

A Report by a Panel of the

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

AN EARLY EVALUATION OF NOAA'S HABITAT MATRIX PROGRAM



2009



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Presentation by
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of Public Administration
to the
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Networking Forum
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ACADEMY's ASSIGNMENT

Provide the first outside, independent evaluation of the program

- Satisfy OMB's PART requirement
- Improve program performance
- (Finish constructing the program)

April–December 2008

APPROACH

Immersion in the program(s)

- Headquarters briefings
- Field interviews
- Document reviews, including
 1. Program's charter,
 2. "accomplishments reports,"
 3. Prior evaluations of component programs
- Data calls (performance and budget data)
- Academy Panel Meetings
(interaction with program leaders and stakeholders)
- Full-day facilitated workshop with program leaders

WHAT IS THE HABITAT MATRIX PROGRAM?

Six major programs

- Habitat Protection
- Habitat Restoration
- Chesapeake Bay Office
- Damage Assessment, Remediation & Restoration
- Marine Debris
- Aquatic Invasive Species

29 pages of detailed legislative “mandates”

Programs administratively located in 3 separate line offices

A goals structure not aligned with programs and mandates

A GREAT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE!

THE GOALS STRUCTURE

11/21/08

Mandates to Outcomes for the NOAA Habitat Program

Ultimate Objectives

Healthy and Productive Coastal and Marine Ecosystems that Benefit Society

A Well-informed Public that Acts as a Steward of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

NOAA Outcomes

Protect life and property and enhance community resilience

Robust and sustainable fisheries, protected resources and other living marine resources

Safe public use, recreation and enjoyment

Habitat Outcomes

Habitat Conservation Actions & Activities

Intermediate Outcomes

Foundational Activities

Outputs

Requirements & Drivers

Executive Branch

Legislative Branch

Healthy Habitats

Programs & Partnerships

Consultations
Community-based Restoration
Cooperative Habitat Protection
National Fish Habitat Action Plan
Open Rivers Access for Fish
Deep Corals
Invasive Species Prevention
Promoting Hazard Resilient Coastal Communities
Marine Debris

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Ecosystem Approach | Strategies | • Improve Public Understanding |
| • Promote Partnerships | • Proactive Protection | • Regional Implementation |
| • Cooperative Strategies | • Watershed Assessments | • Balance Competing Uses |

Activities

- Protect
- Restore
- Characterize and Assess
- Promote Stewardship

Drivers

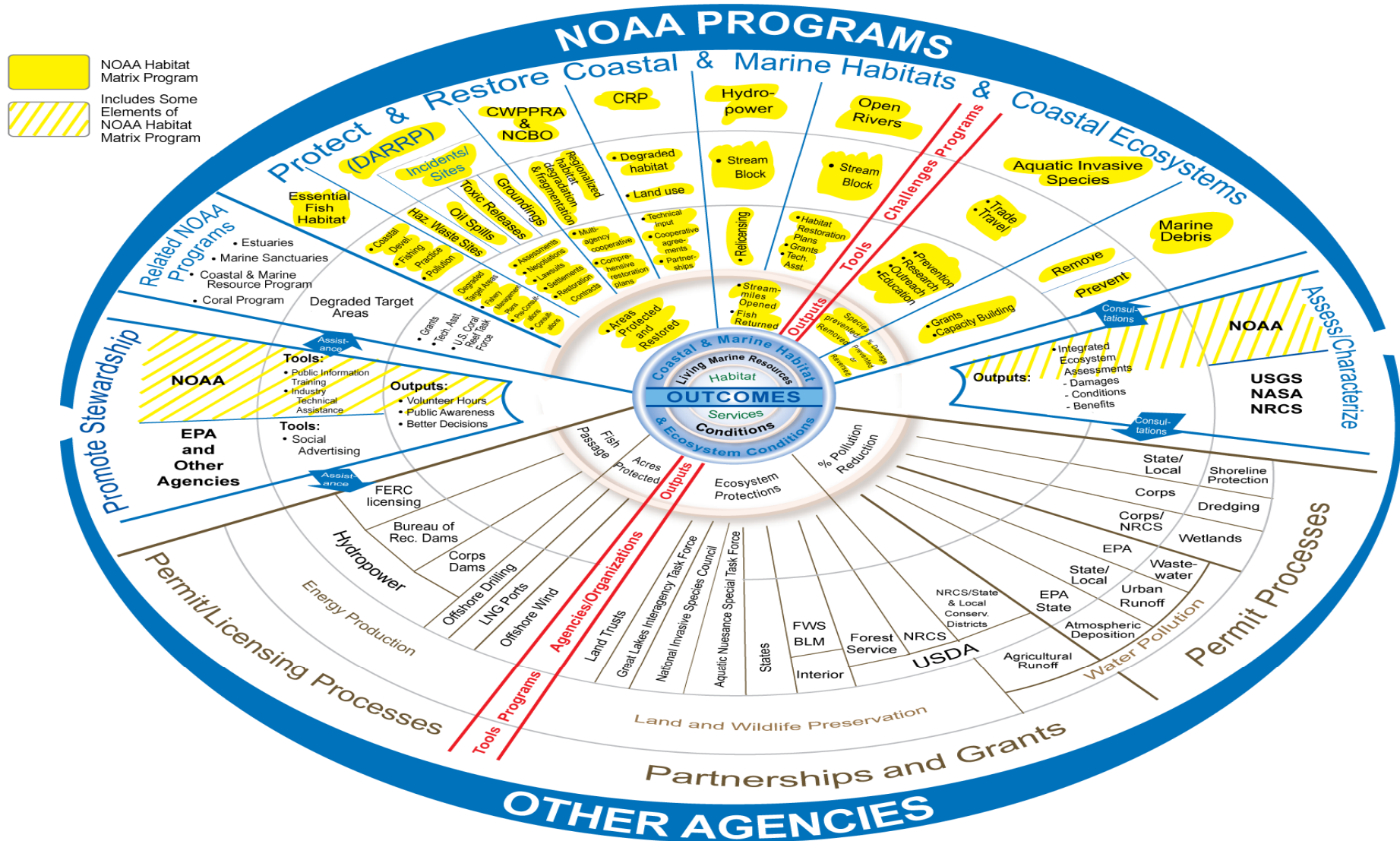
- NOAA Strategies
- US Ocean Action Plan
- Executive Orders
- Multi-agency Agreements
- Public Expectations

