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THESIS/DISSERTATION INFORMATION

Author (last name, first name): Sprague, Paige

Title: Decision Support Tools for Managing Freshwater Inflows

Keywords (please provide at least three keywords that identify the topic of your work): Freshwater inflows, Decision support tools, ecosystem based management, estuarine ecosystem, Gulf of Mexico

Abstract: Estuaries are important transitional zones where freshwater and marine water meet and mix. This freshwater is referred to as freshwater inflows. Freshwater inflows provide nutrients, sediments, and regulate salinity levels. An estuary cannot properly function without freshwater inflows from rivers and streams. Landscape changes caused mainly by anthropogenic influences are altering the amount of freshwater inflows to estuaries. Humans are diverting fresh water from rivers and streams. As the human population grows and the strain on water resources continues, the ability to effectively manage freshwater inflows into estuaries is becoming increasingly important. The purpose of the current project was to design support tool frameworks for managing freshwater inflows to estuaries, then to create a web-based decision support tool, and lastly to produce a stakeholder survey to gauge its effectiveness. The results contain the content available on the webpage. This project 1) integrates long-term data sets on climate, freshwater inflows, nutrients, sediments, and biological components, 2) assists in the creation of environmental flow standards, and 3) publishes information on a web site to aid in decision making and increase stakeholder engagement.

Description (optional, enter any other description or comments here):
