

**Comment Summary**  
**Responses to June 19, 2007 *Federal Register* Notice**  
**Coral Reef Conservation Program External Review, 2002-2006**

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This document summarizes the responses to a Request for Comment that was posted in the *Federal Register* on June 19, 2007 by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP). The Request for Comment was intended to solicit feedback on the programs and activities that the CRCP has supported in its efforts to conserve coral resources for the five years between 2002 and 2006. The Request for Comment posed six questions:

- Is the Program focusing efforts on the right suite of activities to advance coral reef conservation?
- Are the Program's efforts in various geographic areas appropriate to address the issues in each region?
- Are the Program's science and observation efforts (e.g., research, mapping, and monitoring) adequately addressing management needs, and informing and resulting in management actions?
- Have the Program's education and outreach efforts been effective in reaching the proper audiences?
- Is the Program providing effective leadership and building useful partnerships to advance coral reef conservation?
- How can the CRCP improve its impact and performance in the future?

The CRCP received approximately 35 responses to this notice. A list of the respondents is provided at the end of this document in Appendix A. Respondents included Federal, state and local agencies and organizations with responsibilities for coral reef conservation and management; fisheries councils; non-governmental organizations; and individuals with an interest in coral reef issues.

The responses are provided anonymously in this summary. If the reader is interested in the source of a particular comment, Appendix B provides the names of the respondents and their specific comments.

The remainder of this document provides a summary of the comments that are provided in Appendix B.

**Q1: Is the Program focusing efforts on the right suite of activities to advance coral reef conservation?**

In general, commenters stated that the threats identified in the National Action Plan and addressed by the CRCP are the right ones to address to advance coral reef conservation, although one commenter stated that the intensity and timeliness of the Program's efforts are not sufficient to address the severity and scope of the coral reef crisis. One commenter remarked that insufficient funding is directed at reducing

and prohibiting other identified threats, such as unsustainable coastal development, overuse from tourism, and pollution and runoff. Another commenter stated that while the threats addressed by CRCP are the right ones to address, they are not of equal importance, and that increasing sea surface temperatures and ocean acidification pose the greatest threats to coral reefs. Still another commenter reported that misuse/overuse by recreational activities is a key threat that was not fully vetted by the National Action Plan. One commenter suggested that the program should triage the most addressable coral reef threats that lead to impacts that can be controlled, such as land-based sources of pollution, and not focus on issues such as global warming.

Several commenters addressed CRCP's distribution of funding. Most commenters stated that the mix of activities and the allocations to those activities make sense. One commenter is encouraged by the program's recent focus on restoration. However, several commenters stated that funding distribution is an issue. One commenter felt that disproportionate funding has been allocated to activities related to "reducing the adverse impacts of fishing" and "improving the use and effectiveness of MPAs." Another commenter felt that funding is disproportionately allocated to mapping and monitoring relative to the "central mission" of saving reefs; by contrast, another commenter noted that mapping and monitoring activities are extremely important to the protection of reefs. The latter commenter also stated that funding and efforts aimed at reducing fishing are being given to agencies with no statutory authority to implement regulations to manage fishing activities. One commenter stated that politics play more of a role in funds distribution than do conservation needs.

One commenter noted that the funding for coordination activities, at 20 percent of total funding, seems a bit high, but acknowledged that the cost might reflect the reality of managing multiple systems and programs. Similarly, one commenter noted that State and Territory ecosystem funding, coupled with fishery management, makes "management" much larger than the other spend plan categories. Another commenter noted that the majority of the Program's personnel costs are to support positions based in Washington D.C. The commenter suggested better distribution of funding for positions within areas where there are coral reefs, because local jurisdiction staff members are responsible for providing detailed reports and information, developing local action strategies, and coordinating efforts to better conserve and manage coral reef resources. Two commenters stated that the CRCP should not be funding programs that are in direct conflict with stated goals of the National Action Plan and National Action Strategy, or that are in conflict with efforts or policies of local jurisdictions or administrations. (These commenters did not provide examples of such programs.) One commenter cited the lack of funds for equipment use (boats,

vehicles, maintenance and staff support) for research and monitoring efforts, as well as support staff and project managers to ensure completion of projects.

One commenter noted that the majority of funds for implementation of LAS projects are leveraged by the jurisdictions from the funds that are received from the CRCP, and are therefore not implemented primarily with CRCP funding.

One commenter pointed out that of the \$26 million awarded annually to NOAA, a significant percentage of that funding is not directly linked to LAS or other priorities identified by the US Coral Reef Task Force (UCRTF).

One commenter stated that the Program is not focusing on the right suite of activities. This commenter stated that the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative has failed to address the issues affecting reefs in that area, such as sewage outfall and the disposal of medical and industrial waste into Florida waters, and that the Coral Reef Program is not adequately focusing on this issue.

Commenters provided many suggestions for the CRCP concerning the program's investments. A few comments discussed the issue of transparency within CRCP with respect to its funding process and decision-making. Comments on this issue included:

- CRCP needs more transparency with regard to the relationship between project funding and local resource management priorities as defined by the jurisdictions (two commenters).
- CRCP needs to better communicate how it allocates funds to improve the status of coral reef resources (two commenters).

Several commenters provided suggestions for modifications to the distribution, amounts, or purposes of funds across the spend plan categories, as can be seen in the following comments:

- Increase funding for Reducing Global Threats to Reefs and Reducing Impacts of Climate Change.
- Pursue more programs in the categories of General Coral Reef Conservation and International Coral Reef Conservation.
- Increase focus on the Climate Change goal.
- Secure funding for large-scale projects, such as watershed restoration to address land-based sources of pollution and the need for a marine laboratory in American Samoa.
- Redistribute funds from some of the more expensive programs such as research cruises and mapping to the State and Territorial Management and Monitoring Grants and the General Coral Reef Conservation Grants.

- Include more emphasis on the science and management of restoration.
- Shift resources from monitoring the decline of reefs to restoration.
- Increase funding for (and partnership with) NOAA's MPA center to ensure effective use of this tool.
- Increase funding for deeper coral reef research.
- Support increased emphasis on research, monitoring, and restoration for Endangered Species Act listed corals.
- Increase funding for research so that it is commensurate with other categories, or even higher. Because this would result in lower funding for other areas, more overall funding is needed.
- Reduce the REA component to tow surveys and redirect the funds to local monitoring efforts through expansion of the State and Territorial Monitoring Grants.
- Address the causes of increasing sea temperature and acidification in addition to studying the impacts of those threats.
- Funnel more funds internationally since conservation efforts in developing countries, where most reefs are located, pale in comparison to those undertaken by the US.

Several suggestions focused on CRCP's support to the development of local capacity for coral reef activities, both through programmatic-level support and funding. One commenter noted that CRCP-funded projects are led by staff from various agencies who offer in-kind support to the local jurisdiction and who must perform coral reef responsibilities in addition to their other jobs. This often makes it difficult to get the coral funded projects off the ground, completed in a timely manner, and implemented with proper oversight and management. Specific suggestions on this topic included:

- Assess local support (e.g., positions and management), including staff capacity and project management skills, to ensure that programs and projects are completed. The planning methods that are suggested in the All Islands strategy would help build the kind of project planning, implementation, and evaluation capacity that is needed in the islands.
- Provide more funding to the jurisdictions through the management and monitoring grants to enable implementation.
- Place greater emphasis on building on-site capacity for reef conservation and protection, especially marine protected areas (MPAs).
- Increase support for local conservation programs.
- Place a mid-level staff member (in addition to Coral Fellows) within each jurisdiction to support conservation activities at local level (two commenters).
- Fund local positions within key government agencies to implement projects.

- Each Federal oversight agency (e.g., EPA for ASEPA, USWWF/NOAA for DMWR, NSF for ASCC, NPS/DOI for NPAS) should fund a position that would oversee projects and coordinate efforts among the local agencies.
- Projects and funding directed to LAS should be coordinated with the jurisdictions. Applicants for NOAA Coral Program grants should be required to communicate initially with jurisdictional POCs to find ways to collaborate and ensure they are addressing the needs of the unfunded LAS priority projects, as well as other local coral conservation priorities identified by POCs.
- Task local marine and wildlife resource management agencies to lead initiatives and projects related to reducing impacts of fishing and the creation and strengthening of MPAs.
- Direct that funding provided for coral reef conservation under the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council not be used to support programs that are in direct conflict with the stated goals of the National Action Plan and the National Action Strategy, efforts underway within the jurisdictions, or policies of local administrations (two commenters).
- Secure additional funding (\$37 million) to complete LAS projects identified in 2002-2003.
- Fund the acquisition of high-resolution imagery and the strengthening of local capacity by training a team of local GIS managers in remote sensing techniques to map their coral reef at a more meaningful scale.

Another topic that garnered a few comments is the use of funding for field implementation. Comments on this topic included:

- Increase percentage of funding allocated to field implementation activities that contribute to in-situ conservation of reefs.
- Increase grant funding to partners who undertake field implementation.
- Focus funding on “on-the-ground” activities, such as improving water quality, developing and implementing restoration techniques, and increasing enforcement of existing regulations.

A few comments addressed issues concerning the US Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) and the All Islands Council (AIC), as follows:

- CRCP needs to more effectively engage other Federal agencies represented on USCRTF and secure genuine commitment to work together with local jurisdictions.
- CRCP needs to have more frequent phone calls and more effective interaction at USCRTF meetings with POCs and during scheduled site visits.

- Steering committee calls need to be re-assessed as a communications mechanism. The current process of having all issues discussed and decided on phone calls across 10 time zones with over 20 individuals may not be the best approach to gaining input and insight. (Three commenters)
- USCRTF should amend Objective 5 of the Reef Managers' Guide to read: "Address the impact of global change, coral bleaching, and reef health on reefs and people, and support efforts at the local, state, national, and global levels to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases."
- USCRTF processes for following up on, and responding to, issues raised by NGOs in their public comments needs to be greatly improved. Public comments from NGOs and private citizens located within the geographic regions that contain coral reefs deserve appropriate responses.
- CRCP should increase funding for the AIC Secretariat to increase policy support, communication and coordination between the CRCP, other Federal agencies, and the jurisdictions.

Three comments addressed the need to assess program activities and their results over time. One commenter stated that CRCP should define the current balance between studying, assessing, and mapping coral reefs and the direct actions to manage them, and examine whether it has changed over the years of the program. Another commenter recommended the development of metrics on the amount of time CRCP-sponsored planning, reporting, and meetings compared to the time devoted to research and monitoring, regulations and enforcement, public educations and awareness, and other management activities. The commenter stated that it seems that much time is devoted to planning, reporting, and meeting at the expense of real management. One commenter stated that better communication needs to be established to identify a clear strategy with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time) objectives, and that the final measure of progress should be tied directly to reef health indicators.

**Q2: Are the Program's efforts in various geographic areas appropriate to address the issues in each region?**

Several commenters responded that the Program's geographic reach is appropriate. They cited the support to the states, territories, and commonwealths in the Pacific and Caribbean, where most US coral reefs are located. Two commenters noted that CRCP's technical support and human resources have enabled the initiation of new coral reef conservation programs where none existed before, or have greatly enhanced the ability and capacity of coral jurisdictions to expand on previous efforts. Another commenter stated that the program has used diverse locally identified projects and programs to address local issues, and that some of the broader, cross-cutting programs, such as assessment, monitoring, and MPAs, address both local concerns and regional and national priorities.

Several commenters noted shortcomings in domestic coral reef programs. One commenter stated that the CRCP does not adequately address South Florida. According to this commenter, no management plan exists for reefs in that area. Another commenter reported that the Caribbean region is under-funded, considering the “dire situation” there. A third commenter suggested that CRCP allocate resources in a manner that reflects the distribution of US coral reef ecosystems. The commenter noted that a recent NOAA report identifies Florida as the area with the greatest area of potential reef ecosystems, yet the current allocation of resources is weighted disproportionately toward the Pacific. Another commenter stated that CRCP needs to consider requests from Guam with respect to innovative strategies that deal specifically with that island and its coral resources.

Several commenters suggested the CRCP should extend its reach to include an international component. One commenter suggested that more regional and international collaboration is needed for effective resource management. Another commenter stated, “A truly effective program must involve all reef systems, not just domestic ones,” and suggested that a much greater share of the 20% of discretionary funds should be used for international projects. Other specific suggestions on this topic include:

- CRCP needs to increase protection for the Gulf of Mexico, which faces unique threats from oil and gas exploration. Except for the Flower Garden Banks, Gulf reefs are unprotected from destructive fishing practices and would benefit from fully developed action plans.
- Greater investment in conservation of reefs in the (non-US) greater Caribbean and South Pacific regions will be essential to save US reefs.
- In the Samoan Archipelago, there is a need for coordination with other islands within the archipelago. American Samoa is lumped with Hawai’i, Guam, and CNMI for coral reef conservation activities, and lacks support for ecologically-based regional approaches to reef management because of a lack of coordination with Samoa and other countries (two commenters).
- Because of their sovereignty, FAS are ineligible for, or restricted in the amounts they can receive from, CRCP grants. A redistribution of some internal NOAA funding to support the work of NGOs in the FAS would result in increased coral reef conservation.
- Deep-sea and cold water corals merit the attention of the USCRTF.

One issue touched upon by three commenters is CRCP’s contribution to the Micronesian Challenge. Two commenters supported increased involvement in the Challenge; one commenter wants funding for the Challenge to be redirected. Here are the specific comments addressing the Challenge:

- In the Freely Associated States, CRCP should find a way to support local coral reef conservation initiatives such as the Micronesian Challenge.



- CRCP should assist in mediations between the US State Department and the jurisdictions with regard to foreign assistance for coral reef issues. CRCP should support the Micronesian Challenge, as have several other countries and organizations including the Secretariat of the Pacific Environmental Programme, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, The Nature Conservancy, and Conservation International.
- Despite public opposition to more MPAs in the CNMI, much funding has been diverted to support the Micronesian Challenge, which requires setting aside 30% of marine areas in the CNMI as no-fishing areas. Instead, more of the funding that is going to the Micronesian Challenge should be provided to LAS projects and fisheries data management programs.

