

**Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Coastal Training Program Advisory Committee Report
January 2005**

The Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is developing a regional Coastal Training Program (CTP) with funding and guidance from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Estuarine Research Division (ERD). The goals of the CTP are to improve decision-making related to coastal resource management at local and regional levels by providing coastal resource managers with information, tools, and techniques necessary to make informed resource management decisions within their respective fields; increase collaboration across sectors and disciplines related to coastal management issues; and advance comprehension of the environmental, social, and economic consequences of human activity within the coastal landscape.

The first step in the CTP planning and development process was to establish an Advisory Committee composed of (at a minimum) representatives from local/regional Coastal Programs, Sea Grant, and the NERR system. The following members were selected by the reserve Manager, Education Coordinator, and CTP Coordinator based on this requirement:

Members

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The above-listed members represent Sea Grant, the state of Mississippi's Coastal Program (MS Department of Marine Resources), and reserve staff from Grand Bay as well as Weeks Bay in Fairhope, Alabama. Other members represent reserve partners (e.g., USFWS, Mississippi State University, University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi Secretary of State, the Nature Conservancy, MS Department of Marine Resources, and NOAA). Several members also serve on the Grand Bay NERR's Board of Directors and/or the Education Advisory Committee.

The CTP Advisory Committee convened in May 2004, to discuss the goals of the program and begin development of the market analysis survey. During this initial meeting, committee members provided input concerning the appropriate geographic boundaries of the CTP, helped create a list of target agencies and organizations for the market analysis, and piloted questions to be incorporated in the market analysis survey. A second meeting was held in August 2004 to discuss the results of the market analysis survey and to discuss tactics for conducting the needs assessment.

The CTP Advisory Committee will continue to meet quarterly to provide input and evaluate the Grand Bay Reserve's Coastal Training Program; however, committee members are also consulted on an "as needed" basis to provide input on reports and proceedings and ideas for future workshops. The specific responsibilities of the committee include:

- Attendance at scheduled meetings;
- Guidance for the development of the Market Analysis, Needs Assessment, Marketing Plan, and Program Strategy;
- Evaluate proposed projects and recommend potential projects to ensure that the needs of local coastal resource managers are being met;
- Help ensure that appropriate audiences are targeted by CTP events, and foster existing and potential partnerships within the Gulf Coast education and resource management training community.

Membership on the CTP Advisory Committee is voluntary and is not considered a time-limited position. Additional members may be invited to join the committee as needed, and attendance at meetings is open to all interested parties.