

Coastal Health Strategy Team
Conference Call Notes from Friday, June 17, 2005
12:00 pm CT

Participants:

Sahdu Jonhston (new co-chair)
Don Zelazny (co-chair)
Joyce Coffee
Dale Bryson
Emily Finell
Julie Kinzelman
Suzanne Malec
Joel Wolf
Margaret Wooster
Bill Ward
Kate Tomford

1. Introductory comments:

- Sahdu Johnston is Acting Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Environment and is glad to be joining the Coastal Health team as a new co-chair.
- Thank you to all writers and contributors for a quick response to the Executive Committee's comments/questions on the Coastal Health team's chapter (version submitted May 27).

2. Update on events and progress over the past two weeks:

- The team submitted a draft to the Executive Committee on May 27 and received feedback the following week. The Committee's feedback focused on 3 areas of revision:
 - The Committee included instructions for standardizing format/style, which increased the draft from 5 pages to 8 pages. Rationale text and wet weather background were moved to the appendices to decrease chapter page length.
 - The Committee required that Recommended Actions (particularly funding requests) fit within a 5-year timeframe because this is the horizon used for Congressional planning purposes. Team writers revised Actions to conform to this timeframe.
 - The Committee requested that cost figures apply to the Great Lakes basin only, not the Great Lakes states or nationwide. Again, team writers revised Goals and Actions to conform to this geographic specification.
- Simultaneously, the team finalized supplementary Coastal Health materials:
 - The 5 appendices were revised and finalized: A.) Chapter Endnotes, B.) Sources of Coastal Health Threats, C.) Conditions Governing Recommended Action 1, D.) Detailed Description and Evaluation of Alternative Approaches to Achieving Goals, and E.) On-Going Efforts in Great Lakes Research.
 - The team compiled a chart of recommendations that overlap with the Indicators and Information (I&I) team: indicator needs, monitoring/observation needs, research needs, and communication needs.

3. Discussion of making the strategy team chapters "budget neutral":

- Don summarized a recent discussion among Executive Committee members of whether strategy team chapters should be revised so that all recommendations are "budget neutral" (i.e., reflect no growth in funding).

- An inter-agency agreement was reached, concluding that the chapters should recommend what is best for the Great Lakes, and not be limited to the current budget. Therefore, the suggestion to draft “budget neutral” recommendations has been tabled for now.
- Don reported that the total cost of all recommendations submitted by the 8 teams was \$38 billion (based on latest chapter versions; subject to change). Water infrastructure-related items from the Coastal Health and Nonpoint Source teams make up ~2/3 of this total.
- Joyce noted that the Coastal Health team’s total federal funding request was about \$8 billion, and that the team also requested a significant share of funding from the local level. In some cases, required funding is dependent on the results of surveys, assessments, studies, etc.
- Julie is still waiting to find out the dollar amount required to fund the BEACH Act, then this figure will be incorporated in the team’s chapter.
- Margaret noted that the timeframe for the federal funding request had been condensed without lowering the funding level; this could be revisited if necessary.

4. Discussion of next steps:

- The revised chapter and appendices will be distributed to all team members in the next week.
- All team members are encouraged to read the endnotes for a full explanation of how funding requests were calculated and justified.
- The Executive Committee is now working to meet the July 7 deadline for release to the public. This will take place at Summit I in Duluth (marking the beginning of the public comment period). Only members of Congress and the Executive Committee are expected to attend; contact Joyce if you wish to attend as an observer (there will be no working sessions).
- During the public comment period, 5 public meetings will be held – one per Great Lake later in July and August.
- The Coastal Health team is essentially on hold for now and will reconvene in late August or September. The team will stay in the same sub-groups by topic to address public comments.
- The next full Collaboration working meeting will be October 6 & 7 near Rochester, NY.
- Summit II will take place on December 2, marking the second public release (with all initial public comments addressed and all corresponding revisions incorporated). The Executive Committee’s objective is to submit the recommendations in time to be considered for the next Congressional appropriation cycle (i.e., inclusion in the 2007 budget).

5. Discussion of creating a “fact sheet” to supplement the chapter:

- Don suggested creating a “fact sheet” to supplement/summarize the team’s chapter when it goes out for public comment.
- The public may zero in on funding requests. In response, team members should try to avoid this emphasis and focus on the other issues that the Coastal Health strategy recommends. One purpose of the fact sheet would be to provide team members with appropriate responses to anticipated questions about the chapter.
- The Coastal Health team’s fact sheet could serve as a template for other teams.
- The team may utilize Cadmus to create a graphic for the fact sheet. The graphic will visually illustrate the Coastal Health team’s primary goals and recommendations.
- If you have ideas for the fact sheet, please submit them to Don, Joyce, and Suzanne.

6. Leadership transition:

- Joyce will be going on maternity on August 11, at which time Suzanne will take over her role. Prior to August, Joyce will bring Suzanne up to speed to enable a seamless transition.
- Thanks to Joyce for being the glue that has held the Coastal Health team together thus far!
- Team members should stay up to date this summer by periodically checking the website.