



Department of Commerce
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
National Fisheries Marine
Caribbean Field Office



Guide to Minimizing Impacts of Development to Marine and Coastal Resources: From Project Design to Permitting

U.S. Virgin Islands – Participant Evaluation Results

St. Croix – March 9, 2010

University of the Virgin Islands, Northwest Wing Great Hall

&

St. Thomas – March 10, 2010

USVI Small Business Development Center Training Facility

April 2010

Introduction

As part of the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP), the National Marine Fisheries Service's, Protected Resources Division Caribbean Field Office carried out workshops for developers, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to provide information regarding the Territorial and Federal permit process in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). These workshops were held in St. Croix at the University of Virgin Islands and in St. Thomas at the VI Small Business Development Training Center. The St. Croix meeting was attended by 15 people and the St. Thomas activity was attended by 44 people.

Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; NOAA Fisheries; and the Divisions of Environmental Protection, Coastal Zone Management, and Fish and Wildlife of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources participated as panelists in the workshops. The presentations were divided into minor to major land and minor to major water with the construction of a single-family residence and construction of a tourism-related development used as examples of potential land projects and the construction of a single-family dock and marina construction used as examples of potential water projects. Following each session (land and water), attendees had the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters.

This report summarizes the results of the evaluations completed by workshop in St. Croix and St. Thomas. In addition, the report includes their recommendations and suggestions for future activities. Because many of the questions on the evaluation were not answered in full by those who completed an evaluation sheet, we incorporated some answers from each of the workshops into the summary of the overall results. In the sections that required the evaluator to provide an explanation, opinion and / or recommendation, the person's comments were copied verbatim in the results. The report also indicates whether an explanation, opinion, or

recommendation was identified by only one person, or when several persons expressed similar sentiments.

Results

A total of 59 people attended the workshops in U.S. Virgin Islands with 75% of attendees coming to the St. Thomas activity. A total of 14 evaluations were completed by attendees of the St. Croix activity held on March 9, 2010, representing 93% of the total attendees. Thirty evaluations were completed by attendees of the St. Thomas workshop held on March 10, 2010, representing 68% of the total attendees.

Overall, 61% of those who evaluated the workshops indicated that the organization of the activity was excellent, 34% indicated that the organization of the workshop was good, and 2% indicated that it was regular. For 66% of the responders, the activity met their expectations fully, and 32% noted their expectations were partially fulfilled. As for the activity duration, 82% of the respondents said it was long enough and 16% said it was insufficient.

The workshops were held in two different physical facilities: the University of the Virgin Islands, Northwest Wing Great Hall in St. Croix and at the VI Small Business Development Training Center in St. Thomas. Sixty-four percent (64%) of those attending the workshop in St. Croix said that the facilities were excellent and 36% said they were good. In St. Thomas, 67% of the respondents responded that the facilities were excellent and 30% said they were good.

Forty-five percent (45%) of the respondents indicated that the activity increased their knowledge of the permitting process totally and 50% reported that the activity increased their knowledge partially. Here are some of the explanations offered by the respondents:

St. Croix

-I learned the answers to questions that I had.

-I am already involved with the permitting process as a planner with the DPNR.

St. Thomas

-Little offered in the way of planning-mostly making aware of jurisdictions.

-I think we need to really pound on people that this is to learn process- not to talk about special projects or pet projects.

- Tangled web of requirements and contradictions.
- Very good presentations and a good use of time.
- I am new to Virgin Islands
- Not enough time allotted to each presenter
- Must of this issues here I have worked through in PR, so I know where you want to go. What I learned is mostly how you do it and how I can help!
- Having all the agencies present was good, but lacking was an overview.
- Was not completely familiar with the roles of federal agencies.
- More detailed information is necessary for complete understanding of underlying requirements and steps. (2)

The content of the presentations given by agency panelists was also evaluated by the attendees. Only the Division of Fish and Wildlife had different agency representatives in St. Croix versus St. Thomas. However, because the evaluation sheet requested an evaluation of the agency presentation and not the presenter, the results of the evaluations from each location are lumped together in this report. The results of the evaluations of agency presentations from both workshops were as follows:

- DPNR-Coastal Zone Management: 50% of respondents indicated the presentations were excellent and 48% indicated they were good.
- DPNR- Division of Environmental Protection: 45% of respondents indicated the presentations were excellent, 48% indicated they were good, and 2% indicated they were poor.
- DPNR- Division of Fish and Wildlife: 45% of respondents indicated the presentations were excellent and 48% indicated they were good.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: 43% of respondents indicated the presentations were excellent, 61% said they were good, and 2% indicated they were poor.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: 55% of respondents indicated the presentations were excellent and 52% indicated they were good.
- NOAA Fisheries: 45% of respondents indicated the presentations were excellent and 48% indicated they were good.

Below is a list of suggested topics or themes that respondents felt should have been presented during the workshop, or an indication as to whether the information covered was adequate:

St. Thomas:

- Local and federal enforcement of the regulations. Updating of regulations.
- Hydrology. Geomorphology
- No, the themes covered were pretty broad. Actually, would be good to have more of these seminars and would like EPA presence.
- Post-permitting monitoring and enforcement!
- Whether there will be new tighter legislation in light of climate change. What environmentalists can do to make sure the procedures and permitting are complied with correctly (ie. resources when there is an illegal CZM permit)

Attendees of the workshops evaluated the overall activity as follows: 27% indicated the activity was excellent, 2% indicated that it was very good, and 18% indicated that it was good.

