

COASTAL SERVICES

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 6 • NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005

LINKING PEOPLE, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

PROTECTING THE BOTTOM LINE:

Leasing Washington's
Submerged Lands for
Conservation

Katrina Interrupts
Mississippi's Efforts to
"Nest in Peace"

Seeing the Writing on
the Web in Ohio



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Almost every part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has been involved in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita preparation, response, and recovery. From forecasting their paths, to supporting rescue and recovery efforts, to helping reopen important ports and waterways, to assessing the storms' environmental impacts, NOAA has been quietly working behind the scenes during these terrible natural disasters.

The NOAA Coastal Services Center is no exception. For instance, to help assess the crushing effects of Hurricane Katrina, the Center provided the Federal Emergency Management Agency with remotely sensed data records of the affected Gulf Coast region. These data were used as a baseline to estimate the damage to natural and man-made environments.

In this edition of *Coastal Services*, we cover the impacts of Katrina on Mississippi's Nest in Peace project, a model local stewardship program coordinated by the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society. In the article, we hear how Mississippi Audubon plans to respond to the storm interruption by making the program bigger and better.

In addition, the article examines the opportunity the storm is providing for

environmental groups and regulators to rebuild beaches with habitat and storm protection in mind, and to help spur the state's economic recovery through ecotourism.

In the cover story of this edition of *Coastal Services*, you will learn about a possible new coastal resource management tool for marine conservation and restoration.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources, with help from the Nature Conservancy, has drafted what may be the nation's first state policy to allow leases of submerged lands to protect them from degradation.

Other articles look at the Lake Erie Information: Discussion Board, an on-line venue for fishermen, boaters, and others with technical questions about the lake and its resources to get answers directly from Ohio Sea Grant extension staff members, and the Gray's Reef Ocean Film Festival, which has become that national marine sanctuary's primary outreach event.

We hope that you find the information in this and every edition of *Coastal Services* interesting and useful.



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NEWS AND NOTES

Helpful Information for Coastal Officials

Today, and When Disaster Strikes

Even though emergency response is not the primary goal of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center, the products and services originally developed for state and local coastal programs can play an important role in a disaster recovery program. The following outlines some of the Center's efforts during the eventful hurricane season of 2005.

Coordination

In all phases of a disaster, officials require quick and easy access to pertinent information, and the fewer places they have to go to get that information the better. Well-established partnerships with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey allowed Center data and assistance to go rapidly to the people who needed it most.

An agreement with the NOAA National Weather Service's National Hurricane Center also provided for the deployment of a modeling and geographic information system expert from the Coastal Services Center to help integrate storm surge and other data sets into easy-to-use information products.

"Because of our previous working relationships with these agencies, we understood each other's capabilities and needs," says Steve Raber, remote sensing manager for the Coastal Services Center. "Our partnerships with the private sector and other organizations also proved helpful, since we were able to coordinate the delivery of additional data and products from other sources that might have otherwise been inaccessible."

Remotely Sensed Imagery

The NOAA Coastal Services Center's Coastal Change Analysis Program is working to complete a national baseline of coastal land cover and change data. As a result, staff members were working in the Gulf region prior to Hurricane Katrina. This work put the Center in an ideal position to perform quick analyses

of initial hurricane impacts. Maps were developed to help officials see the impacted areas, visualize debris accumulations, and study impacts to wetland areas.

Flood Maps

An ongoing project with the National Weather Service is focused on improving flood-prediction capabilities. This effort brought helpful information to emergency preparedness officials, including forecasts and near-real-time information about rain, winds, and flooding. Officials used this information to create maps that were used to determine the number of critical facilities impacted by the storms and the demographics of the impacted regions.

People involved in rebuilding communities continue to use the information to see how the landscape reacted and changed in response to the flooding and strong winds, and to help them make smart rebuilding decisions. The flood-map team is using remotely sensed maps and other information-gathering devices to recalibrate the flood prediction models and determine ways to improve the predictive process.

Long-Term Recovery

Many of the products and services that proved to be helpful after the storm are also playing a role in the long-term recovery effort. The Center is working with the rest of NOAA to bring products and services to those concerned with the rebuilding effort.

These efforts include the creation of partnerships developed to leverage resources and expertise, technical support to guide social and economic recovery, improved storm surge inundation modeling and maps, and other products that help officials predict, prepare for, and recover from natural disasters. ❖

For more information about the Center's products and services, visit the organization's Web site at www.csc.noaa.gov, or e-mail Donna.McCaskill@noaa.gov.

