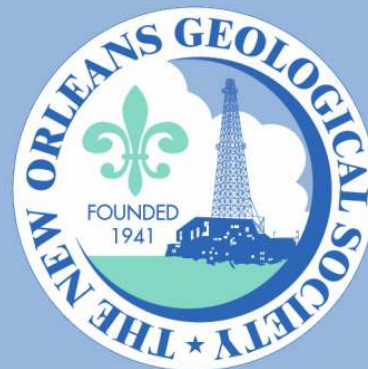


# NOGS LOG



September 2009

Volume 50, Number 3

## Upcoming Events and Activities

### September 14 - NOGS Luncheon

\*\*\* At the Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome \*\*\*

\$2.00 validated parking in hotel garage

Guest speaker Denise J. Reed, Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences at University of New Orleans, will present "A New Approach to River Management: Action for a Sustainable Coastal Landscape?"

(See page 7 for Abstract and Biography)

HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN SUPERDOME

ADMISSION:

Check with concierge or  
front desk for location

Lunch served at 11:30am

with reservation ..... \$30.00

without reservation ..... \$35.00

Student Member with reservation .... Free

### September 19 - Annual Louisiana Beach Sweep and Inland Waterway Cleanup

For more information: [http://www.saveourlake.org/beach\\_sweep.htm](http://www.saveourlake.org/beach_sweep.htm).

### October 2 - NOGS Kick-Off Party

6:30-9:30 PM at Tom and Amber Klekamp's home in Beau Chene, Mandeville.

See announcement on page 13.

### October 5 - NOGS Luncheon

Guest speaker Rocky R. Roden, Rocky Ridge Resources Inc., will present  
"DHI Threshold Effect in Prospect Risking".

### November 12 - SGS Technical Symposium

"Exploration Offshore USA OCS: Opening the Next Frontier?" In New Orleans.

See announcement on page 30.

### December 4 - NOGA-NOGS Christmas Holiday Party

At Metairie Country Club. More details in future LOG issues.

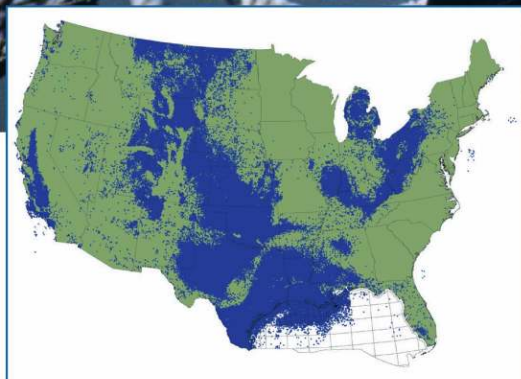
### December 6-8 - 29th Annual GCSSEPM Foundation Bob F. Perkins Research Conference

"Unconventional Resources: Making the Unconventional Conventional."

In Houston. See announcement on page 8.

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**NOGS Office**

Office Manager: Annette Hudson

Office Hours: 8:30am – 3:30pm on Monday-Wednesday-Friday

Tel: 504-561-8980 □ Fax: 504-561-8988

E-mail: info@nogs.org □ Website: www.nogs.org

The office is located at Suite 300, 810 Union Street, New Orleans, LA 70112.

Correspondence and all luncheon reservations should be sent to the above address.

Sent to press on August 16, 2009.

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Editor	Elizabeth Petro	MMS	504-736-2866	nogseditor@gmail.com
Director 2010	Michael M. Ledet		504-394-9636	mikeledet@cox.net
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**COMMITTEE**

	<b>Chairperson</b>			
AAPG Delegates	Dave Balcer	Chevron	985-773-6725	dbalcer@Chevron.com
AAPG Student Chapter	Bobby Cosentino	Tulane University	504-495-9475	rcosenti@tulane.edu
AAPG Student Chapter	Bryan Rogers	UNO	504-736-2772	thgem@gmail.com
Advertising-Log	Andrea Stancin	Shell	504-728-0431	Andrea.a.stancin@shell.com
Auditing	James Swaney	MMS	504-736-2677	james.swaney@mms.gov
Awards	Michael N. Fein	W & T Offshore	504-210-8148	mikef@wtoffshore.com
Ballot	Chuck Holman	ENI	504-593-7869	chuck.holman@enipetroleum.com
Best Paper	David E. Reiter	ENI	504-593-7606	david.reiter@enipetroleum.com
Continuing Education	TBA			
Employment Counseling	Paul J. Post	MMS	504-736-2954	paul.post@mms.gov
Entertainment	David E. Reiter	ENI	504-593-7606	david.reiter@enipetroleum.com
Environmental	Daisy Pate	Eustis Geotechnical Eng.	504-613-5798	dpate@eustiseng.com
External Affairs	Michael A. Fogarty	Sylvan Energy, LLC	603-523-4808	mike.a.fogarty@gmail.com
Field Trip	David Garner	Shell	504-728-6154	David.Garner@shell.com
Finance and Investment	Chuck Holman	ENI	504-593-7869	chuck.holman@enipetroleum.com
Historical	Edward B. Picou, Jr.	Consultant	504-529-5155	epicou@bellsouth.net
Membership/Directory	Penne Rappold	Shell	504-728-4338	prappold@gmail.com
New Geoscientists (NGNO)	TBA			
Nominating	Willis E. Conatser		504-466-9749	weconatser@aol.com
Non-Technical Education	Duncan Goldthwaite	Consultant	504-887-4377	DGldthwt@aol.com
Office Operations	William M. Whiting	Consultant	504-947-8495	bootscom@aol.com
Publications Sales	Edward B. Picou, Jr.	Consultant	504-529-5155	epicou@bellsouth.net
Photography	J. David Cope	Taylor Energy Co LLC	504-589-0419	dcope@taylorenergy.com
School Outreach	Thomas C. Bergeon	Century Exploration	504-832-3772	Tom.bergeon@centuryx.com
Scouting	Carol Rooney	Consultant Geologist	504-835-1909	carolbrooney@aol.com
Technical Projects	TBA			
Ad Hoc Committee on University Support	Michael J. Gallagher	Eni Petroleum	504-593-7480	Michael.Gallagher@enipetroleum.com

**NOGS LOG STAFF**

Editor	Elizabeth Petro	MMS	504-736-2866	nogseditor@gmail.com
Editor-Elect	Fran Wiseman	MMS	504-736-2912	frances.wiseman@mms.gov
Auxiliary	Susie Baker	NOGA	504-466-4483	abaker1006@aol.com
Info Tidbits	Elizabeth Petro	MMS	504-736-2866	nogseditor@gmail.com
Drill Bits	TBA			
Webmaster	Edward B. Picou, Jr.	Consultant	504-529-5155	epicou@bellsouth.net
Layout	Jannette Sturm-Mexic			

**NOGS AUXILIARY**

<b>Officers</b>		<b>Phone</b>	<b>Directors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Phone</b>
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1st Vice-President	Jean Jones	504-738-8091	Peggy Rogers	2009-10	504-392-6323
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## *from the President*

The Kickoff Party will be Friday evening, October 2nd at our home in Mandeville. NOGA is working on a buffet-style dinner from the LA Grill-one of the best caterers on the Northshore. We'll have an open bar and celebrity bartender Al Baker. Come meet the new Board members and enjoy an evening of food, spirits and conversation under a nearly full moon; I'll have the telescope out for viewing. Watch for an email "blast" as soon as the menu and cost is finalized. Call or email Annette for details and a driving map.

