



# Coastal Training Programs of Florida Needs Assessment Report

December 2006

Assessment and Report by:

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A Report funded in part by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Coastal Management Program, pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award Number NA05NOS4191074. The Views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the State of Florida, NOAA or any of its sub-agencies.



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# Acronyms

CAMA	Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas
CMP	Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection Coastal Management Program
CTP	Coastal Training Program
FDEP	Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
NERR	National Estuarine Research Reserves
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System - This program requires permits for the discharges to federal waters.
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load - A program that requires contributors to pollution of a designated impaired water body to develop and comply with a Basin Management Action Plan

# Executive Summary

Decisions are made every day that have long-term impacts on coastal environments. The Coastal Training Programs at the three National Estuarine Research Reserves in Florida were created to ensure that decision-makers have the knowledge and tools needed to effectively address critical resource management issues. Past assessments have addressed the needs of a range of audiences, including land-use planners, elected officials, regulators, land developers, community groups, environmental non-profit organizations and coastal businesses. This assessment focuses on the needs of city and county commissioners and members of planning, port and other boards and includes the following elements:

- A two-day strategic planning and project preparation meeting
- A review of relevant studies, documents and literature
- An online survey of elected officials in the primary service regions of the three Reserves
- Input on a summary assessment report from elected officials and Coastal Training advisors and partners
- A proposal for a website design and an outreach plan

This project identifies officials' most important coastal resource issues, the services they most want from the Coastal Training Programs and suggestions on the best way to provide the information and skills desired. The following are the summary conclusions and recommendations from this needs assessment:

## **Conclusions About Working with Elected and Appointed Officials**

- Local officials make legislative/policy decisions, oversee administrative decision-making and hear appeals of staff decisions. To help them consider scientific information, the level, amount and format would be different than for environmental professionals.
- Local officials often pay more attention to property rights, constituent demands, fiscal costs of infrastructure, and complying with minimum standards and legal requirements than to environmental impacts and longer-term economic values of a quality natural environment.
- Environmental information may be best presented as one of the impacts to be considered. Analysis of economic impacts and the value of the environment will be helpful in a systematic analysis.
- Officials are often forced to arbitrate between conflicting experts and attorneys. A workshop setting is the place where neutral information they trust can be discussed. The challenge is to move the group culture from argumentative to objective analysis.
- Policy/planning, development review, program plans/budgeting decisions have standard procedures. It may be helpful for officials to understand how Coastal Training Coordinators can assist at different points in these procedures.

## Recommendations

- Focus on issues that were rated important in the survey, that are currently “hot,” that advocates on commissions want to champion, that most impact critical natural resources and for which Reserves are prepared to offer assistance.
- Develop an appealing, practical website that is easy to use, answers questions, promotes understanding of key issues, provides reliable information, supports networking with other individuals, organizations and resources, and builds an ongoing positive relationship with elected and appointed officials.
- Develop presentations describing the Coastal Training website, trainings and other services to offer at commission workshops, committee meetings, and conferences.
- Nurture personal relationships with advocates and others on commissions by asking about their needs and aspirations, helping them shape action strategies and providing information and assistance. In addition, CTPs can work with and through other groups officials respect.
- Work with officials in their regularly scheduled workshops, when possible, to take advantage of the benefits of collaborative learning and group commitments.
- Enhance relevance of Coastal Training information and services with case studies, data on economic impacts, testimonials of respected peers and constituents, and fieldtrips to explore situations first-hand.

# Introduction

## Needs Assessment Overview

The purpose of a needs assessment is to gain a better understanding of the training and information needs of elected and appointed government officials, and how Coastal Training Programs can best address their needs. This assessment includes the following elements:

- A two-day strategic planning and project preparation meeting
- Review of relevant studies, documents and literature
- A contact database of elected and appointed officials from the primary service regions of the three Florida Reserves
- Identification of outside reviewers including Coastal Training advisory committee members, Reserve partners, and current or former elected officials
- An online survey of elected officials from the three primary service regions
- Input and review of a preliminary assessment report summary by elected officials, Coastal Training advisors and other partners
- A website design and outreach implementation plan

This report summarizes each of these activities. Source documents, literature and interview summaries, searchable databases and complete survey results are provided separately in the format preferred by the three Florida Coastal Training Program Coordinators.

## The Florida Coastal Training Program

The Florida Coastal Training Programs are part of the National Estuarine Research Reserves System (NERRs), which is a national network of protected areas focusing on natural resource management, research and education. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration funds the NERRs in coordination with a state agency. In Florida, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) funds Reserves. The Coastal Training program provides up-to-date scientific information and skill-building opportunities to individuals responsible for making decisions that affect coastal resources. Through this program, Reserves ensure that decision-makers have the knowledge and tools needed to address critical resource management issues of concern to local communities. Coastal Training Programs at Reserves focus on issues such as water quality, habitat conservation and restoration, biodiversity and sustainable resource management. Programs target a range of audiences, including land-use planners, elected officials, regulators, land developers, community groups, environmental non-profit organizations and coastal businesses.

Delivery of Coastal Training includes seminars, hands-on skill training, participatory workshops, lectures and technology demonstrations. Participants benefit from opportunities to share experiences and network in a multidisciplinary setting, often with Reserve-based field activities. Partnerships with local governments are critical in the exchange and sharing of expertise and resources. In the last year alone, Coastal Training Programs nationally reached nearly 6,000 decision makers during 40,000 contact hours comprised of trainings, workshops and seminars.

The three Florida Coastal Training Programs are based at the Apalachicola NERR, serving northwest Florida, Rookery Bay NERR in Naples serving the southwest and southeast coasts, and the Guana Tolomato Matanzas NERR in St. Augustine serving the northeast coast. These programs have resulted in better-informed decision making on coastal resource issues and have improved coastal stewardship at local and regional levels.

The Coastal Training team at the three Florida NERRs included:

**Tabitha Whalen Stadler**, Coastal Training Coordinator, Rookery Bay NERR

**Joy Hazell**, Coastal Training Specialist, Rookery Bay NERR

**Rosalyn Kilcollins**, Coastal Training Coordinator, Apalachicola NERR

**Martin Healey**, Environmental Trainer, Guana Tolomato Matanzas NERR



## **Consultant Team**

The Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium, the Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis at Florida State University, and the Florida Sea Grant Program at the University of Florida conducted this assessment of the training and information needs of elected and appointed local government officials, as well as developing recommendations for a website design and an outreach plan to build on current positive relationships with the target audience. The consultant team included:

**Dr. Tom Taylor**, Associate Director, Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium (FSU)

**Dr. Julie Harrington**, Assistant Director, Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis (FSU)

**Dr. Bob Swett**, Coordinator, Florida Sea Grant Boating and Waterway Management Program and Assistant Professor, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences (UF).

**Project Assistants** include: Bassam Awad, Jinjin Guo, Steve Godwin, Latressa Haws, Ashley Ryder, Erin O'Connell and Drew Miller

## **Strategic Planning and Assessment Preparation Meeting**

The Coastal Training Program team and the consultant team met on May 8-9, 2006 at the University of Florida in Gainesville. On the first day, the group clarified the strategic direction of Coastal Training, the project objectives, the audiences, the knowledge and skills to be conveyed and potential Coastal Training and outreach approaches. The second day focused on developing guidance for executing the literature review, database development and research efforts. Dr. Taylor presented a concept for an integrated decision approach for Coastal Training activities and a schedule of activities. Next steps and responsibilities were identified. The report of this meeting is in Appendix A.

