

Ocean Interpretive Stations
A Pilot Program for Coastal America Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers

Abstract

Investigators:

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Budget requested

Year 1:	\$265,137
Year 2:	\$ 98,586
Year 3:	\$ 17,232
Total:	\$379,955.00

Objectives: To create a pilot program which will deliver ocean literacy learning opportunities to 3 million people across the country by installation of dynamic *Ocean Interpretive Stations* at four Coastal America Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers: lead applicant the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, IA, the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, IL, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, MD, and the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, CA. These *Interpretive Stations* will present vital messages of ocean literacy to the broad public using and expanding on a proven product in a free choice learning environment in four key sites across the country. The pilot kiosks will provide the regional stories of Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic, the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River watershed and the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific.

Description of Activities: This project will fund the installation of four Ocean-in-the-News kiosks with Smithsonian Institution content and the additional regional messages which will be developed for four Coastal America Learning Centers. *Ocean Interpretive Stations* will create four new messages which can be offered to learners at the Smithsonian and the four pilot sites. This project may lead to the possible disseminate the content of Ocean-in-the-News to the other 18 Learning Centers.

Expected Outcome: The *Ocean Interpretive Stations* will enhance ocean literacy among museum goers through multimedia offerings, providing current, newsworthy and foundational ocean topics to encourage learning for 3 million visitors. The project has the potential to be disseminated to 18 other Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers throughout the United States, with the possibility of reaching over 25 million visitors. The project outcomes are: Increased awareness of ocean issues on the part of visitors; increased knowledge of regional ocean issues; increased capacity of sites to provide additional resources to teachers in the four regions; and to demonstrate effectiveness of this collaboration to other CERC partners, encouraging additional partnerships in the future.

Rationale: The *Ocean Interpretive Stations* will give citizens information they lack to make good water resource decisions. Polling shows that over 50% of Great Lakes residents felt that what their actions do not impact the Great Lakes. Although non-point source pollution is the largest source of river pollution, 86% of Americans are completely unfamiliar with the term and do not know that it means water running over land picking up pollutants and depositing them into rivers. Only 17% of Americans identified agricultural run-off and urban sprawl as a major threat to the health of our waters.