

Assisting Great Lakes Coastal Communities with Sound Land Use Management

One of the major assets of Great Lakes communities in combating the economic doldrums affecting them is local environmental quality. The environment affects not only the tourism industry but many quality of life factors important in attracting and retaining individuals and businesses in the area. Fundamental to local environmental quality is sound land use management, which in New York State is largely the responsibility of local governments. Most local officials have no formal training in land use issues, and public representative turnover is often high, particularly for volunteer positions such as planning boards and zoning boards of appeals. There is thus a serious need for readily available training in a range of issues for local officials.

New York Sea Grant Responds

Coordinating with existing programs, New York Sea Grant is updating and expanding the LEAPE - Locally-led Education and Action for Protecting the Environment - Program. Components include basic training in understanding types of non-point source pollution (sources, impacts, and controls) as well as associated issues such as roles and responsibilities of officials, and available management tools. Specific topics addressed include public management of private septic systems, management of roads (salt, drainage ditches, etc) and grantsmanship.

Formal and informal surveys of local officials and key informants have provided additional specificity regarding information needs. For example, one survey found all communities



"Local government actions in the arena of land use management have both economic and environmental effects." Photo: J. Herring, NYSG

responding expressed a need for assistance in identifying funding opportunities and applying for grants.

Resources Available

In 2007-2008, NYSG staff have reviewed existing LEAPE materials and are updating the resources. Trainings regarding the management of onsite wastewater systems are being developed which will serve in conjunction with New York State's Onsite Training Network, filling a gap identified in State assessments for a decade. This training, as well as the training in road ditch and road salt management, are also designed to serve under the NEMO (Nonpoint Management for Municipal Officials) program.

To learn more about how NYSG resources available to municipal leaders can help your Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River community, contact New York Sea Grant at 716-645-3610.

New York Sea Grant is a cooperative program of the State University of New York and Cornell University. Sea Grant Extension administration is located at 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

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