

10th Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
October 3-7, 2003
Guam & CNMI

Resolution 10-3: Proposal on Pacific Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program

Whereas, the coral reef resources in the U.S. Pacific Islands of Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Freely Associated States, and the Pacific Remote Insular Areas (PRIAs) are a cornerstone of the region's economy, ecological diversity, tourism, fisheries, and cultural practices; and

Whereas, jurisdictions in the region have varying capacities to conduct comparative, comprehensive, long-term monitoring and assessment across both locally-accessible and remote coral reef ecosystems; and

Whereas, much of the Pacific Island's coral reef ecosystems are found in geographically remote areas; and

Whereas, the Pacific Islands geographically remote coral reef ecosystems are typically less impacted by stresses from local development and other sources of pollution and are national treasures that have significant scientific value as baseline indicators of coral ecosystem health, both nationally and globally; and

Whereas, these remote areas provide a unique opportunity to observe and better understand the effects of climate change, disease, and natural processes as compared to reefs in populated areas; and

Whereas, federal agencies have important capabilities in assessing, monitoring and implementing actions to protect U.S. Pacific coral reef ecosystems and are key partners in building coral reef ecosystem assessment, monitoring and management capacity within the region; and

Whereas, federal agencies have important responsibilities in providing platforms, training and access to remote areas; and

Whereas, there is a need to coordinate and conduct similar and compatible monitoring and assessment programs with the on-going efforts in each jurisdiction and to share and compare data between the remote and populated sites.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved,

That the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force supports the following through appropriate coordination with local jurisdictions:

- (a) Continued long-term assessment and monitoring of the nation's coral reef ecosystems throughout each of the Pacific island jurisdictions on at least a biannual basis;
- (b) Expansion of long-term assessment and monitoring efforts to include coral reef ecosystems of the Freely Associated States;
- (c) Continued and expanded comparative study of remote coral reef ecosystems and locally-accessible, more human-influenced reef ecosystems; and
- (d) Continued and expanded allocation of funding and other resources to support these activities;

recognizing that, in the case of the Federal members of the Task Force, support for specific amounts and individual actions will be subject to the budget and appropriations process.