UNO is offering two "meaty" courses aimed at the professional geoscientist in the industry. One, a 6000-level course taught by Dr. Royhan Gani meets Wednesdays 4:30 to 7 pm. The other, a 4000-level course Introduction to the Petroleum Play will be taught by Dr. Tim Matava and others to be named, will meet Saturdays 9 am to 2 pm. Email Dr. Mark Kulp at [mkulp@uno.edu](mailto:mkulp@uno.edu) if you're interested in either of these courses. Mark is making every effort to smooth the registration for professionals.

For Young Professionals ("YPs" or "NeoGeos"): Last month I proffered the advantages of an SPE membership. Since then, Shell engineer Josh Etkind introduced me to SPE's "The Way Ahead" (TWA). TWA comes in hardcopy for members but is currently available online to all visitors to the SPE website. Ostensibly for engineers, most of the articles are general enough to be useful to all young geoscientists in the oil industry. The latest issue includes articles on managing your career path, leadership skills, the current state of the oil market, and technical vs. managerial careers. Heading to an overseas assignment? In a new series of articles, there is a TWA guide to Aberdeen, the center for North Sea operations, and more articles are planned in which YPs describe what it is like to work in some of the oil and gas industry's key locales around the globe. There is an article on Decision Analysis-it's not a cookbook recipe, argues two professors who share some pointers on how to map out the likely consequences of decisions, assess the importance of individual factors, and choose the best course of action. Another new series debuting this issue looks at young women in the oil industry-where are they working, what are they doing, what are their challenges? This sort of information wasn't available 30-40 years ago when one learned the industry ropes through a mentor. Check out "The Way Ahead" at [www.spe.org/spe-app/spe/twa/index.htm](http://www.spe.org/spe-app/spe/twa/index.htm) you won't be disappointed.

There was a good turn out of NOGS members for the 3rd Annual Flood Symposium July 16th. Drs. Mark Kulp (UNO), Torbjörn Törnqvist (Tulane), Juan Lorenzo and his student Jason Hicks (LSU), and Alexander Kolker (LUMCON)

carefully tailored their presentations to the lay people and engineers in the audience. Fox News taped the entire meeting and John Snell interviewed Dr. Törnqvist. This was the first time I had seen the work of Lorenzo and his graduate student Jason Hicks. Their talk was about seismic monitoring of a distressed levee on the West Bank-a nice example of application of geophysics to the geotechnical and engineering field. Bob Hafner is lining up Jason Hicks to talk about his research at a future NOGS luncheon. The PowerPoint slides from all four Flood presentations will be available on our NOGS website in the next couple of weeks. Meanwhile BRGS and the LGS are gearing up for their 3rd Annual La. Subsidence and Land Loss Symposium, Nov. 16 & 17 in Baton Rouge. Info at the BRGS website [www.bras-la.org](http://www.bras-la.org).

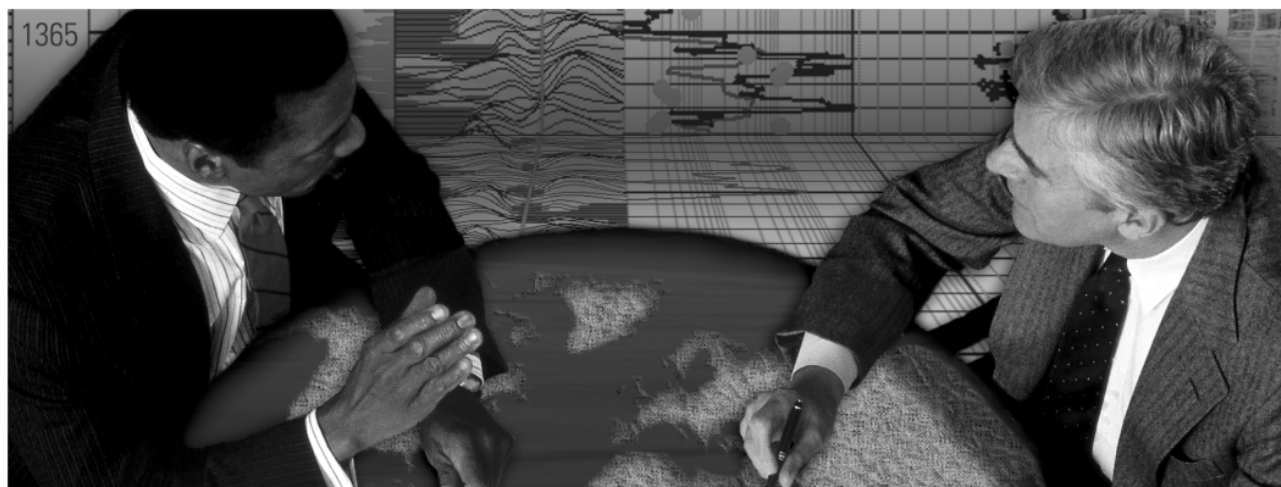
AAPG 2010 convention attendees will have a great opportunity to enjoy an evening of history at the WW II Museum Tuesday evening, April 13th. Details for dinner at the Museum are in the planning stages, but award-winning Chef John Besh will be opening his "American Sector" Restaurant this November in the Museum. So you're guaranteed good food. There's an open bar. Add to this mix good music-hopefully-the Pfister Sisters with their Andrews Sisters impersonations and you are looking at a memorable evening. However, we cannot do this and keep the price to \$50 per person without individual and corporate support. Century Exploration has already pledged \$2,500 support. If you or your company want to be listed as sponsors for World War II Museum Party, email Robert Rooney [Robert.Rooney@centuryx.com](mailto:Robert.Rooney@centuryx.com) or Al Baker [abaker1006@aol.com](mailto:abaker1006@aol.com).

Linda and Lee Prout have promoted a great idea for the 2010 Convention-a KaBOOM! Playground. This event will occur on the Saturday before the Convention and participants will work with KaBOOM! reps to reconstruct one of the playgrounds in the New Orleans area. About two months before the work party, KaBOOM! will get input from the neighborhood kids on what they want for their playground.

Finally, The NOGS Christmas Holiday Party on December 4th is shaping up to be a truly gala event. President-elect and Entertainment Chairman Dave Reiter met with NOGA members Beverly Christina, Judy Lemarié and Amber Klekamp to check out the recently renovated ballrooms at the Metairie Country Club. Details should be finalized by next month's LOG. This will be a popular event and space is limited to ninety persons, you should consider early reservations.

