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FAU Harbor Branch to Host National Workshop on Global Issues Facing Estuaries

FORT PIERCE, Fla. (Oct 9, 2013) – Scientists at FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI) are taking a lead role in getting key players together from across the nation to discuss issues facing the world’s estuaries and how observation and prediction systems can address these issues.

FAU Harbor Branch will host a workshop for the “Our Global Estuary” initiative, which will bring together 50 invited participants from across the US and from Australia. Top estuarine scientists, resource managers, urban planners, environmental lawyers, tribal, coastal and ocean observing system managers, educators and other stakeholders will come together to work toward new solutions for regional and global sustainability. **There will be a press conference following the final session of the workshop on Wednesday, October 22 at noon** on the Harbor Branch campus (5600 U.S. 1 North, Fort Pierce.)

“There is an urgent need to anticipate and manage environmental changes in estuaries, both regionally and globally,” said António Baptista, Ph.D., workshop co-chair and director of the NSF Science and Technology Center for Coastal Margin Observation & Prediction. “These critical but sensitive ecosystems provide some of the world’s most valuable natural resources, and are essential for economic and environmental sustainability.”

This workshop is the first in a series of events which aim to provide a powerful set of recommendations to answer science questions, aid management, develop policy and promote stewardship activities.

“I am excited to be a part of this ground-breaking initiative,” said Margaret Leinen, Ph.D., workshop co-chair and director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. “Bringing together this high-level group of experts is the first step in providing recommendations that can be used to respond to the risks and opportunities facing the world’s estuaries.”

The workshop, funded by proceeds from the HBOI Foundation’s annual “Love Your Lagoon” dinner held each February, has been coordinated by a nine-member steering committee of nationwide experts with backgrounds in observatories, estuarine science and management.

“This workshop would not be possible without the grant support from the HBOI Foundation and the hard work of the steering committee,” said Megan Davis, Ph.D., workshop co-chair and HBOI associate executive director of research. “We are very pleased that HBOI was chosen as the location to host this timely and much needed national workshop on estuarine observation and predication networks.”

For more information or to attend the press conference, contact Carin Smith at 772-242-2230 or carinsmith@fau.edu.

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About Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute:

Founded in 1971, Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute is a research community of marine scientists, engineers, educators and other professionals focused on Ocean Science for a Better World. The institute drives innovation in ocean engineering, at-sea operations, drug discovery and biotechnology from the oceans, coastal ecology and conservation, marine mammal research and conservation, aquaculture, ocean observing systems and marine education. For more information, visit www.fau.edu/hboi.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.