

Proposal for Special Session at ERF 2005, Norfolk, Virginia

To: Bob Christian (christianr@mail.ecu.edu)

- 1) Session Chairs: James Morris, University of South Carolina
Dennis Whigham, Smithsonian Institute
Mark Brinson, East Carolina University
- 2) Title: Ecological indicators of change in coastal environments
- 3) Session Type: Combination of oral and poster
- 4) Description:
 - Theme: The effects of land-based stressors and natural physical phenomena (e.g. freshwater input) on estuaries.
 - Concept: To investigate how activities within watersheds, both anthropogenic and natural, affect estuaries, and the linkages that exist in the upstream direction. The management of estuaries requires effective integration of watersheds with estuaries. In addition, managers need indicators capable of distinguishing between natural and human-caused stresses to coastal systems.
 - Content: This special session will comprise oral and poster presentations that showcase various perspectives on the linkages between watersheds, or the land in general, and estuaries. We anticipate that many talks will focus on the use of indicators to demonstrate effects of land-based stressors on estuarine ecosystems. Presentations will cover both a variety of scales and various geographic regions, which will encourage scalar and geographic comparisons.
- 5) Participants: We anticipate submission of 5 to 10 papers from researchers supported by the US EPA's Estuarine and Great Lakes Ecological Indicators program, which includes the coastal Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific, and Great Lakes regions. We will also invite other researchers doing similar work, and will welcome unsolicited submissions that fit within the theme of our session.