



SEA GRANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATION IN

COASTAL COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND COASTAL ECONOMIES

Coastal areas are the most developed in the nation. Demographic data show that this narrow fringe — comprising 17 percent of the contiguous U.S. land area — is home to more than 53 percent of the nation's population. Further, coastal development and sprawl are increasing and, by some estimates, the coastal development footprint has tripled in 50 years. Coastal communities are experiencing the cumulative impacts from these pressures. Sea Grant's Coastal Communities and Economies initiative is assisting coastal communities in their efforts to protect their environmental amenities, strengthen their economies and improve their quality of life.

Sea Grant Produces National Benefits

Recent investment in Sea Grant coastal communities programming has resulted in the following outcomes:

- Sea Grant designed and implemented a comprehensive education/outreach program to reach a multi-cultural populace of approximately 45,000 residents living in nine towns on the Island of Hawaii. Impacts of these activities included West Hawaii residents' support of precedent setting legislation, which created a Regional Fisheries Management Area (RFMA) wherein community-based marine resource management is a primary component.
- Sea Grant worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and New York State to develop a Geographical Information System database called "Coastal View." The GIS program allows coastal managers to view changes in the coastline of Long Island's South Shore. Coastal managers are using the information in Coastal View to guide their decisions. For example, information provided to the National Park Service resulted in modification of plans for a \$2 million barrier island marina.
- Sea Grant was instrumental in the establishment of a South Carolina Nature-based Tourism Association (SCNBTA) for the purpose of promoting low impact uses of natural resources for rural economic development. Sea Grant and SCNBTA collaborated in bringing this new tourism niche to the attention of the state's tourism industry at an annual Governor's conference on tourism. As a result of this effort, the state Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department expanded its Heritage Corridor Program in 14 rural counties to include a "nature corridor" that helps direct nature-based tourists along country roads, through small towns, and into local businesses.
- Sea Grant played an important role in helping fishing cooperatives get started in New Hampshire and continues to work closely to help them survive increasing financial and regulatory challenges. The cooperatives are a critical part of the fishing communities and without them fishermen would have nowhere to buy fuel and ice or to unload and sell their product. Sea Grant has helped the cooperatives to diversify their product lines and investigate opportunities in aquaculture. When changes in fishing regulations forced a co-op to close, Sea Grant assisted its members in developing business strategies and exploring new ways to earn income. These efforts led to the reopening of the facility.
- NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) was developed as a collaborative effort between Cooperative Extension and Sea Grant. NEMO is an effort to help local officials use technology such as GIS and statistical analyses to link land use and water quality in planning decisions. More than two-thirds of the towns in Connecticut have applied NEMO to help them to revise their comprehensive plans, land use regulations and development design criteria in order to better protect aquatic and marine resources. NEMO is now a national initiative encompassing 24 projects in 26 states.
- Sea Grant helped to strengthen coastal watershed policy in Rhode Island by working with the RI Rivers Council to create a milestone state policy that amends Rhode Island's river classification system to include coastal waters and expands the coastal watershed stewardship role of local watershed councils. This new policy will be integral to Rhode Island's ongoing efforts to integrate state, local and regional watershed management policies and action plans.
- The Maine Shore Stewards Program is a collaborative effort of Sea Grant, several state agencies, and Cooperative Extension. Maine Shore Stewards are community-based citizen volunteers who monitor the environmental health of their coasts and provide important data and information to Maine's decision-makers to help solve pollution problems, restore clam-flats and encourage the ethic of caring for the coast in Maine communities. The water quality and phytoplankton monitoring activities were awarded the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's prestigious Team Award in 2001 for providing invaluable assistance to FDA."
- Working with local governments, Sea Grant has

developed an award-winning plan to manage boating in southwest Florida's waterways that minimizes the impact of boats to the environment. The state legislature in 2002 authorized a pilot program in two Florida counties that allows general waterway/canal dredging permits if they follow the Sea Grant scientific guidelines. The end result is environmentally friendly permitting at lower cost in less time.

- The South Carolina African-American Heritage Council and the S.C. Heritage Program received assistance from Sea Grant in producing and distributing 40,000 copies of *Touring the SC African American Trail of Charleston, Colleton and Dorchester Counties*. The guide, now in its second printing, directs tourists to

sites of African-American cultural and historical importance and to African-American owned businesses throughout the region.

- Sea Grant is leading a statewide effort in Wisconsin to teach coastal county Land Information Office officials how they can successfully apply Geographic Information Systems techniques to coastal issues. Since 1995, the program has sponsored 33 coastal GIS workshops, trained more than 350 individuals and helped improve the GIS capabilities of the state Coastal Management Program. Research is currently underway to identify the technical and institutional issues that will be faced in the development of an integrated Wisconsin Land Information System and the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.

Building the Future on Successes of the Past

Sea Grant initiated a Coastal Community Development Program to assist communities in protecting their environmental amenities, strengthening their economies and improving their quality of life. Working with public and private sector partners, Sea Grant stands ready to provide the research, education and science-based outreach needed to foster sustainable communities and smart growth and development.



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