



Project 437

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Introduction

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Welcome, to this, the final annual meeting of IGCP Project 437, *Coastal environmental change during sea-level highstands: A global synthesis with implications for management of future coastal change.*

Project 437 has a healthy lineage and has sought to build upon the important achievements made in its predecessor projects over a period of 25 years. Previously funded IGCP coastal projects have included: *Project 61* Sea-level change during the last deglacial hemicycle directed by Arthur L. Bloom (1974-1982); *Project 200* Sea-level correlation and applications directed by Paolo A. Pirazzoli (1983-1987); *Project 274* Coastal evolution in the Quaternary directed by Orson van de Plassche (1988-1993) and *Project 367* Late Quaternary coastal records of rapid change – application to present and future conditions directed by David B. Scott (1994-1998).

IGCP Project 437 is based on the central theme of coastal environmental changes during sea-level highstands. Project 437 was formulated in response to the perceived growing need to examine coastal changes during discrete highstands, rather than for intervals of major sea-level changes as has characterised previous IGCP coastal-related projects. Sufficient time has elapsed since the culmination of the post-glacial marine transgression, such that coastal changes evident today on many of the world's coastlines are largely due to ongoing changes during the present highstand. An ultimate, and indeed more ambitious objective of Project 437 was the intercomparison of highstand records (e.g. the last interglacial and the present Holocene interglacial).

Four annual meetings of Project 437 have been held since its inception in 1999.

The first meeting was held in Hawaii, 9th-12th November 1999 at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu. The meeting was organised by Professor Charles Fletcher III and colleagues. Approximately 100 delegates from 23 countries participated in the meeting. The meeting included a fieldtrip to examine the aeolianite exposures of the island of Molokai.

The second annual meeting of Project 437 in 2000 (29th October to 7th November), organised by Dr Enrique Schnack and colleagues, was held Puerto Madryn, Argentina. The meeting was also very well attended, and two excursions were conducted. The pre-conference excursion examined the coastal sedimentary environments of Peninsula Valdes and the post-conference excursion concentrated on the coastal environments of Tierra del Fuego.

The third annual meeting of IGCP Project 437 in 2001 (4th to 12th September 2001), organised by Professor Ian Shennan and colleagues, was held in the United Kingdom, with the conference being hosted by the University of Durham, and the post-conference excursion examining the coastal records of the region around Fort William in Scotland.

The fourth annual meeting of the project was held in Barbados in 2002 and included a very detailed overview of the Quaternary geological history of the island by Ulrich Radtke and Gerhard Schellmann. All meetings proved to be of an exceptionally high standard. In addition to these activities, many national committees have held regular meetings and field trips.

Many research publications have resulted from IGCP Project 437, and the flow on of further publications resulting from the project will continue for some time to come. Recent publications include:

Murray-Wallace C.V., Schnack E.J., Orford J. (eds). (2003). *Coastal Environmental Change During Sea-Level Highstands*. Marine Geology, 194, (1-2), 1-133.

Fletcher III C.H., Murray-Wallace C.V. (eds). (2002). *Coastal Environmental Change During Sea-Level Highstands*. Sedimentary Geology, 150, 1-201.

Long A.J., Murray-Wallace C.V., Morhange C. (eds). (2002). *Sea-level changes and neotectonics*. Journal of Quaternary Science, 17 (5-6), 385-631.

The research of any scientific project, in part, may be gauged by the vigour with which its participants have contributed. In this regard, I would particularly like to express my gratitude to you all for your loyal and very dedicated and inspired research contributions over the past five years. If the project has stimulated you to think about coastal research from a different perspective, then it has been an even greater success.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Giuseppe Mastronuzzi and Paolo Sansò for their kindness in agreeing to host this, the final annual meeting of IGCP Project 437.

