

Drifter Newsletter #14 February 2015

New Rigs

Now that dozens of the new aluminum-framed “Irina” drifters have been deployed, we can assess their performance. The one problem seems to be that, while the $\frac{3}{8}$ ” spars do not break, they bend easy. Since nearly all of them are found bent when these drifter comes ashore, we do not know if that bending is occurring at sea or only when it hits the beach.



In response to this Irina uncertainty and more interest in shallow water deployments that likely to encounter multiple groundings, we started thinking about yet another design. The “Emily” drifter, named after Emily Flaherty of Salem Sound Coastwatch who has recently proposed a drifter project in collaboration with the Gulf of Maine Institute to EPA’s Environmental Education Program, was built. As pictured below, this experimental drifter has wood paneling for sails. We tested this design with overnight soaks in the pool and adjusted the ballast to be 10lbs which allowed the unit to be stable in the water and still provide several inches of freeboard. We plan to send the first prototype out in Cape Cod Bay with Bobby Martin on route to his scalloping grounds in late Feb 2015. Stay tuned for results.

Proposals submitted and accepted

We have submitted proposals to both “NOAA B-WET”, “NOAA’s Marine Debris” and “EPA Environmental Education” in the last few months. John Terry (Gulf of Maine Institute) is lead on the B-WET proposal and, as mentioned above, Emily Flaherty, led the EPA proposal with John’s help. John Galuzzo (South Shore Natural Science Center,

Norwell MA) received a grant of \$20k which gets a few drifters to Massachusetts high schools south of Boston to be deployed in the Spring of 2015.

New Partners

We are happy to add the following list of institutions/schools who have just joined us this year and are deploying drifters for the first time:

- Jacksonville Marine Lab
- Quincy MA High School
- Plymouth MA High School
- Scituate MA High School
- Weymouth MA High School
- Middlesex Community College
- Penobscot East Resource Center

Annual review of transmitters and “decommissioning” process

Since the satellite service providers charge monthly fees regardless of whether we are using transmitters or not, it is very important that we “decommission” any transmitters that are either lost at sea or not being used in the coming year. You also need to be aware of how many transmissions you paid for and how many you have used. See [this site](#) to get an idea of where you stand with transmission use.

Future Plans

We hope to improve our “lesson plan” options on the studentdrifters.org pages. Please send any ideas on how to improve that. The construction manuals also need to be up-to-date with all the new developments as noted above.