**Q3: Are the Program’s science and observation efforts (e.g., research, mapping, and monitoring) adequately addressing management needs, and informing and resulting in management actions?**

Commenters strongly praised the Program’s research, mapping, and monitoring efforts, stating that the CRCP is doing a good job informing and addressing management needs. Others cited positive outcomes resulting from partnering efforts, such as a coral disease monitoring program funded by CRCP that taught local marine biologists to identify and map coral disease in American Samoa. Commenters cited several specific examples of products and activities that have been particularly useful, as highlighted here:

- Research is yielding a wealth of important diagnostic information that will help coral reef managers understand causal stress-response linkages, and provide the basis for better informed policies.
- CRED has been useful in helping to identify which reef fish are over-fished and need to be protected (two commenters). CRED has also provided much needed data on remote shoreline areas in Hawai’i.
- RAMP and other research cruises provide valuable scientific data to support effective coastal resource management decisions (three commenters).
- The LAS process has been beneficial in raising awareness and for focusing on important issues and problems.
- Mapping projects have provided much useful information about coral reef sources that can be used for management decisions. In particular, the Program’s mapping, monitoring, and documentation regarding the coral reef ecosystems of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands were instrumental in bringing national and international attention to the scale and uniqueness of those ecosystems.
- The coral bleaching handbook has been a very effective tool for communicating to management audiences.

- NOAA's international partnerships are extremely important in terms of leveraging US funds to achieve common objectives, particularly on the research side, and to empower managers to take the research findings and use them to improve their management effectiveness. (two commenters)
- The opportunities provided by workshops and participation in NOAA cruises have helped managers to better understand coral reef issues.

One commenter stated that mapping and monitoring consume too much of the budget. According to this commenter, management needs are highly political in nature, so although NOAA research has documented major threats to coral reefs from global warming and ocean acidification, policy makers at upper levels have ignored or selectively interpreted research findings. This commenter states that NOAA scientists have apparently deferred to policy makers to address or fail to address the concerns suggested by their research.

One commenter noted that it is difficult to evaluate the degree to which management actions have resulted from CRCP's efforts. Another commenter stated that he is not sure that the monitoring efforts supported by CRCP are geared to answer specific management questions, and that there are likely not enough resources in CRCP to develop a monitoring program for one jurisdiction that will provide representative and statistically defensible conclusions about improvements, or lack thereof, in coral reef ecosystems. One commenter stated that he was not sure whether mapping and monitoring programs have provided the information needed by managers, particularly in the more remote regions such as the Eastern Caribbean. Another commenter specifically noted that it is unclear how RAMP final reports are ultimately used, but that these efforts need to translate into national policy.

Two commenters suggested that CRCP work to improve assessment of the Program itself, as seen in these comments:

- Strengthen efforts to monitor program results by developing assessment criteria, monitor projects, and measure impacts.
- Formulate SMART objectives that directly address improvement of the health of the resource.
- Carefully analyze the relative conservation benefit of the use of the funds that are provided for coral reef research.

Several comments focused specifically on levels or distribution of funding, such as:

- Additional support for equipment (boats, maintenance) would benefit local projects. (three commenters)

- Support long-term water quality monitoring. (three commenters)
- Fund acquisition of high resolution imagery, and strengthen local capacity by training teams of local GIS managers in remote sensing technologies to map the extent of their coral reefs at a more meaningful scale.
- Fund more diver surveys to ground truth the resources in some mapping areas.
- In-field management may be receiving too few funds relative to research, monitoring, and mapping.
- Increase funding for scientific studies that address coral reef health.
- Increase funding for research on the cumulative impacts on nearshore reefs from beach dredge and fill projects.
- Increase funding for inshore and offshore creel surveys for Guam, CNMI and American Samoa to allow assessment of status and condition of reef fish stocks and effectiveness of fishery conservation and management measures.
- Consider redirecting funds from more costly programs (e.g., cruises and mapping) to Management and Monitoring Grants and General Coral Reef Conservation Grants.
- Additional funding is needed for mapping and monitoring to provide input that can be used to design appropriate management measures to protect sensitive coral areas.
- Explore funding for NOAA RAMP cruises for the FSM, Palau, and Marshall Islands, affiliates of the US who possess significant coral reef resources.
- In Hawai'i, the annual allocation for monitoring is barely enough to undertake monitoring activities on two islands, and does not allow for development of a statewide, integrated long-term monitoring program.
- Underfunding of fisheries monitoring programs appears to be a concerted effort to ensure that a lack of information is used to justify the establishment of new MPAs.
- A reduction in the cruise schedule can assure managers of meaningful data while allowing some funds to be reprogrammed for on-the-ground monitoring activities that are underway and at a much finer scale in each jurisdiction.

One commenter suggested that NFWF allow indirect costs in budgets, and that it review its cost share policy with non-governmental organizational partners.

Other comments focused on additional tools and research that are needed, including:

- Many of the basic tools, such as bathymetry and habitat maps, are limited.
- Research is needed to understand that quantities, sources and sinks of pollution, as well as larval transport pathways, so managers can develop effective strategies to address threats to reefs and evaluate coral reef recovery rates.

- CRCP could do more with marine disease, since it could be considered a response variable for entire ecosystem health. A focus on good diagnostics would be appropriate.
- We need sound data or detection techniques to adequately measure whether mitigation measures on land are eliminating or minimizing impacts to downslope coral reefs.
- Exogenous factors (e.g., trade, alien species, illegal fishing, pollution/disease) need to be effectively monitored to understand the relative impact of such exogenous threats compared to those that are being addressed through local actions.
- More emphasis should be placed on adaptive management that goes beyond monitoring, and tests hypotheses about potential management options on reefs. Adaptive management tests scenarios experimentally, then changes them if the results are not up to a defined standard.
- An array of sensors to monitor oceanographic conditions, similar to the one that has been established for the NWHI, is needed in the main Hawaiian Islands to understand the currents throughout the archipelago and patterns of connectivity.

Several commenters focused on the timeliness, availability, and utility of products and services resulting from CRCP funding. Comments included:

- Timely reporting of CRED missions requires some improvement, as the results allow jurisdictions to allocate resources, assess strategies, and define management efforts to address prevalent coral reef protection issues.
- More timely release of bathymetric and habitat characterization information. Comprehensive maps of areas in Federal waters have been withheld from Council and public, limiting ability to address essential fish habitat mandates and coral reef conservation efforts in the EEZ.
- Conduct research cruises less frequently, and allow data to be analyzed and provided to local jurisdictions in a more timely manner.
- The long delay in analyzing and reporting data from the 2002 and 2004 monitoring surveys is disappointing.
- Reports containing data analyses for 2003, 2005, and 2007 have not been provided to Guam, and may not be available for another two years. It is important that the jurisdiction receive this data in a more timely manner.
- Data in monitoring projects should feed one central database that can be queried for summary information (e.g., species status, location specific habitat information).
- As a result of scale, maps have not been very useful and accurate for local resource managers.
- Because maps are digital, resource managers without training or access to desktop GIS systems still underutilize maps that are available.

- The new acoustic maps are not useful. In Broward County, the best reef resources are shown as pavement on these maps.

A few commenters suggested improving coordination or involvement with other partners.

- CRCP should better coordinate with the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council to enhance science or conservation representation. CRCP should work with the Governors, who appoint Council members, to make them aware of the lack of this representation.
- CRCP can expand its cooperative efforts to other partners, both within NOAA and with other agencies, such as the International Fisheries Offices.
- Involve more Federal agencies in LAS, as some Federal agencies have the same needs and issues as states, territories, and Freely Associated States.

***Q4: Have the Program's education and outreach efforts been effective in reaching the proper audiences?***

Several commenters stated that it appears that the CRCP has provided extensive education and outreach support to coral reef conservation, or has funded educational or outreach activities that are undertaken by local organizations. Examples from commenters include:

- Thanks to the activities of the CRCP, more educational materials and activities related to coral reef protection are available than ever before.
- The CRCP at NOAA is clearly the world leader in disseminating information to the scientific and coral reef management communities, through development resources, workshops, and the engagement of staff.
- CRCP has made research results and academic discussions on issues related to coral reefs available to the users, especially to educators.
- CRCP has provided opportunities for educators to see researchers work in the field, which is a very important experience for them.
- Fact sheets on the State of Coral Reef Ecosystems if the US is a useful summary of the US reefs are doing.
- Local programs in Hawai'i, which have been partly supported by the CRCP, have clearly raised the level of awareness about the threats to coral reefs.
- RARE Pride has built local capacity and has enhanced the CRAG education and outreach work.. Outreach efforts reach schools, villages, youth groups, churches, and teachers.

- Due to education and outreach by CRCP and others, there is likely now an increased awareness by the general public that coral reefs are in trouble due to global warming, and there is a groundswell of public support for action to address this problem.

Some commenters reported that the education and outreach efforts do not go far enough, or do not focus on the right topics. One commenter noted that there is little education and outreach support for individual government agency education and outreach programs within American Samoa because the resources in the grant do not allow for this support with all the other goals and objectives that must be reached within the LAS. Another commenter noted that limited resources and focus have been applied to raising awareness about coral reefs across the general US public, and that more focus should be placed on ensuring that children and policy makers who do not live near coasts understand and care about how their actions impact coral reefs. Still another commenter noted that CRCP outreach focuses more on the positive than on some of the very real threats and challenges faced in conserving coral reefs. One commenter noted that there is less awareness among the general population of the impacts of overfishing on coral reefs, and that although there may be support among the general population for more MPAs, such support is not focused enough to overcome the opposition to MPAs from highly vocal fishing interests.

Despite acknowledgement that CRCP undertakes or supports many outreach and educational activities, however, several commenters stated that it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of those efforts; to determine whether programs have reached the right audiences; and whether this has translated into increased awareness and changes in behavior. One commenter stated that it is difficult to tell how much important information generated about the causes of coral reef demise— and what citizens can do about it—is getting down to the level of schools, communities, consumer groups, utilities, and local governments. One commenter noted that outreach efforts in Hawai'i have not translated into more political and financial support for the management of coral reef ecosystems by the state legislature, while another noted that the Program's efforts have not reached the highest levels of government (e.g., the White House). One commenter recommended that to learn whether outreach and education efforts are successful, CRCP should support basic surveys of people's attitudes and awareness toward reefs to get a baseline, then resurvey the same population after several years.

Commenters provided several suggestions related to funding for outreach and education. Two commenters suggested that CRCP take advantage of the US role as co-coordinator of the International Year of the Reef in 2008 by providing funding to develop and distribute key awareness materials to aid in

local or national efforts. Another commenter stated that more funds and guidance need to be directed to the jurisdictions for support for communities to start local NGOs that can share in the responsibilities of outreach and education. One commenter specified that the National Science Foundation should fund locally appropriate educational curricula in schools and community colleges in American Samoa, which would provide the basis for building future scientists and managers in that jurisdiction.

Some commenters focused on the content of the outreach/education and the intended audiences:

- Move from general education and outreach messages (e.g., coral reefs are valuable, important, and under threat) to more specific messages directed at garnering and focusing specific actions which can and should be supported, such as expansion of MPAs, upgrading of sewage treatment plants, and better management of construction runoff.
- NOAA could publish something like, “Ten Things I Can Do to Save Reefs.”
- More attention should be placed on the scientific findings and potential applications produced by the CRCP’s science and observation line agencies. These scientific findings need to be translated in a manner that can be understood and easily accessed by the layperson.
- More effort needs to be put into educating the public on identifying and acting on land use problems that cause runoff onto reef ecosystems.

Some comments focused on the intended audiences for CRCP outreach and education:

- The information the CRCP generates can be used for social marketing, to craft targeted messages to different segments of the public to elicit their personal commitment to protecting reefs. (two commenters)
- More outreach to fishermen, women’s and men’s organizations, and pastors is needed to make outreach truly effective.
- More outreach and education for ethnic communities who are not familiar with local laws.

**Q5: Is the Program providing effective leadership and building useful partnerships to advance coral reef conservation?**

Commenters strongly praised the CRCP for its leadership and partnership-building successes, often citing partnerships in particular as critical to the success of coral reef conservation efforts at the local level.

Comments about CRCP’s leadership and support to partnerships included:

- CRCP is providing effective leadership and building useful partnerships to advance coral reef conservation given internal and external politics, needs, challenges, and opportunities.
- CRCP is particularly strong in personnel and approach.
- CRCP has convened or been a part of the major coral reef conservation meetings throughout the world.
- CRCP has helped to highlight innovative approaches to conservation and encourage others to participate.
- The coral reef conservation program is providing effective scientific leadership and is building useful partnerships across the planet. The workshops and networks I have been in as a result of NOAA CRCP's efforts have been particularly effective.
- By funding a number of partners that are developing innovations in coral reef conservation, the CRCP is enhancing its leadership.
- CRCP has started to build more effective partnerships. Pacific Islands MPA Community (PIMPAC) was developed through support of the CRCP. PIMPAC members include many government and local NGO partners, as well as a resource team comprised of the Community Conservation Network, Locally Managed Marine Area Network, The Nature Conservancy and the Micronesia Conservation Trust. The CRCP has also been partnering more directly with The Nature Conservancy at many levels in both the Pacific and the Caribbean on many efforts including resilience, sustainable finance, site-based management planning, management effectiveness, and climate change
- Coral Reef Task Force and related meetings have brought people together within states, territories, and commonwealths with federal partners unlike ever before.
- CRCP supports important regional processes that are providing leadership in coral reef conservation. These include the Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area Community (PIMPAC) and others.
- LAS planning efforts have contributed even more to coordination and collaboration at the local level than the meetings. Agency stove pipes have become more permeable, much more collaboration is going on between agencies and organizations at all levels, and concerted efforts have been mounted to try and mitigate the threats to coral reef ecosystems that were simply not there before.
- LAS have been quite successful in focusing efforts on priority threats and have been utilized in various ways by the local jurisdictions to prioritize actions and leverage support.
- NOAA is a partner in a global program of Targeted Research on Coral Reefs to help build capacity for management in countries where the majority of reefs are found. Such international



programs can galvanize key action on the ground, garner the attention of the press, and help leverage additional resources from other institutions to address many of the problems facing reefs outside the U.S. and the Freely Associated States of the Pacific.

- The All Islands Coordinating Committee and its interaction with the Task Force and CRCP office have brought state, territorial, and commonwealth coral reef managers closer together than any other endeavor. Some of the tensions between the All Islands Committee and the CRCP staff have contributed to closer working relationships among the POCs.
- The USCRTF has been a major boon for the International Coral Reef Initiative as well and helped keep several important policy initiatives on the radar screen of international conventions and other fora. Maintaining links with international initiatives remains key to generating the kind of global support that will be required to protect the world's coral reefs.
- Promoting socioeconomic monitoring of coral reefs, in addition to the bio-physical monitoring that has been the traditional approach of monitoring efforts, has been a major breakthrough.

