



AIC Chair's Report

Fran Castro
Chair, U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)

34th U.S. Coral Reef Task Force
October 29, 2015 | Fajardo, Puerto Rico

Introduction

Thank you Governor Padilla, the
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, +
Department of Natural and Environmental
Resources

Welcome William (Wil) Castro (Guam POC)
and Ray Uchimura (Hawai'i interim POC)

Thank you to previous POCs, Emma Anders
and Lorilee Crisostomo



C. Morishige, AIC

AIC and Jurisdictional Priorities

AIC Overarching Priorities



1. Achievable and shared site-based and resource-focused outcomes; and
2. Integrated and strengthened federal-local partnerships.

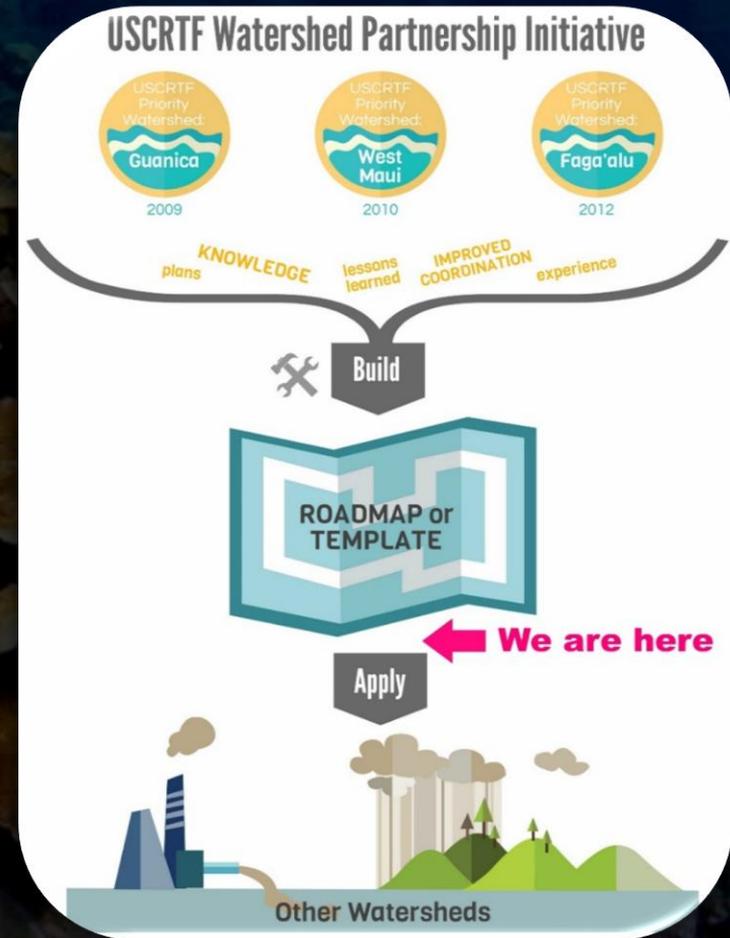
Jurisdictional Priorities

Watershed Partnership Initiative

- Successful place-based partnership projects
- Extraordinary opportunity for visibility at national level
- **Intent** = Demonstrate ecological improvement in USCRTF priority watersheds; 5 year minimum
- **Not the intent** = Indefinite focus on a site

AIC Request:

- “Graduation Plan”
- “Sunset clause” of 10 years
- Emphasis on reaching meaningful ecological improvements in less time



Jurisdictional Priorities

Increased Federal-Jurisdictional Integration

Increasing Effective Communications

- Simple way to increase integration
- February 2015 AIC request
 - ½ day meeting on jurisdictional management priorities and updates at D.C. winter meetings
 - ½ day meeting on federal agency updates at jurisdictional fall meetings

AIC Request:

