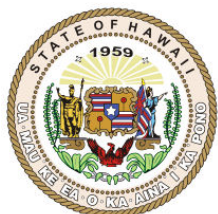




U.S. ALL ISLANDS CORAL REEF COMMITTEE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2008-2013

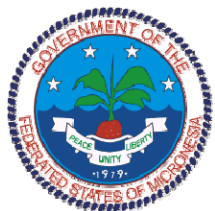
A collaborative initiative to conserve coral reefs in U.S. jurisdictions



Prepared by the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef
Committee (AIC) and Secretariat

The Territory of American Samoa
The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas
The State of Florida
The State of Hawai'i
Guam

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
The Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands



With assistance from
U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs,
and the
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
U.S. Department of Commerce



U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee Strategic Action Plan
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U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (U.S.AIC), representing the Territory of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Florida State, Guam, State of Hawai'i, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and affiliated members, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Prepared and edited by

Takiora Ingram, PhD
Executive Director
U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (U.S. AIC)

Imelda Gebauer
Administration Assistant

All Islands Coral Reef Committee Strategic Planning Retreat held on
February 5-7, 2007

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U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee



American Samoa



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands



Florida



Guam



Hawai'i



Puerto Rico



US Virgin Islands

Affiliate Members

Federated States of Micronesia

Republic of Marshall Islands

Republic of Palau

Preface and Acknowledgements

Threatened by a growing number of natural and anthropogenic stresses, coral reef ecosystems are deteriorating worldwide at alarming rates. As most of the U.S. coral reefs (approximately 95 percent) are located within the jurisdiction of the ten member states, territories and commonwealths of the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee, this collaborative initiative was established as a response to halt and reverse further destruction of coral reef ecosystems.

The U.S. Islands Coral Reef Committee member jurisdictions have produced this document ("Gold Book") as the Committee's official Strategic Action Plan (2008-2013). This strategic plan builds on the 1999 All Islands Coral Reef Initiative Strategy, ("Green Book") and the 1997 U.S. Islands Coral Reef Initiative ("Blue Book"). However, this strategic plan is different from these earlier strategies as it focuses on the activities of the Committee as a whole and the AIC Secretariat. As part of this plan, the Committee reaffirms the Maui Resolution of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (1999): "*Support the existing U.S. Islands Coral Reef Strategy as a priority for new funds*".

This strategic action plan was produced by the members of the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee and Secretariat, in cooperation with the Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior and the Coral Reef Conservation Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce.

The goals and objectives of this strategic plan take into consideration the *U.S. National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs*, produced and adopted by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force in 2000, and the *National Coral Reef Action Strategy* produced in 2002 by NOAA, in cooperation with federal, state, territory and commonwealth members and staff of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

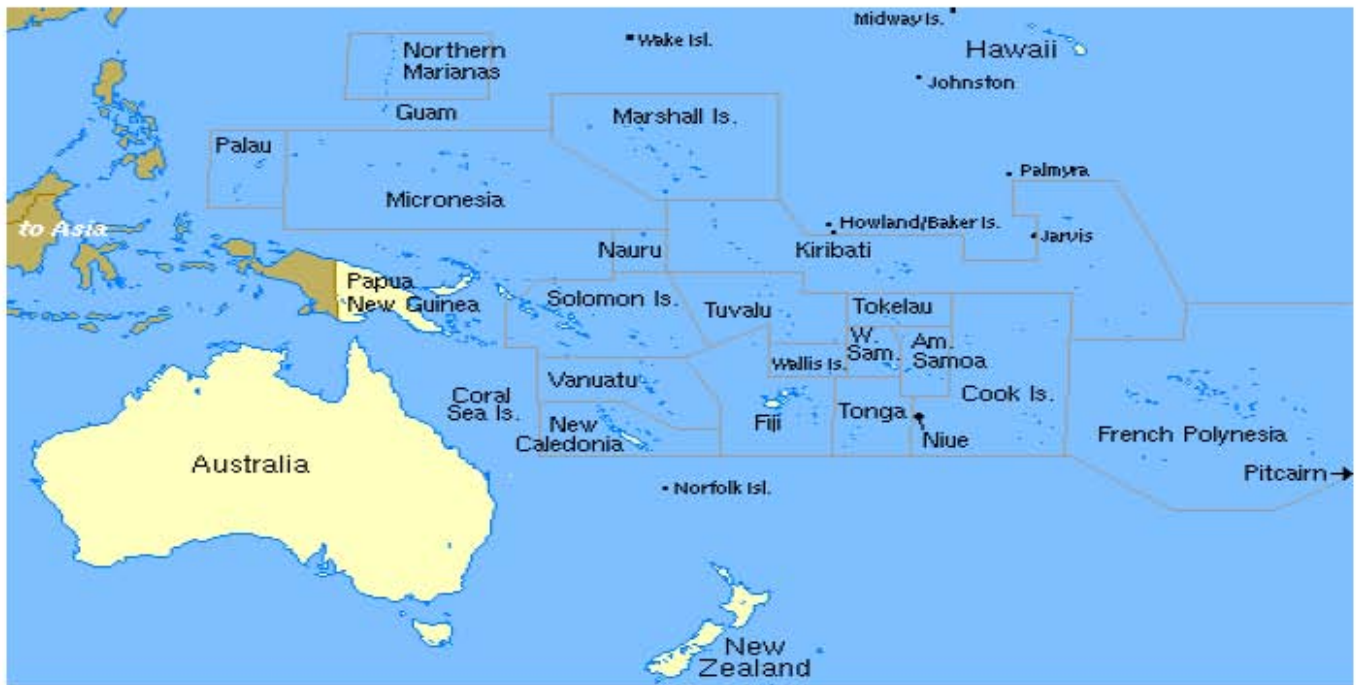
The preparation of this Strategy would not have been possible without the dedication of many people working toward the goals of protecting and managing our precious coral reef ecosystems and significant contributions from a range of federal agencies, NGOs and partners. Special thanks to the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force members and Secretariat, staff of the Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, Coral Reef Conservation Program, and members of the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee for invaluable input and assistance in preparing this strategic plan. Without the support of these agencies and partners, it would not be possible for us to achieve the goal of sustainable management of our coral reefs.

Sincerely,

Lelei Peau
Chairman
May 23, 2007

NOAA Fisheries Service
Pacific Islands Regional Office
1601 Kapiolani Blvd, Suite 1110
Honolulu, HI 96814

Pacific and Caribbean Regional Maps



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The **U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)** is a made up of marine resource managers from state, commonwealth, territorial agencies and freely associated states working collaboratively with federal agencies to conserve and protect coral reefs in the United States

The AIC has prepared this document (“Gold Book”) as the Committee’s official Strategic Action Plan (2008-2013). This plan builds on the AIC Communications Plan (2006) and the 1999 All Islands Coral Reef Initiative Strategy, (“Green Book”) and the 1997 U.S. Islands Coral Reef Initiative (“Blue Book”). However, this strategic plan is different from these earlier strategies, as it focuses on the activities of the Committee as a whole, and the AIC Secretariat. The two previous strategies mainly focused on local needs and funding for each of the jurisdictions.

This strategic action plan provides a dynamic road map to achieve the goals of the Committee and Secretariat to protect the coral reefs of the States, Commonwealths, Territories, and Freely Associated States over the next five years. This is a living document, which will be regularly updated and evaluated as part of an iterative process.

The AIC is a collaboration of marine resource managers from state, commonwealth, territorial agencies and freely associated states working together with federal agencies to conserve and protect coral reefs in the United States.

The Committee was established in 1994 by the governor-appointed Points of Contact (POCs) from the U.S. states, territories and commonwealths of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Guam, Hawai’i, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The AIC was recognized as a key element of the overall U.S. Coral Reef Initiative in the **Presidential Executive Order 13089** which established the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) in 1998. The State of Florida joined the Committee as an Associate member in 2000 and became a full member in early 2007. Affiliate Members of the AIC are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Vision:

By ensuring coordination and cooperation within and between our jurisdictions and partners, we are able to manage and protect coral reef ecosystems and biological diversity for present and future generations to perpetuate cultural, environmental and economic values that are vital to our way of life.

Mission:

To fulfill this vision, we will continue to identify on-going coral reef management needs, establish priorities and seek necessary resources for coral reef management, share information and foster coordination locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally. As official representatives of our Governors for the coral reef initiative we will strive to elevate awareness of coral reef issues, develop local capacity and partnerships; implement

actions in a coordinated regional voice; develop policy and advocate for jurisdictional needs; and coordinate bottom-up, locally-grown initiatives to ensure long- term sustainable use of coral reefs.

Coral reef ecosystems

The world's coral reefs are seriously threatened by over-exploitation, pollution, habitat destruction, invasive species, disease, bleaching and global climate change. Warming ocean temperatures have been blamed for mass coral bleaching events in the past decade, and this warming may lead to a rapid increase in the frequency and severity of coral bleaching in coming decades (Donner et al. 2005). The rapid decline of these ancient, complex and biologically diverse marine ecosystems has significant social, economic and environmental impacts in the island jurisdictions, nationally and globally.

Coral reefs are among the most diverse, biologically complex and valuable ecosystems on Earth. Often called *rainforests of the sea*, coral reefs provide economic and environmental services to millions of people as valuable areas of natural beauty, sources of food, jobs and revenues, recreation and tourism and shoreline protection.

“The United States has a significant national interest in protecting its coral reef ecosystems. The area of coral ecosystems within 10 fathom and 100 fathom depth contours respectively in tropical and subtropical water of the United States is 36,813 sq km and 143,059 sq km” (Rohmann et al. 2005). The majority of U.S. coral reefs making up the referenced areas are within State and Territorial waters.

Coral reefs provide a wide range of valuable services to the nation and the world, including tourism, fishing, coastal protection, biodiversity, and natural heritage. But coral reefs are in peril.

By 1997, an estimated 11 percent of the world's reefs had been lost to a variety of human activities. The growing number of anthropogenic threats that have been identified include: shoreline development, polluted runoff from agricultural and land-use practices, over-fishing and over-exploitation, destructive fishing practices, dredging and shoreline modification, vessel groundings and anchoring, disease outbreaks and global climate change. These threats have been compounded by a lack of awareness and appreciation for coral reefs at local, national and global levels. It is estimated that an additional 32 percent of the world's coral reefs are now seriously threatened.

Threats

The LAS goals and objectives are linked to the US National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs adopted by the USCRTF in 2000. From the 13 goals identified in the National Action Plan, six threat areas were prioritized by the U.S. All Islands Committee as their focus for immediate local action:

- land-based sources of pollution
- over-fishing
- lack of public awareness
- recreational overuse and misuse
- climate change and coral bleaching
- disease

In addition, management capacity building was identified as a key issue, and several jurisdictions have developed LAS to address other significant threats within their jurisdictions. These include population pressure in American Samoa, aquatic invasive species in Hawai'i, and maritime industry and coastal construction impacts in Florida (Table 1).

Responses

In response to the growing global environmental crisis, President William Jefferson Clinton issued the Coral Reef Protection Executive Order 13089 on June 11, 1998 (Appendix 3) recognizing the importance of conserving coral reef ecosystems. The Executive Order recognized that the existing U.S. Islands Coral Reef Initiative strategy covered approximately 90 percent of U.S. coral reef ecosystems and was a key element of the overall U.S. Coral Reef Initiative.

The Executive Order also established the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF), which includes the major federal agencies responsible for coral reef conservation and members of the U. S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)

The AIC provides leadership for and coordination of strategic initiatives to strengthen the conservation and protection of coral reef ecosystems in the United States. The AIC implements policies and initiatives to conserve and protect coral reefs, and forms partnerships that strengthen stewardship of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. In 2007, the Committee adopted this Strategic Plan to guide its activities over the next five years.

U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee's Strategic Plan Goals

The main goals of the Committee's Strategic Plan (and strategies) are to facilitate and coordinate the following:

Goal 1. Secure necessary funding and capacity to implement coral reef management plans.

