

Coral Reef Injury & Mitigation Working Group Update

DRAFT Handbook on Coral Reef Impacts: Avoidance, Minimization, Compensatory Mitigation and Restoration

33rd U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting

Feb. 19th, 2015

Washington, D.C.

USCRTF Action: Agency Review

- Briefing paper
- Draft Handbook and comment log sheet

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6mi484t9n2kv6e9/AAA_NDOHA-yWSWuNm7cL0b__Ra?dl=0

- **Request consolidated agency comments**
- 60 day review period
- **Comments due April 20th**

Working Group Members

- Army Corps of Engineers (Planning & Regulatory)
- EPA
- DOD
- DOI (FWS, NPS)
- DOJ
- NOAA (CRCP, NMFS, Restoration Center, Sanctuaries)
- State of Florida (FDEP, FFWC)
- State of Hawaii (DAR)
- USCG



DRAFT Handbook on Coral Reef Impacts: Avoidance, Minimization, Compensatory Mitigation, and Restoration

- What the Handbook is:
 - Compilation of what we do now
 - Summary of authorities
 - Collection of coral reef mitigation and restoration options (BMPs)
 - Case studies and lessons learned
 - Challenges and obstacles



- **Promotes avoidance and minimization**

DRAFT Handbook on Coral Reef Impacts: Avoidance, Minimization, Compensatory Mitigation, and Restoration

- What the Handbook is **not**:

This document is not official agency guidance, nor does it represent a comprehensive policy statement, or replace requirements contained within statute, codified in regulation or agency guidance documents.

- Target audience – Proponents, RPs, Managers
- Deliverable under USCRTF Resolutions (16.7 and 25.1) and NOP Implementation Plan

Abbreviated Table of Contents

1. Background
2. Framework for Planned Impacts to CRE
3. Framework for Responding to Unplanned Coral Reef Impacts (groundings/spills)
4. Coral Reef Mitigation and Restoration Options
5. Performance Standards and Monitoring
6. How Can We Improve the Practice?
7. Recommendations and Next Steps
8. ESA Considerations for Listed Corals



How Did We Get Here?

2002 – Puerto Rico Meeting Resolution 8.4

- Pacific mitigation report (Bentivoglio, 2003) – in response to 2000 National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs
- Formed interagency Coral Reef Mitigation Working Group
- Requested similar mitigation report for Atlantic/Caribbean region (Yoshioka, 2004)

2006 – USVI Meeting Resolution 16.7

- Workshop on coral reef injuries
- Combined Coral Injury & Mitigation Working Group (mechanism for engagement and communication)

2010 – Guam/CNMI Meeting

- USCRTF mitigation workshop
- Initial mitigation options summary document

2011 – D.C. Meeting Resolution 25.1

- USCRTF activities in support of National Ocean Policy
- Issue of coral injuries and mitigation prioritized

2014 – DOI-OIA funding to facilitate Handbook development

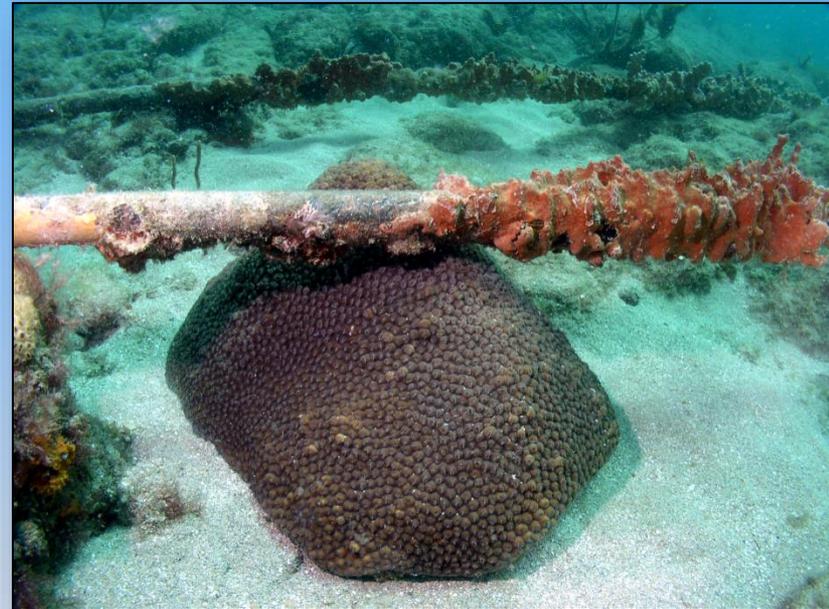
Challenges to Getting Here

- Primary WG Challenges - Agency differences in interpretation of assessing and responding to coral impacts
- Collaborative, stepwise process was necessary in order to overcome challenges
- Efforts to build the necessary relationships, understanding, and trust to address challenges have taken time



Steps Toward the Handbook

- What has the Working Group been doing?
 - Legal summary (authorities)
 - Mitigation and BMP reference compilation (describing options)
 - Hired contractor to pull document together (DOI-OIA support)
- DRAFT Handbook on Coral Reef Impacts: Avoidance, Minimization, Compensatory Mitigation and Restoration



What Have We Learned So Far?

- Approach to coral reef impacts has been case by case
- Variable success – both in process and ecological outcomes
- Need for consistent and practicable approaches for impact assessment and mitigation setting
- Need to improve success of compensatory mitigation and restoration actions
- Best Practice – **AVOID, AVOID, AVOID**



ACTION - Agency Technical Review

- Briefing paper
- Draft handbook and comment log sheet:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6mi484t9n2kv6e9/AAANDOHA-yWSWuNm7cL0b__Ra?dl=0
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Next Steps

- Webinars to facilitate review and comment
- Final draft Handbook for legal and ethical review at Fall USCRTF
- Draft Handbook resolution to include USCRTF tasking to continue WG
- WG developing rollout and socializing strategy
- Recommendations for future USCRTF products
- USCRTF support and integration for ongoing regional initiatives and what else may be needed?

For More Information

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