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

DISSEMINATION AND USE OF A WEB-BASED TOOL TO SUPPORT NATURAL RESOURCE-BASED PLANNING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Chester Arnold, Center for Land Use Education and Research, University of Connecticut*
David Dickson, Emily Wilson and John Rozum

Session Title: Applying Innovative Land Use Technology in Coastal Communities

Moderator: Kalle Matso, Cooperative Institute of Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology

Abstract:
One of the greatest barriers to better land use planning at the local level is inadequate access to natural resource and other data upon which the planning process needs to be built. Local land use decision makers must put the individual site-level decisions they make into a greater context (town, watershed, region) that takes into consideration all of the impacts of a given proposal on the community and its resources.

Geospatial data and technology can play a tremendous role in helping communities meet this challenge and make sustainable land use decisions. But, while there has been an explosion of digital data and a proliferation of geospatial tools in recent years, many of these data and technologies are only available to communities with sufficient resources to invest in the software and staff necessary to support their proper application. In many areas of the country, such as New England, there is no substantive regional or county government and many towns have little or no staff. For these communities, the greater potential may not be in traditional geospatial tools but in new web-enabled technologies that do not require GIS expertise.

In support of this approach, the *Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials* (NEMO) Program of the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research developed the *Online Community Resource Inventory* (CRI). The CRI is designed to provide both GIS and non-GIS enabled communities with access to geospatial data to support natural resource-based planning, a foundational concept of NEMO. Because planning is a process, not a technical exercise, the tool has always been intended to work in concert with in-community workshops conducted by NEMO staff. This CICEET-supported project begins the process of disseminating and adapting he CRI tool to other parts of the country, making use of the unique vehicle of the National NEMO Network, a self-formed group of land use education projects that now includes 32 projects in 30 states. The educational, technical, and community outcome aspects of this project-in-progress will be discussed in this session.