Some commenters reported that the Federal Program is directing the activities of local programs.

- There is a feeling in the islands that the Federal government is trying to dictate priorities and projects to local agencies, rather than supporting projects identified by agencies via their LAS. One issue is increased pressure to create more MPAs.
- It is difficult to promote (local or regional) fishery management programs if there is a preconception from leadership that fishing is the only activity where more regulations are needed, as opposed to activities that contribute to contamination, pollution, and sedimentation.

Commenters offered several suggestions to CRCP for improving its leadership or perceptions of leadership. Some suggestions addressed the relationship between CRCP Headquarters and local jurisdictions that implement coral reef conservation activities, such as:

- The Program has too much focus on leadership in Washington, DC with not enough support for the development and support of local leaders and partnerships.
- Ratio of CRCP staff at Headquarters versus in the jurisdictions needs to be evaluated. More resources are needed in the jurisdictions.
- More support is needed for building capacity within the jurisdictions to enable them to better manage their coral reef resources.

- Leadership shows little confidence and support in the ability of local staff to build effective partnerships and leadership. This causes doubt at the local level in the national level's ability to provide true leadership and guidance that will assist local efforts.
- CRCP needs to address policy at the federal level, in order to be an example to territories' local governments. NOAA should advocate federal policy that is in the best interests of the jurisdictions' coral reef resources and critique federal actions and projects that would negatively impact these resources.
- We need creative leaders that take risks with innovative solutions and that can recognize the value of trusting reputable local natural resource managers.
- The Program should show leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- We are concerned about NOAA's support to the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WesPac). WesPac is a federal institution that is undermining local jurisdictions' missions. Guam has used resources to counter the misinformation propagated by WesPac. These resources could have been better spent.

Commenters also addressed ways to improve partnerships; most comments addressed the role of other Federal agency partners. One commenter notes that the Program needs more consistent engagement from other Federal agency partners, although another commenter stated that the goal of greater engagement of Federal partners has been less than successful. A strategy of identifying federal navigators for each LAS seemed to work in places like Hawaii and Florida where many Federal agencies already had regional staff. One commenter stated that more partnerships with local government decision makers and local NGOs would be helpful, as many decisions about coral reef management and restoration are made at the local level rather than by state or federal coral reef resource managers. One commenter recommended out-year planning with partners based on common conservation needs, priorities, threats, and challenges; he stated that this could help NWRS address a significant lack of capacity for managing the coral areas under its realm of responsibility

The CRCP's role on the US Coral Reef Task Force garnered several comments. Comments included the following:

- The CRCP can provide better leadership in the effectiveness of the US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting. With the high level staff from various other Federal agencies sitting at the table, critical priority issues can be addressed with some level of commitment from members of the committee.

- The USCRTF needs to be more aggressive about defining its purpose, goals, and objectives, which should create a clear set of priorities and needed actions to achieve conservation goals. The Task Force needs to establish better ways to ensure that objectives are being met. Perhaps the entire body of the US Coral Reef Task Force should meet on a two-year schedule instead of twice a year.
- CRCP should improve the effectiveness of USCRTF meetings. The TF meetings have tended to try to cover too many disparate topics at once, settling on providing more superficial updates, while sacrificing the opportunity to probe and understand one or two key priority issues more in depth. Also, a disproportionate number of NOAA staff attend the meetings held in the jurisdictions, some of whom appear to be fairly superfluous, using limited resources with minimal apparent benefit to coral reef conservation.

Other comments included:

- CRCP should engage in more rigorous review and evaluation processes.
- Guam is concerned about the potential impact of the move of 8000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam, and the role that CRCP might play in that move. More time and money needs to be spent on mitigation models that compensate the people of Guam for the destruction and/or increasing use of coral reef resources that will be impacted by such development projects.

**Q6: How can the CRCP improve its impact and performance in the future?**

Commenters provided numerous suggestions for improving the CRCP's performance and impact. Major areas in which comments were provided include:

- Program funding and expenditures and grants processes
- Program management
- Program partnerships, task forces, and committees
- Program activities and priorities
- Program communication
- Program assessment

Comments within each of these major areas are provided on the following pages.

### ***Program Funding and Expenditure; Grants Processes***

More money needs to be funneled to where the reefs are.

Better link internal and external funding needs to the same suite of priorities. As a part of this process, develop criteria for funding allocations and priorities that can and are agreed to with the jurisdictions.

More funding for local positions to manage coral reef conservation projects.

Provide more support for building local capacity.

Develop long-term strategies and funding to support science education, scholarship, and jobs.

Increase funding for scientific research and reef and water quality monitoring.

More funds should be spent via external review process that requires joint PIs between NOAA and outside partners.

Better link internal and external funding needs to the same suite of priorities. As a part of this process, develop criteria for funding allocations and priorities that can and are agreed to with the jurisdictions.

Help with capacity issues by providing more opportunities for the purchase of larger equipment such as vehicles and boats. In the past, the general policy has been to reject capital purchases.

Seriously consider completely revamping the grants process.

Grants online needs to be improved. Problems cited include a lack of timely technical support from the help desk. The program needs considerable revision to make the process more user-friendly and effective, accompanied by more training in the local jurisdictions.

### ***Program management***

Streamline the federal portion of the program.

Eliminate management overlap (e.g., the NOAA Coral Reef Management Fellowship program has five different NOAA program coordinators/managers.)

Allocate more resources to on-the-ground conservation and less on meetings bureaucracy and paperwork, which take time and resources away from conservation efforts.

- Revise the Fellows program to better meet the needs of the local jurisdictions. CRCP should explore some different approaches, depending on the needs of the local jurisdictions, such as:
  - Very short-term fellowships for highly skilled professionals to meet specific and critical needs
  - Training/educational opportunities for existing local staff (e.g., GIS training, social marketing training, data management and analysis, etc.) resulting in certifications or degrees, with full financial support
  - Internships for recent local graduates (e.g., the Micronesia Challenge/PIMPAC “champions” project)

### ***Program leadership***

- Change how Federal government operates in the US Pacific Islands. Allow local government to participate in planning for research; promote traditional language and knowledge in education and outreach activities; involve more fishermen in activities; encourage local programs to disseminate information; avoid efforts to influence or dictate to local agencies to support Federal agendas that are not consistent with traditional cultures and values.

Improve SEFCRI impact and performance by allowing EPA to take a leadership role in its management.

### ***Program partnerships, task forces, and committees***

Increase focus on supporting regional partnerships as, ecologically, we are more closely tied to non-US island chains.

Continue to build partnerships and cooperative efforts for research, monitoring, and mapping.

Cooperative efforts can significantly reduce costs and expand the amount of work that can be accomplished.

NOAA can build on its established relationships with its external partners such as the three research institutes for more activities.

Develop more international partnerships to pursue research efforts associated with coral reef conservation that are of common interest to the United States and the international community.

CRCP could improve its relations with the All Islands Committee and the POCs. I think there have been times when NOAA headquarters staff have decided to initiate planning processes or to impose uniform requirements on states, territories, and commonwealth that have been unnecessarily restrictive or prescriptive. In some cases, there has been an unwillingness to consider other options.

Restructure the format of Task Force meetings to make them more useful with less frequency of meetings of the whole USCRTF.

The US Coral Reef Task Force Meetings could serve as a vehicle to share information on the goals and objectives of NOAA towards improving the health of the resources. The roles of the various Federal agencies on the task force are unclear, as are the contributions they will make toward the improvement of the coral reefs or to the support of the jurisdictions.

USCRTF meetings could be more efficient and effective. Perhaps focus on some of the bigger policy issues, such as climate change, at the spring meetings in Washington, DC. The fall meetings in the jurisdictions could then focus on specific themes more important to that place.

The All Island Committee (AIC) of the USCRTF is an under-used institution with respect to driving policy. The AIC are representative agents of the resources that will be impacted by decisions made by

the CRCP, and the federal government. It is imperative to use the expertise and influence of the members of the AIC to determine policy.

### ***Program activities and priorities***

Establish a national marine sanctuary in the reefs of Southeast Florida, or ask the state of Florida to designate protected status (e.g., Outstanding Florida Waters, MPAs, Aquatic Preserves) to the reefs of Southeast Florida.

Compel the state of Florida to enforce the NPDES program [to reduce land-based sources of pollution into shoreline areas].

Do not spend money on streamlining the permitting process. Streamlining permitting will only allow many destructive practices to continue.

More support for implementation on-the-ground, especially in terms of building and strengthening local capacity (staff, training, equipment, etc.).

Fund threat and cultural awareness training for all local coral reef partners on all threats to coral reef ecosystem.

Increase allocation and attention on in-situ conservation of reefs. This should focus on supporting efforts to develop and institutionalize approaches that are proving effective in coral reef conservation.

Increase attention on develop sustainable approaches to coral reef conservation.

Increase attention on Learning Networks (groups of practitioners work together to share effective program approaches).

Increasing the precision of satellites will have will make the coral reef conservation program products more relevant to the scale at which reef managers operate.

### ***Program communication***

More clearly define the goals of NOAA's CRCP and identify ways to measure the success of the program on conservation, protection and restoration of the coral reef resources.

Listen to the needs of the territory.

CRCP needs to create a program monitoring apparatus or process for concerns to be pursued.

More openness about, and consultation on, NOAA spend plan decisions would greatly improve relations between NOAA headquarters staff, the POCs and All Islands Committee and make the CRCP more effective. The CRCP spend plan should be directly linked to the priority needs identified by the jurisdictions, which will require close consultation with jurisdictional POCs before spend plan decisions are made, not after.

- Improve communication between the CRCP and the POCs by testing new ideas and working out problems (e.g. Grants Online, and grant application templates, tracking and reporting systems) before implementing them and making them requirements.
- Improve coordination of requests for information and response timelines to avoid duplicative requests and unnecessary urgency.
- Expand the type of communication efforts that resulted in products like the Coral Bleaching Handbook.
- Undertake periodic reporting to Congress.
- Conduct more tailored outreach to the public on results of research and monitoring, performance of management interventions, intensity of threats, etc. to give people a sense of what they can do personally to help protect reefs. The message needs to be, "It's not just government's job, it is the responsibility of all of us to protect coral reefs."
- Better communication and support. The coral reef resources are within the jurisdictions. Many decisions made by NOAA are not fully understood by the jurisdiction or were made without consultation from the jurisdiction and/or appropriate parties. There needs to be better communication conveying the direct benefits of the chosen suite of activities and the responsibilities of each of the CRCP participating line offices with regard to the project. CRCP could be more effective through greater communication and transparency with the local jurisdictions. It is unclear to the jurisdictions how the CRCP sets its internal priorities and this has led to some friction. Conflict can often be avoided with frequent, open communication, and building strong professional relationships. Key staff should also make it a priority to spend quality time with the jurisdiction points of contact at TF meetings and during scheduled site visits and really listen to their needs, instead of just approaching them when deadlines are looming or the CRCP has a need from the jurisdiction.
- The amount of reporting and request for information from the various CRCP programs needs to be addressed. There is not enough time or staff to deal with additional reporting requirements. A more effective and efficient way of obtaining progress reports or information needs to be established.

***Program assessment***

- Create state level report cards or score cards on the health of coral reef ecosystems in the US.
- Create a scorecard that assesses other US Government and state agencies in terms of how coral reef friendly their policies and business practices are.

**Appendix A**  
**Respondents to**  
**Request for Public Comment**  
**CRCP External Review Program**

1. US All Islands Coral Reef Committee
2. American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group (Meredith Speicher)
3. Community Conservation Network (Scott Atkinson)
4. Christopher Boykin
5. Cry of the Water
6. Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute
7. Peter Craig, National Park of American Samoa
8. Quenton Dokken
9. Andrew Gude
10. Michael Guilbeaux
11. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
12. Michael Hamnett
13. Drew Harvell
14. Drew Martin
15. Marea Hatzios, World Bank
16. Hawaii (Athline Clark)
17. Mark Hixon
18. Ove Hoegh-Goldberg, University of Queensland
19. Jill Komoto
20. Martin Moe, Jr.
21. Jennifer Ann Moore
22. Tom Moore
23. Trina Leberer, Nature Conservancy Micronesia Program
24. Oceana
25. Alida Ortiz
26. Palm Beach County Reef Rescue
27. John Ogden, Florida Institute of Technology
28. Sierra Club
29. Andrew Shepard, NOAA Undersea Research Center
30. Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
31. World Wildlife Fund
32. Phil Dustan\*
33. Robert Stone (NOAA)\*
34. Vangie Lujan, Guam

\*Informal responses



<b>Appendix B</b> <b>Summary of Comments</b> <b>CRCP Federal Register Notice</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Commentor</b>
<i><b>Q1: Is the Program focusing efforts on the right suite of activities to advance coral reef conservation?</b></i>	
<p>Comment:</p> <p>The threats identified in the National Action Plan are the right ones to address to advance coral reef conservation.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen management capacity of local agencies by placing a mid-level staff member (in addition to Coral Fellows) within each jurisdiction to support conservation activities at local level</li> <li>• More frequent phone calls and CRCP staff having more effective interaction at USCRTF meetings with POCs and during scheduled site visits to listen to issues and needs. Current process (steering committee calls) needs to be re-assessed as communications mechanism.</li> <li>• More effectively engage other Federal agencies represented on USCRTF and secure genuine commitment to work together with local jurisdictions. Require that applicants for NOAA CRCP grants communicate initially with jurisdictional POCs to ensure that they are addressing the needs of unfunded LAS priority projects and other local coral conservation priorities.</li> <li>• More transparency with regard to relationship between project funding and local resource management priorities as identified by jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Secure additional funding (\$37 million) to complete LAS projects identified in 2002-2003.</li> <li>• Secure funding for large-scale projects, such as watershed restoration to address land-based sources of pollution and need for marine laboratory in American Samoa.</li> <li>• Focus funding on priority projects and activities that are not LAS projects.</li> <li>• Increase funding for the AIC Secretariat to increase policy support, communication and coordination between the CRCP, other Federal partner agencies, and the jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Redirect funding for conservation carried out by Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council to support LAS. Do not fund programs that are in direct conflict with stated goals of National Action Plan and National Action Strategy, or that are in conflict with efforts or policies of local jurisdictions or administrations.</li> </ul>	<p>US All Islands Coral Reef Committee</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coral reef funds support relatively small projects that are undertaken by the local government agencies. There are no funds to support large projects that would improve the health and understanding of our coral reefs, such as research facilities, learning centers, and infrastructure projects that address direct impacts to our coral reefs.</li> <li>• American Samoa lacks funds for equipment use (boats, vehicles,</li> </ul>	<p>American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group</p>