Major Mandates

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| • Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act | • Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act | • Energy Policy Act of 2005 | • NOAA Authorization Act of 2002 |
| • Federal Power Act | | • Marine Debris, Research, Prevention and Reduction Act | |

THE PROGRAM STRUCTURE

NOAA HABITAT MATRIX PROGRAM—IN CONTEXT



The Habitat Matrix Program is a small part of the action needed.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All measure “activities” (outputs) on the goals pyramid chart

--emphasize workload management

NOAA does not have current ability to measure outcomes or progress toward outcomes

Targets for measuring progress

- Approximately 1 / 3 can be used to imply outcome performance
- 59% of targets new for FY 2008

THIS IS STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS

FINDINGS

Programs in the matrix are still largely **separate**

Most rely for success on **actions by others**:

- Federal agencies
- State and local governments
- Private parties

NOAA's **responsibilities** far **outstrip resources** available

The **disconnect** between the program's outcome goals and current activities **precludes prioritizing limited resources** to achieve greatest outcome-oriented performance

The program is only now beginning to use **logic models** to link outputs to outcomes

Organized feedback from stakeholders is rare

RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish an overarching statutory framework (toward ecosystem health)

Strengthen outcome-oriented goals & targets

Increase scientific support for:

- Habitat assessments
- Progress reporting

Work more closely with stakeholders on large-scale watershed planning (ecosystem health)

Prioritize spending to optimize ecosystem health

THE EVALUATION'S VALUE TO NOAA

1. Fulfill OMB requirement to have an outside, independent evaluation
2. Build a more cohesive matrix management team
3. Refine the program's logic model
4. Reformulate the program's legislative foundation (ecosystem health)
5. Provide a stronger basis for budget formulation and justification
 - performance & budget integration
 - revised priorities
6. Strengthen relationships with stakeholders
 - better ideas
 - better performance
 - stronger support
7. Systematize the use (value) of evaluations by the program's management team

LESSONS FOR EVALUATORS

Managing the intersections between evaluation,
technical assistance, and organization development

Usefulness of expert-review group (in addition to
technical evaluation staff)

Navigating around the lack of good data

Lack of funds and mechanisms to communicate results
of evaluations

- 20 prior evaluations of Matrix-related activities, identified after a long search)
- Not tracked or systematically utilized
- Academy's evaluation not published or presented
- One-shot evaluations (not an evaluation strategy

DIALOGUE ON EVALUATION LESSONS