- Implementation during the February 2016 meeting

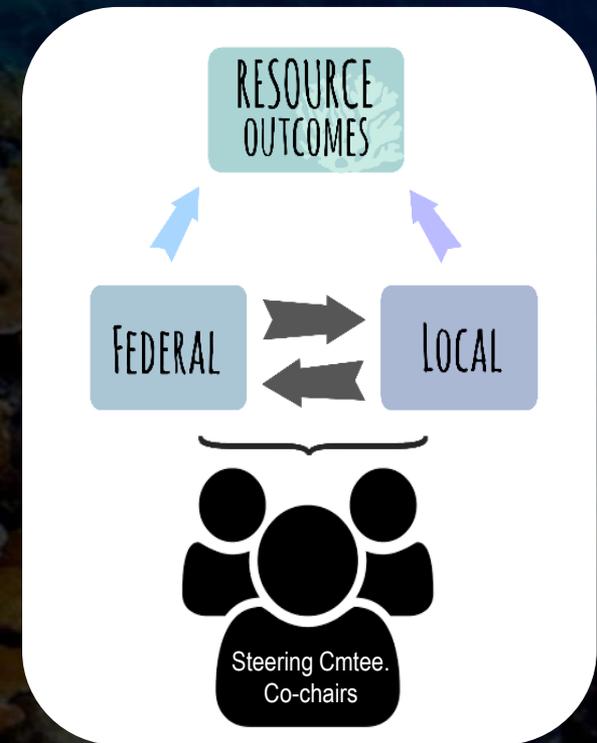


Jurisdictional Priorities

Increased Federal-Jurisdictional Integration

3rd Steering Committee Co-chair

- Intent = Increase Federal-Jurisdiction integration
- Steering Committee = Non-voting; non-mandated
- Broader management focus is key



Spoke with co-chairs re: alternatives and options to address this concern

Jurisdictional Priorities

114TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION **S. 373**

To provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 4, 2015

Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. TROTT, and Mr. SCHAFFER) introduced the following bill, which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

A BILL

To provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives*
2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Vessel Incidental Discharge Act”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings; purpose.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (S. 373)

- Letter to co-chairs, July 2015
- Cumulative and water quality impacts to coral reefs
- AIC recognizes that coordination managed through Task Force

AIC Request:

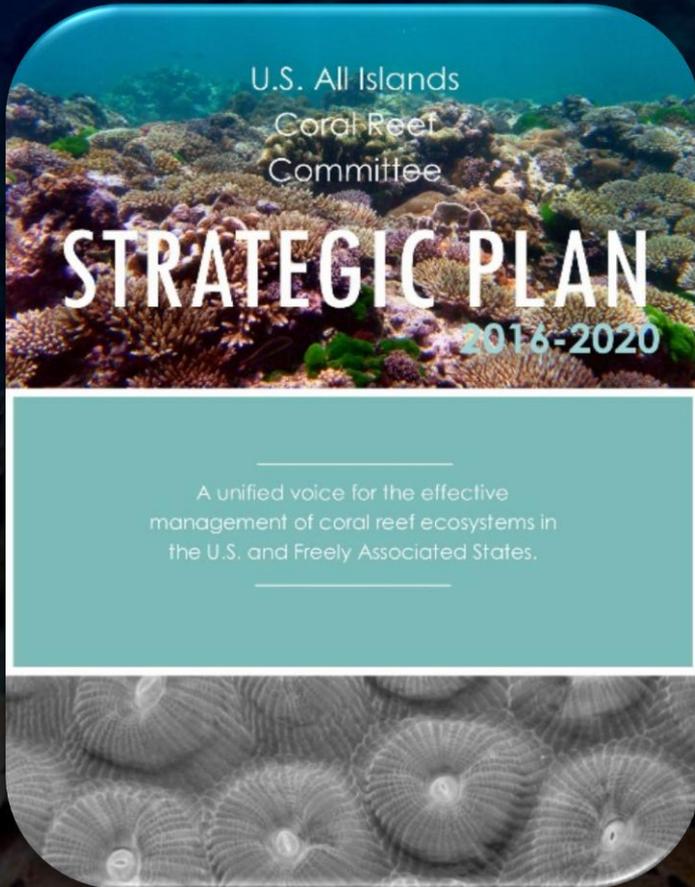
- Discuss how best to address and develop protocol

USCRTF Strategic Planning

- Requested in February
- Greatly appreciate consideration and good discussion + efforts of Tiger Shark Team and all involved



AIC Strategic Plan, 2016-2020



- ½ day meeting on Monday
- Strategic Plan finalized
- Action Plan finalization process
- Target = Early 2016
- THANK YOU to our partners

Jurisdictional Updates

Member Updates

American Samoa

- Multiple, major, ongoing threats
- COTS interagency removal & mitigation
- Longline fishing vessel grounding - Funding and technical assistance for removal needed
- Better mechanism for coral reef “emergency response” is needed



F/V Seahawk #68 ran aground onto the reef near the Pago Pago Airport causing major reef damage. Credit: CRAG



Miso Sablan, Coral Reef Summer Intern conducting reef flat surveys in the Saipan lagoon. Summer, 2015. Credit: Lyza Johnston, CNMI BECO

