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A Summary of the Findings of the Coastal Training Market Analysis

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Prepared for:
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**A Summary of
the Findings of
the Coastal
Training
Market Analysis**



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A SUMMARY OF COASTAL TRAINING MARKET ACTIVITY IN THE APALACHICOLA RESERVE REGION

The Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR) is located in Franklin County on the Florida panhandle within the 19,600-square-mile Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint watershed. Spanning more than 246,000 acres, the Reserve includes areas of Franklin, Gulf, Calhoun, and Liberty counties. The Reserve received its designation in 1979, and is a federal/state partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

The ANERR, along with the other National Estuarine Research Reserves throughout the United States, is undertaking an initiative to assess the market and needs of individuals faced with decision-making responsibilities in the area of coastal resources management. Professionals involved in coastal resources management are expected to formulate effective strategies and apply interdisciplinary approaches to solving problems and policy issues impacting the environments of coastal regions. Individuals undertaking tasks that may affect coastal management include elected officials, state and federal agency staff, planning professions, project managers, regulatory personnel, coastal managers, agricultural and fisheries interests, volunteer boards, contractors, consultants, and nonprofit agencies and organizations. Potential policy issues facing these individuals are loss of habitat, commercial fishing, pollution and the degradation of surface and ground water quality, coastal development activities, shoreline construction and erosion, and coastal hazards.

The ANERR engaged the Great Lakes Environmental Finance Center (GLEFC) of the Maxine Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University to examine the coastal training provider market in the ANERR region and assess the needs of these training providers. An analysis of the training provider market can be utilized by the Reserve to build upon its current training and education efforts. The outcomes of the analysis will assist the ANERR in developing training curricula that builds upon existing capacity, and enhances the skills needed to apply new technologies and environmental methodologies. This brief report summarizes the findings of a survey conducted by the GLEFC of the Reserve's local training provider market. The complete survey findings are published in a detailed report, complete with appendices and graphical depictions of results.

Organizational Background

Providers of coastal resources management training programs within the ANERR region were surveyed for their input on the content, techniques, and implementation of this type of training. The missions of many of these training provider organizations varied greatly. Training and education is the primary focus for institutions of higher education. For other organizations, field research and increasing the level of public awareness drive their missions, and training is a tool that is utilized to facilitate these goals. Several organizations promote conservation efforts and utilize training as a form of dialogue to stimulate the public’s knowledge of the local habitat and environment. Of the training providers, the majority responded that coastal resources management training is either one area out of a series of training topics offered, or a few courses are offered on the topic even though it is not the focus of training.

Training Topics

Water quantity and quality was the topic that providers chose most frequently for training delivery at their organizations. Coastal wetlands, estuaries, and invasive species are additional topics frequently covered. Several other topics likewise solicited considerable attention, as the table below indicates. All topics were covered in varying degrees by training providers, with the exception of shipping and shipping activities. Topics listed as “least covered” by training providers are not necessarily topics considered of least importance, but due to factors such as timing, availability, and instructors are not offered as frequently by providers.

Table 1

TRAINING TOPICS COVERED BY PROVIDERS	
Ten Most Covered Training Topics	Ten Least Covered Training Topics
1. Water Quantity and Quality	1. Shipping and Shipping Activities
2. Coastal Wetlands	2. Boating Pump Out
3. Estuaries	3. Home Septic Systems
4. Invasive Species	4. Port Facilities
5. Conservation Lands Management	5. Sewage Out Falls / Combined Sewer Overflow
6. Endangered and Threatened Species	6. Beach Nourishment / Sand Availability
7. Cultural and Historic Resources	7. Clean Vessel Act and Issues
8. Habitat Restoration	8. Oil and Gas Drilling / Mineral Extraction
9. Sustainable Economic and Coastal Development	9. Siltation Management
10. Wildlife Management	10. Wastewater Treatment Methods

The survey also revealed a variety of specific training courses offered by providers, such as Ecoventures, Coastal Awareness/Systems, Clam/Aquaculture, Land Conservation Strategies, Erosion and Sediment, and Sustainable Development. While

many training sessions were conducted five or fewer times, others were held as frequently as on 50 different occasions. Training sessions are typically held for three to four hours, or primarily in mornings and afternoons. Many were also convened all day, and a smaller grouping convened on weekends.

The training providers primarily offer training on a statewide basis, but also target select counties. The training focus within these select counties is narrower in approach and content. The typical attendance for the training courses ranged from 11 to 50 individuals. Training encompasses a variety of delivery formats, with lectures and workshops being the most frequently used approaches. Focus groups and field experience methods are also utilized.

Training Approaches and Delivery

Training is most frequently conducted by in-house staff from each organization; however, volunteers are also occasionally utilized as a valuable source of expertise. The providers indicated only in a couple of instances that they hire instructors from outside of the organization to conduct training sessions. The qualifications of the instructors were diverse in that a majority possessed an advanced degree, either a Ph.D. or Master's degree, in their respective discipline. The remaining providers hold Bachelor's degrees, and in one case, the provider held no post secondary educational training credentials. No training provider possessed an associate's degree.

Participants of the training most frequently received educational/training materials at the completion of the session. Several of the providers referenced that the training was required as part of a formal certification process, or participants were given a certificate of participation for employment-related purposes. The training providers primarily offered training at no cost to participants. When fees were collected, these fees were usually in the form of tuition in a college or university setting. The costs incurred by the training providers were most often to secure the services of the instructor, or to pay for materials and handouts given to participants of the training.

The participants who received training were most often from non-profit organizations, governments or governmental agencies, or scientists. The providers indicated that there is a high to medium need for additional training of their audiences.

Training opportunities are primarily marketed by providers through organizational newsletters, direct mail, and websites. Other marketing efforts of providers are through cosponsors and partners, and press releases. The marketing methods are shown in the table below.



Figure #1

The providers are able to offer a variety of services to other trainers and partners in the area. These services are professional expertise and technical assistance, instructors and trainers, and facilities and operational support. The figure below outlines these findings.



Figure #2

Training Opportunities

The training providers identified issues that they perceived to be gaps or disparities existing in coastal resources management training in Florida. These gaps were primarily identified as the lack of knowledge on what training is being offered and who is providing it, the lack of interest on behalf of certain participant groups in enrolling in training events (particularly local elected officials), the need for more special topic workshops, and the necessity to recruit qualified instructors to provide knowledge to participants. The providers also acknowledged the necessity of integrating scientific training into the approaches adopted by training providers.

The disparities identified by the providers are an indication that training opportunities exist in the area of coastal resources management for the Apalachicola Reserve region. Opportunities are prevalent for collaborative training initiatives, redefining training content and delivery methods, and developing strategies to consistently coordinate and implement training to decision-makers, policymakers, and even providers.