The mission of the NOAA Coastal Services Center is to support the environmental, social, and economic well being of the coast by linking people, information, and technology.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service
Coastal Services Center

Mississippi's "Nest in Peace" Interrupted by Katrina

For 30 years, the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society has been working to protect beach-nesting least terns, other birds, and the habitats on which those species depend. One of the Audubon chapter's key and recently expanded projects has been Nest in Peace, a model for local stewardship that involves sand fencing and signage to protect habitat, public education and involvement, and monitoring and research.

On the day the interview to talk about Nest in Peace was scheduled with Mark LaSalle, coastal project director for Mississippi Audubon, Hurricane Katrina struck the U.S. Gulf Coast.

A week later, after he and his family had safely evacuated from their flooded home in Ocean Springs, LaSalle talked about the impacts of Katrina on the project and how Nest in Peace would come back better than ever. He also saw the opportunity the storm would provide for environmental groups to join with regulators to rebuild beaches with habitat and storm

protection in mind, and to help spur the state's economic recovery through ecotourism.

The Big One

"Obviously, we didn't talk on Monday," was the start of the e-mail LaSalle sent four days after the massive storm devastated the Gulf Coast. While news coverage provided the nation with horrific images of lost lives and destroyed homes and businesses, from LaSalle's vantage point in Vicksburg, it was difficult to evaluate the environmental damage that also was experienced along Mississippi's shore.

"As for the terns or [Nest in Peace] signs, I doubt that any of that survived. I am assuming that the beach profile was altered significantly," LaSalle wrote.

During a telephone conversation a few days later, LaSalle admits to anxiously awaiting next year's tern nesting season, but predicts "these birds will come back."

One reason for his optimism is that Katrina hit the coast after the tern nesting season ended.

"If anything, it will revitalize our program even more than before."

Mark LaSalle
Mississippi Coast Audubon Society

LaSalle also believes that "hurricanes are natural phenomena. Every so often they come in and reset the clocks in an area. It's all part of the natural cycle."

Project Interrupted

Under the Nest in Peace project, Mississippi Audubon, with support from the Harrison County Sand Beach Department, works to maintain four safe nesting areas for the endangered least terns on beaches in Gulfport and Biloxi.

Over the past three decades, Mississippi Audubon has helped census those colonies, put up protective sand fencing, and erected and maintained the Nest in Peace signs, as well as interpretive signage designed to educate beachgoers about the need to protect the habitat and birds. In addition to using the Nest in Peace logo on bumper stickers and road signs, the society constructed an interpretive boardwalk, complete with viewing benches, so visitors could see the colonies without disturbing the birds.

"People need to understand why they have to leave these animals alone," LaSalle says. "Any disturbance can be catastrophic" because terns are easily chased off their nests, and a chick or egg can die after as little as 15 minutes exposure to intense midday sun.

Recent Additions

This year, Mississippi Audubon "did some different things," LaSalle notes.

The group expanded efforts to engage youth and the general public in the project, and worked with the National Audubon Society as part of its Coastal Bird Conservation Program to conduct an exhaustive survey of all coastal nesting birds along the state's shoreline.

During the summer, area schoolteachers involved students in research, monitoring, and protection efforts. This included constructing a selection of shelters that tern chicks could use for protection if they should wander from the nest, and monitoring to see if the chicks used the shelters and which shelter worked best.

The middle school student volunteers "dutifully went out there for six to eight weeks taking down data," LaSalle says. "The bottom line of what they found is that the chicks did use the shelters."

LaSalle says that the work the chapter and volunteers did as part of the field-based, science-driven Coastal Bird Conservation Program "improved the value of 25 years of tern census data."

"What we really want to do," he says, "is take that data . . . and look in-depth at trends and what we can do to improve the habitat."

After the Storm

LaSalle is adamant that Mississippi Audubon will continue the Nest in Peace project, "Katrina or no Katrina."

"If anything, it will revitalize our program even more than before," he says. "We really did pick it up a couple notches this year, and we will pick up where we left off next year."

He also believes the storm is granting resource organizations and regulatory agencies the opportunity to better plan the environmental recovery.

"We are drafting white papers right now to get to the Mississippi regulatory folks," LaSalle says. "We want to engage them in a conversation as soon as is practicable to identify good-quality areas that can be restored to help protect human resources and to provide habitat for animals."

