

Former Soviet Leaders Seeking Environmental Management Ideas

BY SUSAN USHER

Washington, D.C. High-rise oceanfront condos in Myrtle Beach, S.C. The very different port cities of New Orleans and Boston. Raleigh, Morehead City, a corporate row-crop operation in Carteret County, a coastal resort and a hog farm in Brunswick County.

All are classrooms for a group of Eastern European business and environmental leaders seeking timely lessons from America in coastal zone management. Last week officials from Ukraine, Georgia and Russia attended a meeting of the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission at Sunset Beach as part of a World Bank-sponsored study tour.

Their countries vary tremendously in size and population—from Georgia's 5 million people to Russia's 138 million people, but they face some challenges and opportunities in common.

In the context of coastal zone management, the countries are looking at ways to "strike a median between the goals of the economy and of the ecology," said Leonid Yarmark of the Coastal Zone Management Center in Russia. "We're interested in learning how coastal management goals are set here and how they are achieved." It will be a starting point, because the countries lack experience in American-style coastal management.

Like the others, he was speaking through interpreter Sergei Chernov of the World Bank.

Much of the leaders' energies will focus on a common area of concern on their return: the fate of the Black Sea.

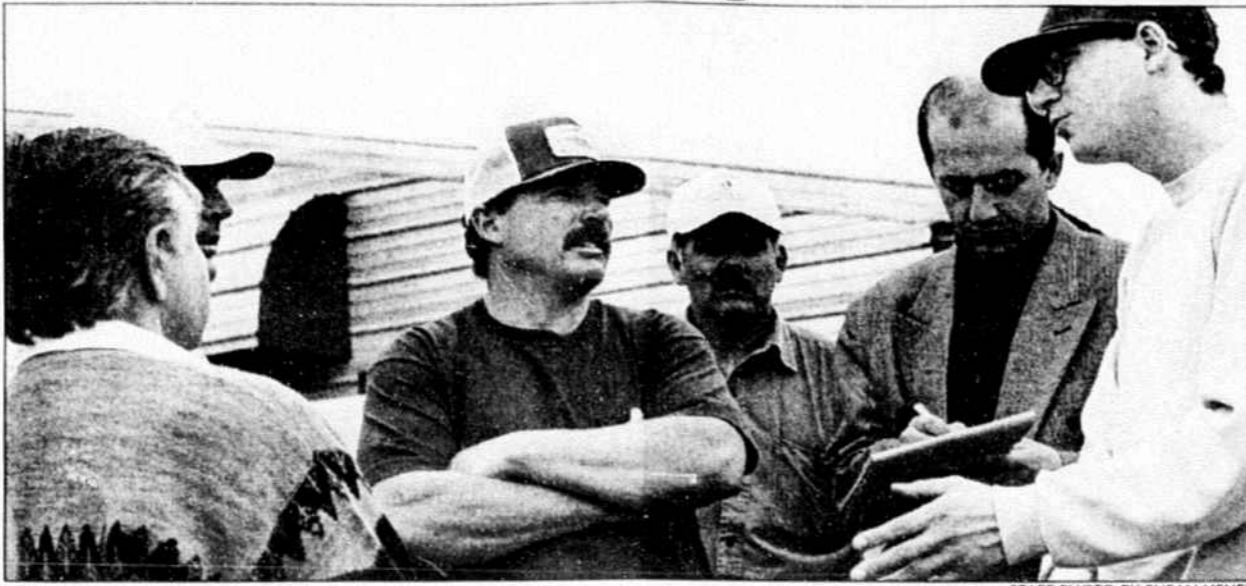
"The Black Sea is deeply troubled by pollution, overfishing," said James Harrington, a former North Carolina state official who coordinated the study tour by the World Bank, an international financing agency for reconstruction and development.

These three countries and Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania have reached an international agreement for rescue of the sea through a centralized agency, opting against privatization when they had the choice. Internally, the World Bank is helping each country develop its own coastal zone management program.

Tour participants expressed interest in the way citizens participate in and influence the setting of coastal zone management priorities here, and in the structure of government agencies.

"In the United States everybody owns little plots of land," said Zviad Bezhanidze, head of the economic commission, Parliament of Adjarian, Georgia. "That results in Bandaid-type measures—like the sandbags (seen in a video of North Carolina beaches earlier that day). In our country, when an initiative is decided, it is implemented uniformly."

That's generally true in the other countries as well. In Ukraine along the Black Sea sandbagging wouldn't be an alternative because no one's allowed to build that close to the shore because of an 100-meter no-build coastal zone from the high tide line.