*Tom*

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# September 14 NOGS Luncheon Presentation

\*\*\* at the Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome \*\*\*

## A New Approach to River Management: Action for a Sustainable Coastal Landscape?

presented by

**Denise J. Reed**

Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of New Orleans

### ABSTRACT

Without aggressive action, the future is bleak for coastal Louisiana. This was the message delivered by 35 experts in geology, ecology, coastal geomorphology, oceanography, engineering, and economics from across the United States and around the world who met in New Orleans after Katrina. Despite all of the previous restoration efforts, including the investment of over \$50 million per year since 1990 under CWPPRA -a wide range of analyses still show that land loss exceeds land gain. The processes that contribute to ongoing land loss will be compounded in the 21st century as sea-level rise accelerates and by the likelihood of increased frequency or intensity of major hurricanes. Small-scale management efforts such as sediment mining to construct marshes and stabilize barrier islands or the diversion of flow and sediments from the Mississippi River through controlled breaches may slow land loss

locally. Allowing small amounts, relative to the riverine supply, of sediment to reach coastal wetlands through 'diversions' gives the false impression that the coastal landscape can be restored while maintaining 'business as usual' on the river. Rather, all the available resources of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers will be required to sustain the coastal system, as was typical over past millennia before engineered channels and levees began forcing sediment directly to the deep Gulf, reducing coastal sediment deposition. Harnessing the resources of the Mississippi River is the only way to move towards a sustainable landscape and under the best of circumstances the sustainable coast will likely be smaller than at present, and its character, in terms of the distribution of habitat types and the configuration of landforms, will be different from both the present and the recent past. What will it take to get a approach to river management for the 21st century?

### BIOGRAPHY

**Dr. Denise Reed** is a University Research Professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of New Orleans and is currently Interim Director of the Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences. Her research interests include coastal marsh response to sea-level rise, the contributions of fine sediments and organic material to marsh soil development, and how these are affected by human activities. She has worked on coastal issues on the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf coasts of the US, as well as other parts of the world, and has published the results in numerous papers and reports. She is involved in restoration

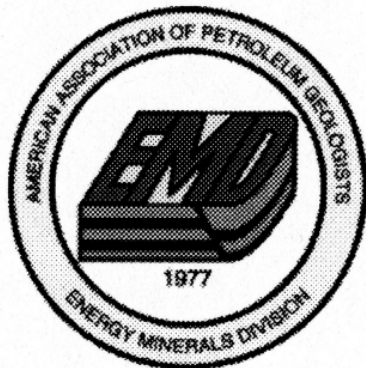
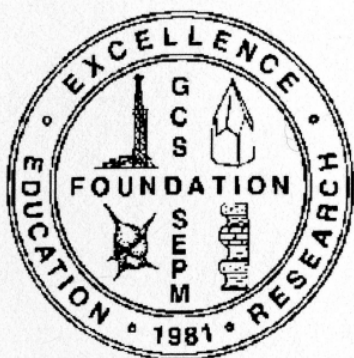
planning both in Louisiana and in California, and in scientifically evaluating the results of restoration projects. Dr. Reed has served on numerous boards and panels concerning the effects of human alterations on coastal environments and the role of science in guiding ecosystem restoration, including the Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board, a number of National Research Council Committees, and the Ecosystems Sciences and Management Working Group of the NOAA Science Advisory Board. She received her BA and PhD from the University of Cambridge in England and has worked in coastal Louisiana for over 20 years.

**THE LUNCHEON RESERVATION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 9 - CONTACT THE NOGS OFFICE**

### “And Looking Ahead...”

The next NOGS Luncheon will be October 5. Guest speaker Rocky R. Roden, Rocky Ridge Resources Inc., will present “DHI Threshold Effect in Prospect Risking”. Contact the NOGS office to make your reservation.





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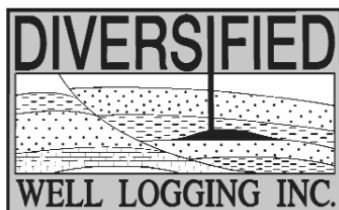
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## NOGS CONTACT LIST

--- continued from page 3 ---

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504-210-8192  
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504-728-4066  
504-210-8148  
504-831-7779  
504-736-2677

#### E-mail


bootscon@aol.com  
klekamp@bellsouth.net  
mfauquier@wtoffshore.inc  
dcope@ankorenergy.com  
tim.piwowar@shell.com  
mikef@wtoffshore.com  
mshalett@gmail.net  
james.swaney@mms.gov

### AAPG DELEGATES

#### Term Ends

2011	Tom Hudson	Chevron	985-773-7163	tom.hudson@chevron.com
2011	Edward B. Picou, Jr.	Consultant	504-529-5155	epicou@bellsouth.net
2011a)	Brenda Reilly	Energy Partners Ltd.	504-799-4811	breilly@eplweb.com
2011a)	Robert Rooney	Century Exploration	504-832-3777	Robert.rooney@centuryx.com
2012	William Whiting	Consultant	504-947-8495	bootscon@aol.com
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## An Evening with America's Greatest Generation at the National World War II Museum

The New Orleans Geological Society intends to sponsor an evening dinner and social at the National World War II Museum for Tuesday, April 13, 2010 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. in conjunction with the AAPG 2010 Annual Convention and Exhibition. The venue for the evening will include admission to the museum, an open bar, a buffet dinner, musical entertainment plus transportation to and from the Convention Headquarters Hotel. However, this venue is not cost effective on a per person basis without the solicitation of industry sponsorships at both the corporate and the individual levels. The goal is to maintain an admission price of \$50 or less per person depending upon the total amount of the funding raised. Presently, funds are being collected through AAPG's Convention Sponsorship Program which is chaired locally by Robert Rooney. A copy of AAPG's brochure depicting this Program can be found elsewhere in this and future issues of the NOGS LOG. NOGS wishes to encourage its members and/or their employers to fiscally support this endeavour which, in turn, will provide a very memorable evening to the AAPG Convention visitors who decide to attend. Please contact Robert Rooney or myself if you have any questions or any suggestions to make this event a huge success. Robert can be contacted at (504) 832-3777 or Robert.Rooney@centuryx.com, and I can be reached at (504) 836-2710 or ABaker1006@aol.com.

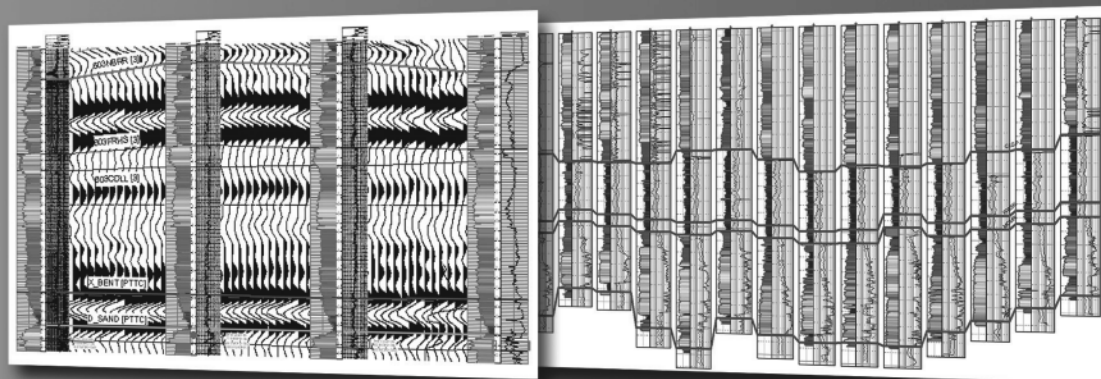
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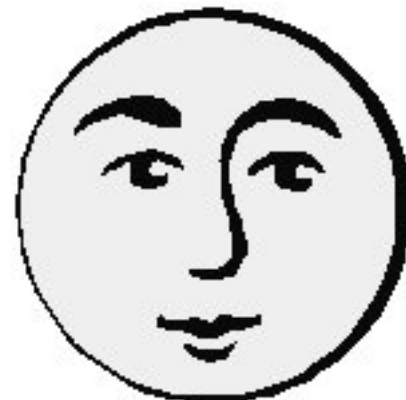
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## **NOGS KICK-OFF PARTY**

