

Approaches to State Coastal Management

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University of Rhode Island
Marine Bulletin Series No. 13

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While any meaningful examination of the peculiarities of individual state approaches to coastal management goes well beyond the limited scope of a summary statement such as this, a number of useful observations may be made on these approaches arranged into broad categories. Six categories cover the efforts initiated to date and will be discussed in turn.

No Significant Activity

Five states have made little or no progress toward developing comprehensive coastal management programs. They are Alabama, Georgia, New Jersey, South Carolina and Virginia. Of these, New Jersey with new wetlands conservation legislation and Virginia with a Legislative Advisory Council on the environment appear most ready to respond to new federal initiatives offered under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (S-3507). Why have the above five states failed to anticipate such initiatives? A number of likely explanations present themselves. Apathy and/or absence of recognized need may be factors. Funding and personnel deficiencies may prevent adequate discharge of management responsibilities. Efforts may be stymied by existing agency, local or legislative opposition. In short, these states appear to be particularly vulnerable to internal administrative and political weaknesses which plague the efforts of all states. It is questionable whether they can achieve a great deal until a concerted effort is made to overcome these weaknesses.

The Matrix Approach

The matrix approach to coastal management involves a careful, detailed and systematic identification and analysis of the resources of the coastal zone and problems related to their allocation. This information is then used in the orderly and logically sequential development of a comprehensive management plan and an administrative mechanism to implement it. The key to the matrix approach is its strong emphasis on pre-planning. Little if any active management is initiated prior to completion of the guide plan. The matrix technique represents the most popular approach to coastal management with 13 states involved: Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Plans are in varying stages of completion and differ in scope and sophistication.

The strengths of this approach are several. It stresses rational and careful consideration of problems and provides for their orderly and logical resolution through an appropriate and presumably well-informed management mechanism

with a clearly established guiding philosophy. It provides numerous opportunities for all levels of government to participate in the planning process. Its weaknesses, however, are also several. Long-range planning is a time-consuming process which generates a number of problems for itself. It is ill-suited to deal with immediately pressing demands whose uncontrolled resolution may seriously compromise planning goals. Moreover, continued postponement of visible and dramatic action breeds public, bureaucratic and legislative apathy and exposes the plan to extended bureaucratic and vested interest hostility. The long-term financial and staff commitments required are likely to suffer as a consequence and are themselves likely to exacerbate existing competition for funds and staff.

The Matrix-Moratorium Hybrid

The matrix-moratorium hybrid represents an attempt to control short-term development and thereby establish a more favorable climate for long-range planning. By so doing, it is hoped that the matrix approach may be made more suitable for states with coasts under strong developmental pressure. The four states—California, Delaware, Oregon and Texas—which have chosen this approach to coastal management have all declared general or selective moratoriums on development within a defined coastal or offshore strip during a planning period of specified length.

The moratorium approach shares the strengths of the pure matrix technique while substantially reducing its vulnerability to unchecked development. It remains vulnerable, however, to most of the matrix technique's other weaknesses while additionally imposing on itself the burdens of interim planning and day-to-day interim management. In this it can, as appears probable with California's recently passed Proposition 20 (Coastal Initiative), assume many of the difficulties associated with organizational management as pursued in Rhode Island and Washington. Of this more later. Where selective coastal moratoriums have been initiated, as with Delaware's prohibition of heavy industry, Texas' restrictions on submerged land sales and Oregon's tight control of coastal construction, it appears that protection afforded the planning process is frequently illusory or incomplete at best. Selectivity affords unregulated activities continued opportunities to proliferate while providing regulated interests with a convenient scapegoat around which to rally public opposition to related (and sometimes unrelated) issues. In this regard, it is disturbing to note that opponents of Delaware's program appear to have been successful in linking it to unpopular tax increases proposed by the incumbent governor during the 1972 campaign. His defeat on the tax issue may bode ill for the state's present management approach.

State-County Efforts

Three Great Lakes states, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan, have chosen to encourage their county governments to regulate coastal development through traditional single-use land zoning under the loose supervision of the state. The counties have been given a specified period to zone permissible uses of a number of land categories in a narrow coastal strip. General guidelines have been suggested with the right to replace inadequate programs reserved to the state.

The state-county effort is commendable in that it guarantees local participation in the planning and management process and provides for a large measure of local initiative. It might reasonably be assumed that this approach will encourage the grassroots support necessary for effective management. It should also result in a program more sensitive to community needs and interests than is likely to result from state planning alone. The state's interest in preventing shoddy performance on the county level is protected by its reserved right to replace inadequate programs with its own. However, very frequent recourse to this power will undermine the community support generated by placing administrative responsibility at the county level.