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<p>maintenance, staff support) for research and monitoring efforts, support of facilities, and support staff and project managers to ensure completion of specific projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRCP-funded projects are led by staff from various agencies who are essentially in-kind support from the local jurisdiction and who must perform coral reef responsibilities in addition to their other jobs. This often makes it difficult to get the coral funded projects off the ground, completed in a timely manner, and implemented with proper oversight and management.</li> <li>• Local support (e.g., positions and management) needs to be assessed. We lack staff capacity, including project management to ensure that projects and programs get completed.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:  Fund local positions within key government agencies to implement projects. Each Federal oversight agency (e.g., EPA for ASEPA, USWWF/NOAA for DMWR, NSF for ASCC, NPS/DOI for NPAS) should fund a position that would oversee the projects and coordinate efforts among the local agencies. The majority of the personnel costs are to support positions based in Washington D.C. We suggest better distribution of funding for positions within areas where there are coral reefs. Local jurisdiction staff members provide detailed reports and information, develop local action strategies, and coordinate efforts to better conserve and manage the coral reef resources.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix of activities and breakdown of allocations makes sense.</li> <li>• Coordination at 20% seems a bit high, but that might be the reality of managing all of the system and programs.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in mapping and remote sensing should be producing useful models and products, so more resources could be allocated to monitoring, ecosystems research, direct management, and education and outreach.</li> <li>• Define the current balance point between studying/assessing/mapping coral reefs and direct action to manage them, and examine whether it has changed over the years of the program.</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Guilbeaux,  Community  Conservation  Network</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No.</li> </ul> <p>Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative’s (SEFCRI’s) unwilling to address major issues affecting our reefs, such as sewer outfall pipes that discharge 400 million gallons a day of partially treated sewage, and medical and industrial waste onto the reef tract of Southeast Florida.</p> <p>A project looking at Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Coastal Construction and other activities around coral reefs has refused to address BMPs for beaches</p>	<p>Stephanie Clark, Cry  of the Water</p>

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and beach maintenance. Use of BMPs during construction can greatly reduce land based sources of erosion, minimizing the need for dredge and fill projects that can damage or destroy reef.	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraged by recent focus on restoration.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shift some resources from monitoring the decline of reefs to restoration. Research undertaken during restoration will help understand coral reef decline and resilience.</li> <li>Disappointed by decision to ignore deeper coral reef ecosystems. When funds become available, they should be used to continue deeper coral research.</li> </ul>	<p>Andrew Shepard,  University of North  Carolina- Wilmington  (UNCW)</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suite of activities is very appropriate.</li> <li>Majority of tools now available to enhance coral reef conservation have been included.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If priority is conservation of coral reefs, increase percentage of funding allocated to field implementation activities that contribute to in-situ conservation of reefs.</li> <li>Many in-field activities are being carried out by partners; therefore, increase grant funding to partners who undertake field implementation.</li> <li>Encourage use of multi-stakeholder and community-based approaches to coral reef management.</li> </ul>	<p>Scott Atkinson,  Community  Conservation Network</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The priorities for activities in which the Council is involved are sufficient for the management activities of the Council in the Gulf of Mexico.</li> </ul>	<p>Gulf of Mexico  Fishery Management  Council (FMC)</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRCP is focusing its efforts on the right suite of activities and has strived to balance a range of outside interests, political considerations, and other factors.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>Triage the most addressable coral reef threats and focus conservation efforts on these. NOT global warming-related issues, but impacts that can be controlled, such as land-based sources of pollution and sedimentation.</p> </li> </ul>	<p>Andrew Gude, US  Fish and Wildlife  Service (USFWS)</p>

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<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While CRCP has supported projects on elkhorn and staghorn corals in the past, it should support increased emphasis on research, monitoring, and restoration for ESA-listed corals. These efforts will assist in recovery of the ESA-listed species, which in turn will support recovery of other coral species.</li> <li>• Funding should focus on "on-the-ground" activities, such as improving water quality, developing and implementing restoration techniques, and increasing enforcement of existing regulations.</li> </ul>	<p>Jennifer Ann Moore, NOAA Fisheries Service</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding seems to be disproportionately allocated to mapping and monitoring relative to the central mission of saving reefs.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Greater emphasis should be placed on building on-site capacity for reef conservation and protection, especially via marine protected areas.</p> <p>MPAs are an essential tool that should be more greatly emphasized. Increased funding for and partnership with NOAA's MPA Center will be essential to ensure effective use of this tool.</p>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State and Territory ecosystem management funding is the single largest listed item. That coupled with the fishery management item makes "management" huge in relation to the other categories.</li> <li>• Mapping and monitoring are extremely important.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for research should be increased to be at least commensurate with other categories and hopefully at a higher level. This would be at the expense of other components, which means that more funding is needed overall.</li> <li>• Matching requirements for research funding should be removed or greatly reduced. It is often difficult for researchers to find specific matching funds for research projects.</li> <li>• CRCP could include more emphasis on the science and management of restoration. The function of the NOAA restoration center in coral reef conservation is not clear.</li> <li>• CRCP support to local conservation programs might be increased.</li> </ul>	<p>Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute, Nova Southeastern University</p>
<p>It would useful to develop some metrics on the amount of time devoted to CRCP sponsored planning, reporting, and meetings compared to the time devoted to research and monitoring, regulations and enforcement, public education and</p>	<p>Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai'i</p>

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awareness, and other management activities. It seems like a lot of time is devoted to planning, reporting and meeting at the expense of real management.	
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is still a substantial need for building capacity to plan and manage projects that will have a positive, measurable ecological impact. The planning methods that are suggested in the All Islands strategy would help build the kind of project planning, implementation, and evaluation capacity that is needed in the islands.</li> <li>• Jurisdictions have identified a need for NOAA’s CRCP to place a mid-level staff member (not an intern/fellow) within each jurisdiction with the experience and resources to work side-by-side with POC's to support conservation activities at the local level, and to bridge this gap.</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai’i</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not clear how the program elements relate to local action strategies or the priorities of local resource management agencies</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai’i</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In principal, the threats identified in the National Action Plan are the right suite of threats to advance coral reef conservation.</li> <li>• While over half the projects outlined in the LAS report have been implemented, the majority of funds raised to date for implementation are NOT from the CRCP. The jurisdictions, especially Hawaii and Florida, have done an outstanding job of leveraging the funds that have been received from NOAA.</li> <li>• One key threat area that was not fully vetted in the National Action Plan was impacts from the misuse/overuse by recreational activities.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the Local Action Strategies are a priority for the USCRTF, then this should be at least ONE of the major criteria used in funding allocation and decision-making within the CRCP. Additional comments on this are included below.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Athline Clark, Hawai’i Division of Aquatic Resources</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not clear whether the CRCP is funding projects that address local resource management priorities identified by the jurisdictions and what criteria is required. At present only about 10% of the funding received by NOAA goes out the door to support the on-the-ground efforts within the jurisdictions and elsewhere.</li> <li>• Of the approximately \$26 million awarded annually to NOAA, a significant</li> </ul>	<p>Athline Clark, Hawai’i Division of Aquatic Resources</p>

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<p>percentage of funding is not directly linked to the LAS or the other priorities identified by the USCRTF.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need for more transparency as it is unclear to the jurisdictions how the CRCP sets the spend plan priorities. More open communication on how NOAA's CRCP allocates funds to improve the status of coral reef resources.</li> <li>• The CRCP spend plan should be directly linked to the priority needs identified by the jurisdictions, the Coral Reef Conservation Act, and the USCRTF, which will require close consultation with these groups before spend plan decisions are finalized.</li> <li>• Projects and funding directed to LAS to address the needs identified by the jurisdictions should be coordinated with the jurisdictions. Applicants for NOAA Coral Program grants should be required to communicate initially with jurisdictional POCs to find ways to collaborate and ensure they are addressing the needs of the unfunded LAS priority projects, as well as other local coral conservation priorities that POCs can identify. Project results should be provided to the local jurisdictions. There is also a need to focus on priority projects and activities identified by the jurisdictions that are not LAS projects.</li> <li>• It is critical that more funding is provided to the jurisdictions for funding through the management and monitoring grants to enable implementation in the jurisdictions.</li> <li>• With the increasing reporting, tracking and performance measures requirements that are now being added to the list of administrative requirements that must be followed to continue to receive the grants, the need for staff has become far greater, which results in even less on the ground achievable results.</li> <li>• There is a need for funding available for coral reef conservation under the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council to be directed to support the needs and priorities of the local jurisdictions and their Local Action Strategy priorities and not to fund programs that are in direct conflict with the stated goals of the National Action Plan and the National Action Strategy or the efforts underway within the jurisdictions, and/or the policies of the local administrations.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The coral reef conservation program at NOAA is focusing its efforts and resources on the right suite of activities to advance coral reef conservation at a global scale. The continuous development of new products, and the integration of products into conservation strategies, has been of great benefit to reef managers in the United States as well as internationally.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ove Hoegh-Goldberg, University of Queensland</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We already understand the major threats to coral reefs, as well as the types of actions that must be taken to mitigate them. There is no need for more research</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">John Ogden</p>

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<p>wish lists. Research must be nested within the context of management and have two important goals: (1) to verify the efficacy of management and to adjust it as necessary, and (2) to try to understand how corals and coral reefs work over large geographic scales within ecoregions and under different management regimes.</p>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. The program is comprehensive, and uses a mix of tools, including grants and partnerships to encourage participation by academia, the private sector, NGOs and local communities, all of whom are stakeholders in healthy reefs and the long term benefits they provide to society and the planet.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funnel more funds internationally since conservation efforts in developing countries, where most reefs are located, pale in comparison to those undertaken by the U.S. Yet, these are extremely important sources of biodiversity, livelihoods, nutrition and income to hundreds of millions of people.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>CRCP may be focusing on the “right” suite of activities, but perhaps the intensity and timeliness of these efforts is not sufficient to deal with the severity and scope of the coral reef crisis. Through support for the Local Action Strategies (LAS), the jurisdictions have been able to focus the funding received to identify threats within the jurisdiction.</p> <p>For 2007 Spend Plan, unclear how the priorities for the suite of activities were determined. The deliverables of each activity and their respective application(s) to local jurisdictions’ needs are also unclear. This needs to be communicated in a more effective manner to the local jurisdictions and reflect that consultation with the local jurisdictions occurred.</p> <p>Better communication needs to be established to identify a clear strategy with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time) objectives. The final measure of progress should be tied directly to reef health indicators. The goal should be to achieve a significant improvement in resource health.</p> <p>One activity the CRCP can consider is the development, utilization, and/or support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs play a crucial role in natural resource conservation and have traditionally served as catalysts for positive change.</p> <p>CRCP should address collaboration with regional organizations, the international</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Evangeline Lujan, Guam</p>

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community, and NGOs in terms of information sharing and successful management strategies regarding coral reefs.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More funding is needed on-the-ground for implementation at the jurisdictional level. Efforts to increase funding for the coral program and for coral reef conservation in other agencies such as the Department of Interior have not yet resulted in significant gains. NOAA should consider the redistribution of funds from some of their more expensive programs such as research cruises and mapping, to the State and Territory Management and Monitoring Grants and the General Coral Reef Conservation Grants.</li> <li>• Certain components of the cruises have been less beneficial to the jurisdictions, such as the REAs, due to the methods selected and lengthy delays in analyzing the data meant to support local management actions. Oceanographic and tow data are also useful for assessing regional trends in coral reef ecosystem health over time. Perhaps the cruises could be conducted less frequently, allowing for the data to be analyzed and provided to the local jurisdictions in a timelier manner. Perhaps the REA component could be reduced to just the tow surveys and the funds redirected to local monitoring efforts through expansion of the State and Territory Monitoring grants, to better meet the needs of the local jurisdictions in answering their management questions.</li> <li>• Maps have proved less useful and accurate for local managers, due to scale. Funding should be focused on acquisition of high resolution imagery and the strengthening of local capacity by training a team of local GIS managers in remote sensing techniques to map the extent of their coral reefs at a more meaningful scale (within acceptable confidence limits).</li> <li>• Funding for coral reef conservation under the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council could be better utilized to support the needs and priorities of the local jurisdictions, and the policies of the local administrations.</li> </ul>	Trina Leberer, Nature Conservancy Micronesia
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Yes, in general, CRCP is focusing efforts on the suite of coral reef conservation activities laid out by the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overwhelming effort and funding allocated from National Program and Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program to activities related to “reducing the adverse impacts of fishing” and “improving use and effectiveness of MPAs”. Not enough funding is being directed at reducing and prohibiting other identified threats such as unsustainable coastal development, overuse from tourism, and</li> </ul>	WesPac



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<p>pollution and runoff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding and efforts aimed at reducing fishing and MAP are being given to agencies with no statutory authority to implement regulations to manage fishing activities.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local marine and wildlife resource management agencies should be tasked to lead initiatives and projects related to reducing impacts of fishing and the creation and strengthening of MPAs.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Coral Reef Action Strategy (NAS) categories of threats appear sufficiently broad to cover the range of threats to coral reef ecosystems and the types of actions which should be taken to address those threats.</li> <li>• The threats are not of equal importance. The trends of increasing sea surface temperatures and ocean acidification pose the greatest threats to the survival of coral reefs globally.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program should address the causes of these threats (increasing sea temperature, acidification), whereas so far the Program addresses only the impacts.</li> <li>• The Coral Reef Task Force should amend its Objective 5 of the Reef Managers' Guide to read as follows: "Address the impact of global change, coral bleaching, and reef health on reefs and people, and support efforts at the local, state, national, and global levels to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases."</li> </ul>	Sierra Club
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CRCP has done well in identifying its six program categories and its ten primary goals. WWF believes these categories and goals capture the appropriate programmatic scope of coral reef conservation efforts.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOAA should pursue more programs in the categories of General Coral Reef Conservation and International Coral Reef Conservation. As compared to other categories, these two more fully encompass the broad purpose of CRCA and the global nature of coral conservation.</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of program funding serving two goals: Reducing Global Threats to Reefs, and Reducing Impacts of Climate Change.</li> </ul>	WWF

