

DRAFT

COASTAL POLICY CONFERENCE ON ECOSYSTEM-BASED APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTHEAST REGION

Sponsored by

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington

The College of Charleston

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The Clean Water Trust Fund

The Nature Conservancy

November 14-15, 2005 Wilmington, NC

Introduction

In the last few years considerable attention has been paid to the condition of the Nation's coasts and oceans, the ecological services they provide, and the resources they contain. Detailed analyses by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, the Pew Oceans Commission, and many other public and private institutions have documented the impacts of rapid population growth in coastal regions, water and air pollution, and the unsustainable exploitation of fishery resources. These studies have described how the sectoral and often uncoordinated approaches to management currently practiced by governmental institutions at all levels have contributed to the problems. Given the complexity and interconnections among the relevant issues, a consensus has emerged that a key to improving the condition coastal ecosystems is to adopt a new management paradigm: ecosystem-based management. The Administration responded to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy in the U.S. Ocean Action Plan, which among many action items, called for ecosystem-based approaches to managing coastal and marine ecosystems.

Ecosystems are inherently regional, and their features and functions exist on many spatial scales. Thus prerequisites for developing and implementing ecosystem-based management include defining the spatial extents and scales at which:

- 1) Coastal ecosystems exist and interact;
- 2) Natural and anthropogenic variability occur;
- 3) Socio-economic forces that impact how coastal ecosystems operate;
- 4) Indicators of ecosystem status and trends can be measured; and
- 5) Governmental institutions function.

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington, the College of Charleston, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are sponsoring a regional workshop to address these issues for the Southeast Shelf Regional Ecosystem, which is defined by NOAA as the outer banks of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and to eastern tip of Florida. Initially, the inland boundary of this Ecosystem was established as being the coastal watershed, plus the inland extent of diadromous fish. (See <http://ecosystems.noaa.gov/workshops&meetings.htm> for additional details on the establishment of the NOAA ecosystems).

The goals of the workshop are to: identify key issues and regional priorities for the Southeast Shelf Regional Ecosystem; define the geographic scope and scale of these priority issues and the socio-economic impacts on and benefits from this Ecosystem ; refine the delineated boundaries of the Southeast Shelf Regional Ecosystem; obtain general agreement on a suite of ecological and socio-economic indicators and their impacts; discuss potential ways for improved collaboration among governing institutions.

Three topic areas to focus discussions include the below issue with an emphasis on cumulative human impacts on these ecosystem health issues:

- 1) Fish, Fisheries, and Protected Species Assessment of the Southeast Ecosystem
- 2) Coastal and Offshore Habitat Assessment of the Southeast Ecosystem
- 3) Pollution, particularly storm water runoff, and Connections to Ecosystem and Human Health Assessment of the Southeast Ecosystem

Agenda

Day 1

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| 730-815 | Coffee social | |
| 815-845 | Welcome and introduction | |
| 845-915 | Overview of the Ocean Action Plan and the involvement of NOAA: | <i>VADM Lautenbacher or other representative from the AQUABOX/SIMOR</i> |
| 915-945 | Commission on U. S. Ocean Policy Recommendations: | <i>Dr. Paul Sandifer, Former Member, U. S. Commission on Ocean Policy & Senior Scientist, NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science</i> |
| 945-1015 | Fish, Fisheries and Protected Species Assessment of the Southeast Ecosystem | |
| 1015-1030 | <i>Break</i> | |
| 1030-1100 | Coastal Habitat Assessment of the Southeast Ecosystem | |
| 1100-1130 | Pollution & Connections to Ecosystem and Human Health Assessment of the Southeast Ecosystem | |
| 1130-1200 | Socio-economic Assessment of the Southeast Ecosystem | |

1200-1330 **Ocean Commission's vision of ecosystem-based management:** VADM
Watkins

1330-1730 **Breakout sessions:** 1) Fish, Fisheries, and Protected Species 2) Coastal
& Offshore Habitat 3) Pollution and Connections to Ecosystem and
Human Health

Each breakout session will have 2-3 speakers and discussions on key issues addressing:

- 1) Identifying regional priorities for each topic.
- 2) The geographic scope and scale of these priority issues. In particular, the discussions should include the inland extent of diadromous fish; major sources of pollution to coastal waters beyond coastal watersheds; and the identification of areas outside of the ecosystem boundaries that will need further attention (areas extending beyond the EEZ for highly migratory species, dealing with fuzzy lateral boundaries, etc.)
- 3) The status and trends of ecological and socio-economic indicators needed to characterize and track ecosystem health or socio-economic benefits for these issues.

1800-1930 Potential social event or dinner on your own with encouragement for further discussion?

Day 2

830-845 **Introductions and announcements**

845-1115 **Reports from 3 breakout session chairs and group discussions
(reports will be 15 minutes each and discussions 30 minutes each).**

845-930 **Fish, Fisheries and Protected Species**

930-1015 **Coastal Habitat**

1015-1030 *Break*

1030-1115 **Pollution and Connections to Ecosystem and Human Health**

1130-1245 *Lunch*

1300-1400 **Panel discussions – combined summary from the 3 breakout
session chairs**

- 1) Geographic scope boundaries for all priority issues
- 2) Summary of ecological health of the Ecosystem, socio-economic impacts on the Ecosystem and human benefits from the Ecosystem based on a priority list of Ecosystem indicators

1400-1600 **A panel session with the breakout session chairs and senior representatives from each of the four States (plus perhaps multi state entity organizations e.g. SAFMC) to discuss potential regional collaboration and next steps with interaction with the conference participants**

Discussions on regional governance include; identifying the governing institutions that have some authority over the priority issues based on the geographic scope of these issues; identifying existing collaborative organizations which with modification could provide an Ecosystem

Approach to Management in the Southeast and potential next steps to move forward in the Southeast Regional Ecosystem