

# U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee Report



21<sup>st</sup> U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting  
Washington D.C.  
February 25, 2009

# U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)

- Established in 1994 by the Governors of U.S. state, territory and commonwealth coral reef jurisdictions
- 7 Members - American Samoa, CNMI, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, USVI
- 3 Affiliate Members – FSM, Marshall Islands, Palau
- Provides a unified voice for coral reef conservation
- Provides collaborative sharing among jurisdictions to improve protection of coral reef ecosystems, working collaboratively with the USCRTF
- Supports implementation of Local Action Strategies
- Develops policy and provides advocacy for coral reef conservation, outreach and public awareness

# Where can you find the AIC?

NEW Website: [www.allislandscoral.org](http://www.allislandscoral.org)

- Contact information
- Each jurisdictions accomplishments
- Local Action Strategies
- Strategic Action Plan 2008-2013



# AIC jurisdictions determine and prioritize local threats and local action strategies (LAS):

- Land Based Sources of Pollution, Overfishing & Management, Public Outreach and Education, Recreational Overuse and Misuse, Climate Change, Coral Bleaching, Disease
- Populations Pressure –American Samoa
- Aquatic Invasive Species-Hawaii
- Maritime Industry & Coastal Construction Impacts - Florida
- Increasing Development -Guam

# American Samoa

## Climate Change

- Finalized a climate change local action strategy with a three year action plan
- Currently developing a government-wide hybrid vehicle policy
- Documented annual, multi-species community mass bleaching events. Possibly the first coral reef in the world - a vision of things to come?



# American Samoa

## Population Pressure in American Samoa

- Hosted a Population Summit, bringing together international experts, concerned citizens, and key policy makers to address rapid population growth;
- Drafting a Territorial Population Policy. Once completed American Samoa will be the first US territory or state to have one. The United States remains the only developed country without an official population policy;
- Collaborating with various agencies to expand reproductive health services and implement immigration reform.

# CNMI

## Successes

- Managing local action strategies through community-engaged projects that address land-based sources of pollution, fisheries management, recreational use and lack of awareness
- Collaborating with regional partners to achieve the goals and objectives of the Micronesia Challenge

## Challenges

- Insufficient technical and enforcement capacity; high staff turnovers
- Climate Change



# HAWAII

## **The Decline of Maui's Coral Reefs the Rise of Invasive Algae and the Need for Herbivore Management**

### **Proposed Kahekili Herbivore Fisheries Management Area**

- A Marine Managed Area (MMA) designed to protect and enhance the herbivore fish and invertebrates stocks
- Study to see if increasing herbivore fish stocks will effectively reduce invasive algae growth and improve overall coral reef health.

### **Lay Gill-Net Ban within the waters surrounding Maui**

- Fish populations should increase and result in increased herbivore fish and reduced problems with invasive algae.



# Guam

- Increase in development Local Action Strategy
  - Governor created the Civilian/Military Task Force
    - Natural Resources Subcommittee
  - Completion of Natural Resource Strategy -both civilian development and DOD defense
  - Process of completing of Mitigation Policy
  - Monitoring Team – moving forward
- Challenges-
  - Building Capacity, limited funding, enforcement



# Florida

## Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI)

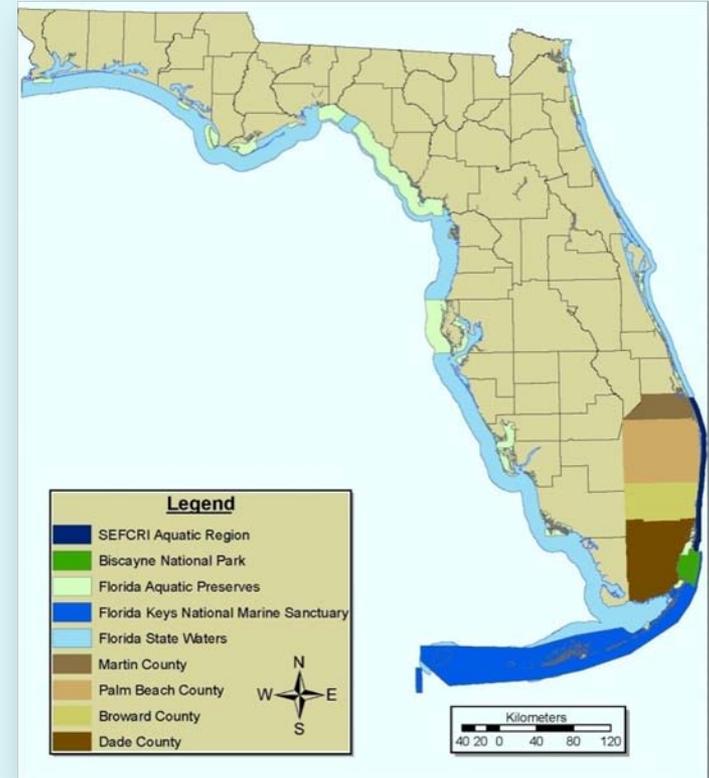
- Implementing >140 local action strategies to protect the northern Florida Reef Tract from impacts of land-based sources of pollution, recreational use, maritime industry and coastal construction
- Developing management alternatives based on science and stakeholder engagement

## Florida Reef Resilience Program

- A public-private partnership strengthening local and international reef management capacity
- Developing and promoting resilience-based reef use (e.g. marine zoning) and management strategies (e.g. staghorn coral restoration) to enable Florida's coral reefs to withstand and/or adapt to climate change and local threats

## Challenges

Climate Change • Polluted Inland & Coastal Waters • Destruction and decline of coral reefs due to physical impacts • Limited knowledge of many factors linked to coral decline • Limited capacity to address existing and new challenges



# Puerto Rico



(A.) Boats anchored north of the El Conquistador ferry dock, July 2006. (B.) Example of seagrass blowout probably caused by repeated anchoring in the area. (C.) Launching personal watercraft, Palomino. (D.) Blowouts associated with the site where personal watercraft are launched.



# U.S. Virgin Islands

## Establishment and Growth of the St. Croix East End Marine Park



### Challenges to our success:

- Lack of capacity (technical capacity, enforcement, hiring & retention of staff)
- Need to move from dialog & coordination to implementation at local and federal agency level
- Need for USVI community to recognize value of coral reef ecosystems and prioritize their health

# Challenges Across Jurisdictions

- Limited capacity in the local agencies
- Need for additional funding
  - especially for monitoring and research to inform management actions
- Interagency coordination
  - many projects require large budgets and cut across multiple agencies

# What's Next

- Work more closely among jurisdictions to share resources and experience
- Work with federal members of the USCRTF to address needs in the jurisdictions
- Focus on addressing unresolved issues and long-standing needs, including:
  - fulfilling USCRTF goal to protect 20% of U.S coral reefs in marine reserves by 2010
  - implementing USCRTF Climate Change Resolution
  - implementing USCRTF Framework for Action



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