Strategies include: securing sustainable funding for coral reef conservation, strengthening jurisdictional management and capacity, and building Partnerships

Goal 2. Provide leadership to focus the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force to meet our local and regional needs.

Strategies include active participation in the USCRTF and Regional Initiatives, maximizing the U.S. All Islands Committee's position by engaging jurisdictional Governors, effective advocacy and engagement of USCRTF members.

Goal 3. Strengthen coral reef management through more effective communication and collaboration among the All Islands Committee (AIC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Department of Interior (DOI), the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) and its steering committee, and the relevant Congressional delegations.

Strategies include: strengthening organizational capacity and governance of the AIC Secretariat; coordination of Committee advocacy, improving communication with the

USCRTF, strengthening communications; implementing and periodically reviewing Committee policies and processes

Goal 4. Supporting each U.S. coral reef jurisdiction's ability to define and implement plans and best practices to actively manage our coral reefs in a sustainable manner by 2013

Strategies include: Improved communication between scientists and managers, periodic reviews of the AIC strategic plan for improve coral reef management, sharing technical resources and services; and sharing strategic planning tools and mechanisms.

Goal 5. Share information on coral reef management and Committee initiatives to foster coordination, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Strategies include: sharing research and data across regions and increasing regional collaboration and cooperation

For further details on the USAIC's goals and strategies, refer to page 26.

Background

Purple Sea Fan Coral, Puerto Rico

Background

The world's coral reefs are seriously threatened by over-exploitation, pollution, habitat destruction, invasive species, disease, bleaching and global climate change. The rapid decline of these ancient, complex and biologically diverse marine ecosystems has significant social, economic and environmental impacts in the U.S. coral reef jurisdictions, nationally and globally.

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By 1997, an estimated 11 percent of the world's reefs had been lost to a variety of human activities. The growing number of anthropogenic threats that have been identified include: shoreline development, polluted runoff from agricultural and land-use practices, over-fishing and over-exploitation, destructive fishing practices, dredging and shoreline modification, vessel groundings and anchoring, disease outbreaks and global climate change. These threats have been compounded by a lack of awareness and appreciation for coral reefs at local, national and global levels. It is estimated that an additional 32 percent of the world's coral reefs are now seriously threatened.

The U.S. Department of State proposed the Coral Reef Initiative in 1993, and formally announced its establishment in Barbados at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in May 1994. The global response to this coral reef crisis resulted in the establishment of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) in 1994 by eight governments, including the United States, who recognized the importance of halting and reversing the global degradation of coral reef ecosystems. Members from the U.S. Islands actively participated in these discussions.

The American Flag Pacific Islands of American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Hawai'i prepared and formalized their own Coral Reef Initiative at a Pacific Basin Development Council meeting in December 1994. The Caribbean region (U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico) and Florida (2004) subsequently developed a regional Coral Reef Initiative.

By 1995 Coral Reef Initiative working groups had formed in each Pacific Island jurisdiction. These groups included government and non-government interests. A collaborative monitoring program began in the Caribbean to gather baseline data.

In September 1997, the U.S. All Islands Committee met in Maui, Hawai'i to coordinate an island strategy for the Coral Reef Initiative. The results of this workshop were published in the U.S. Islands Coral Reef Initiative Summary Report, known as the "Blue Book", and outlined strategies for coral reef management in each island jurisdiction. At the national level, the United States also established the U.S. Coral Reef Initiative to design and implement improved management of coral reef resources, education, monitoring, research, and restoration efforts to conserve and sustainably use coral reef ecosystems. In 1997 the Congress passed a House Concurrent Resolution recognizing the significance of maintaining the health and stability of coral reef ecosystems.

In response to the growing global environmental crisis, President William Jefferson Clinton issued the Coral Reef Protection Executive Order 13089 on June 11, 1998 (Appendix 3), recognizing the importance of conserving coral reef ecosystems. The Executive Order also recognized that the existing US Islands Coral Reef Initiative strategy covered approximately 90 percent of US coral reef ecosystems and was a key element of the overall US Coral Reef Initiative.

The Executive Order also established the US Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF), which includes the major federal agencies responsible for coral reef conservation in the Federal government. The Co-Chairs of the USCRTF then invited the governors of state, territorial and commonwealth partners to join as full members. Through policies defined in the Executive Order, the federal government was directed to strengthen its stewardship of the nation's coral reef ecosystems.

The USCRTF established seven Working Groups, (coastal uses; water and air quality; mapping and information synthesis; ecosystem science and conservation; international; outreach and education) including the US All Islands Working Group.

In 1999, the United States All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC) was formalized by the governor-appointed Points of Contact (POCs) from each coral reef jurisdiction. The All Islands Committee provides a mechanism for island concerns and interests to be heard through a unified voice, helps clarify the process by which the islands and their federal partners can more effectively communicate and cooperate, and develops a means by which collaborative sharing can improve coral reef management and protection at all levels. The Committee also adopted the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Initiative Strategy or "Green Book" which included vision and mission statements a sustainability statement, and proposals for local action strategies.

In addition, due to the significance of their coral reef resources, expertise in traditional marine resource management, and their unique relationship with the Committee and the United States, the Points of Contact appointed by the Presidents of the following nations (freely associated states) are non-voting, affiliate members of the Committee: The Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The **U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee** (AIC) is made up of marine resource managers from state, commonwealth, territorial agencies and freely associated states working collaboratively with federal agencies to conserve and protect coral reefs in the United States

In 1999, the USCRTF adopted Maui Resolution 2-1 which states in part:

“Support the existing U.S. Islands Coral Reef Strategy as a priority for new funds”. The Committee reaffirms this resolution as an integral part of this strategic plan.

A range of sources were considered and consulted in the preparation of this strategic plan. In 2000, the USCRTF adopted the *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs* which represents the national commitment by the USCRTF's member agencies, conservation partners and the public to reverse the decline of coral reefs around the world. The National Action Plan presented priority recommendations to be undertaken by federal, state and territorial governments, non-government organizations and international conservation partners.

The USCRTF identified two themes for immediate and sustained national action:

- *Understand coral reef ecosystems* and the natural and anthropogenic processes that determine their health and viability; and
- *Quickly reduce the adverse impacts* of human activities on coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

The USCRTF adopted the “Puerto Rico Resolution” in 2002 providing for the development of three-year Local Action Strategies (LAS) by each of the seven member states, territories and commonwealths. These LAS are locally driven roadmaps for collaborative and cooperative action among federal, state, territory and non-governmental partners who identify and implement priority actions needed to reduce key threats to valuable coral reef resources.

The Puerto Rico Resolution also made provision for the establishment of the All Islands Coral Reef Secretariat to provide policy support and coordinate the Committee's participation in the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

Also in 2002, NOAA produced the *National Coral Reef Action Strategy*, in cooperation with federal and non-federal (state, territory and commonwealth) members and staff of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

These national coral reef initiatives have also been considered within the broader framework of two national policy initiatives. The Pew Oceans Commission report (2003), *America's Living Oceans – Charting a course for sea change*, concluded that we need to ensure healthy, productive, and resilient marine ecosystems for present and future generations. In the long term, economic sustainability depends on ecological sustainability. This requires a change in perspective and the need to adopt an ethic of stewardship and responsibility toward the oceans and the need to treat our oceans as a public trust.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy in 2004 provided recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy to the President and Congress in its report, *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century*. The recommendation on Ocean

Stewardship/Coral Reef Stewardship recognized the importance of education and public awareness and promoting lifelong ocean education.

The AIC has prepared this document (“Gold Book”) as the Committee’s official Strategic Action Plan (2008-2013). The plan builds on the AIC Communications Plan (2006), the 1999 All Islands Coral Reef Initiative Strategy, (“Green Book”) and the 1997 U.S. Islands Coral Reef Initiative (“Blue Book”). However, this strategic plan is different from the earlier strategies as it focuses on the activities of the Committee as a whole and the AIC Secretariat. The two previous strategies focused on local needs and funding for each jurisdiction’s local action strategies.

The action strategies contained in this strategic plan have been developed by members of the AIC and the Secretariat. Key federal partners were also consulted. This strategic action plan is a living document that provides a carefully developed policy framework and road-map for healthy coral reefs for future generations. Implementation of this plan will require collaboration by a range of public agencies and private organizations concerned with coral reef conservation and protection.

U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee

The U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee

The United States Coral Reef Initiative, initiated and defined in great part by the states, territories and commonwealth jurisdictions of the United States, has continued to evolve since its inception in 1993.

While the U.S. island jurisdictions of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Guam, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands had been meeting informally since 1993, they formally created the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC) in 1999. The Governors of each of these AIC jurisdictions designated Points of Contact (POCs) to represent them. The State of Florida became a full member of the Committee in 2007.

The Freely Associated States (Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau) were invited to join the Coral Reef Task Force as non-voting members in August 2000 and were also invited to participate in the U. S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee as Affiliate members.

The Committee was established to develop a regional mechanism for improving island communications, strengthening our voices in the federal process to conserve coral reefs, and to share common experiences, successes and failures. The Committee has continued to serve as the basis for a "bottom-up" initiative and true partnership approach to environmental management at all levels, program funding, and regional cooperation and coordination.

The Committee meets semi-annually, usually in coordination with USCRTF meetings and on a rotational basis in each of the AIC member jurisdictions to discuss key issues, to propose new actions, present progress and update reports, and future plans. These meetings provide a venue to report on the status of on-going coral reef initiatives in local areas, an opportunity to discuss resolutions and the status of past resolutions, and allow for public participation regarding coral reefs and coral reef conservation.

This strategic plan is different from the Committee's earlier strategies ("Green and Blue Books") as it focuses on the activities of the Committee as a whole and the AIC Secretariat.

**U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee
Guiding Principles
for Sustainable Use of Coral Reef Ecosystems**

Sustainable use of coral reefs, as with any natural resource, begins with the philosophy that the resources are a community's bank account, against which interest can be drawn as long as the principal is protected, and that activities which may impact the health and levels of coral reef resources must be guided by the Precautionary Principle. Achievement of sustainable use is dependent upon a community's:

Understanding that coral reefs are the building blocks of tropical, marine environments and include a variety of inter-related ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrass beds, mud and sand flats, and deep water environs, including the plants, animals and physical associated factors;

Appreciation that coral reefs provide protection from storms, an arena for recreation and tourism, a source for medicines and pharmaceuticals, for marine biodiversity, carbonate sand, and subsistence resources for food, and are intricately linked to tradition, culture and our way of life;

Concern for the effects of population growth, poor land use and coastal construction practices, detrimental fishing practices and over fishing, increased human impacts from tourism, pollution, adverse effects of climate change, military, navigation and other maritime activities and, most important, the cumulative impacts on the resources and our way of life and;

Determination that management regimes are based on local conditions, through partnership efforts of local, state, federal and international governments, and communities, and that each generation shall inherit the full rights and responsibilities to those resources which provide food for our tables, social and traditional cultural opportunities for our families, economic benefits for our communities, and beauty and wonder for our spirit.

