts for potential threats to the bay, such as illegal dredging and mangrove cutting. The office also oversees mitigation projects in areas where seagrass has been destroyed and helps keep watch over endangered manatees.

*Full story and source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/04/20/2178292/environmentalists-fight-plan-to.html>*

## **Report card shows South Australian waterways killing wildlife (SA, Australia)**

16 April 2011, by Christie Peucker, Adelaide Now

Nearly half of all waterways in Adelaide and the Mt Lofty Ranges are over-polluted, a report shows. An EPA report shows that poor water quality continues to wipe out rare aquatic fauna across Adelaide and destroy critical marine habitats along the Yorke Peninsula. The snapshot of the state's first water quality report card in three years shows the dire state of many waterways with close to 50 per cent of the creeks in Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges in "poor" or "very poor" condition.

The preview, obtained by the Sunday Mail, also reveals high nitrogen levels at the top of Gulf St Vincent were depleting seagrasses vital to the region's fishing economy. Leaking septic tanks, over-fertilised soil and storm-water are the likely causes of the spike in nutrients between Ardrossan and Port Vincent, according to Environment Protection Authority senior scientific officer Clive Jenkins, who said 175 years of European settlement were catching up with the environment. He said dense algal growths detected on seagrass near Port Vincent and Pine Point were an early warning sign of future losses.

*Full story and source: <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/report-card-shows-south-australian-waterways-killing-wildlife/story-e6frea6u-1226040271312>*

## **Restoration Underway For Damaged Underwater Grasses After BP Spill (USA)**

14 April 2011, RedOrbit

As part of the ongoing Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) that has followed the Deepwater BP oil spill, federal and state partners have reached an agreement with BP to begin a new effort to restore submerged aquatic vegetation that was damaged by response vessels and activities.

Emergency restoration projects like this one are intended to reduce or prevent ongoing or potential injuries to natural resources resulting from the spill and related response activities. NOAA will lead the Gulf seagrass restoration effort, which also will include state co-trustee agencies and the National Park Service. BP will pay to implement these projects.

During the spill, the threat of oil reaching shorelines was real. Many response vessels across the Gulf were mobilized to place boom along shorelines and across smaller bays and estuaries in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. The placement of these booms over sensitive, shallow seagrass habitats resulted in damage to these important nursery habitats.

*Full story and source:*

[http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/2029978/restoration\\_underway\\_for\\_damaged\\_underwater\\_grasses\\_after\\_bp\\_spill/](http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/2029978/restoration_underway_for_damaged_underwater_grasses_after_bp_spill/)

*Related articles:* [http://blog.gulflive.com/mississippi-press-news/2011/04/sea\\_grass\\_-\\_search\\_for\\_damage.html](http://blog.gulflive.com/mississippi-press-news/2011/04/sea_grass_-_search_for_damage.html)

<http://www.dailymarkets.com/stock/2011/04/19/a-year-after-the-deepwater-horizon-spill-the-nature-conservancy-calls-for-restoration-in-the-gulf-of-mexico/>

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2011/04/one-year-later-where-has-all-the-oil-gone.html>

### **Australia: Pelicans being treated for infectious diseases (NSW, Australia)**

14 April 2011, by Robert Herriman, *examiner.com*

The Australian Seabird Rescue reported today that heavy rainfalls seen recently has resulted in an increase of pelicans sickened with such infectious diseases like pneumonia and botulism. According to Rescue coordinator Rhonda Sikk, heavy rainfalls in Illawarra have washed polluted runoff into the waterways and ocean causing a buildup of toxins in the seagrass.

The organization has treated at least ten pelicans for these infectious diseases at a hefty cost. Sikk notes that the organization is overwhelmed as far as space and money due to the large influx of sick birds. Illawarra is a region in the Australian state of New South Wales. It is a coastal region situated immediately south of Sydney and north of the Shoalhaven or South Coast region.

