



U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee

Report to the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force,
Puerto Rico
November 3, 2009

U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)

- U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)
- Established in 1994 by the Governors of U.S. state, territory and commonwealth coral reef jurisdictions
- 7 Members -American Samoa, CNMI, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, USVI
- 3 Affiliate Members –FSM, Marshall Islands, Palau
- Provides a unified voice for coral reef conservation
- Provides collaborative sharing among jurisdictions to improve protection of coral reef ecosystems, working collaboratively with the USCRTF
- Supports implementation of Local Action Strategies
- Develops policy and provides advocacy for coral reef conservation, outreach and public awareness

Where can you find the AIC?

- NEW Website: www.allislandscorals.org
- Contact information
- Each jurisdictions accomplishments
- Local Action Strategies
- Coral reef activity news and announcements



Stimulus Funding for Coral Reefs

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funded 5 large-scale projects related to coral reefs in the USVI, Florida, Hawai'i (2), and CNMI.

Total: \$15 million

- The coral related funded projects were:
 - *USVI Watershed Stabilization* (St. John and St. Croix, USVI) – \$2.7 million
 - *Threatened Coral Recovery and Restoration* (Florida and USVI) – \$3.3 million
 - *Maunalua Bay Reef Restoration* (Maunalua Bay, Hawaii) – \$3.4 million
 - *Pelekane Bay Watershed Restoration* (Pelekane Bay, Hawaii) – \$2.7 million
 - *Laolao Bay Coastal Restoration* (LaoLao Beach, Saipan, CNMI) – \$2.9 million

AIC jurisdictions determine and prioritize local threats and local action strategies (LAS):

- Land Based Sources of Pollution, Overfishing & Management, Public Outreach and Education, Recreational Overuse and Misuse, Climate Change, Coral Bleaching, Disease
- Populations Pressure –American Samoa
- Aquatic Invasive Species -Hawaii
- Maritime Industry & Coastal Construction Impacts -Florida
- Increasing Development -Guam

American Samoa

Successes

- Climate Change
 - Developing 3 year action plan through LAS.
 - Implemented a government-wide hybrid vehicle policy.
 - Conducting socio-economic studies on perceptions/impacts.
 - Documented multi-species mass coral bleaching events, annually.
- Population Pressure
 - Established Population Commission through Governor's Executive Order.
 - Drafting a Territorial Population Policy.
 - Collaborating with national and regional NGOs a data users workshop.



American Samoa

Challenges

- There are no Universities or NGOs to assist with conservation efforts
- On island technical capacity remains limited.
- The recent tsunami has created significant environmental challenges related to water quality and marine debris.



CNMI

Successes

- Conservation action plan for Laolao Bay Watershed completed to address land-based sources of pollution which resulted in funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)
- Fostering interest in resource management among local college students through internship program

