

**National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research
Coral Reef Projects PI Meeting**

La Parguera, Puerto Rico
June 10-12, 2003

Meeting Report

Background

The NOAA Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (CSCOR) held an internal program management meeting June 10-12, 2003 for the six coral reef programs that CSCOR administers. The major goal was to bring together the Lead Principal Investigator and Project Manager for each project so that they could collectively hear first-hand what their counterpart coral reef projects are doing. A second goal was to promote communication between projects so that individual projects can benefit from their collective successes and failures. A third goal was to inform the representatives from the projects of the ongoing revision of NOAA's internal processes and grants management practices in order to facilitate their grant proposal writing, project implementation, and project reporting requirements. The CSCOR projects participating in the meeting were: Coral Reef Ecosystem Studies-Caribbean; Coral Reef Ecosystem Studies-Micronesia; Coral Reef Research for Hawaii's Managers; the Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative Research Program; the National Coral Reef Institute; and the Puerto Rico Coral Reef Monitoring Program. The meeting participants consisted of only the Lead PI's and the Project Managers of all CSCOR's Coral Reef Program's projects, as well as representatives from CSCOR and the Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment.

Project Overviews

Puerto Rico Coral Reef Monitoring Program (PRCRMP) *Craig Lilyestrom; Chief, Division of Marine Resources (DMR), Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER).*

The PRCRMP objectives are to conduct baseline assessment of Puerto Rico's coral reef resources and to monitor water quality. The monitoring program has since been modified to follow the CARICOMP¹ protocols. Changes include visiting fewer sites, conducting stratified depth sampling, establishing permanent substrate marks, improving fish census procedures, incorporating coral disease, and collecting continuous water data. In addition to its monitoring studies, the PRCRMP project is conducting studies on the impact the trade on marine ornamental organisms and habitat characterization using side scan sonar.

¹ Caribbean Coastal Marine Productivity, an international consortium of agencies collecting and storing standardized data on coral reef ecosystems in the Caribbean region.

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Coral Reef Ecosystem Studies/Caribbean (CRES-Caribbean) *Rich Appeldoorn, Project Principal Investigator, University of Puerto Rico (UPR – M).*

The CRES-Caribbean's purpose is to study processes responsible for the decline of coral reefs, to study the feasibility of alternative management strategies and to offer advice to resource managers. Their studies incorporating movement and/or habitat use are being carried out in collaboration with the NOAA Center for Coastal Mapping and Assessment (CCMA) Biogeography Program. Additional studies are focusing in developing better understanding of user perceptions of management practices and their impacts to improve MPA development. The results will be incorporated into a decision model using ecological and socio-economical data to evaluate alternative management scenarios when creating MPAs. The Department of Marine Sciences of the University of Puerto Rico is in the process of creating a new center, the Center for Integrated Coral Reef Studies, to carry on the work performed by CRES-Caribbean.

National Coral Reef Institute (NCRI) *Richard Dodge; Project Principal Investigator, Nova Southeastern University (NSU).*

The purpose of the NCRI is to conduct coral reef assessment, monitoring, and restoration. The program identifies gaps and constraints in coral reef knowledge and conducts active research as well as funding extramural hypothesis-based studies. Current projects are focused on mapping and classification of southeast Florida coral reefs using remote sensing techniques, restoration of reefs from catastrophic events such as groundings, and the assessment of marginal reef systems present in cool subtropical waters as potential refugia from sea temperature rise due to the effects of climate change. Additional work is looking at creating tissue-based bioindicators that can serve as early warning of coral stress, effects of artificial reefs on fish populations, taxonomy of pantropic octocorals, and the effects of climate change on disease and growth of corals. NCRI is also involved in international collaboration helping conduct assessments of Cuba's coral reefs.

Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative Research Program (HCRI-RP) and Coral Reef Research for Hawaii's Managers (CRRHM) *Michael Hamnett, Project Principal Investigator and Kristine Davidson, Project Manager; University of Hawaii (UH).*

The mission of the HCRI-RP is to support monitoring of and research on coral reefs to build capacity for their management in Hawaii. The project is a collaborative agreement between the Division of Aquatic Resources and Division of Land Resources and UH. The project is run as an extramural funding program run by the University of Hawaii. The HCRI-RP is housed within UH's Social Science Research Institute because at its founding it was recognized that problems affecting coral reefs are caused by peoples' actions and addressing them requires a strong social perspective. The HCRI-RP has put a lot of emphasis on its outreach component. Their philosophy is that they know what the science says, but if it is not communicated to the managers and the public it serves no purpose. To address this issue, they have produced several technical documents and videos, hold regular meetings with resource managers, and asked their investigators to work with local schools.