# Literature Review

## Introduction

The consultant's review focused on existing studies, documents and literature related to training and information needs assessments and surveys of elected and appointed government officials, and was conducted in five parts:

1. Coastal/environmental issues identification for the survey
2. Review of existing Coastal Training needs assessments and other related coastal program materials
3. Development decision procedures and needs for Coastal Training services
4. Identification of strategies for using science in local government decision-making
5. Summary analysis and conclusions

The literature review used qualitative research techniques. Key words or concepts were highlighted in the source materials, compiled, categorized, and then synthesized in the summary results presented here. The compilations and synthesized products are included on the CD that accompanies this report.

## Coastal/Environmental Issue Identification

This part of the literature review focused primarily on identifying coastal and environmental issues relevant to officials and Reserves. It also sought to a better understand the categories of decisions made by officials and the types of services provided by Coastal Training Programs. Since local officials and Reserves address a wide range of issues, there were commonalities and distinctions between the groups. The challenge of this part of the literature review was to find and frame only those issues that were important to local officials, that relate to coastal resources of interest to Reserves, as well as issues that could be addressed by Coastal Training. Sources included a wide range of documents including the NERRs' strategic plans, several Coastal Training Program needs assessments and market analyses and descriptions of current and past workshop topics. Issues were also identified from commission agendas in the three Florida Reserve home counties and agenda topics from several state conferences related directly to elected officials. A full list of resources is included in the Appendix B.

All issues gleaned from source materials were listed, categorized and checked each time they appeared in the various sources. The issues were discussed by the consultant team and Coastal Training team and were modified several times. A similar process was used to create the parts of the survey that focused on common categories of decisions made by officials and the range of Coastal Training services that could be offered. A draft survey was reviewed by outside reviewers and finalized using their input. The complete survey is provided in Appendix I.

## **Insights from CTP Needs Assessments and Other Coastal Program Materials**

A review of prior needs assessments and coastal program materials revealed a lack of focus on elected and appointed officials as a distinct target audience. Therefore, the summary observations below not only focus on what is known about delivering training and science-based information to elected officials, but also include insights on the processes needed to effectively create programs/projects for this audience. Synthesis of source materials was conducted in stages due to the volume of information. The relevant excerpts from the full source review are in Appendix D. A second level of refinement narrowed the selection of key concepts and the results are in Appendix E. The following list is a summary of this part of the literature review.

- The overall trend among Coastal Training Programs when choosing target audience for training was the selection of elected and appointed officials. Sixty-seven percent of Coastal Training Programs targeted elected and appointed officials. (Trend Analysis of CTPs)
- Coastal Training Programs may need to conduct additional audience assessments of officials to obtain the data needed to develop alternative and creative training delivery strategies, ensuring that they have the information needed to make policy decisions that have far-reaching impacts on coastal resources. (Trend Analysis of CTPs)
- Training methods, including format, delivery, content and group interactions, may be quite different for this group. (Trend Analysis of CTPs)
- Officials want an overview of comprehensive and strategic planning, zoning, subdivision management, coastal area planning, aesthetic regulations and transportation planning to better understand the context in which their decisions are made. (Carteret County North Carolina Town Planning Boards CTP Needs Assessment)
- Coastal Training audiences stated the need to better understand the relationship between their decision-making (processes) and the impact of their decisions on coastal resource issues and problems. (Trend Analysis of CTPs)
- Training activities could be designed to include decision making outcomes and impacts to the coastal environment. If so, this may present an opportunity for the NERRs to measure changes in policy and decision maker attitudes over time. (Trend Analysis of CTPs)
- Decision makers often have general knowledge on well-known issues, such as wastewater, and they do not need to be converted. What they need is practical “how-to” information on using new techniques and to realize that these techniques do not have to become a financial burden, and to discover sources for more information and technical assistance. (An Impact Evaluation of Selected Workshops and Outcome Map for the Waquoit Bay NERR CTP)
- Respondents expressed a need for information on an economic value-oriented approach, either as a defense or justification for their policy decisions. This information, they believed, would allow them to pursue effective protection and management policies. This would also give them a “numbers-oriented” way to appeal to landowners, developers, and elected officials in addressing coastal protection issues. Science-based models of local/regional economic impact analyses can demonstrate that growth can coexist with proper stewardship of natural resources. (Old Woman Creek NERR, Ohio, Needs Assessment: Strategies and Opportunities)
- The participants stated that the workshops they were evaluating mostly focused on physical

impacts but not on the social impacts of various issues. However, since social aspects are what influence the political climate, it is also important that workshops raise the socio-political impacts of different management options. Workshops can also help people become critical thinkers. (An Impact Evaluation of Selected Workshops and Outcome Map for the Waquoit Bay NERR CTP)

- A cultural models approach revealed conflicts in the way scientists and the way municipal officials approach water protection. Actions to improve water quality, in spite of scientific uncertainty, were key to municipal participation. Collaborative learning workshops are needed to make these dueling concepts explicit and to challenge the group to design watershed protection strategies that will overcome this conflict. Environmental management strategies can be framed in language that overcomes barriers associated with scientific uncertainty, economic-based conflict and responsibility to act. Collaborative Learning provides the educational structure for negotiation of strategies to bridge the science policy interface and to pursue implementation of watershed management goals. (A Cultural Models Approach, Wells NERR)

## **Development Decision Procedures and Needs for Coastal Training Services**

Many local government decisions are made through formal procedures established by ordinance. These include zoning changes, subdivision plats, planned unit development and other development agreements, development project reviews and approvals, wetland mitigation plans, dock permits and marina permits. This part of the literature review documents the comprehensive plan and development review processes, and criteria used in St. Johns County, the City of Naples, Lee County, Collier County, Franklin County and the City of Apalachicola (See Appendix F). These documents can help Coastal Training Programs consider the roles they may play at various stages in the processes. The procedures were examined and compared and most follow the basic steps outlined below. At different steps, the applicant or the staff reviews specified types of information; including information on impacts to coastal resources. This analysis provides a basis for suggesting possible roles for the Coastal Training Program and their partners. The identification of possible roles is not intended to suggest that CTPs should be involved in all steps for all cases, but only what they might do if they receive specific requests for additional information or technical assistance from officials or their staff.

**Table 1: Comprehensive Plan Policy or Map Amendment Process and CTP Services**

<b>Typical Procedure</b>	<b>Possible CTP Services</b>
Pre-Application Submittal	Provide applicant with data and best practices
Pre-Application Meeting	Identify potential impacts to coastal resources
Application	Provide applicant with data and best practices
Staff Review Process	Provide data, analysis and best practices to applicant and staff
Subsequent Submittals	Same
P&Z Transmittal Public Hearing	Provide neutral science-based assessments
BCC Transmittal Public Hearing	Same
DCA review and ORC Report	Provide data, analysis on coastal resource impacts
P&Z Adoption Public Hearing	Provide neutral assessments of impacts on coastal resources
BCC Adoption Public Hearing	Same

Note: Small-scale amendments for projects of less than 10 acres do not require public hearings or Florida Department of Community Affairs review.

CTP services would only be provided in special situations where the applicant, staff and decision makers needed additional information or technical assistance.

**Table 2: Development Project Review Processes and CTP Services**

<b>Typical Procedure</b>	<b>Possible CTP Services</b>
Pre-Application (for some projects)	Provide applicant with data and best practices
Pre-Application Meeting (for some)	Provide review comments
Application	Provide applicant with data and best practices
Staff Review Process	Provide review comments, data and analysis to the applicant and staff
Subsequent Submittals (as needed)	Same
P&Z Adoption Public Hearing (For projects over a certain size or if there is an appeal)	Provide expert explanations of impacts and recommendations
BCC Adoption Public Hearing (For projects over a certain size or if there is an appeal)	Same

# Guidelines for Using Science in Local Government Decision-Making

The review of needs assessments and other program materials highlighted the importance of creating new training formats and ways of interacting with elected officials. There were recommendations to take a systems approach, focusing on impacts and outcomes, including legal, fiscal, economic, social and political as well as environmental. The review of the Wells, Maine NERR focused on the use of cultural models and emphasized the importance of framing decisions as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won. For example, everyone can work together to balance environmental and economic needs rather than seeing the situation as a battle between developers and environmentalists. Coastal Training Programs already position themselves as neutral purveyors of information and potentially as facilitators of stakeholders with differing views.