Challenges

- High staff turnovers
- Insufficient technical and enforcement capacity



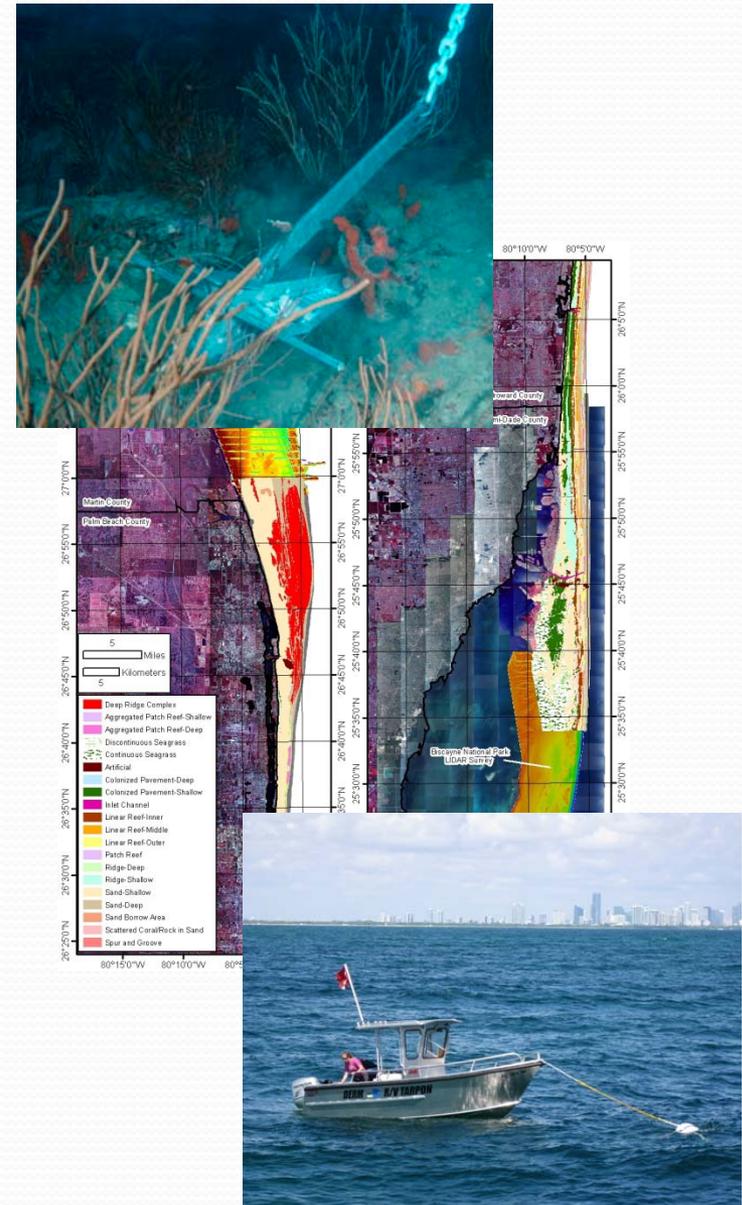
Florida

Successes

- Enacted the *Coral Reef Protection Act* on July 1, 2009. The new law raises awareness about damages associated with vessel impacts and authorizes penalties for coral reef injuries resulting from vessels anchoring, grounding and dragging cables on the Florida Reef Tract.
- Completed the first maps of 240km² of benthic habitat off northern Miami-Dade County in June 2009 with partners at the National Coral Reef Institute.
- Partnered with Miami-Dade County to install the first 20 mooring buoys off the coast of Miami in September 2009.

Challenges

- Sustaining funding for the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Lack of fisheries independent monitoring on the northern Florida Reef Tract
- Increasing reports of invasive lionfish (*Pterois* spp.)