*Full story and source:* <http://www.examiner.com/infectious-disease-in-national/australia-pelicans-being-treated-for-infectious-diseases>

*Related article:* <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/04/14/3191635.htm?site=illawarra:>

### **Seagrass restoration project on Baldwin County coast continues (Alabama, USA)**

10 April 2011, by Connie Baggett, *al.com*

Boaters along Baldwin County's coast in the coming weeks will likely notice workers erecting signs and posts with bird perches as Dauphin Island Sea Lab works to restore the area's dwindling seagrasses, according to officials. Kenneth L. Heck Jr. of the Sea Lab told Baldwin County commissioners last week about the program funded by Coastal Impact Assistance Program funds.

"We have been planning to get on the water this spring, and now that's here," Heck said Thursday. "During the next three or four weeks we will be on the water scouting places to work, planning and getting information out to educate the public." Areas particularly important are located in southern Perdido Bay and the north shore of Little Lagoon, Heck said. Grassbeds near Robinson, Ono, Bird and Walker islands are part of the project.

Commission Chairman Frank Burt commended Heck for the ongoing work, and said grasses located inland in freshwater areas were disappearing as well. Burt said he had seen a decline in underwater grasses that feed wild ducks, and as a result the area has a diminished population of the game species.

Beginning in 2006, DISL started working to restore the beds, adding kiosks warning boaters about the presence of the seagrass, followed by "no motor zones" enforced by Alabama Marine Police, [Heck] said. This year, DISL will be trying a restoration method used successfully in south Florida called the "bird stake method." Heck said the project would include placing stakes with perches along the scarred areas in grassbeds. "Birds roost on the stakes and do what comes naturally," he said. "Their droppings are rich in phosphates, and that encourages regrowth of seagrass."

*Full story and source:* [http://blog.al.com/live/2011/04/seagrass\\_restoration\\_project\\_o.html](http://blog.al.com/live/2011/04/seagrass_restoration_project_o.html)

### **New marina in the East End wins backing from Minister (Bermuda)**

08 April 2011, by Owain Johnston-Barnes, *The Royal Gazette*

Plans for a new marina in the East End could go ahead, despite planning permission being refused by the Development Applications Board (DAB). The Stocks Harbour Marina Project was refused by the DAB last September the decision was appealed by the applicant, Stocks Harbour Marina Ltd. Environment Minister Walter Roban last month backed the appeal, allowing the proposal to move forward.

Planning inspector Peter Cuming said in a report that the environmental impact of the proposed marina would be minimal. Plans for the marina, located southwest of St George's Harbour and just east of the Swing Bridge, were first put forward in 2008. They included 215 berths on a series of floating concrete docks.

The DAB had expressed concerns about the high number of berths compared to the low number of parking spaces. Other issues of concern were the large size of the proposed marina and the potential threat to seagrass in the area, an important food source for sea turtles. After looking into the matter, Mr Cuming supported the appeal. He said in his report that numerous environmental studies were carried out which suggested there would be little to no adverse impact on the turtles or the sea grass.

*Full story and source: <http://www.royalgazette.com/article/20110408/NEWS/704089963/-1/news>*

### **Mystery Marine 'Pest' Is Beneficial Seagrass (New Zealand)**

*8 April 2011, Northland Regional Council Press Release*

A local resident's fears over the rapid spread of a grass-like marine plant at Taurikura have been allayed with news the 'pest' is actually a beneficial native seagrass. The woman contacted the Northland Regional Council after becoming alarmed at the pace the plant appeared to be colonising the intertidal area around Taurikura Bay, about 30km south-east of Whangarei. Council Estuary Management Advisor Jon Hampson says the council was able to identify the plant as the native seagrass '*Zostera muelleri*', known to Maori as rimurehia. "The good news is that this species seems to be thriving in Taurikura Bay at a time when seagrasses internationally are being lost at a rate of about two to five percent annually."