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Coral Reef Ecosystem Studies/Micronesia (CRES-Micronesia) *Robert Richmond, Project Principal Investigator; University of Guam.*

The CRES-Micronesia project is a collaboration of several independent states throughout the islands of Micronesia. Because of the relationships established by the All Islands Task Force group, they are able to work across islands and management agencies. The project works closely with the Marine Resources Pacific Consortium (MAREPAC), a network of managers from American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Guam, and the Marshall Islands. The main goals of CRES-Micronesia are to understand the effects of water quality on coral reefs, the role that MPAs have in protection of coral reefs, and how can the science be best implemented to manage coral reef resources. They are focusing on taking the proven knowledge of traditional systems from the Pacific Islanders and applying to modern policy decision and resource management.

NOAA Presentations

NCCOS Strategic Objectives *Ruth Kelty (RK); NOAA staff, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)/Headquarters*

RK provided an overview of NCCOS, the parent office of CSCOR at NOAA. The presentation also provided information to CSCORS's coral reef project PIs and managers on NOAA's Coral Reef Ecosystem Research Plan. RK pointed out that in order to evaluate its progress in coral reef conservation, NOAA is in the process of developing a system of performance metrics for all its coral reef efforts. The evaluation system will have an impact on how CSCOR's coral reef projects will be evaluated by NOAA on their contribution to coral reef conservation. However, how the performance metrics that will be applied to scientific research have not been determined yet.

Integrative Mapping, Monitoring, and Assessment *Mark Monaco (MM); NOAA staff, NCCOS/Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment (CCMA).*

MM's presentation provided an overview of NCCOS's CCMA ongoing work creating an inventory of the coral reefs under US jurisdiction and of its monitoring and assessment program. The presentation provided an example of the type of guidance and support that CCMA can and currently gives to NOAA funded research and monitoring projects, as well as state and territory agencies and research institutions.

Model for Project Implementation *Felix Martinez (FM); NOAA staff, NCCOS/CSCOR.*

FM's presentation was intended to provide CSCOR's coral project PIs and managers with a blueprint of a successful project². The blueprint consists of five steps: project design, study selection process, study design and coordination, project implementation, and data analysis and dissemination. The principles of adaptive management are applied throughout the project's design and implementation in the form

² The concepts used for this presentation are derived from work published by Foundation of Success, a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental conservation.

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of a constant evaluation and feedback mechanism. This oversight, allows for timely corrections and/or re-design of the project and its studies as needed to achieve the project's goals.

Grants Management *David Hilmer (DH); NOAA staff, NCCOS/CSCOR.*

DH's presentation provided an overview on NOAA's current and proposed grant processing and management requirements. Emphasis was given to how the proposed changes to NOAA's grants management process will affect CSCOR's projects, particularly in the form of accelerated timelines for submission of proposals. DH also gave a preview of the ongoing development of an electronic proposal submission system for NOAA.

CSCOR Mission and Project Communications *Mike Dowgiallo (MD); NOAA staff, NCCOS/CSCOR.*

MD presented an overview of CSCOR's mission and its operating principles. The overview was followed by a review of the requirements for communication of results by the coral reef projects. Besides the formal progress and final reports, projects are expected to communicate their results to an external audience, such as resource managers and the community at large. MD also pointed out that as part of a NOAA funded effort, the projects need to make their data available to the National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC), NOAA's ocean meta-database, and to the Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS), NOAA's coral specific meta-database.

Integrated Assessment (IA)/State of the Reef Report (SRR) *Mark Monaco (MM); NCCOS/CCMA*

MM presented an overview of the National Ocean Service's (NOS) Coral Reef Ecosystem Program (CREMP). CREMP is in charge of the IA of the coral reefs under US jurisdiction. The IA is a comprehensive assessment of the current status of the reef, the impacts affecting them, and the effectiveness of associated management actions. MM provided a description of the SRR. CCMA is assisting the states and territories on developing standardized methodology to guarantee the quality and consistency of the information integrated into the SRR. To achieve this goal, workshops are conducted for the state and territorial monitoring agencies. MM noted that the information from CSCOR's coral reef projects is incorporated into the SRR as it is reported to their respective regional points of contact (POC). (Note: CSCOR coral reef projects are aware of this requirement and are reporting results to their POCs)

Framework for Collaboration *Felix Martinez (FM); Knauss Sea Grant Fellow, NCCOS/CSCOR.*

FM discussed the commonalities between CSCOR coral reef projects, as well as the unique experiences that each project has due to working on separate geographical locations. The shared and unique characteristics provide the rationale for the implementation of a formal framework for collaboration between projects. The concept of a yearly meeting co-sponsored by CSCOR and the coral reef projects was developed and adopted.

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Meeting Outcomes

The meeting proved to be a major success. The goal of promoting communication between projects to promote collaboration was accomplished at the onset. Face to face contact between CSCOR representatives and the projects proved an effective way of addressing grant management issues which had not been clarified after telephone and/or e-mail communication. We were also able to agree on continuing to meet every year as a means to maintain communication links between projects and to address CSCOR grant management issues. As a result of the meeting we came up with a list of action items for which CSCOR will provide answers to the project PIs and managers as soon as possible. The action items with the initials of the person responsible of completing are:

1. Inform CSCOR of the status of the performance metrics system so that it can be forwarded to its coral reef projects (RK).
2. Determine the feasibility of treating the Congressionally Directed Projects as three year grants subject to yearly appropriations (DH).
3. Inform project PIs and managers of the status of NOAA's proposed grants processing timelines (MD).
4. Provide a template of the NCCOS weekly report to the project managers (MD).
5. Include the project PIs and managers in the NCCOS weekly report distribution list (RK).
6. Send a complete and update list of contacts to the project PIs and managers (MD).
7. Coordinate a CSCOR coral reef projects meeting for 2004 (FM).

