



MARKETING PLAN
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DRAFT

Prepared by:
Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
PO Box 151
Prudence Island RI 02872

Rhode Island Sea Grant
Coastal Resources Center
University of Rhode Island

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Narragansett Bay Watershed Coastal Training Program Marketing Plan

Introduction

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR), Rhode Island Sea Grant at the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resource Center (RISG/CRC), and the Environmental Protection Agency Region 1 (EPA) have established a strong partnership to maintain and improve the quality of our region's natural and cultural resources within the Narragansett Bay watershed. The project team will achieve this goal through the Narragansett Bay Watershed Coastal Training Program (NBWCTP). The NBWCTP will provide coastal decision-makers such as municipal staff and volunteers with current, credible, and critical information, tools, and techniques that will help them to make better management decisions in order to ensure a cleaner, healthier, and economically productive Narragansett Bay for the future.

Although RISG and EPA Region 1 have been the primary partners working towards developing and implementing the NBWCTP, other partnerships will be created to include those groups with expertise on specific topics or experience working with targeted audiences. Potential partners include GrowSmart RI, Roger Williams University, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Save The Bay, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, the Partnership for Narragansett Bay, and the Coastal Institute at the University of Rhode Island.

The purpose of this document is to formulate a comprehensive and effective marketing plan that will result in strong program attendance, high educational product use, and increased recognition of the NBWCTP by coastal decision-makers and other training providers throughout the Narragansett Bay Watershed.

Marketing Goals and Objectives

The primary marketing goal is to establish the Narragansett Bay Watershed Coastal Training Program as a recognized and reliable provider of up-to-date, science-based information, tools, and techniques that will enable coastal decision makers throughout the Narragansett Bay Watershed to make better informed management decisions. Specific objectives for the NBWCTP marketing plan for the next three years include:

- Establish recognition of the NBWCTP among state and regional partners and coastal decision-maker audiences.
- Identify and develop appropriate advertising tools for target audiences.
- Build marketing capacity by maintaining and improving current databases, developing a CTP website, advertising through listservs, and by designing promotional materials such as a NBWCTP brochure, poster, and PowerPoint presentation.
- Stay informed on emerging or changing priority issues.
- Keep track of programs being offered on priority issues by other organizations within the Narragansett Bay Watershed

Target Audiences

Prior to the market analysis, the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve along with Rhode Island Sea Grant and the Environmental Protection Agency Region 1 determined our first target audiences to be municipal volunteers and staff. We will concentrate on these audiences over the next three years.

Municipal volunteers are defined as individuals serving on conservation and harbor commissions, planning, economic development and zoning boards, municipal land trusts, school committees, Rhode Island councils, and Massachusetts selectmen. Municipal staff are paid employees including planners, conservation agents, town clerks, and managers.

Although the market analysis shows that this audience is often targeted, the needs assessment showed that there is still a great demand for accurate, useful, science-based information by municipal officials in the categories of economic development/growth, planning/management, science, and public administration. A survey of Rhode Island municipal volunteers by the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension and GrowSmart RI in 2000 identified a need for additional training and/or education, the recommendations from the Narragansett Bay Summit 2000 indicated a need to address local officials on the effects of land use on coastal resources, and although these audiences may often be targeted, the quality and usefulness of the information they are receiving can not be determined through the market analysis.

Most non-urban communities within the Narragansett Bay watershed and coastal Rhode Island increased their population during the past 10 years (GrowSmart RI, 1999 and Massachusetts news, 2001). This population growth has heightened pressures on schools, roads and other public utilities as well as the region's natural resources.

It is the needs and responsibility of the municipal volunteers and staff to meet the needs and desires of this growing population while still upholding the goals and objectives of their community legal documents as well as state and federal laws and regulations. Usually these goals and objectives state the need to maintain the unique character and cultural, natural and social resources of the place and encourage compatible economic development.