Mr Hampson says seagrass can be found all around New Zealand's coast, inhabiting the intertidal and sub-tidal areas of relatively sheltered waters such as estuaries. He says only a few years ago, Whangarei Harbour's seagrass beds had almost entirely disappeared, surviving in only small isolated pockets. However, a change in the cement manufacturing process at Portland and cleaner wastewater discharges had significantly reduced sediment levels coming into the harbour allowing seagrass to recolonise increasingly large areas. Plants had also been successfully transplanted from recovering areas into the previously bare parts of Takahiwai.

"The original decline was linked to poor water quality in Whangarei Harbour, including high levels of sediment from rural, urban and industrial activity. That in turn reduced water clarity, both blocking the sunlight seagrass needs for photosynthesis and also having a smothering effect." Despite the improvement in seagrass populations, he says reducing sediment run-off from the land remains one of the biggest physical environmental challenges for Northland and the reduction in seagrass levels in Whangarei Harbour is by no means unique.

*Full story and source: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1104/S00212/mystery-marine-pest-is-beneficial-seagrass.htm>*

*Related article: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/rural/72653/false-alarm-over-sea-grass>*

### **Endangered Species Act Protection Sought for Nation's Smallest Seahorse (Louisiana, USA)**

*07 April 2011, Center for Biological Diversity (press release)*

NEW ORLEANS— The Center for Biological Diversity today filed a petition seeking Endangered Species Act protection for the dwarf seahorse, a one-inch long seahorse that lives in seagrass beds in the Gulf of Mexico, Florida and the Caribbean. The seahorse is threatened with extinction due to pollution from the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, decline of seagrass throughout its range and commercial collection.

The dwarf seahorse was declining even before the BP oil spill contaminated much of its remaining range. Oil pollution and dispersants used to break up oil are toxic to both seahorses and the seagrasses they need to survive.

Since 1950 the state of Florida has lost more than half its seagrasses, with loss in some areas exceeding 90 percent. Seagrass loss has also been dramatic in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and the Bahamas. Because the dwarf seahorse is a habitat specialist, loss of seagrass equates directly to seahorse population declines.

*Full story and source: [http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press\\_releases/2011/dwarf-seahorse-04-06-2011.html](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2011/dwarf-seahorse-04-06-2011.html)*

*Related articles: <http://motherjones.com/blue-marble/2011/04/bp-vs-dwarf-seahorse>*

*[http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press\\_releases/2011/dwarf-seahorse-04-06-2011.html](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2011/dwarf-seahorse-04-06-2011.html)*

### **"Spoil" the key to healthy Naples Bay habitat? (Florida, USA)**

*05 April 2011, by Jennifer Trammell, NBC2 News*

Muck from the bottom of canals may be the answer to restoring wildlife habitat in Naples Bay, experts say. The Naples City Council has wanted to build islands out of the muck, called "spoil," for years. But the project is on hold while the state evaluates other islands in Florida.

It may look like paradise, but oysters, birds and seagrass don't want to call Naples Bay home. Dirty water has pushed them out. Mike Bauer, Naples Natural Resources Manager, says the solution to restoring the habitat is with islands made of spoil - dredged from nearby canals.

*Full story and source: <http://www.nbc-2.com/story/14380284/2011/04/04/spoil-islands-the-key-to-healthy-naples-bay-habitat>*

## **Hay Point, Gladstone dredging commences (QLD, Australia)**

05 April 2011, by Rhiannon Zanetic, Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News

Dredging and water-quality monitoring operations have begun in the Hay Point and Gladstone pilotage areas in Queensland. Dredging operations resumed last Friday at Hay Point coal terminal and will continue until September 30, Maritime Safety Queensland said.

Also at Hay Point, the vessel Delphi began a seagrass habitat monitoring program last Friday and it will continue this week. Operations are restricted to daylight hours only.

Meanwhile, water-quality monitoring will take place in the Gladstone Upper Harbour from Tuesday to Friday this week and from Monday to Thursday next week. A six-metre rigid inflatable boat Arib II will conduct the operations, deploying loggers and sampling equipment.