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus international program funds on fewer, larger grants in the most critically important areas. Concentrating resources would enable greater impact in CRCP's highest priority areas.</li> <li>• Increase focus on the Climate Change goal. The CRCP can best address climate change issues using a varied approach including research, prevention, and adaptation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>Q2: Are the Program's efforts in various geographic areas appropriate to address the issues in each region?</i></b></p>	
<p>Suggestion:</p> <p>The Coral Reef Conservation Program should extend its geographic reach to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gulf of Mexico: Faces common as well as unique threats, including oil and gas exploration. Except for Flower Garden Banks, Gulf reefs are unprotected from destructive fishing practices and would benefit from fully developed local action plans.</li> <li>• Deep-sea and cold water corals: New species are discovered with almost every research dive. Value of these discoveries warrant attention of USCRTF.</li> </ul>	Oceana
<p>Suggestion:</p> <p>Expand program to include an international component. Specific examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samoan Archipelago: Need for coordination with other islands within archipelagos. American Samoa lacks support for ecologically-based regional approaches to coral reef management because of lack of coordination with Samoa and other countries.</li> <li>• Freely Associated States: Find ways to fund FAS to support local coral reef conservation initiatives such as Micronesian Challenge.</li> </ul>	US All Islands Coral Reef Committee
<p>Comment:</p> <p>American Samoa is often lumped together with Hawaii, Guam, and CNMI for coral reef conservation activities. We lack support and coordination with islands within our own island archipelago, and are often lacking support for ecologically based, regional approaches to coral reef management.</p> <p>Suggestion:</p> <p>Expand program to include an international component.</p>	American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program very responsive to geographic needs in various regions.</li> <li>• It appears as a diversity of locally identified projects and programs have been</li> </ul>	Michael Guilbeaux, Community Conservation Network

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supported to address local issues. Broader, cross cutting programs (assessment, monitoring, MPAs) seem also to have the same attention to local concerns as well as regional/national priorities.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caribbean region is under-funded considering dire situation there.</li> <li>• Politics play more of role in funds distribution than do conservation needs.</li> </ul>	Andrew Shepard, UNCW
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No (South Florida).</li> <li>• We currently have no management plan for our reefs.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion: This could be improved with better local management.</p>	Stephanie Clark, Cry of the Water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program has provided support in the major coral reef regions of the world.</li> <li>• For bio-diversity, greater emphasis could be placed on the parts of the U.S. and affiliates that have the most diverse reefs. This would include the Pacific region.</li> </ul>	Scott Atkinson, Community Conservation Network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, in the Gulf.</li> </ul>	Gulf of Mexico FMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As far as I am aware.</li> </ul>	Andrew Gude, USFWS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic balance seems appropriate.</li> </ul>	Drew Harvell, Cornell University
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater investment in conservation of reefs in the greater Caribbean and South Pacific regions will be essential to save US reefs.</li> </ul>	Mark Hixon, OSU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CRCP should allocate resources with some regard to the distribution of US coral reef ecosystems. A recent NOAA report identifies Florida as the area with the greatest area of potential coral reef ecosystems. While resource allocation cannot be made on the basis of potential area of the resources alone, the current allocation of resources seems weighted disproportionately (2x) towards the Pacific.</li> </ul>	Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute, Nova Southeastern University
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To the degree to which the programs efforts are being driven by local resource management priorities, I would say they probably are appropriate. But, from looking at the 155 individual funding elements in CRCP FY'07 spend plan, I cannot connect most of those program elements with needs in the geographic areas served by the CRCP.</li> </ul>	Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai'i

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<p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants for NOAA Coral Program grants should communicate with jurisdictional POCs to find ways to collaborate to ensure they are addressing the needs of the unfunded LAS priority projects and other local coral conservation priorities that POCs can identify.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRCP has provided substantial support to the states, territories, and commonwealths in the Pacific and Caribbean where the U.S. coral reefs are situated. This has enabled the initiation of new coral reef conservation programs where none existed before, or has greatly enhanced the ability and capacity of coral jurisdictions to expand on previous efforts.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now that Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument will be funded under the Sanctuaries Program, there is a need to reassess how the funds under the CRCP are allocated to this effort and if funds could not be better spent where the real impacts are occurring, in the locations where people live instead of the remote islands.</li> </ul>	<p>Athline Clark, University of Hawai'i</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The geographic areas covered by NOAA are appropriate within the regions that they are engaged. In respect to the Great Barrier Reef, I believe that has been adequate support -- especially in the understanding is being generated alongside the work of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, as to how bleaching events transpire and affect our region.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a compelling need to increase the precision of the satellite products down to the one kilometer and below (if possible). At the present scale, many of the products are not operating at the scale of the manager.</li> </ul>	<p>Ove Hoegh-Goldberg, University of Queensland</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CRCP could be more open and consider requests and/or input from Guam with respect to innovative strategies that deal specifically with Guam.</li> <li>The CRCP needs to trust reputable, established local resource managers and give them the space and money to conduct projects that support the overarching mission of coral conservation. The Point of Contacts for each jurisdiction should at a minimum be consulted when a project is</li> </ul>	<p>Evangeline Lujan, Guam</p>

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<p>conducted in the jurisdictions. These projects should also support the work of the LAS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More regional/international collaboration is necessary for effective resource management. By working with our international partners, we can share experiences and knowledge and learn about what is occurring in each region.</li> <li>• CRCP should assist in mediations between the US State Department and the jurisdictions with regard to foreign assistance for coral reef issues. For example, the Micronesian Challenge, which includes several countries and international organizations such as SPREP, SOPAC, TNC, and Conservation International, is a regional effort that needs to be supported by CRCP.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FAS have observer status on the US Coral Reef Task Force, are included in the tri-annual report on the Status of the Coral Reefs of the United States and the Pacific Freely Associated States, and are eligible for State and Territory Monitoring Grants (but for a lower amount of funding than the Territories and Commonwealths). But due to their sovereignty, they are ineligible for State and Territory Management Grants, and instead have to compete for the smaller amounts of funding available under the General Conservation and International Grants. In terms of aerial extent, biodiversity, and resource health, their coral reef ecosystems are incredibly important to US coral reef conservation efforts.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In lieu of increased funding, a redistribution of some of the internal NOAA funding to support more of the innovative work of the local conservation NGOs in the FAS would most likely result in a greater return for coral reef conservation.</li> </ul>	Trina Leberer
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, the program’s efforts address the need identified by local jurisdictions in the LAS.</li> <li>• In CNMI, much funding has been diverted to support Micronesian Challenge, which calls for setting aside 30% of marine areas of CNMI as no-fishing areas. Fisheries management measures put into place in CNMI demonstrate an increase in abundance of nearshore fishery resources. Public does not support more MPAs. Despite these facts, funding is still being diverted away from LAS projects and fisheries data management programs, and toward Micronesian Challenge and</li> </ul>	WesPac

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MPAs.	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Program provides an important function in administering and overseeing grants that supplement the limited funds available to states and territories and have resulted in more conservation activities than otherwise would have occurred. The Program also provides significant technical support and human resources to supplement those of the states and territories. “Capacity building,” especially when directed at training “locals,” is another important aspect of the Program.</li> <li>• While the LAS may be appropriate, they may not be sufficient. Comments by NGOs have raised issues not covered by the LAS, or have identified areas they feel are not adequately addressed by the LAS. Public comments submitted by CORALations cite numerous compliance problems with the sewage treatment system administered by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (PRASA), and raise questions over the efficacy of the Consent Decree negotiated by EPA with PRASA. The Local Action Strategy for Puerto Rico, on the other hand, identifies Land-Based Sources of Pollution as an LAS area, but does not include upgrading of the sewage treatment system as a priority project. Instead, it cites a project to “Improve compliance and enforcement of laws, rules, and regulations related to construction and land development permits in order to prevent deterioration of coral reef habitats.”</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task Force process for following up on, and responding to, issues raised by NGOs in their public comments needs to be greatly improved. The public comments, especially from NGOs and private citizens located within the various geographic regions, are extremely valuable and deserve appropriate responses.</li> </ul>	Sierra Club
<p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Program should strengthen and expand its international efforts. The CRCA requires a global scope for the successful completion of its purpose. To successfully “preserve, sustain and restore” coral reefs, as the CRCA mandates, a truly effective program must involve all reef</li> </ul>	WWF

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<p>systems, not just domestic ones. A much greater share – or even all – of the discretionary 20% should be used to fund international projects.</p>	
<p><b><i>Q3: Are the Program’s science and observation efforts (e.g., research, mapping, and monitoring) adequately addressing management needs, and informing and resulting in management actions?</i></b></p>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. CRED program will provide data to identify reef fish that are over-fished and need to be protected in American Samoa. CRCP-funded coral disease project in American Samoa included local marine biologists who learned how to monitor coral for disease, which built local capacity. Research cruises are valuable for information that leads to management decisions. Successful at producing maps of US and FAS coral reef resources.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional support for equipment use (e.g., boats, maintenance) would benefit local projects.</li> <li>• Support tools like bathymetry, habitat maps, and long-term water quality monitoring in jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Focus funding on acquisition of high resolution imagery; strengthen local capacity by training teams of local GIS managers in remote sensing technologies to map extent of their coral reefs at a more meaningful scale.</li> <li>• Conduct research cruises less frequently, allow data to be analyzed and provided to local jurisdictions in more timely manner. Consider redirecting funds from more costly programs (e.g., cruises and mapping) to Management and Monitoring Grants and General Coral Reef Conservation Grants.</li> <li>• Hold workshops on coral bleaching, monitoring, social monitoring in the jurisdictions to allow locals who implement program to participate.</li> </ul>	<p>US All Islands Coral Reef Committee</p>
<p>The Program provides useful services, information, and partnering support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRED provides data to know which reef fish are over-fished and need to be protected.</li> <li>• DMWR’s coral monitoring program has allowed local researchers to recognize the problems, gather data, and provides it to management and advocate conservation.</li> <li>• Both CRED and the monitoring program have gathered a significant amount of information to better inform managers and scientists about our coral reefs, allowing us to identify threats to reefs to allow proper management and conservation.</li> <li>• The CRCP has encouraged partnering. One example of this partnering was seen with a oral disease project with Dr. Greta Aeby and Dr. Thierry Work (funded through CRCP), which included local marine biologists as part of the</li> </ul>	<p>American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group</p>

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<p>team. Local marine biologists were able to learn from these experts and are now monitoring for coral diseases. They were also able to better understand the scope of the threat that coral diseases pose here in American Samoa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American Samoa supports the State of the Coral Reef Report and believes it is an excellent way to summarize our knowledge, includes a very wide range of contributors, and stimulates thought and research to increase our knowledge.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Timely reporting of CRED missions requires some improvement, realizing that providing the results allows jurisdictions to allocate resources (i.e., CRCP funding), assess strategies and define management efforts to address prevalent coral reef protection issues.</p> <p>Additional support for equipment use (boats, maintenance) could greatly benefit research projects.</p> <p>Better coordination with the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Fisheries Councils have much representation from fishermen, but little science or conservation representation. Council could do more to provide support and leadership on reef fish conservation. CRCP could work with Governors (who appoint Council members) to make them aware of the lack of representation of scientists and conservation representatives on the Councils.</p> <p>CRCP should do more work with the staff of Fisheries Councils to support more conservation-minded policies for reef fish.</p>	
<p>Need a comprehensive water quality-monitoring program for the reefs of Southeast Florida. Look at nutrients, heavy metals, contaminants from medical and industrial waste pumped to ocean outfalls.</p> <p>LADS maps were a good first step. However, we have little faith in the new acoustic maps. For example, in Broward County the best reef resources—such as field of Staghorn coral, monument corals more than 20 feet across, and nearshore areas with some of the highest diversity of coral cover— are shown as pavement on these maps.</p> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More diver surveys to ground truth the resources in some of these mapping areas.</li> <li>Increase funding for scientific studies that address coral reef health and water quality monitoring.</li> <li>Fund research on the cumulative impacts on nearshore reefs from beach dredge and fill projects.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Stephanie Clark, Cry of the Water</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRCP activities closely aligned with managers (Fishery Management Councils, NMFS, Sanctuaries).</li> <li>Not sure whether true for more remote regions (e.g., eastern Caribbean).</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Andrew Shepard, UNCW</p>
<p>Unsure if the mapping and monitoring programs have provided the information needed by managers.</p> <p>A large amount of funding has been allocated to these efforts. NOAA should</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Scott Atkinson, Community</p>



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carefully analyze the relative conservation benefit of this use of funds. Priority of in-field management may be receiving too little funds relative to research, mapping, and monitoring.	Conservation Network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRCP surveys and products are extremely useful in American Samoa.</li> <li>• Workshops, opportunities for participation on NOAA cruises in the Pacific have been helpful.</li> <li>• NOAA staff have tried to accommodate our needs and requests, such as deploying their acoustic logger in areas we helped select, and providing satellite time to track 5 "off-season" sea surface drifters that the territory (CRAG) purchased in cooperation with CRCP.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely reporting of results. Long delay in analyzing and reporting data from 2002 and 2004 monitoring surveys is disappointing.</li> </ul>	Peter Craig, National Park of American Samoa (NPAS)
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are to the extent that funding is available.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional funding is needed, particularly for mapping and monitoring, to provide input that can be used to design appropriate management measures to protect sensitive coral areas.</li> </ul>	Gulf of Mexico FMC
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRCP's science and observation efforts are adequately addressing the management needs, and informing and resulting in management actions.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FWS should engage NOAA in advance and plan out-year coral monitoring activities to address the lack of NWRS capacity.</li> <li>• Involve more Federal agencies in LAS, as some Federal agencies have the same needs and issues as states, territories, and Freely Associated States.</li> </ul>	Andrew Gude, USFWS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data in the monitoring projects should feed one central database that can be queried for summary information (i.e., species status, location specific habitat information)</li> </ul>	Jennifer Ann Moore, NOAA Fisheries Service
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rate of decline of some reef systems argues for a more aggressive, hypothesis testing approach than mere monitoring. More emphasis on adaptive management that goes beyond monitoring and tests hypotheses about potential management options on reefs needs to be instituted. Adaptive management actually tests scenarios experimentally, and then changes them if they are not working up to the standard expected.</li> <li>• CRCP could do more with marine disease, since it can be considered as a response variable for entire ecosystem health. A focus on good diagnostics would be very appropriate.</li> </ul>	Drew Harvell, Cornell University