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Core Principles for Coral Reef Conservation

In addition to the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee's Guiding principles, we acknowledge the core principles adopted by the USCRTF in the National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs (2000):

- adopt a **science-based ecosystem approach** to coral reef conservation that recognizes and builds upon important linkages among adjacent and remote habitats associated with coral reefs.
- undertake **adaptive management** approaches that track and respond to environmental change and emerging threats.
- Undertake a **precautionary approach** to protect coral reefs.
- incorporate the **human dimension** into coral reef conservation strategies by ensuring that management measures reflect, and are sensitive to the local socioeconomic, political and cultural environment, and that they build an informed public engaged in choosing alternatives to activities that harm coral reefs.
- Increase coastal managers' capacity to incorporate the **socioeconomic context** into coastal management programs by establishing socioeconomic monitoring programs
- apply **marine zoning - including marine protected areas and no-take ecological reserves** - in order to protect and replenish coral reef ecosystems by minimizing harmful human impacts and user conflicts in important habitats.
- fully and proactively use **existing management authorities and programs** and develop, where needed, new legal mechanisms that protect, restore and enhance coral reef ecosystems.
- develop and support strong **domestic partnerships** among governmental, private and scientific interests to meet the complex cross-jurisdictional challenges of coral reef conservation.
- provide leadership to **reduce regional and global threats** to coral reefs through capacity building and collaboration.
- Strengthen management capacity

Local Action Strategies

*Recreational Overuse and Misuse Project
Hawai'i
Photo by John S. Johnson*

*Laulau Watershed Restoration Project
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*

*Coral Disease Project
American Samoa
Photo by Greta Aeby*

*Maritime Industry and Coastal
Construction Impacts
Florida State*

Local Action Strategies (LAS) and Threats

In 2002, the USCRTF adopted the “Puerto Rico Resolution,” which called for the development of three-year Local Action Strategies (LAS) by each of the members of the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee to reduce threats to the Nation’s coral reef ecosystems. The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) initiated the development of the LAS in partnership with the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee. The LAS initiative was designed to link the goals and objectives of the U.S. National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs (2000) with locally driven priorities and actions. These LAS are locally-driven, short range roadmaps for collaborative and cooperative action among federal, state, territory, commonwealth and non-governmental partners. The LAS identify and implement priority actions needed to reduce key threats to valuable coral reef resources in each region. LAS projects in each jurisdiction have been funded by grants from NOAA’s Coral Reef Conservation Program and local sources of funding.

Together, the LAS from the seven U.S. coral jurisdictions of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawai’i, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have identified over 750 projects to address primarily six priority threats to coral reef ecosystems.

The LAS goals and objectives are linked to the US National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs adopted by the USCRTF in 2000. From the 13 goals identified in the National Action Plan, six threat areas were prioritized by the U.S. All Islands Committee as their focus for immediate local action:

- land-based sources of pollution
- over-fishing
- lack of public awareness
- recreational overuse and misuse
- climate change and coral bleaching
- disease

In addition, management capacity building was identified as a key issue, and several jurisdictions have developed LAS to address other significant threats within their jurisdictions. These include population pressure in American Samoa, aquatic invasive species in Hawai’i, and maritime industry and coastal construction impacts in Florida (Table 1).

Projects and Funding

The LAS Status Report (2002-2006) provides an overview of the progress that the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee, federal agencies and non-governmental partners have made over the last four years in developing and implementing Local Action Strategies (LAS) to reduce threats to the Nation’s coral reef ecosystems.

Of the 760 total projects identified in 2002-2003, 493 (65%) are currently underway or have been completed with approximately \$25 million from government and non-governmental sources has been applied to project implementation. However, many projects have not yet been funded.

Table 1 -- Summary of Coral Reef Threats identified by the AIC for 2008-2013

	A. Samoa	CNMI	Florida	Guam	Hawai'i	Puerto Rico	USVI
Land based sources of pollution	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Over-fishing & management	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recreational Impacts/use		X	X	X	X	X	X
Climate change, coral bleaching & disease	X			X	X		X
Education/outreach/awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Management capacity building	X	X		X			X
Population pressures	X						
Aquatic invasive species					X		
Maritime Industry & coastal construction impacts			X				

Source: Survey of AIC Members, 2007

Challenges

Limited capacity of local agencies to manage activities that impact reefs continues to be the major challenge to increasing the scope and effectiveness of coral reef conservation efforts, particularly in the territorial and commonwealth jurisdictions.

Another challenge is the need for additional funding to complete the proposed projects. Almost \$37 million, representing 60 percent of the total cost for project implementation is still needed to complete the LAS projects originally proposed.

Also, many less expensive projects were funded over larger budget items (65% of the projects), with only 40% of the required funding committed. Of particular concern is the need for additional sources of funding for large scale projects such as watershed restoration projects to address existing land based sources of pollution and the need for a marine laboratory in American Samoa for improved research on coral reef disease and health for the region.

AIC Strategic Plan Goals and Action Strategies

U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee Strategic Plan Goals & Strategies (2008 to 2013)

The main **Goals** of the Committee's Strategic Action Plan are to **facilitate and coordinate** the following:

Goal 1. Secure necessary funding and capacity to implement coral reef management plans.

Goal 2. Provide leadership to focus the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force to meet our local and regional needs.

Goal 3. Strengthen coral reef management through more effective communication and collaboration among the All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Department of Interior (DOI), the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) and its steering committee, and the relevant Congressional delegations.

Goal 4. Supporting each U.S. coral reef jurisdiction's ability to define and implement plans and best practices to actively manage our coral reefs in a sustainable manner by 2013

Goal 5. Share information on coral reef management and Committee initiatives to foster coordination, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Action Strategies to Conserve Coral Reefs

The Committee will implement strategies to promote the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs in coordination with the USCRTF's National Action Plan, NOAA's Strategic Plan and Local Action Strategies. Each strategy identifies responsibilities for the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee, the All Islands Secretariat, Federal partners and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).

The following action strategies provide the framework to implement the Committee's initiatives to effectively manage and conserve coral reef resources:

Goal 1: Secure necessary funding and capacity to implement coral reef management plans.

Strategy 1: Secure Sustainable Funding for Coral Reef conservation.

- Work with NOAA annually to be involved in the development of the coral spend plan (timing is early summer for the next year). (Chair, Secretariat, NOAA).
- Request that NOAA provide the 2007 (and subsequent) coral spend plan to the POCs on an annual basis as soon as it becomes public. (Chair, Secretariat)
- Inform Congressional delegations on All Islands funding priorities to influence NOAA and DOI's annual spend plans. (Committee & Secretariat)

- Revise the Maui Resolution to mandate that priority be given to the All Islands for funding. (Chair, Secretariat)
- Seek increased coral reef conservation funding for LAS projects through NOAA, DOI and other USCRTF members. (Committee)
- Assist in the establishment and strengthening of local and regional funding mechanisms, including private foundations, NGOs, and international organizations and donors. (Secretariat in partnership with Federal partners)
- Seek other mechanisms for funding via alternative grant sources and adoption of projects by federal agencies. (Secretariat and Committee)
- Seek assistance and facilitate the development of sustainable financing plans including user fees, exit taxes, and other strategies for each jurisdiction. (Secretariat, with NGOs, NOAA)
- Seek mechanisms to address funding of infrastructure projects in watersheds to address the Caribbean and Pacific water quality resolutions. (Secretariat, Chair, Committee)

Strategy 2: Strengthen Jurisdictional Management and Capacity.

- Provide a framework for the development of capacity assessment and needs planning in each jurisdiction (Secretariat, Committee)
- Work with NOAA to review the capacity plans for each jurisdiction and provide recommendations to the USCRTF members on how to assist in meeting these identified needs (Secretariat, Committee)
- Invest in the next generation of managers -- work with partners to develop a collaborative internship program to mentor up-coming managers, including supporting internships in each jurisdiction. (Committee, Advisors and Federal partners)
- Seek additional mechanisms for augmenting capacity in each jurisdiction similar to the Coral fellowship program. (Committee, NOAA)
- Review the Coral Fellows Program. (Committee, NOAA)
- Work with the local jurisdictions to seek a way to integrate the fellows and/or interns into the local workforce. (Advisors, Secretariat)
- Look at other alternatives to hire staff e.g. through the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH), instead of direct contracts or on-island government positions. (Committee, Advisors)
- Identify sources to build capacity through grants, fellowships and other mechanisms. (Secretariat, Committee)

Strategy 3: Strengthening and Building Partnerships

- Strengthen and build partnerships with a range of public, private sector, regional organizations, education/research institutions, and NGOs. (Secretariat, Committee, Advisors)

Goal 2. Provide leadership to focus the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force to meet our local and regional needs.

Strategy 1: Active Participation of the Committee on USCRTF & Regional Initiatives

- Provide leadership and set the agenda for the USCRTF and Steering Committee in consultation with other members. (Chair, Secretariat)
- Facilitate increased federal agency participation e.g. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) support and other agencies. (Governors, Chair, Committee, Secretariat)
- Facilitate development of increased capacity for jurisdictions to manage coral reefs including workshops and training. (Advisors, Committee, federal partners, Secretariat)

Strategy 2: Maximize the U.S. All Islands Committee's position by engaging jurisdictional Governors

- Encourage Governors' participation in U.S. Coral Reef Task force meetings. (Committee)
- Assist active governors write to newly elected governors and encourage their participation in USCRTF activities. (Committee)

Strategy 3: Effective Advocacy and Engagement of USCRTF

- Present the Committee's strategic plan to the USCRTF and others to articulate the vision and priorities of the Committee. (summarize plan for Chair to present to Task Force) – (Chair)
- Identify global threats that will impact our local ability to manage and raise threats to the national level for action e.g. climate change, ocean acidification, responding to major injury events, coral health and disease, population pressure, and over-fishing. (Committee, Advisors)
- Identify opportunities for solutions and suggest action to the USCRTF. (Governors, Chair, Committee, Secretariat, Advisors)

Goal 3. Strengthen coral reef management through more effective communication and collaboration among the All Islands Committee, NOAA, DOI, the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and its steering committee, and the relevant Congressional delegations.

Strategy 1: Strengthen USAICRI Secretariat Organizational Capacity and Governance

- Strengthen the All Islands Secretariat to include at least two professionals and one student intern to improve coordination with POCs, federal agencies, NGOs, building partnerships, organizational effectiveness, and sustainable funding. (Committee, Secretariat, NOAA, DOI, federal partners)
- Ensure All Islands Secretariat financial sustainability by securing at least \$250,000 in on-going annual support for All Islands Secretariat

operations from reliable and diverse funding sources. (Committee, Secretariat, NOAA, DOI, federal partners)

Strategy 2: Coordination of Committee advocacy

- Develop position papers, white papers on key issues of concern. (Chair, Advisors, Secretariat)
- Coordinate meetings to update congressional delegations. (Committee, Secretariat)
- Meet with key agencies and staff members on issues of concern (Committee, Secretariat)
- Work with advocacy partners on key Legislation such as the Coastal States Organization, others. (Committee, Secretariat, Advisors)
- Work with federal agencies that provide majority funding to foster additional support and assistance, e.g. NOAA, DOI (Committee, Secretariat)
- Coordinate among and between other federal agencies (EPA, USDA, others) and other NOAA programs such as Sanctuaries, Fisheries, and International Program on issues of concern related to coral reef management. (Committee, NOAA, Secretariat)
- Ensure that federal initiatives that are not a part of the USCRTF are not working at cross purposes to the goals and needs of the Committee, especially if they are receiving funds from the Coral Program. (Governors, Committee, Secretariat, Advisors, NOAA, DOI)
- Work together on improving and streamlining the reporting and information needs of NOAA's Coral Program. (Committee, NOAA, Secretariat)

Strategy 3: Improve communication with the USCRTF

- Work with the USCRTF to ensure that protocols and policies of the USCRTF are reviewed periodically. (Committee, Secretariat)
- Develop additional mechanisms to address issues that are raised during the USCRTF meetings. (Committee, Secretariat, NOAA, DOI)
- Continue to work with the USCRTF to review the status on Resolutions and assess action and priorities and how they have been addressed, as well as to advocate for additional action on those still to be addressed. (Committee, Secretariat, Steering Committee members)
- Develop new mechanisms to address the recommendations raised by the Committee Chairman's report at the USCRTF meeting e.g. attach the report in a letter to the co-chairs, and copy congressional representatives. (Chair, Secretariat)

Strategy 4: Develop tools for the Committee to strengthen effective communications

- Maintain and update the Committee's Website (Secretariat)
- Send press releases after USCRTF meetings (Chair, Secretariat)
- Develop additional informational materials such as brochures. (Secretariat)

Strategy 5: Adopt, Implement and periodically review Committee policies and processes

- Adopt, implement, and periodically review strategic policies. (Committee, Secretariat)
 - o USAIC Charter
 - o USAIC Strategic Plan
 - o Communications protocol/policy

GOAL 4. Supporting each U.S. coral reef jurisdiction's ability to define and implement plans and best practices to actively manage our coral reefs in a sustainable manner by 2013.

