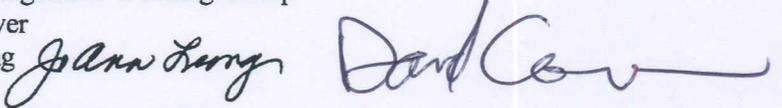


May 29, 2009

To: NOAA Scientific Advisory Board
Attn: David Fluharty, Chairman

From: Ecosystem Science and Management Working Group
Chairpersons: David Conover
Jo-Ann Leong



Re: Report on Coastal Strategy Initiative for NOAA

The Ecosystem Science and Management Working Group, ESMWG, a standing committee of the NOAA Scientific Advisory Board, has met in February and in May, and here provides for the Board, a report of its initial deliberations. The ESMWG has decided to focus its attention first on NOAA's approach in the coastal zone. We strongly support the emerging NOAA effort to develop a comprehensive coastal strategy that incorporates ecosystem and social sciences and supports policy and management. Implementation of an ecosystem approach to management is crucial in the coastal region. The members of the Working Group have identified a need for NOAA to construct a framework for performing some form of integrated ecological assessments (e.g., IEA as recommended by the External Ecosystem Task Team). The framework should inform decisions about policy issues (such as land acquisition and habitat restoration activities) and meet the needs of end users. It should comprise a planning and assessment process with many components including:

- inclusion of appropriate watershed/marine connections
- application of existing and new models for forecasting that can be linked to decision support tools
- incorporation of data from observation systems into monitoring and tracking of ecosystem status and trends
- collection of new data, including economic and social data, at spatial scales appropriate for management
- accurate, high resolution mapping that informs spatial planning
- identification of cumulative effects and tradeoffs among management objectives
- collaboration among other federal and state agencies and other partners in the planning and assessment process

The ESMWG will continue to focus its attention on coastal issues and look forward to working with NOAA in the development of a Coastal Strategy and the reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

The ESMWG is concerned about the anticipated gap in ocean color observations for research and operations and will review and comment on NOAA's mitigation plans prior to the fall meeting of the SAB.