



January 8, 2010

Area Students Build Their Own Underwater Vehicles and Test Them January 27

Area high school students build water-worthy Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) modeled on real undersea exploratory tools during the month of January as part of a program sponsored jointly by NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary and the Savannah Science Seminar.

The students build their ROVs from PVC pipe, cable ties, pool "noodles" and small motors during two evening workshops held at the Savannah campus of Georgia Tech on Jan.11 and Jan 25. They will put their ROVs to the test **Wednesday, Jan. 27 from 6 to 8 p.m.** at the Chatham County Aquatic Center. Approximately 32 students from area public and private schools are participating in the popular program this year.

Gray's Reef uses a professional ROV to document the sanctuary. The student-built ROVs give program participants an opportunity to learn how marine exploration is conducted as well as a hands-on opportunity to apply principles in engineering, math and other technical fields.

In April, Gray's Reef will sponsor a ROV building competition in Savannah. The event is one of several regional competitions held around the country. Winners of the regional meets go on to the national competition sponsored by the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center.

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is one of the largest near-shore live-bottom reefs of the southeastern United States. It is one of 14 national

marine protected areas that make up the Office of the National Marine Sanctuaries and is governed by the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. It is managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Gray's Reef is the only natural reef area protected offshore of the Georgia coast. The approximately 22 square mile sanctuary (about 14,000 acres) protects habitat that is recognized both nationally and internationally.

The mission of the Savannah Science Seminar is to promote an understanding and appreciation for science through informative, participatory presentations and hands on workshops in the fields of engineering, technology, mathematics, and the medical practices, to motivated and highly qualified secondary school students in Savannah and Chatham County. Students are encouraged to pursue careers in science and return to the Savannah area as professionals.



Students at the Southeast Regional ROV Competition get ready to deploy their ROV at the Chatham County Aquatic Center