Strategy 1: Improve communication between scientists and managers, ensuring that science is driven by local and regional management needs, utilizes traditional ecological knowledge, incorporates and strengthens local expertise, and is shared with local communities and resource managers to assist in designing plans and best practices. (Committee and Advisors)

Strategy 2: Conduct a periodic Assessment and Review of the All Islands strategic plan for improved coral reef management. (Committee)

Strategy 3: Share technical resources and services across jurisdictions. (Committee and Federal partners)

Strategy 4: Share strategic planning tools and mechanisms to provide solutions towards successful management of coral reefs. (Committee and Federal partners)

Goal 5. Share information on coral reef management and Committee initiatives to foster coordination, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Strategy 1: Research and data sharing needs across regions

- Identify data needs across region to assist the Committee with management strategies. (Committee, Secretariat, Advisors)

Strategy 2: Facilitate increased regional collaboration and cooperation

- Coordinate with regional bodies and initiatives e.g. Micronesia Challenge, South Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP), Locally-Managed Marine Area (LMMA), Caribbean regional entities, and others. (Chair, Secretariat)
- Work across the region with key international NGOs addressing coral reef management activities. (Chair, Secretariat)

Measures of Success

The AIC and its Secretariat, Advisors and partners recognize the importance of assessing and measuring the Committee's achievements over time. The following are some examples of performance areas and measures that may be used.

Performance area #1: Increased management action to conserve coral reefs

Some examples of these performance measures are: developed a management plan and charter; established or reviewed legislation, policy, resolutions, rules, regulations or guidelines; implemented best management practices; and provided management workshops, retreats or planning meetings.

Performance area #2: Increased capacity to manage coral reefs

Some examples of these performance measures are: created or filled an essential staff position; provided a management training opportunity or workshop; established a new internship program; secured additional funding; created an interagency workgroup or finalized an interagency agreement or MOU with key partner; or formed new partnerships;

Performance area #3: Increased understanding of the reef ecosystem, watershed dynamics, and human dimensions

Some examples of these performance measures are: conducted a social survey, assessment or economic valuation; conducted a targeted research project or study; or gathered and shared information to understand reef issues.

Performance area #4: Increased Stakeholder Awareness of Coral Reef Issues

Some examples of these performance measures are: initiated a new awareness activity or media campaign; established a website and other communications tools; conducted outreach activities, advocacy initiatives; held meetings or workshops with key stakeholders, developed a new school program, curriculum, or teaching materials, or completed an assessment of the effectiveness of the AIC's outreach program.

Partners and Stakeholders

*Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia
Photo by David Burdick*

*Photo by Florida Keys National Marine
Sanctuary*

*Coral Reef, Guam
Photo by David Burdick*

Partners and Stakeholders

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force

The United States is working globally with other nations to halt the coral reef crisis and protect, restore and sustainably use coral reef ecosystems. The United States Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) was established in 1998 by Presidential Executive Order #13089 to lead U.S. efforts to preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. The USCRTF has been instrumental in building partnerships and strategies for on-the-ground action to conserve coral reefs. The Task Force includes leaders of 12 federal agencies, seven U.S. states and territories, and three freely associated states who work in cooperation with local government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, the scientific community and commercial interests to further the understanding and conservation of coral reef ecosystems.

The CRTF is responsible for overseeing implementation of the Executive Order, and developing and implementing coordinated efforts to map and monitor U.S. coral reefs; research the causes and solutions to coral reef degradation; reduce and mitigate coral reef degradation from pollution, over fishing and other causes; and implement strategies to promote conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs internationally.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA, in the U.S. Department of Commerce, is a key partner of the AIC. The AIC Strategic Plan links to two outcomes in **NOAA's Strategic Plan**:

Ecosystem Mission outcomes:

- *healthy and productive coastal and marine ecosystems that benefit society*
- *a well-informed public that acts as steward to coastal and marine ecosystems*

Coral Reef Conservation Program outcomes:

- *impacts of climate change and coral disease are understood and approaches to enhance coral reef resiliency are developed and implemented.*
- *Direct physical impacts from maritime industry and natural/non-natural hazards are reduced.*
- *Impacts from coastal uses and land-based activities are reduced.*
- *Overfishing in coral reef ecosystems is reduced and other adverse impacts from commercial and recreational fishing are minimized.*

NOAA'S Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP)

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) was established in 2000 to implement requirements of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. The CRCP received approximately \$26 million each year in FY 2001-2006. The FY2007 President's budget included a request of \$26.4 million.

The CRCP mission is to support effective management and sound science to preserve, sustain and restore valuable coral reef ecosystems. NOAA's CRCP provides some funding for each jurisdiction's local action strategies (LAS).

The Coral Reef Conservation Program has three main components:

1. the **National Program** provides resources, tools and services to coral reef managers, scientists and communities to improve the effectiveness of coral reef

management. For example, the CRCP supports a variety of coral reef mapping, monitoring, research, training and management to provide information and tools that help solve key coral reef management issues. The program also provides support and hosts the Secretariat for the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

The Coral Reef Management Fellowship program was established to respond to a need for additional coral reef management capacity and capability in the U.S. Flag Pacific and Caribbean Islands. The fellowship program has provided highly qualified individuals with professional on-the-job education and training on island-level coral reef management and has provided policy and management support to the U.S. Flag islands for coral reef issues.

The USCRTF established the Tauese P.F. Sunia Memorial Coral Reef Conservation Summer Internship Award in 2004. This award is in recognition of the late Governor of American Samoa's outstanding leadership in and contribution to the conservation U.S. coral reef ecosystems. The award is intended to continue the Governor's legacy by providing an outstanding college or university student the chance to develop professional coral reef management skills to be applied in their local jurisdiction. This opportunity is available to students from Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Hawai'i, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Freely Associated States of Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

2. the **Coral Reef Conservation Grants Program** makes available matching grants to government agencies, non-government agencies and academic institutions for coral reef conservation projects in six grant categories:
 - State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Management (applicants: State and Territory management agencies)
 - State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring (applicants: State and Territory management agencies)
 - Coral Reef Ecosystem Research (Applicants: Academia, NGOs etc.)
 - Projects to improve or amend Coral Reef Fishery Management Plans (Applicants: South Atlantic, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and Western Pacific Fishery Management Councils)
 - General coral reef Conservation (Applicants: Academia, NGOs, local and tribal governments, community organizations, etc)
 - International Coral Reef Conservation (Applicants: International governments, NGOs)
3. the **Coral Reef Conservation Fund** was created in 2001 to assist NOAA in implementing the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, and is managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program. The mission of the fund is to build public-private partnerships to reduce and prevent degradation to coral reefs and associated reef habitats. To date, the foundation has awarded more than \$15 million in federal and non-federal matching funds for 166 coral conservation projects in 35 countries.

The **Pacific Islands Marine Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC)** is a collaboration of marine protected area (MPA) managers, non-governmental organizations, local communities, federal, state, and territorial agencies, and other stakeholders working together to collectively enhance the effective use and management of MPAs in the U.S. Pacific Islands and Freely Associated States. PIMPAC aims to build partnerships among Pacific Island MPA practitioners and to bring support to the region in order to strengthen MPA planning, management, and evaluation efforts and conserving marine resources.

Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Insular Affairs (OIA)

OIA, in the U.S. Department of the Interior, is another key AIC partner. DOI has administrative responsibility for coordinating federal policy in the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and oversight of federal programs and funds in the freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

1. **Coral Reef Grants:** OIA, in cooperation with the NOAA, annually provides technical and financial assistance to the insular areas to improve the management and protection of their marine resources. Grants support a broad range of projects designed to fill gaps in management capacity and to support comprehensive resource management within each of the jurisdictions.
2. **Marine Resource Management in the Freely Associated States:** OIA and NOAA work with the U.S. freely associated states to improve the management, conservation and use of their marine resources. With funding from OIA, a team of stakeholders and technical experts developed a blueprint for the first national system of protected areas in the Federated States of Micronesia.
3. **Natural Resource Assessments and Management Planning:** OIA has funded resource assessments and community-based planning for several of the atolls in the Marshall Islands.
4. **Salt River Bay Research and Education Center:** OIA has partnered with the National Park Service and a consortium of universities known as the Joint Institute for Caribbean Marine Studies to establish a new marine research and education center in St. Croix, USVI. The Salt River Bay Marine Research and Education Center would support science-based decision making for managers throughout the region, provide education and outreach to students and the public, and restore world-class facilities to the island that were lost in Hurricane Hugo.

The Micronesia Challenge

The Micronesia Challenge is a common commitment by the leaders of the countries and territories of Micronesia to establish a comprehensive system of resilient MPA networks. The AIC will work collaboratively with the Micronesia Challenge. The Challenge goals are:

- 30% of near-shore marine resources and 20% of terrestrial resources across the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Territory of Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are under effective conservation by 2020.

- All aspects of implementation of the Micronesia Challenge are guided by a framework developed and agreed upon by these five jurisdictions.

These outcomes will contribute to global targets set out at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for protected areas, island biodiversity and to the sustainable livelihoods of island communities.

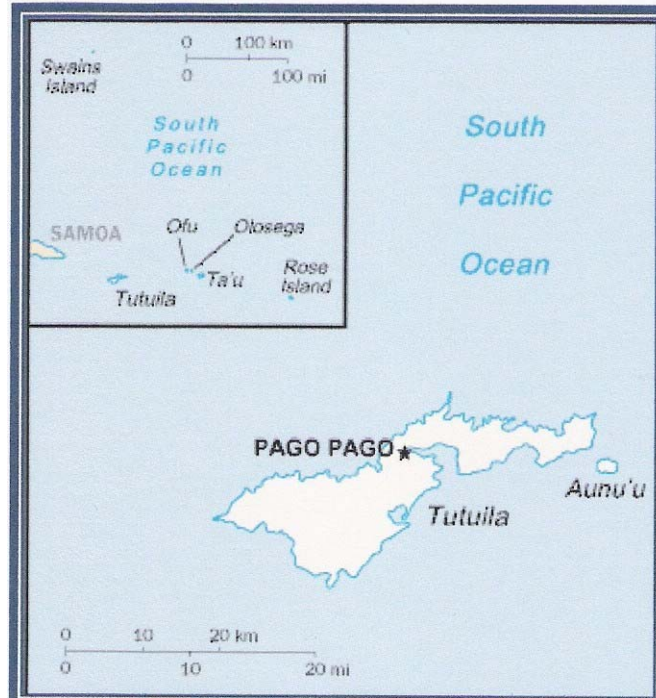
Federal, Regional and International Partners

The AIC will strengthen partnerships with federal, state and commonwealth agencies, regional and international organizations and with non-governmental organizations.

- **Federal Partners**
 - o U.S. Department of Commerce – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):
 - Coral Reef Conservation Program
 - Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
 - NOAA Fisheries
 - Pacific Services Center
 - o U.S. Department of the Interior:
 - Office of Insular Affairs
 - National Park Service
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - U.S. Geological Survey
 - o U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
 - o U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 - o U.S. Department of Justice
 - o U.S. Agency for International Development
 - o U.S. Department of Defense
 - o U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - o U.S. Coast Guard
 - o U.S. Department of State
 - o U.S. Department of Transportation
 - o National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
 - o National Science Foundation (NSF)
 - o Aquatic Alien Organism Task Force
- **Regional and International Partners**
 - o Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP)
 - o Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
 - o Coral Reef Initiative of the South Pacific (CRISP)
 - o The Micronesia Challenge
 - o Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area Community (PIMPAC)
 - o The Nature Conservancy
 - o Conservation International
 - o Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
 - o Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
 - o Caribbean Coral Reef Institute
 - o International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)
 - o Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat
 - o World Wildlife Fund

U.S All Islands Coral Reef Committee Member Profiles and Maps

American Samoa



Coral Reef Conservation in American Samoa is led by a collaborative effort of the Governor's **Coral Reef Advisory Group** (CRAG) comprised of member agencies who work together by mutual consensus to manage coral reefs in American Samoa by planning achievable programs, identifying and coordinating with other partners, obtaining funding for projects, tracking project compliance, promoting public awareness, and developing local capacity for eventual self-sustainability.