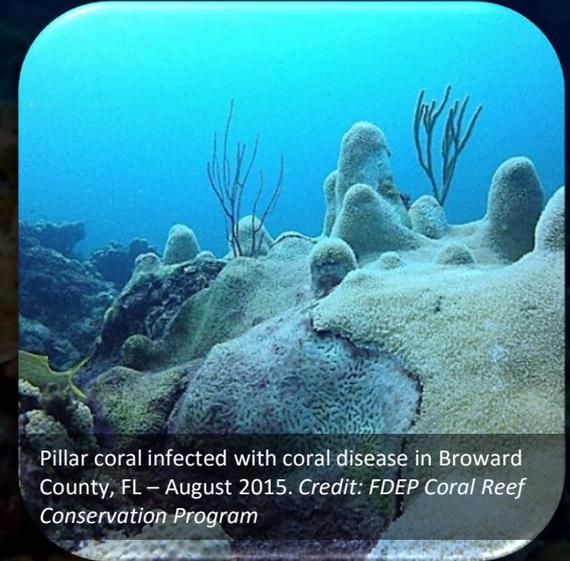
CNMI

- Thermal stress events in 2013 & 2014
- Multiple typhoons; Typhoon Soudelor
 - Coral reef impacts, ship grounding, seagrass habitat damage
- CNMI Reef Resilience Study – finalized and published

Member Updates

Florida

- Unprecedented coral disease outbreak – Significant mortality; 165 mi² FL Reef Tract
- Funding mechanisms for coral reef “emergency response” is needed
- Coral bleaching documented; 2nd year of warm waters



Pillar coral infected with coral disease in Broward County, FL – August 2015. Credit: FDEP Coral Reef Conservation Program



Acropora pulchra in West Agana during the 2014 bleaching event. Mortality of upper branch tips occurred subsequent to this event. Credit: Dr. Laurie Raymundo, University of Guam Marine Lab

Guam

- Water quality and rising temperatures (+ extreme low tides) = lethal for some species
- Staghorn *Acropora* populations – Limited to shallow waters; decimated in deeper waters
- 2016 reef resilience assessment – Data to help understand resilience of Guam reefs

Member Updates

Hawai'i

- Significant bleaching – Highest rate in *Pocillopora* spp.
- 2nd state to establish a statewide environmental court
- Establishing 1st coral mitigation bank in U.S.
- Success in urchin hatchery and coral nursery operations for mitigation



Collector plastic bins utilized to transport *A. cervicornis* from nurseries areas to relocation place in Belvedere and Pta. Guaniquilla Natural Reserve, Cabo Rojo. May, 2014. Credit: E. Irizarr, DNER



Puerto Rico

- Capacity issues continue – Welcome Task Force member agency assistance
- Coral restoration efforts in Cabo Rojo with threatened coral spp.
- Reduction and treatment of runoff to coral restoration areas

Member Updates

U.S. Virgin Islands

- Sargassum influx + invasive *Halophila stipulacea* – Request Task Force member agency assistance
- Enforcement capacity evaluation
- Creating a Visitor's Center at the St. Croix East End Marine Park



Students in STXEEMP EcoCamp 2015 participating in Bayside tour led by Ranger John Farchette. Credit: Jose Sanchez, Park Ranger, STXEEMP

Federated States of Micronesia

- Typhoon Maysak – Late March; Presidential Disaster Declaration
- USDA – Post-typhoon imagery; agroforestry recovery and rehabilitation
- Landmark “Shark Bill” – EEZ; ~3M mi²



Chuuk Lagoon Map of Grounded Vessels. Credit: Secretariat of the Pacific Community, FAME Division, Coastal Fisheries Programme

Member Updates

Republic of the Marshall Islands

- Preparing for El Niño effects
- Winds shifting direction; erosion; drought; severe storms
- New temporary regulations on fishing to protect herbivores in anticipation of bleaching



Meeting with Majuro Local Government and Coastal Management Advisory Council regarding El Niño bleaching and possible regulations. *Credit: Broderick Menke*

Republic of Palau

- PAN System-wide Management Plan underway
- Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) to study supertyphoon impacts to coral reefs and quantify recovery potential
- Best practices for sustainable management developed during symposium held at PICRC

