

DRAFT - ERF Strategic Planning - Overview – Affiliate Societies

Vision

As the leading international scientific society devoted to the science of estuaries and other shallow water coastal habitats, the Estuarine Research Federation expects to play a important role in enhancing education and facilitating the exchange of information on the science and management of estuarine and coastal ecosystems. By strengthening ERF's affiliated societies we envision making both the affiliates and ERF more successful. Enhancing the visibility of the affiliates will provide additional opportunities for interactions of estuarine and coastal scientists, students, managers and policy-makers at a regional scale.

Motivation

As the leading international scientific society devoted to the science of estuaries and other shallow water coastal habitats, the Estuarine Research Federation expects to play a important role in enhancing education and facilitating the exchange of information on the science and management of estuarine and coastal ecosystems. Achieving our visions and goals will help to build global capacity in the areas of estuarine and coastal ocean science and policy development. The Federation was created in 1971, when the members of two older, regionally-based estuarine research societies had a vision for a national organization that would address estuarine and coastal issues more broadly. The regionally based Affiliate Societies presently number seven and encompass all of the coastal regions that border the United States, Canada and Mexico. The affiliated societies continue to interact closely with ERF. Their Presidents serve as ERF Governing Board members and many of their members are also ERF members.

ACCESS – Atlantic Canada Coastal and Estuarine Scientific Society, covering the east coast of Canada, including the Gulf of St. Lawrence region

AERS – Atlantic Estuarine Research Society, covering the mid-Atlantic region of the US

CAERS – California Estuarine Research Society, covering California and western Mexico

GERS – Gulf Estuarine Research Society, covering the entire Gulf Coast of the US and eastern Mexico

NEERS – New England Estuarine Research Society, covering the New England region of the US

PERS – Pacific Estuarine Research Society, covering the Pacific Northwest region of the US and western Canada

SEERS – Southeastern Estuarine Research Society, covering the US Atlantic Coastline from Florida to North Carolina

Objectives and Strategies

During the Schaffner Administration (2003-2005) there was a notable amount of effort made toward increasing the interaction and cooperation between ERF and the Affiliate Societies. The major goals outlined during strategic planning activities centered on finding ways to use the ERF-Affiliate relationships to make both the Affiliates and ERF more successful, and to enhance the visibility of the Affiliate Societies, which provide opportunities for interactions of estuarine

and coastal scientists, students, managers and policy-makers at a regional scale. Four major objectives were outlined:

- 1) Increase communication among affiliates
- 2) Enhance communication between ERF and affiliates
- 3) Provide rich science content and a forum for the exchange of ideas among policy makers and scientists
- 4) Help affiliates enhance the participation and professional development of students

Increase communication among affiliates. It was clear from ERF Board Meeting interactions that some of the affiliate societies really had no idea how the other Affiliate Societies conducted business, raised funds, and were organized. Thus, an Affiliate Society President's lunch was initiated in the fall 2004 ERF Board Meeting in which the presidents could discuss among their selves some of the above matters. This was successful, and continued during the spring ERF Board Meeting, and is envisioned to continue as a regular part of ERF Board Meetings. Topics shared among the group included the role of student representatives, annual membership fees charged, sources of society funding and investments, meeting structure, and others. This effort has enhanced communication among the Affiliate Societies, and has served to make the individual societies more successful by finding out what has worked for other groups, and what has not worked.

Another means of enhancing communication and improving operations in general has been posting Affiliate Society by-laws and / or operations manuals on the Affiliate Society's websites. This has allowed newer societies the benefit of seeing what others have done, so they can make their own rules by considering what has been done by older societies.

Enhance communication between ERF and Affiliates ERF Headquarters and the Federation's Board members have considerable expertise in issues such as financial management and conference planning. ERF's Executive Director, Joy Bartholomew, maintains an open line of communication and acts as a source of advice to Affiliate Society Presidents. As part of the ongoing efforts to enhance communication, Joy contacts Affiliate Society Presidents before each ERF Governing Board meeting to discuss matters that may be of interest to either that society of the ERF Administration. The Federation has also asked the affiliate societies to standardize their reporting of membership and finances for regular reporting as a means of enhancing communication on issues such as membership, finances, and meeting attendance.

Provide rich science content and a forum for the exchange of ideas among policy makers and scientists The Affiliate Society Presidents agreed that it was desirable to get more managers and policy makers to attend regional meetings. One way to accomplish this would be to have special sessions with high profile speakers at the Affiliate meeting. However, some of the Affiliate Societies are financially unprepared to bring in a special speaker. Thus, a proposal was presented to the ERF Board in which a special ERF fund (the Speaker's Fund) would be made available to Affiliate Societies to be used for either funding a special speaker to come in, or else fund a special workshop that academics and agency personnel would be interested in. The ERF Governing Board, designating \$5,000 to be made available for the first year, passed this proposal. The program has been proved successful and was used by at least three societies to

bring in speakers. Thus, the ERF Board subsequently passed funding for this proposal for a second year.

Help affiliates enhance participation and professional development of students. The professional development of students is a topic of interest both to ERF and the Affiliate Societies. As students will graduate and move from area to area, thus changing regional societies as needed, they need to be aware of the ERF mission. Thus, the Presidents commissioned a poster that can be utilized at Affiliate Society meetings in which the relationship between ERF and the regional Affiliates is clearly displayed. This should help to encourage ERF members to attend Affiliate Society meetings and Affiliate Members, especially new professionals, to attend ERF Meetings.

Timelines for Action?

Resources Needed?

How to Measure Success?