26th Annual International Submerged Lands Management Conference

Planning for Biodiversity Conservation on Submerged Lands

Speaker: Jay Odell

Abstract: Terrestrial conservation planning is well established. Developing marine planning methods and integrating marine ecosystems into terrestrial planning, however, is still in its infancy. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been building tools and methods for conservation planning in coastal and marine environments in the U.S. and internationally for over 10 years. Our purpose in regional planning is to identify places of significant biodiversity that deserve conservation attention at a scale we define as "ecoregions" - biogeographic areas of similar geologic, oceanographic, hydrologic and biologic properties. The basic objective of an ecoregional assessment is to characterize a region's biodiversity and key ecological processes as well as the current impacts, future risks (threats) and human uses that affect biodiversity and ecosystem function. Ecoregional assessments are designed as a transparent decision support system for marine resource managers and stakeholders. TNC uses assessment results and conservation action plans to identify effective threat abatement strategies. Submerged lands tenure and other market based approaches are emerging as high priority conservation strategies for TNC and partners. This talk will give an overview of TNC's ecoregional and conservation action planning methods, with examples from completed and ongoing U.S. projects.

Speaker Information: Jay Odell has spent the last twenty years working to understand, conserve and restore marine biodiversity and ecological processes at multiple scales. Before coming to work for The Nature Conservancy, Jay worked for the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife for 13 years conducting and leading marine resource stock assessments, monitoring and managing harvests, and representing the State of Washington in fishery management plan negotiations with sixteen treaty tribes.

Jay started working as a marine ecologist for The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire in 2002, developing and implementing conservation and habitat restoration plans at local and regional scales. During the past year he has been working with diverse partners to develop a marine conservation action plan for the mid-Atlantic region.

Jay received a B.Sci. from Evergreen State College in 1986, conducted post-graduate work at the University of Washington, and received a M. Sci. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 2003.