Planning Process - Steering Committee Decision-Making

Background

One of the key guiding principles describes how the steering committee will operate:

> Be directed by a steering committee that represents the diverse interests of the coalition. Goals and implementation strategies will reflect the assessment of coastal land conservation needs. The committee will strive for a consensual decision-making process and communications will be transparent.

To ensure this guiding principle is incorporated into the ongoing work of the steering committee, the following approach to decision-making was developed by the steering committee in May 2004.

- The steering committee will strive for a consensual decision-making process but recognizes that some decisions may require that the steering committee vote if consensus is not developed within a timely manner.
- Quorum is reached when 2/3 of the steering committee is present
- All steering committee members should be able to make objective assessments of their own biases. If a conflict of interest exists for a specific topic, the steering committee member should identify and announce that potential conflict in advance of discussion. If appropriate, the member should not vote but can participate in discussion if asked.

Decision-Making Process

1. All Steering Committee members will be notified when an upcoming meeting will involve a decision about the strategic framework. Background information will be provided about the potential decision.

2. Steering Committee members will participate in email discussions about the decision to ensure meeting time is effectively used.

3. When appropriate, coalition members could be surveyed (using free web-based survey tools) about their input to this decision.

4. At the meeting, the facilitator will facilitate a discussion about the topic, identifying differing viewpoints, and discussing ways in which those viewpoints can be addressed.

5. After a certain period of discussion (depending on the decision), the facilitator will check for overall agreement with a possible decision. The facilitator should clearly ask for consensus, by a show of hands of those who are in consensus with the proposed decision.

6. If everyone is not in agreement, the facilitator will ask for a brief description of the concerns for others to reflect upon. If appropriate, a brief period of discussion may be appropriate to determine if those concerns can be addressed. The facilitator should help the group determine if the topic should be postponed for additional consideration or if the steering committee should vote.

7. If concerns cannot be addressed, the decision should be put to a vote, with 2/3 majority needed to make a decision.