American Samoa has a long history of coral research and monitoring activities. For instance, the Aua Transect is the oldest known coral reef transect still being surveyed, and the second oldest monitoring program in the world.

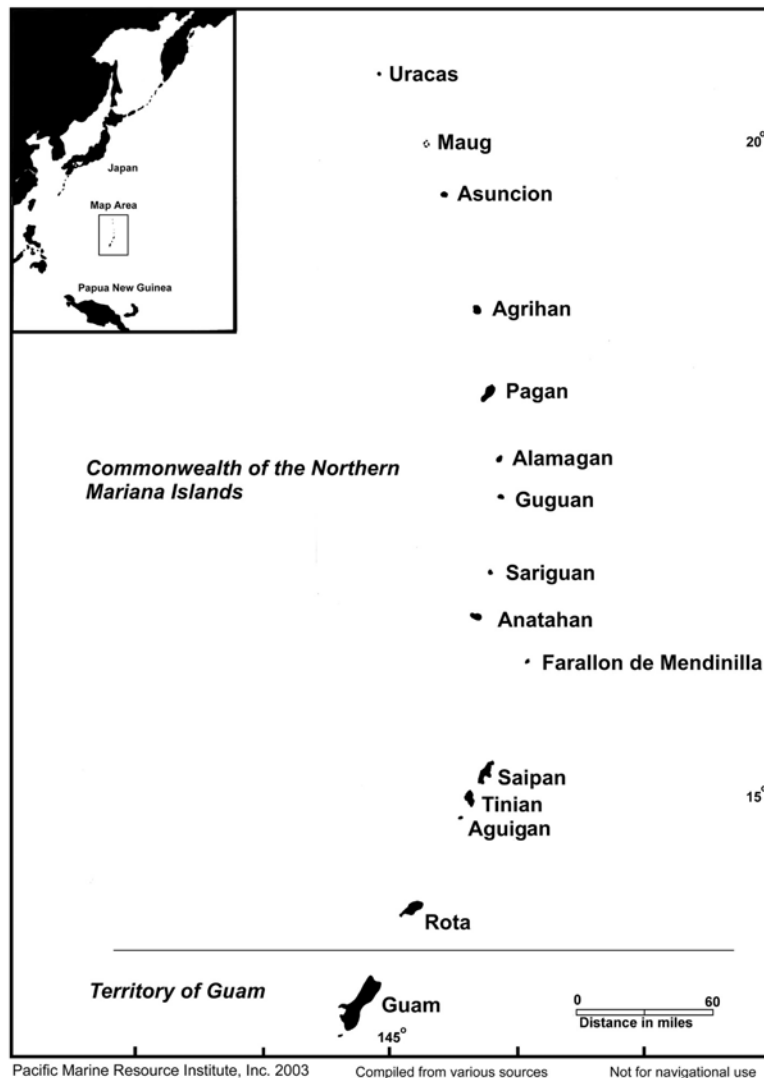
CRAG was formed in 1997 in an effort by the territory to coordinate and facilitate coral reef management activities. CRAG consists of:

- o American Samoa Department of Commerce (AS Coastal Management Program and Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary)
- o American Samoa Community College
- o American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency
- o National Park Service – American Samoa
- o Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources

Each agency within CRAG is responsible for:

- o Enhancing the quality of marine habitats
- o Regulating activities on coral reefs
- o Promoting environmental awareness
- o Facilitating research into various aspects of coral reef science

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)



Healthy coral reefs and their associated living resources provide critical economic, social and ecological functions and values to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands. These functions and values include attracting tourism and associated economic development; protecting the shoreline from storm damage; providing fish and other resources for cultural and commercial harvest and use; providing recreation and enjoyment for island residents; and contributing to the health of the ocean ecosystem. The people of the **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)** recognize that there are significant threats to our coral reefs. As a member of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, the CNMI fully supports the goals and objectives of the U.S. Coral Reef Initiative and Task Force.

Through an Executive Directive the CNMI Coral Reef Initiative Program was established under the Office of the Governor. The Directive calls for joint coral reef conservation efforts in CNMI amongst the three natural resource agencies, the Divisions of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and Coastal Resources

Management. In addition, the Directive calls for the appointment of a Point of Contact and three working committees to be established; a Policy Committee, consisting of the Directors of DEQ, DFW and CRM; a Science Committee, consisting of one biologist from each of the three agencies; and a Coordinating Committee, consisting of one representative from each of the three agencies.

The Coastal Resources Management program was established in 1983 to promote the conservation and wise development of coastal resources.

The Division of Fish & Wildlife is one of several agencies under the Department of Lands and Natural Resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands government. The Division was created in 1981 by Public Law Number 2-51 entitled the "Fish, Game and Endangered Species Act". The Division endeavors to conserve fish, game and wildlife, and to protect endangered and threatened species.

Through research, monitoring, regulation, enforcement, planning and management, the Division seeks to ensure the long-term survival and sustainability of the CNMI's natural resources for present and future generations.

The Division of Environmental Quality was created in 1982 through Public Law 3-23 to protect the right of each person to a clean and healthful environment. The Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act defines the purpose and jurisdiction and authorization to issue regulations and implement programs to protect the air, land, and water of the Commonwealth.

Florida



The **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)** is the lead agency in state government for environmental management and stewardship. The Department of Environmental Protection is one of the more diverse agencies in state government, protecting Florida's air, water and land. The Department is divided into three primary areas: Regulatory Programs, Land and Recreation and Planning and Management. Florida's environmental priorities include restoring America's Everglades, improving air quality, restoring and protecting the water quality in our springs, lakes, rivers and coastal waters, conserving environmentally-sensitive lands and providing citizens and visitors with recreational opportunities, now and in the future.

Why are living corals valuable?

Coral reefs are a natural treasure, and they provide a marvelous resource for recreation, education, scientific research, and public inspiration. Millions of tourists and local residents enjoy scuba diving, snorkeling, and fishing, thanks to Florida's coral

reefs. These activities are a tremendous source of income for Florida and its coastal communities. A study of natural and artificial reef usage in southeastern Florida showed that from June 2000 to May 2001, expenditures in Broward, Palm Beach, and Miami-Dade counties contributed 1.9 billion dollars income; employment related to natural reefs provided over 36,000 jobs in the region.

Coral reefs are valuable natural resources. They protect our coasts by reducing wave energy from storms and hurricanes. As a source of food and shelter, coral reefs provide critical habitat for numerous species. Coral reefs support important fisheries. Corals and other reef plants and animals provide sources for health and beauty aids, including ingredients for new medicines.

FDEP's Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas manages 45 sites, nearly five million acres, of submerged lands. All but four freshwater sites are located along Florida's 8,400 miles of coastline and include 41 Aquatic Preserves, 3 National Estuarine Research Reserves, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and the Coral Reef Conservation Program.

Partners and their accomplishments:

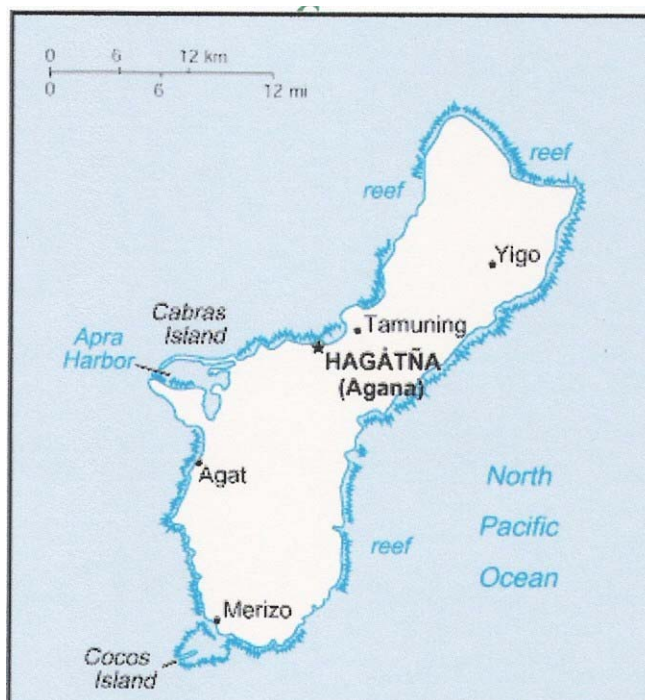
The State of Florida and the federal government have been working together for over 25 years to protect the marine environment in the Florida Keys. This effective partnership continues today in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, established in 1990. Such a combined effort provides a comprehensive ecosystem management approach for the long-term protection of diverse natural resources in Keys waters. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the federal agency that oversees the National Marine Sanctuary program. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is the state partner involved in FKNMS management. Together these agencies cooperate and consult with each other on how to ensure the protection of FKNMS resources. An Advisory Council was established to act as conduit of public opinion and to assist in the development of the FKNMS Comprehensive Management Plan and Sanctuary regulations went into effect on July 1, 1997.

With guidance from the United States Coral Reef Task Force, the FDEP and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission coordinated the formation of a team of interagency and non-agency marine resource professionals, scientist, resource users and other stakeholders. This team, known as the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative Team (SEFCRI Team), first gathered in May 2003 to develop local action strategies targeting coral reefs and associated reef resources north of the Florida Keys from Miami-Dade County, through Broward, Palm Beach and Martin Counties, to improve the coordination of technical and financial support for the conservation and management of coral reefs. This region was chosen because its reefs are close to an intensely developed coastal region, with a large and diverse human population. Prior to the development of SEFCRI, there was no public education or management plan proposed for reefs located north of the Florida Keys. The SEFCRI is managed by the FDEP Coral Reef Conservation Program with continued guidance from the SEFCRI Team, comprised of representatives from over 50 agency, non-government organization, university and private partners

Projects conducted in Florida include:

- o Florida's Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP), established in 1994 and funded by NOAA and the EPA, is the most comprehensive, long term monitoring program in the Florida Keys.
- o Florida Keys Coral Reef Evaluation & Monitoring Project (CREMP)
- o Southeast Florida Coral Reef Evaluation & Monitoring Project (SECREMP)
- o Coral Disease and Bleaching Assessments
- o Fishery-Dependent Monitoring
- o Benthic Habitat Mapping

Guam



Guam's coral reefs are the essence of the economic, cultural, political, and social viability of the island. Guam possesses fringing reefs, patch reefs, submerged reefs, offshore banks, and barrier reefs that surround Cocos Lagoon in the southern part of Apra Harbor. The combined area of coral reef and lagoon is approximately 69 km² in near-shore waters between 0-3 nmi (5.5 km), and an additional 110 km² in U.S. waters greater than 3 nmi offshore (Hunter 1995). There are approximately 5000 species of marine organisms found in Guam (Micronesia 35-36: 2003).

Guam's coral reefs are under stress and being degraded from natural and anthropogenic causes. To address the stresses and degradation of the reef, the government of Guam declared its responsibility to prudent preservation through Guam Coral Reef Initiative (CRI), Executive Order (EO) 97-10. The Guam CRI calls for an organized, comprehensive program for the conservation and effective management of Guam's coral reef ecosystem for the use of future generations. The implementation of Guam's CRI depends on four key aspects: partnerships, coordination, integration, and capacity-building.

