

Website Workshop: Developing a Resource for Submerged Lands Managers

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Ms. Lawrence described the focus of this interactive workshop and the two primary considerations for a long-term website: content and logistics.

Starting with content, it's important and necessary to identify the site: purpose, primary audience, secondary audiences, granularity, topics to be covered (wish list), and tools and features (wish list).

A discussion ensued about the site's primary purpose: to be a tool for submerged lands managers. At a minimum, the site is a place to capture information presented at conferences; a place to post presentations and discussions/ideas/outcomes.

Other purposes:

- 1) to network with each other through a chat room feature and/or the ability to IM with multiple folks;
- 2) a place to find information – searchable by topic or by individual or by other;
- 3) a place to list appropriate contacts by state, province, territory; those specifically responsible for SL permits or SL management;
- 4) a place where issues raised at each conference are identified and amplified. In other words, a place to keep track of important issues that popped up last year, so we don't have to start anew each year; and
- 5) the conference section should include abstracts, agendas, presentations, etc.

Comment: We are speaking about the same issues from many years go. We could go back ten years, for example, and try to post historical papers/presentations. A link to contact offices also would be helpful. This would be of great benefit also to those who cannot attend the ISLM annual conference.

Comment: This site could evolve into an "information portal" for SL management, in general; could include or link to technical resources, such as white papers and links to SL case law, outside of the ISLM meeting sphere. The site could become a broad repository for resources.

Primary Audience: Submerged Lands managers and policy folks; conference attendees and their peers. This represents a relatively small corps of people. (Need to characterize meeting attendees and be sure to capture other countries/provinces not represented, such as Canada.)

Secondary Audiences: NGOs, conservation groups/nonprofits, researchers, academics, legislative staff, educators; even a kids page could be developed (down the road); realtors and business interests; developers; offshore developers; alternative energy folks; consulting folks who work with the development community; special interest groups at the community level.

Granularity (meaning, how specific/narrow do you want your focus): All 50 states and outside the U.S., for those who come to conferences; e.g., Canada; U.S. Virgin Islands; Kenya; Nigeria. May depend on who *wants* to participate, who is willing to send us the information.

Comment: We could begin with a "call" to submit your information and request to identify for this site – at the state level – who is the agency of responsibility and what is their direct link to content regarding Submerged Lands. To help this process move forward, we could provide each state with a "template" of information we want to include (definitions, enabling legislation, fees charged, royalties received, etc.).

Topics: See mock-up of front page (on screen). What else is needed?

Long laundry list is needed! (TNC perspective)

Mapping – takes you to state resources such as Virginia Coastal Gems

Contacts – list of states, provinces, with a few sub-categories within

Fee Structures – list by state with specific examples and/or case studies

Legal issues – case studies

At a minimum, topics need to reflect the information presented at the annual conference.

Tools & Features (this is a wish list!):

Jay from TNC gave a sneak preview of their related site. He cautioned that this is just one example and their focus is one of targeting conservation organizations interested in SL (ocean and coastal waters). He demonstrated some of the cool site features; specifically, the interactive tool used in the “terms” section of the site. He also showed a decision checklist feature. Other features under development include: state summaries for each ocean coastal state, the ability of conservationists to lease/own SL and relevant agencies to contact for information/data on water quality, aquaculture, fish and wildlife, etc. Also, a listing by state concerning specific statutes and leasing/ownership case studies. Also, a contact matrix by state and spatial data on leases and parcel information.

The discussion then turned to “logistics” and associated considerations in order to move forward.

Timeframe:

Establish a committee to keep this idea alive? Is your goal to make it available by next conference?

With regard to establishing your timeline, it’s important to incorporate “usability” testing along the way. This can be done by conference participants or by a smaller group. Suggest that you begin with a steering committee. Start with something simple, such as this year’s conference information. By 1/31, have that information up and running.

Budget:

What you can put into it will determine how much to do initially. The steering committee can look at resources for funding to do cool stuff.

Comment: Establish a Web Steering Committee and lead person. The steering committee will review workshop notes and get the discussion ball rolling.

Where will the site reside?

For near-term, it could reside at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, on their server.

Who will provide content?

The steering committee should appoint people for content areas. Need to agree on that process and designate who will be the liaison for each area of the site. The more you can assist your “customers” with a template of the information you need, the more successful you will be in getting it. Other tools to consider using: survey monkey, etcetera (automated survey tools).

Other considerations for the steering committee:

Who is responsible for defining scope/priorities of content? Who is responsible for getting estimates to build the site according to identified content needs? What happens when people fail to deliver the promised content? Who is responsible for making edits and revisions?