"Hopefully, we can lessen the impacts of future storms, within reason, and provide wonderful natural habitat that can support wildlife and restore the beauty of the Gulf Coast." This in turn will serve to prime the area's economic generator.

"Having good, high-quality natural areas is part of the tourist economy," LaSalle explains.

Even before the storm, LaSalle was working to establish an education and ecotourism center



The Nest in Peace project helps protect least terns as they nest on Mississippi beaches.

for the region, and he plans to continue those efforts. "We really need to be promoting nature-based ecotourism on the Gulf Coast. This is the first big effort to identify a facility that would help support that."

Positive Attitude

LaSalle is confident that Mississippi's coast can recover from the devastation brought by Hurricane Katrina.

"Let's clean up and get back to work," he says. "I grew up in coastal Louisiana and the people who live in these areas, well, you pull up your britches and you go on. What else can you do?" ❖

For more information on Mississippi Coast Audubon Society's Nest in Peace project, contact Mark LaSalle at (228) 475-0825, or mlasalle@audubon.org.

PROTECTING THE BOTTOM LINE:

LEASING WASHINGTON'S SUBMERGED LANDS FOR CONSERVATION



Washington State is testing a new policy that allows submerged nearshore lands to be leased for restoration and conservation.

Much of the country's marine nearshore environment is owned by the states and managed for navigation, commerce, and public access. Many states, in turn, have leased or sold as much as one-third of the country's submerged coastal lands to private interests for activities such as oil exploration and extraction, the development of marinas and docks, and the cultivation of aquaculture.

But what about leasing submerged lands to protect them from degradation? Could this be a new tool in coastal resource managers' limited arsenal of strategies for marine conservation and restoration?

To find out, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, with help from the Nature Conservancy, has drafted what may be the nation's first

state policy to allow leases of submerged lands for restoration and conservation. In addition, the Nature Conservancy has helped provide outreach and training for Department of Natural Resources staff members to support the policy, and has committed to a pilot lease to test this new conservation approach.

"We know there has been a significant decline in marine resource diversity and productivity, and we know there is a limited toolbox of strategies to address that decline," says Mike Beck, senior scientist with the Nature Conservancy's Global Marine Initiative. "We need to create new strategies, and we think we can apply many of the same lessons that have proven to be successful in the terrestrial environment."

Pricing Submerged Land

Billions of dollars a year are spent by private entities to lease and develop submerged lands in this country.

The Submerged Lands Act, which Congress enacted in 1953, conveys "title and ownership of the lands and natural resources of the three-mile territorial sea to the states," giving states the authority to lease marine plots to private interests.

In Washington State, for instance, the Department of Natural Resources manages 2.4 million acres of aquatic land and has granted close to 3,700 leases, many of which are for commercial purposes. The leases generate \$15 to \$18 million in state revenues per year, and the department processes about 100 new authorizations annually.

Legal Ground

The state's directive for leasing submerged lands calls for such uses to balance five public benefits, says Jay Udelhoven, former assistant division manager for aquatic resources at Washington's Department of Natural Resources.

These benefits include encouraging direct public use and access, fostering water-dependent uses, ensuring environmental protection, and utilizing renewable resources. The directive also calls for the uses to generate revenue when it is consistent with the other public benefits.

"In theory it means if an entity comes in and wants to lease for conservation, and another entity wants to lease the same area for water-dependent commerce, those things can be evaluated equally."

Jay Udelhoven, *The Nature Conservancy*

Having a specific policy to lease submerged lands for conservation and restoration "puts conservation on equal footing with the other public benefits the department manages for," says Udelhoven, who is now a senior policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy.

"In theory it means if an entity comes in and wants to lease for conservation, and another entity wants to lease the same area for water-dependent commerce, those things can be evaluated equally. Based on that evaluation, the one that provides for the greater public benefit is the one that leases the site."

You Had to Ask

A spark for Washington State's conservation leasing policy was generated in October 2000 when Udelhoven was approached at a public meeting by a resident who wanted to pick up an expiring lease for an area that was being used for finfish cultivation. "The resident's idea," Udelhoven explains, "was to protect the site."

"At that time, it wasn't really possible," Udelhoven says. "We didn't lease things to protect them; we only approved leases for water-dependent, commercial, recreational,

and extractive uses," which often impacted the resources.

