



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Sea Grant College Program
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

November 22, 2010

M. Richard DeVoe
Executive Director, South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
287 Meeting Street
Charleston, SC 29401

Dear Mr. DeVoe:

On behalf of the Site Review Team (SRT) for the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, I am pleased to transmit to you the enclosed SRT report. The report documents the findings and recommendations regarding program management and organization; stakeholder engagement; and collaborative network activities during our visit on September 21-22, 2010.

Our policy states that you, as the program director, have the opportunity to prepare a response to the SRT report. Both the SRT report and your response will become part of the Program file in the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). I encourage you to keep the NSGO informed of any activities that are undertaken to strengthen your program so that these actions may be considered by the NSGO at the Final Review.

I wanted also to offer my thanks and to express the gratitude of the Site Review Team for the effort you and your staff put forth to make this review productive and enjoyable. In addition, please express our thanks to the Board of Directors and the many program and university officials, administrators, staff, researchers, advisors and stakeholders who ensured that our review was comprehensive and complete.

Sincerely,

Terrence P. Smith
Program Officer
National Sea Grant Office

Enclosure

Cc: H. Simmons, C. Wilson, P. Kurkul, D. Furlong
L. Cammen, S. Grimes

**Review of the
South Carolina Sea Grant College Program**

September 21-22, 2010



Terrence P. Smith

11/22/2010

Chair, Federal Program Officer

Date



Harry Simmons

11/22/2010

Co-Chair, National Sea Grant Advisory Board Member

Date



I. INTRODUCTION

The Site Review Team (SRT) review of the South Carolina Sea Grant (SCSG) Program took place on September 21-22, 2010 in Charleston, South Carolina.

The SRT members were

Terry Smith (Chair) Program Officer National Sea Grant Office Silver Spring, MD	Harry Simmons (Co-Chair) Sea Grant Advisory Board Caswell Beach, NC
Chuck Wilson Director, Louisiana Sea Grant/Provost, Louisiana State University Baton Rouge, LA	Patricia Kurkul Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS Gloucester, MA
Dan Furlong Consultant Dover, DE	

Prior to the beginning of the SRT visit, and in conformance with National Sea Grant Office and College Program guidelines, the South Carolina Sea Grant program issued a public notice of the SRT visit by inviting interested parties to send written comments to the SRT Chair. The SRT Chair did not receive any responses.

The report of the SRT follows the guidelines of the 'Site Review Team Procedures Manual (March 2010)'. The SRT reviewed and discussed broad issues related to the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium's: 1) Organization and Management; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; and 3) Collaborative Network Activities.

Although the report is organized by these identified issues, the South Carolina SRT notes that all three topics are related and, in fact, intertwined. Moreover, an explicit or formal distinction between stakeholder engagement and collaborative activities may not best characterize the joint planning/management approach used by the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium program.

Meeting conduct and organization

The SRT review took place at the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC (see attached Agenda for times and locale of the various parts of the meeting).

The SRT met with South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium management, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium Board of Directors, members of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium Advisory Board, and other Sea Grant partners and constituents. The agenda began with a 90-minute introduction from the Program Director on the program's organization and history and then continued as a series of panel sessions (14 in total).

The agenda was well organized and the presentation style, which used no visual aids beyond the introductory presentation, facilitated spontaneous questioning and discussions.

The format of the meeting provided contact with a large number of individuals. Chaining a number of topic-specific panel sessions kept the agenda focused and allowed the entire meeting to take place in a relatively compact conference room. That is, at any one time, 10-15 individuals were present and engaged in testimony and discussion. Yet, over the day and a half of the agenda, more than 50 individuals spoke directly to the SRT.

Despite the variety of focal points the overall meeting was structured and sequenced by the three overall review issues. In overview, the SRT thought the meeting structure very effective.

II. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE PROGRAM

As is currently true for many Sea Grant programs, the Consortium's State-level funding has declined due to a decline in the State budget and consequent reductions in State appropriations. Relative to the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, however, it's important to note that although funding has decreased, the percentage reduction to the Consortium is less than the percentage reduction to other state-supported universities/agencies.

The program has lost four staff members and there appears to be little likelihood of those positions being filled in the near future. Despite this the Consortium has continued to meet its mission of generating and applying science-based information on issues and opportunities that enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal and marine resources.

The Consortium uses a large Program Advisory Board (PAB) to guide its program. Members on the PAB (29 in total number) represent a broad range of partners and experts. Utilization of this large, diverse group adds a multidimensional perspective to the program.

Leadership

The director is engaged and connected to all of the elements of the program. The entire management team has strong State, regional and national leadership experience.

