

IN TUNE

Integrated coastal zone management

Integrated coastal zone management is being implemented under a pilot project adapted to the specific characteristics of the Escoumins–Betsiamites River coastal zone. This type of approach takes into account all of the natural resources in a given area and all of the activities carried out there.

North Shore of the Gulf ZIP Committee

The North Shore of the Gulf Zip Committee, created in 1996, quickly began working on projects included in its ERAP: educational activities in schools, shoreline clean-up work, oil spill response operations and a variety of other conservation and development initiatives.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Lower Estuary of the St. Lawrence



Photo : Peter Hale

In recent years, numerous experiments in managing the natural resources and activities within a specific area have been implemented to give local residents a chance to participate in the decision-making and planning process. An example of this is the pilot project for integrated coastal zone management in the Escoumins — Betsiamites River area, initiated by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 1996. This article describes the different phases involved in the project and some of the benefits derived from it.

Integrated management is an approach that involves managing all of the natural resources within a target area and all of the activities that take place there. Instead of managing activities individually and dealing with the interested parties separately, the goal is to bring together all the users of the area so that they can adopt measures which address all of the ecological,

economic and social concerns related to the area of interest.

The Fish Habitat Management Division of Fisheries and Oceans Canada set out to develop an integrated management approach for the coastal zone by implementing a pilot project on the Upper North Shore, within the Lower Estuary of the St. Lawrence.



Photo : Peter Hale

SUMMARY

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In addition to establishing an integrated coastal zone management approach suited to the Escoumins — Betsiamites River coastal zone, the pilot project was aimed at answering a number of questions which would allow this model to be applied to other regions in the marine part of the St. Lawrence. For example, the participants sought to determine the ideal size of the target area for applying the ICZM concept, the most effective tools and mechanisms of co-operation and the limitations of the approach.

An awareness campaign to get the ball rolling

The pilot project area encompasses 85 km of the Upper North Shore region between Escoumins and Betsiamites River. The coastal zone comprises a strip of dry land 2 km to 3 km wide and extends into the estuary to a point about 10 km offshore. These geographic limits take in most of the activities that impinge on coastal resources, together with the habitats and geographic range of the key resources and the areas where they are harvested. This particular coastal zone was chosen as a testing ground for the concept because of the diversity of uses involved and the considerable vitality and keen interest shown by local and regional communities.

The first phase of the project, carried out from 1996 to 1997, included a community awareness campaign, which provided the opportunity to recruit volunteers to serve on a coastal committee. In addition, thematic maps showing the different coastal uses and habitats were prepared so that the

participants would have a tool for quickly visualizing the overall coastal zone.

Collaborative efforts

During the second phase of the pilot project, a coastal committee was set up bringing together 18 resource persons from a variety of sectors: representatives from local and regional municipalities, the fishing industry, environmental protection and development groups and the tourist industry.

The coastal committee's first task was to divide the territory of the coastal zone into cohesive management units. The members then evaluated these units by assigning an order of priority to them based on various characteristics, including use patterns, ecological value, sensitivity and accessibility. After that, they drew up a list of all the activities carried on in the study region, in order of importance. A similar procedure was followed in analysing the participants' concerns with respect to the coastal zone.

A synthesis map incorporating all the information collected was eventually produced. "The priority-setting exercise was certainly not easy," said Jean Morisset, who headed up the project on behalf of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. "The participants were very appreciative of the opportunity to learn more about the quantity and variety of resources found in the coastal zone, its development potential and the different concerns related to the zone."

Decision making and action

The results of the second phase provided a basis for launching the third phase of the pilot project, in 1998. The object of this stage was to draft an integrated management plan for the Escoumins — Betsiamites River coastal zone.

When initially asked to define their vision of the coastal zone together, the members of the coastal committee selected three unifying aims (a) to learn more about the coastal zone; b) manage the zone; c) and participate in decision making. Over the course of eight working meetings, the participants were able to pinpoint more than 130 actions likely to contribute to attaining the management objectives they had set, in response to the concerns raised in the previous stage. Implementation of some of these measures should begin in the fall of 1999.

Marc Larin, chairman of the North Shore of the Estuary ZIP Committee, was also serving as co-ordinator of the committee when the third phase of the pilot project got under way. In describing the co-operative process, Mr. Larin pointed out that the project had created a sense of belonging among the coastal committee members. He stressed the need to sound out community organizations as part of this type of approach. "Since the mandate of ZIP committees is to promote co-operative action by riverside communities, if we want to be able to export the overall approach to other regions, it only makes sense to have the ZIP committees take part in organizing and directing the exercise. Some of the measures proposed in environmental remedial action plans

(ERAP) and integrated coastal zone management plans may address similar problems and compete for the same sources of funding; it would therefore be easier and more effective to integrate the different actions envisaged," noted Mr. Larin.

Mr. Morisset pointed out that the pilot project on the Upper North Shore was aimed at testing a simple approach for applying the integrated coastal zone management concept, which involved promoting the participation of all local and regional players, including ZIP committees. He stated further that a methodology document was being prepared in order to share with coastal communities the knowledge gained and lessons learned from the pilot project.

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Chronicle

ZIP Committees in
the Heat of the Action

**North Shore of the Gulf
ZIP Committee**

**Shoreline clean-up and planning in
the Gulf area**

Between 1993 and 1999, under the Area of Prime Concern Program, or ZIP Program for short, 13 regional ZIP committees were set up to carry out concerted action in an equal number of areas along the St. Lawrence River. Phase III of the St. Lawrence Vision 2000 action plan is now dedicated to the implementation of environmental remedial action plans (ERAPs) drawn up by the different riverside communities. A new ZIP committee will soon be joining the existing ones.

