Wilkinson Bay
Louisiana
29° 28' 28.833", -89° 54' 29.2248"
July 22, 2010

The Public Laboratory worked with Gulf Coast residents to use balloons, kites, cameras, and other simple, consumer-level tools to produce their own aerial imagery. The goal: to create documentation to support environmental and legal claims against the oil spill. We believe in complete open access to spill imagery and are releasing all imagery — including this map — into the public domain.

Mappers: Lauren Craig, Adams Griffth and others from Kiewit Construction
Cartographer: Stewart Long
View this map online at:
http://publiclaboratory.org/wbe0710

The Public Laboratory
for Open Technology & Science
...find out more at grassrootsmapping.org
This map was made for under $200 by volunteers using a helium balloon, a digital camera, and a boat.

Know an area that needs to be mapped? Get in touch: team@publiclaboratory.org

(504) 358-0647

Reimagining the data lifecycle
Sharron Dosemagen & Jeffrey Warren

...Click the gallery of images above to learn about the map making process and see the data collected.

The Public Laboratory for Open Technology & Science

Subscribe to our newsletter, the Public Laboratory Report, for updates on the latest projects and public participation opportunities.

Download the full 5-page PDF at: http://publiclaboratory.org/guide

An Illustrated Guide to Grassroots Mapping with Balloons or Kites

By Sue Goldsby

To get started, you might want to explore this new attempt by us at Public Laboratory. We release the content on this (the "back") side of the poster under a "Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike" license. This means that you can copy, redistribute, and create based on our work as long as you attribute our work and show any changes you make.

On Site
An interview with Barbara Marcotte

Down with BP! Up with grassroots science! Join the movement to support, and by focusing on locally-relevant outcomes that emphasize human capacity and understanding.

What do you think about the way the cleanup was handled? Do you feel yourself thinking or feeling different about the Bay since the spill?

Barbara Marcotte: It's the feeling that we are isolated and that the issues are being treated as separate from each other. A lot of the issues are connected. For instance, there is the damage to the wetlands and the damage to the fish and the damage to the shrimp. But when I talk to the fishermen, they can't even get any answers about the impact of the spill on the wildlife. And the damage to the wetlands is just as bad as the damage to the oil spill.

The bay is a big place, and the damage is all over. They're not dealing with the entire issue, and they're not thinking about the ramifications of their actions. They're just treating it as a separate issue. And it's not.

Can you tell us about the kind of fishing people do here?

Barbara Marcotte: The fishermen here generally have a few different types of fishing practices. Some of them are commercial fishermen, who go out and catch a lot of fish, and then sell it to the local market. They have permits to fish in certain areas, and they usually have a quota for how much they can catch. They also have to follow certain regulations, such as size and weight limits, to protect the fish population.

The other type of fishing is more for subsistence purposes. People who fish for subsistence usually go out and catch what they need for their families, and then they might sell some of it.

We are concerned that, to date, much of the so-called citizen science community treats people like mere data points.

The rules that govern the role of people like me in their projects are often unspoken and unclear, and it's difficult to know how our work is being used or what it's being called.

What do you think about the conditions under which data is produced, and the agenda that guides public scientists in their research?

Barbara Marcotte: I think that a lot of the research is driven by political agendas, and sometimes it's driven by commercial interests. The people who fund the research often have their own agenda, and they want the results to support their own theories. This can lead to a lack of objectivity in the research, and it can also lead to a lack of transparency.

The people who do the research need to be more accountable to the public, and they need to be more transparent about their methods and their findings. They need to be more open about what they're trying to achieve, and they need to be more open about how they're going to use the data that they collect.

What happens if those protections erode?

Barbara Marcotte: If the protections erode, then the ecosystem will suffer. The wetlands will be lost, and the fish and shrimp populations will decline. This will have a ripple effect throughout the entire ecosystem, and it will have a negative impact on the economy as well. The fishermen will suffer, and so will the rest of the people who rely on the ecosystem for their livelihood.

They say that they are doing this under the guidelines of protecting people. How many people, you think, are really protecting people?...