Organization

The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium is the only true state agency in the national Sea Grant network and is overseen by a management board; the Board of Directors, seven university presidents and a state agency director. As an independent state agency that reports to the state legislature, the South Carolina Consortium Sea Grant staff exhibited a high degree of involvement not only with clients and partners, but with the Board itself. Since the organization/structure is embodied in SC State statute it is possible that continued declines in State funding might alter the State Agency model and move the program to some other State-affiliated status.

Programmed team approach

Consortium management is experienced, well connected to stakeholders, and integrated. Program managers work as a unified team even though each member of the team wears multiple hats. Thus, the Consortium endorses a management philosophy based on team decision making. As a result, the Program makes excellent use of non-state and non-omnibus funds to leverage appropriate financial support.

The Consortium is good at identifying and using young talent within stakeholder pools and is capturing part of other university talents to build specialists for the program.

Support

South Carolina State budgetary issues are causing reductions in non-federal funding to state-supported entities. This situation may worsen over the next several years and will necessitate continued creative financing. However the Consortium has good support from Board and member programs and from additional programs and initiatives emerging from NOAA and other federal partnerships.

III. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium's stakeholder engagement is broad, impressive, diverse and multidimensional. The Consortium has been entrepreneurial and has used creative 'out-of-the-box' thinking. This has leveraged credibility and provided opportunities to match resources to needs.

In terms of the extension/advisory program, with agents and the extension leader at Clemson University, budget reductions impacting Clemson impose risks to the effectiveness of the extension program. Thus, the Consortium should preserve the program/functionality at Clemson to ensure that performance remains high.

IV. COLLABORATIVE NETWORK/NOAA ACTIVITIES

"Collaborative Network / NOAA Activities" means dealing or working with organizational entities that have the ability to contribute time, talent, or other resources to the Sea Grant program. These include federal, state, and local government agencies; academic and research institutions; as well as industry and special interest groups.

The Consortium has expertly leveraged partners' resources. Partners identified included NOAA (OAR, NOS, NMFS), DOI (F&WS, NPS), USGS, CDC, NSF, FEMA, EPA, US Army COE, other state agencies, private foundations and the business and industry communities.

Participants noted that the structure and performance of the Consortium helped convince individual institutions that creating and facilitating partnerships would lead to more effective use of funds.

The large and inclusive set of activities/partners demonstrates large returns for relatively low expenditure and, since the collective players go beyond simple participation by fostering existing partnerships and creating new partnerships, the South Carolina Consortium acts as the leader/initiator of much of the collaboration.

More specifically, the Consortium is at the forefront of several emerging regional programs/operations including the Southeast Alliance¹, the NOAA Southeast and Caribbean Regional Team (SECART) and the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA). The SRT also notes that the South Carolina Consortium encouraged and funded work on climate change before such an approach was popular and also initiated work on cold water corals and wind energy alternatives.

The Consortium manages a large, diverse set of collaborative programs, which includes beach cleanup, beach rip current education, coastal development, coastal heritage (including the Gullah-Geechee cultural corridor), coastal erosion, marine debris programs and work with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council on South Atlantic deep water marine protected areas.

The Consortium is leveraging valuable and limited resources in two-ways – providing support to programs and providing outside resources to support the Consortium's goals.

Although the Consortium's collaborative activities focus on the state of South Carolina, as they should, the SRT notes several examples of the Consortium acting as a multi-state or regional facilitator or leader. Since the Consortium often is the regional lead, the program can tailor its activities to solve local/regional problems.

The Consortium also partners with other Sea Grant programs. There was evidence of leadership in several of these multi-Sea Grant initiatives, including climate change extension work and direct marketing of fishery products with Alaska Sea Grant.

The SRT was also impressed with the Consortium's work with the private sector where, through education and creative partnering, private sector resources were brought to bear in areas with aligned public and private goals.

V. COMMENTS, FINDINGS, and SUGGESTIONS

Comments

- There are currently eight institutions in the Consortium - seven South Carolina universities and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Given this organizational design - multiple state universities and the state's principal coastal, ocean, and marine resource agency serving as partners and overseers - the Consortium is engaged early and often by partners who represent a very diverse

¹ *An agreement among the governors of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida to better manage and protect coastal ocean resources.*

group of stakeholders and special interest groups. This intentional organizational design creates an initial buy-in and ensures that such activities meet the program's overall mission and goals.

- The Program Advisory Board serves as an important facilitator given its large size, diversity of membership and broad expertise.

Findings

- The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium blends science, outreach and communication components well. As an example, recent efforts dealing with hypoxia in the Myrtle Beach area resulted in a large coordinated operation which utilized a base scientific approach rather than a preconceived strategy for eliminating a current practice.
- The Consortium, through the use of its Program Advisory Board, gets excellent guidance on initiatives related to coastal and marine resource issues and opportunities. The Advisory Board also provides a forum to develop, review and focus the Program's Strategic Plan in a timely and effective manner.
- The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium can look at a state issue as a national issue, translate it to a regional level and then bring the issue back to a national level, not as a problem, but as a solution. Thus the Consortium is comfortable in describing and solving issues in a simultaneous local (state), regional and national context.

