

OCEANOGRAPHY IN THE DEERAN STATE 3

Recent & Upcoming Events

Honors Colloquium Focuses on Global Climate Change



Evening at the Ocean Club



Marine Scientist to Give Plenary Talk at Ocean Optics Conference

Graduate Student Adventures

Okay, everyone close your eyes and picture a New England salt marsh. Smell the salt air, the mud, feel the breeze on your face, hear the sea grasses waving in the breeze. Now, imagine this salt marsh is somewhere in the Caribbean, replace the grass with trees, make the breeze warm, keep the mud and salt smell, and imagine a tropical drink in your hand if you like. Congratulations! In your mind's eye, you are in a mangrove forest that is uniquely adapted to coastal environments in the tropics and provide vital habitat for many organisms. Unfortunately, mangrove forests all over the world have been logged for coastal construction projects. Mangroves living in areas exposed to wave action are particularly vulnerable and are extremely difficult to replace by planting new trees. Their seedlings cannot be moved once they've been planted and seeds (or propagules) are easily washed away by waves and tides.



GSO graduate student Jason Krumholz teamed up with the Reef Ball Foundation on Grand Cayman Island to develop a technique for establishing new mangrove forests in high energy environments. Mangrove propagules were planted in biodegradable cement planters filled with soil and fitted with plaster bottoms (designed in concert with the Scotts Company) that release fertilizers over the span of a year and then break away, allowing the seedlings to take root in the underlying soil. The cement planters, too, will degrade over time and, eventually, no signs of the restoration project will remain. At the last check, the seedlings were doing fine - but then Hurricane Gustav blew through the Caymans. Jason does not yet know if his project and the seedlings have survived. Stay tuned.

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