



COASTAL ECOSYSTEM LEARNING CENTER SELECTION CRITERIA SUMMARY

1. The facility must meet all federal and local construction, safety and licensing requirements.
2. The facility must meet all appropriate or applicable regulations or restrictions required by all the Coastal America Federal Agency partners.
3. The facility must demonstrate a commitment to address coastal resource protection and management issues through their exhibits, education and outreach programs and science and research programs.
4. The facility can be a not-for-profit institution or a for-profit institution. This includes facilities that are governed by a State or local government agency.
5. The facility must devote 75% of their indoor floor space to educational, interactive coastal habitat/ecosystem exhibits, including 50% aquatic displays and 25% terrestrial displays related to aquatic ecosystems. Equal floor space credit will be given for developing and operating outdoor nature trails which include aquatic ecosystems and emphasize, in the interpretive presentations associated with the trail, the effects of the nearby water sources on the terrestrial site.
6. The facility staff must have a permanent, full-time, professionally trained, executive vice-president level employee in charge of education and outreach activities.
7. The facility must have:
 - An auditorium or room able to host meetings of 100 people.
 - One or more classrooms for the use of visiting children or groups.
 - A reference library open to visitors and the general public. Reference libraries open on an appointment basis are acceptable.
 - Audiovisual equipment.

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- Equipment capable of transmitting by electric means lesson plans, experiment instructions and other educational materials to teachers conducting K-12 and /or college level classes.
 - A mechanism for visitors to obtain educational materials (e.g. gift shop, catalog, website).
8. The facility must be affiliated or endorsed by an “institute of higher education”.
 9. A facility will be given special consideration if endorsed or recognized by a professional conservation, habitat restoration or wildlife conservation organization.
 10. Special consideration will be given to facilities with areas set aside for traveling exhibits.

How to apply:

The applicant facility should submit a letter addressing the above 10 selection criteria to:

Virginia K. Tippie
Director, Coastal America
300 7th Street, SW
Room 680
Washington, DC 20024

A copy of the application letter should be sent to the Regional Implementation Team Chair.

(Note: The Coastal America Regional Implementation Team (RIT) sponsoring the nomination of a facility as a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center must demonstrate their commitment and capacity to support their existing learning centers as well as the proposed facility.) Please visit the Coastal America website for a list of RIT Chairs at <http://www.coastalamerica.gov/text/rit.html>; or contact us by phone at (202) 401-9928.

For additional information call Marguerite Duffy, Deputy Director for Education/Outreach, Coastal America at (202) 401-9923 or marguerite.duffy@usda.gov.

As of 8/1/06

January 2004

**Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center
Designation Process**

January 2004

- I. Facilities interested in being designated a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center (CELC) must submit an application which documents that the facility fulfills each of the CELC criteria. A copy of the designation criteria and examples of previously submitted applications can be provided.
- I. A sub-team of the Regional Implementation Team (RIT), composed of representatives from at least 3 different federal agencies, conducts a site evaluation to confirm that the facility meets each of the CELC criteria. The sub-team presents their findings and recommendation to the overall RIT. An example of a sub-team site evaluation report can be provided.
- I. The RIT votes on whether to recommend to the National Implementation Team (NIT) that the nominated facility be designated a learning center. Per a decision made at the December 1999 Principals meeting, a recommendation to designate a new learning center must include information demonstrating the RIT's capability and commitment to supporting their existing learning centers as well as a new learning center. Although specific criteria for how the RITs should make such a demonstration have not been established, RITs are still expected to provide information as appropriate. Examples of how other RITs have fulfilled this requirement are available from the Coastal America office.
- I. The NIT votes on whether to recommend to the Principals that the nominated facility be designated a learning center. The NIT meets the first Wednesday of every month.
- I. The Principals decide whether to designate the facility as a learning center. The Principals meet at least twice a year in the spring and fall.

Letter of Application addressing the 10 Selection Criteria should be sent to:
Ms. Virginia K. Tippie
Director, Coastal America
300 7th Street, SW
Room 680
Washington, DC 20024 (Federal Express Zip Code)