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Table 1. The list of meeting participants including their position relative to their institutional or project affiliation.

Name	Position	Affiliation
Lionel Orama	Representative for Chancellor	UPR – M
Nilda Aponte	Director-DMS	UPR – M
Richard S. Appeldoorn	Lead Project PI	CRES – Caribbean
David Ballantine	Back-up Lead Project PI	CRES – Caribbean
Ernesto Otero	Study PI	CRES – Caribbean
Manuel Valdes-Pissini	Study PI	CRES – Caribbean
Ernest Weil	Study PI	CRES – Caribbean
Paul Yoshioka	Study PI	CRES – Caribbean
Robert Richmond	Lead Project PI	CRES – Caribbean
Michael P. Hamnett	Lead Project PI	HCRI – RP/CRRHM
Kristine Davidson	Project Manager	HCRI – RP /CRRHM
Richard Dodge	Lead Project PI	NCRI
Carol Fretwell	Project Manager	NCRI
Bernhard M. Reigl	Study PI	NCRI
Craig Lylestrom	Chief-DMR/DNER	PRCRMP
James Timber	Biologist	PRCRMP
Felix Martinez	Knauss Sea Grant Fellow	NCCOS/CSCOR
Michael Dowgiallo	NOAA Staff	NCCOS/CSCOR
David Hilmer	NOAA Staff	NCCOS/CSCOR
Ruth Kelty	NOAA Staff	NCCOS/Headquarters
Mark Monaco	NOAA Staff	NCCOS/CCMA

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**NOAA NOS / NCCOS / CSCOR
Coral Reef Projects PI Meeting
Agenda**

DAY 1 (June 10)

- 9:00 – 9:30 Opening
 - Welcoming
 - Introduction of Participants
- 9:30 – 9:45 Workshop Objectives (Felix Martinez)
 - CSCOR perspective (Mike Dowgiallo)
 - NCCOS perspective (Ruth Kelty)
- 9:45 – 10:45 Project Overviews I³
 - PRCRMP (Craig Lilyestrom)
 - CRES – Caribbean (Rich Appeldoorn)
- 10:45 – 11:00 Break
- 11:00 – 12:30 Project Overviews II
 - NCRI (Richard Dodge)
 - HCRI – RP (Michael Hamnett)
 - CRES – Micronesia (Robert Richmond)
- 12:30 – 1:45 Lunch
- 1:45 – 2:30 NOAA Strategic Plan
 - NCCOS Strategic Objectives (Ruth Kelty)
- 2:30 – 3:15 NOAA Support
 - NOS/CCMA Collaboration (Mark Monaco)
- 3:15 – 3:30 Break
- 3:30 – 4:15 NOAA Issues I
 - Model for Project Implementation (Felix Martinez)
- 4:15 – 4:30 Review of Day 1 (Felix Martinez)
- 4:30 ADJOURN

Evening Activities:

- 6:00 – 7:30 Group Dinner (All)
 - Restaurante Majimo (Hotel Torres de la Parguera)
- 8:00 – 10:00 Trip to Bioluminescent Bay

³ “Project Overviews” will consist of 30 min presentations, including a 5 min period for questions.

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DAY 2 (June 11)

- 8:45 – 9:00 Objectives for day 2 (Felix Martinez)
- 9:00 – 9:45 NOAA Issues II
- Grant Management (David Hilmer)
- 9:45 – 10:30 NOAA Issues III
- CSCOR Mission / Project Communications (Mike Dowgiallo)
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 11:00 NOAA Issues IV
- Integrated Assessment / State of the Reef Report (Mark Monaco)
- 11:00 - 11:45 NOAA Issues V
- Framework for Collaboration (Felix Martinez)
- 11:45 - 12:15 Open Discussion I (All)
- Communications / Collaboration
- 12:15 – 1:30 Lunch
- 1:30 - 2:00 Open Discussion II (All)
- TBD
- 2:00 – 2:30 Open Discussion III (All)
- TBD
- 2:30 - 3:00 Open Discussion IV (All)
- TBD
- 3:00 - 3:15 Break
- 3:15 - 3:45 Open Discussion V (All)
- TBD
- 3:45 - 4:15 Closing Comments (Felix Martinez)
- Summary day 2
- Action items
- 4:15 ADJOURN

No planned evening activities

DAY 3 (June 12)

- 8:00 - 12:00 Optional field trip to inner reefs/mangroves
(Snorkeling at reef sites, return through mangrove channels)