The state-county approach to coastal management does have a number of debilitating administrative flaws. Loose state supervision, while encouraging local initiative, provides few incentives to forceful or innovative action. A narrow and essentially obstructionist county interpretation of management objectives is defensible under the law and may be assumed when local and state management goals clash. Individual counties will often have differing developmental preferences which are difficult to coordinate into any centrally-focused comprehensive management approach in the absence of clearly defined state management powers and objectives. The result can be and often is a disjointed and largely ineffective effort to achieve limited and ambiguous goals. Comprehensive management is unlikely to result from such activities.

The Organizational Approach

The organizational approach represents the most immediately ambitious and directly risky technique for managing coastal development. It is being practiced by only two states, Rhode Island and Washington. This approach emphasizes direct and immediate administrative action. In contrast to the matrix technique's extended pre-planning period, a functional management mechanism is established at the earliest possible date. It is equipped to deal with pressing developmental problems revealed by a quick inventory or survey. Its actions are guided by a general statement of management philosophy and a loose and flexible set of long-range objectives. Matrix-type detailed plan definition begins only after the program is initiated and is pursued concurrently with active management.

There are several advantages to direct administrative action. It is especially relevant for states whose coastal areas present critical developmental problems demanding immediate management response. It allows for a gradual accumulation of financial and staff commitments while providing both a visible justification for such commitments as are required and a visible monitor of their effectiveness. This, of course, can be a double-edged sword — incompetence and waste will be as immediately apparent as will finesse and efficiency. Direct action allows the state to react to specific threats with a dispatch that encourages public support and interest, discourages inaction by recalcitrant bureaucrats and legislators and helps maintain public and administrative commitment.

The speed with which the manager can begin grappling with developmental problems can also be one of the organizational approach's greatest weaknesses. The aura of urgency and crisis that surrounds many decisions encourages rash, ill-considered and ill-conceived responses which may be poorly adapted to sought-

after ends. There is an understandable tendency to over-react to the most pressing and obvious threats and ignore equally important but less dramatic responsibilities. The system, in short, may find itself bound into a "brush fire" mentality.

The desire for direct response creates additional problems. Coastal communities may be expected to jealously guard delegated and traditional controls over their shorelines. They are suspicious of state intervention and reluctant to be prodded into quick action. This reluctance is expressed by lack of cooperation at the critical local level and through legislative pressure to modify and weaken necessary functional management powers. Unplanned system modification can result in a mechanism inadequately equipped to overcome residual bureaucratic, legislative and community resistance to forceful management. The low price tag associated with the establishment of an organizational system may further undermine its effectiveness when minimal financial and staff commitments are carried over into the active management process by legislators under strong community pressure to resist threats to local autonomy.

The greatest threat to organizational management occurs in the interim between the initiation of active management and the completion of the long-range development plan. During this extended "muddling through" period important decisions face a manager who has only a very general set of objectives to guide his actions. The consequences are several. Forceful decisions on major policy issues may be avoided and postponed. This effectively removes control over major developments from the manager and largely defeats the purpose for which management was initiated. With the reluctance to rule on major issues comes a strong tendency to become bogged down in routine decisions examined independently and dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis. The cumulative impact of these decisions will be considerable, unplanned, unanticipated and uncontrolled, again, much to the detriment of effective management and public and legislative confidence.

Comparable Efforts

Two states, New York and Maryland, are in the process of expanding the responsibilities of existing administrative divisions to include coastal planning and, to a lesser degree, management functions. This approach has the advantage of largely avoiding the normal frictions created by the establishment of a new bureaucracy within the existing state administrative structure. It does not necessarily, however, escape the other problems associated with the various approaches to coastal management which have been outlined thus far. Whether a new system is superimposed on existing institutions or created from within, it will share the common problems discussed.

One state, Hawaii, has expanded the matrix approach as applied exclusively to the coastal zone to include comprehensive planning on a statewide scale. Again, the problems associated with matrix planning have already revealed themselves. It may be anticipated that as active management is initiated, organizational problems also will develop.

State Approaches to Coastal Management

A. Breakdown by state.

State	No Significant Activity	Comparable Efforts	Planning	Moratorium	Active management	State Guidelines— Local Action	Approach (category)
Alabama	x						None
Alaska			x				Matrix
California			x	x			Matrix-moratorium
Connecticut			x				Matrix
Delaware			x	x			Matrix-moratorium
Florida			x				Matrix
Georgia	x						None
Hawaii		x					Other ^a
Illinois			x				Matrix
Indiana			x				Matrix
Louisiana			x				Matrix
Maine			x				Matrix
Maryland		x					Other ^b
Massachusetts			x				Matrix
Michigan			x			x	County
Minnesota			x			x	County
Mississippi			x				Matrix
New Hampshire			x				Matrix
New Jersey	x						None
New York		x					Other ^c
No. Carolina			x				Matrix
Ohio			x				Matrix
Oregon			x	x			Matrix-moratorium
Pennsylvania			x				Matrix
Rhode Island			x		x		Organizational
So. Carolina	x						None
Texas			x	x			Matrix-moratorium
Virginia	x						None
Washington			x		x		Organizational
Wisconsin			x			x	County
30	5	3	22	4	2	3	TOTALS by column

^a. Statewide planning; ^b. Chesapeake Bay Interagency Planning Committee; ^c. Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Marine and Coastal Resources.

