

Communicating Your Science
COMPASS Workshop – April 28, 2016
Speaker and Panelist Biographies



Heather Mannix

Assistant Director of Policy Engagement, COMPASS

heather.mannix@compassonline.org

[@heathermannix12](https://twitter.com/heathermannix12)

As the Assistant Director for Policy Engagement at COMPASS, Heather works to facilitate constructive discussion and interaction between scientists and decision makers. Before coming to COMPASS, she spent over seven years at the Consortium for Ocean Leadership in Washington D.C. working with large ocean research programs such as the Census of Marine Life and the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative. Heather also managed the Ocean Research Advisory Panel, a science advisory body to the Federal Government. She received her B.A. from Hood College in Environmental Science and Policy and my M.A. from American University in Global Environmental Policy.



Dan Parker

News Editor, South Jetty Newspaper

dan@portasouthjetty.com

Dan Parker has been immersed in journalism and for most of his life and has spent quite a bit of time in the company of scientists over the years. A 54-year-old resident of Port Aransas, he is the news editor of the South Jetty, a weekly community newspaper just several blocks from the University of Texas Marine Science Institute. Parker grew up in Port Aransas. His father, Patrick L. Parker, was a respected chemist who spent nearly his entire career with the Marine Science Institute, doing groundbreaking research and serving at times as the facility's director.

Dan Parker earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin in 1983 and went on to work as a reporter at daily newspapers including the Killeen Daily Herald in Texas, San Luis Obispo Telegram-Tribune in California, the Tulsa Tribune in Oklahoma, the Charleston Post and Courier in South Carolina, and the Corpus Christi Caller-Times, back in Texas, before starting at his current paper, the South Jetty.

Parker, who has won many journalism awards for his reporting and photography, has written on a wide range of topics that include environmental issues. Subject matter has ranged from sea otters in California to a hazardous waste landfill in South Carolina to brown tide blooms in Texas. He has conducted hundreds of interviews with scientists over the years, with many of those interviews taking place on this campus.



Christine Hale

Oil Spill Science Outreach Specialist
Sea Grant Texas at A&M University

chris.hale@tamu.edu

Christine Hale has a passion for community capacity-building, experience studying humans in nature, and a drive to help people utilize science to make informed decisions. Her main role as Oil Spill Science Outreach Specialist is as a link between communities and the science coming from the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI), a research program that aims to mitigate the effects of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the marine environment and public health, and improve understanding of oil spill issues in general. Hale works with her counterparts in the Gulf to foster the two-way communication between researchers who conduct oil spill science and the multiple stakeholder groups that need this information to make more informed decisions.

“I was hired to share emerging oil spill science, both locally and regionally,” Hale says. “I take the science directly to people whose livelihoods depend on a healthy Gulf, primarily decision makers such as natural resource managers, emergency response personnel and political leaders, and those in the fishing industry and at nonprofit organizations. These are people who need the information to do their jobs.”

Hale and her colleagues publish bulletins and share information through seminars and workshops on topics such as spill impacts to fisheries, dispersant impacts to aquatic life, and seafood health. Future events related to oil spill science will be announced on Gulf Sea Grant and GoMRI websites. Depending on funding, these outreach efforts may continue for 10 years.

So far, GoMRI has resulted in some 400 peer-reviewed publications. That represents a wealth of information, but also one that few people have the time or experience to sort through. Hale and the rest of the team distill the information and help to bring everyone in the community to the table. They also examine research from other oil spills to help the Gulf community understand the complexity and comprehensive nature of long-term effects.

Hale encourages community feedback about which outreach efforts people find useful and what other kinds of information they need. “For example, we use feedback on what types of oil spill science people more or less of in order to deliver products specific to our audience, and adjust our goals for future outreach. Our effort is dependent upon what the community needs.”

She started at Texas Sea Grant in August 2014 and came to the program from the University of the Virgin Islands Sea Grant, where she was an Extension Specialist and Stewardship Coordinator. Her activities there included building public support to address “Ridge to Reef” or whole-ecosystem issues. She has a bachelor of science in marine science from Millersville University of Pennsylvania and a master of science in marine and environmental science from the University of the Virgin Islands.



David Sikes

Caller-Times Outdoors Columnist

david.sikes@caller.com @DavidOutdoors

David Sikes is a product of a Catholic and Cajun upbringing. He grew up fishing, hunting and camping in the Bayou Teche area of South Louisiana. He is an Eagle Scout with newspaper ink in his veins, thanks to his maternal great grandfather, Lazaire Bienvenu, who co-founded the St. Martin Parish newspaper in 1886. The Teche News weekly newspaper is still published in St. Martinville.

David's family moved to Houston during his high school years. He graduated from Sharpstown High and earned a journalism degree from the University of Houston.

After working as a news reporter for several small Texas newspapers, David joined the Corpus Christi Caller-Times news staff in 1996, where he covered Port Aransas, Rockport, Aransas Pass as well as coastal issues. In 1998, David became the paper's Outdoors columnist. He is a longtime member of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association and currently serves as its chairman of the board.

Conservation issues he has embraced include the promotion of freshwater inflows into Texas estuaries, Kemp's ridley recovery, red snapper management, seagrass protection, reopening of Cedar Bayou and Texas Parks & Wildlife Coastal Fisheries management strategies.

He continues to promote coastal and conservation issues, while writing about fishing, hunting, camping, nature photography, state and federal wildlife and fisheries regulations and legislative issues involving the same. David has written about fishing and/or hunting in Alaska, Colorado, South Dakota, Montana, New Mexico, Louisiana, Arkansas, Idaho, Mexico, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

His freelance writings have appeared in a variety of Scripps newspapers, *Texas Outdoor Journal*, *Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine*, *Texas Fish & Game*, *Texas Sporting Journal* and *Lone Star Outdoor News*, the Texas Deer Association's *Tracks* magazine and the *Texas Wildlife Association* magazine.

David was awarded the Ducks Unlimited Wetland Conservation Achievement Award for 2012 in the communications category and the Harvey Weil Foundation named him its Professional Conservationist of the year for 2012. The Texas Wildlife Association honored David that same year with its Charly McTee Outdoor Media Award. He is secretary of the board of directors of the Wildlife in Focus conservation/education nonprofit and is editor of the Wildlife in Focus book series. He lives on north Padre Island with his miniature dachshund Gilmore, who answers to Gilley.