Guam

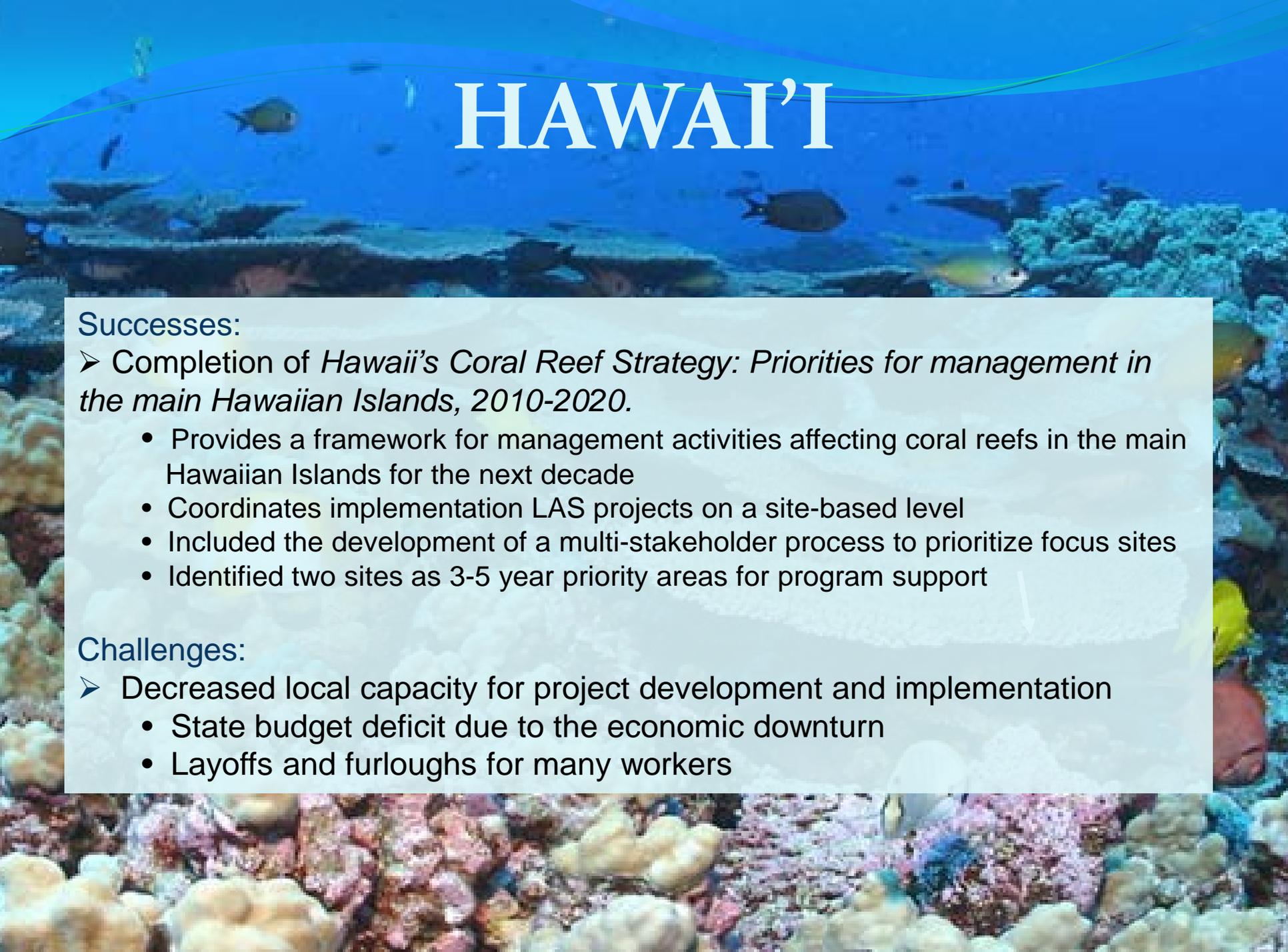
- Successes
 - Natural Resources Subcommittee
 - Natural Resource Strategy
 - Mitigation Strategy, including support for mitigating impacts (eg. Mitigation in lieu fee program)
 - Conservation Action Plan-watershed management plans
 - Piti/Asan Watershed
 - Santos Memorial Park
 - Masso Reservoir
 - Piti/Asan Community Stewardship Program



Guam (contd.)

- Recreational LAS
 - DAWR hosting series of community workshops to determine Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)
 - Used in Guam's MPAs to help regulate recreational activities
- **Challenges-**
 - Building Capacity, limited funding, enforcement
 - Need for better engagement with stakeholders and diverse communities
 - New impacts – are Guam's reefs resilient to big global threats such as climate change

HAWAI'I

A vibrant underwater scene featuring a diverse coral reef. The water is a deep, clear blue. In the foreground, there are various types of coral, including branching and table corals, in shades of yellow, orange, and pink. Numerous small, dark-colored fish are swimming throughout the water column. The overall atmosphere is bright and healthy.

Successes:

- Completion of *Hawaii's Coral Reef Strategy: Priorities for management in the main Hawaiian Islands, 2010-2020*.
 - Provides a framework for management activities affecting coral reefs in the main Hawaiian Islands for the next decade
 - Coordinates implementation LAS projects on a site-based level
 - Included the development of a multi-stakeholder process to prioritize focus sites
 - Identified two sites as 3-5 year priority areas for program support

Challenges:

- Decreased local capacity for project development and implementation
 - State budget deficit due to the economic downturn
 - Layoffs and furloughs for many workers

Puerto Rico



Figure 5. Channel erosion in the Rio Loco due in part to old irrigation infrastructure, invasive species and the loss of Guánica Lagoon. The picture on the lower right shows the potential role of trees in this ecosystem to help to fortify streambanks and reduce erosion

U.S. Virgin Islands

Successes

- Development of Phase II VI LAS building upon outputs from VI Management Priorities
- Marine Park Initiative (STXEEMP and STEER)
- Restoration activities within 3 priority watersheds to address land-based sources of pollution (ARRA funded)
- Increased collaboration and tools to respond to impacted reefs - partnership with NOAA Restoration Center & TNC's ARRA-funded coral nursery project
- Creation of interagency VI Lionfish Response Management Plan - collaborative action to address emerging threat of this invasive species

