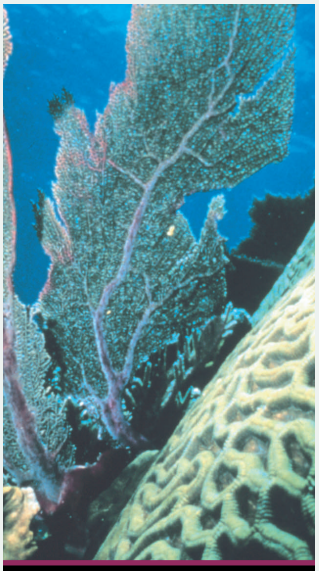

U.S. CORAL REEF TASK FORCE
Local Action Strategies

In 2002 *the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force adopted the "Puerto Rico Resolution" which calls for the development of three-year Local Action Strategies (LAS) by each of the seven member U.S. states, territories and commonwealths. These LAS are three-year locally-driven roadmaps for collaborative and cooperative action among federal, state, territory and non-governmental partners which identify and implement priority actions needed to reduce key threats to valuable coral reef resources.*

THE SIX LAS FOCUS AREAS

- Overfishing
- Land-based Sources of Pollution
- Recreational Misuse/Overuse
- Lack of Public Awareness
- Climate Change and Coral Bleaching
- Disease

The goals and objectives of the LAS are linked to those found in the U.S. National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs, adopted by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force in 2000. From the thirteen goals identified in the National Action Plan, the Task Force prioritized six threat areas as the focus for immediate local action: over-fishing, land-based sources of pollution, recreational overuse and misuse, lack of public awareness, climate change and coral bleaching, and disease. Additional focus areas were identified in some jurisdictions including: Invasive Species in Hawaii, Population Pressure in American Samoa, and Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts in Florida.

Florida, Hawaii, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands created specific Local Action Strategies for select locally relevant threats, using the six priority focus areas as a guide. Applying a collaborative decision-making process based on local needs, concerns and capacities, each jurisdiction developed strategies that contain a variety of projects designed for implementation over a three-year period (FY2005-2007).

The Local Action Strategies developed thus far represent more than the efforts of government agencies – the strategies include the views and voices of hundreds of stakeholders, including representatives of local and international non-governmental organizations, academia, industry, and concerned citizens, which were expressed through extensive workshops, briefings and public meetings.

While the approach to LAS development was unique in each jurisdiction, all of the resultant strategies include targeted goals, objectives, and specific projects to reduce the impacts of focus area threats. Currently, resources are being identified and acquired to implement the strategies. As additional capacity and funding become available in the future, it is anticipated that new strategies addressing the remaining focus areas identified in the Puerto Rico Resolution will be initiated as relevant to each jurisdiction.

The LAS framework has allowed U.S Coral Reef Task Force agencies to more clearly identify local needs, connect local priorities to national goals, and coordinate agency actions to better support each local jurisdiction's management of their coral resources. Local leadership and commitment are the foundation of the LAS efforts. However, a great deal of work remains in identifying support to implement the LASs during the upcoming years.

JANUARY 2005

INDIVIDUAL JURISDICTION FOCUS AREAS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

AMERICAN SAMOA

Fisheries Management
Land-based Sources of Pollution
Local Response to Global Climate Change
Population Pressures

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CNMI

Land-based Sources of Pollution
Fisheries Management
Recreational Use
Increase Awareness and Involvement
Coral Reef Resources Management

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GUAM

Land-based Sources of Pollution
Fisheries Management
Lack of Public Awareness
Recreational Misuse /Overuse
Disease/Coral Bleaching

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HAWAII

Fisheries Management
Land-based Sources of Pollution
Lack of Awareness
Aquatic Invasive Species
Recreational Use (tbd in 2005)

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FLORIDA

Awareness and Appreciation
Fishing, Diving and Other Uses
Land-based Sources of Pollution
Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts

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PUERTO RICO

Lack of Awareness
Land-based Sources of Pollution
Overfishing
Recreational Misuse/Overuse

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USVI

Lack of Awareness
Overfishing
Recreational Use
Land-based Sources of Pollution

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The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) was established by Presidential Executive Order in 1998 to lead U.S. efforts to preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. The USCRTF includes twelve federal agencies responsible for aspects of coral reef conservation, seven states and territories, and three freely associated states. The USCRTF has been instrumental in building partnerships and strategies for on-the-ground action to conserve coral reefs. For further information on the USCRTF, please visit:

http://coralreef.gov