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<b>Comment</b>	<b>Commentor</b>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The LAS process has been extremely beneficial in raising awareness and for focusing on important issues and problems.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least in Florida, the LAS could use more funding for on-the-ground activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute, Nova Southeastern University</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is difficult to evaluate the degree to which management actions have resulted from CRCP's efforts.</li> </ul>	<p>Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute, Nova Southeastern University</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am not sure that the monitoring efforts supported by CRCP are geared to answer specific management questions. Designing and implementing effective monitoring programs that are scientifically defensible and reasonably priced is difficult. HCRI supported monitoring activities in West Hawaii for over five years before we could actually see the impact of fisheries replenishment areas. I am not sure there are enough resources in the CRCP to develop a monitoring program for one jurisdiction that will tell you in some representative and statistically defensible way whether coral reef ecosystems are getting healthier or not.</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai'i</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CRCP's science and observation efforts are addressing some management needs and informing management actions.</li> <li>The CRED program in the past 2 years has partnered with all the resource agencies in Hawaii to do baseline surveys around all the main Hawaii Islands and to provide much needed data on remote shoreline areas.</li> <li>The mapping program has been successful in producing maps of coral reef resources.</li> <li>In Hawaii, the amount allocated annually (\$115,000) for monitoring is barely enough to undertake monitoring activities on 2 islands. It does not allow for the development of a statewide integrated long-term monitoring program.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a result of scale, maps have not been very useful and accurate for local resource managers. Also, maps are mainly a digital product and without access to desktop GIS are still be under-utilized by the resource managers who most need to know where the coral resources are located for permitting approvals. There needs to be efforts to not only produce and provide the maps but focused efforts to ensure that training and resources are provided to the agencies so that they will use them.</li> </ul>	<p>Athline Clark,</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic tools like bathymetry, habitat maps and long-term water-quality monitoring are essential for coral reef resource managers to understand the extent and types of reef resources and the influence of threats such as land based sources of pollution on reefs. However, many of these basic tools are limited.</li> <li>• There is a significant array of sensors to monitor oceanographic conditions in the NWHI. A corresponding array is needed in the main Hawaii Islands to understand the currents throughout the archipelago and patterns of connectivity.</li> <li>• Research is needed to understand the quantities, sources and sinks of pollution, and larval transport pathways, so that managers can develop effective strategies to address threats to reefs, and evaluate coral recover rates.</li> <li>• There is a need to assess whether cruises should be considered ‘monitoring’ activities in subsequent years after baseline data is provided. The data provides a snapshot in time but rigor of the data when it is only collected one every couple of years is questionable. Perhaps this program could be undertaken on a less frequent basis and still assure managers of results. A less intensive cruise schedule may allow some of the funds to be reprogrammed for the on-the-ground monitoring activities that are also underway and at much finer scale in each jurisdiction.</li> <li>• We need sound data or detection techniques to adequately measure whether mitigation measures on land are eliminating or minimizing impacts to down slope coral reefs. Tools and research techniques that allow managers to better isolate key cause and effect parameters are needed.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a general feeling in the reef management community that the Coral Reef Conservation Program is doing a good job at informing and addressing management needs. The web site is very effective.</li> <li>• Projects like the coral bleaching handbook have been very effective tools for communicating to management audiences.</li> </ul>	<p>Ove Hoege-Goldberg,  University of  Queensland</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exogenous factors (e.g., trade, alien species, illegal fishing, pollution/disease) may originate in areas outside local control. This needs to be effectively monitored to (1) understand the relative impact of such exogenous threats compared to those which are being addressed through local actions and (2) revise the program of interventions if it is not effective by focusing on only those issues over which local jurisdiction allows intervention.</li> <li>• Research is yielding a wealth of important diagnostic information that will help coral reef managers understand causal stress-response linkages, and provide the basis for better informed policies.</li> <li>• NOAA's international partnerships are extremely important in terms of leveraging US funds to achieve common objectives (particularly on the research side), reach out to the international community (particularly the developing world) to build capacity in these countries to assess the state of</li> </ul>	<p>Marea Hatzios,  World Bank</p>

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<p>coral reef health, conduct experimental research to understand ecosystem response, and empower managers to take the research findings and use them to improve their management effectiveness.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guam has benefited from several mapping, monitoring and research projects. The benthic habitat mapping project provided important baseline data that has served as a basis upon which more detailed data has been developed. The NOAA Pacific Rapid Assessment Monitoring Program (RAMP) cruises have been conducting data collection for Guam. Comments:</li> <li>• The Pacific RAMP is an unprecedented endeavor that will provide valuable scientific data to support effective coastal resource management. Guam has the option of receiving raw data upon request and has received preliminary reports.</li> <li>• Reports containing data analysis have not been provided to the jurisdiction in a timely manner. This final report for 2003, 2005, and 2007 will not be available for another two years. It is critical that Guam obtain this report in a timely manner.</li> <li>• However, it is unclear how RAMP final reports are ultimately used. These efforts need to translate to national policy.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CRCP should explore funding for the NOAA RAMP cruises for the FSM, Palau, and the Marshall Islands, affiliates of the United States who possess significant coral reef resources.</li> <li>• Results should help formulate future SMART objectives that directly address improvement of the health of the resource.</li> </ul>	<p>Evangeline Lujan, Guam</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAMP has collected a diverse array of information needed by resource managers, and NOAA is expediting the synthesis of this information into a format managers can use to inform management decisions.</li> <li>• Underfunding of fisheries monitoring programs appears to be a concerted effort to ensure that a lack of information is used to justify establishment of new MPAs.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More timely release of bathymetric and habitat characterization information. Nearshore benthic habitat maps are available for public; comprehensive</li> </ul>	<p>WesPac</p>

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<p>bathymetry and habitat characterization of areas in Federal waters have been withheld from Council and public, limiting ability to address essential fish habitat mandates and coral reef conservation efforts in EEZ.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase funding for inshore and offshore creel surveys for Guam, CNMI and American Samoa to allow assessment of status and condition of reef fish stocks and effectiveness of fishery conservation and management measures.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOAA’s mapping and monitoring products have been very high quality and very valuable. In particular, the Program’s mapping, monitoring, and documentation regarding the coral reef ecosystems of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands were instrumental in bringing national and international attention to the scale and uniqueness of those ecosystems.</li> <li>• Mapping and monitoring currently consume proportionately too much of the budget. Management needs are highly political in nature, so while NOAA research has documented major threats to coral reefs from global warming and ocean acidification, policy makers at upper levels have ignored or selectively interpreted research findings. NOAA scientists have apparently deferred to “policy makers” to address (or fail to address) the concerns suggested by their research. There are similar issues with research and monitoring documenting overfishing. The fishing lobby is so strong that the managers in some states and territories are afraid to use even use the word “overfishing,” and refer instead to “fishery management” issues.</li> </ul>	Sierra Club
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a whole, the CRCP provides effective leadership and builds valuable partnerships for coral conservation. WWF is pleased that CRCP projects include some of the finest coastal science and observation efforts in the world.</li> <li>• There are two possible improvements to NFWF’s program management: 1) allowing indirect costs in budgets; and 2) reviewing its cost share policy with non-governmental organizational partners.</li> <li>• CRCP can expand its cooperative efforts to other partners, both within NOAA and with other agencies, such as the International Fisheries Offices.</li> <li>• CRCP should strengthen its efforts to monitor program results by developing assessment criteria, monitor projects, and measure impacts.</li> <li>• Share results with end users and others interested.</li> </ul>	Sierra Club
<p><b><i>Q4: Have the Program’s education and outreach efforts been effective in reaching the proper audiences?</i></b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to measure effectiveness of education and outreach efforts, whether programs have reached the appropriate audiences, and whether this has</li> </ul>	US All Islands Coral Reef Committee; also

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<p>translated into increased awareness and changes in behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited resources and focus have been applied to raising awareness about coral reefs across general US public. Efforts need to be more focused on ensuring that children and policy makers who do not live near coasts understand and care about how their actions impact coral reefs.</li> <li>Take advantage of the US role as co-coordinator of International Year of the Reef in 2008 by providing funds to develop and distribute key awareness materials to assist in local or national efforts. At national level, there should be an effort to involve zoos, aquaria, and other venues where general public can see and learn about reefs.</li> </ul>	<p>identical comments from Athline Clark, University of Hawai'i</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rare Pride has built local capacity and has enhanced the CRAG education and outreach work. Outreach efforts reach schools, villages, youth groups, churches, and teachers.</li> <li>There is little education and outreach support for individual government agency education and outreach programs within American Samoa because the resources in the grant do not allow for this support with all the other goals and objectives to reach within the local action strategies. There is little support for school curriculum development within the Department of Education.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional support and guidance from the National Science Foundation to fund locally appropriate education curriculum in our schools and community college would provide the base for building future scientists and managers in American Samoa.</li> <li>More outreach to fishermen, women's and men's organizations, and pastors is needed to truly be effective.</li> </ul>	<p>American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They appear to be helping. To what degree, I cannot ascertain.</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Guilbeaux, Community Conservation Network</p>
<p>Not at the local level. Locally, the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) is run by Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP). FDEP is also the regulatory agency that issues permits for many of the practices that injure our reefs. We would like to ask the Federal Program to take a more active role in giving guidance and direction to our local program.</p>	<p>Stephanie Clark, Cry of the Water</p>
<p>Sanctuaries have been gems at working with local communities.</p>	<p>Andrew Shephard, UNCW</p>
<p>Thanks to the activities of the CRCP, more educational materials and activities related to coral reef protection are available than ever before.</p> <p>CRCP has made research results and academic discussions on issues related to</p>	<p>Álida Ortiz, Retired Marine Biology Professor, University of Puerto Rico,</p>

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<p>coral reefs available to the users, especially to educators.</p> <p>CRCP has consulted teachers about the form and pertinence of the materials before production.</p> <p>CRCP translates the results into a vocabulary that teachers can use in their classrooms.</p> <p>CRCP has provided opportunities for educators to see the researchers work in the field which is a very important experience for them.</p> <p>Funds assigned to this portion of the Program have been very wisely used.</p> <p>The personnel carrying out these tasks are most professional and always available for consultation.</p>	<p>Humacao; presently Consultant, Environmental and Education Issues</p>
<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Gulf of Mexico FMC</p>
<p>It would appear so.</p>	<p>Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute, Nova Southeastern University</p>
<p>As far as I know this has been effective.</p>	<p>Andrew Gude, USFWS</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <p>I have not personally seen much in the way of education and outreach from CRCP. I think the local programs in Hawaii, which have been partly supported by the CRCP, have clearly raised the level of awareness about the threats to coral reef ecosystems.</p> <p>The outreach efforts in Hawaii have not translated into more political and financial support for the management of coral reef ecosystems by the state legislature. I think they have started to stimulate resource management initiatives by non-profits and community organizations. This may be what is required to get more state public resources devoted to coral reef ecosystem management.</p>	<p>Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai'i</p>
<p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development resources, workshops and the engagement of the staff involved have been very effective in reaching scientific audiences across the planet. The impact has been enormous – with numerous studies of dual benefit to the USA and the international community being stimulated. In this regard, the coral reef conservation program at NOAA is clearly the world leader in bringing together</li> </ul>	<p>Marea Hatzios</p>

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<p>and disseminating information to the coral reef management community.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheet(s) on the State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the U.S. is a useful summary of how U.S. reefs are doing.</li> <li>• Cannot tell how much of the really important information generated about what is causing the demise of coral reefs and what we as citizens can do about it is getting down to the level of schools, communities, consumer groups, utilities, local government.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOAA could publish something like “10 things I can do to save reefs”. The information the CRCP generates can be used to craft targeted messages to different segments of the public to elicit their personal commitment to protecting reefs.</li> <li>• Recommend basic surveys of people's attitudes and awareness toward reefs to get a baseline and then resurvey the same population after several years.</li> </ul>	<p>Marea Hatzios</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program’s education and outreach efforts have been very active, but more can and should be done.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for education and outreach efforts should be directed toward projects that incorporate principles of social marketing, such as identifying target audiences and crafting specific messages with respect to the target audience.</li> <li>• On a national level, the “coral reef crisis” and related issues (e.g., global climate change) need to be highlighted. The IYOR08 action plan has an opportunity to bring to the forefront the crisis of the deteriorating health of coral reefs nationally and globally.</li> <li>• Furthermore, more attention should be placed on the scientific findings and potential applications produced by the CRCP’s science and observation line agencies. These scientific findings need to be translated into a manner that can be understood and readily accessed by the layperson.</li> <li>• More funds and guidance must be directed to the jurisdictions for community based management and for support for communities to start local NGOs to share in the responsibilities of education and outreach.</li> <li>• Educational and outreach efforts still need to be repeated on a continual basis</li> </ul>	<p>Evangeline Lujan, Guam</p>



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to get the conservation message across to the community.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The education and outreach working group has been one of the most active and coordinated parts of the CRCP.</li> <li>It is difficult to say if their efforts have reached the proper audiences and have translated into increased awareness and changes in behavior.</li> <li>CRCP outreach focuses more on the positive than on some of the very real threats and challenges we face in conserving coral reefs.</li> <li>The IYOR will offer opportunities to reach out to the international community and build more awareness in the US.</li> </ul>	Trina Leberer, Nature Conservancy Micronesia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need more education and outreach with ethnic communities that are not familiar with local laws.</li> <li>More effort to educated public on identifying and acting on land use problems that cause runoff onto reef ecosystems.</li> </ul>	WesPac
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Program’s education and outreach efforts regarding the impacts of global warming on coral reefs have not reached highest levels, i.e. the White House.</li> <li>Due to education and outreach effort by others, however, there is likely now an increased awareness by the general public that coral reefs (and penguins, and polar bears as well) are in trouble due to global warming, and there is a growing ground swell of public support for action to address this problem.</li> <li>There is less awareness among the general population of the impacts of overfishing on coral reefs, and while there may be support among the general population for more marine protected areas, such support is usually not focused enough to overcome the opposition to MPAs by highly vocal fishing interests.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move from general education and outreach messages (e.g. coral reefs are valuable and important and under threat) to more specific messages directed at garnering and focusing specific actions which can and should be supported, e.g. expansion of marine protected areas, upgrading of sewage treatment plants, better management of construction runoff, etc.</li> </ul>	Sierra Club
<b><i>Q5: Is the Program providing effective leadership and building useful partnerships to advance coral reef conservation?</i></b>	
<p>CRCP has provided effective leadership and coordination in the first phase of the program.</p> <p>Suggestion: More support is needed for building capacity within the jurisdictions to enable</p>	US All Islands Coral Reef Committee; also Athline Clark