Challenges

- Insufficient technical and enforcement capacity
- Data gaps (e.g. fisheries, connectivity, health thresholds, etc.) – necessary to inform policy and management actions
- Climate change impacts



The Indo-Pacific "Lionfish" - A Dangerous Invasive Spe



**Lionfish
Public Meeting**

The Threat is REAL.
The Lionfish are HERE
The Time to act is NOW



WE NEED YOUR HELP!
Lionfish are invasive predators that can devastate St. Croix fisheries, coral reefs and tourism!

To learn more about the **Virgin Islands Lionfish Response Plan** and what **YOU can do**, attend

Wed, October 28th at 7:00 pm
at the
Curriculum Center

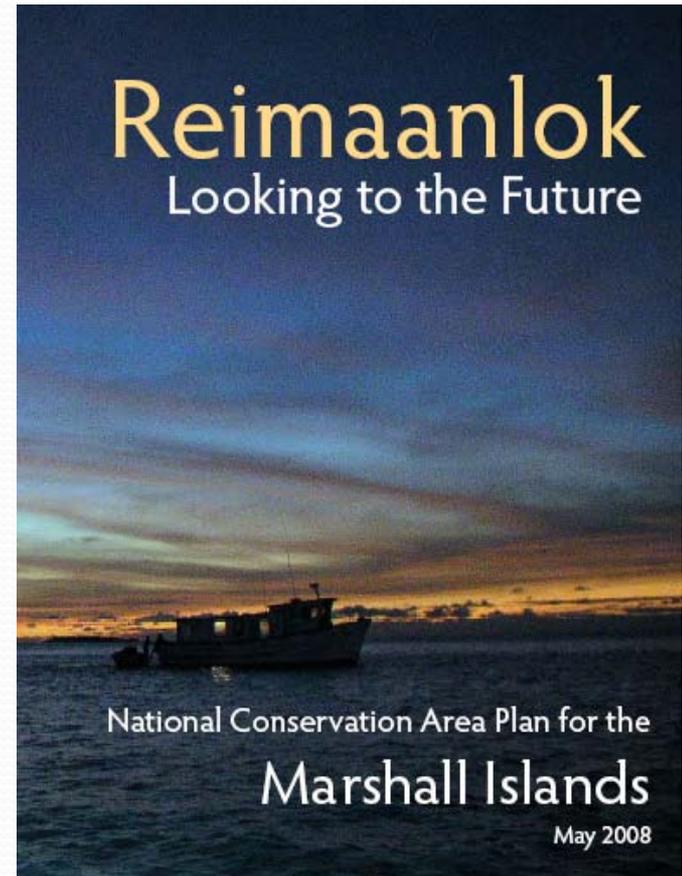
For more information or to report a lionfish, contact the DPNR
Division of Fish and Wildlife at 642-6800.

REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

ISLANDS

- Successes

- Climate Proofing the community based conservation planning process through our Reimaanlok Plan
- Strengthened CMAC (Coastal Management Advisory Council)
- Hosted several Climate Change Workshops and Meetings
- Marine Science Certificate Program to increase capacity in outer islands



RMI (continued)

- Challenges
 - Logistics – transportation to outer islands
 - Local Capacity
 - Funding
 - Coral Disease, Crown of Thorns and Bleaching
 - Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Enforcement

Recommendations

- Support USDA's proposal for the NGO Partnership Funding initiative;
- Encourage more active engagement by ALL federal agencies in the implementation of each jurisdiction's coral reef management priorities and in the development of their own coral reef conservation implementation plans;
- Adopt the Roadway Resolution and request quick action from the USCRTF Secretariat until further conversations with DOT and update at the Winter meeting of the USCRTF in February 2010.
- Provide a briefing on the findings of the Working Group at the Fall 2010 USCRTF meeting.
- Encourage the Army Corps of Engineers to develop regulatory guidance to address lost coral reef ecosystem function and report back at the Winter meeting of the USCRTF in February 2010.

www.allislandscorals.org

