

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM U.S. OCEAN POLICY COMMISSION
May 3, 2002**

Question #1: Florida was successful in obtaining legislative approval for the \$3 billion Florida Forever Plan. What role did public education play in achieving this consensus?

Public education played a huge role in securing Legislative enactment of Florida Forever. The education began in 1998 with the drive to get the state Constitution Revision Commission to place an amendment on the ballot that would permit bonds to be sold for conservation purposes. The Florida Forever amendment was crafted to replace the previous constitutional language under which the land acquisition program, Preservation 2000 (P2000), was funded.

The P2000 Program was put in place in 1990; bonds could not be sold for P2000 program purposes beyond 2013. P2000 introduced Florida's citizens and elected leaders to the value of a dedicated funding source for securing conservation properties. At the end of the P2000 decade, a broad coalition, including Governor Bush, supported the continuation of a program to acquire conservation lands through a variety of means, while providing more emphasis on land management.

The passage of Florida Forever was a top priority of Governor Bush's administration. The environmental community pooled its resources to create the "Florida Forever Campaign" and spent 8 months and about \$1 million to educate the public. The combined efforts of the Governor, elected officials, private citizens and the amendment campaign succeeded in securing voter approval of 72 percent. That high percentage reflected the strong public support for conservation land acquisition in Florida and the Legislature responded by enacting the Florida Forever Act.

Question #2: What techniques do you recommend to broaden public knowledge and public comment to develop a sense of public responsibility or ownership of environmental assets (e.g., marine system)?

Developing a sense of public ownership of environmental assets requires an **awareness** of the assets, **understanding** their relevance, **appreciating** their value, **investing** in their protection, and **celebrating successes**. Information and outreach play an important role in giving the public awareness and understanding of the status of the environmental assets and the threats they face. For example, information on the quality of coral, the sources of degradation and the ongoing initiatives to address these problems alert the public to potential issues. Information and outreach can also highlight the link between the condition of environmental assets and economic, environmental and aesthetic/spiritual values. Students, educators and scientists appreciate the opportunities for learning and discovery provided by the marine ecosystem. Divers, tourists, boaters, fishers and coastal

residents can easily value the ocean. Appreciation for the importance of less direct relationships to the resource, however, may require some additional education. For instance, how many people are aware of the role the oceans play in nutrient cycling or that Florida residents benefit from revenues derived from marine-based tourist activities? Public outreach campaigns are especially effective when they are targeted toward specific audiences and rely heavily on visual images that stimulate emotions.

Educational efforts to illustrate why natural resources matter can also encourage changes in social behavior. Once the value of environmental assets is understood, individuals should have opportunities to participate in protecting them. It is especially important to provide hands-on, field-based, experiential learning opportunities that promote strong environmental appreciation, individual responsibility and participation in the solution. This can be done with public consultation, formation of citizen advisory councils, providing for volunteer and service learning opportunities, and even co-management of resources, such as occurs at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

A conservation program should also provide for monitoring and periodic status reports and consider the perspectives of local citizens. To do otherwise does not allow participants to celebrate successes and gain the feeling of public ownership. A federal conservation program related to marine systems offers greater opportunities to partner with others and communicate successes than a program operated within a single state. Generally, however, creating an awareness of successes and incremental accomplishments should be framed in a way that will result in the continuation of an initiative. As discussed above, Florida Forever is built on the foundation of earlier successes with the P2000 program. In another example, the 5-year review of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary program in 2002 will build on the successes of its management over the years.

Question #3: What is the Florida investment plan in educating/informing its residents about ocean issues important to the state? How much is spent on this effort, as a dollar amount and as a percentage of the state budget?

Through a number of programs (e.g., outreach activities of DEP's Office of Environmental Education; educational activities of the Bureau of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas; Florida Coastal Management Program-funded projects and educational activities; Clean Marina program; watershed management; The Governor's Springs Initiative; state participation in the Gulf of Mexico Program initiatives and projects) the public is educated on the value and economic importance of the ocean ecosystem, fisheries resources, and the threats to their health and survival. These activities in combination with the DEP's pollution prevention and control programs, wetland protection programs and management of protected coastal and aquatic areas illustrate the state's commitment and significant investment in protecting ocean and estuarine resources. The DEP's investment would be in addition to that of other state agencies engaged in protecting coastal and marine resources and educating the public, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Departments of

Agriculture and Consumer Services, Health, and Community Affairs and the five regional Water Management Districts.