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<p>them to better manage their coral reef resources.            Need more consistent engagement from other Federal agency partners.</p>	
<p>The Program provides leadership and promotes partnerships to advance coral reef conservation.            Too much focus on leadership in Washington, D.C. with not enough support for the development and support of local leaders and partnerships.            Leadership shows little confidence and support in the ability of local staff to build effective partnerships and leadership. This causes doubt at the local level in the national level's ability to provide true leadership and guidance that will assist local efforts.</p>	<p>American Samoa            Coral Reef Advisory            Group (CRAG)</p>
<p>Program is particularly strong in personnel and approach.            CRCP appears to be adding value and leadership to coral reef conservation throughout the world.</p> <p>Suggestion:            Keep working on collaborations and partnerships with private donors interested in coral reef conservation.</p>	<p>Michael Guilbeaux,            Community            Conservation Network</p>
<p>Many good works have been supported.            More rigorous review and evaluation processes.            Partnerships could be stronger if these elements were improved.</p>	<p>Andrew Shepard,            UNCW</p>
<p>CRCP is very strong in providing leadership and building partnerships.            CRCP has convened or been a part of the major coral reef conservation meetings throughout the world            CRCP has helped to highlight innovative approaches to conservation and encourage others to participate.            CRCP supports important regional processes that are providing leadership in coral reef conservation. These include the Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area Community (PIMPAC) and others.            By funding a number of partners that are developing innovations in coral reef conservation, the CRCP is enhancing its leadership.</p>	<p>Scott Atkinson,            Community            Conservation Network</p>
<p>CRCP is providing effective leadership and building useful partnerships to advance coral reef conservation given internal and external politics, needs, challenges, and opportunities.</p> <p>Suggestion:            Out-year planning with partners based on common conservation needs, priorities, threats, and challenges. This could help NWRS address a significant lack of capacity for managing the coral areas under our realm of responsibility.</p>	<p>Andrew Gude,            USFWS</p>
<p>Comments:            Coral Reef Task Force and related meetings have brought people together within states, territories, and commonwealths with federal partners unlike ever before.</p>	<p>Michael Hamnett,            University of Hawai'i</p>

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<p>LAS planning efforts have contributed even more to coordination and collaboration at the local level than the meetings. Agency stove pipes have become more permeable, much more collaboration is going on between agencies and organizations at all levels, and concerted efforts have been mounted to try and mitigate the threats to coral reef ecosystems that were simply not there before.</p> <p>I think the All Islands Coordinating Committee and its interaction with the Task Force and CRCP office have brought state, territorial, and commonwealth coral reef managers closer together than any other endeavor. Ironically and not unexpectedly, I think some of the tension between the All Islands Committee and the CRCP staff have contributed to closer working relationships among the POCs.</p> <p>A few efforts at getting folks to work together that have not worked as planned. Sub-regional meetings intended to get regional and local federal partners involved in funding LAS activities did not work as planned. Local meetings and local planning efforts accomplished what was intended to result from the regional meetings.</p>	
<p>The coral reef conservation program is providing effective scientific leadership and is building useful partnerships across the planet. The workshops and networks I have been in as a result of NOAA CRCP's efforts have been particularly effective.</p>	Ove Hoege-Goldberg
<p>Comments:</p> <p>NOAA is a partner in a global program of Targeted Research on Coral Reefs to help build capacity for management in countries where the majority of reefs are found. Such international programs can galvanize key action on the ground, garner the attention of the press, and help leverage additional resources from other institutions to address many of the problems facing reefs outside the U.S. and the Freely Associated States of the Pacific.</p> <p>The USCRTF has been a major boon for the International Coral Reef Initiative as well and helped keep several important policy initiatives on the radar screen of international conventions and other fora. Maintaining links with international initiatives remains key to generating the kind of global support that will be required to protect the world's coral reefs.</p> <p>Promoting socioeconomic monitoring of coral reefs, in addition to the bio-physical monitoring that has been the traditional approach of monitoring efforts, has been a major breakthrough.</p>	Marea Matziolos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need creative leaders that take risks with innovative solutions and that can recognize the value of trusting reputable local natural resource managers.</li> </ul>	Evangeline Lujan, Guam

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRCP needs to address policy at the federal level, in order to be an example to territories' local governments. NOAA should advocate federal policy that is in the best interests of the jurisdictions' coral reef resources and critique federal actions and projects that would negatively impact these resources.</li> <li>• The CRCP can provide better leadership in the effectiveness of the US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting. With the high level staff from various other federal agencies sitting at the table, critical priority issues can be addressed with some level of commitment from members of the committee.</li> <li>• The USCRTF needs to be more aggressive about defining its purpose, goals, and objectives, which should create a clear set of priorities and needed actions to achieve conservation goals. The Task Force needs to establish better ways to ensure that objectives are being met. Perhaps the entire body of the US Coral Reef Task Force should meet on a two-year schedule instead of twice a year.</li> <li>• Ratio of CRCP staff at Headquarters versus in the jurisdictions needs to be evaluated. More resources are needed in the jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Guam is concerned about the potential impact of the move of 8000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam, and the role that CRCP might play in that move. More time and money needs to be spent on mitigation models that compensate the people of Guam for the destruction and/or increasing use of coral reef resources that will be impacted by such development projects.</li> <li>• NOAA supports the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WesPac) is a federal institution that is undermining local jurisdictions' missions. Guam has used resources to counter the misinformation propagated by WesPac. These resources could have been better spent.</li> </ul>	

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<p>Comments:</p> <p>LAS have been quite successful in focusing efforts on priority threats and have been utilized in various ways by the local jurisdictions to prioritize actions and leverage support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal of greater engagement of federal partners has been less successful. A strategy of identifying federal navigators for each LAS seemed to work better in places like Hawaii and Florida where many federal agencies already had regional staff.</li> <li>• CRCP has started to build more effective partnerships. Pacific Islands MPA Community (PIMPAC) was developed through support of the CRCP. PIMPAC members include many government and local NGO partners, as well as a resource team comprised of the Community Conservation Network, Locally Managed Marine Area Network, The Nature Conservancy and the Micronesia Conservation Trust. The CRCP has also been partnering more directly with The Nature Conservancy at many levels in both the Pacific and the Caribbean on many efforts including resilience, sustainable finance, site-based management planning, management effectiveness, and climate change.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRCP should improve the effectiveness of USCRTF meetings. The TF meetings have tended to try to cover too many disparate topics at once, settling on providing more superficial updates, while sacrificing the opportunity to probe and understand one or two key priority issues more in depth. Also, a disproportionate number of NOAA staff attend the meetings held in the jurisdictions, some of whom appear to be fairly superfluous, using limited resources with minimal apparent benefit to coral reef conservation.</li> </ul>	<p>Trina Leberer, Nature Conservancy  Micronesia</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local CRCP leadership needs to focus on LAS efforts and provide leadership for all local partners working on coral reef conservation efforts.</li> <li>• Difficult to promote fishery management programs if there is a preconception from leadership that fishing is the only activity where more regulations are needed, as opposed to activities that contribute to contamination, pollution, and sedimentation.</li> <li>• Feeling in islands that federal government is trying to dictate priorities and projects to local agencies, rather than supporting projects identified by agencies via their LAS. One issue is increased pressure to create more MPAs.</li> </ul>	<p>WesPac</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Program is providing effective leadership and building useful partnerships in connection with the Local Action Strategies conducted in partnership with State and territorial governments.</li> </ul>	<p>Sierra Club</p>

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<p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Program should show leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.</li> <li>• More partnerships with local government decision makers (and local NGOs would be helpful, as many decisions about coral reef management and restoration are made at the local level rather than by state or federal coral reef resource managers.</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Q6: How can the CRCP improve its impact and performance in the future?</i></b>	
<p>Increase focus on supporting regional partnerships as, ecologically, we are more closely tied to non-US island chains.            More money needs to be funneled to where the reefs are.            More funding for local positions to manage coral reef conservation projects.            Streamline the federal portion of the program.            Eliminate management overlap (e.g., the NOAA Coral Reef Management Fellowship program has five different NOAA program coordinators/managers.)            Listen to the needs of the territory.            Provide more support for building local capacity.            Develop long-term strategies and funding to support science education, scholarship, and jobs.            Provide more financial assistance.</p>	<p>American Samoa            Coral Reef Advisory            Group (CRAG)</p>
<p>The Coral Reef Conservation Program is a great program that should be expanded. It could be more efficient at the local level if better guided and overseen from the federal level.</p> <p>Compel the state of Florida to enforce the NPDES program [to reduce land-based sources of pollution into shoreline areas].            Establish a national marine sanctuary in the reefs of Southeast Florida, or ask the state of Florida to designate protected status (e.g., Outstanding Florida Waters, MPAs, Aquatic Preserves) to the reefs of Southeast Florida.            Increase funding for scientific research and reef and water quality monitoring.            Improve SEFCRI impact and performance by allowing EPA to take a leadership role in its management.            Do not spend money on streamlining the permitting process. Streamlining permitting will only allow many destructive practices to continue.</p>	<p>Stephanie Clark, Cry            the Water</p>
<p>CRCP review process and evaluation/reporting processes are notoriously shoddy. More funds should be spent via external review process that requires joint PIs between NOAA and outside partners.</p>	<p>Andrew Shepard,            UNCW</p>
<p>Increase allocation and attention on in-situ conservation of reefs. This should focus on supporting efforts to develop and institutionalize approaches that are proving effective in coral reef conservation.            Increase attention on develop sustainable approaches to coral reef conservation.            Increase attention on Learning Networks (groups of practitioners work together to</p>	<p>Scott Atkinson,            Community            Conservation Network</p>

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share effective program approaches).	
Continue to build partnerships and cooperative efforts for research, monitoring, and mapping. Cooperative efforts can significantly reduce costs and expand the amount of work that can be accomplished.	Gulf of Mexico FMC
NOAA can build on its established relationships with its external partners such as the three research institutes for more activities.	Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute, Nova Southeastern University
<p>CRCP could improve its relations with the All Islands Committee and the POCs. I think there have been times when NOAA headquarters staff have decided to initiate planning processes or to impose uniform requirements on states, territories, and commonwealth that have been unnecessarily restrictive or prescriptive. In some cases, there has been an unwillingness to consider other options.</p> <p>More openness about, and consultation on, NOAA spend plan decisions would greatly improve relations between NOAA headquarters staff, the POCs and All Islands Committee and make the CRCP more effective. The CRCP spend plan should be directly linked to the priority needs identified by the jurisdictions, which will require close consultation with jurisdictional POCs before spend plan decisions are made, not after.</p>	Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai'i
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve communication between the CRCP and the POCs by testing new ideas and working out problems (e.g. Grants Online, and grant application templates, tracking and reporting systems) before implementing them and making them requirements.</li> <li>• Improve coordination of requests for information and response timelines to avoid duplicative requests and unnecessary urgency.</li> <li>• Allocate more resources to on-the-ground conservation and less on meetings bureaucracy and paperwork, which take time and resources away from conservation efforts.</li> <li>• Restructure the format of Task Force meetings to make them more useful with less frequency of meetings of the whole USCRTF.</li> <li>• More clearly define the goals of NOAA's CRCP and identify ways to measure the success of the program on conservation, protection and restoration of the coral reef resources.</li> <li>• Seriously consider completely revamping the grants process.</li> </ul>	Athline Clark, University of Hawai'i

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better link internal and external funding needs to the same suite of priorities. As a part of this process, develop criteria for funding allocations and priorities that can and are agreed to with the jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Seek additional mechanisms to increase capacity and to address this need in all jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Provide the necessary support to revise the LAS and to develop reporting mechanisms for both the jurisdictions and the CRCP.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop more international partnerships to pursue research efforts associated with coral reef conservation that are of common interest to the United States and the international community.</li> <li>• Expand the type of communication efforts that resulted in products like the Coral Bleaching Handbook.</li> <li>• Increasing the precision of satellites will have will make the coral reef conservation program products more relevant to the scale at which reef managers operate.</li> </ul>	Ove Hoegge-Goldberg
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodic reporting to Congress</li> <li>• State level report cards or score cards on the health of coral reef ecosystems in the U.S.</li> <li>• Scorecard that assesses other U.S. Government and state agencies in terms of on how coral reef friendly their policies and business practices are.</li> <li>• Conduct more tailored outreach to the public on results of research and monitoring, performance of management interventions, intensity of threats, etc. to give people a sense of what they can do personally to help protect reefs. The message needs to be, "It's not just government's job, it is the responsibility of all of us to protect coral reefs."</li> </ul>	Marea Matziolos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better communication and support. The coral reef resources are within the jurisdictions. Many decisions made by NOAA are not fully understood by the jurisdiction or were made without consultation from the jurisdiction and/or appropriate parties. There needs to be better communication conveying the direct benefits of the chosen suite of activities and the responsibilities of each of the CRCP participating line offices with regard to the project.</li> <li>• The amount of reporting and request for information from the various CRCP programs needs to be addressed. There is not enough time or staff to deal with additional reporting requirements. A more effective and efficient way of obtaining progress reports or information needs to be established.</li> <li>• The US Coral Reef Task Force Meetings could serve as a vehicle to share information on the goals and objectives of NOAA towards improving the health of the resources. The roles of the various Federal agencies on the task force are unclear, as are the contributions they will make toward the</li> </ul>	Evangeline Lujan, Guam



