

The

Crest

Current Issues in Coastal Ocean and Estuarine Science

VIMS Hires New Dean and Director

Dr. John T. Wells has been appointed Director of VIMS and Dean of the William and Mary School of Marine Science. Currently director of the University of North Carolina Institute of Marine Science at Morehead City, Wells is expected to assume his new responsibilities on August 1, 2004.

"John Wells is a nationally prominent scientific leader who can bring new vision, increased name recognition, strong federal connections, and bold and inspired guidance to VIMS," says

VIMS Director L. Donelson Wright, who will be returning to his research career in VIMS' Physical Sciences Department.

"I am confident that, under his direction, VIMS will advance to a new plateau of scientific excellence and interdisciplinary understanding and that the Institute's funding base will be significantly expanded and diversified."

William and Mary Provost Geoffrey Feiss says that "John Wells

is a marine geologist of the first order with a wealth of experience around the globe. His interest in sedimentary environments will enrich VIMS' reputation for excellence in the study of estuaries like the Chesapeake Bay, and his record of attracting and managing grants will advance the Institute's efforts to protect our marine environment through externally funded research."

Wells holds a bachelor's degree in geology from Virginia Tech, a master's degree in geological oceanography from Old Dominion University, and a doctorate in marine sciences from Louisiana State University. He launched his teaching and research career in 1979 at Louisiana State University's Coastal Studies Institute, and became an associate professor at the University of North Carolina's marine science institute in 1985. He



Dr. John Wells

was promoted to professor in 1991, and named director of the institute in 1993.

The UNC Institute of Marine Sciences has a mission of providing public service through research, and is

Continued on page 2

Hurricane Isabel Hinders VIMS Research

Hurricane Isabel slammed into the VIMS campus on September 18 during its passage across North Carolina and Virginia. Isabel's storm-surge and waves combined to destroy all three of VIMS' research piers, including the pump houses and lines that supply running seawater to Institute scientists. Waves, storm-surge flooding, and fallen trees also claimed 18,000 sq ft of workspace and displaced 34 scientific and support personnel. Several buildings on campus were without electricity for more than a week.

Director of Facilities Management Joe Martinez estimates that damages to the campus reached \$2-3 million, the highest loss in state government.

Isabel struck particularly hard at research programs involving blue crabs, benthic community ecology, food-web studies, and cobia. Blue crab and benthic community ecology researchers Drs. Rom Lipcius and Rochelle Seitz lost a large number of refrigerated samples, fiberglass tanks, and custom-

made field sampling gear when Isabel's storm surge toppled the landmark Ferry House off its foundation at the end of the Ferry Pier.

Continued on page 4

Virginia Institute of Marine Science
School of Marine Science
College of William and Mary
P.O. Box 1346
Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Glou. Point, VA 23062
Permit Number 6

*New Dean and Director
continued from page 1*

recognized for conducting scientific studies that have fundamental and immediate relevance to the citizens of North Carolina. While director, Wells oversaw the construction or renovation of three laboratory buildings and implementation of numerous partnerships with other universities and agencies.

Wells' primary research interest is coastal marine geology with emphasis on sedimentology, morphology, physical processes, and the evolution of sedimentary environments. He pursues these topics with research along the central North Carolina beaches, the lower Neuse River and Pamlico Sound, the Mississippi Delta, the west coast of

Korea, and Lake Malawi in east Africa.

The new VIMS dean currently serves as editor-in-chief of the journal *Marine Geology*, and has authored or co-authored nearly 100 publications on such topics as the evolution of sedimentary environments in Louisiana's Atchafalaya Delta, the dispersal of silts in China's Yellow Sea, the effectiveness of beach scraping as a method of erosion control and its impact on barrier island ecology. Wells serves on the board of the North Carolina Coastal Federation, the board of the Carteret County Beach Commission, and the community advisory committee of North Carolina State University's Center for Marine Sciences and Technology.