



- Conservation
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2012 Down Under Out Yonder

"Coral reef ecology workshops for educators"

The **Gulf of Mexico Foundation's** annual Down Under, Out Yonder (DUOY) coral reef workshop and scuba diving expedition is sponsored by ConocoPhillips for K-12 and college entry educators, nationwide. This five-day workshop includes the 2-day *Corals to Classrooms* land-based portion conducted at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) offices in Galveston, Texas. Afterwards, participants explore coral reef habitats through three days of scuba diving aboard the M/V Fling, a 100-foot live-aboard dive boat. Non-diving educators may participate in the *Corals to Classrooms* workshop only and forego the DUOY diving component.

The workshop focuses on the coral reefs of the FGBNMS, located in the Gulf of Mexico about 115 miles off the Texas coast. The federally protected underwater sanctuary harbors the northern-most coral reefs in the continental US, with its 56 square miles of coral-covered salt domes providing habitat for a variety of schooling fish, turtles, and sharks.

Workshop participants receive numerous teaching resources as well as innovative ideas for implementing topics in biology, oceanography, geology, physical science, American government and environmental science. In addition, teachers participate in a supplemental field trip to the Moody Gardens Aquarium where they have the chance to practice their newly acquired skills.

The total cost for the DUOY expedition is **\$250**. Plus, teachers receive Texas SBEC credit for completing the 2-day *Corals to Classrooms* workshop or for the completion of the entire 5-day workshop. By providing educators with this participatory field experience, the Gulf of Mexico Foundation hopes to encourage not only the awareness but the stewardship and conservation of our important coral reef habitats.

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