**Friday, October 2  
6:30 to 9:30 PM**

**Tom and Amber Klekamp’s Home  
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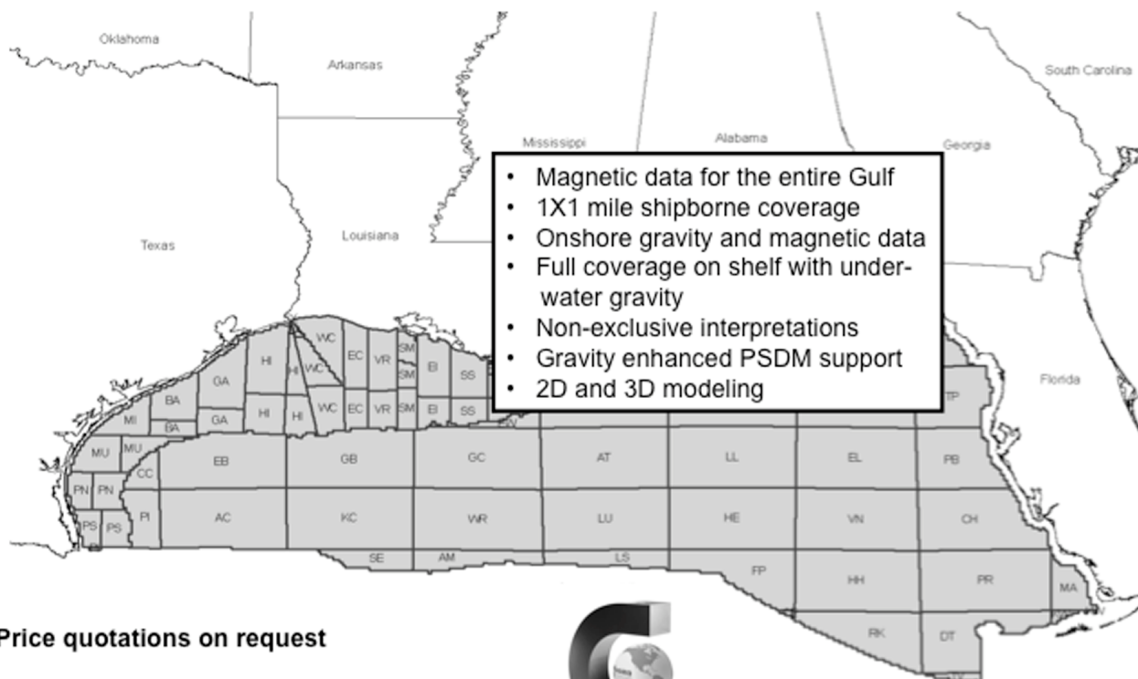
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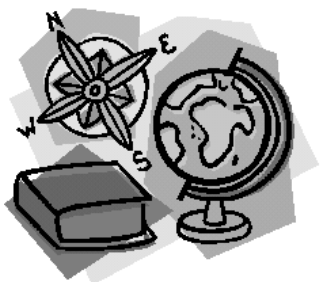


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# **Academic Abstract**



## **Framework and Evolution of a Transgressed Delta Lobe: St. Bernard Shoals, Northern Gulf of Mexico, USA**

Bryan Rogers and Mark Kulp

Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of New Orleans

Michael D. Miner

Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of New Orleans

Shore-parallel marine sand bodies on the Louisiana continental shelf are thought to mark the approximate position of paleoshorelines associated with abandoned deltas. Ship Shoal, Trinity Shoal, and Outer Shoal, are single, strike-elongate shelf sand bodies, the St. Bernard Shoals, however, consist of 61 discrete sand bodies that range in size from 44 km<sup>2</sup> to 0.5 km<sup>2</sup>. These shoals are located ~25 km southeast of the Chandeleur Islands in 15-18 m water depths and have as much as 3-5 m of relief. The strike of the larger individual sand bodies is oriented northwest (shore-normal), whereas the strike of the shoal platform (St. Bernard Bathymetric high) is shore-parallel.

An analysis of existing and new sediment cores, high-resolution shallow seismic reflection profiles, side scan sonar imagery, and sea-floor sediment samples indicates that a ravinement surface separates the shoal sand bodies from underlying prodelta, delta front, and distributary channel facies. These sub-shoal facies are interpreted to be the product of a previously unrecognized progradational event associated with the Bayou La Loutre distributary within the St. Bernard deltaic complex. The facies relationship—marine sand overlying fluvio-deltaic deposits with paralic deposits absent—has important implications for the evolution of a deltaic dominated shelf and the formation of mid-shelf sand bodies in such settings. A relict, progradational beach ridge plain abutting the lower La Loutre distributary has also been interpreted from seismic profiles. The beach ridges developed as sand—sourced from an updrift, formerly abandoned delta lobe—was transported alongshore and deposited against the actively prograding La Loutre distributary; providing an opportunity to establish the relative chronology of delta lobes on the eastern Louisiana shelf. The results proposed herein corroborate Frazier's (1967) chronology, and show that the distributary network preserved below the St. Bernard Shoals prograded after abandonment of a more northern lobe. After fluvial abandonment the most recent St. Bernard complex delta lobe became truncated by marine processes. Subsequent to truncation, the shoals formed through subaqueous excavation and reworking of sand contained within lowermost portions of the underlying distributary channels by hurricane-induced currents on the inner shelf. Understanding the formation of the St. Bernard Shoals has important implications for the chronology of the St. Bernard delta complex, the evolution of the Chandeleur Islands, and modes of marine sand body development.

*We are currently seeking academic abstracts from geology students from all of our local universities. Please contact Liz Petro at [nogseditor@gmail.com](mailto:nogseditor@gmail.com) with any questions or abstract submissions.*

**FROM THE EDITOR**





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Dear Fellow NOGS Members,

Next April 11th to 14th, NOGS will host the 2010 AAPG Annual Convention and Exhibition at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. This is a tremendous opportunity that The New Orleans Geological Community has to demonstrate our importance as an Industry hub, and as an important part of our local community. For example, at the AAPG Convention and Exhibition this past June in Denver, the AAPG website reports there was a total attendance of 7,452, with 260 exhibiting companies. Also, as a reminder of AAPG's international influence, 85 countries had representative attendees. Some of the countries with the highest attendance representation included the following:

Country Attendees

United States	6,359
Canada	269
United Kingdom	166
Norway	54
Brazil	52
Columbia	36
China	35
Saudi Arabia	31
France	31
Australia	29
Netherlands	29

According to AAPG's website, the majority of the post-show survey respondents indicated that they would attend the 2010 Annual Convention and Exhibition in New Orleans.