B. Totals by approach.

Approach	None	Matrix	Matrix-moratorium	Organi-zational	County	Other
30	5	13	4	2	3	3

State Coastal Management Legislation and Agencies

State	Enabling Legislation	Designated Agency	Type	Membership
Ala.	None	None	-----	-----
Alaska	Alaska Land Act (169-1959)	Department of Environmental Conservation	Admin.	-----
Calif.	Marine Resources Conservation & Development Act (1642-1967)	Advisory Commission on Marine & Coastal Resources	Citizen	36
	Coastal Zone Conservation Act (Proposition 20-1972)	State Commission & six regional commissions	Citizen	12 each
Conn.	None	Legislative study commission is preparing to recommend necessary legislation	-----	-----
Del.	Coastal Zone Act (HB 300; Sub. 2, 175-1971)	State Planning Office with appeal to: State Coastal Zone Industrial Control Board	Admin.	-----
Fla.	Coastal Coordinating Council (259-1970)	Coastal Coordinating Council within Dept. of Natural Resources	Citizen-Agency Heads	Un-specified
Ga.	None	None	-----	-----
Hawaii	State Land-Use Law (187-1961)	Land-Use Commission in Dept. of Planning & Economic Development	Citizen	9
Ill.	Water Resources Planning Act (Federal, 1965)	Great Lakes Basin Commission	State-Federal Admin.	19
Ind.	Water Resources Planning Act (Federal, 1965)	Great Lakes Basin Commission	State-Federal Admin.	19
La.	Advisory Commission on Coastal & Marine Resources (35-1971)	Advisory Commission on Coastal & Marine Resources	Citizen	9
Maine	None	State Planning Office evolving Coastal Development Plan	Admin.	-----
Md.	Executive Order (1969)	Chesapeake Bay Inter-agency Planning Committee	Multi-Agency	6
Mass.	Executive Order No. 59 (1968)	Commission on Ocean Management	Unknown	Unknown
Mich.	Shoreline Management & Protection Act (245-1970)	Water Resources Commission-Town Governments	State-Local	-----
Minn.	Regulation of Shoreland Development (777-1969)	Commissioner of Natural Resources-County Governments	State-Local	-----

State	Enabling Legislation	Designated Agency	Type	Membership
Miss.	Marine Resources Council (293-1970)	Marine Resources Council	Citizen	16
N.H.	None	Office of State Planning is evolving long-range plan	Admin.	-----
N.J.	None	None	-----	-----
N. Y.	Division of Coastal Resources (715-1969)	Division of Coastal Resources in Dept. of Environmental Conservation	Admin.	-----
N. C.	None	N. C. Marine Science Council involved in long-range developmental planning	Citizen	28
Ohio	Water Resources Planning Act (Federal, 1965)	Great Lakes Basin Commission	State-Federal Admin.	19
Ore.	Coastal Zone Management Plan (608-1971)	Coastal Conservation & Development Commission consisting of four regional commissions	State-Local Citizen	30
Penn.	Water Resources Planning Act (Federal, 1965)	Great Lakes Basin Commission	State-Federal Admin.	19
R. I.	Coastal Resources Management Council Act (279-1971)	Coastal Resources Management Council	Citizen	17
S. C.	None	None	-----	-----
Texas	Natural Resources Inter-Agency Council (Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 38, 1969) Moratorium of Sales or Lease of Submerged Lands (21-1969) Council on Marine-related Affairs (279-1971)	Natural Resources Inter-Agency Council (Comprehensive Coastal Study) Appropriate agencies Council on Marine-related Affairs	Inter-Agency ----- Citizen	11 ----- 12
Va.	None	None	-----	-----
Wash.	Shoreline Management Act (286-1971)	Department of Ecology-local government	State-Local Admin.	-----
Wisc.	Water Resources Act, Section 22 (Shorelands Zoning) (614-1965)	Department of Natural Resources-County Governments	State-County Admin.	-----

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This report was prepared for a Coastal Resources Management Council Workshop held on November 29, 1972, at Kingston, Rhode Island. Much of the material included was originally compiled by the author for a paper entitled Administrative and Political Considerations of Alternative Approaches to Coastal Management, U.R.I., May 1972 (unpublished). Additional information was extracted from A Description and Analysis of Coastal Zone and Shoreline Management Programs in the United States by Earl H. Bradley, Jr., and John M. Armstrong, University of Michigan Sea Grant Program, March 1972 (MICHU-SG-72-204), and from correspondence with state officials. Interpretive analysis is the author's.

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