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July 2025



A Message from Executive Director Dr. Brian Roberts

Hello.

Welcome to the July 2025 edition of the newsletter. Here we highlight the scope and successes of our spring and early summer activities.

We just celebrated a huge milestone for the RV *Pelican* as it nears the end of a long and distinguished career. Happily, thanks to many of you who have supported the construction of a replacement we can end that career while looking forward to the construction of a replacement vessel that will guarantee the state of Louisiana remains a pivotal contributor to our understanding of the ocean.

Along those lines we hosted hundreds of visitors on the Maritime Campus during our *Meet the Fleet* event. This inspiring day provided our staff the opportunity to spend time exploring marine science with community members through activities, demonstrations, and meet-and-greet opportunities. If you were one of the hundreds that made time to come out on what was a very busy Saturday, thank you. We have a lot more planned so be on the lookout for announcements being held at this incredible new campus.

We also focused on providing essential training and workforce development programs needed by the next generation of coastal and marine science professionals. Our early summer was packed with young talented and curious minds that are at the forefront of defining what it is we will understand about the coast, coastal ocean, and Gulf in the future. The amazing talent that we helped develop this June is a great indication of Louisiana's future successes as a leader in coastal and marine science.

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On Saturday, May 3, LUMCON hosted its first Meet the Fleet event at the Houma Maritime Campus, welcoming hundreds of community members, students, educators, and partners to explore the vessels, technology, and scientific work that drive Louisiana's coastal and marine research activities.

This year's event featured hands-on demonstrations led by LUMCON scientists and staff, including remotely operated vehicle (ROV) displays, interactive oceanography labs, and vessel tours aboard LUMCON's RV *Pelican* and RV *Acadiana*. A highlight for many families was the youth Knowledge Quest, which encouraged kids of all ages to engage directly with booths and learn more about marine science and innovation.

LUMCON was proud to collaborate with consortium members and local partners, including Fletcher Technical School, Nicholls State University, Universities of Louisiana Maritime Academy, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP), and Bayou STEM to showcase career paths in marine operations, restoration, and coastal stewardship. These efforts reflect LUMCON's continued commitment to education, workforce development, and public engagement aligned with Louisiana's strategic priorities.

Thank you to all who participated and supported the event. Your engagement helps us inspire the next generation of scientists and stewards of Louisiana's working coast.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the R/V *Pelican*, a cornerstone of marine research in the Gulf. Designed in 1980 based on preliminary drawings for the University of Texas, the *Pelican* was funded through capital outlay in 1982 and completed in early 1985. It was christened in February of that year, delivered to the DeFelice Marine Center on May 6, and embarked on its first voyage in June. Since then, the *Pelican* has supported thousands of scientists, students, and educators in conducting vital research—from hypoxia monitoring and sediment sampling to deep-sea coral exploration and ecosystem studies. Known as the “workhorse of the Gulf,” the vessel has earned a reputation for its reliability, versatility, and impact on ocean science. Over the past four decades, it has

also served as a floating classroom—providing hands-on training and transformative experiences for the next generation of marine scientists.

Fittingly, June 10th, 2025 marked a momentous milestone—not only was it the 40th anniversary of the *Pelican* heading offshore on its first research cruise, but it also marked the official construction kickoff meeting for building its replacement vessel. The new vessel is being funded by the state of Louisiana and built by Thoma-Sea Constructors, LLC based in Houma, LA. This exciting new chapter ensures that the spirit and mission of the *Pelican* will continue to thrive for decades and continue to strengthen Louisiana's role as a leader in oceanographic research.

[Visit the Event Page](#)

[R/V Pelican 40th Anniversary](#)



We want to recognize the eight homeschool students from Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes who attended our inaugural Marine Science Semester. For seven weeks this spring, these students attended one session per week held at the Blue Works facility on the Houma Maritime Campus. Sessions focused on providing experiential learning opportunities designed to enhance the deeper understanding for the complex marine ecosystems of coastal Louisiana while contributing to the development of their skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. During sessions they worked as a collaborative team to increase their science literacy through investigation, experimentation, and interpretation of their data. Topics included research questions, experimental design, environmental monitoring, coastal plants and animals, oceanography, wayfinding, map making, chemistry, and food web ecology. Our next marine science semester will begin in September.

Registration for the Fall 2025 semester is now open. Click the button below for details.

Science Semester

LUMCON offers a range of summer programs.

From one-week summer camps to extended research programs. LUMCON fosters student-led learning, allowing students to develop their professional skills, advance their understanding, and investigate areas of interest where they meet today's most compelling questions about Louisiana's coast and coastal ocean.

Many of our summer programs help students make the connections between their academic learning and the science they care most about by engaging with independent research or to take a role in active research programs where they make significant contributions to what we know. Our residential programs go beyond enriching the academic side of our students. Through robust professional development activities, a respectful culture, networking and mentorship students are able to continue on their future pathways to STEM careers.

LUMCON summer programs are dedicated to engaging a wide range of primary, secondary, undergraduate, graduate, and professional level learners. In late May, the fourth cohort of STEM Prep began their 6 week residency at the Marine Center. A week later, the 2025 cohort of Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) students arrived, marking the 15th year of the REU program at the Marine Center. The collaborative nature of science and place-based education was on full display as high school students attending the LUMCON Estuarine Awareness and Discovery (LEAD) camp and the Field Marine Science (FMS) camp rounded out the in-residence community at the Marine Center this June.

**Education and Outreach
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