Among the comments and/or suggestions offered by those attending the workshops to improve future activities the following were included:

St. Croix

- Figure out how to get developers/consultants to attend.
- We need to put these presentations on a CD.
- The NOAA presentation had many slides with far too much text to read and in small fonts. I teach students the 40/words/slide rule.
- Same format

St. Thomas

- Should have these workshops every 6 months.
- Need to review existing DPNR permit review and approval process for compliance with a handbook. Then a mandatory training of new BMPs for CZM and DEP staff. Need to set up a day training course for groups/ persons who prepare EARs. Only people who attend can prepare them.
- Presentations should be available online or in a CD or DVD format. EARs should be viewable online.
- The 10min time limit and informed speakers made this event a success.
- Start on time. Allow more time for presentations.
- Extended time frame for questions and answers.
- Invite law makers as presenters to be participants..
- Have available handouts of the pp or notes for each agency that presented.
- Suggest handout with contacts and websites of panel members. (2)
- Solicitation of process improvements from applicants-what are the challenges and frustrations experienced by applicants and how might they be addressed?



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St. Croix: A total of 14 Evaluation Sheets were tabulated.
St. Thomas: A total of 30 Evaluation Sheets were tabulated.

1. The organization of the activity was:
 __27__ Excellent __15__ Good __1__ Regular ___Poor
2. Your expectations were fulfilled:
 __29__ Totally __14__ Partially ___ Not at all
3. The time was devoted to activity:
 __36__ Sufficient _7__ Insufficient ___ Excessive
4. Physical facilities where the activities offered were:
St. Croix _9__ Excellent __5__ Good ___ Deficient
St. Thomas _20__ Excellent _9__ Good ___ Deficient
5. The activity increased your knowledge of the permitting process:
 _20__ Totally _22__ Partially ___ Not at all

Explain:

St. Croix

- I learned the answers to questions that I had.
- I am already involved with the permitting process as a planner with the DPNR.

St. Thomas

- Little offered in the way of Planning-mostly making aware of jurisdictions.
- I think we need to really pound on people that this is to learn process- not to talk about special projects or pet projects.
- Tangled web of requirements and contradictions.
- Very good presentations and a good use of time.
- I am new to Virgin Islands
- Not enough time allotted to each presenter
- Must of this issues here I have worked through in PR, so I know where you want to go. What I learned is mostly how you do it and how I can help!
- Having all the agencies present was good, but lacking was an overview.
- Was not completely familiar with the roles of federal agencies.
- More detailed information is necessary for complete understanding of underlying requirements and steps. (2)

- Great information but I suggest a longer workshop, maybe a certification program for “specialists in permitting and environmental impacts” (or EARS).
- We can contact the federal agencies with violations and they will consider these violations even if the permit is not yet before them.

6. Evaluate the content of the presentations given by the following agencies at the workshop:

DPNR-Coastal Zone Management: _22_ Excellent _21__ Good ___Poor

DPNR- Division of Environmental Protection: __20_ Excellent _21__ Good _1__Poor

DPNR- Division of Fish and Wildlife: _20__ Excellent _21_ Good ___Poor

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: _19_ Excellent _27__ Good _1__Poor

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: _24_ Excellent _23__ Good ___Poor

NOAA Fisheries: __20_ Excellent _21__ Good ___Poor

7. Do you think any other themes should have been presented? Explain

St. Croix

- We could use more of this activity, but better advertisement.
- Much of the information was a bit repetitive, but I believe it was unavoidable as the agencies duties overlap considerably.

St. Thomas

- Local and federal enforcement of the regulations. Updating of regulations.
- This seminar had almost nothing to do with coral reef conservation. It was great for understanding the permit process.
- Hydrology. Geomorphology
- No, the themes covered were pretty broad. Actually, would be good to have more of these seminars and would like EPA presence.
- Great job everyone! It's tough being in your position and you made it look good!
- Post-permitting monitoring and enforcement!
- Whether there will be new tighter legislation in light of climate change. What environmentalists can do to make sure the procedures and permitting is complied with correctly (ie. resources when there is an illegal CZM permit).

8. In general, please rate the activity:

12 Excellent _8__ Good ___ Regular ___ Poor
1 Very Good

9. Comments or suggestions to improve future activities:

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- We need to put these presentations on a CD.

-The NOAA presentation had many slides with far too much text to read and in small fonts. I teach students the 40/words/slide rule.

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St. Thomas

-Should have these workshops every 6 months.

-Need to review existing DPNR permit review and approval process for compliance with a handbook. Then a mandatory training of new BMP to CZM and DEP staff. Need to set up a day training course for groups/ persons who prepare EARS. Only people who attend can prepare them.

-Presentations should be available online or in a CD or DVD format. EARS should be view online.

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-Invite law makers as presenters to be participants.

-Have available handouts of the pp or notes for each agency that presented.

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-Solicitation of process improvements from applicants-what are the challenges and frustrations experienced by applicants and how might they be addressed?