

UNH, NOAA Name New Co-Director for Coastal Response Research Center

Veteran spill responder Mark W. Miller is the new co-director of the University of New Hampshire [Coastal Response Research Center \(CRRC\)](#), a partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R), effective April 3, 2015. Miller will serve as NOAA co-director alongside UNH co-director Nancy E. Kinner, professor of civil and environmental engineering at UNH. The CRRC, a partnership between UNH and NOAA since 2004, aims to reduce the consequences of spills and other hazards that threaten coastal environments and communities and serve as a hub for the local, national and international oil spill communities.

“Mark’s extraordinary depth of experience in all aspects of spill response and his partnerships with other agencies at the federal and state level will help CRRC address the emerging needs faced by responders in the form of new threats and hazards,” says Kinner, who also directs the Center for Spills in the Environment, a UNH-based partner center.

Currently, Miller, based in Seattle, is a manager in the emergency response division of NOAA OR&R. He oversees a team of software developers who work to transition scientific results into operational tools to support the needs of emergency responders. He joined NOAA in February 1988, and his first major deployment was to Alaska to respond to the Exxon Valdez oil spill. In the years since that spill, Miller has supported hundreds of oil spill responses, including the Arabian Gulf oil spills as a result of Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom; Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005; and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. He has served in roles varying from field observer to the NOAA science liaison in the National Incident Command.

Miller’s expertise goes beyond the field of oil spill response. He is a chemical preparedness and response specialist and serves as the NOAA program manager for the CAMEO software suite, the most widely used chemical response tool in the U.S. In 2001, he assisted with one of the worst biological attacks in U.S. history, when letters laced with anthrax began appearing in the U.S. mail.

Miller received a NOAA Distinguished Career Award in 2014 in recognition of his sustained excellence in contributions to oil and chemical spill science, preparedness, and response throughout 25 years of service to NOAA.

“My goal in joining CRRC as the NOAA co-director is to help guide the process of translating relevant science into information and tools that improve field response and restoration,” Miller says. “I am excited about this opportunity as the Center continues its excellent spill response; assessment and restoration work and evolves to include more of an all-hazards focus.”

Miller assumes the NOAA co-directorship from Dr. Amy Merten, chief of OR&R’s Spatial Data Branch, who has been co-director since 2006. During Amy’s tenure, ERMA was invented, developed, and implemented operationally; awareness of Arctic response and preparedness has been realized; and an emphasis was placed on research to better understand toxicity and human dimensions to improve spill response and injury assessment methods. Amy will be continuing her involvement with the Arctic as the Chair of the Arctic Council’s Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response workgroup (EPPR).

“Over the years our partnership with UNH and the CRRC has been instrumental in improving our ability to plan, prepare and respond to spills and other all-hazards incidents,” says Dave Westerholm, director of NOAA OR&R. “I want to thank both Amy and Nancy for their

leadership and innovation that made those advances possible. As we look forward, Mark Miller brings a wealth of experience, leadership and energy and I am excited to see the great things that he and Nancy have in mind to increase our nation's capability to respond to disasters."

The NOAA/UNH CRRC partnership stimulates innovation in spill preparedness, response, assessment and implementation of optimum spill recovery strategies. The primary purpose of the center is to bring together the resources of a research-oriented university and the field expertise of OR&R to conduct and oversee basic and applied research, conduct outreach, and encourage strategic partnerships in spill response, assessment and restoration. The CRRC's partner center, the UNH-based Center for Spills in the Environment, expands the scope of interaction and cooperation with the private sector, other government agencies and universities. The Centers are administered by, and located at, the UNH campus in Durham, N.H., where they are affiliated with the UNH School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering (SMSOE). More information about the CRRC is available at the website www.crrc.unh.edu

The [University of New Hampshire](http://www.unh.edu), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.