Suggestions

- The Program's inherent multi-institutional structure has created many opportunities and, given the effective leadership of the Program, significant efficiency and productivity. Thus, there is potential for continued and even improved performance. But in a multi-faceted, highly interrelated set of operations, changes in infrastructure or leadership can be disruptive. This implies that the Program should consider approaches or scenarios that can accommodate leadership or structural changes.
- 'Coastal Heritage Magazine' is an excellent publication, and the Consortium should attempt to increase readership, in print and online, which may imply delivery to non-resident property owners.

S.C. Sea Grant Consortium
National Sea Grant Site Visit – Day One

Tuesday September 21, 2010	1 st Floor Conference Room, New Science Center, College of Charleston 202 Calhoun Street (corner of Calhoun and Coming streets)
0715 – 0730	Leave B&B and Walk to new Science Center
0730 – 0800	Coffee and Refreshments
0800 – 0815	Introduction and Purpose of the Site Visit Terry Smith, Ph.D., National Sea Grant College Program Office
0815 – 0945	Program Management and Organization – S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, Strategic Planning, Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement, Budget & Funding, Extension Panel #1 – Consortium “Core Group” Discussion M. Richard DeVoe, Executive Director Elaine Knight, Assistant Director Denise Sanger, Ph.D., Assistant Director for Research and Planning Susan Ferris Hill, Director of Communications Robert Bacon, Sea Grant Extension Leader
0945 – 1000	Break and Discussion with Staff
1000 – 1200	Stakeholder Engagement/Collaboration – Planning/Engagement Panels (<i>DeVoe</i>) Panel #2 – NOAA Partners in Planning and Engagement Paul A. Sandifer, Ph.D., Interim Science Advisor to NOAA Administrator Margaret A. Davidson, J.D., Director, NOAA Coastal Services Center Geoff Scott, Ph.D., Director NOAA Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research Panel #3 – University/Institute Partners in Planning and Engagement Robert Becker, Ph.D., Director, Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University Robert Van Dolah, Ph.D., Director, SCDNR Marine Resources Research Institute Paul T. Gayes, Ph.D., Director, Center for Marine and Wetland Studies, Coastal Carolina University Panel #4 – State Agency Partners in Planning and Engagement Robert Boyles, Deputy Director, SCDNR Marine Resources Division Carolyn Boltin-Kelly, Deputy Commissioner, SCDHEC Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management Panel #5 – Business/Industry Partners in Planning and Engagement John Knott, President and CEO, Noisette Company, North Charleston, S.C. C. Frank Lewis, Senior Engineer, SCANA Corporation, Columbia, S.C. Tim Reinhold, Ph.D., VP for Engineering, Institute for Building and Home Safety, Tampa, FL

1200 – 1300	Lunch and Discussion with Panelists
1300 – 1445	<p>Stakeholder Engagement – Extension/Education Panels (<i>Bacon</i>)</p> <p>Panel #6 – Serving Coastal Communities - Planning for Action (<i>Turner</i>) <i>Katie Giacalone</i>, Natural Resources Coordinator, Carolina Clear, Clemson University (NEMO-LID Atlas) <i>David M. Jirousek</i>, AICP, Director, Jasper County Building and Planning Services (Jasper County comprehensive planning) <i>Susan Lovelace</i>, Ph.D., Outreach and Social Science Coordinator, NOAA Hollings Marine Laboratory (S.C. Coastal Information Network) <i>Matt Slagel</i>, Shoreline Management Specialist, SCDHEC Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management (Shoreline Change Workshops)</p> <p>Panel #7 – Serving Coastal Communities - Managing Shorelines (<i>McCoy</i>) <i>Kevin Blayton</i>, P.E., Director of Public Works/City Engineer, City of North Myrtle Beach, S.C. (Beachfront monitoring and management) <i>Robert Bebee</i>, Lt., Special Operations, Midway Fire and Rescue, Pawleys Island/Litchfield Beach, S.C. (Rip currents awareness)</p> <p>Panel #8 – Enhancing Science Education (<i>Vernon-Bell</i>) <i>Murray Eicher</i>, Science Supervisor, Charleston County School District (District linkages) [Invited] <i>Linda Sinclair</i>, Science Consultant, South Carolina Department of Education (State linkages in K-12 science education) <i>Lundie Spence</i>, Ph.D., Director, COSEE-Southeast (Regional scientist-educator linkages) <i>Beth Burkett</i>, Interpreter, Caw Caw Interpretive Center, Charleston County Parks (Informal education linkages)</p>
1445 – 1500	Break and Discussion with Panelists
1500 – 1530	Walk to President’s Board Room College of Charleston
	President’s Board Room, Randolph Hall (2nd Floor) College of Charleston George Street (between Coming and St. Philips streets)
1530 – 1700	<p>Program Management and Organization – Governance and Oversight S.C. Sea Grant Consortium Board of Directors Meeting <i>Raymond Greenberg</i>, Ph.D., M.D., President, Medical University of South Carolina, and Chair, presiding</p>
1700 – 1800	Break and Walk back to New Science Center; Site Visit Team Executive Session (1715 to 1745)
	Atrium, New Science Center, College of Charleston 202 Calhoun Street (corner of Calhoun and Coming streets)
1800 – 2030	<p>Stakeholder Engagement – Meet our Colleagues 30th Anniversary Reception – S.C. Sea Grant Consortium</p>