There is a small but growing body of literature on public decision-making. Broad topics include how to integrate science and stakeholder input, manage complexity, involve different perspectives, seek consensus and resolve conflicts. A sample of books and materials reviewed include: Adaptive Governance and Water Conflict [in Florida] by John T. Scholz and Bruce Stiftel, editors, Value-Focused Thinking by Ralph Keeney, Smart Choices by John Hammond, et. al., Creative Problem Solving by Arthur Van Gundy, EPA Constructive Engagement Resource Guide and others. Summaries of these sources are in Appendix G. The following is a generalized process that incorporates elements of a number of these sources and can be used by Coastal Training to guide group discussions and plan training approaches.

- Define the challenge or problem
  - Clarify values or objectives that may be impacted from different perspectives
  - Gather facts needed for understanding
  - Consider related decisions and decision makers
- Generate possible solutions
  - Document what has worked elsewhere
  - Create innovative alternatives
- Seek objective, consensus solutions
  - Assess the consequences of options on values/objectives (build a table)
  - Negotiate trade-offs
  - Account for uncertainty and risk tolerance
  - Consider impacts on the future
  - Make some decisions now and defer others until there is better information

The decision making model above is helpful in working with comprehensive plan amendments, development reviews and other standardized decision process, but may be most appropriate for complex or unclear issues facing a local government. These often require extensive staff/expert analysis and may involve advisory groups, task forces and public workshops or hearings. The Coastal Training Programs can provide technical support for these types of processes or they could take a greater leadership role as does the Coastal Training Program in Maine.

## **Summary Conclusions from the Literature Review**

The highlights of this literature review are summarized in seven insights. These insights were sent to Coastal Training advisors and used in interviews with elected officials and partners. Their input is summarized in the Research Results section of the needs assessment report. A list of the sources reviewed is in Appendix B.

- Local officials make legislative/policy decisions and oversee administrative decision making. The level, amount and format for needed scientific information is different than for environmental professionals.
- Different types of problems may require different approaches and expertise.
- Local officials consider constituent, economic, fiscal, legal, as well as environmental aspects of decisions. Environmental information may be best presented in this broader context whenever possible.
- Policy/planning, development review, program plans/budgeting decisions have standard procedures. It may be helpful for officials to understand how Coastal Training can assist at different points in these procedures.
- Complex, contentious issues may require collaborative problem solving.
- Officials interested in environmental education will participate in typical Coastal Training approaches.
- Addressing coastal environmental issues with local commissions and boards calls for special approaches and materials that can be used in the regular meetings and workshops.

## **Database of Local Officials**

A major task of the Training Needs Assessment was to create a database of contact information for local government officials, such as elected and appointed officials and land use policy makers. The contact database was to serve two purposes: (1) to conduct a Web-based survey of elected and appointed officials using E-mail addresses and (2) as an on-going resource for day-to-day contacts by each Coastal Training Program.

The data fields contained in the contact database are county/city, department, first name, last name, title, address line 1, address line 2, city, state, ZIP code, telephone, E-mail, Website, date of next election, assistant name, assistant E-mail, and assistant phone. Priority was given to obtaining E-mail addresses of elected officials for use in the Web-based survey. Furthermore, since information for some data fields is more readily available than others, research efforts were concentrated on specific data fields in order to maximize productivity within the project timeline (e.g., name, address, E-mail, county/city, department, telephone). The result is that information for assistants is lacking in the database.

Contact information for the database was obtained for local officials associated with counties and cities in the Research Reserves' primary service areas. Appendix H lists the counties and cities that were selected for inclusion in the contact database. When available, the official Web site that is associated with a county or city is also listed. In addition to these Websites and those in the database itself, other sources of information are listed below.

- Florida Department of Community Affairs, Florida Directory of Planning Officials, [www.dca.state.fl.us](http://www.dca.state.fl.us)
- Florida Association of Counties, Membership Directory, [www.fl-counties.com](http://www.fl-counties.com)
- Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council, [www.mpoac.org](http://www.mpoac.org)
- Florida City and County Management Association, Directory, [www.fccma.org](http://www.fccma.org) (Membership required for access)
- Florida Zoning and Planning Association, [www.fpza.org](http://www.fpza.org)
- Florida Government Communicators Association, Membership Directory, [www.fgca.org](http://www.fgca.org)
- Examples of Useful Websites:
  - [www.dmoz.org/Regional/North\\_America/United\\_States/Florida/](http://www.dmoz.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Florida/)
  - [www.statelocalgov.net/state-fl.htm](http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-fl.htm)
  - Supervisor of election sites are valuable for obtaining information for smaller counties/communities that do not have official government websites. For example, for Gadsden [www.gadsdensoe.com](http://www.gadsdensoe.com) has information on elected officials for cities within the county.

The initial database was updated as part of conducting the survey. Many calls were made to correct undeliverable E-mails, incorporate November election results and add additional appointed board members.

Building and maintaining a database of local officials is a major undertaking. E-mail and mail addresses, and phone numbers change. Firewalls, spam blockers and email overload may result in messages not being read. The databases for each of the three Reserves will require updating as they are used, especially after election cycles. Some local governments update their contact directories on a regular basis, while others do not. Coastal Training Program staff should contact entities in their region periodically to determine when directory updates are available. There a number of entities that maintain separate directories, which leads to a duplication of efforts. It is recommended that each CTP program work with these entities (partners) in its region and develop one directory that serves all. This could be accomplished by developing a Web-based interface for input into an underlying database.

# Research Results

## Introduction

During the CTP strategy and assessment preparation meeting, the Coastal Training team identified elected and appointed officials as the target audience for the needs assessment. The research was done in two parts. The first was a survey of local elected and appointed officials. The second part involved getting feedback on the preliminary findings of the literature review and survey, through a series of interviews with elected officials and Coastal Training partners, as well as comments from Coastal Training advisors.

## Survey Methodology

The online survey focused on:

- Rating the importance of coastal resource issues
- Identifying what is most needed to enhance decisions involving these issues and which types of decisions most require assistance
- Clarifying preferences for CTP training, education and other services

Survey issues were determined through examination of CTP needs assessments, other coastal organizations' materials, and conference and commission agendas. Draft surveys were revised, and then finalized through a series of CTP team and consultant meetings, before a review by CTP advisors and final publication.

An online survey link was E-mailed to approximately 600 elected and appointed officials in the following counties close to the three Florida Reserves.

<b>NERR</b>	<b>Counties Surveyed</b>
Apalachicola	Gulf, Franklin, Wakulla, Liberty, Calhoun, Gadsden and Jackson
Rookery Bay	Dade, Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota and Manatee
Guana Tolomato Matanzas	Flagler, St. Johns and Duval

Seventy-two officials responded, ten declined to participate and there was no response from the remaining. This represents a 12% response rate, which is higher than some similar surveys of elected officials. The effort was hampered by the November elections and Thanksgiving holiday, which occurred during the survey period. Some of the jurisdictions are small and/or rural and may not have Internet access. There were also problems with E-mail accuracy, staff screening computer firewalls and spam blocking. An undeterminable number of the 600 may not have received the survey.