Full story and source: <http://www.lloydslistdcn.com.au/archive/2011/04-april/05-1/dredging-operations-in-hay-point-and-gladstone>

## **Achieving sustainable fisheries (Malta)**

3 April 2011, by Alan Deidun, the Sunday Times of Malta

A conference held recently under the aegis of Din I-Art Ħelwa addressed various issues related to the sustainability of fisheries. The conference, aptly entitled 'Fished out?', sought to tackle this hot potato from various angles. Presentations were made by fisheries management authorities, journalists, marine biologists, lawyers, representatives of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority and of the aquaculture industry, as well as the former European Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Joe Borg.

In his presentation, Darrin Stevens from Mepa's Ecosystems Management Unit focused on local MPAs. There are five MPAs in local waters, covering about five per cent of Malta's territorial waters and encompassing most of the local *Posidonia oceania* meadows. Of these, only one (Rdum Majjiesa) is a recognised Natura 2000 site. Stevens expounded as to how Mepa is currently considering venturing into deeper waters and designing offshore MPAs.

Full story and source: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110403/environment/achieving-sustainable-fisheries.357949>

## **New Bali Reef Handbook Highlights Biodiversity (Bali, Indonesia)**

03 April 2011, by Fidelis E. Satriastanti, Jakarta Globe

Bali's local government and an environmental group on Friday launched a handbook to raise awareness of biodiversity conservation efforts in the Nusa Penida marine park. The Nusa Penida Profile Book, launched in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, highlights the biodiversity of the 20,000-hectare marine conservation area established in 2010.

The area supports a diverse array of species, including 296 types of coral and 576 species of fish, five of them newly discovered while carrying out research for the handbook. The Nusa Penida conservation area also supports 1,419 hectares of coral reefs, 203 hectares of mangrove forests and 108 hectares of seagrass. Riyanto Basuki, the book's author and head of regional conservation at the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said the starting point for conservation was to first identify the area's assets.

The conservation area is part of the Coral Triangle, considered the world's richest underwater wilderness which stretches across six nations between the Indian and Pacific oceans, running through Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Full story and source: <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/new-bali-reef-handbook-highlights-biodiversity/433169>

## **BMA to host information session (QLD, Australia)**

28th March 2011, by Kate Bastable, Mackay Daily Mercury

Do you want to find out what's happening with the proposed third stage of the Hay Point Coal Terminal expansion? BMA, which approved the key project on Friday, is holding a community information session.

The \$2.45billion project, which will create 1000 jobs during construction and increase the port's permanent workforce by 13, will increase the terminal's capacity from 44million tonnes per annum (mtpa) to 55mtpa by 2014. A ship loader will be built on a new third berth, which will be constructed offshore, existing trestle conveyors and surge bins will be replaced and overland conveyors will be built to transfer coal from the stockpile to the jetty. Initial works, including dredging activities, began in mid-2010.

Dredging is required to remove both soft weathered material such as silt and clay and hard rock material to allow the new third berth. In a fact sheet published on its website, BMA said it had enacted rigorous environmental and water quality monitoring programs, developed in consultation with government agencies. The ongoing programs involved monitoring of corals, seagrass, fish communities, invasive marine pest species and water quality, and an

independent environmental site supervisor had been engaged by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to oversee the project, it said.

*Full story and source:* <http://www.dailymercury.com.au/story/2011/03/28/bma-runs-public-session-terminal-plans-coal/>

*Related article:* [http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&q=http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/community-meeting-for-hay-point-coal-terminal-expa&ct=ga&cad=CAEQARgAIAAoATAAOABA\\_pS\\_7ARIAVgBYgJlbg&cd=Xa2DeS3VokI&usg=AFQjCNFuqNTec2zYTOMTPyFuEiH\\_E4d9NQ](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&q=http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/community-meeting-for-hay-point-coal-terminal-expa&ct=ga&cad=CAEQARgAIAAoATAAOABA_pS_7ARIAVgBYgJlbg&cd=Xa2DeS3VokI&usg=AFQjCNFuqNTec2zYTOMTPyFuEiH_E4d9NQ)

### **Children learn importance of underwater habitats at Gulf Breeze event (Florida, USA)**

27 March 2011, Pensacola News Journal

Hunter Wynowski didn't know what to expect Saturday afternoon when he attended the annual Seagrass Awareness Celebration at the Shoreline Park South in Gulf Breeze.