S.C. Sea Grant Consortium
National Sea Grant Site Visit – Day Two

Wednesday, September 22, 2010	1st Floor Conference Room, New Science Center, College of Charleston 202 Calhoun Street (corner of Calhoun and Coming streets)
0715 – 0730	Leave B&B and Walk to new Science Center
0730 – 0800	Coffee and Refreshments
0800 – 1000	<p>Stakeholder Engagement – Topical Constituent Panels (<i>Sanger</i>)</p> <p>Panel #9 – <i>Coastal Heritage</i> Educational Outreach (<i>Tibbetts</i>) <i>Lundie Spence</i>, Ph.D., Director, COSEE-Southeast (Communicating ocean science information to educators) <i>J. Smith Harrison</i>, Executive Director, S.C. Wind and Hail Underwriting Association, Columbia, S.C. (Communicating hazards information to property owners and the building industry) <i>Michael A. Allen</i>, Community Partnership Specialist, National Park Service (Communicating Gullah-Geechee cultural heritage information to all audiences)</p> <p>Panel #10 – Hypoxia in South Carolina Coastal Ocean Waters (<i>Sanger</i>) <i>Braxton Davis</i>, Ph.D., Director, Policy and Planning Division, SCDHEC Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management (Coastal management interactions) <i>George Voulgaris</i>, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Earth & Ocean Sciences, University of South Carolina (Physical oceanographic drivers) <i>Richard Viso</i>, Ph.D., Assistant Director, Center for Marine and Wetland Studies, Coastal Carolina University (Role of groundwater) <i>Erik Smith</i>, Ph.D., Research Coordinator, North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERRS, University of South Carolina (Biogeochemical forces and collaborative research)</p> <p>Panel #11 – Sustainable Seafood Industry (<i>Von Harten and Whetstone</i>) <i>David Whitaker</i>, Assistant Deputy Director, SCDNR Marine Resources Division <i>Bill Cox</i>, Owner, Island Fresh Seafood, Inc., Yorges Island, S.C. <i>Megan Westmeyer</i>, Sustainable Seafood Initiative Coordinator, South Carolina Aquarium, Charleston, S.C.</p>
1000 – 1030	Break and Discussion with Panelists
1030 – 1200	<p>Collaborative Regional Networks – NOAA/SG/Regional Panels (<i>DeVoe</i>)</p> <p>Panel #12 – Regional Coastal Climate Programs (<i>Whitehead</i>) <i>Kirstin Dow</i>, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments (CISA), University of South Carolina (Interactions with the NOAA RISA climate community) <i>Jack Thigpen</i>, Ph.D., Extension Director, North Carolina Sea Grant College</p>

	<p>Program (Regional coastal climate extension model) <i>David Stoney</i>, Ph.D., Director, Kitchen Table Climate Study Group of McClellanville, S.C. (Local climate change engagement)</p> <p>Panel #13 – Developing Regional Ocean Observing Capabilities (<i>DeVoe</i>) <i>Harvey Seim</i>, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Marine Sciences, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Chair, Board of Directors, Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA) <i>Debra Hernandez</i>, Executive Director, SECOORA, Charleston, S.C. <i>Eugene (Geno) Olmi</i>, Ph.D., Regional Coordinator, NOAA Southeast & Caribbean Regional Team (SECART), Charleston, S.C.</p> <p>Panel #14 – Forming the Governors’ South Atlantic Alliance (<i>DeVoe</i>) <i>Virginia Fay</i>, Senior Policy Analyst, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, St. Petersburg, FL <i>Carolyn Boltin-Kelly</i>, Deputy Commissioner, SCDHEC Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management [invited]</p>
1200 – 1230	Lunch and Discussion with Panelists
1230 – 1245	Walk to Consortium’s Conference Room
	Conference Room, S.C. Sea Grant Consortium 287 Meeting Street (corner of Meeting and George streets)
1245 - 1515	Working Session – Site Visit Team
1515 - 1600	Read-Out – Site Visit Team with Consortium Core Group and Leadership
1600	Adjourn