

K. Horikawa, O.H. Pilkey, and J.R. Weggel, with P.D. Komar as moderator, is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, 1987.

COASTAL SEDIMENTS '87 will be held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel in New Orleans on May 12-14, 1987. On May 11th, three short courses will be offered: (1) Coastal Sediments—Coastal Modelling, (2) Barrier Shoreline Geology and Protection in Louisiana: a Short Course, and (3) Coastal Sediment Movement. Several post-conference

tours of the Port of New Orleans and the Louisiana coast are also planned. Details on the courses and tours as well as the final technical program will be available in a final conference brochure by February 1987.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Estuary as a Filter (Proceedings of the Seventh Biennial International Estuarine Research Conference)**, edited by V.S. Kennedy, 1984, Academic Press, 511p. £36.50.

Previous volumes of the *Proceedings of the Estuarine Federation* have been criticized for the uneven quality of the contents that included submitted as well as plenary papers; this volume includes only invited, plenary papers, ostensibly related to a single theme. Several of the invited were not chosen. As the title implies, the theme of the volume is filtration in estuaries. It is limited to 23 papers, more or less about the topic of the filtering action of estuaries, that is, as receivers and retainers of substances in suspension or solution, and in the electronic sense as a process whereby an input signal may be received and altered as an output signal. In this latter sense we have papers on turbulence and mixing, and wind stress and residual currents. The editors (J.R. Schubel and V.S. Kennedy) state, in concluding their introduction, that "an estuary's most effective physical, geological, and geochemical filtering actions usually overlap and all are located in the upper reaches of the estuary in the turbidity maximum" (p. 10). And, it might be added, these are the processes that govern the occurrence and abundance of life in estuaries.

As might be expected from this, there are no papers dealing with specific plants or animals, but nutrients, nitrogen loading and such are on the menu. In this context, outwelling in Georgia is defended as a "deeply entrenched paradigm...although the present results do not unequivocally

prove an export of *Spartina* carbon...they...strongly suggest it" (p. 323). Paradigms, like dragons, die hard, it seems. Submerged vascular plants and seagrasses are also discussed, and a paper on radionuclides reminds us that we do live in a new world. The concluding section, on management implications, includes freshwater inflow in Texas bays, the changing delta of the Mississippi, the Chesapeake Bay, and as a note of encouragement, a concluding paper on the rehabilitation of the Thames.

In all, this is a well-organized, successful volume that is a welcome change from some of its predecessors that have been an *omnium gatherum* of journal contributions.

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**Coastal Engineering Research**, by the Institution of Civil Engineers, Maritime Engineering Group, 1985, Thomas Telford, London, 123p. £22.50. ISBN 0-7277-02416.

As an island with a strong maritime tradition it is fitting that Britain should have a major interest in coastal engineering. On average, coastal engineering projects valued at £120 million are undertaken every year, just over half of them abroad. Therefore it is surprising to find that the UK research effort in coastal engineering lacks direction and coherency. Recently JOHNSON and ABEL (1985) have reported that the Science and Engineering Research Council (the main UK funding body for engineering) were

unable to establish, after two years of work, a lead agency for coordinating a national (UK) research programme in coastal engineering. This publication must be viewed in the light of Johnson and Abel's comments.

The publication divides into three sections dealing with "Beaches and sea walls," "siltation, dredging and dispersion" and "coastal harbours, breakwaters and offshore islands." Each section is a self-contained statement compiled by a Working Party, identifying not only priorities for research, but funding opportunities and fostering of future co-operation and integration between workers. The subject matter of each section is relatively elastic; for example, the Beach and Seawall section includes cliffs. Furthermore, the sections overlap to some degree, almost inevitably given the commonality of many shore stabilisation techniques.

While research needs are highlighted, there is little detail as to how they might be achieved. Moreover, there are often so many needs that it is not at all clear in what order they should be tackled. For instance, the Harbours, Breakwaters and Offshore islands section includes at least 43 recommendations for research, from ship motions to concrete curing. Almost everybody should find his or her pet project emphasised at some point. I suspect that this "scatter gun" approach owes more to the wide membership of the three Working Parties than any genuinely pragmatic assessment of future research.

What is left out is perhaps as interesting as what is left in. There is very little consideration of environmental issues. The fact that sea-level is rising is noted, but a research effort to tackle it is not mooted. Ecological engineering is hardly mentioned, aside from 5 lines on dunes and 14 on "saltings." Indeed, the environment, when it is discussed, is usually limited to the physical properties of fluids. A short statement on the role of the UK coastal engineer in the forthcoming European EIA initiative might have been appropriate.

It is difficult to see the exact purpose of this publication. Presumably it arose from a need to unite in the face of rapidly diminishing research budgets. However, the emerging picture is one of disparate activity and little sense of strategy. If the object of the volume is to promote discussion then I hope it does, yet the high price, allied to the often unreadable text, mitigate against such a result.

#### LITERATURE CITED

JOHNSON, B. and ABEL, J., 1985. Towards a better in-

tegration of conservation with the development and management of Britain's Maritime Resources. *CEED Discussion Paper 1*.

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**Journal of Coastal Research, Special Issue No. 1**, edited by Paolo A. Pirazzoli and John S. Suter. 1986, Coastal Education & Research Foundation [CERF], Charlottesville, Virginia, USA., 94p. US\$20.00. ISSN 0749-0208.

This volume of nine papers arose out of the IGCP Project 200 meeting at Mar del Plata, Argentina in early October, 1984. Although more papers than the nine in this volume were presented at the meeting (thirty in total), it was felt that a selection could usefully be presented together in one volume to highlight factors dealing with general sea-level change and also to show examples of work on sea-level from around the world. The current volume is the result of this view.

The whole volume is ninety-four pages long; this means an average of around nine and one-half pages per contribution. Some of the papers therefore are restricted to no more than one page of text and five of diagrams. Others are longer: Pirazzoli has twenty-six pages, and therefore a more detailed evaluation.

Of the nine papers, three are overviews of aspects of sea-level change on a world scale. Mörner proposes a redefinition of the term "eustasy" to mean "absolute sea-level changes regardless of causation," a view that perhaps has a lot to commend it, especially backed by his powerful arguments citing the problems of disentangling the variables which go to make up the resultant of changing sea-level. But, as with all changes of definition of ancient terms like this one, the problem is that many will still use "eustasy" in its old sense, and thus extra confusion will result. A newly-coined term is necessary for the highly laudable aim of simplifying the concepts of sea-level changes.

Pirazzoli is also concerned with world sea-level, but through the medium of tide-gauge records. This paper is an important one with the clear conclusion, from the records of 1,178 stations, that although sea level *is* rising worldwide, it is doing so at different rates in different places; therefore the whole concept of a uniform eustatic (in the pre-Mörner sense!) sea-level rise may be illusory and that local factors are most prominent in controlling the measured height of the sea at any one station.