

Florida Assessment of Coastal Trends (FACT)

Executive Summary

In 1995, the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) contracted with the Florida Center for Public Management to develop *Florida Assessment of Coastal Trends (FACT 1995)*, the nation's first coastal environmental indicator system. *FACT 1995* added an important management tool to improve FCMP's vision in dealing with the future of Florida's coastal areas. *FACT 1995* provided a comprehensive perspective of the important environmental, growth management, economic, and social values associated with the coast. This system provided a means of evaluating Florida's progress in protecting its coastal areas; a basis for making strategic decisions about programs and financial resources; and information about coastal issues and problems to other decision-makers and the general public.

The process for developing *FACT 1995* set the substantive, conceptual and organizational structure for the initial version of *FACT* and for all subsequent editions. The first step in the indicator development process was to initiate an issue and sub-issue development process designed to identify the critical, strategic issues facing Florida's coastal future over the next five to twenty years. These issues and their defining sub-issues would then be used to provide the organizational framework for identifying the required indicators. On January 24, 1995 a workshop was convened and a number of coastal experts representing a range of coastal policy interests spent a day discussing coastal priorities. The principal product of their deliberations was the development of a list of nine strategic issues facing Florida's coastal areas. These issues are as follows:

- Impact of Growth in the Coastal Zone
- Disruption of Coastal Physical Processes
- Responding to Coastal Threats and Hazards
- Degradation and Restoration of Coastal Ecosystems
- Managing Fresh Water Allocation
- Sustaining the Human Uses of the Coast
- Balancing Public and Private Uses of Resources
- Preservation of Cultural and Aesthetic Resources
- Encouraging Public Awareness and Involvement

Over the next several months, appropriate indicators were developed and organized according to each issue, and these indicators comprise the body of indicators found in *FACT 1995*. Each indicator is displayed in a standardized format that reflects the reasons for its inclusion, identifies technical information regarding its source, format, and limitations, and provides a brief analysis and/or graphical display of any trends associated with the indicator. In addition, each indicator displays certain conceptual information commonly used to characterize indicators concerning the availability of data for the indicator and the strength of the information supporting the indicator. Discussion of those conceptual frameworks and others used to support this system is included in the Introduction.

This document – *FACT 1997* – is the first scheduled update and revision of the original indicator system. This revision includes:

- updating the data in the indicators,
- deleting indicators with poor or nonexistent data sources,
- adding new indicators to improve the system, and
- reformatting the individual indicator sheets to improve their graphic effect.

FACT 1997, in addition to this published format, will also be made available on the Internet in electronic format.