

# National Estuarine Research Reserve System

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**How does NERRS monitor and assess its programs?**

**Atziri Ibanez, National Education Coordinator**



# Overarching Goal - NERRS Education

NERRS Strategic Plan 2005-2010

**Goal:** Enhance people's ability and willingness to make informed decisions and take responsible actions that affect coastal communities and ecosystems.

## Objectives:

- People are ***aware*** of the ecological, economic, historical, and cultural importance of estuarine resources
- People ***understand*** how human choices and natural disturbances impact social, economic, and estuarine ecological systems
- People ***apply*** science-based information when making decisions that could impact coastal and estuarine resources



# There are 3 type of Reserve Education Programs

## ① NERRS System-wide Program:

- A program that is implemented in a minimum of 75% of the reserves utilizing a similar approach or protocols to meet agreed upon goals and objectives.
- Program progress and impact are reported by individual reserves and are aggregated and synthesized at the national level.

### Examples:

- Coastal Training Program – Audience: Coastal Decision-Makers
- K-12 Estuarine Education Program – Audience: K-12 Teachers & Students (not funded)
- Graduate Research Fellowship Program
- System-wide Monitoring Program



# There are 3 type of Reserve Education Programs

## ② NERRS National Program:

- A program implemented by a subset of reserves, or any other entity, on behalf of the NERRS.
- National programs use expertise, products, and material from reserves across the system.
- Program progress and impact is monitored and reported on a national scale.
- Example:
  - EstuaryLive



# There are 3 type of Reserve Education Programs

## ③ NERRS Local Programs:

- A program implemented by an individual reserve site.
- At the local level, the NERRS Education Program targets a culturally diverse audience of educators and students, coastal decision-makers, environmental professionals, resource users and the general public.



# How do we monitor & assess impact from all Reserve (local) Programs?

- **Performance Monitoring System** to assess how well we are achieving our objectives
- **Track suite of contextual indicators** to provide information on environmental and socioeconomic factors influencing program actions
- **Site-based evaluations**
  - Evaluate how well a state has (1) met NERR system goals, (2) implemented the Federally-approved NERR management plan, and (3) adhered to the terms of its financial assistance awards
- **Program Reviews (external & internal)**



# How do we monitor & assess impact from National Programs? – EstuaryLive

<b>ESTUARYLIVE Program Results</b>				
<b>Performance Indicators</b>				
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>General Quantitative Indicators</b>				
Teacher participation (Internet participants only)	291	257	502	526
Average Number of Students for each Registered Teacher (Internet participants only)	49	53	42	48
Participation by students and teachers (Internet participants only)	18,600	13,600	20,958	25,315
Potential Viewers (Satellite and Internet Participants)	115,000*	700,000	700,000	700,000
Number of Questions asked by Participants	1,000	756	1,153	1,398
Number of hits on www.estuaries.gov Web Site	57,427	146,148	486,512	560,881
Total number of requests for assistance by participating teachers	N/A	75	83	98
<b>Teachers Access to Resources about Estuaries</b>				
Percentage of teachers reporting the intent to incorporate lessons and activities on estuarine ecology taken from the www.estuaries.gov Web site.	N/A	92%	86%	61%
Percentage of teachers reporting the intent to incorporate lessons and activities for comparing estuaries taken from the www.estuaries.gov Web site.	N/A	90%	70%	52%
<b>Teachers increasingly use the telecast as the highlight of their teaching</b>				
Percentage of teachers who plan to participate in				

# How do we monitor & assess impact from System-Wide Programs?

- **Site Requirements**
  - Full time person dedicated to implement the program
  - Implement a Market Analysis & Needs Assessment
  - Strategic plan and action plan for the implementation of the program
- **Program Framework**
  - Programs have their own logic model
  - Well defined objectives & outcomes
  - Clear alignment to overall NERRS Strategic Plan
  - Funding provided is the same for all 27 sites
  - Each program defines its individual approach to evaluation
    - Coastal Training Program – Focus on performance monitoring

