

# The University of Texas Marine Science Institute Public Lecture Series

Richard L. Watson, Ph.D

## Protect the Natural Dune Seawall: Our First Line of Defense Against Hurricanes



A few months ago, we witnessed the incredible destructive power of two major hurricanes, Katrina and Rita, along the Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama coasts. Whole towns have been wiped from the face of the earth at Holly Beach, Cameron, Waveland, Gulfport, and other locations.

Beaches and dunes, including those on our coast, undergo a cycle of erosion during major storms and rebuilding in the calm between storms. Port Aransas and Mustang Island are fortunate to be protected by a wide band of strong, high vegetated dunes. This is our natural dune seawall and it provides the very best protection from destructive hurricane overwash, far better than a man-made seawall. Our natural dune seawall is our only protection from total destruction in a major hurricane.

Dr. Watson will explain the natural processes that affect beaches and dunes along the Texas coast. A graduate of The University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Watson is a marine and coastal geologist with 40 years of experience studying the Texas gulf coast. He is an expert on sediment transport and has a thorough knowledge of the natural movements of sand in the surf, the dynamics of water movements, the geologic history of the Texas coast, and Texas coastal boundary law.

**When:** Thursday, January 12, 2006 at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

**Where:** The University of Texas Marine Science Institute  
*Visitor Center Auditorium*  
Cotter Street (near the beach)  
Port Aransas

**Info:** Lectures are free and open to the public  
Call 361-749-6805  
[www.utmsi.utexas.edu/outreach/public\\_lectures.htm](http://www.utmsi.utexas.edu/outreach/public_lectures.htm)

