

MVCO WAVES

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The Martha's Vineyard Coastal Observatory is producing great data for a growing and diverse scientific community. It has been an exciting first season with new instrument installations and a very busy period as we work at expanding our team and developing a management structure for our new facility. The vision of the observatory as a significant resource not only to the scientific community, but also to the public, and especially as a tool for educators gives us a very broad mission. Meeting these diverse goals will be challenging and exciting.

Field Ops

Despite bad weather in late January, we had a successful run out to the observatory in early February to deal with a ground fault problem in the power system. The divers braved 34-degree water and sleet on the way home to remove, clean, lubricate and reinstall the main power connector.

March saw Peter Traykovski and his team lead by Glenn McDonald and divers Esmail Ali, Sandy Williams and Jay Sisson successfully maintain and reposition the NRL optical sediment monitoring instrument.

Web Page Debut

We are very happy to announce the long awaited birth of our web page! Janet Fredericks, our data manager, and Sheila Hurst, our page manager, have been working with Julie Allen and Lori Dolby at CIS for several months now and we are very happy with the results. You can view 20-minute data averages for the "core" sensors as well as download a picture of the surf conditions on South Beach. Most of the information for new users is available in the "Plugging In" section. Feedback is welcome and should be sent to Sheila.



Outreach

In January Mrs. Ann Hoyle, the enrichment teacher at the Edgartown School, invited Marga McElroy to give a presentation on the MVCO. Marga met with a group of students taking a mini-course on weather with Mr. David Farber. The presentation was followed by a field trip to the observatory later in February.

Spring Cleaning

Planning for the spring overhaul of the underwater node has begun and may take place in early May, weather permitting. Divers will uncouple the node from the pedestal and it will be recovered by the R/V Asterias and brought ashore for rejuvenating. The instruments will be cleaned and calibrated and modifications will be made for easier diver access, guest ports may be added, the ground fault system will be upgraded and new instruments will be installed. It will probably be redeployed in about two weeks. Jay Sisson, who joined the field ops team this winter, will take the lead in planning this as well as our future marine operations. His experience as both a marine operations manager and diver have already been a great asset to our team.

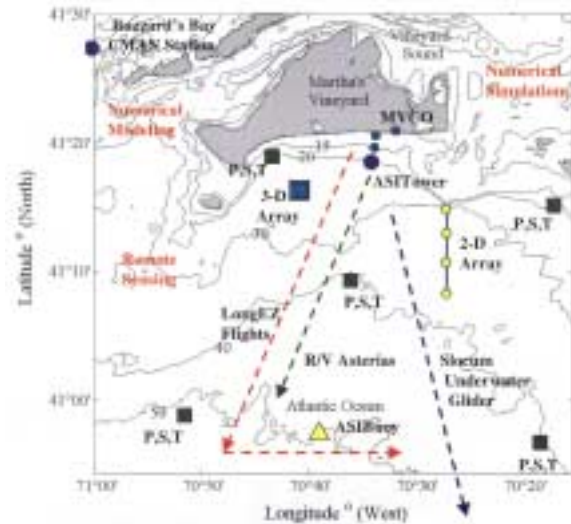


Future Plans

Plans are in full swing for this summer's expansion of the observatory to include the Coupled Boundary Layer Air-Sea Transfer (CBLAST) experiments. This is an exciting project which will involve scientists from all over the country using a broad spectrum of sampling techniques that will involve boats, planes, drifters, buoys, and autonomous vehicles (AUVs).

Many of the permits are already in place to lay more cable out to the 15-meter contour. The node at this site will be mounted on the Air-Sea Interaction

Tripod (ASIT), which will pierce the surface and allow the scientists to monitor a wide variety of dynamic processes from benthic sediments, up the water column and into the atmosphere. In addition to the underwater sensors, a 15-meter meteorological mast atop the tripod will support instruments that will measure fine scale transfer of gases, energy and turbulence. The installation will occur this summer with the major science program beginning in 2003.



Sandy Williams is planning the cable installation for early June. The contract was awarded to a team headed by Clearwater Inc. of Old Saybrook, CN. The tower design has recently been completed by Appledore Engineering of New Hampshire. Bid packages went out to potential fabricator/installation firms in March and tower construction is expected to start in May with the installation in early summer.