## Survey Results

The survey results are discussed by category below. The full results are in Appendix I. Preliminary survey results were E-mailed to Coastal Training advisors for comment and these initial insights were used during twelve post-survey interviews with elected officials and representatives from partner organizations. Their insights are incorporated in the results summarized below.

### What are the Important Issues?

Many of the tools used by Coastal Training are issue-based. The survey therefore included an extensive list of coastal and environment-related issues to assist in offering training or field-based programs and information related to pertinent topics. The survey included fifty-one issues and these issues were grouped into four categories for an easy read. Respondents rated each issue and were given an opportunity to write in additional issues. The following summary includes all issues in the four categories followed by the average rating reported for each Reserve region, as well as an average rating for all Reserves combined. The following abbreviations are used for the ratings:

AP = Apalachicola, GTM = Guana Tolomato Matanzas, RB = Rookery Bay, All = average of all responses

Highest ratings for each Reserve are quite different for some issues. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each issue using the following scale:

5 = Very Important, 4 = Important, 3 = Moderately Important, 2 = Of Little Importance and 1 = Not Important

This translates to a higher number indicating an issue of greater importance.

**Table 3: Importance of Aquatic Issues (On, in or under the water)**

Issues	AP	GTM	RB	ALL
Fish and shell fish populations and health: commercial and recreational	4.13	4.09	4.30	4.20
Endangered species management: manatees, sea turtles etc.	3.56	4.32	4.21	4.10
Algal blooms such as red tides and blue green algae	3.73	3.73	4.44	4.06
Timing quality and quantity of fresh water flow into the estuaries	4.07	3.73	4.12	3.99
Channel and harbor dredging: access, navigation or resource impacts	3.56	4.29	3.87	3.93
Control of invasive, aquatic plants and animals	3.87	3.68	4.03	3.89
Boating speed zones and no-access areas	3.38	4.05	4.03	3.88
Boat pump-outs discharges etc.	3.33	4.14	3.91	3.85
Seagrass and other submerged aquatic vegetation	3.60	3.38	4.00	3.72
Marine debris	3.25	3.86	3.80	3.69
Artificial reefs: location construction and funding	3.12	3.50	3.55	3.43
Aquaculture facilities and promotion	3.88	3.00	3.27	3.33
<i>Total responses</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Number who skipped this question</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>10</i>

**Table 4: Importance of Beach Marsh and Shoreline Issues**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>GTM</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>ALL</b>
Pedestrian access to the water: beach access, boardwalks etc.	4.19	4.57	3.97	4.20
Beach water quality: closures	4.00	3.95	4.13	4.05
Coastal regulations e.g. construction control lines and high hazard area policies	3.93	4.14	3.94	4.00
Beach and shoreline setback and buffer requirements	3.69	4.45	3.78	3.97
Beach erosion renourishment and stabilization	3.47	4.36	3.84	3.93
Floodplain management	3.47	3.64	4.23	3.87
Dune restoration and protection	3.20	4.23	3.82	3.81
Boating access: ramp siting, parking and management	3.93	3.95	3.63	3.80
Marina siting and management	3.80	3.95	3.66	3.78
Salt marsh restoration and protection	3.00	4.14	3.85	3.76
Mangrove protection	2.36	3.32	4.36	3.62
Seawalls etc.	3.00	3.86	3.59	3.55
Small docks: siting, design, construction, management etc.	3.67	3.64	3.44	3.55
<i>Total responses</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Number who skipped this question</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>11</i>

**Table 5: Importance of Upland issues**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>AC</b>	<b>GTM</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>ALL</b>
Water quantity and quality for natural systems	4.38	4.36	4.74	4.54
Land use density and intensity impacts	4.19	4.64	4.63	4.53
Smart growth and sprawl control	4.24	4.73	4.50	4.51
Waste water treatment and disposal	4.69	4.36	4.41	4.46
Wetlands: protection restoration and mitigation	4.13	4.38	4.55	4.40
Stormwater management: public and private	4.47	3.95	4.58	4.36
Public drinking water supply issues	4.47	4.10	4.47	4.35
Impervious surface impacts on water quality, run-off and recharge	4.25	4.23	4.42	4.32
Septic systems: siting design and maintenance	4.63	4.05	4.31	4.30
Low-impact or sustainable development: site design construction and landscaping	4.13	4.14	4.42	4.27
Buffer requirements for streams, wetlands and conservation areas	4.00	4.50	4.24	4.27
Aesthetics: green space, water views, landscaping etc.	3.75	4.32	4.39	4.23
Point-source pollution prevention: industrial, waste treatment etc.	4.13	3.86	4.42	4.18
Wildlife habitat and corridor protection	3.76	4.18	4.03	4.01
Landscaping requirements to protect water quality	3.81	3.68	4.24	3.97
Conservation and rural land stewardship (Agriculture retention)	3.63	4.14	3.97	3.94
Basin Management Action Plans to meet TMDL requirements	3.87	3.68	3.84	3.80
Agriculture best practices to protect water quality	3.50	3.59	4.03	3.77
Control of invasive upland plants and animals	3.69	3.55	3.79	3.69
<i>Total responses</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Number who skipped this question</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>10</i>

**Table 6: Importance of General or Area-Wide Issues**

Issue	AC	GTM	RB	ALL
Conservation and recreational land acquisition and management	3.94	4.41	4.42	4.31
Environmental system management: habitat and watershed management plans etc.	4.00	4.09	4.55	4.29
Achievement of community visions and quality of life of life indicators related to coastal resources	4.21	4.18	4.22	4.21
Economic development and tourism promotion including heritage and eco-tourism	4.07	4.23	4.15	4.16
Endangered species protection	3.87	4.09	4.30	4.14
Cultural and historic resources: identification and protection	3.67	4.32	4.19	4.12
Climate change and sea-level rise	3.53	3.18	3.91	3.59
<i>Total responses</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Number who skipped this question</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>11</i>

The highest rated issues were, 1) water quantity and quality for natural systems, 2) land use density and intensity impacts, 3) smart growth and sprawl control, 4) waste water treatment and disposal, 5) wetlands: protection restoration and mitigation, and 6) stormwater management, public and private. It is important to note that even though these are the issues rated most important, all issues were rated highly. The lowest rated issue was *Aquaculture facilities and promotion* with a 3.33. One elected official said that these are all “motherhood and apple pie” issues. It is hard [for a politician] to say they are not important and the real question is whether the officials are committed to take action on the issues. There was also a comment that, "If there is a focus on the water quality issue and protection of key conservation areas, many of the other issues will be taken care of."

A respondent from Apalachicola was concerned about stopping the zoning changes that allow increased density in coastal areas. GTM respondents were concerned about bulkheads, docks and other shoreline development, the need for artificial reefs, the need for buffers to protect aesthetics, wetlands and property values, long-range water, wastewater and transportation planning, dredging, need for long docks and others. Additional issues for Rookery Bay included: public access for canoes and kayaks, non-point pollution of canals and bays including retrofitting older developments, density and high-rise development in high-hazard areas, Lake Okeechobee releases, Everglades restoration and unbridled growth.

Respondents were asked to describe their first, second and third most important issues. In many cases, one person’s first priority is another’s second or third; therefore, this discussion will look at the comments as a whole. This summary provides highlights only. For a richer description in the respondents’ own words, see Appendix I.

