

## Session 6: Trends in Data and Open Access

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### MANAGING THE EDGES: A COASTAL DATA PARTNERSHIP

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#### **Abstract:**

The edges of islands and continents are, of course, critically important areas. Beaches, wetlands, shorelines, parks, tourist destinations, coastal communities - all are managed by some governmental or private entity. Best practices, management strategy documents, data sets and reports on how to manage these are often kept in local computers or even in boxes in basements, often inaccessible to management and the public. How can this information be made available to benefit those who have been charged with managing coastal resources? The Jack K. Williams Library at Texas A&M University at Galveston, the Texas Digital Library and the Galveston Island Parks Board have begun a collaboration to design a repository for the collection of Galveston Island beach management data and documents with an eye to developing a national model for collecting data and a national repository for those data. The Galveston Island Parks Board is tasked with managing over 32 miles of beaches and shoreline, including dunes, vegetation, parks, facilities and roads. While the partnership is in its early stages, significant progress has been made on collecting and organizing a wide array of information, and plans are developing to bring this collection to the wider world. This paper describes the history and uniqueness of the collaboration, the processes for collecting and disseminating data and documents, data collected, lessons learned and strategies for the future.

**Keywords:** Islands, coastlines, coastal resources, Galveston Island Parks Board, repositories, collaborations, libraries.

#### **Introduction**

Almost by definition, members of IAMSLIC work and reside near water. Most institutional members are coastal. Governmental entities, from the national level down to parks boards or private managers, manage some aspects of those coasts. These coastal regions have enormous impacts on the nation, as a source of recreation or industry. Economic sectors that are impacted by coastal regions include tourism boards, local businesses, hotel and motel operations and state or provincial revenues. The National Resources Defense Council estimates that Americans alone take 900 million trips per year to coastal

areas and spend over \$40 billion USD (USEPA, 1996). Shoreline-adjacent counties contributed \$6 trillion USD to the US domestic gross product and 47 million jobs (NOEP, 2010).

Williams and Micallef (2009) found that effective beach management leads to:

- Effective utilization of an increasingly valuable national resource.
- Encouragement to tourism.
- An increase in quality of recreational opportunities.
- A contribution to enhancement to nearby urban settlements.
- An enhancement of coastal protection.
- Facilitation of monitoring, regulation, planning and decision-making.
- Promotion of sustainable coastal development.

In Texas the coastal areas fall under the purview of the Texas General Land office with intergovernmental agreements with counties, cities and regional parks boards. In Galveston, Texas the beaches of Galveston County and the City of Galveston are management by the Galveston Park Board of Trustees (GPBT). The Park Board has a significant collection of documents, reports, data and studies that reflect best management practices in that area. The purpose of the GPBT is to manage, develop, and promote Galveston's natural resources and other assets in order to sustain and further tourism on the island. In particular, the Park Board concerns itself with the management and sustainable use of Galveston Island beaches. As such, the Board has an interest in measuring and recording these resources, and in devising policies to oversee their management and use. The Park Board produces or commissions the production of raw geographic and economic data (e.g. an end-to-end land survey of the island out to wading depth, currently underway; various industry surveys), studies, reports, and other documents.

### **Foundations**

At Texas A&M University at Galveston, the Jack K. Williams Library supports the campus in part by collecting and providing access to information resources pertaining to the marine sciences and maritime professions. The Library, particularly through the creation and maintenance of the Galveston Bay Information Center, also serves researchers with scholarly interests in the Galveston Bay Complex and surrounding area, as well as the community of Galveston Island itself, by building and sharing collections of information relating to the area. The Galveston Bay Information Center, developed by TAMUG, comprises mostly science-oriented resources, but also includes historical and cultural material.

Researchers at Texas A&M University at Galveston and other parties with an interest in Galveston Island could benefit from the data and documents produced by the Galveston Park Board. Additionally, other Park Boards could benefit from seeing examples of the Galveston Park Board's work, and this information sharing could lead to the development of best practices and other tools to aid in the organizations' fulfillment of their missions. Thus, it is in the Library's and the Park Board's mutual interest to build an online information center that will host, organize, and provide access to this material.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the repository is to collect in one place digital copies of data and documents that can be of use to beach management entities across the nation including parks boards, cities, counties, private entities and others interested in beach management. The repository provides open access to contents that will increase the usage and impact of data and documents. The repository maximizes the visibility

of the Galveston Island Parks Board, Texas A&M University at Galveston, the City and County of Galveston through beach management efforts and provides a system for monitoring and assessing those efforts. The repository preserves content, provides open access, and serves as a model for data and document retention and use on a national scale.

### **Initial Process**

- Identify Parks Board/City of Galveston data/documents appropriate to the purpose.
- Establish ingress/access processes for data/documents.
- Determine funding needs for staff and resources.
- Develop a web interface on top of TDL repository.
- Publicize resources.
- Develop the repository as a national resource.

### **Collection**

The repository consists of raw data in various formats, reports of beach management efforts, documents pertaining to beach data, and other materials describing and supporting beach management practices. All resources in the repository are accessible online.

Resources are collected from the Galveston Island Parks Board, the City and County of Galveston and any contracted entity that uses data for beach measurement. TAMUG staff members organize resources and deposit them into the repository. The Galveston Island Parks Board determines criteria for the collection of resources.

### **Management**

The Parks Board retains rights to all contributed resources to the repository. TAMUG staff contributes metadata to resources and manages digitization and administration of the TDL portal.

### **Access**

Access to content is open to all. Administrative access is restricted to TAMUG staff and the Executive Director of the Parks Board, or their designated representative.

### **References**

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