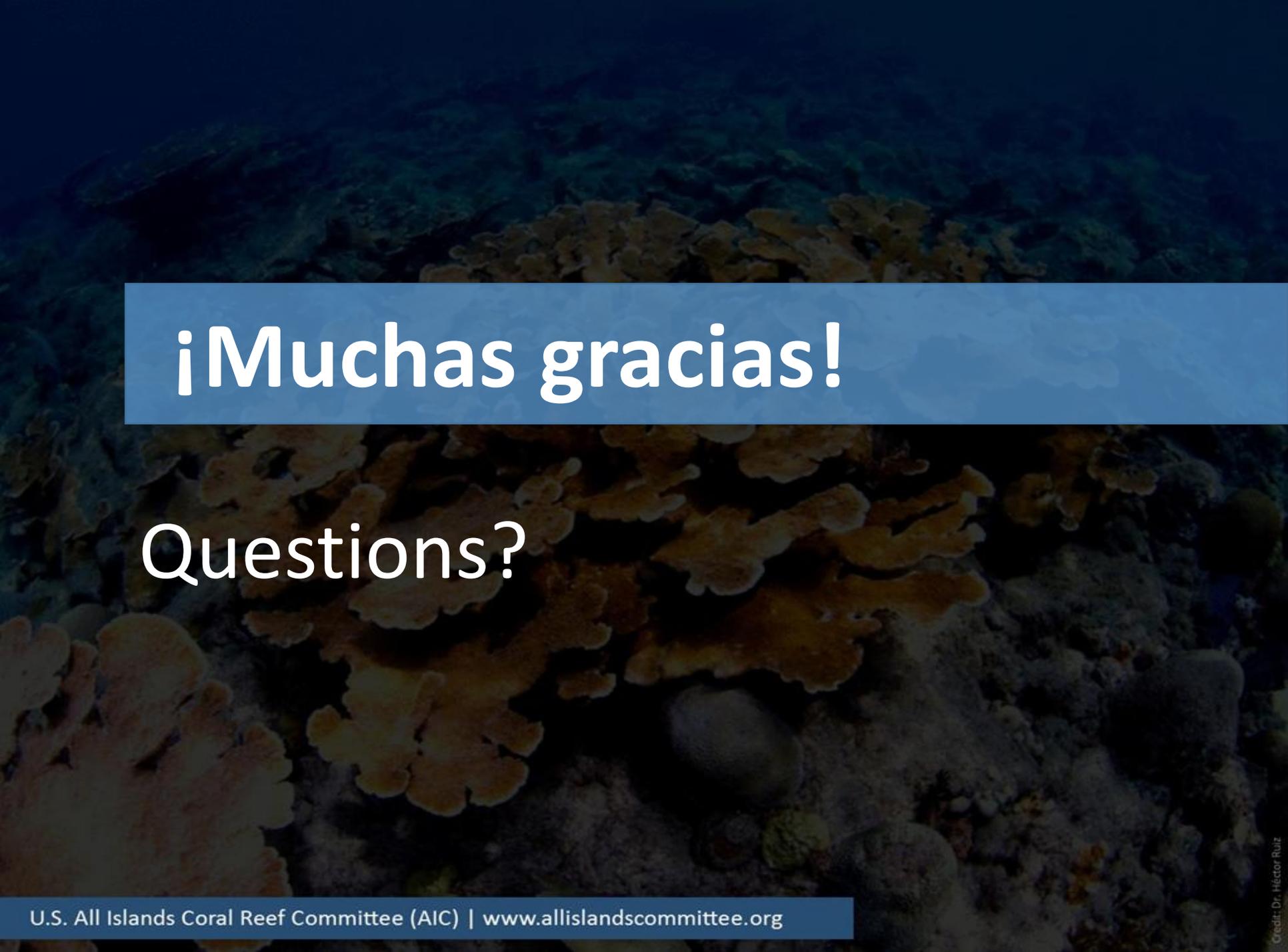


PAN technical partners including PICRC, TNC, PCS and others at PAN Strategic Planning Workshop. *Credit: PICRC*

Acknowledgements



- Governor Padilla, Secretary Guerrero, & Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
- Members and Principals
- Co-chairs
- Task Force Member Agencies
- Damaris Delgado, Tania Metz, and team
- Steering Committee co-chairs & USCRTF Secretariat
- Shannon Simpson, USCRTF Secretariat (NOAA)
- AIC Secretariat

An underwater photograph of a coral reef, showing various types of coral in shades of brown, tan, and grey against a dark blue background. The lighting is somewhat dim, creating a serene and slightly mysterious atmosphere.

¡Muchas gracias!

Questions?