Municipal volunteers are not required to receive training. Unless their professional lives are in the fields of land use planning, natural resources management or economic development, volunteers are often making land use, economic, social and environmental decisions for their community with minimal to average amounts of expertise on these issues. Expertise has been gained by trial and error during their tenure on the board or commission on which they sit.

The strong response from municipal staff and volunteers informs us that there is a demand and desire to receive training and information on many issues that will assist these staff and volunteers in making better decisions for their communities.

Marketing Strategy: Tools, Tactics, and Products

Building support

Building support for the NBWCTP began in 1999 with the planning phase for the “Narragansett Bay Summit 2000”, a comprehensive, two day conference that explored the principal economic uses of Narragansett Bay in an environmental context, focusing on seven topics: (1) the Narragansett Bay ecosystem, (2) marine transportation, (3) research, technology, and education, (4) recreation and tourism, (5) land use and transportation, (6) industry, and (7) fisheries and aquaculture. Several hundred people attended this conference including 26 Town Council Presidents, 11 Mayors, 5 Town Administrators, 20 members of conservation commissions, representatives from 8 state agencies, and General Assembly members including the State House Economic Advisor, Senate Policy Analyst, and a representative from the Speakers Office of the House of Representatives.

The Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve participated in the logistical planning, program development, and was the largest single source funding provider for this event. Although NBWCTP had yet to be named, NBNERR began informing the forty plus planners and sponsors of Bay Summit 2000 of the NERRS Coastal Training Initiative. Included in the registration packet was NBNERR’s first attempt at a needs assessment developed for a broad range of coastal decision-makers.

Recommendations that came from the Bay Summit included:

- Improve the management and communication of environmental information
- Develop a forum for collaborative planning
- Undertake outreach and education about the Bay for coastal decision-makers, specifically training for local officials on the regional and environmental effects of local land-use decisions.
- Pursue urban revitalization – by working with all interests to discourage “sprawl” development, promoting re-use of Brownfield sites, and by reducing sprawl incentives in existing tax structures (relevant to NBWCTP partners)

The Narragansett Bay Summit 2000 was the foundation from which we will develop the NBWCTP. It provided us the opportunity to form new partnerships and also provided a list of recommendations applicable to the NBWCTP.

Since that time, organizations and agencies throughout the Narragansett Bay Watershed were informed of the Coastal Training Program when we contacted them about the market analysis. NBNERR and RISG also presented at a one day workshop with GrowSmart RI in order to inform those organizations that work with municipal staff and volunteers of our efforts to develop the NBWCTP. Municipal staff and volunteers were informed of the NBWCTP through the needs assessment efforts. Other coastal decision-maker audiences and potential partners will be contacted in the future as we expand our efforts.

Building support for the NBWCTP in future will include sponsorships of other agency and organization training programs and outreach efforts, as well as inviting others that

offer coastal decision-maker education programs or products to post their information on the NBWCTP website, and by promoting our efforts on our partner's websites.

Creating an identity

A graphic identity was created with the help of the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. We will use this graphic on all of our marketing products and on the NBWCTP website.

Develop the NBWCTP website

Results from our needs assessment made it very clear that municipal staff and officials prefer getting much of their information on-line. A website will be developed to include information on priority issues, a calendar of events, a directory of training/education providers that offer programs/products for coastal decision-makers within the Narragansett Bay watershed, links to partner websites, and links to brochures and fact sheets that can be downloaded. The creation of an on-line directory was used as an incentive for organizations and agencies to complete the market analysis. In the future the website may feature on-line registration capabilities if our target audiences identify this as a priority. An easily recognizable domain name such as www.NarragansettBayCTP.com will be created for the program.