On a personal note, I remember the hard choice that the NOGS board had to make in 2005 following Hurricane Katrina when members were faced with mounting personal challenges dealing with family responsibilities, property loss, career uncertainty, and relocations, the NOGS board decided to postpone what was to be the 2008 AAPG Convention and Exhibition in New Orleans. Well, 2010 is now our year, and the NOGS planning board lead by Tom Hudson as General Chairman along with the leadership at AAPG are on the way to bringing a first-class Convention to our city. Conventions of the quality that AAPG consistently delivers do not happen on their own. We need your financial support to make the 2010 Convention a success. Now is the time as members of the New Orleans Community, and the Oil & Gas Industry to publicly demonstrate your commitment to bringing the high quality technical program and exhibits that the AAPG has to offer to its members, through your generous financial contributions as sponsors.

Challenges will always be present in our industry, but as finders of oil and gas, we know the power of a strong technical base which continues to help us unmask the potential of the basins in which we work. I don't think you will ever regret making a gesture of generosity, especially when it goes toward the betterment of your peers, future employees, or future business partners, and of course - you.

On behalf of AAPG and NOGS, thank you in advance for your generous support. For a list of available sponsorship levels and individual sponsorship opportunities, you can visit the AAPG website sponsorship link at: <http://www.aapg.org/neworleans/sponsorship.cfm>

In addition, a sponsorship form is posted opposite this letter which can be faxed directly to AAPG to the attention of Steph Benton.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Rooney

AAPG Sponsorship Chairman

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### 3rd Annual Flood Symposium, July 16th.



Flood Symposium Moderator, WAFB-Baton Rouge Anchorperson and Attorney, Julie Baxter (far left) and the East Bank Levee Board Member, the Hon. Mike Merritt, Secretary of the SE La Flood Protection Authority-East Bd of Commissioners (back to camera, foreground) look on as Dr. Torbjörn Törnqvist – Tulane, Dr. Alexander Kolker - LUMCON, Dr. Juan Lorenzo – LSU and Dr. Mark Kulp – UNO are presented their medals by the Hon. Susan Maclay, President of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-West Board of Commissioners, and Dr. George Losonsky of Losonsky & Associates in Baton Rouge. Dr. Losonsky was appointed a founding Commissioner of the SLFPA-E Bank Board of Commissioners by Governor Blanco. Along with Mike Merritt, he is the other geologist serving as a Commissioner and is also the elected Secretary of SLFPA-E.



# NOGS July 13th Luncheon



Dave Reiter, right, with  
Tom Klekamp



Robert Rooney



Bob Hafner



Bill Whiting



Tom Klekamp

# NOGS MEMORIAL FOUNDATION YEARLY REPORT 2008-2009

## GENERAL FUND

### INCOME:

Interest	\$21,005.00
Qualified Dividends	3,502.00
Other Dividends	10,736.00
Capital Gains LT	0.00
Capital Gains ST	0.00
Money Fund Earnings	1,264.00
Contributions	<u>35,594.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$72,101.00</b>

### Expenses:

Scholarships	\$21,000.00
Scholarship Luncheon	240.00
Donations	1,000.00
Administrative Expense	1,200.00
Maps in Schools Program	200.00
Miscellaneous	0.00
Board Insurance	725.40
Accountant Fees	<u>675.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,040.40</b>

The scholarships were presented at the September NOGS luncheon meeting.

## MORGAN STANLEY SMITH BARNEY ACCOUNT

Value of Investments June 30, 2008	\$665,594.21
Value of Investments June 30, 2009	\$654,793.25
Net Increase (decrease)	(\$10,800.96)

## VANGUARD ACCOUNT

Value of Investments June 30, 2008	\$111,409.20
Value of Investments June 30, 2009	\$ 80,518.30
Net Increase (decrease)	(\$30,890.90)

**Total Net Increase (decrease) (\$41,691.86)**

The NOGS Memorial Foundation was impacted by the steep declines in the financial markets as reflected in the decrease in value of our investment accounts; however income for the Foundation's programs was less affected due to the Memorial Foundation Board's focus on investments with secure yields.

A new scholarship was added for 2009-2010 in the amount of \$2500 per year and named in honor of George W. Schneider Sr. The scholarship will be rotated between three universities, with a student from the University of New Orleans being the recipient for the first year, a Tulane student for the second year, and a Louisiana State University student for the third year. Awards beyond the first three years will follow the order laid out in the first three years. The scholarship may be awarded to a junior, senior, or graduate student, with the guidance of the respective department chair.

NOGS has now awarded a total of 188 scholarships to date, with 10 more to be awarded in September, 2009. The numbers break out as follows:

79 awards to UNO for a total of	\$150,500
76 awards to LSU for a total of	\$146,000
73 awards for Tulane for a total of	\$142,000
30 awards to Nicholls State for a total of	<u>\$40,000</u>
For a grand total of \$478,500 in scholarships awarded.	

In order to reflect the NOGS Memorial Foundation's ongoing educational outreach in Southeast Louisiana, the Board amended the Foundation bylaws to expand the "greater New Orleans area" to include St. Charles, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. John the Baptist, and Tangipahoa Parishes, and adjoining coastal areas.

Respectfully submitted,

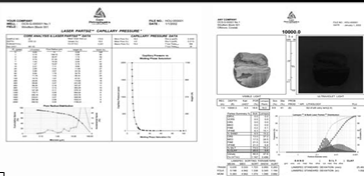
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Chairman, NOGS Memorial Foundation 2008-2009



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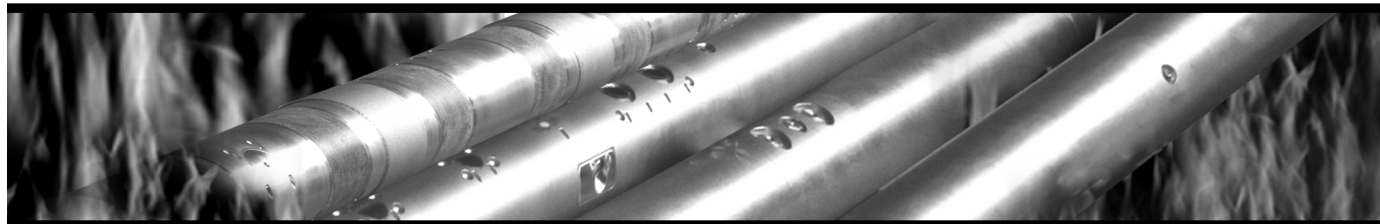
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# **The Geological Facts of Life About Flood Protection**

It was a privilege and an honor to have the support of NOGS in presenting this Third Annual Symposium in the Jefferson Parish Council Chambers in the Joseph Yenni Building at 1221 Elmwood Park Blvd. on July 16, 2009.