To provide an example as a typical illustration, the following is a summary of the coastal environmental education efforts at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve during the 2000/01 state fiscal year. Over 17,900 people visited the Reserve Nature Center or participated in educational programs provided by Reserve staff. This demonstrates an increase of 4,500 people over FY 99/00 and was mostly due to a higher visitation rate at the Nature Center in Apalachicola. Over 12,600 walk-in visitors came to the Nature Center. The Reserve has six staff dedicated to the education facility in Apalachicola. Three are program providers and three are support positions. Structured educational programming was conducted with 2,464 people, ranging in age from pre-K through senior adult. This programming consisted of field trips, activities at the Nature Center, classroom lectures, a Guest Lecture series, and a Coastal Management Workshop series for environmental professionals. Other educational services/opportunities provided include an educational resource lending library, classroom treasure chests, classroom curricula, a newsletter, judging at science fairs, and production of a boater/fishermen's guide for the Apalachicola Bay area. Staff was also involved in many public events including Estuaries Day, the Florida Seafood Festival, the annual Coastal Cleanup, an open house for local teachers, Archaeology Day, and Earth Day. Presently, staff is managing a grant that will provide new interpretive exhibits in the Nature Center and on the Reserve's nature trail. Expenditures for the education program are as follows:

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| Staffing (6) | \$ 154,000 |
| Operating Expenses | \$ 18,000 |
| Active Grants | \$ 798,000 (over 2 years) |

Question #4: Coordination among agencies and various interests is important if the nation is to have an integrated and coordinated ocean policy. Please provide your thoughts, from the state perspective, on what institutional changes are needed at the national level to enhance coordination and effectiveness.

DEP has no specific recommendations for retooling federal agencies or programs. Where federal agencies have overlapping or joint jurisdictions, however, they should be critically examined for opportunities to streamline and reduce bureaucratic layers. Aside from making obvious changes to make the current division of responsibilities operate more efficiently, existing agencies and programs should develop ways to better integrate and coordinate their operations and to ensure consistency between individual actions. Most importantly from the state's point of view, federal agencies should enhance their coordination with affected states and recognize states as full partners. Specific suggestions:

- Fed agencies should consult with states during the planning of their operational activities to avoid surprises and requests for review of decisions already made (especially applies to DOD)
- Coordinate with the state on all federal permits and approvals for activities in federal waters
- Allot adequate time for effective consultation and problem solving
- Establish state and federal agency place-based work groups to consider and reconcile complex issues
- Consider specific statutory or rule changes to improve NEPA coordination and especially its linkages with the CZMA, OCSLA, and state regulatory and proprietary evaluations. Some examples:
 - ◆ Provide for state review and comment of draft EAs
 - ◆ Include federal consistency certifications and determinations in EAs and EISs and synchronize NEPA and CZMA consistency time clocks
 - ◆ Prohibit the signing of a FONSI or a ROD before the state has concurred with the consistency of the project pursuant to section 307 of the CZMA
 - ◆ Restrict the shelf life of NEPA documents to ensure that its description of the affected environment and reference data and information are up-to-date
 - ◆ Coordinate state and federal evaluations and decisions so that the public receives more streamlined, coordinated service. For instance, in cases where there is a state regulatory review being conducted for a project that is also the subject of a NEPA document, the federal agency should coordinate the identification and selection of alternatives, necessary data and information, impact assessments and final decisions with appropriate state agencies.

Question #5: You noted during your comments that offshore oil and gas development is not consistent with Florida’s resource utilization ideas. How did the state make this choice? How will energy be supplied in the future to Florida’s growing population? During the meeting you commented on programs that have been implemented across the state to increase energy efficiency and conservation. Please provide additional information on these programs.