Concerns about water quality, development impacts on shorelines and natural areas, beach erosion, public access and endangered species were reported in all three Reserve regions. Water quality issues are linked to drinking water, septic tanks, fertilizer use, stormwater control, red tide, aquaculture and salt water intrusion. Special concerns in the Apalachicola area include: upstream water releases, ecotourism, recreational, commercial and guide fishing, invasive plants

and animals and achievement of community visions. GTM comments mentioned mooring fields, channel dredging to protect working waterfronts and reduce dock length, groin structures for beach renourishment, artificial reefs, blighted beach towns, the need for new urbanism and restoring a public passion for cultural and historic resource protection. Rookery Bay issues were: mangroves, manatees, freshwater flows related to Lake Okeechobee, Everglades Restoration and the Caloosahatchee Estuary, sewerage on Marco Island, development and runoff along the Imperial River, public access to the preserves, maintaining the coastline for storm protection (Katrina), sensible marinas and sustainable, green, low impact development.

### What is Needed to Enhance Decisions that Impact Coastal Environments?

Some CTP audiences are scientists or are frequent users of science, fully understand the value of the environment, and are scientifically literate. Local officials are much like other CTP audiences in that they may not realize when and where science can help them make better decisions. To connect the science-based information provided by CTPs with the types of decisions and the competing values balanced by Officials in making their decisions, a series of survey questions focused on policy and project needs. The highest response, “scientifically verifiable data,” is an affirmation of the Coastal Training Programs’ primary function. The remaining items have had less emphasis in CTP services in the past and their high rating may indicate a need for a change in focus.

**Table 7: Importance of Different Forms of Decision Assistance:**

Decision Assistance	AP	GTM	RB	ALL
More scientifically verifiable data	4.27	4.27	4.50	4.38
Better decision tools to integrate consideration of the environmental, economic, stakeholder, and legal implications of alternative decisions	4.27	4.27	4.38	4.32
Better analyses of how environmental impacts affect the local and regional economy	4.20	4.19	4.34	4.26
Better analyses of all policy or project impacts on the local and regional economy	4.27	4.00	4.25	4.17
Better explanations of the legal implications of the policy or project approval	4.13	4.32	4.09	4.17
A better understanding of impacts of decisions on specific constituent or stakeholder groups in the community	4.33	4.09	4.06	4.13
Better assessments of fiscal impacts on your unit of government	4.27	4.14	4.06	4.13

Another aspect of training is the transfer of knowledge. However, in order for knowledge to have an impact, it must be put into practice. The following excerpt from the survey attempts to categorize the types of decisions that officials grapple with. By understanding the context in which knowledge will be used, training can be tailored to increase its effectiveness. The most highly rated decisions were those involving planning and policymaking, as well as specific land development decisions. Decisions involving public projects and special studies were also rated quite high. In addition, the literature review suggests services that the CTPs can provide at each stage of the decision processes (Appendix F).

**Table 8: The Importance of Having Assistance with these Types of Decisions:**

<b>Types of Decisions</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>GTM</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<u>Planning and policy decisions</u> , for example: comprehensive plan amendments, transportation plans, conservation and recreation plans, agriculture land stewardship, economic development strategies, wetland and watershed protection, waste water requirements, emergency management, manatee protection plans, and others	4.53	4.71	4.59	4.62
<u>Land development regulation decisions</u> , for example: developments of regional impact, land use changes, project approvals, variances, environmental permitting, docks, and others	4.47	4.73	4.47	4.55
<u>Decisions on public projects and facilities</u> , for example: siting locally unwanted land uses, wastewater treatment and disposal, marinas, mooring fields, shipwrecks, public land management, and others	4.40	4.52	4.22	4.35
<u>Special studies and problem solving, by ad hoc task forces advisory boards or public involvement processes</u> for example: community visions, sustainable development, rural land stewardship, economic development, tree ordinances, and others	4.07	4.00	4.25	4.13

### **How Can the Coastal Training Program Be Most Helpful?**

#### Acceptability of Training and Education Formats

The Coastal Training team identified a range of services that they already offer or could offer with existing resources. To help match the needs of officials with these services the survey contained a series of questions related to the types, location and duration of services. Since Coastal Training Programs have a reputation for informative fieldtrips, it was not surprising that this service was highly rated. The website and presentations at regular meetings or workshops are close in the ratings. Several day workshops received a very low rating. The written comments in the survey were confirmed by the interviews with elected officials. These individuals have huge demands on them and little time. They made it clear that it is better to reach them at their regularly scheduled workshops than at commission meetings. Commission meetings are too packed for effective presentations and interaction. The comments also indicated that some officials like to go to trainings and will continue to participate in regular Coastal Training Programs.

These questions used a three-point scale: 3 = Preferred, 2 = Acceptable and 1 = Not Acceptable.

**Table 9: Acceptability of Training and Education Formats**

<b>Format</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>GTM</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>ALL</b>
On-site field trips to learn about specific issues	2.57	2.76	2.22	2.48
A website with basic information and down loadable or linked resources	2.31	2.57	2.47	2.47
Presentations – at your regularly scheduled meetings or workshops	2.57	2.43	2.43	2.46
Workshops – 1-2 hours	2.57	2.19	2.33	2.34
Presentations held at your local Research Reserve or other locations for	2.14	2.33	2.21	2.24

individual commission or board members				
Workshops – 2-4 hours	2.07	2.14	2.15	2.13
A course or series of workshops over several months	2.21	1.90	2.00	2.02
Workshops - full day	2.07	1.95	1.71	1.87
Workshops – several days	1.36	1.29	1.19	1.26

What are the Preferred Times and Places for Training?

These results indicate that any season is acceptable with Spring being the best and Winter the worst. Weekdays are preferred with Wednesday the highest. Morning is the best time of day and evening the worst. As anticipated, the acceptability of travel drops significantly as the distance increases.

**Table 10: Season, Weekday, Time of the Day and Distance Preferences**

	AP	GTM	RB	ALL
<b>a. Season</b>				
Spring	2.29	2.47	2.27	2.34
Autumn	2.15	2.16	2.08	2.12
Summer	2.08	2.05	2.00	2.04
Winter	2.25	2.00	1.89	2.00
<b>b. Day of the week</b>				
Wednesday	2.54	2.30	2.00	2.22
Thursday	2.33	2.10	2.08	2.14
Friday	1.92	2.10	2.17	2.09
Monday	1.83	2.16	2.13	2.07
Tuesday	2.08	2.11	1.79	1.96
Saturday	1.58	1.33	1.50	1.46
Sunday	1.17	1.11	1.17	1.15
<b>c. Time of the day</b>				
Morning	2.36	2.57	2.44	2.47
Afternoon	2.25	2.30	2.13	2.21
Evening	1.83	1.85	1.46	1.68
<b>d. Distance to the training place</b>				
<15 miles	2.50	2.76	2.78	2.72
15-30 miles	2.50	2.32	2.00	2.21
31-50 miles	2.08	1.68	1.77	1.81
51-75 miles	1.58	1.32	1.35	1.39
>75 miles	1.38	1.26	1.12	1.22

How Important are Other Services Provided by the Coastal Training Programs?

Contrary to what is implied by its name, Coastal Training Programs in Florida and around the country provide a range of other services outside the classroom. As indicated by these results, what is often most important to officials are clear simple fact sheets, briefing papers, maps or data that answer a specific question. Direct assistance is also important. This might mean working with staff on an ordinance, answering questions at commission or committee meetings or by phone. Written comments and interview input suggest that active participation in public meetings would have a markedly stronger influence over what occurs. Some staff and council members are content with taking the advice of the development community, and have a certain mindset that accepts the minimum level of environmental protection. One suggestion was to present the pros and cons of all alternatives, and not just go with 'conventional wisdom'. Credibility is lost by simply representing one side of an issue.