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<p>improvement of the coral reefs or to the support of the jurisdictions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The All Island Committee (AIC) of the USCRTF is an under-used institution with respect to driving policy. The AIC are representative agents of the resources that will be impacted by decisions made by the CRCP, and the federal government. It is imperative to use the expertise and influence of the members of the AIC to determine policy.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support for implementation on-the-ground, especially in terms of building and strengthening local capacity (staff, training, equipment, etc.).</li> <li>• Revise the Fellows program to better meet the needs of the local jurisdictions. CRCP should explore some different approaches, depending on the needs of the local jurisdictions, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very short-term fellowships for highly skilled professionals to meet specific and critical needs;</li> <li>• training / educational opportunities for existing local staff (e.g., GIS training, social marketing training, data management and analysis, etc.) resulting in certifications or degrees, with full financial support;</li> <li>• internships for recent local graduates (e.g. the Micronesia Challenge / PIMPAC “champions” project).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Help with capacity issues by providing more opportunities for the purchase of larger equipment such as vehicles and boats. In the past, the general policy has been to reject capital purchases.</li> <li>• USCRTF meetings could be more efficient and effective. Perhaps focus on some of the bigger policy issues, such as climate change, at the spring meetings in Washington, DC. The fall meetings in the jurisdictions could then focus on specific themes more important to that place.</li> <li>• Grants online needs to be improve. Problems cited include a lack of timely technical support from the help desk. The program needs considerable revision to make the process more user-friendly and effective, accompanied by more training in the local jurisdictions.</li> <li>• CRCP could be more effective through greater communication and transparency with the local jurisdictions. It is unclear to the jurisdictions how the CRCP sets its internal priorities and this has lead to some friction. Conflict can often be avoided with frequent, open communication, and building strong professional relationships. Key staff should also make it a priority to spend quality time with the jurisdiction points of contact at TF meetings and during scheduled site visits and really listen to their needs, instead of just approaching them when deadlines are looming or the CRCP has a need from the jurisdiction.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Trina Leberer, Nature  Conservancy  Micronesia</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRCP needs to create a program monitoring apparatus or process for concerns to be pursued.</li> <li>• Fund threat and cultural awareness training for all local coral reef partners on all threats to coral reef ecosystem.</li> <li>• Change how federal government operates in the US Pacific Islands. Allow local government to participate in planning for research; promote traditional language and knowledge in education and outreach activities; involve more fishermen in activities; encourage local programs to disseminate information; avoid efforts to influence or dictate to local agencies to support federal agendas that are not consistent with traditional cultures and values.</li> </ul>	WesPac
<b>General Comments</b>	
<p><b>Definition of Coral Reef</b></p> <p>The definition of “coral reef” varies across EO 13089, the CRCA of 2000, and the CRCAA of 2007. This variation makes the definitions difficult to scientifically interpret and difficult for any regulatory agency to administer. Overly inclusive interpretation by the NMFS and USFWS has resulted in administrative jurisdiction over a single, one centimeter coral polyp on an artificial steel bulkhead, which according to their interpretation constitutes a “coral reef” and “coral reef ecosystem.” Therefore, damage to this individual coral requires mitigation, which would not be required under the EO or the Acts. CRCP needs to address this definition issue and support its uniform application.</p>	William Kramer Hawai’i
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOAA is doing an excellent job with funding coral reef work throughout the seven states and territories.</li> <li>• Grateful such funding exists and that NOAA is a resource.</li> </ul>	Christopher Boykin, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The US is not doing enough to protect our reefs. The US needs to set up an agency with control and enforcement over reefs.</li> <li>• The Clean Water Act is not aggressively enforced in areas where reefs are degrading.</li> <li>• The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is not doing enough to protect these reefs. Sewage outfalls are damaging South Florida reefs/</li> <li>• Need greater funding for the study of reef damage and programs to study how damage might be overcome.</li> </ul>	Drew Martin, Florida Chapter, Sierra Club
<p>A key to coral reef conservation is maintenance of suitable water quality. Water quality cannot be maintained if non-point sources of pollution are not controlled, which is needed to save the coral reefs of the island territories.</p>	Dr. Quenton Dokken, Gulf of Mexico Foundation
<p>In the past year, NOAA has been requiring audited financial statements. This</p>	Jill Komoto, Malama

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<p>requirement will leave many nonprofits who want to apply for funding out in the cold, due to the cost of an audit (\$4-6K, minimum).</p> <p>Another issue for nonprofits is general liability insurance. As more nonprofits become involved in hands-on activities, general liability becomes a big concern.</p> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program should find a way to assist with operational expenses such as these.</li> </ul>	<p>Kai Foundation</p>
<p>Overall, NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program has made an excellent start on the extremely important mission of saving U.S. coral reefs, yet there is room for improvement.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the US is truly committed to saving coral reefs, increased funding is essential.</li> </ul>	<p>Mark Hixon, Oregon State University (OSU)</p>
<p>NOAA's CRCP is doing on balance a good job.</p> <p>One of the bright stars of the program is Coral Reef Watch. Coral Reef Watch is a superb program, right on the cutting edge of innovation.</p>	<p>Drew Harvell, Cornell University</p>
<p>The USCRTF has been a truly great endeavor. The TF could be more effective with more authority. The TF's present model of sending complaints or issues to member agencies to address could be improved with more central authority. The TF would be enhanced by including more relevant agencies (e.g., DOE). In addition, the TF could use some weeding of or encouragement for certain member agencies to be more proactive (e.g., NSF, DOT, NASA, DOJ).</p>	<p>Richard Dodge, National Coral Reef Institute, Nova Southeastern University</p>
<p>The Coral Reef Conservation Program has been a tremendous catalyst for coral reef management activities at the national, state, territorial, and commonwealth levels of government.</p> <p>Coral reefs are not getting any healthier with current levels of stress much less with what we are likely to see as a result of global climate change. I do not think the political will is there to provide the levels of protection and management that are needed much less to change human behavior.</p>	<p>Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai'i</p>

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<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAS documents and the proposals submitted for funding from states, territories and commonwealths are much too long and detailed. CRCP should use some kind of on-line system be developed to allow people to do their action strategies on-line, link annual funding proposals to those strategies, submit reports on progress linked to the proposals, and be able to move verbiage about proposed activities into completed activities when they were completed.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of Task Force and associated meetings, as the travel burden is too great for multiple meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Hamnett, University of Hawai'i</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The grants program is in need of serious overhaul. Pre-proposals are due to NOAA within a month after you have just received the previous year's allocation making it nearly impossible to be able to predict next steps in projects needing multiple years of funding. The review process is long, overly burdensome, and overly complex for both the NOAA staff and the grantees. Reporting requirements are extremely time-consuming. New requirements to develop and track performance measures will increase the cost of all projects.</li> <li>• Each year NOAA allocates approximately \$1-3 million of the CR funds annually to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. All funds awarded under the NFWF must produce a minimum of 1-to-1 match. Grantees must be able to show that they have had a recent audit, and the lists of requirements to obtain the award are significant. CRCP should re-evaluate whether allocating funds to this organization is better than adding these funds to the current general coral reef grant pot and distributing them.</li> <li>• There needs to be a system developed where this information can be easily uploaded and used by whoever needs the information for whatever purposes.</li> </ul>	<p>Athline Clark, University of Hawai'i</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ecological balance between coral and algae growth that has historically been provided by the presence of herbivores has been lost. And in many areas, the presence of top level predators, such as spiny lobster, that kept the populations of organisms that feed on living coral in check have also been eliminated.</li> </ul> <p>Coral reef restoration efforts fit into three categories.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Specific physical site restoration: repair of ship grounding events, repair of storm damage, restoring the physical structure of a site through repair and reestablishment of damaged and displaced coral formations; replacement of reef formations with artificial structures; restore live coral growth by reattachment of shattered on-site corals and attachment of cultured and stabilized coral fragments.</li> <li>2. Preventative restoration: disease repair, physical algae removal on and near at-risk coral formations, human impact control (MPA designations), and</li> </ol>	<p>Martin Moe, Jr.</p>

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<p>programs for debris removal and pollution control.</p> <p>3. Ecological restoration. Two possibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reestablishment of colonies of <i>Diadema antillarum</i> to specific areas of the reef tract that can function as centers of significant reproduction of this keystone herbivore and should greatly enhance the larval presence and settlement of juvenile <i>Diadema</i>, and juvenile corals, on these reefs. The positive effects of these ecologically restored reefs will naturally propagate to other reef areas throughout the reef tract.</li> <li>• Widespread protection of spiny lobster on the entire or selected portions of the offshore reef tract. The activity of adult spiny lobsters on the reefs could diminish the populations of coralivorous organisms which destroy coral tissue and place the entire formation at risk through introduction of disease.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRCP should step back and evaluate status of mapping and monitoring efforts and conduct a gap analysis to identify priority outstanding needs.</li> <li>• CRCP monitoring efforts should build their protocols off of a standardized methodology and then feed the raw data into a central repository.</li> <li>• Put a greater emphasis on supporting the research and development of techniques that have the potential to recover and restore reefs. A clear path should also exist for taking the technique development from the R&amp;D phase to an operational phase.</li> <li>• Corals that could otherwise be saved are left to die (because of ship wrecks, other damage) because no authority or financial resources exist to conduct coral stabilization and reattachment.</li> <li>• Under “Restore Injured Habitats,” CRCP could provide support to directly prevent injuries and/or restore for impact by the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the removal of derelict vessels on coral reefs.</li> <li>▪ Conduct reattachment and restoration in the aftermath of physical impacts (vessel groundings, anchor damage, and hurricanes). Because no funding is currently available corals that could otherwise be saved are often left to perish in the aftermath of these impacts.</li> <li>▪ Support the installation of mooring buoys on a wide-scale.</li> <li>▪ Support the installation of additional aids to navigation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CRCP should continue their efforts to reauthorize the CRCA with emergency response and liability provisions. Additionally, CRCP should seek additional</li> </ul>	

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<p>funds and/or reallocate existing funds to conducting restoration in the aftermath of coral impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition towards on-the-ground projects that work to directly to reduce impacts and restore impacted reefs. Where possible these activities should work to “operationalize” previous coral research efforts into actual solutions. Some considerations are below:</li> <li>• To control land-based sources of pollution, the program should consider supporting direct action (installing sediment controls, buffering systems, and pollution reduction systems) to deal with some of the problems.</li> <li>• NOAA funded research has shown that reintroduction of Diadema has the potential to improve conditions for coral recruitment and decrease competition between algae and corals. This project has been successful on a small scale and it is likely appropriate to expand it to a larger scale.</li> <li>• We need to evaluate whether more grants and training for local jurisdictions are always the right solution. In many of these cases experience has shown that it would often be much more efficient for NOAA just to put the necessary resources on-the-ground to help solve the problems rather than continue to pour money and resources into local governments and see little or no return.</li> <li>• Past projects and grants should be evaluated on case-by-case basis to see how well they succeeded in helping CRCP meet its mission. Programs that have not had the desired outcome should be re-evaluated so that future projects of a similar nature can incorporate lessons learned.</li> </ul>	
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The coral reefs of Broward, Palm Beach and Martin Counties are unprotected. Impacts from development and lack of enforcement of existing regulations continue to degrade the ecosystem at an alarming rate. No coastal water quality monitoring program exists. The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative called for such a program and after four years remains unfunded.</li> <li>• Special interests exert a significant and disproportionate influence on policy makers and the regulatory community, while the coastal environment is severely underrepresented.</li> <li>• A wastewater utilities trade organization is funding a coastal study. NOAA is a participant in the project, but is prevented by contractual agreement from releasing project information without approval from the trade group. This is a less than transparent relationship for a governmental organization to be party to and unquestionably conveys the appearance of impropriety. This</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ed Tichenor, Palm  Beach County Reef  Rescue</p>

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<p>arrangement leaves the public with the impression the trade organization has ultimate authority under the program to censor scientific data generated by the study. This coupled with an ongoing public relations campaign employing questionable data interpretation undermines any confidence the public could have in the unbiased nature of the investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State of Florida has failed in its responsibility pursuant to Section 1342 of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System to issue permits for fixed terms not to exceed five years by allowing the operation of facilities beyond the term of the statute with no enforcement action.</li> <li>• The State of Florida has also failed to administer this federal program by not enforcing Section 403 requirements of the Clean Water Act on the ocean outfalls.</li> </ul> <p>Suggestion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We recommend NOAA seek funding for investigations from sources which do not have a vested interest in the outcome or have control over the final product. NOAA and the coral reefs of south Florida would best be served by instituting a coastal management program designed to offer protection to the resource from the impacts that are already too well known.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisheries Councils should have the same standing and be treated equally as states and territories, as they are an entity specifically mentioned in CRCA 2000.</li> <li>• NOAA has applied increasing constraints and restrictions on types of coral reef conservation projects and activities that the Council is allowed to undertake.</li> <li>• NOAA prohibits Council from conducting normal Council activities such as funding meetings for coral reef advisory panels, coral reef stock assessment panels, public meetings on proposed coral reef FMP amendments, and publicizing meetings. Also restricted from producing and disseminating coral reef annual report, coral reef FMP amendments, and activities covered by other FMPs. These restrictions are not placed on states and territories.</li> <li>• NOAA is now requiring the Council, when applying for CRC Grants, to provide information that is not specified or required in the annual announcements of Availability of Federal Grant Funds, Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity, or NOAA Standard Award Conditions.</li> </ul>	Wes Pac
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a proactive stance by the federal government for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and revise the National Action Strategy accordingly. Provide interpretations for data presented at the NOAA website that represent the best available scientific consensus (NOAA's data demonstrating global warming</li> </ul>	Sierra Club

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<p>are presented, but one has to search the NOAA website long and hard for any mention of the strong connections to human activity or of our collective need to reverse current trends).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Task Force response to issues raised by NGOs and others in public comments.</li> <li>• Direct “capacity building” efforts toward the training of local people where possible, rather than relying on short-term rotations of out-of-state/territory personnel.</li> <li>• Ask outside experts to review materials posted at the CRCP website to catch minor errors or note areas that could use clarification.</li> <li>• Update posted materials on an annual basis to accommodate ongoing NOAA-funded research. Delete references to materials for which links apparently no longer exist or are inoperative. Reprogram the NOAA website to function better on Macintosh computers (and, presumably, computers using open source software). Program NOAA CDs to work cross-platform.</li> <li>• Take full advantage of the upcoming Year of the Reef 2008 to strengthen and expand engagement by federal agencies in coral reef conservation, and to work in concert with NGOs and others throughout the world to promote action-oriented coral reef conservation activities and projects.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CRCP is a high quality program that serves a critically important purpose in conserving coral reef systems – not only in the US, but around the world.</li> </ul>	WWF