The **Guam Coral Reef Initiative Coordinating Committee** (GCRICC), established by EO 97-10, is made up of focal points representing the following agencies:

- Administrator of the GCMP Bureau of Statistics and Plans
- Director of the BSP, or designee;
- Director of the Department of Agriculture, or designee;
- Director of the University of Guam Marine Laboratory (UOGML), or designee;
- Administrator of the Guam Environmental Protection Agency, or designee;

The Guam Coral Reef Initiative Policy Advisory Committee (GCRIPAC), also established by EO 97-10, consists of the following people:

- representative of the Governor's Office to be appointed by the Governor;
- representative of the Guam legislature to be appointed by the Speaker of the legislature;
- the Director of the Department of Parks & Recreation, or designee;
- the Director of the Department of Commerce, or designee;
- the General Manager of the Guam Visitors Bureau, or designee;
- representative of deep water commercial fisheries to be appointed by the Governor;
- representative of reef commercial fisheries to be appointed by the Governor;
- representative of the maritime industry (shipping) to be appointed by the Governor;
- representative from among Guam's dive shop operators to be appointed by the Governor;
- representative from among Guam's recreational water craft operators to be appointed by the Governor;
- representative from each locally based and registered environmental non-governmental organization to be appointed by the Governor.

EO 97-10 will be updated Spring of 2007 to reflect the participating members of the GCRICC, include additional responsibilities such as the development of local action strategies (LASs), specify protocols regarding applications for federal grant money for coral reef conservation projects, and stipulate reporting guidelines and due dates.

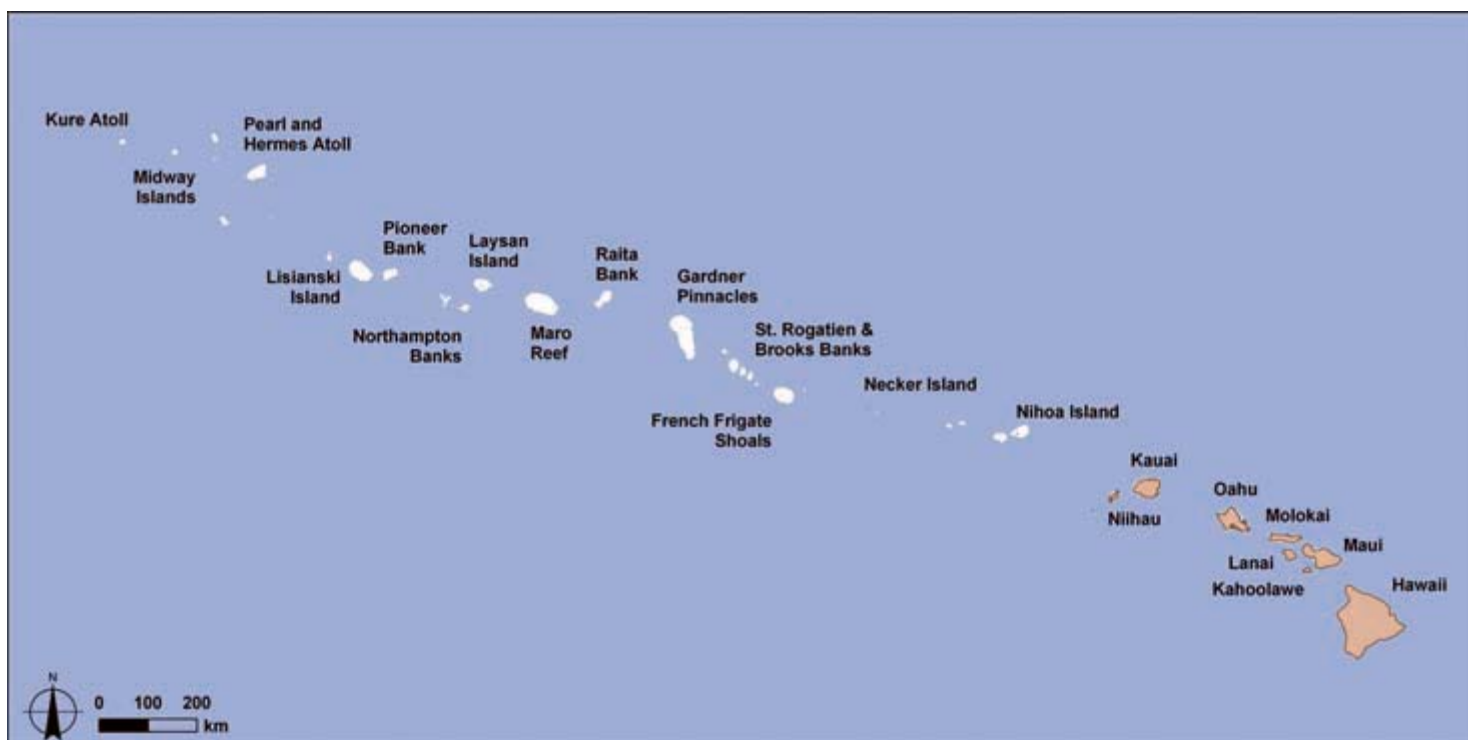
The GCRICC and the GCRIPAC have developed local actions strategies to address the five priority threats to Guam's coral reefs:

- i) Land-based sources of pollution
- ii) Fisheries management
- iii) Recreation Use and Misuse
- iv) Lack of Awareness
- v) Climate Change, Coral Bleaching and Disease

Recently, the GCRICC has adopted an eco-system based approach and is integrating this into all the LAS. The GCRICC has also utilized the Conservation Action Plan (CAP) tool, courtesy of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), in order to prioritize projects within each LAS with respect to site plans. As a result of the CAP, GCRICC will be reviewing and amending all the LAS in order to reflect this site based approach. During this process, the GCRICC will also consider revised performance measures for each LAS.

The Guam Coastal Management Program has developed and maintains a database for projects involved with the GCRI and tracks LAS projects. Currently, there are 98 projects identified for all of Guam's LAS. Of the 98 projects, 25 have not been funded and 11 have been partially funded. Of the 98 projects, 52 have received federal CRI money through management or monitoring grants. The GCRICC needs to develop a sustainable financial strategy to continue GCRI endeavors.

State of Hawai'i



Hawaiian Archipelago, including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Map: A. Shapiro

The agency responsible for coral reef management in Hawai'i is the State's **Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)**. DAR's mission is to manage, conserve and restore the state's aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations. As lead agency for the coral reef program, the DLNR/DAR created Hawaii's Coral Reef Working Group (CRWG) to:

- o Provide input and advice on coral reef conservation projects
- o Recommend on annual priorities for funding
- o Development of a statewide (Main Hawaiian Islands) coral reef monitoring strategy
- o Develop an overarching coral reef management strategy for the Main Hawaiian Islands
- o Gather information on annual accomplishments

Through education, scientific research, monitoring, and community-based projects, DAR's coral reef program focuses on managing land-based sources of pollution, coral reef fisheries (address over-fishing), water quality, recreational impacts, aquatic invasive species, and climate change and marine disease.

Input is also sought on actions affecting Hawai'i that are proposed by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, such as the development of the 5-year NOAA coral reef research strategy.

CRWG receives input from each of the Local Action Strategy (LAS) steering committees, through their Coordinators on priority projects that the committees' identify to be funded in the following year. The CRWG members may also submit projects that are not in the

LAS for consideration and funding. In the next few years, Hawai'i will develop an overarching coral strategy that is linked to the LAS and other planning processes and provides a clear road map for other coral reef management funding needs

Member Agencies include:

- o Hawaii State DAR-DLNR
- o Hawaii Coastal Zone Management Program
- o Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative Research Program
- o U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- o NOAA-Office of Coastal Resources Management
- o NOAA-Fisheries
- o Sierra Club/Reef Check

As stated previously, Hawaii has 6 Local Action Strategies to address key threats to its coral reef resources. Each LAS has a steering committee that is actively involved in the development and implementation of that LAS. The steering committees are comprised of representatives from federal and state agencies, NGOs, and the research community. The steering committees assist in developing goals and objectives for the LAS, and also assist in writing the projects that are recommended under each LAS to accomplish the goals and objectives. The ongoing input from the steering committees varies from committee to committee but has been significant during the development and revision phases of the LAS. Steering committee members are kept apprised of the status of the LAS and their input is sought to select annual priority projects to be funded under the coral reef conservation grants and through other sources. Each steering committee is staffed by an LAS coordinator who seeks input into project implementation, keeps community groups and the steering committee updated on progress, and often is engaged in on-the-ground project implementation.

The process to develop each LAS includes not only seeking the input of the steering committee but also the input of all the affected communities and stakeholders. The LASs also provide an overview of ongoing activities. Each LAS was developed with significant community participation. The mechanisms used to gather community input were varied across each LAS, but were used to develop the goals, objectives and projects. In some cases, numerous site visits and discussions with stakeholders occurred, in others, workshops were held to seek input. In all cases, the draft LAS was posted on a web site and stakeholders were notified of the posting and given a chance to provide input into the LAS prior to finalization. Each LAS was developed with the input of over 100 individuals and organizations.

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

On June 15th, 2006, approximately 139,793 square miles of emergent and submerged lands and waters of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands were set aside by Presidential Proclamation 8031 and declared a Marine National Monument. The Monument is co-managed by the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Hawai'i as co-trustees. In March 2007, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument was renamed the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

Conserve Coral Reefs

*American Samoa
Photo by Keoki Stender*

*Coral Reef Alliance's Dive In To Earth Day 2007
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*

*Elkhorn Coral
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Photo by NOAA*

*Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
Photo by James Watt*

*Blue Soft Coral
Haleiwa Trench, Hawai'i
Photo by Keoki Stender*

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico



The **Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER)** is the lead agency for coral reef conservation initiatives, which manages a network of Natural Reserves, develops management plans for coastal Special Planning Areas, and regulates activities in the maritime zone. The DNER also serve as Puerto Rico's point-of-contact to the US Coral Reef Task Force and have led a participatory process to develop and implement local action strategies to improve the health of coral reefs. The strategies address four priority threats to coral reefs: land-based sources of pollution, over-fishing, lack of public awareness, and recreational overuse/misuse.

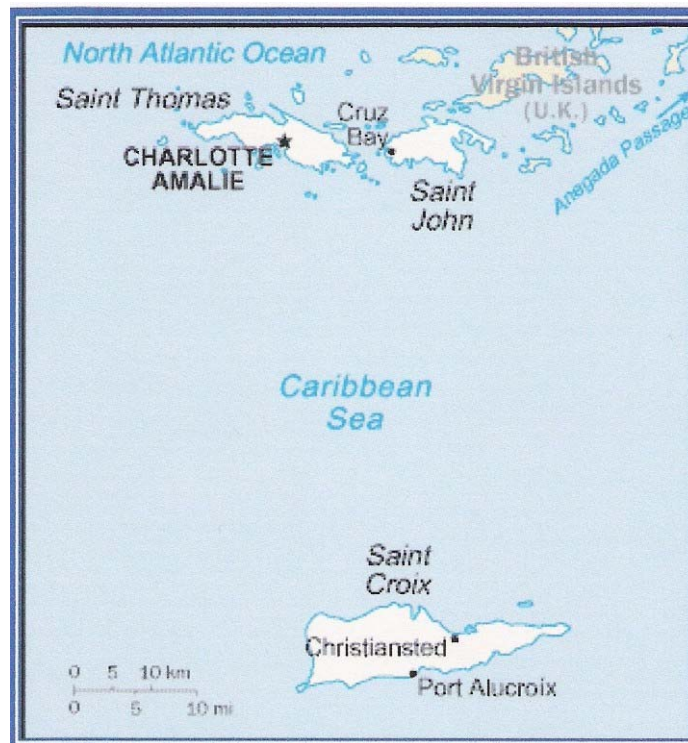
Puerto Rico's monitoring program provides information needed for effective resource management and public awareness, while constructing a scientific data base for long-term analysis of the coral reefs in natural reserves of Puerto Rico.