**Table 11: Importance of Coastal Training Program Services**

<b>Services</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>GTM</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>ALL</b>
Provide clear, simple, data maps, fact sheets etc.	4.54	4.67	4.41	4.52
Provide and explain model ordinances, best management practices etc.	4.38	4.33	4.38	4.37
Convene/host problem solving forums or workshops to develop recommendations to your commission on specific issues	4.46	4.05	4.00	4.11
Issue specific consultation through phone calls, emails and/or meetings	4.00	4.33	3.86	4.05
Helping identify and access qualified scientists and other environmental professionals	3.92	4.10	3.86	3.95
Assisting advisory committees to integrate scientific, legal, administrative, property owner, and interest group input and shape consensus recommendations to your commission	4.08	4.14	3.72	3.94
Helping scientists and staff to present technical information in a useful format	3.85	4.10	3.72	3.87
Assistance with tools, e.g. GIS issue analysis study compilations white papers	3.77	4.05	3.76	3.86
Providing materials and guidance to your employees who do staff training and public education	3.85	3.81	3.86	3.84

**Demographics**

Knowledge of the Coastal Training Program

This question was asked to gauge the awareness of officials of the CTP. Almost 70% of the respondents were not aware of the program and there are probably more of these who did not respond. Those who did complete the survey are now more aware of the issues and services that can be provided by the Florida CTPs.

**Table 12: Pre-Survey Knowledge of the Coastal Training Program**

<b>Knowledge Of CTP</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>GTM</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	6	8	6	20	31%
No	8	13	23	44	69%
Skipped this question	5	5	8		

County of Residence

Respondents indicated the county they live in. The results are in Appendix I. This will enable the Coastal Training Programs to sort the results by county and see if there are special issues, service or format preferences.

The Position of the Respondents

Sixty-six percent of respondents were from city councils and 21% were from county commissions/councils/boards. There are many more cities than counties throughout Florida. The low number of planning board respondents is due to the low number of surveys sent to them. It was much more difficult to get email addresses for the volunteer board members than for the elected officials.

**Table 13: The Positions of the Respondents**

<b>Position</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>GTM</b>	<b>RB</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Percent</b>
City Commission, Council or Mayor	9	10	22	41	66%
County Council or Commission	3	4	6	13	21%
Planning Board or Commission	2	1	2	5	8%
Other	1 employee	1 Port Board 1 unidentified		3	5%
Skipped	5	9	7		

## **Insights from Advisors, Officials and Partners**

A summary of the literature review and the survey results were sent to Coastal Training advisors for comment. Responses were received from five advisors. Interviews were also conducted with three current or former elected officials and nine representatives from Coastal Training partner organizations.

Key points from all responses were highlighted, then synthesized in two stages to identify similarities, then summarized into the list below (See Appendices D and E). This synthesis was then used to develop the website design, implementation plan and needs assessment recommendations contained in the remainder of this report.

### **Issues of Importance from the Survey**

- Most of the issues were rated as important, and it is hard for politicians to be against them. The problem is officials do not act on them.
- If you protect water quality and key conservation lands, many of the other issues will take care of themselves.
- Officials discussing land use focus on infrastructure (fiscal impacts) and property rights more than environmental impacts. They need to see the big picture and long-term, e.g. watershed view.
- Other agencies may be better at addressing some of these issues. The CTP Advisory Committees can help clarify agency roles.

### **How Local Officials Use Science in Decision-Making**

- Officials have to juggle so many things and often lack the training to understand complex issues.
- They focus on the current critical issues or cases, or those brought by the Chamber of Commerce and others they respect.
- They always have to also consider economic, citizen and other impacts. We must be thoughtful in how we present our information.
- They are influenced by citizens' demands more than fact-based information from staff.
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) agreements on limiting pollution of impaired water bodies, and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for point source pollution limits may be "hooks" to get them to look at environmental issues and scientific information.
- If consultants say projects meet level of service standards, they are usually approved without thorough analysis.
- At times, they are arbitrators between staff and special interests.
- Developers' experts and attorneys may overwhelm them.
- Economic and environmental impacts are usually externalities that are not considered.
- Elected officials are interested in how other communities have tackled similar problems.

## Providing CTP Services to Local Officials

- Cultivate personal relationships with advocates on commissions who can influence other members, and direct staff to consider science-based information.
- Work through respected groups like the Chamber of Commerce, economic/tourism development commissions, civic associations and the League of Women voters.
- Present and provide information to environmental and other groups and avoid associations that may affect Coastal Training's reputation as a neutral entity.
- Work with staff and consultants and help them provide information to officials.
- Reach officials through Regional Planning Councils, the League of Cities, Association of Counties and Planning Association websites, workshops, meetings and conferences.
- Use sound bites and overarching themes to frame issues that officials relate to, like "Florida Forever" or "green development." Link concepts to economic value. Avoid labels like "environmental protection" that may be seen as negative.
- Provide fact sheets, best practice guides, case studies and white papers on critical issues.
- Establish a relationship where commissions refer questions to the CTP for neutral analysis and recommendations.
- Enhance relevance with field trips, case studies, testimonials from peers, visuals that show system and long-term impacts, especially those that relate to fiscal and economic factors.
- Support forums that frame common problems to be solved rather than arguments over who is right or wrong. Enable consideration of different perspectives [cultural models].
- Utilize online meetings, video conferencing and workshops, and other technology tools to reach more officials in convenient formats.
- Link planning to environmental issues by enhancing current requirements, negotiations and enforcement for plan amendments, development agreements, MS4 permits, TMDL agreements, fiscal impact analysis models, FIAM, levels of service and others.
- Serve as a clearinghouse and provide a resource guide.
- Conduct dry runs of presentations and materials with a test audience of former officials.
- When possible, work with each commission as a group because of the value of shared learning and long-term group dynamics, and to address the sunshine laws and time constraints.

## Website

- When someone opens the site they need to see something appealing, like a kid with a fishing line. Let them know what the site will do for them.
- The site should focus on questions that are important to them and lead them smoothly to answers they want. Include a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page.
- Organize the site by topic areas with links to fact sheets, sample ordinances, best practice guides, organization contact information, studies, products from CTP workshops and other resource materials.
- Help officials understand issues; do not overwhelm them with information. Use visuals, case studies, historic trends and testimonials to convey the concepts.

- Show the practical, real world impacts of decisions, especially the fiscal impacts on government and economic impacts on the community.
- Encourage visitors to ask questions, identify other resources and suggest ways to improve the CTP website and services. Provide chats, scenarios, games, online tests of understanding and other tools to make the site interactive.
- If they do not find it quickly they will not come back - three clicks or less.
- Involve professional communications, marketing and website experts.
- Assure that the site will have easy and timely updates.

### **Promoting the Use of the Website**

- Arrange to have links on sites that are commonly used by officials like the League of Cities, Association of Counties, Chamber of Commerce and others.
- Mail and E-mail notices about the website and about periodic updates. Notify officials about specific resources on the site that address current hot issues they are dealing with.
- Provide ten+ minute presentations on the website and other CTP services at commission workshops, committee meetings and conferences.
- Have a one-page or foldout business card sized brochure on the CTP website, and services that can be mailed or distributed at presentations.
- Track the use of pages on the site, solicit feedback and evaluations, and update the site regularly.

# Pilot Project Implementation Plan - High Tech and High Touch

## Introduction

The design of a pilot project and implementation plan was a component of this needs assessment. The selection of the pilot project was based on the survey results and the review of preliminary results by elected officials and Coastal Training advisors and partners. The three most preferred service formats identified in the survey were:

- On-site field trips to learn about specific issues
- A website with basic information and downloadable or linked resources
- Presentations – at regularly scheduled meetings or workshops

The summary review results emphasized the importance of balancing the website development with face-to-face interactions with commissioners: high tech and high touch. This section of the assessment report recommends an implementation plan with objectives and steps 1) for the website (Including a conceptual design) and 2) for outreach to local elected and appointed officials (Including proposals for individual contacts and presentations). There are also suggestions for project evaluation.

