COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT IN THE 80's

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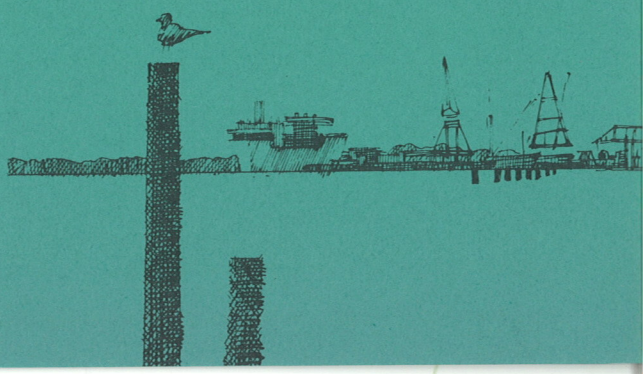
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office of Coastal Zone Management

In the 1980's we face a major challenge to protect and restore fragile coastal resources while meeting national goals of increased energy development and sustained economic growth. The United States' coastal areas contain the country's seven largest cities, 53 percent of its population, and 90 percent of its population growth. It is estimated that 80 percent of the population will live on the coasts by the year 2000.

The Nation's growing population creates demands for housing, support industries, and recreation areas. Forty percent of U.S. industries are located in coastal areas, and 60 percent of the U.S. refinery capacity is concentrated in just four coastal states (Texas, Louisiana, California and New Jersey). The demands associated with population and industrial growth place stress on the productive biological resources of the coastal zone. For example, we have filled over 40 percent of our wetlands and continue to do so at a rate of 300,000 acres per year.

The Office of Coastal Zone Management (OCZM), part of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is responsible for carrying out federal laws aimed at protecting, restoring and developing our coastal resources.

In 1972 Congress passed the Coastal Zone Management Act in response to public concern about balancing needs for preservation and development in coastal areas. Through the Act, OCZM has provided financial and technical assistance to states voluntarily participating in the federal



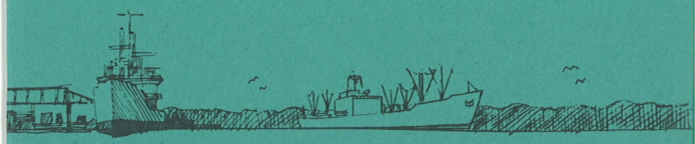
program. In 1980, Congress amended the Act and reauthorized the program through 1985. Through the Coastal Zone Management Act and the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, as amended, OCZM administers a group of programs briefly described below.

STATE COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

The Coastal Zone Management Act establishes a voluntary program through which states receive federal grants to develop and implement state coastal management programs. These programs must address the policy objectives of the Act, including protection of valuable natural coastal resources, better management of development in coastal areas, enhanced recreational access to the coasts, and improved coordination of government activities.

State coastal management programs include a wide variety of activities among which are beach and dune preservation, permitting systems to protect coastal wetlands, energy facility siting processes, and urban waterfront and port redevelopment.

All 35 states and territories eligible for assistance have participated in the program. To date, 25 states and territories, including 78 percent of the nation's coastline, have received federal program approval and are proceeding to implement their programs. Several other states are still working toward program approval.



COASTAL ENERGY IMPACT PROGRAM

In 1976, amendments to the Coastal Zone Management Act created a new program to meet the needs of state and local units of government whose coastal zones are affected by the development and production of coastal oil and gas and other related energy activities. The Coastal Energy Impact Program provides grants, loans and loan guarantees to help communities plan for services and public facilities to accommodate growth caused by energy development. The program also provides grants to mitigate unavoidable damage to natural and recreational resources caused by coastal energy development.

SANCTUARY PROGRAMS

The purpose of the Marine Sanctuary Program is to preserve and restore areas of the U.S. coastal waters for their conservation, recreational, ecological and esthetic values.

Three marine sanctuaries have been designated--the Monitor Sanctuary, an area one mile in diameter surrounding the wreck of the U.S.S. Monitor off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina; Key Largo Coral Reef Marine Sanctuary, protecting one of the Florida Key's most fragile coral areas; and the Santa Barbara-Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary off California, protecting a wide diversity of marine mammals, birds and fish. Several other proposed sanctuary sites are under consideration.

The Coastal Zone Management Act provides financial assistance to state and territorial governments to acquire, develop and operate estuarine sanctuaries. These sanctuaries provide field laboratories for studing the natural and human processes that affect estuaries so that stresses on these highly biologically productive areas can be minimized. To date, nine estuarine

sanctuaries have been established in Washington, Oregon, Georgia, Hawaii, Ohio, Florida, Rhode Island, and California.

OCEAN RESOURCES COORDINATION AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

A significant expansion in the scope of OCZM occurred in 1978, when the Office took on broader ocean resource assessment responsibilities. Recognizing that the problems of multiple uses of the coastal zone are moving seaward, OCZM's Ocean Resources Coordination and Assessment Program (ORCA) was created to develop sound policy in two important areas--marine transportation and Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas exploration and development--which are likely to have significant effects on the development and conservation of other ocean and coastal resources.

ORCA is also undertaking a series of strategies assessments to identify possible resource use conflicts in the coastal and ocean zone of the U.S. The first assessment covered the Atlantic coast, and ORCA is beginning assessments for the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska.

For more information about the Office of Coastal Zone Management or its programs call or write the Coastal Zone Information Center; 3300 Whitehaven Street, N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20235
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