The objectives of the Coral Reef Monitoring program are to:

- o Map the geographical distribution of coral reefs
- o Produce a baseline characterization of priority reef sites
- o Establish a monitoring program of high-priority reef sites

The Caribbean Fisheries Management Council (CFMC) and the NOAA Fisheries office in Puerto Rico have collaborated with DNER scientists and management to significantly revise Puerto Rico's fisheries law. This new law is designed to protect the integrity of coral reef systems by regulating fishing activities through the implementation of catch quotas, establishment of no-take areas within three natural reserve sites, and seasonal fishing closures for overexploited species.

Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands



The **U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR)** is the lead marine resource management agency in the USVI for:

- o Administration and enforcement of all laws pertaining to preservation and conservation of: fish, wildlife, vegetation, trees, coastal zones, cultural and water resources, air, water, and oil pollution
- o Oversight and appliance of: land survey and subdivision, development, building, earth change permits, code enforcement, zoning administration, boat registration, mooring and anchoring of vessels in territorial waters
- o Formulation of long-range comprehensive and functional development plans for the human, economic, and physical resources of the territory

The mission of the DPNR is to protect, maintain and manage the natural and cultural resources of the Virgin Islands through proper coordination of economic and structural development in collaboration with other local, federal and non-government organizations, for the benefit of present and future generations so they will live safer, fuller lives in harmony with their environment and cultural heritage.

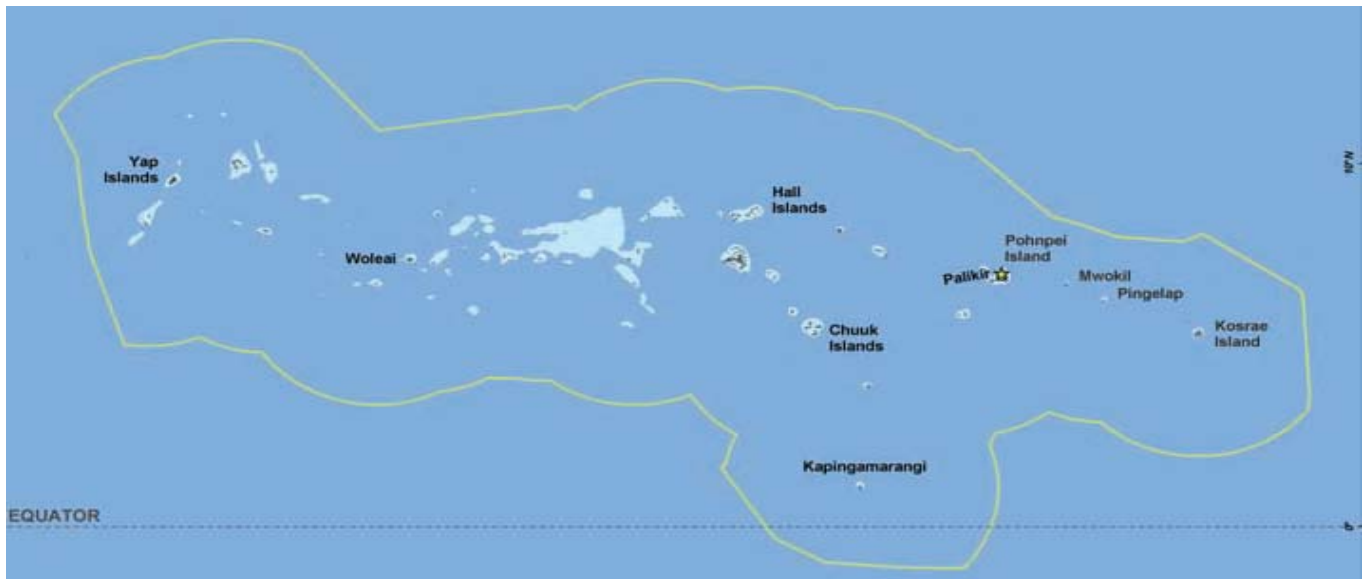
The Virgin Islands Coastal Zone Management Program's (VICMP) goals are to:

- o Protect, preserve, enhance, and restore the overall quality of the environment in the coastal zone
- o Work, coordinate, and partner with various local and national government agencies to develop and implement projects in regards to minor/major developments in the coastal zone

Jurisdiction over coral resources is shared by several U.S. agencies and the Virgin Islands government. In 2001, the Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument of St. John was established, and the Buck Island Reef National Monument of St. Croix was expanded. Both areas are managed by the National Park Service. In 2002, the St. Croix East End Marine Park, which is managed by DPNR, was established as the first in a series of marine parks for the territory.

The Virgin Islands Network of Environmental Educators (VINE) provides coordination amongst individual environmental education programs, and materials and programs to Virgin Islands teachers to provide their students with a comprehensive Environmental Education experience. VINE emphasizes that their goal is to provide students with the best educational opportunities.

Federated States of Micronesia



Map: A. Shapiro

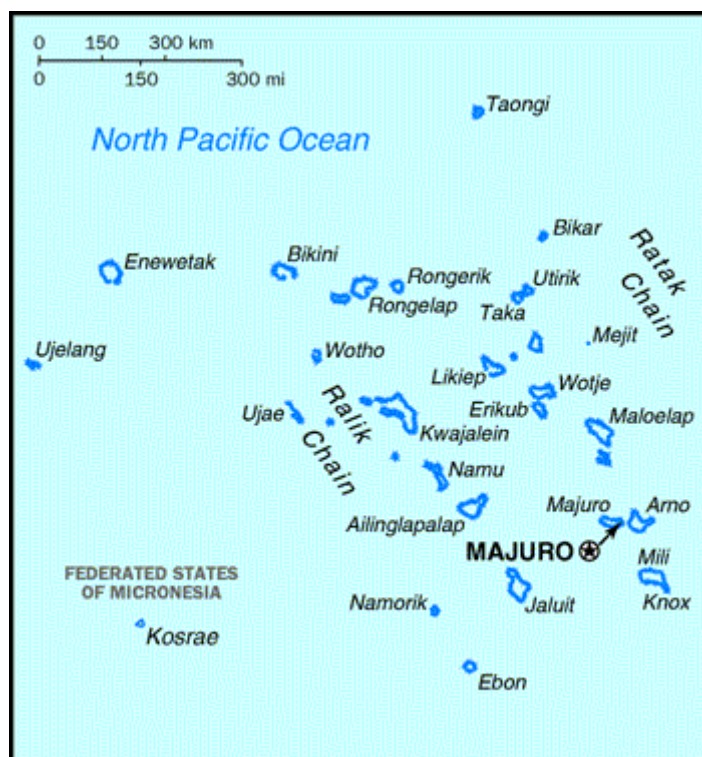
The **Federated States of Micronesia** (FSMI) is an island nation located in the Pacific Ocean, northeast of Papua New Guinea. The country is a sovereign state in free association with the United States made up of the four states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap (east to west).

The FSM National Government has two regulatory agencies that manage coral reef ecosystems—the Division of Resource Management and Development and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) office. These agencies also have offices in each state. The Marine Resources Pacific Consortium is funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior to increase the local and regional capacity for assessment and monitoring. Also, the College of Micronesia-FSM has faculty and staff trained in marine resource assessment and monitoring.

Although, each state has its own language, customs, local government, and traditional system for managing marine resources, the islanders share a strong dependence on coral reefs and marine resources. In the FSM, traditional leaders (chiefs or their equivalent) and community groups are active in traditional governance as well as western-style, democratically elected officials. This dual system provides opportunities and challenges to reef and marine resource protection. Over the past several years, Kosrae has begun to develop a MPA program that involves co-management of coastal resources between local communities and state resource management agencies. Currently, Kosrae has four MPAs that are managed by government agencies and/or local communities.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in the FSM, such as The Nature Conservancy, offer technical and financial assistance for reef-related programs. The Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) also plays a major role in spearheading the development of a statewide coral reef monitoring program and promoting public awareness programs. CSP also assists local communities in designating and monitoring local marine protected areas.

Republic of the Marshall Islands



The coral reefs of the **Republic of the Marshall Islands** (RMI) are among the most pristine in the Indo-Pacific. The primary agencies involved in protecting coral reef ecosystems are the Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination Marshall Islands (OEPPC), the Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) and RMI Environmental Protection Authority (RMI-EPA).

The mission of the Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination (OEPPC) is to protect human health and the natural environment of the Marshall Islands, actively supporting a sustainable balance between RMI's economy and its natural environment, and to ensure improved coordination of all international and regional environmental programs and activities allowing policy coordination to rest directly with the office of the President. Since 2003 OEPPC has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment in the atolls.

OEPPC was established by the President calling for the strengthening of the Government's focus on the issue of Climate Change. Climate change is a high level issue for the RMI and is linked to the Rio Conventions: UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including the associated Kyoto Protocol. To this end, the OEPPC will focus on building its capacity to direct its activities to the issues surrounding these Conventions. OEPPC is the focal point for the AIC and USCRTF.

As part of the Micronesian Challenge, RMI has established the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) which is an inter-governmental, non-governmental group led by MIMRA. The Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) is a non-governmental organization based in Majuro focused on education and awareness and community activities.

Marine reserves and other management measures are still in their infancy, but several atolls (Jaluit, Arno, Likiep, Mili, and Rongelap) are spearheading this effort. In 2000, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the National Biodiversity Report addressed the need for conservation and management of natural resources.

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) was established for the management, conservation and development of fisheries resources of the Marshall Islands.

The Marine Science Program at the College of Marshall Islands (MSP-CMI) is studying the status of marine resources to help each atoll population manage its resources and plan fishing and other activities in a sustainable manner, with the specific purpose of conserving particularly rich or threatened zones.

The MSP-CMI collaborates with MIMRA, RMI-EPA, Marshall Islands Visitor Authority, and Ministry of Internal Affairs to design community-based fishery management plans. MSP-CMI, together with the Natural Resources Assessment Surveys (NRAS) team, combined local marine survey expertise with international scientific expertise to conduct underwater surveys assessing reef health and fishing impacts.



Map: A. Shapiro

The **Republic of Palau** has the most diverse coral fauna of Micronesia and the highest density of tropical marine habitats of comparable geographic areas around the world. Various governmental and non-governmental organizations have conducted research and monitoring projects to help with the management of Palau's coral reef ecosystems. A variety of management tools have been set in place to address issues such as fishing, recreational use, and land-based sources of pollution in order to protect the marine resources of Palau.

A number of government agencies and NGOs work collaboratively to manage marine resources. The Office of Environmental Response and Coordination (OERC) was established to facilitate coordination of negotiations and follow-up of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for the major atmospheric conventions. The OERC's mandate was subsequently broadened to cover the biological diversity conventions and other MEAs. The OERC acts as Palau's focal point for the Climate Change and Biological Diversity Conventions, the AIC and USCRTF.

The Palau Ministry of Resources and Development has overlapping jurisdiction with each of Palau's 16 state governments for all marine areas within 12 nm of the high tide watermark. National and state agencies, in coordination with locally based non-governmental organizations, have put a variety of management tools in place to address issues such as fishing, recreational use, and land-based sources of pollution to protect the marine resources of Palau. Several MPAs have been established throughout Palau to provide measure of protection for marine resources tailored to the management goals and intended purpose of the individual MPAs. Palau recently passed the Protected Areas Network Act of 2003 which provides a framework for the establishment of a MPA network in Palau. Much of the design, criteria, and regulations are still under development, and expertise and technical assistance are needed to assist in implementation.

The Environmental Quality Protection Board of Palau (EQPD) conducts monthly water quality monitoring of marine waters and is responsible for education, outreach, and enforcement. The Koror State Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement is responsible for planning and management, research, monitoring of marine lakes and rock islands, education and outreach, training and enforcement.

Organizations such as The Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), the Palau Conservation Society, and The Nature Conservancy have been working together conducting research and establishing several monitoring sites to improve the management of MPAs, thereby making MPAs more effective in meeting their goals and objectives. The Palau Conservation Society (PCS), Palau's first non-profit organization, has been a leader in conservation of Palau's environment. Dedicated to the protection of biodiversity, natural resources and local communities who use those resources, PCS supports the establishment and management of conservation areas, the development of sustainable resource use policies, and an increase in environmental awareness.