The resident's question, however, stoked discussion within the Department of Natural Resources about the value and possibility of leasing submerged lands for conservation under existing state statutes and policies.

Another Angle

The Nature Conservancy's Mike Beck began pondering the possibility of conservation groups leasing nearshore property in 1999. Instead of commercial production, he envisioned the leases "producing" restored habitat.

In 2002, Beck organized a workshop in New York focusing on conservation leasing—the first conference of its kind—and Udelhoven fortuitously was invited to participate. A partnership between the state agency and nonprofit organization quickly developed.

"Once the Nature Conservancy got involved, it really triggered our efforts," says Matt Niles, environmental planner for Washington's Department of Natural Resources. Existing state statutes and policies were examined to see if protective leases could be

allowed, and an internal policy and guidance document was produced.

"What we found when we looked at the statutes," says Udelhoven, "was clear language authorizing leases for environmental protection purposes."

The conservancy helped provide a training session about required operations, maintenance, and monitoring of conservation leases for about 50 Department of Natural Resources staff members.

What It Says

Under the state's conservation leasing policy, submerged land must be actively restored or managed.

An entity taking on such a lease has to prove its staff has the experience, knowledge, and capability to manage a marine resource area. This entails providing the Department of Natural Resources with a conservation management plan for the site, as well as reports on monitoring and research.

The rigorous approval process makes it clear that an entity could not lease a site "just to exclude others from leasing an area," explains Udelhoven.

Pilot Project

To test the new policy, the Nature Conservancy agreed to undertake a pilot lease.

"The first thing we had to do," says Betsy Lyons, the conservancy's marine conservation project manager, "was figure out what kind of project and where to do it."

The extensive selection and planning process included identifying and matching high-priority conservation areas for both the Nature Conservancy and the Department of Natural Resources

Continued on Page 6

with habitat that would support target conservation activities, such as oyster restoration. The site also had to be acceptable to other stakeholders.

“We didn’t want to compete with the tribes or existing shellfish growers,” Lyons explains.

The area selected was a 10-acre site on Woodard Bay in South Puget Sound where the conservancy will restore and enhance the habitat for native Olympia oysters.

The Requirements

Before undertaking the lease, the conservancy was required to conduct an extensive ecological assessment and carry out a legal boundary survey to define the lease area.

In hindsight,” Lyons notes, “we should have had the project fully scoped and identified before applying for the lease. Because we hadn’t done all the baseline survey work up front, it was difficult to provide the level of detail that was required.”

The benefit of signing the lease, she says, is that it gives the conservancy “exclusive access to the site for a set amount of time. We can control what’s happening on the

ground until the oyster population becomes sustainable.”

The organization will, however, allow low impact public use, such as canoeing and kayaking.

Easier Said than Done

One of the primary challenges for implementing the policy has been resistance among some Department of Natural Resources staff members.

Some of the concerns cited by the staff include the belief that the policy might contradict or undermine traditional department partnerships for restoration projects. Some question the value of requiring conservation organizations to pay for lease agreements, or of requiring an evaluation and implementation process more onerous than that required for commercial leases. Others contend that the job of conservation should be the state’s.

“A lot of the obstacles that we have had to overcome have been internal,” acknowledges Matt Niles. “We’re a big agency with a lot of people who have diverse opinions of how we should be doing things. A lot of the reason for the resistance is not because people are opposed to

conservation; rather, they think we should be doing a lot more.”

Udelhoven notes that department staff members were included in the creation and implementation of the policy and that much of the current policy reflects their concerns.

One of the values of the pilot project, he says, is to show the staff “how this fits within the existing program and that it actually complements the existing program.”

The Response

Mike Beck is more direct in his response to department staff members’ doubts.

“Individuals are concerned that we are paying for what should have been an agency responsibility, or that conservation should be a state role. If we are having a clear and frank discussion, the question is then, ‘Are you [the state] fulfilling that role?’ The response is, ‘Not as much as we would like.’ The next question is, ‘Couldn’t you use assistance in that role?’ . . . If you extend semi-exclusive rights to lots of other businesses and organizations, why not extend those rights to us?”

Beck notes that the requirements the Nature Conservancy is being asked to meet for the pilot lease are “far greater than any standard currently being asked of the 3,700 other leaseholders in the State of Washington.”