The field trips were not chosen for the pilot because Florida Coastal Training Programs already conduct on-site field trips for elected officials and other target audiences. Rookery Bay NERR has a "Go With the Flow: Watershed Science and Policy Program" for elected officials. They also work with Leadership Collier and Leadership Marco programs to offer a field-based program on their environment day. Apalachicola and GTM NERRs also do a variety of field programs either with specific target audiences, as during the Master Naturalist Program, or during programs that have topics that can be enhanced through a field experience. A website is also a tool that has been previously absent from Florida's Coastal Training strategy. Therefore, it is fulfilling a gap in services that can be addressed immediately within the scope of this project.

Presentations at regularly scheduled meetings or workshops have been conducted occasionally in the past when Coastal Training staff was asked by officials or staff to present on a specific topic. This strategy could be expanded upon and will require careful planning and dedicated outreach. Since the website also requires an outreach component and a cultivation of the relationship between officials and Coastal Training, it was deemed to be a better choice for a pilot project.

### Pilot Project Goals

- A website where officials and their staff can go to get the knowledge, information and services they need regarding coastal resources.
- Increased awareness and use of the Coastal Training website and other services
- Better local government decisions and coastal resource results.

# Website Implementation Plan

## Objectives for the Website

- To be an appealing, helpful CTP website that visitors appreciate, use frequently and tell others about.
- To answer key questions and help users understand important concepts.
- To provide science-based, factual and politically neutral information needed for decision making, and refer users to other reliable information, experts and organizations.
- To help officials understand the economic value of coastal resources and the costs of environmental impacts.
- To encourage interaction by enabling users to ask questions, suggest additional resources, network with peers sharing similar challenges, and provide input on how to improve the website.
- To encourage the institutionalization of best practices that are agreed upon and supported by diverse groups.
- To offer clear information on CTP trainings and services, and the ability to sign-up or submit service requests online.
- To provide assistance to more officials and others electronically, thus maximizing the use of limited CTP staff time and resources

## Implementation Steps

The specific design and layout of the website would be determined during a formal planning process, although several key aspects are included in this report. The following work plan is a broad-brush approach to creating a successful product.

- Review existing materials
  - Utilize this needs assessment. It includes a wide array of resources.
  - Visit other websites used by officials or aimed at officials to help decide on the format, as well as, to include links
  - Review other publications aimed at officials including books, magazines, etc. to identify approaches
- Hire a web consultant, and if resources allow, a public relations or communications expert. Identify donations, if possible.
- Based on this assessment, include issues of high importance and decision making outlines as requested by the officials surveyed
- Have advisors and elected officials review the site before it goes live and adapt the site based on feedback.
- Create an outreach plan that includes several strategies.
- Develop and implement a website and outreach evaluation plan
- Plan for website maintenance

## Website Conceptual Design

This conceptual design is based, in part, on the insights from the Coastal Training Advisors comments and the elected official and CTP partner interview notes in the research section of this report. The proposed design builds on the existing Coastal Training Program page on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection website. The website will need to be built incrementally as information and time is available. The design is presented as a site map. The items at the next lower level of the outline would only be seen by clicking on the higher-level outline items that have links. The outline numbers and comments in brackets would not be seen.

### Coastal Training Program Main Page

[The opening page of a website is an important component because it is both a first and lasting impression and will determine whether that visitor will use the site. There will be one or more appealing pictures that convey the importance of coastal resources to the people of Florida and the economy. The CTP description will highlight the value of the program to the site visitor. A description of the NERR will have a link to the national map or reserves; a box will link the visitor to workshops by Region. Menus at the top and left side will have these options:]

- I. Florida CTP Home Page, [existing]
- II. CTP Reserves [existing]
- III. Open Workshops [existing]
- IV. Past Workshops [existing]
- V. Related Training [existing]
- VI. Resources on Coastal issues [see below]
- VII. Resources for Planning and Environmental Professionals [existing]
- VIII. Resources for Local Elected and Appointed Officials [see below]
- IX. Contact Information [existing]
- X. Related Links [existing]

### [VI.] Resources for Seeking Solutions to Critical Coastal issues

This is your link to explanations of coastal issues, case studies, reports, databases, with links to other information, individuals and organizations that can help you. Click on your area of concern.

- A. Aquatic issues (on, in or under the water)
- B. Beach, marsh and shoreline issues
- C. Upland issues

A Quality Coastal Environment Benefits Everyone!  
A vibrant economy  
Healthy lifestyles  
A beautiful place to be

A beautiful  
coastal landscape  
in the background

Quote from a local official

## **VIII. Resources for Local Elected and Appointed Officials**

### A. What Do You Want to Learn? - Training and Education Resources

[Users can see and sign-up for current trainings and request special trainings]

### B. How Can We Help You? - Other Services for Local Officials

[This will have the list of services in the survey]

### C. CTP Services for Different Types of Decisions

[This will have possible CTP services for each step in different decision procedures]

### D. How Can We Better Analyze Environmental, Economic and Other Impacts?

[See possible materials below]

## **VIII.D. Economic Analysis of the Environment**

Environmental impacts affect property value, economic vitality, government expenses, tax revenues and more. Providing analysis of short and long-term economic impacts of specific decisions can be very helpful for local officials, staff and stakeholders. The coastal resources in Florida serve many diverse interests. Florida's beaches, fisheries, barrier islands, wetlands and navigable waters have immense economic value. There are considerable coastal resource benefits going beyond the apparent benefits such as those associated with shipping and tourism. A description of and methods pertaining to economic analysis of coastal resources are outlined below.

Highlights on the Economic Analysis of the Environment:

1. Economic Impact Analysis
2. Methods of Economic Impact Analysis.
3. Economic Valuation.
4. Methods of Economic Valuation for Non-Market Goods and Services

### **VIII.D.1- Economic Impact Analysis.**

Estimates how a change in policy or market conditions affects employment or expenditures in a region or economic sector. Results are usually presented in terms of:

- Output (revenues or sales)
- Income
- Employment (jobs)

#### **VIII.D.2- Methods of Economic Impact Analysis.**

- Survey studies, market studies, and comparable case studies.
- Input Output Analysis; such as IMPLAN and RIMS II that are static (or one-year models).
- Hybrid Approach; Input Output Analysis and Econometric Modeling; e.g., REMI that are dynamic (providing long range estimates; up to 50 years).

#### **VIII.D.3- Economic Valuation.**

- The theory of economic valuation is based on individual preferences and choices. People express their preferences through the choices and tradeoffs that they make, given certain constraints, such as those on income or available time.
- Economic value is measured by the most someone is willing to give up in other goods and services in order to obtain a good, service, or state of the world. In a market economy, dollars (or some other currency) are a universally accepted measure of economic value, because the number of dollars that a person is willing to pay for something tells how much of all other goods and services they are willing to give up to get that item. This is often referred to as “willingness to pay.”
- In order to make resource allocation decisions based on economic values, what we really want to measure is the net economic benefit from a good or service. For individuals, this is measured by the amount that people are willing to pay, *beyond* what they actually pay.

#### **VIII.D.4- Methods of Economic Valuation for Non-Market Goods and Services**

- Direct Methods:
  - Contingent Valuation: develops non-market values by directly surveying individuals and their willingness to pay for a good or service.
  - Benefits Transfer: applies data or results from another valuation study of a resource to another site.
- Indirect Methods:
  - Contingent Valuation: develops non-market values by directly surveying individuals and their willingness to pay for a good or service.
  - Hedonic Price Method: Property prices (or wage rates) are compared to assess values for water quality and other variables.
  - Travel Cost Method: Used primarily to estimate the value of recreation. Travel expenses are seen as the “price” of a recreational experience.
  - Random Utility Model (or multiple site travel cost method): focuses on the choices users make among alternative sites.

