

Coastal Café: Building Partnerships to Implement Smarter Coastal Growth

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The participants discussed one central question:

*How do we build the necessary partnerships to implement smart growth in coastal areas?
What is the appropriate role for Sea Grant Extension?*

Participants' ideas and comments to this question are grouped around the following:

- why does it make sense for Sea Grant to be involved in the issue of smart growth?
- who might Sea Grant work with?
- what type of assistance might Sea Grant undertake?
- how might that assistance be implemented?
- what are the challenges?

Why does it make sense for Sea Grant to be involved in this issue?

- Sea Grant's strength is natural/rural setting, why would Sea Grant want to get involved in developed areas?
 - Upstream protection for benefit of downstream environment/habitat
 - Better water quality/protect fish habitat
 - Big picture approach, rather than segmented into pieces, everything is connected
 - Cost of being urbanized
 - Because there is a need and an opportunity to expand.
 - Sea Grant role to help decision makers realize the effects of growth and development to the coast (economic, environmental, tourism, etc.)
 - Sea Grant extension agents/expertise to educate decision makers

Who Sea Grant might work with:

- Fisheries, EPA, Army Corps of Engineer are all important partners
- City/county citizen advisory boards (especially those involved in development/planning) might be a special target audience for outreach
- Media
- State Department of Environmental Protection
- Emergency managers
- USDA agriculture extension agents are good partners for work in rural areas. These folks have tremendous credibility in rural areas.

- State universities
- Local government
- Developers
- Realtors
- Economic development agencies
- Planning and engineering community
- Ports as potential partners
- NRCS
- landscape architects

What types of assistance/activities Sea Grant might undertake:

- Extension could help look at economic benefits – how can concentrate development in port areas benefit suburban areas?
- Extension could also help develop regulatory tools, best management practices, take best tools out there and share between areas
- Extension agents could help with comprehensive planning. Provide *technical assistance*. Not just one time information or training, but more ongoing technical assistance is important
- Counties may need help dealing with permitting septic systems, help with long-term planning, help with crafting zoning requirements – zoning assistance, regulatory tools, model ordinances
- Provide resource information to help inform long-term planning (e.g. shellfish bed mapping)
- Sea Grant can help make connections, network – connect people with the appropriate points of contact in other agencies
- Provide funding assistance. Can and should do some advocacy (e.g. for clean water), but must not cross line over to partisanship. Must retain neutrality and credibility, but do need to speak up for resources, smart growth, etc.
- Sea Grant could help CZM programs know what types of assistance (training, grants, technical assistance) are available from the NOAA family (and other federal agencies) and may also be able to do advocacy/outreach that CZM cannot do because of its regulatory role
- Sea Grant can help fill research gaps for CZM, inform decision-making
- Sea Grant can elevate view of coastal issues and get more attention for the issues
- National Sea Grant program needs to grapple with how local Sea Grant programs will need to tailor this initiative to their local settings
- Michigan citizen planner program is a good model for outreach to citizens
- Should work on guiding redevelopment. Although it would be great if Sea Grant could mount an initiative like the extension model with agriculture, a lot of development has already happened
- Have to tie smart growth to money, economic benefits. Have to show how benefits average person

- “Compliance assistance” programs that help people do it right the first time rather than relying on enforcement and fines after the fact. SC DHEC is working on a compliance assistance program regarding NPDES – just don’t have staff to enforce after violated – huge backlog of compliance inspections. Easier to bring folks into compliance, have them do it right the first time. Lot of people would comply if just knew how. Outreach needed
- Pump out the factsheet. Agriculture extension puts tons of factsheets in county facilities – should start getting coastal information out there
- Newsletters to inform local citizens of important issues facing the planning board and important upcoming planning hearings.
- Do more on a national level – e.g., with Coastal States Organization
- Sea Grant a natural choice to identify and convene stakeholders at local, regional, national levels
- Communities need “translators” for land use hearings/address translation issues between planners and community at public meetings (role for Sea Grant?)
- Sea Grant should be educating the public (versus just decision-makers/public officials) re: projects in communities, how to get engaged, how to speak at public hearings, how to get involved in public process
- Would like to see Sea Grant evaluate what communities need – state of public knowledge/concerns/needs re: land use
- Sea Grant’s research agenda should be expanded to address opinion research (Delaware Sea Grant has done assessments); social science research is scanty
- Need national-level research on community values and needs
- Sea Grant can act as an educator to these local municipalities
- Sea Grant seen as having an excellent infrastructure, that could be a great resource to local leaders
- It would be great if Sea Grant agent could be member of county staff
- Can Sea Grant coordinate to help connect state programs with local municipalities?
- Could Sea Grant provide information on comparative work (i.e. who is doing what, where). AND Sea Grant could act as filter, or QC, for “what is out there,” “how should this be done.”
- Sea Grant agent could act as regional host for meetings on regional topics that foster a larger community interest
- Sea Grant brings existing network to the table. Link to expertise outside smart growth (i.e. wetlands restoration, fish habitat, etc.). This adds to the expertise that Sea Grant brings
- Well established communications, cost sharing for staff, outreach, demonstrations
- We need to get a better pulse for the kinds of information and assistance that decision makers need. What are their perceptions, barriers, leanings, current practices, issues, modes of operation, trigger points?
- What are the outstanding questions? What are the scientific questions? The social issues? Look at the research reserves, the CZM programs, and try to identify national priorities. Then see where Sea Grant can help. You’re looking