This article chronicles the recent activities of the North Shore of the Gulf ZIP Committee, which over the past few months has devoted its efforts to launching new projects under its ERAP.



Photo : Comité ZIP Côte-Nord du Golfe

The region of interest to the North Shore of the Gulf ZIP Committee encompasses more than 5,000 km of shoreline from Pentecôte to Blanc-Sablon and covers an area of 25,000 km², which is shared by nineteen municipalities and five Indian reserves. It features a multitude of islands, including Anticosti Island. The shoreline configuration is highly varied. Whereas in the Mid North Shore region, sandy shores fringe the mouths of the many rivers that empty into the St. Lawrence, the Lower North Shore has a rocky coastline with a few salt marshes.

Incorporated in 1996, the North Shore of the Gulf ZIP Committee has organized a few educational activities in schools in addition to participating in numerous projects to protect and enhance the environment, in co-operation with other regional organizations. It has also been involved in cleaning hundreds of kilometres of shoreline.



Photo : Comité ZIP Côte-Nord du Golfe

Beautifying the shores

By giving local residents the opportunity to help restore the St. Lawrence and its shores, clean-up activities go a long way toward increasing the environmental awareness of coastal communities. During the summer of 1999, the North Shore of the Gulf ZIP Committee directed the clean-up of 8 km of shoreline as part of its continuing efforts in this regard.

The town of St. Augustin, 125 km from Blanc Sablon, is located on the eastern bank of the river bearing the same name, opposite the Pakuashipi Montagnais reserve. Last summer, the local communities, which are among the most isolated in the Lower North Shore region, began clean-up activities in and around the town. Two streams that traverse the town were improved by removing a variety of refuse and some pollution sources impeding their natural flow.



Photo : Comité ZIP Côte-Nord du Golfe

The ZIP Committee has also tackled a few areas on Anticosti Island. In Ellis Bay, for example, clean-up participants removed many logs scattered along the shoreline, which dated back to the era of timber drives. Sainte-Claire Bay, on the westernmost tip of Anticosti, is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful spots on the island. The municipality is currently planning to turn it into a regional park. However, before the ZIP Committee set to work, the degraded state of the shores, which were cluttered with refuse from an abandoned village, made the Sainte-Claire Bay site unsuitable for tourism development. The shoreline clean-up done in this sector, in partnership with the municipality, therefore marks a first step toward restoring access to the St. Lawrence.



Photo : Comité ZIP Côte-Nord du Golfe

Clandestine dumps: a serious problem on the North Shore

Shoreline clean-up operations frequently lead to the discovery of clandestine dumps scattered here and there. The waste dumped at these sites poses serious environmental problems, since it can degrade the water and soil and blight the landscape.



Photo : Comité ZIP Côte-Nord du Golfe

Two students set out to find the illegal dumps on the North Shore between the municipalities of Pentecôte and Havre-Saint-Pierre, and covering an area extending 2 km inland. By using a GPS (global positioning system) device, they located more than 200 dump sites containing waste items such as abandoned appliances and automobiles, construction debris and tires.



Photo : Comité ZIP Côte-Nord du Golfe

"In an area like that of the North Shore of the Gulf ZIP, waste management is a real challenge," said Marc Otis, ZIP Committee coordinator. Most of the municipalities do not have management programs that provide for treatment of either household waste or hazardous waste. Sept Îles is the only city that has a household waste recycling centre. The presence of such a large number of clandestine dumps can be explained by the many logging camps, cottages and outfitting facilities scattered along the coastline, most of which are located far from municipal dumps and in sites that are difficult or even impossible to reach from the road. "However, now that we know the exact location of the clandestine dumps, the ZIP Committee can study various solutions for removing the waste," added Mr. Otis.

Survey of preparedness

Among the priorities set by the ZIP Committee, a key one is to improve the municipalities' ability to respond effectively to an oil spill in the Gulf.

During the summer of 1999, a survey was conducted among municipal administrators to get a clearer picture of their preparedness in the event of a marine disaster. Havre Saint-Pierre was found to be the only municipality with a contingency plan that sets out detailed procedures for handling a marine spill. Furthermore, only 50% of the 19 municipalities surveyed had an emergency response plan.



Photo : Comité ZIP Côte-Nord du Golfe

Nonetheless, at the time of the survey, a number of municipalities said that they were working with Quebec's Department of Public Security to update their existing emergency response plan or draw up such a plan. "The North Shore of the Gulf ZIP Committee plans to follow up on the municipalities' efforts to achieve oil spill preparedness," Mr. Otis concluded, noting that over the coming months the Committee will also study the response capability of ports in the region.

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News *in* BRIEF

The government partners of St. Lawrence Vision 2000 are going to officially submit the regional environmental assessment on the Portneuf–St. Nicolas area to the Quebec and Chaudière-Appalachians

ZIP Committee. This will be done at a press conference scheduled for 10 am on October 26, in the presence of local stakeholders.

For more information, call: (418) 649-6510.

Environment Canada's **Science and the Environment Bulletin** for September/October 1999 (Issue 14) features an article entitled "***Bolstering the Banks of the St. Lawrence.***"

Territoire d'eau **An informative and thought-provoking exhibit**

Quebec's considerable water resources, including the majestic St. Lawrence, half a million lakes and more than 4,500 rivers, are currently the focus of a special exhibit mounted jointly by the Musée du Séminaire in Sherbrooke, Environment Canada's Biosphere, the Musée du Fjord in La Baie and the Musée de la civilisation. The Territoire d'eau exhibit will run until April 2000 at the Musée de la civilisation in Quebec City.

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