

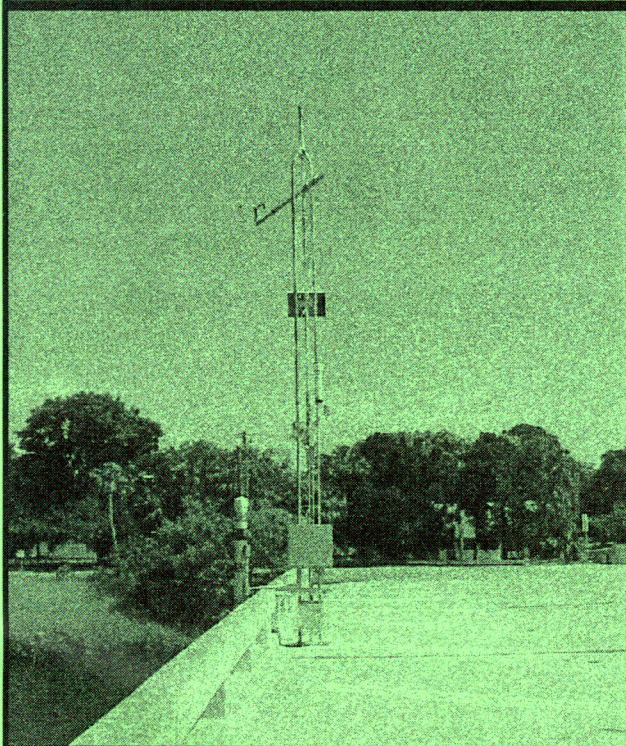


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**GULF COAST CONSERVANCY**

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## The Aripeka COMPS Station



USF-COMPS Aripeka COMPS station. View to the south.  
Photo by Cliff Merz. Used by permission.

By now everyone who drives through Aripeka must have noticed the heavily instrumented tower on the south fork bridge. But just what does it measure, and who does it measure it for? Here are the answers, courtesy of the tower's owner, the University of South Florida:

The University of South Florida has implemented a real-time Coastal Ocean Monitoring and Prediction System (COMPS) for West Florida. COMPS consists of an array of instrumentation both along the coast and offshore, combined with numerical circulation models, and builds upon existing in-situ mea-

surements and modeling programs funded by various state and federal agencies. In addition, COMPS links to the USF Remote Sensing Laboratory, which collects real-time satellite imagery via its HRPT and X-Band receivers. This observing system fulfills all of the requirements of the Coastal Module of the Global Ocean Observing System (CMGOOS). Data and model products are disseminated in real-time to federal, state, and local emergency management officials via the internet (URL <http://comps.marine.usf.edu/>). COMPS is designed to support a variety of operational and research efforts, including storm surge prediction, environmental protection, coastal erosion and sediment transport, red tide research (ECOHAB - Ecology of Harmful Algal Blooms), and hyperspectral satellite remote sensing of coastal ocean dynamics (HYCODE). A precedent for this system already exists in the form of the Tampa Bay PORTS - itself a first for monitoring estuaries.

Florida is the United States' fourth most populous state, with 80% of the population living in a coastal county. Several recent storms have brought large, unpredicted flooding to Florida's west coast. The coastal sea level response to tropical and extra-tropical storms results from wind forcing over the entire continental shelf. Much of the local response may actually be due to storm winds quite distant from the local area of concern; a case in point being tropical storm Josephine, a modest storm that nevertheless caused extensive flooding in the Tampa Bay area. COMPS provides additional data needed for a variety of management issues, including more accurate predictions of coastal flooding by storm surge, safety and efficiency of marine navigation, search and rescue efforts, and fisheries management, as well as supporting basic research programs.

Follow the progress of the Pasco  
Wildlife Protection Ordinance, and the  
Environmental Land Acquisition and  
Management Program (eLAMP)

The COMPS Aripeka Coastal Station is physically located at 28° 25.990' N (28.433° N) and 82° 40.001' W (82.667° W) along the east side of the South Fork Hammock Creek Bridge in the village of Aripeka. Mounted on the bridge

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MHHW), Relative Humidity/Air Temperature, Barometric Pressure, and Precipitation sensors. Marine instrumentation includes Water Level, Temperature, and Salinity. Data is hourly transmitted via the GOES satellite. Site funding is via a cooperative effort between the University of South Florida's/College of Marine Science's COMPS program, the Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Trust Fund, and the Pasco County Division of Emergency Management. This site became an operational COMPS coastal station on 6/12/2002. Anyone with an Internet connection may access the meteorological and marine data from the site, which includes: water level, windspeed, wind direction, wind gusts, barometric pressure, air temperature, relative humidity, water temperature and salinity. Just type <http://comps.marine.usf.edu/info.html> into your browser. Although the data is transmitted every 6 minutes, the table on the opening page is updated hourly. To view continuous data plots, click on Plots for 24 hour and 5 day graphs.

*The editor wishes to thank Cliff Merz and the USF College of Marine Science for permission to quote extensively from their website.*

To offer your comments on any topic concerning the GCC, send your letter to: **Editor, GCC Newsletter**, P.O. Box 738, Aripeka, FL, or E-mail to [mdavis51@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:mdavis51@tampabay.rr.com). Please list "GCC" in title. Name and address must accompany submission, but may be withheld on request. The editor is seeking both factual and opinion articles on topics of interest to GCC members. Articles submitted should be approximately 400-600 words, and may include photographs or drawings.

The editor reserves right to edit and condense all submissions. The deadline to submit material for inclusion in the next issue is Nov. 15th, 2002.



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