“At one level that’s OK with us,” he says, “because this is the first conservation lease and we want to make sure it’s all going to work. At some point, we would like to have a conversation about the fairness and balance of uses in the marine environment.”

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Internet Resources

Washington State Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Resources home page
www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/aqr/index.html

Nature Conservancy magazine article on the conservancy’s efforts to develop submerged lands leasing and ownership
www.nature.org/magazine/spring2005/misc/index.html

Law and policy report on leasing and owning submerged lands
http://nature.org/initiatives/marine/files/tncrwu_leasing_policy_report.pdf

Leasing and ownership law and policy fact sheet and a strategy report on leasing and restoration of submerged lands
http://nature.org/initiatives/marine/files/tncrwu_leasing_policy_factsheet.pdf

Leasing and ownership fact sheet

http://nature.org/initiatives/marine/files/nearshore_marine_fact.pdf

SEEING THE WRITING ON THE WEB IN OHIO

Ohio Sea Grant saw the writing on the Web sites. More and more people are first turning to the Internet for their news and information and to chat about topics important to them. The program’s extension agents decided it was time to join the conversation.

The Lake Erie Information: Discussion Board (www.sg.ohio-state.edu/discus/) provides an on-line venue for fishermen, boaters, and others with technical questions about the lake and its resources to get answers directly from program staff members.

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“In a two-week period we had over 200 replies, all saying, ‘yes, yes, yes.’”

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Fred Snyder, Ohio Sea Grant
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“This differs from e-mail in that instead of responding to one person, it shares the answer with everyone,” says Fred Snyder, extension specialist and program co-leader for Ohio Sea Grant. “It becomes a valuable teaching tool. One person asks the question, but hundreds might learn from it.”

Usage of the discussion board has steadily increased since its launch in July 2002. It has become Ohio Sea Grant’s most frequently accessed page, following the entry home page. The board received at least 3,100 hits

in 2004, and while 2005 numbers weren’t available at the time of this interview, Snyder says usage jumped significantly this past summer.

Five Sea Grant staff members take turns answering discussion board questions each week, providing information on fisheries, water quality, lake levels, regulations and policies, and many other topics.

“We’re not trying to provide fishing tips or to evaluate fishing gear,” Snyder explains. “Other sites have fishing pros who can answer those types of questions. We’re more in the Sea Grant mode of Lake Erie education.”

It was, in fact, technical questions about Lake Erie that were receiving incorrect answers on other discussion boards that illustrated the need for Ohio Sea Grant to create its own site.

“People would pop up [on other Web sites] with off-the-wall answers,” Snyder says. When he would see incorrect information on a discussion board, Snyder would log on and provide the correct answer, always posting his name and Sea Grant affiliation.

It wasn’t long before questions started being directed to Snyder specifically and other sites were requesting he host real-time question and answer sessions. To see if his hunch that Sea Grant needed its own discussion board was right, Snyder posted a question on a popular Web site asking anglers if they would support and use a Sea Grant information board.



Ohio fishermen, boaters, and others now have an on-line venue to ask technical questions about Lake Erie and its resources.

“In a two-week period we had over 200 replies, all saying, ‘yes, yes, yes,’” Snyder says. The program’s communications staff and computer specialist developed the easy-to-use site.

To get the word out, a press release was distributed to local media, and notices were posted on Great Lakes fishing Web sites. Snyder notes that the board’s discussion threads also appear in topic-related Google searches, which adds to the diversity of the board’s users.

“I just love it,” Snyder says of the discussion board. “I’m just interested in what people think. I can’t wait to see what kind of reply I’m going to get when I answer a question.”

He adds, “Media like this will be used a lot in the future. I think it’s useful in a lot of areas.” ❖

To view the Lake Erie Information: Discussion Board, point your browser to www.sg.ohio-state.edu/discus/. For more information, contact Fred Snyder at (419) 635-1022, or snyder.8@osu.edu.

MOVIES MORE VALUABLE THAN A THOUSAND PICTURES FOR GEORGIA SANCTUARY

Being located 17-and-a-half nautical miles off Sapelo Island, Georgia, and submerged beneath 60 to 70 feet of water limits the number of visitors to Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary. Because the sanctuary's staff members can't easily bring visitors to the site, they have found an effective way to bring the sanctuary and ocean to the community.



Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary gets lead billing at the Savannah College of Art and Design's Trustees Theater in downtown Savannah, Georgia.