# Outreach Implementation Plan

## Objectives for Outreach

- To promote awareness and use of Coastal Training website and services
- To initiate and strengthen long-term relationships with local officials
- To enhance recognition of Coastal Training Programs as sources of high quality, reliable, neutral information and services

## Outreach Implementation Steps

- Develop promotional materials that may include: a one-page map of the website, a brochure, a postcard, a tri-fold business card or sea shells/key chains/pencils with the web address, that can be mailed or distributed at presentations.
- Arrange to have links on sites that are commonly used by officials such as the League of Cities, Association of Counties, Chamber of Commerce and others.
- Send mail and E-mail notices about the website as well as when the site is updated. Create a way to sign-up to receive notices.
- Monitor commission agendas and the news, and notify officials about specific resources on the site that address current hot issues.
- Link the website to alternative formats such as web seminars, conference calls and interactive video.
- Reach out to receptive commissioners who can be advocates.
- Provide ten+ minute presentations on the website and other CTP services at commission workshops, committee meetings and conferences.
- Track usage of items on the site, solicit feedback and evaluations, and follow-up so officials sense they are understood and valued.

## Proposal for Outreach to Individual Commissioners

Several of the interviews emphasized that face-to-face interactions with officials complement the website and presentations to the commissions. Engaged individuals can be more effective environmental advocates with fellow commissioners, can better direct staff, and can act as contacts for accessing the Reserves' resources.

- Identify potential advocates from training participants, website and phone requests, newspapers and informal interactions.
- Identify the current hot issues from the needs assessment, news and reviews of their commission agendas (Their meeting websites can be book-marked for regular reviews).
- Determine the decision process, the current stage they are in, the information needed and the best way to provide it.
- Call, E-mail and mail to clarify information and assistance needs and provide the website address and other relevant information.
- Work with and through those they respect and trust including economic development and tourism councils, chambers of commerce, the League of Cities and others.

- Make appointments to explore how the CTP can best help them work with the other commissioners and stakeholders to utilize the best scientific information available.
- Follow-up to see if more assistance is needed and to evaluate and document the results of the service provided.

### **Proposal for Individual and Group Presentations**

The survey results and review input indicate that it is important for elected and appointed officials to understand coastal resources issues, and they may have little time, interest or need for complex scientific explanations. It may help to preface technical information with an acknowledgement of how the economic, legal, fiscal and stakeholder impacts need to be considered along with the environmental effects. The following is a possible agenda that could be used in an in-person, online or DVD presentation to an individual, a commission or a conference session. It can be adapted to highlight current issues, apply to specific decision procedures, and address different target audiences.

#### **[Name]-Coastal Training Program Partnership: How Can We Work Together?**

##### **Possible Presentation Purposes**

- To consider current coastal resource issues
- To select priority issues
- To explore how the Coastal Training Program can contribute to local decision making
- To suggest appropriate next steps for building a partnership

##### **Possible Agenda**

#### **3 m Opening**

Dramatically describe one or more current coastal issue and the impact on the economy and community, providing examples of solutions and positive benefits  
Acknowledge the challenge of balancing economic, legal, fiscal, stakeholder and environmental concerns

Explain the presentation purpose and outline key points

#### **5 m What Issues Can the CTP Be Most Helpful With?**

Present a draft list of issues and ask for others (In a handout or on screen)  
Prioritize by giving each official 3 votes for their most important issues, or check and submit a form

#### **5 m How Can the CTP Contribute?**

Provide a one-page website map showing information and services available  
Encourage officials to go to the website or contact CTP Coordinators directly

#### **2 m Closing**

Thank the officials for their participation  
Commit to following-up on the current priority issues  
Express interest in building an ongoing partnership

## **Evaluation**

Program evaluation is always challenging, often expensive and sometimes inconclusive. It is especially difficult to evaluate one of a myriad of impacts on the decisions of elected and appointed officials. The following are some possible measures to consider:

- The number of visitors to the website and (if possible) to particular pages
- The number and content of requests for information from the website
- Participation levels and topics in online discussions/chats
- Suggestions and problems submitted to the webmaster
- Satisfaction surveys of CTP website and service users

## **Summary Conclusions and Recommendations**

This Coastal Training needs assessment focused on elected and appointed officials, a unique and important audience for the Coastal Training Programs in Florida. They have many demands on their time and many groups that seek to influence them. It is important for the Coastal Training Programs to establish their role as neutral providers of information and services and to distinguish themselves from those seeking only to serve their self-interests.

Seventy-two officials completed the survey; about twelve percent of those that were E-mailed survey requests. The highest rated issues were, 1) water quantity and quality for natural systems, 2) land use density and intensity impacts, 3) smart growth and sprawl control, 4) waste water treatment and disposal, 5) wetlands: protection restoration and mitigation, and 6) storm water management, public and private. It is important to note that even though these are the issues rated most important, all issues were rated highly. The survey also assessed the importance of aspects of decision-making and the preferred Coastal Training services.

The assessment involved a review of relevant literature, the survey, a review of preliminary results by elected officials and Coastal Training advisors and partners, and an implementation plan for a website and outreach. The insights and results from all parts of the assessment are summarized in these conclusions and recommendations:

### **Conclusions about Working with Elected and Appointed Officials**

- Local officials make legislative/policy decisions, oversee administrative decision-making and hear appeals of staff decisions. To help them consider scientific information, the level, amount and format would be different than for environmental professionals.
- Local officials often pay more attention to property rights, constituent demands, fiscal costs of infrastructure, and complying with minimum standards and legal requirements than to environmental impacts and longer-term economic values of a quality natural environment.

- Environmental information may be best presented as one of the impacts to be considered. Analysis of economic impacts and the value of the environment will be helpful in a systematic analysis.
- Officials are often forced to arbitrate between conflicting experts and attorneys. A workshop setting is the place where neutral information they trust can be discussed. The challenge is to move the group culture from argumentative to objective analysis.
- Policy/planning, development review, program plans/budgeting decisions have standard procedures. It may be helpful for officials to understand how Coastal Training Coordinators can assist at different points in these procedures.

## **Recommendations**

- Focus on issues that were rated important in the survey, that are currently “hot,” that advocates on commissions want to champion, that most impact critical natural resources and with which Reserves are prepared to offer assistance.
- Develop an appealing, practical website that is easy to use, answers questions, enables understanding of key issues, provides reliable information, supports networking with other individuals, organizations and resources, and builds an ongoing positive relationship with elected and appointed officials.
- Develop presentations describing the Coastal Training website, trainings and other services to give at commission workshops, committee meetings, and conferences.
- Nurture personal relationships with advocates and others on commissions by asking about their needs and aspirations, helping them shape action strategies and providing information and assistance needed. Also, work with the groups officials respect.
- Work with officials in their regularly scheduled workshops, when possible, to take advantage of the benefits of collaborative learning and group commitments.
- Enhance relevance of Coastal Training information and services with case studies, data on economic impacts, testimonials of respected peers and constituents, and fieldtrips to explore situations first-hand.

This assessment has contributed to a better understanding of the needs of local elected and appointed officials and how to better provide services to this unique audience. It is clear there is also a need for additional research. The issues change, literally, with the weather, and with legislation, constituent demands, environmental conditions, elections and more. Monitoring of the “hot” and critical long-term issues needs to occur on a regular basis. Coastal Training’s reputation and relationships are key to their success. Research needs to clarify how the Coastal Training Programs can best work with their partners to be even more effective in assisting officials. The enhanced influence of Coastal Training Programs can contribute to better decisions and better coastal resource results.