The event's goal was family fun, where children could touch marine life in tanks, practice bass fishing, kayak and participate in other activities. In addition, the children also had the chance to learn about the importance of seagrass to the environment.

Saturday's event attracted about 400 people, organizers said. It gave children an upclose look at seagrass.

*Full story and source:* <http://www.pnj.com/article/20110327/NEWS01/103270338/1006/Children-learn-importance-underwater-habitats-Gulf-Breeze-event>

*Related article:* <http://www.pnj.com/article/20110326/NEWS01/110326005/400-attend-Seagrass-Celebration?odyssey=nav|head>

### **Hernando Approves Contract to Address Sea Grass Concerns (USA)**

23 March 2011, by Barbara Behrendt, Dredging Today

The Hernando County Commission on Tuesday approved a four-month contract with a private seagrass recovery company to get the county back in compliance with a federal permit critical to the Hernando Beach Channel dredge.

Earlier this month, the county received notice that it was out of compliance with its Army Corps of Engineers permit to replant seagrass as part of the dredging process. The county, which had taken on the seagrass monitoring responsibility, had failed to provide nutrient injections and fertilizer spikes required to maintain the seagrass beds. Noncompliance could result in a permit suspension or revocation or a fine up to \$27,500, according to the letter sent by Alfred A. Pantano Jr., district commander for the corps.

County transportation services director Susan Goebel, who told commissioners that she was responsible for the noncompliance, assured them that the four-month contract with the firm Seagrass Recovery would get the project back on track and would not cause any delays in getting the dredging started. The cost for the contract is \$83,672. Additional maintenance and monitoring of sea grasses will be required for the next five years, but the county staff is continuing to explore options to accomplish that as inexpensively as possible, including a possible permit modification. Monitoring and maintenance costs could exceed \$500,000.

*Full story and source:* <http://www.dredgingtoday.com/2011/03/23/hernando-approves-contract-to-address-sea-grass-concerns-usa/>

*Related articles:* <http://www.tampabay.com/news/localgovernment/preliminary-work-started-on-long-stalled-hernando-dredge/1161110>  
<http://www2.hernandotoday.com/content/2011/apr/04/052042/dredging-project-officially-restarted/>

## **PUBLICATIONS:**

### **Queensland seagrasses. Status 2010 - Torres Strait and East Coast.**

Six page brochure on the status of seagrass in Queensland produced by Fisheries Queensland (DEEDI). Seagrasses are a key component of the marine ecosystem of Queensland and are essential for sustainable and productive fisheries. In Queensland, seagrasses are widespread and found from the upper intertidal region, on reef platforms, and down to 70 metres below sea level. The Torres Strait and the east coast of Queensland have some of the most extensive seagrass meadows in the world with an estimated 17,206 sq km in the strait and at least 38,079 sq km down the east coast. Seagrass meadows in Queensland have declined in abundance down the east coast over the last 3-4 years, however the total area of seagrass in Queensland has changed little over the long-term (5-10 years). Seagrass declines where they have occurred are most likely the result of natural variations in climate, particularly tropical storms and flood run-off, against a background of reduced water quality.

[http://www.seagrasswatch.org/Info\\_centre/Publications/pdf/OLD\\_Seagrass\\_Status\\_2010.pdf](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/Info_centre/Publications/pdf/OLD_Seagrass_Status_2010.pdf)

### **Working together to monitor seagrass in Queensland's Ramsar sites.**

Issue 19 of Wetlands Australia 2011 includes an article about seagrass monitoring in Ramsar wetland in Queensland, Australia.

