UM Researchers Awarded Grants From Federal RESTORE Act Science Program

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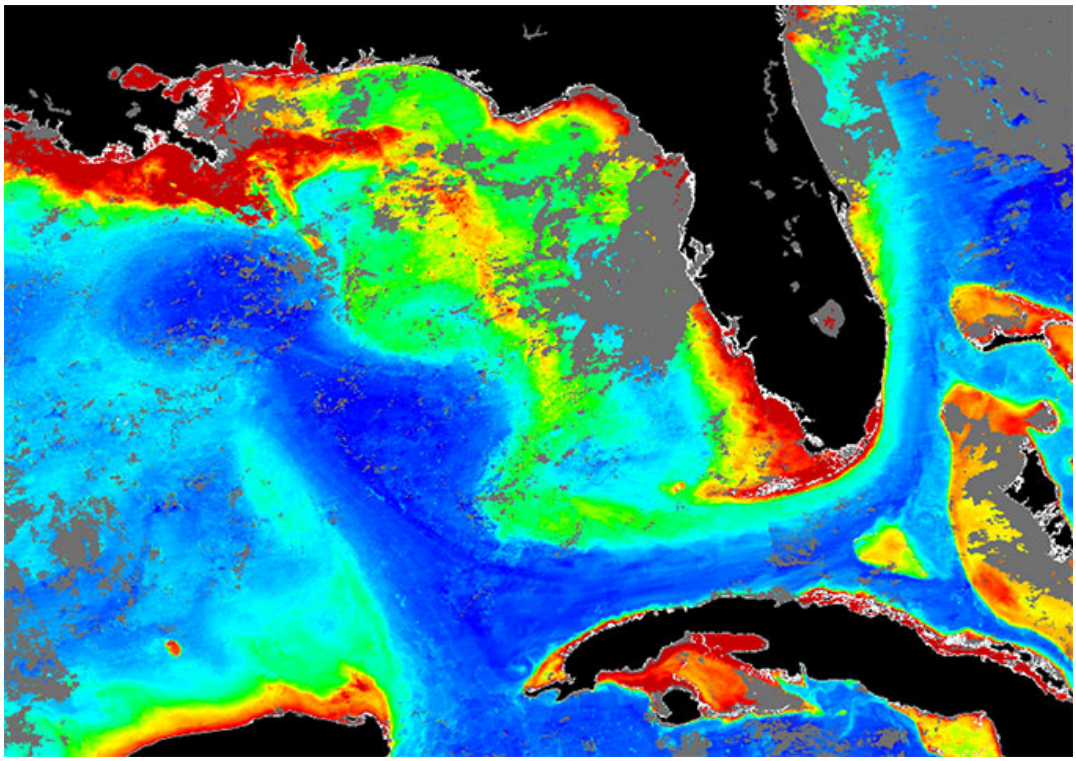
Researchers from the University of Miami (UM) Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science were recipients of 2015 RESTORE Act Science Program (Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies) research grants. Administered by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the program funded seven projects in 2015 designed to carry out research to support the long-term sustainability of ecologically and commercially important ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico.



The project under PI Le Hénaff will quantify the ability of the existing Gulf of Mexico observing system to monitor episodes of export of nutrient-rich waters from the Mississippi River Delta to the Florida Keys reefs (ocean color image from August 13, 2014, http://optics.marine.usf.edu/)

A project, led by scientist Matthieu Le Hénaff of the UM Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies (CIMAS), to assess Gulf of Mexico observation networks from an ecosystem management perspective received $398,812 in funding. UM Rosenstiel Professor Villy Kourafalou, Frank Muller-Karger (University of South Florida), and Luke McEachron (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), will serve as co-investigators on the project, which is based on an approach that has been successfully used to assess the capacity of ocean observing networks to effectively monitor ocean circulation.

“This is a significant step toward a prototype for biophysical observing system evaluation with a broad range

of ocean management applications, a key objective of the RESTORE Act," said Le Hénaff.

In collaboration with ecosystem and resource managers, Le Hénaff and co-investigators will establish realistic observation and management scenarios, which will form the foundation for observing system experiments that will quantify the impact of various components of the existing Gulf of Mexico observing system, toward an effective and sustainable ecosystem management. This work will greatly enhance the Observing System Simulation Experiment (OSSE) capabilities of the Joint UM and NOAA "Ocean Modeling and OSSE Center".

UM Rosenstiel Professor Elizabeth Babcock and CIMAS post-doc Arnaud Gruss are co-investigators on the science team awarded $3950.00 to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of ecosystem modeling efforts in the Gulf of Mexico and align current and future ecosystem modeling efforts with management needs and restoration activities. That project is led by James Simons from Texas A&M University Corpus Christi.

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