Focus on the Coast expands and updates its web site

by Juliana Barrett

Focus on the Coast is a recently updated and expanded online resource for information on Connecticut's coastal natural resources. The website provides descriptions of major coastal habitats that you will find in Connecticut and some of the threats that are impacting these habitats. These habitats include tidal wetlands, beaches and dunes, coastal grasslands and shrublands, and coastal forests. There is also information on submerged aquatic vegetation (such as eelgrass beds) and migratory fish. Steve Gephard, Connecticut DEP Inland Fisheries Division, has written a paper on the impacts of climate change on migratory fish, which is available on this site.

At this site, you can link to digital maps and information via the Community Resource Inventory on priority coastal resource areas and land cover. Users of this site might include land use officials, land stewards, coastal land owners, and students who want to better understand and protect Connecticut's valuable coastal habitats.

This website was developed as an educational resource and is a collaborative effort between the University of Connecticut's NEMO Program and Connecticut Sea Grant. The NEMO program (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) is dedicated to providing information, education and assistance to land use officials in balancing growth of their communities with protection of natural resources and town character.

To access Focus on the Coast, point your web browser to: http://nemo.uconn.edu/tools/fotc/index.htm.

Smart coating technology developed by PEL

PEL Associates Inc. has been awarded a broad U.S. patent for "Smart Coating Systems". The "smart" coating concept uses new technology that will release coatings from a surface upon command. Various triggers, such as electrical, acoustic or microwave energy, can be used to give the command to detach. Potential applications involve defouling of ships, drug delivery, and electric circuit modification.

According to Mort Wallach, president of PEL, practical examples of how this new technology might be used in the future include:

- defouling ship hulls, cooling systems,
- removal of bacteria from hospital areas or schools
- removal of toxic agents from military equipment
- vehicle interior or exterior alteration or decoration
- paint or ice removal from autos, aircraft or other vehicles
- removal of ice from roads and pathways

There are also many ways this technology can be applied to the field of electronics. This new technology could form the basis for many new and potentially successful businesses. I f used for boat hull defouling, it could save fuel, keep our environment cleaner, help prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species.

PEL is located at the Marine Sciences Technical Center at the University of Connecticut in Groton, Connecticut. I t provides new and novel technology and systems engineering for industrial, marine, defense, and homeland security requirements. To learn more, see the PEL Associates web site, http://www.pelassociates.com.