[http://www.seagrasswatch.org/Info\\_centre/Publications/pdf/McKenzie\\_Coles\\_2011.pdf](http://www.seagrasswatch.org/Info_centre/Publications/pdf/McKenzie_Coles_2011.pdf)



## SEAGRASS-WATCH on YouTube

**Seagrass: Pastures of the sea** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66Y5vqswj2Q> or <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/seagrass.html>  
Presentation on what seagrasses are and why they are important (14,941 views to date)

## GALLERY

**Mackay-Whitsunday (Qld, Australia): 15-19 April 2011** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Hamilton Island, 15 April 2011  
Sarina Inlet, 16 April 2011  
Pioneer Bay, 17 April 2011  
Midge Point, 18 April 2011  
Hydeaway Bay, 19 April 2011

**Torres Strait (Qld, Australia): 11 -19 April 2011** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/gallery.html>

Badu Island, 11 - 12 April 2011  
Iama (Yam) Island, 18 - 19 April 2011

## CONFERENCES

**CERF 2011 Conference (Daytona Beach, Florida, 6-10 November 2011)**

21st Biennial Conference of the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation.

Societies, Estuaries and Coasts: Adapting to Change

This theme reflects a growing realization that human societies are an integral component of ecosystems and the dynamics of these societies and ecosystems are interactive - their futures are interdependent. Nowhere is this more evident than in the estuaries and coastal zones of the planet, where human populations are concentrated, typically dominating estuarine watersheds and affecting their linkage with the local, regional, and global dynamics of the coastal ocean. CERF as a professional scientific society has increasingly focused not only on understanding causes of ecosystem change but providing information necessary to manage anthropogenic changes that have impacted the biodiversity and sustainability of estuarine and coastal systems. This conference will highlight new findings and perspectives of the interactive dynamics of diverse ecosystems and human societies, and in particular, explore how these dynamics can only be understood and managed when addressed at regional and global scales. To a greater extent than in previous CERF conferences this will include an effort to specifically address socioeconomic drivers and responses.

Please visit the conference & workshop web site for further details: <http://www.sgmeet.com/cerf2011/>

If you are interested in attending CER2011, we invite you contribute to a session in Management, Planning and Policy:

**SCI-085 Threats to Coastal Marine Habitats in the Tropical Indo-Pacific Region**

Conveners: Robert G. Coles ([rob.coles@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:rob.coles@deedi.qld.gov.au)), Norman Duke ([n.duke@uq.edu.au](mailto:n.duke@uq.edu.au)) and Len McKenzie ([Len.McKenzie@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:Len.McKenzie@deedi.qld.gov.au))

*Strategies have been developed to understand and manage the cumulative impacts of multiple pressures on the coastal ecosystems, particularly those of seagrass and mangroves, and the goods and services they provide in the tropical Indo-Pacific region. These are tailored to meet the needs of different countries but meet a common theme - there is increasing cumulative environmental pressures on coastal habitats and a requirement for sustainable development based on understanding of ecosystem linkages. This session will explore our experiences from this region. We encourage a blend of pure science and science applied to management strategies and solutions.*

*When submitting an abstract to this session, select this session in the first Session Choice drop-down as your first choice session. Sessions are listed in numerical order in the drop-down (i.e., SCI-001, SCI-002, etc.).*

Important Dates for CERF2011

12 May 2011

Abstract deadline

6 October 2011

Early Registration ends

## FROM HQ

**Frequently Asked Questions** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/faq.html>

**Seagrass-Watch Magazine** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/magazine.html>

**Seagrass-Watch Shop** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html>

**Virtual Herbarium** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/herbarium.html>

**Giveaways** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/shop.html#GIVE1>

**Future sampling dates** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/sampling.html>

**Handy Seagrass Links** <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/links.html>

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Seagrass-Watch E- Bulletin is compiled by Len McKenzie & Rudi Yoshida.