The state chose to give high priority to the protection of its coastal and offshore ecosystems because they are natural resources of national significance and also because they are critical to Florida’s quality of life and economic well being. Offshore oil and gas development would compromise these values. Florida’s energy future is being secured in part by its efforts to promote energy conservation and the use of alternative fuels. The Florida Energy Office promotes fuel diversification through the use of biomass and solar energy and other sustainable fuels. The Florida Solar Energy Center provides the research and technical assistance needed to implement the state’s demand reduction strategy. When combined with high electricity generation reserve margins and increased fuel imports, demand reduction provides the state with a secure energy future.

Out of concern for the environmental effects of energy consumption, the state is working to improve energy efficiency in a number of ways. State law recognizes the importance of energy conservation and directs the state to “reduce its energy requirements through enhanced conservation and efficiency measures [while] promoting an increased use of renewable energy” (Florida Statute 187.201). Florida’s Energy Conservation Standards

establish “statewide minimum standards for energy efficiency in certain products, consistent with energy conservation goals... which will reduce Florida’s energy consumption growth rate” (Florida Statute 553.953). Over the past 50 years in Florida, energy conservation measures and other technological innovations have contributed to a reduction in the rate of growth in energy demand (from an 8% growth rate between 1950-1973 to 3.2% in the 1990s).

The state is committed to increasing the use of alternative fuel vehicles and constructing energy-efficient buildings. As of the year 2000, 5,725 alternate fuel vehicles traveled state roads, including those powered by electricity or by hybrid electric/gas engines. In some Florida municipalities, homeowners can receive home energy audits, low-interest loans for replacing inefficient heating and cooling systems and subsidies to increase home insulation, all of which help to reduce energy consumption.

In terms of electric power generation, reduced hydrocarbon combustion can be accomplished by converting to lower-carbon fuels and renewable energy sources, by increasing efficiency in generation (such as by co-generation of power and heat), and by improved efficiency in transmission and distribution. Today, these options are represented within Florida’s energy industry. For example, for many years, there has been a trend to replace oil and coal with lower-carbon, cleaner-burning natural gas. There has also been promising growth in the alternative energy technology sector. Florida’s solar energy industry is one of the nation’s largest and strongest. Also, as of 1997, 35 bioenergy facilities produced 79.2 trillion BTUs of energy. Other renewable and alternative energy sources, such as hydrogen fuel cells, may become more prevalent in the future and could contribute to significant reductions in total emissions from power generation.

Question #6: What are the top one or two issues the state of Florida would like to see the Commission address, and what recommendations does the state have for addressing these issues?

Two issues the Commission may wish to address:

- 1) Identify and implement institutional changes, such as the examples provided under the response to Question #4 above, that would improve the integration of existing state and federal programs and initiatives.
- 2) The development of a comprehensive state-federal ocean resource management partnership with specific strategies and performance goals to:
 - protect and enhance marine species and habitat and control nuisance species
 - support and enhance stable, productive fisheries and safe food supplies
 - manage coastal watersheds to improve the quality of water draining into the marine system
 - enhance non-consumptive economic and business opportunities
 - accommodate essential military activities

develop international resource management partnerships
Where appropriate, many goals could be accomplished through existing state and federal programs and initiatives by improved integration and coordination or increased funding. Certain challenges may defy current institutional structures and require specific authorization or concentrated interagency effort.

Question #7: What is the next step in the evolution of the Coastal Zone Management Act to enable it to function better?

The strength of the Coastal Zone Management Act is derived from its reliance on coordination and cooperation between the states and the federal government and the funding provided to coastal states to implement resource protection goals. Florida is generally pleased with the current level of effort by federal agencies to coordinate with the state; however, as noted in the response to question 4, coordination can be improved. To understand the areas where improvements can be made, we encourage a review of the policies and procedures used by federal agencies as they engage in activities that affect the nation's coastal zone to ensure that these policies and procedures support the goals of the CZMA.

Florida will carefully follow the CZMA reauthorization process to ensure that state authority under section 307 is not diminished and that adequate funding is provided to meet responsibilities assigned to the state under the Act.