The Gray's Reef Ocean Film Festival has become the sanctuary's primary outreach event, proving that in this case, movies are more valuable than a thousand pictures.

"This is one of the best ways to give the broadest possible perspective and interpretation of our ocean resources and the issues we face to the broadest number of people," says Reed Bohne, manager of Gray's Reef.

Over three nights and two days in September, more than 20 documentaries and art films about the ocean are shown for free at

the Savannah College of Art and Design's Trustees Theater in downtown Savannah. More than 2,000 people were expected to attend this year's second annual event.

The festival's evening programs include a presentation and question and answer session with a well-known producer or director. This year's event featured pioneer underwater film producer and photographer Stan Waterman, whose Emmy-award-winning work includes *The Deep* and *Blue Water, White Death*.

Two-hour blocks of films, usually tied together by topic, are shown throughout the weekend. Additions to this year's festival included a children's film festival running concurrently at Tybee Island Marine Science Center and an essay and visual arts competition for students in area schools.

"An ocean film festival is somewhat of a novel concept and helps us get more interest locally," Bohne says. The first year of the ocean film festival was ranked by the *Savannah Morning News* as one of the community's top five events for the year.

While the first festival was more successful than the sanctuary staff expected, organizing such an event was time consuming and challenging, notes Gail Krueger, Gray's Reef outreach coordinator and the festival's planner.

"When we started, we didn't know how to organize a film

"You can't just rent a video from Blockbuster."

Gail Krueger,
Gray's Reef National
Marine Sanctuary

festival," Krueger admits. "There was definitely a steep learning curve."

Producing a film festival requires many of the same skills needed to organize any large event, she says, but also involves identifying and screening potential films, getting screen rights, and contracting with ocean-related filmmakers and directors.

"You can't just rent a video from Blockbuster," Krueger says. Still, all the effort is worth it.

"We have found the film festival to be very successful," says Bohne. "It's a great way to talk about the importance of marine conservation from many different perspectives and provide information about Gray's Reef and the sanctuary program."

He adds, "It's helping us broaden our support regionally and within the community. Also, it's just a whole lot of fun." ❖

For more information on the Gray's Reef Ocean Film Festival, point your browser to www.graysreef.noaa.gov. You may also contact Reed Bohne or Gail Krueger at (912) 598-2345.

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Policy Update

"One thing the pilot application has shown us is that we need to make the application process easier," Niles says. The agency already has plans to update the policy and to evaluate whether the program requirements are "overly cumbersome."

Betsy Lyons notes, "We're hoping to sit down with the state and policy folks and say 'here is what we think of the process, here are the pros and cons, and here are our suggestions.'"

She adds, "It's been valuable going through it. We do see enough of the pros that we're willing to continue testing and improving the process."

Currently, the Nature Conservancy is selecting another lease site.

Across State Lines

In addition to pursuing other leases in Washington, the conservancy is encouraging land trust organizations in other states to begin a dialogue with coastal regulators about leasing nearshore lands for conservation.

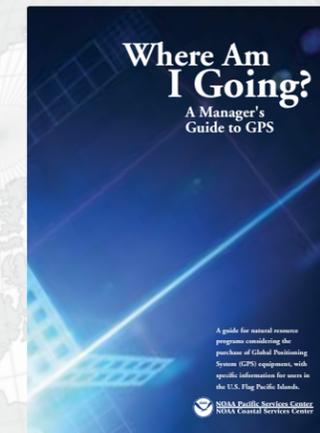
"We hope we are piquing interest in other states," notes Kristen Fletcher, director of the Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program, which has worked with the Nature Conservancy to evaluate the law and policy of conservation leasing.

"The next step," she says, "is to start conversations asking if our submerged lands policies are enough. Are we able to do for marine habitat what we want to do with the current toolbox that we have, or do we want to try to implement something new?" ❖

For more information on Washington State's submerged lands leasing for conservation policy, contact Matt Niles at (360) 902-1065, or matthew.niles@wadnr.gov. For more information on the development of the Nature Conservancy's policy efforts, contact Jay Udelhoven at (206) 343-4345, ext. 339, or judelhoven@tnc.org, or Mike Beck at (831) 459-1459, or mbeck@tnc.org. For legal questions about submerged lands leasing, contact Kristen Fletcher at (401) 254-4613, or kfletcher@rwu.edu.

