

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA COASTAL INFORMATION NETWORK AND PORTAL SITE: BRINGING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO COASTAL COMMUNITY OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

*April L. Turner, S.C. Sea Grant Extension Program
Samantha M. Bruce, S.C. Sea Grant Extension Program*

KEYWORDS: coastal community, outreach, education, Web site, resource portal, partnership, training

The South Carolina Coastal Information Network (SCCIN) emerged as a result of a number of coastal outreach institutions working in partnership to enhance coordination of the coastal community outreach efforts in South Carolina. This organized effort, led by the S.C. Sea Grant Extension Program, includes partners from federal and state agencies, regional government agencies, and private organizations seeking to coordinate and/or jointly deliver outreach programs that target coastal community constituents. The Network was officially formed in 2006 with the original intention of fostering intra-agency communication, coordination, and cooperation.

The overall goal was to maximize the efficient delivery of quality training and educational material to coastal decision-makers, community planners, local officials, and the public. Justification for this collaboration was to avoid duplicative efforts and to minimize the number of meetings/workshops that community leaders and staff are asked to attend, leverage scarce resources, and maximize program benefits and expected outcomes. To facilitate communication and coordination, Network partners have created a member listserv and developed a database of projects, programs, workshops, and other outreach events. Later the database of projects was developed into a Web site with a searchable calendar of outreach events for the eight coastal counties in South Carolina.

Initially the Web site was intended for internal Network use, however, after further consideration, it was made accessible to the public. It was at this point that the Web site was expanded to include a resource portal of outreach and research materials provided by each Network partner and accessible by same search function as the events calendar. In February of 2008 the SCCIN Web Portal was publicly launched, making it available to local government officials and staff and the public. The Web site provides training and educational opportunities, as well as resource materials to community officials, staff, and the interested public. The SCCIN prototype has generated interest from other state and federal agencies that want to develop a similar network based on the South Carolina model. Network partners have since begun to capitalize on partnership opportunities in coastal South Carolina.

April L. Turner
S.C. Sea Grant Extension Program
287 Meeting Street

*Proceedings of Coastal Zone 09
Boston, Massachusetts
July 19 to 23, 2009*

Charleston, S.C. 29451
april.turner@scseagrant.org
(843) 953-2078