

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

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Ecosystem-based management, or EBM, is becoming a preferred approach to managing coastal and ocean ecosystems. One of the most commonly cited principles of EBM is the incorporation of human uses and values into management processes. In the many coastal areas with strong historical or cultural ties to local natural resources, communities can assign great value to the preservation of those linkages. Several important yet challenging first steps to preserving those linkages are documenting historical and cultural information, uncovering gaps in the understanding of these topics, and identifying preservation priorities.

The NOAA Coastal Services Center funded a cultural and historical resource assessment of the Humboldt Bay watershed in Northern California. The assessment was a collaborative effort between the Center, a private consulting firm based in Arcata, California, and representatives of the Humboldt Bay Ecosystem Program, a regional initiative to design an ecosystem-based management framework for the area and develop proposals on high priority issues. The assessment began with an extensive background report documenting the area's ethnogeography, ethnography, history, and current cultural resources. The second aspect of the assessment was a regional roundtable on cultural and historical resources that included representatives of local governments, Native American tribes, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

While the background report provides a much needed reference on the region's culture and history, the workshop identified stakeholder concerns and information needs, and more broadly, generated important cultural and historical information to inform the local EBM program. In addition to aiding local EBM efforts, assessments such as this help NOAA learn about coastal communities' needs related to human dimensions information and applications, and also inform NOAA's efforts to provide the human dimensions information necessary to apply EBM to coastal management.

This poster presentation will present the localized results of the study, and more importantly, the concepts and methods behind the assessment. Additionally, the presentation will offer specific ways that cultural and historical information can be incorporated into EBM.

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