

STRENGTHENING the Federal-Local Partnership



BACKGROUND

The global risk to coral reefs continues to grow and under the status quo, coral reefs continue to decline at alarming rates.

This situation challenges us to establish the most effective way of working together to achieve priority natural resource management outcomes.

The US All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC) has high regard for our partnership with the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) in working together to effectively manage coral reefs and views effective partnership as critical for our reefs' future. We believe that jurisdiction and federal managers have unique and essential expertise and authorities that could be more effectively coordinated to ensure positive resource outcomes.

In that spirit, the AIC has met with Jennifer Koss and Jennifer Moore to begin brainstorming and discussing ideas for strengthening our partnership.

Our intent & goals

We hope that together we can build more integrated and transparent organizational processes where federal and local jurisdictional efforts are mutually developed, prioritized, and implemented. We hope that in the future, an integrated CRCP-jurisdiction partnership can be a model for other agencies, especially those on the US Coral Reef Task Force.

Our intent is to build a stronger partnership between the jurisdictions and CRCP for a better future for our coral reefs.

Our goals are:

- Measurable benefits and outcomes for our coral reef resources.
- Efficient use of limited human, financial, and institutional resources.
- Effective federal-local partnership in managing for thriving coral reef ecosystems to protect their ecological, social, and economic value for future generations.

The opportunity is now

Multiple strategic planning efforts are either currently underway or are due to begin:

- AIC Strategic Plan
- NOAA CRCP's Goals and Objectives (2010-2015)
- Jurisdiction Management Priority documents
- U.S. Coral Reef Task Force focus, FY15-19 (like Resolution 25.1)

We believe this is a unique window of opportunity to coordinate and better integrate these planning efforts towards site-based and resource-focused outcomes.



STRENGTHENING the Federal-Local Partnership



IDEAS for BUILDING a BETTER FUTURE

The AIC has three main ideas for building a stronger federal-local (CRCP-jurisdiction) partnership and a better future for our nation’s coral reefs.

1) Site-based and resource-focused outcomes

Coral reef conservation efforts should focus on *resource outcomes*. These resource outcomes should be realistically achievable within a reasonable timeframe (3-5 years). To make these changes will require looking at, and likely modifying, present efforts and processes. We acknowledge that this will take considerable planning, coordination, and time to build out and implement across both federal and local efforts. We believe that a shift towards site-based partnership efforts will improve partner coordination and help achieve resource outcomes by focusing them in an area—instead of the current ‘buckshot’ approach. These types of initiatives have already proven successful and present good models for effective management.



2) Federal-Local integration

We believe that the federal-local (CRCP-jurisdiction) partnership should be integrated, where each partner is able to learn and understand the other better through meaningful engagement in their partner’s activities, planning, and processes. This would ensure that each partner learns from the perspective, knowledge, and expertise of the other and is able to apply this knowledge and awareness to make the best possible decisions. This integration typically results in building trust and respect amongst partners while moving them toward shared outcomes. This concept ensures that both federal and local authorities are respected and that managers understand and can integrate decisions across programs. This will require strong engagement at the federal and local level so that programmatic and management decisions represent the best information from all parties.

3) Federal and local organization

The AIC believes there are opportunities to improve jurisdictional and CRCP organizational structures, processes, and protocols for better coral reef management outcomes. We understand that this takes a high level of trust and are committed to building that trust.

CONCLUSION

The AIC hopes that each CRCP Senior Management Council member will kindly consider their support for moving forward with these three ideas. We welcome all opportunities for further discussion.

The AIC intends to work closely with CRCP in developing these ideas. We believe this an important next step in the evolution of our coral reef management efforts and are excited about the potential this has to build on past successes to take our management outcomes to a new level.

FRAN CASTRO
Chair, U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee

February 9, 2015