

The Crest

Current Issues in Coastal Ocean and Estuarine Science

VIMS Dedicates Kauffman Aquaculture Center

VIMS dedicated its new Kauffman Aquaculture Center in a ceremony at the Topping, Virginia facility in April. Guests of honor included NOAA Chief Administrator Conrad Lautenbacher, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr., and Susan Magill, Rector of William and Mary.

The Kauffman Aquaculture Center (KAC) was specifically designed to

enhance and extend the work and facilities of VIMS Aquaculture Genetics and Breeding Technology Center (ABC). The General Assembly established ABC in 1995 to explore and promote the development of aquaculture in the Commonwealth.

The Kauffman Center lies 30 miles north of Gloucester Point on a tributary of the Rappahannock River

known as Locklies Creek. Construction of the \$1.4 million Center was funded through a challenge grant by Boots and Jack Kauffman, with matching grants provided by Mr. Matthew T.

Blackwood; the D. Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, Inc.; Mr. and Mrs. Weston F. Conley, Jr. and Family; Dominion; the Elis Olsson Memorial Foundation; Mr. and Mrs. E. Claiborne Robins, Jr.; Mr. and Mrs. James E. Rogers; and the Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation.

ABC Director Dr. Stan Allen notes that "the Kauffman Center significantly expands the scope of aquaculture research at VIMS by providing a facility that was specifically designed to hold both native and non-native species in quarantine." Initial use of the facility will focus on studies of the



Kauffman Aquaculture Center in Topping, VA

Report Bolsters VIMS Agenda

Close parallels between VIMS programs and recommendations in the recent U.S. Ocean Commission report confirm the Institute's bearings

A long-anticipated report on national ocean policy calls for a shift in research emphasis toward fields of study long championed by VIMS scientists, including ecosystem-based management, ocean-observing systems, biodiversity studies, and whole-watershed approaches to coastal decision-making.

Other recommendations in the report bolster VIMS' long-standing mandate to provide policymakers and the public with unbiased scientific information, and support the Institute's on-going efforts to build collaborations with other marine science institutions.

"We were gratified to see the similarities between the commissioners' recommendations and our own programs," says VIMS Dean and Director Don Wright. "We were also pleased with the Commission's call to bring funding for marine research to the level it deserves."

The report notes that coastal watershed counties generate five trillion dollars in economic activity each year, one half the U.S. gross domestic product. It estimates that an annual investment of \$3.2 billion is needed to

help stave off the threats posed by continued degradation of ocean and coastal environments, and recommends payment through a trust fund composed of federal revenues from oil and gas development. Federal oil and gas revenues total approximately \$5 billion annually.

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native oyster *Crassostrea virginica* and the non-native oyster *C. ariakensis*.

The facility features four separate laboratories that were each purpose-built to protect Chesapeake Bay and its living resources from disease, parasites, and the unintentional introduction of non-natives:

Oyster Isolation Laboratory—This room is designed to hold recently

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Virginia Institute of Marine Science
School of Marine Science
College of William and Mary
P.O. Box 1346
Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062

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“We agree with the commission that this is a reasonable investment in view of the value generated by ocean and coastal industries,” notes Wright.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy released its report in late April. Issuance of a final report will follow a 90-day review by the 50 governors and other stakeholders. The President is mandated to use the final report as a guide for submitting a new national ocean policy to Congress.

Congress mandated the 16-member commission in the Oceans Act of 2000, with a charge to make recommendations for a “coordinated and comprehensive” national ocean policy. The mandate reflected widespread recognition that ocean issues have changed dramatically in the 35 years since Congress last authorized an ocean report—including the addition of

37.5 million people to the nation’s coastal watershed counties.

“The recommendations in the report were well received by the marine science community,” says Wright. “The breadth and depth of the analysis shows that the commissioners obviously did their homework.” The commission’s report is based on 15 public meetings and 17 site visits between 2001 and 2003, combined with input from hundreds of experts.

One such expert was VIMS Associate Professor Dr. Linda Schaffner, who as President-Elect of

the Estuarine Research Federation (ERF) helped draft that organization’s statement to the Commission.

“Our statement agreed with the Commission’s conclusion that our marine resources are in serious trouble and that we urgently need to develop a comprehensive National Ocean Policy,” says Schaffner. “It also stressed that we need to

unify our currently fragmented approach to coastal and marine management, and to increase the availability and use of scientific knowledge in the management process.”

Some of the actions recommended by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy:

- Double the nation’s investment in ocean research
- Implement the national Integrated Ocean Observing System
- Increase attention to ocean education
- Strengthen the link between coastal and watershed management
- Create measurable water-pollution reduction goals
- Reform fisheries management
- Establish an Ocean Policy Trust Fund to pay for implementing the recommendations

The ERF letter also called for a greater emphasis on linking marine management to land-use issues and stressed the value of setting achievable goals to reduce fisheries harvests and pollutant inputs.

“We also emphasized the critical need to train new scientists and encourage interactions between scientists, engineers, economists, and social scientists so that the next generation can effectively address complex issues and assist with policy development,” says Schaffner.

Congress last authorized a report on national ocean policy in the late 1960s. Since then, pressures on the ocean and coastal watershed have multiplied significantly, while the focus of marine resource management has shifted from maximizing yields to maintaining sustainability.

For more information, the full text of the 531-page report is available online at oceancommission.gov/