at forcing a cultural change. We've solved the easy problems in coastal management. The remaining challenges require cultural change, and that's hard. I think you'll find that a lot of the problems have remained the same.

How might that assistance be implemented:

- Small local communities may not have GIS and remote sensing capabilities, but do generally have access to Internet, so can provide tools and information via the Internet
- GIS data is often outdated, and local communities can't afford to update – state or county level has to help
- Useful model in New Hampshire is partnership between Sea Grant, NEMO, NERR, and others called Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC) – towns apply for assistance, and every year NROC works with particular town – give technical assistance from all the partners and small amount of seed money
- Sea Grant needs to do a better job telling CZM programs what they're working on – sometimes Sea Grant only communicates with CZM when applying for a grant. Need to do some “marketing.”
- Need to target the public, get public support. Way to do this is lots more outreach.
- Realtor workshops. Realtors mislead people about nature of environment, about permitting realities. There seems to be some movement to start suing realtors, and if this happens they'll be a very motivated audience. Realtors can also help increase the marketability of smart growth developments
- In Texas, Sea Grant got money from the state Department of Environmental Quality to have a storm water person. She's funded with DEQ money, but operates under the Sea Grant mantle (which brings credibility, neutrality.)
- Sea Grant needs to market itself (e.g. what assistance can it provide), and it needs to do lots of basic outreach to public (e.g. what sort of questions should people ask when buying property.)
- That small amount of *seed money* is key for small local governments. This can help make sure someone's time is devoted to planning
- Sea Grant might fund some inspections for an area with a big backlog
- Walking the line “advocacy without partisanship” should be a core capability within extension – may need some training on how to do this
- Identify the issue communally so that everyone has the facts and starts at the same place
- Sea Grant could be more proactive – have an inventory of institutions working on smart growth issues to see where overlap and gaps lay, so that the wheel would not be reinvented
 - Website that is updated regularly
 - Site would need to be annotated for ease of comprehension
- How do you keep advertising to the audience that this is here?
 - Member organizations advertise on website, create links

- Could be a repository of press releases as well - may be easier to maintain than a calendar of events
- Get info in trade newsletter per audience
- Enter information into existing pathways that these players use to get information
- Missing in partnerships is outreach and social marketing for people to buy in to this type of program. Need to find out who key actors are in the development process and start with them. Their behavior has to change (people who build, finance, etc.) However, this may be a top-down approach
- Can't underestimate the community – a bottom up approach should be taken. Developers will build what the public wants; therefore we need to educate the public first. There has to be a sea change in community before builders and developers change. Can go back to the university system to get this information to Low Impact Development education...people motivated by \$\$ need to be able to show examples of what works, especially economic and quality of life benefits. Need to show environmental benefits because people still care about the environment
- Sea Grant can start partnering with economic departments in universities instead of just Agriculture Extension, showcase interdisciplinary case studies. A lot of neighborhoods don't know what smart growth or conservation means. At the same time, many of these terms have negative connotations. Smart growth should be marketed using economic and quality of life tact, not necessarily the environmental benefit tact
- Educate the builders and developers
- A good example would be looking at other communities (e.g. Tokyo) which are dense because there is no available land. How do you impart that outlook on America?
- Growth will happen. Economic growth is a good thing. Need to figure out what growth means and how to approach it
- Issue-based approach needs to be taken – everyone has positions Need to boil it down to issues and approach it that way
- There are always different perspectives, and that is how Sea Grant can get involved, through teachable moments, looking at future scenarios, helping groups who are interested, and in taking a non-advocacy role
- Need to educate/inform community groups on planning process and how to get civically engaged in public hearing process. Public often finds out too late about development plans. Leads to public distrust of the system
- Well-trained mediators and moderators needed to facilitate public hearings
- Need to agree among regulatory agencies that smart growth principals need to be adopted. Next need land owners and developers on board with smart growth principals. Needs common definition of smart growth
- Sea Grant needs to have a public planning outreach person to act as intermediary between public and planning boards – voice public issues up the chain and acts as translator for citizens