Kudos to Ed Picou, for co-chairing the symposium, and for the enthusiastic support of NOGS Officers. Thanks and a tip of the hat to all members who participated. As set forth in the call for papers, the unique purpose of this conference is to convene public agencies and provide officials in charge and the public, with the latest geological research affecting flood protection efforts in the Gulf of Mexico Coast Region.

Again in 2009 the Symposium moderator was Ms. Julie Baxter, a practicing attorney with the Rhorer Law Firm and former Baton Rouge television broadcast news anchor, who won acclaim from the Associated Press and the National Association of Press Women and also won the regional Edward R. Murrow award for investigative reporting in television. Returning as 2009 sponsors with NOGS were Dr. Chacko John and the Louisiana Geological Survey and the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authorities, (SLFPA), East and West.

For 2009 the program was moved to the council chambers to take advantage of state of the art television facilities for recording and rebroadcast on public access channels to continue efforts to reach a larger audience. The public, reporters from the Times-Picayune and Mr. John Snell of Fox TV News attended and asked good questions. The 2009 Symposium placed before the public some important scientific achievements and featured lectures by Dr. Mark Kulp of UNO, Dr. Torbjorn Tornquist of Tulane, Dr. Juan Lorenzo of LSU and Dr. Alexander Kolker of LUMCON.

This Symposium also obtained the largest participation of Flood Authority Commissioners to date as both the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority (SLFPA) East and West Boards of Commissioners had a quorum of Commissioners present when an historic joint meeting of the two agencies was convened for only the second time. After the call to order, pledge of allegiance and roll call, Ms. Baxter was introduced and the technical program began.

## **Geologic Considerations for the Management of the Mississippi River Delta Plain**

Dr. Mark Kulp presented data conveying the importance of the great need for detailed geological research to advise efforts to manage the coast properly by working with and not against geological processes. Dr. Kulp described this as “Transgressive Management”. He described the problem of soils reacting differently to freshwater diversions depending upon whether or not wetlands are fresh or salty. For example, a project benefiting an ecosystem might be torn to pieces by a tropical storm. Alternatively, a project might be designed differently and be less beneficial to the ecosystem to protect land from being lost to tropical storms. As an example, Dr. Kulp noted as tidal inlets deepen, barrier islands diminish and sand is sequestered offshore. Using a diversion from the Mississippi River to carry in sediment and reduce open water in Barataria Bay would reduce the negative impact of the tidal inlet.

Dr. Kulp also spoke about the issue of the amount of sand available for, and cost of, coastline restoration. For example, \$7,700,000 was spent to restore Whiskey Island. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita provided a sudden land loss that would usually take 7 years to accomplish. After reviewing the key geological processes causing subsidence, Dr. Kulp noted most of the sediment in the Mississippi watershed is trapped behind dams upriver. Also, the expense of completely restoring everything that has been lost may be unaffordable. Dr. Kulp presented the idea the challenge now is to re-engineer the coast to protect vital economic and cultural facilities and manage relocations strategically for assets we cannot afford to save.

## **Accelerated Sea-level Rise and Coastal Subsidence: A Dual Threat for the US Gulf Coast**

Dr. Tornqvist presented the idea that the relative rise in sea level and the subsidence of the land are a double threat. He suggests Louisiana is vulnerable because we are nearing the point where sea level rise will become more of a threat than settling of loose coastal soils. He noted from 1880 to 2000 relative sea level had risen about 200 millimeters or about 7 7/8 inches. He showed illustrations of western Greenland glaciers that have doubled their speed due to the area having the fastest melting glaciers. This means the worst case melt water scenario has happened since 1990 causing concern the role of melting ice sheets is not fully taken into account.

As for subsidence, he presented estimates for various factors such as a consistent rate of .15 millimeters per year or about a half an inch per century due to flexing of the earth's crust. However, all combined subsidence factors seemed almost in balance with deposition showing the reason for his concern about the importance of unchecked relative sea level rise as the predominant factor determining the future of the coast.

### **Seismic Monitoring of a Distressed Earthen Levee: West Bank, Louisiana U.S.A.**

(Note: Since last year, Dr. Lorenzo has continued to develop his research line originally commissioned by SLFPA-W. Previously, Dr. Lorenzo found unhealthy levees had a unique seismic signature (unusually slow shear wave transit times). Since last year's pioneering work by SLFPA-W, SLFPA-E has now commissioned three new levee seismic projects, each in a different levee district jurisdiction on the East Bank as the two Commissioners who are geologists (the writer and Dr. George Losonsky, President of Losonsky and Associates and SLFPA-E Commissioner) cooperate on the leaky levee problems occurring on both sides of the Mississippi River.)

In his lecture, Dr. Lorenzo discussed processes causing levees to fail such as erosion, overtopping, undercutting or construction over weak foundation soils. Foundation soils under levees vary from strong to weak and accurately delineating geologic circumstances is vital to taking proper corrective action. Using his seismic methods to measure relative strength and weakness over a traverse of a levee reach Dr. Lorenzo explained how the subject section was marked with robust, arcuate, fractures. His next slide showed him standing up to his knees in a fracture that extended several score yards along the crown of a West Bank levee. He described how the seismic tests using shear waves were defacto estimates of engineering strength and compressibility.

Also in attendance was Dr. Lorenzo's graduate student, Mr. Jason Hicks, from Harvey, Louisiana (where the troubled levee is located). Mr. Hicks participated in the research and was present to answer any questions about his original geological work funded by the National Science Foundation. He laboriously compiled geologic data from cone penetrometer tests, and other technical engineering information, obtained by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE). Mr. Hicks reinterpreted the data to produce the first detailed geologic cross section of the unhealthy levee featured in last year's Symposium presentation. Astonishingly, (to the two Commissioners contending with straight lines of puddles on the flanks of levees in dry seasons) Mr. Hick's geological re-interpretation of ACE engineering data is consistent with having peat or organic material or some other low velocity material actually included in the unhealthy levee embankment studied. This new, geologic, re-interpretation based on sample data seems to directly confirm Dr. Lorenzo's prior seismic survey work finding low velocity (presumably organic) material in or beneath the levee.

(Note: The seismic and geology work is not contradicted by anecdotal reports from retired DOTD employees involved in building the levee. After the research was completed and before the Symposium, the writer spoke to a retired DOTD employee who worked on the project and who remembered it had the highest rejection rate of borrow of any project they could recall— (only one of every four truck loads of borrow material were low enough in organics and high enough in clay to be accepted for use in the levee!)

--- continued on the following pages ---



## The Geological Facts of Life About Flood Protection,

continued from the previous pages

### Sediment Dynamics at Two Mississippi River Diversions

Dr. Kolker spoke about his studies of wetland creation by using river diversions. He seemed to present a more optimistic view than recent, highly publicized, but pessimistic news stories about using diversions to restore the coast. Dr. Kolker noted large floods *can* deposit enough sediment to match subsidence locally. He began his presentation by speaking about tidal gauge data proving relative sea level has risen. In 20 years, he noted, the South Pass tidal gauge showed a relative rise in sea level of about 37.5 millimeters or about 1.5 inches, probably due to compaction of Holocene sediments and isostatic loading.

