



Coastal Communications



National Coastal Research and Monitoring Strategy
EPA(OW & ORD)/NOAA/DOI(USGS)/USDA



Introduction

The nation's coastal resources provide enormous natural, economic, and public health benefits. These resources include the watersheds and communities adjoining the oceans and the Great Lakes, the shorelines, and the waters and ecosystems of our bays, estuaries, and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The health and welfare of the United States is intrinsically dependent on our ability to wisely use and conserve the resources of our coastal region. Unfortunately, our preference for the coast has created environmental pressures that threaten the very resources which make the coastal areas desirable. To address these concerns, EPA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of the Interior (DOI), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in cooperation with other Federal agencies, states, and tribes have developed a National Coastal Research and Monitoring Strategy.

Objective

For the past decade, Federal, state, academic, and private sector scientists have been working toward new approaches to monitor and better understand what controls the physical, chemical, biological, and ecological conditions of coastal waters, bays, estuaries, beaches, wetlands, and the Great Lakes. The efforts generally have similar common goals:

Provide national, regional, and local capabilities to measure, understand, analyze, and forecast ecological changes (natural and anthropogenic) that affect coastal economies, public safety, and the integrity and sustainability of the Nation's coastal ecosystems.

The Strategy

The strategy for a National Coastal Monitoring Program is based on a three-tiered approach (Figure 1), incorporating the following features:

- , Tier I to monitor broad spatial scale basic ecological response conditions
- , Tier II to monitor issue-specific conditions to identify cause-effect interactions
- , Tier III to monitor and conduct research at finer spatial and temporal resolution to build cause-effect models

Research plays a vital role in both interpreting data from, and methods used in monitoring programs. Research is also key to the assessment process and is needed to help characterize issues, diagnose causes, evaluate appropriate management actions, and assess environmental and economic impacts of actions (Figure 2).

Further Information

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