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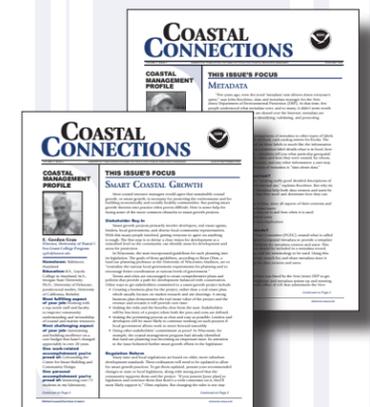
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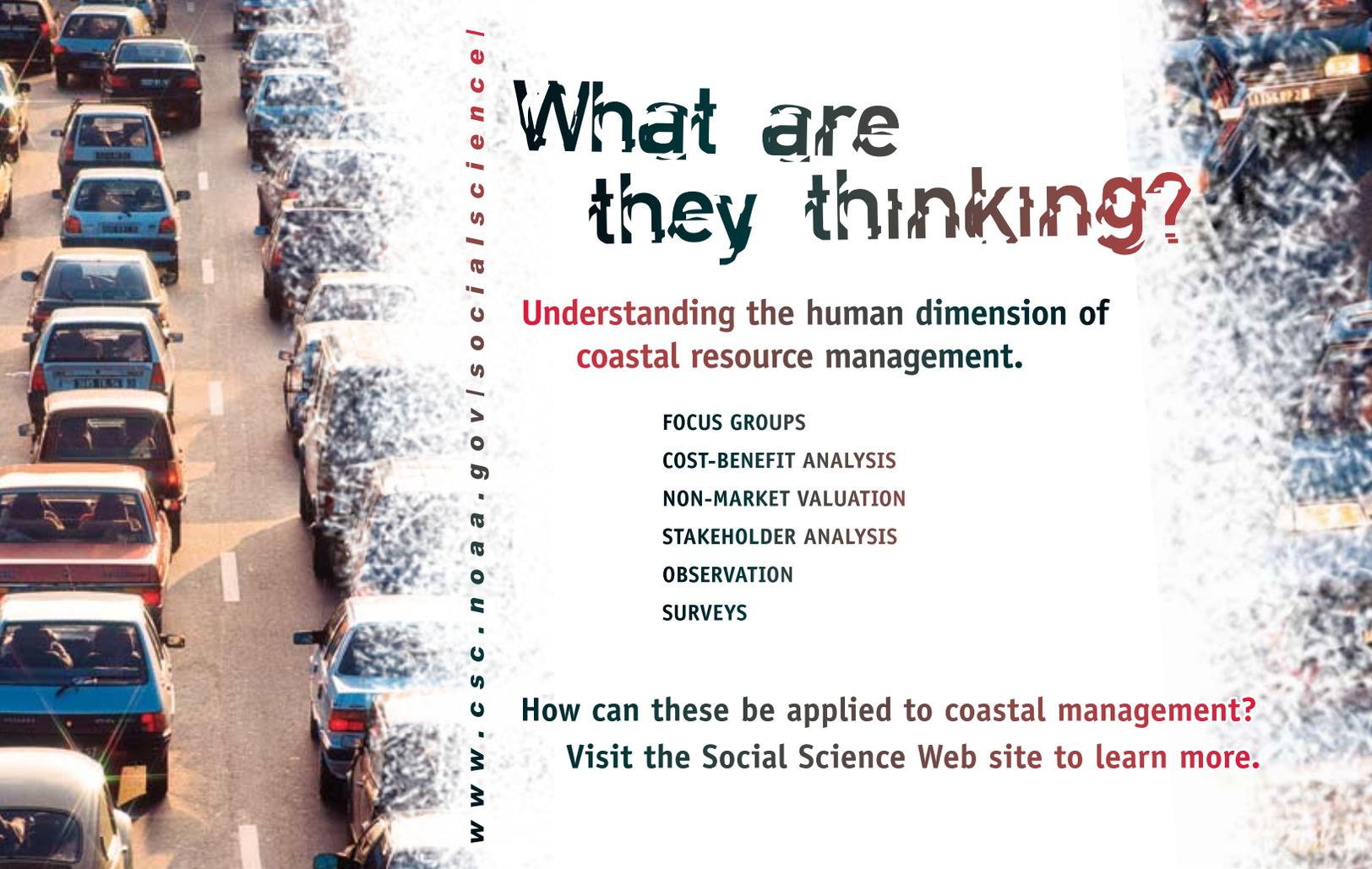
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