RICKY CLEMMONS (second from left) fields questions from business and government leaders from three Eastern European countries Monday about the A.W. Clemmons family farming operation near Bolivia. The visitors were part of a coastal zone management study tour sponsored by The World Bank. Also pictured (from left) are Anatoli Tkachev, division chief for the Ministry for Environmental Protection of Ukraine; Harold D. Jones, district conservationist, Brunswick County Soil and Water Conservation District; Zviad Bezhanidze, head of the economic commission of the Parliament of Adjarian, Republic of Georgia; and interpreter Sergei Chernov.

When the decision was made to restore shoreline lost to erosion on the Sea of Azov, the central government took care of it.

One Ukrainian official is convinced that changing top-down-only approach to implementing policies has drawbacks as well.

"In our country when there is no support for a policy at the grassroots level the decisions tend not to be implemented," said Yuri Hotlubey, mayor of the 500,000-population municipality of Mariupol, or Zhdanov, which overlooks the Black Sea. "In the U.S. you have both; it gives you good balance. What we've seen and heard is a possible future scenario for us."

Hotlubey said he thought the U.S. was a good choice for the tour by the World Bank because of its uniqueness "in terms of having public participation and a public climate for making environmental decisions."

The group has met with state and federal coastal and environmental management officials, county gov-

ernment officials in Carteret and New Hanover counties, and government and business leaders in Myrtle Beach, S.C., where they looked at the challenges of high-density coastal development.

Their tour also took them to a large, row crop operation in Carteret County and to the A.W. Clemmons diversified family farming operation in Bolivia. Clemmons and his sons Ricky and Dale are expanding their hog grow-out business from two houses to six, which will have a capacity for 7,200 hogs. The visitors asked knowledgeable questions about manpower, equipment, sludge treatment and disposal and ground-water monitoring.

Having observed complementary vertical and horizontal structures of government management at all levels, they particularly liked efforts such as "Adopt A Highway" and the Neuse River Keeper—programs that appear to be effective but don't require a large investment.

"Our main conclusion thus far is

should spill over into other sectors more rapidly, he suggested.

"It seems many problems are still being solved empirically and the general potential of the nation has not been realized," he theorized.

Yarmark sees another disadvantage in the United States' fragmented approach to dealing with the environment.

"It's not clear who has the final authority to make sure something is done," he said. "Nevertheless, it is clearly impossible to change the system."

In their countries, he said, one agency is responsible for all environmental issues.

"What is missing in funding," said Hotlubey. "In the United States

the money only started when Congress realized the problem and passed a law (the Coastal Zone Management Act). The value of that law is that it was supported by adequate funding to implement and enforce it. The people in the former Soviet Union have yet to realize that when you pass a law you need to fund it."

Increased public awareness and support, the four agreed last week, will be critical in making balanced coastal zone management effective more than "wishful thinking" in their countries.

"While money is always in short supply," said Hotlubey, "if the people want something done, any mayor (or other elected official) who wants to get re-elected will find it."

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North Carolina Association of Educators Endorses Democrat Ron Taylor

Raleigh, NC...The North Carolina Association of Educators has endorsed the candidacy of Democrat Ron Taylor to the N.C. State Senate for the 18th District, according to a letter sent to Taylor from Rose Marie Lowry, NCAE President.

In her letter Lowry wrote "Your support for public education in North Carolina is appreciated by the Association and the public school teachers in your district. Thank you again for your support of educators and education in our state. We look forward to your service in the General Assembly."

According to the NCAE, in the selection process, candidates and incumbents are asked, in a written questionnaire and personal interview, their position on issues affecting teachers and education in North Carolina. Incumbents are graded on their voting record and support of educational issues presented in the North Carolina General Assembly.

The result is the endorsement of the candidate or incumbent whose beliefs are most compatible with the "concerns of North Carolina educators," according to the group's questionnaire.

In thanking the NCAE for their endorsement Taylor said: "My seven year old son is in public school and I know the challenges that children face...and what parents face...and what the classroom teacher faces, too. I think I

Candidate Ron Taylor meets NCAE members to discuss education at a Whiteville meeting.

bring a better understanding of those needs to the job of State Senator."

In speaking to the NCAE group Taylor mentioned his role as president of Taylor Manufacturing, Inc., maker of farm equipment, wood-burning water stoves and Henry O boats, with 181 employees.

"I know what we come up against when we interview kids just graduated from our schools. Too many are not prepared to enter the world of work. When we don't give the schools the resources they need, we cheat our kids and we cheat ourselves. That's just not fair." Taylor promised to make education a primary issue if elected State Senator.

Paid For By Ron Taylor For N.C. Senate