Palau is also one of nine entities that make up the Marine Resources Pacific Consortium (MAREPAC) formed in November 1999 to address issues relating to the marine environment.

Conserve Coral Reefs

*Coral Reef, Guam
Photo by Dr. Robert Richmond.*

*Photo by Puerto Rico Department of
Land and Natural Resources*

*Elkhorn Coral, U.S. Virgin Islands
Photo by J. Halas*

*Coral reef, Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia
Photo by Katrina Adams*

*Rongelap Atoll,
Republic of Marshall Islands
Photo by Rongelap Expeditions*

*Coral reef, Palau
Photo by Jerry Wellington*

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Photo by Katrina Adams

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American Samoa

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Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas

<http://www.cnmicoralreef.net>

Florida State Department of Environmental Protection

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www.southeastfloridareefs.net

Guam Department of Aquatics and Wildlife Resources

<http://www.guamdawr.org/>

Hawai'i Department of Aquatic Resources

<http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dar/>

Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

<http://www.drna.gobierno.pr>

US Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources

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Republic of the Marshall Islands

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Republic of Palau

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Appendices

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
Photo by James Watt

APPENDIX 1

Members and Partners

Territory of American Samoa
Commonwealth of the Northern
Marianas
State of Florida
Guam
State of Hawai'i
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands
Federated States of Micronesia
Republic of Palau
Republic of the Marshall Islands

DHS/USCG Department of Homeland
Security/U.S. Coast Guard
DOC/NOAA Department of
Commerce/National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
DOD Department of Defense
DOI Department of the Interior
DOJ Department of Justice
DOS Department of State
DOT Department of Transportation
EPA Environmental Protection Agency
NASA National Aeronautics and Space
Administration
NSF National Science Foundation
USACE Army Corps of Engineers
USAID Agency for International
Development
USDA Department of Agriculture



APPENDIX 2

USAIC Members and Contact Information

The Point of Contact (POC) and contact details for each U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee jurisdiction are provided below:

American Samoa

Lelei Peau

Deputy Director
American Samoa Department of Commerce
Executive Office Building
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799
Ph: 684-633-5155
Fax: 684-633-4195
Email: Lelei.Peau@noaa.gov

Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas

Fran Castro

Nonpoint Source Pollution Program Manager
CNMI Division of Environmental Quality
PO Box 501304
Saipan, MP 96950
Ph: 670-664-8570
Fax: 670-664-8540
Email: fran.castro@saipan.com / coralreefpoc@gmail.com

Florida

Chantal Collier

Coral Reef Program Manager
Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas
Florida State Department of Environmental Protection
Biscayne Bay Environmental Center
1277 NE 79th Street Causeway
Miami, FL 33138
Ph: 305-795-1208
Fax: 305-795-3470
Email: Chantal.Collier@dep.state.fl.us

Guam

Evangeline D. Lujan

Guam Coastal Management Program Administrator
Bureau of Statistics and Plans
PO Box 2950
Hagatna, Guam 96932
Ph: 671-472-4201 / 472-4203
Email: vangelujan@yahoo.com / vange@mail.gov.gu

Hawai'i**Athline Clark**

Special Projects Program Manager
Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources
Hawai'i State Department of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl St. Rm. 330
Honolulu, HI 96813
Ph: 808-587-0099
Fax: 808-578-0115
Email: Athline.M.Clark@hawaii.gov

Puerto Rico**Aida Rosario**

Director
Fisheries Research Laboratory
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
PO Box 3665 Marina Station
Mayaguez, PR 00681
Ph: 787-833-2025
Fax: 787-833-2410
Email: arosario@drna.gobierno.pr
aida_rosario2002@yahoo.com

United States Virgin Islands**Manny Ramos**

Acting Director
Coastal Zone Management
C.E. King Airport Terminal Bldg., Fl.2
St. Thomas, VI 00802
Ph: 340-774-3320
Fax: 340-714-9524
Email: manny.ramos@dpr.gov.vi

Affiliate Members**Federated States of Micronesia****Marion Henry**

Assistant Secretary
Division of Resource Management & Development
Department of Economic Affairs
Federated States of Micronesia
P.O. Box PS-12
Palikir, Pohnpei FM 96941
Ph: 011-691-320-2620
Fax: 011-691-320-5854
Email: marionh@mail.fm

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Jeffrey Zebedy

Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination
P.O. Box 15
Majuro 96960
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Phone: 011-692-625-7944
Fax: 011-692-625-7918
Email: oeppc@ntamar.net

Republic of Palau

Andrew Bauman

Marine Unit Chief, OERC
Office of Environmental Response and Coordination
Office of the President of the Republic of Palau
P.O. Box 7086
Koror, Palau 96940
Micronesia
Phone: 011-680-488-6950
Fax: 011-680-488-8638
Email: abauman@palau-oerc.net

U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee Secretariat

Takiora Ingram, Ph.D

Executive Director
U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee
NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office
1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: 808-944-2286
Fax: 808-944-2142
Email: takiora.ingram@noaa.gov

U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee Advisors

Gerry Davis

Assistant Regional Administrator - Habitat
Pacific Islands Regional Office
NOAA Fisheries Service
1601 Kapiolani Blvd. Suite 1110
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: 808-944-2283
Fax: 808-973-2941
Email: gerry.davis@noaa.gov

Michael P. Hamnett, PhD.

Executive Director
Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i
2800 Woodlawn Drive, Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: 808-988-8310
Fax: 808-988-8319
Email: mhamnett@rcuh.com

Robert H. Richmond, Ph.D

Research Professor
Kewalo Marine Laboratory
Pacific Biosciences Research Center
41 Ahui Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-539-7331
Fax: 808-599-4817
Email: Richmond@hawaii.edu

Partners

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program

Bill Millhouser

Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
National Ocean Service
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
Ph: 301-713-3155
Email: Bill.Millhouser@noaa.gov

DOI, Office of Insular Affairs

Karen Koltes, Ph.D

Office of Insular Affairs
Room 4311
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
Ph: 202-208-5345
Email: Karen_Koltes@ios.doi.gov

APPENDIX 3

The White House Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 11, 1998

Executive Order 13089 Coral Reef Protection

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and in furtherance of the purposes of the Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251, *et seq.*), Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1451, *et seq.*), Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321, *et seq.*), National Marine Sanctuaries Act, (16 U.S.C. 1431, *et seq.*), National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1, *et seq.*), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd-ee), and other pertinent statutes, to preserve and protect the biodiversity, health, heritage, and social and economic value of U.S. coral reef ecosystems and the marine environment, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. (a) "U.S. coral reef ecosystems" means those species, habitats, and other natural resources associated with coral reefs in all maritime areas and zones subject to the jurisdiction or control of the United States (e.g., Federal, State, territorial, or commonwealth waters), including reef systems in the south Atlantic, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Ocean. (b) "U.S. Coral Reef Initiative" is an existing partnership between Federal agencies and State, territorial, commonwealth, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and commercial interests to design and implement additional management, education, monitoring, research, and restoration efforts to conserve coral reef ecosystems for the use and enjoyment of future generations. The existing U.S. Islands Coral Reef Initiative strategy covers approximately 95 percent of U.S. coral reef ecosystems and is a key element of the overall U.S. Coral Reef Initiative. (c) "International Coral Reef Initiative" is an existing partnership, founded by the United States in 1994, of governments, intergovernmental organizations, multilateral development banks, nongovernmental organizations, scientists, and the private sector whose purpose is to mobilize governments and other interested parties whose coordinated, vigorous, and effective actions are required to address the threats to the world's coral reefs.

Sec. 2. Policy. (a) All Federal agencies whose actions may affect U.S. coral reef ecosystems shall: (a) identify their actions that may affect U.S. coral reef ecosystems; (b) utilize their programs and authorities to protect and enhance the conditions of such ecosystems; and (c) to the extent permitted by law, ensure that any actions they authorize, fund, or carry out will not degrade the conditions of such ecosystems.

(b) Exceptions to this section may be allowed under terms prescribed by the heads of Federal agencies:

- (1) During time of war or national emergency;
- (2) When necessary for reasons of national security, as determined by the President;

- (3) During emergencies posing an unacceptable threat to human health or safety or to the marine environment and admitting of no other feasible solution; or
- (4) In any case that constitutes a danger to human life or a real threat to vessels, aircraft, platforms, or other man-made structures at sea, such as cases of *force majeure* caused by stress of weather or other act of God.

Sec. 3. Federal Agency Responsibilities. In furtherance of section 2 of this order, Federal agencies whose actions affect U.S. coral reef ecosystems, shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, provide for implementation of measures needed to research, monitor, manage, and restore affected ecosystems, including, but not limited to, measures reducing impacts from pollution, sedimentation, and fishing. To the extent not inconsistent with statutory responsibilities and procedures, these measures shall be developed in cooperation with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and fishery management councils and in consultation with affected States, territorial, commonwealth, tribal, and local government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, the scientific community, and commercial interests.

Sec. 4. U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall co-chair a U.S. Coral Reef Task Force ("Task Force"), whose members shall include, but not be limited to, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Transportation, the Director of the National Science Foundation, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, and the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The Task Force shall oversee implementation of the policy and Federal agency responsibilities set forth in this order, and shall guide and support activities under the U.S. Coral Reef Initiative ("CRI"). All Federal agencies whose actions may affect U.S. coral reef ecosystems shall review their participation in the CRI and the strategies developed under it, including strategies and plans of State, territorial, commonwealth, and local governments, and, to the extent feasible, shall enhance Federal participation and support of such strategies and plans. The Task Force shall work in cooperation with State, territorial, commonwealth, and local government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, the scientific community, and commercial interests.

Sec. 5. Duties of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. (a) *Coral Reef Mapping and Monitoring.* The Task Force, in cooperation with State, territory, commonwealth, and local government partners, shall coordinate a comprehensive program to map and monitor U.S. coral reefs. Such programs shall include, but not be limited to, territories and commonwealths, special marine protected areas such as National Marine Sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and other entities having significant coral reef resources. To the extent feasible, remote sensing capabilities shall be developed and applied to this program and local communities should be engaged in the design and conduct of programs.

(b) *Research.* The Task Force shall develop and implement, with the scientific community, research aimed at identifying the major causes and consequences of degradation of coral reef ecosystems. This research shall include fundamental scientific research to provide a sound framework for the restoration and conservation of coral reef ecosystems worldwide. To the extent feasible, existing and planned environmental monitoring and mapping programs should be linked with scientific research activities.

This Executive order shall not interfere with the normal conduct of scientific studies on coral reef ecosystems.

(c) *Conservation, Mitigation, and Restoration.* The Task Force, in cooperation with State, territorial, commonwealth, and local government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, the scientific community and commercial interests, shall develop, recommend, and seek or secure implementation of measures necessary to reduce and mitigate coral reef ecosystem degradation and to restore damaged coral reefs. These measures shall include solutions to problems such as land-based sources of water pollution, sedimentation, detrimental alteration of salinity or temperature, over-fishing, over-use, collection of coral reef species, and direct destruction caused by activities such as recreational and commercial vessel traffic and treasure salvage. In developing these measures, the Task Force shall review existing legislation to determine whether additional legislation is necessary to complement the policy objectives of this order and shall recommend such legislation if appropriate. The Task Force shall further evaluate existing navigational aids, including charts, maps, day markers, and beacons to determine if the designation of the location of specific coral reefs should be enhanced through the use, revision, or improvement of such aids.

(d) *International Cooperation.* The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, in cooperation with other members of the Coral Reef Task Force and drawing upon their expertise, shall assess the U.S. role in international trade and protection of coral reef species and implement appropriate strategies and actions to promote conservation and sustainable use of coral reef resources worldwide. Such actions shall include expanded collaboration with other International Coral Reef Initiative ("ICRI") partners, especially governments, to implement the ICRI through its Framework for Action and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network at regional, national, and local levels.

Sec. 6. This order does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable in law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

William Clinton
THE WHITE HOUSE,
June 11, 1998

