

PROGRESS REPORT:**MULTI-AGENCY WORKSHOPS HELD 2 – 5 AUGUST 2005
ON FEDERAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES
RELATED TO CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS IN THE U.S. CARIBBEAN**

PURPOSE: During the March 2005 U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (CRTF) meeting in Washington DC, CRTF members supported a proposal for CRTF federal agencies with grants and funding opportunities addressing coral reef ecosystem conservation to assist stakeholders in U.S. island states and territories in understanding, applying and competing for Federal grants aimed at coral reef ecosystem conservation.

WORKSHOP REPORT: In a successful multi-agency CRTF effort, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southeast Region, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Conservation Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs organized and conducted informational and interactive coral grants workshops in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands during the first week of August 2005. Participants numbered 40 in Puerto Rico and 31 in the Virgin Islands, with 12 Federal representatives presenting 53 grant programs and funding opportunities.

The workshops presented a unique opportunity for attendees to learn about a variety of funding, partnership, and technical assistance opportunities that they weren't previously aware of. Many participants expressed that the workshop format, which brought together a limited number of CRTF Federal agency partners and focused on grant programs that can be used to support specific local coral reef protection and conservation priorities, was particularly helpful. The workshops also provided a constructive forum for local agency, NGO and academic representatives to network and discuss potential partnerships and collaborations – within and between the various organizations, and helped the attendees to understand the various ways one can seek funds through partnerships and potential alternatives to combine fund opportunities through cross agency grant requesting.

The workshop sponsors received a wealth of valuable feedback from workshop attendees on the workshop efforts and the various Federal funding and partnership programs. A number of notable suggestions and recommendations were offered and important opportunities were identified to improve coordination among federal agency coral reef grant programs to help deliver more support for on-the-ground coral reef conservation. The following is a list of key recommendations and follow-up action items:

1. Establish a mechanism to share good project proposals among Federal agencies for those projects not chosen for funding through an initial proposal submission to one agency.
2. Conduct future workshops and trainings tailored to specific island needs in:
 - a. Application writing
 - b. Budget planning
 - c. Establishing productive partnerships
 - d. Using Grants.gov
3. Consider holding additional, specific proposal writing workshops by individual agencies.

4. Engage private corporations or foundations to assist with coral conservation projects by providing in-kind contributions, matching funds, or other organizational support.
5. Explore possibilities for providing direct assistance for proposal writing and grant application preparation to local agencies, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.
6. Explore alternatives to help local agencies and organizations address staffing problems and capacity issues.
7. Discuss the possibility of focusing the next 3-year LAS effort on individual jurisdiction priorities rather than a list of priorities determined by the CRTF.
8. Determine how to encourage more CRTF Federal agency partners to prioritize funding and other support for LAS projects.
9. Encourage other CRTF agencies to be proactive in providing similar customized on-the-ground training or workshops to islands.
10. Investigate the possibility of providing larger grant amounts through the same or multiple agencies and/or multi- year project funding to reduce the burden of grant management on local agencies and organizations.

This workshop was an excellent example of CRTF interagency cooperation and progress; the first of its kind to bring together multiple Federal agencies and stakeholders to discuss federal grant programs and issues related to coral reef conservation. Efforts are being made to follow-up on the requests, suggestions, recommendations, and action items that came out of this workshop to make our Federal coral-related grant programs more efficient for our partners in the U.S. Caribbean and the Pacific. It is anticipated that our Caribbean effort will help frame a similar workshop(s) to be held in Hawai'i and the greater Pacific in the near future. Additionally, a CD including detailed information on all Federal coral-related funding opportunities presented during the workshops was compiled and distributed to the participants. The CD will be posted on the CRTF website at <http://www.coralreef.gov/>.

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