- Need better recognition/visibility of Sea Grant name/understanding of role among public, especially in Great Lakes region. Need to better explain (and define) role, educate public. Introduce ourselves to the players in coastal community development
- On state level, Indiana is good model: by law, county agriculture extension agents serve on county planning commissions as voting members
- Use educators as conduit to planning efforts
- Need to find commonalities – engage developers as part of the process, potential allies
- Address natural resource in land use plans
- Developing partnerships for specific communities – different partners in different areas
 - Need to determine what level of partnerships we’re addressing: local? State? Regional? National? Usually county level is key.
 - Depends on area – e.g., in Maryland, state has (had) master plan/smart growth initiative
- Don’t need to scrap existing codes – add option for smart growth-style/mixed use development; more flexibility
- People need incentive
 - Conservation neighborhoods are starting to sell. Some in name only.
 - Need to change what people want expect.
 - Layout advantages/disadvantages of alternatives and cost associated with.
- Visualization was identified as a great marketing item
 - example of local access footage
 - Show people undeveloped areas (natural resources)
 - Show people what the effect of the different alternative development options may be
- Need to associate the long term cost of this development to counteract the appeal of the short term money that development brings in. (i.e. put value to wetlands, beaches, waterfront). Make people think twice about the “easy money.”
 - Tourism, marketing, Chambers of Commerce as potential partners
 - Permitting bodies
 - Focus on groups currently “left out.”
 - Coordinate dialogs at regional CZM meetings to begin to talk about how this would work in different states/regions. Ask who the “right” people are to talk with (if not present). Plan regional roundtable(s) to identify regional needs per Smart Growth and training/capacity building/research
 - Pool resources across partner (MOU) institutions to begin to identify needs
 - Mapping out a research agenda; thinking among managers vs. academics. Often these represent vastly different pots of money (\$10sK vs. \$100sK)
 - What about a “big survey” rolled out regionally with support and coordination across the MOU institutions and implemented through Sea Grant network/offices to get a read on managers, academics, planners, others

(landowners, developers) perspectives, perceptions, motives related to development and Smart Growth

- Identify what are the chief trigger points for the ultimate decision makers (gatekeepers) that permit actions on the ground
- Come up with feasible action plans. Small scale and short term that can actually be implemented and completed (e.g., “what can we feasibly accomplish in the next four months?”). Make them small and replicable in other locations. Smaller = more feasible.
 - Establish demonstrations that can be used to validate this concept for further implementation and buy in
 - Perhaps there could be a role for “specialists” to take on targeted research that would be applicable across state/jurisdiction; “agents” could take the findings and transfer content at county/community level
 - Need for a roundtable with coastal management programs, academic community, NERRS, NEPs, Sea Grant, planners, extension folks, CSO, NGOs, other nonacademic community to develop a research agenda. Need all actors/sectors to have representation of different perspectives and applications
 - How could Sea Grant presence be elevated within associated academic departments (e.g., urban and regional planning)? Sea Grant Directors could establish Sea Grant specialist in departments, with funding for position and research directed at urban/regional planning (relative to coastal Sea Grant focus).
 - Chunk of change proposed to come through OCRM to do coastal community development. Sea Grant needs to partner to figure out how to spend it. This money has been proposed before and not made it through
 - Coastal community development review coming up – would like to have a meeting including some of the folks here today so you can make recommendations for the program for next five years
 - I think we ought to strategize about how to really implement the MOU between EPA and NOAA. Get all the NEPs, NERRs, CZM folks, etc. together and talk about how implement
- Waterfront revitalization comes to mind. That’s something we’re really strategically set up to do – it involves the principles of smart growth, we know a lot of the partners. (For example, if had an inventory of all the under-developed coastal areas in Michigan, could begin to make a case to work on this.) Working waterfronts are a niche. Also coastal access, clean marina programs
- Needs will vary across regions. Some regions have planners who don’t know anything about coastal erosion, coastal resources, while others are more knowledgeable. This again speaks to the need for regional coordination and a dialog with regional partners/networks
 - If this is a new initiative, has to be something “new” in it, and waterfronts aren’t new, coastal erosion isn’t new

What are the challenges:

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- Do we roll this out at the state level, or do we build it from the county level up?
- Shortages of staff at state and local levels
- We need to respond to the various politics of whichever state we are talking about/working within
- Small likelihood that we can have one model that fits universally (across the country)
- Must be implemented at both/multiple scales
- How would/could this work at the watershed or ecosystem scale? Given the recent emphasis on ecosystem-based management, is this appropriate?
- We need to consider what we want to address, at what scale, what level/scale works best (is most appropriate, where), how much money it will cost to implement (for what return)