Next, he noted last year (2008) was one of the highest level Mississippi River floods in the last 25 years and that floods could carry twelve times more sediment to rebuild the coast than otherwise (at low water). Using the 1988 artificial crevasse of Saw Dust Bend as an example to explain his research methods, Dr. Kolker presented his conclusion that diversions to repair or rebuild the coast *need not* be at expense of shipping interests because it is easiest to move the most sediment during floods when river traffic is at anchor or ordered away by the Port Captain. His research shows about ¼ inch of sediment per week was placed in an area of study during flooding and the challenge for coastal managers is to place this process and the new material being laid down, to best advantage. Because so much deposition is gained during flooding, there would be little advantage to continuing a diversion in time of low water when the possibility of shoaling, if any, might discourage navigation.

### Louisiana Shoreline Change from 1937 until 2000

Another first this year was the presentation of the LSU Hurricane Center's impressive shoreline change map as a poster session. The map was created from pixel by pixel comparisons of digital versions of the 1937 and the 2000 Official State Map of Louisiana and was prepared by cartographers at the Louisiana Geological Survey. Land loss areas were marked in orange and gains in green. The poster session continued throughout the day as the map spoke for itself attracting the interest of the public and a TV news crew who studied the green and orange areas while considering recent press reports about (1) changing the portion of flow from the Mississippi through the Old River Structure or (2) about the Blum and Roberts research.

When shown as an exhibit by Chief LGS Cartographer John Snead during his lecture at last year's Symposium, the *Louisiana Shoreline Change from 1937-2000* map was given a blue ribbon by NOGS when the scientists were presented with medals from NOGS in appreciation for participation. The blue ribbon was the first but not the last award for the map. This year at the poster session the "land loss" map was shown with a certificate certifying an award from the 35<sup>th</sup> Map Competition of the Cartography and Geographic Information Society. The award was for: Best of Category: Thematic. The decision to honor the Louisiana map was made by a CaGIS panel of five judges including scientists from the National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution. Congratulations!

## **Panel Discussion**

Again this year, the Symposium finale was the popular panel discussion as the experts entertained impromptu questions from the audience. Ms. Baxter was the moderator of the panel discussion. Flood Authority East Commissioner and Past President Tom Jackson raised questions about whether or not panelists agreed with Dr. Sherwood Gagliano's research about local faulting and its affect on flood protection efforts. Dr. Kulp replied we know the Northern Gulf Coast is riddled with faults but a lack of good data makes it difficult to estimate the regional scale or movement of these faults in the last 10,000 years. Riley Milner of LGS queried the panel about climate change. Dr. Tornquist replied noting the additional fresh water provided by more numerous and more robust storms was an important, but unsettled point. He suggested everyone not be distracted from the impact of the known and increasing rate the relative sea level is rising. Ms. Baxter presented written queries handed in during the program. One questioner asked if a panelist agreed diversions should draw from the bottom of the channel where the river was tantamount to a "mud flow". Dr. Kolker answered "absolutely" and noted while it is more beneficial, it is harder to do.

Ms. Baxter closed the program by thanking Ed Picou and NOGS, Dr. Chacko John and LGS, Commissioner Dr. George Losonsky and SLFPA-E and SLFPA-W. After Ms. Baxter's many years of experience in television broadcasting, this Symposium was a task worthy of her hand because Cox recorded the program for editing into a television program for later broadcast on public access channels or posting on the websites of the four sponsors.

Following Ms. Baxter's remarks East Authority Commissioner Dr. Losonsky on behalf of President Doody and West Authority President Commissioner Maclay concluded the joint meeting of the two agencies by: making closing remarks, presenting the customary medals (donated by NOGS) to the presenters, announcing the next meeting dates for each agency and adjourning the joint meeting.

Thanks to Annette Hudson who has attended every Symposium to help out, and thanks to all of you who volunteered to join the NOGS ad hoc committee on the Geologic Facts of Life for Flood Protection or supported this event with your hard work, attendance and thoughtful advice and questions again this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Merritt

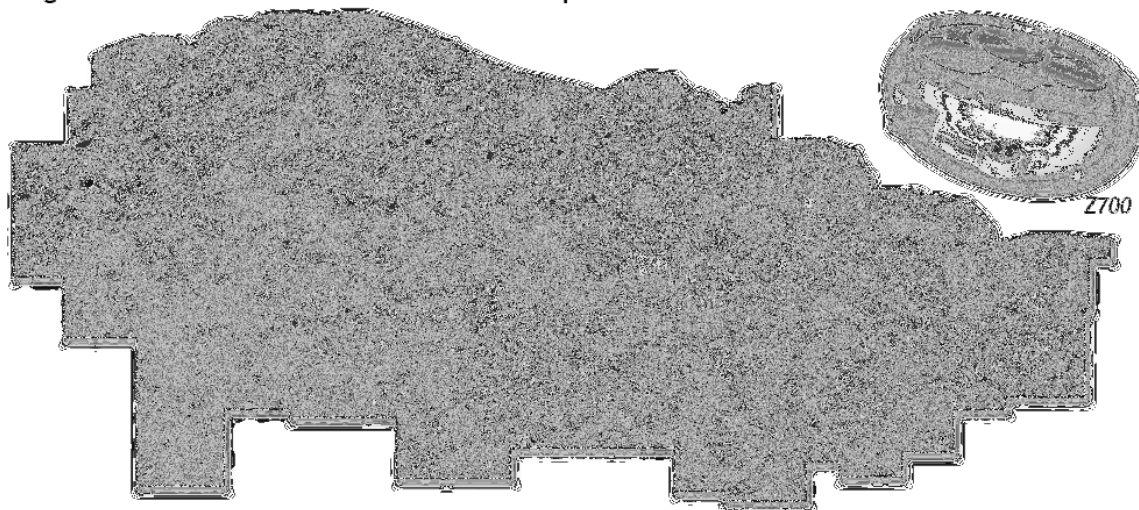
Mike is a NOGS member and President GEM Consulting LTD. He was the first geologist appointed by Governor Blanco to the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority West Bank Board of Commissioners.