Develop/maintain databases

A database of 1,148 municipal volunteers and staff for Rhode Island and Massachusetts was developed using information from the databases of RI Sea Grant and the Audubon Society of RI, municipal web sites, and listings provided by town or city clerks. Updating for this particular target audience is critical due to the continual turnover of elected officials. A database of education/training providers within the Narragansett Bay watershed is also being compiled from the results of the market analysis on SurveyMonkey.com. We will continually add to this database as new partnerships are created or as new organizations/agencies begin to address coastal decision maker audiences.

Organizational Listservs

We currently promote NBWCTP information through email announcements on the RI Natural History Survey's and State-wide Planning's (RIDEM) listservs. We will post notices on others as we are made aware of them.

Email Announcements

We will create our own database of municipal staff and volunteer email addresses in order to promote new education programs or products. Once the website is complete, a link will be included in the email announcements

Partner Web Sites

Links to our website or downloads of educational materials such as brochures and fact sheets will be added to our partners' web sites whenever possible.

Produce a NBWCTP brochure

A simple brochure will be designed to hand out at RIDEM meetings, coastal decision-maker workshops, and copies will be sent to town and city halls to be posted.

NBWCTP presentations

A short PowerPoint presentation has been created by NBNERR and RISG which highlights the NBWCTP and the results of our market analysis. This will be used as a promotional tool at meetings, conferences, etc.

NBWCTP poster

A NBWCTP poster will be created and displayed at the NBNERR Learning Center and used at the RI Natural History Survey's annual conference and other workshops, conferences, and meetings whenever relevant.

Newsletter Announcements

All NBWCTP programs and products will be promoted in the bimonthly Audubon Report, a publication from the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. ASRI is our partner in education. A NBNERR quarterly newsletter will also be created and will include updates on CTP progress.

Create new partnerships

As we identify new audiences and priority issues, we will use the results of the market analysis to determine which organizations already address those audiences, which are experts on those priority issues, and whether or not they wish to partner in our CTP endeavor. We will contact new groups when it is appropriate and productive to do so.

Funding opportunities

Through organizational/agency meetings, emails, etc., we will let potential partners know that funding is available for programs/products that relate to our goal of providing up-to-date, science based information to coastal decision-makers.

Promotional materials

For large events such as conferences, promotional materials such as cups, pens, pencils, magnets, etc. may be produced and given away.

Continuing Education Incentives

We will explore the possibility of offering continuing education incentives in the future.

Evaluation

Evaluating the effectiveness of the NBWCTP marketing efforts is extremely important considering the amount of resources and time invested into this new program and the limited amount of funding available for staff, programs and products, promotional materials, etc. As unsuccessful strategies for promoting NBWCTP are identified, they will be discarded to free up resources for more effective methods. Evaluation of our marketing efforts may include:

- Number of organizations that contact us to create partnerships

- Number of hits on the NBWCTP website
- Number of responses from our email announcements
- How many individuals attend programs
- How many publications are requested
- How many individuals attend multiple programs or request new products as they are developed
- Paper survey at the end of programs (will include question on how they heard about the program)
- On-line survey on www.SurveyMonkey.com – emailed to program attendants
- How many organizations/agencies list their events/products on our website
- If possible, how many individuals use links from partner organizations to get to our website
- A compilation of newspaper clippings, promotional notices on websites, etc.
- Follow-up conversations with program participants and product users
- Number of promotional items handed out – comments received on items

Marketing Matrix for the Narragansett Bay Watershed Coastal Training Program

Target Audience	Method of Promoting					
	Web Site	USPS	EMAIL	Newsletters	Phone	Listsers
Conservation Commissions	X	X	X	X	X	X
Harbor commissions	X	X	X			X
Planning boards	X	X	X	X	X	X
Zoning boards	X	X	X			X
Economic Development boards	X	X	X			X
Municipal Land Trusts	X	X	X			X
RI councils	X	X	X	X	X	X
MA Selectmen	X	X	X	X	X	X
Town Planners	X	X	X			X
Conservation agents	X	X	X			X
Town clerks	X	X	X			X
Managers	X	X	X			X