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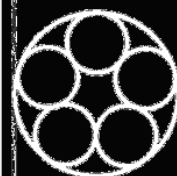
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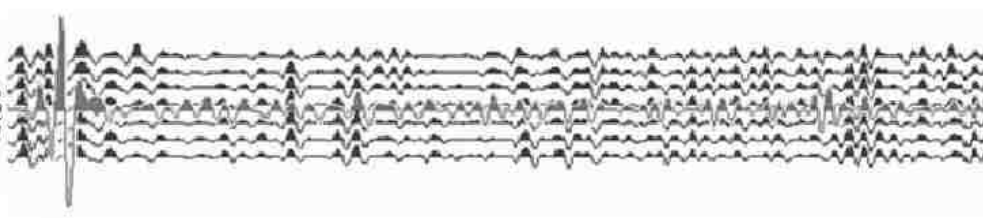
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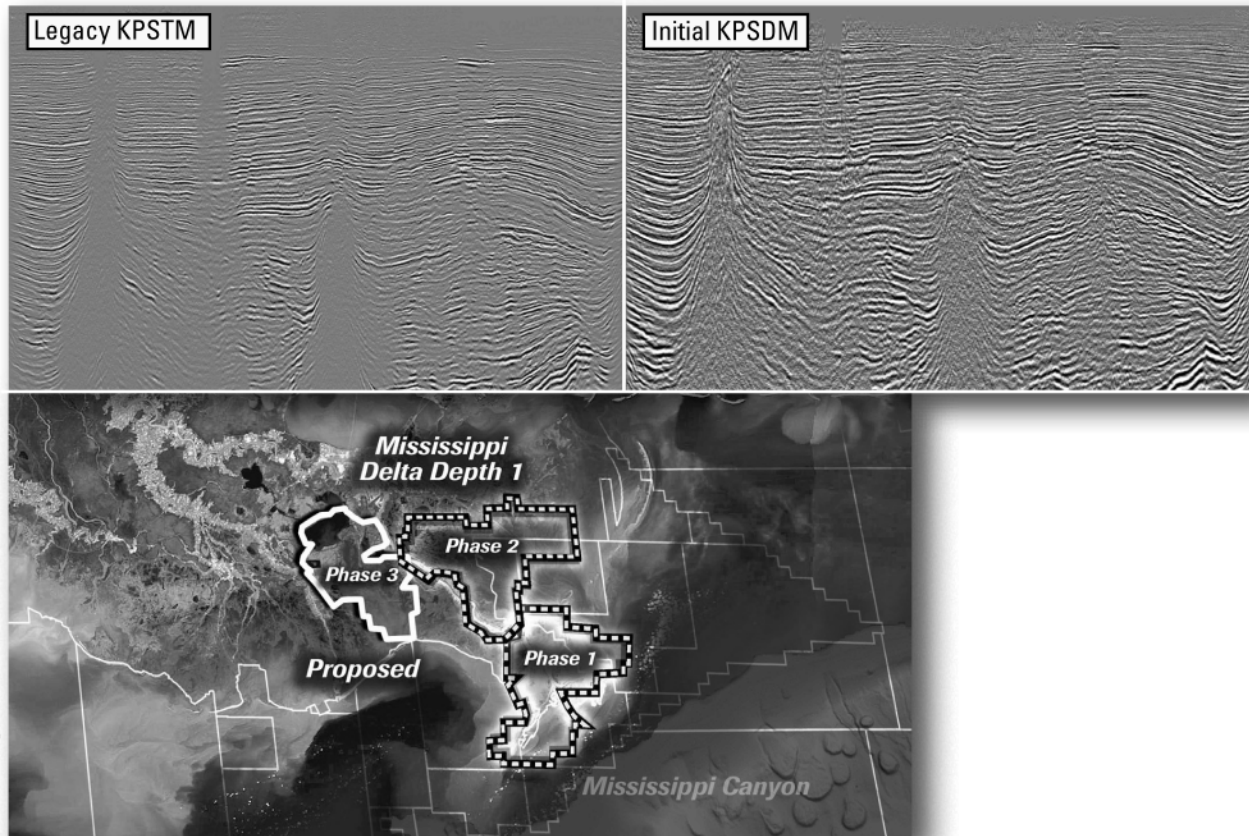
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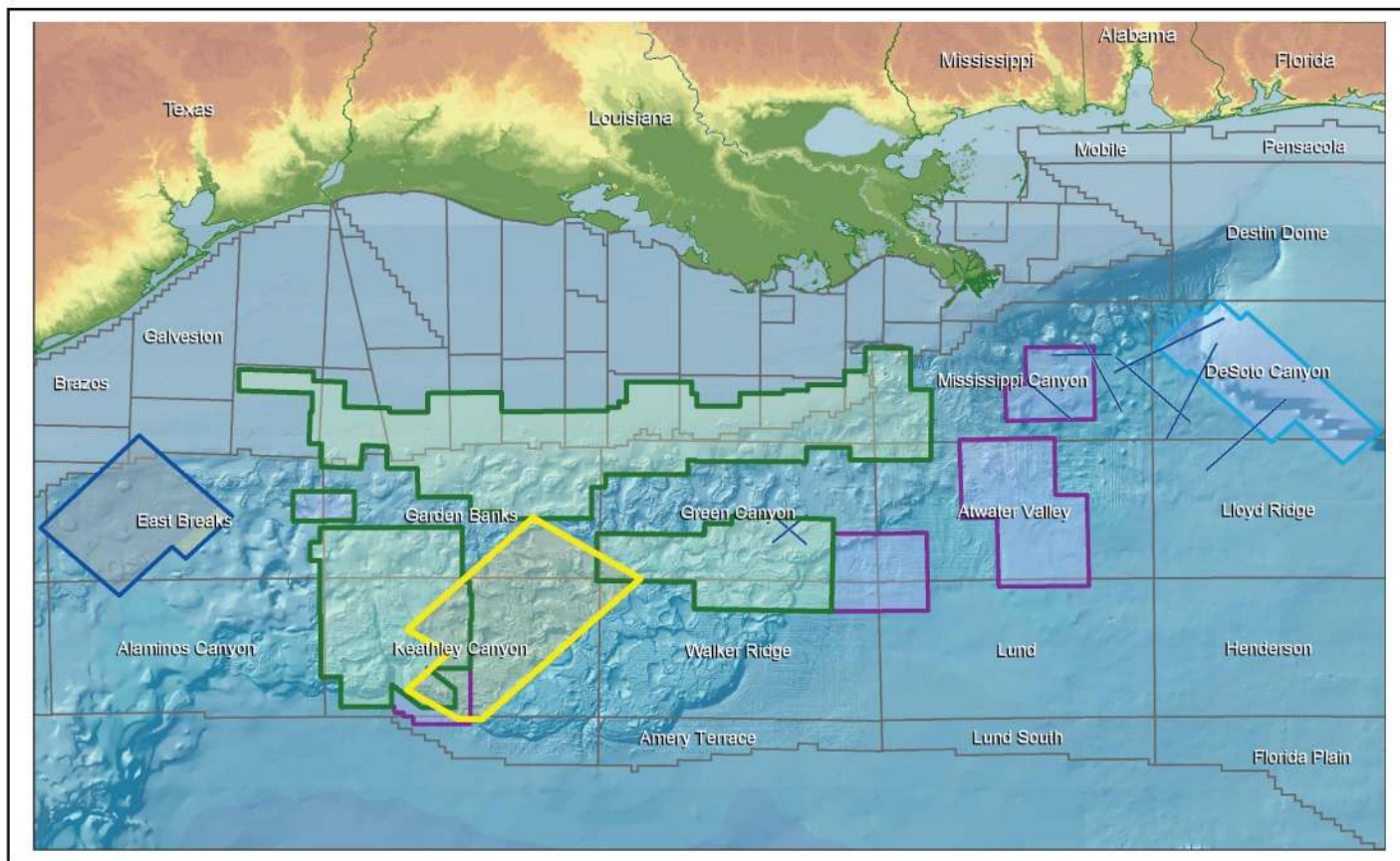


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