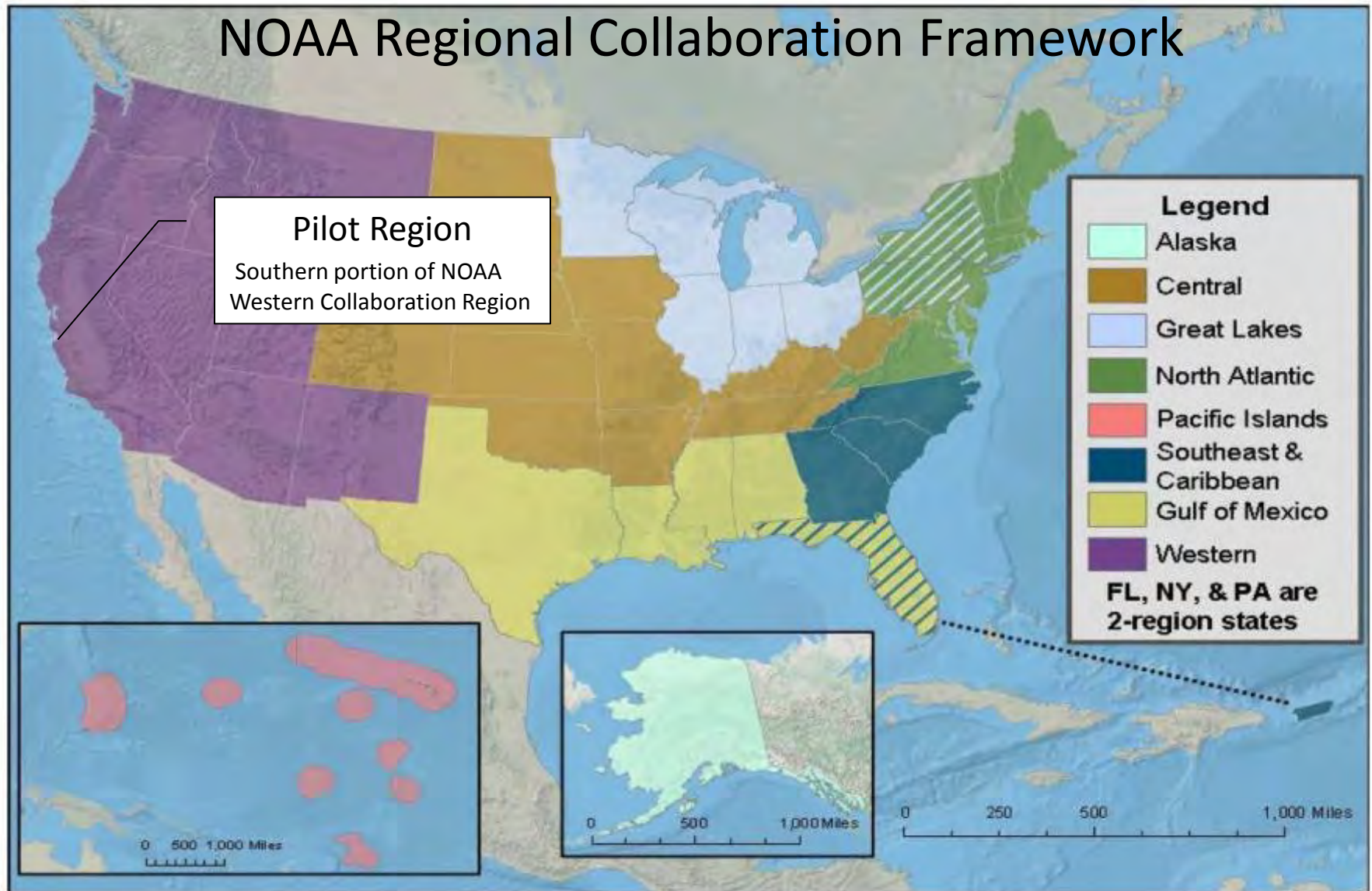




Identifying Place-Based Habitat Priorities: *NOAA Habitat Blueprint and the Habitat Focus Area Regional Pilot*

Joint GFNMS/CBNMS Advisory Council Meeting
January 24, 2013

TESTING THE PROCESS – THE CALIFORNIA PILOT



What is NOAA's Habitat Blueprint?

Components:

- **Establish Habitat Focus Areas**
- Enhanced Habitat Science
- Strengthen Policy and Legislation
- Regional Habitat Initiatives

Drivers:

- Difficulty demonstrating impact of NOAA's habitat conservation activities
- Perceived lack of LO collaboration
- Declining habitat funding
- Concerns with NOAA's level of support for habitat

FIRST STEPS

• **Developed Process Guidance**

- Used cross-NOAA Working Group to develop initial Guidance for how to select habitat focus areas
- Cross-NOAA review
- Editorial Board made final decisions on edits
- Process took over four months

• **Formed a Regional Planning Team (RPT)**

- The RPT is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and facilitating the habitat focus area selection process
- Includes representatives from all NOAA Line Offices
- Led by co-leads from the three main Line Offices involved



TOP FAQs ABOUT HABITAT FOCUS AREAS



- **What is a habitat focus area?**
 - an area where collaboration among NOAA and external partners can yield measurable results and address multiple habitat-dependent objectives
- **Why establish habitat focus areas?**
 - We have been successful but we can always do better
 - Need to prioritize with limited resources
 - Desire to increase collaboration with partners
- **How many focus areas will there be? And how big will the areas be?**
 - One or more in each NOAA region
 - Big enough to make an impact, small enough to show a difference
- **Will all of NOAA's resources be directed to these areas?**
 - No, but some activities taking place in these areas will receive priority

HABITAT FOCUS AREA CRITERIA



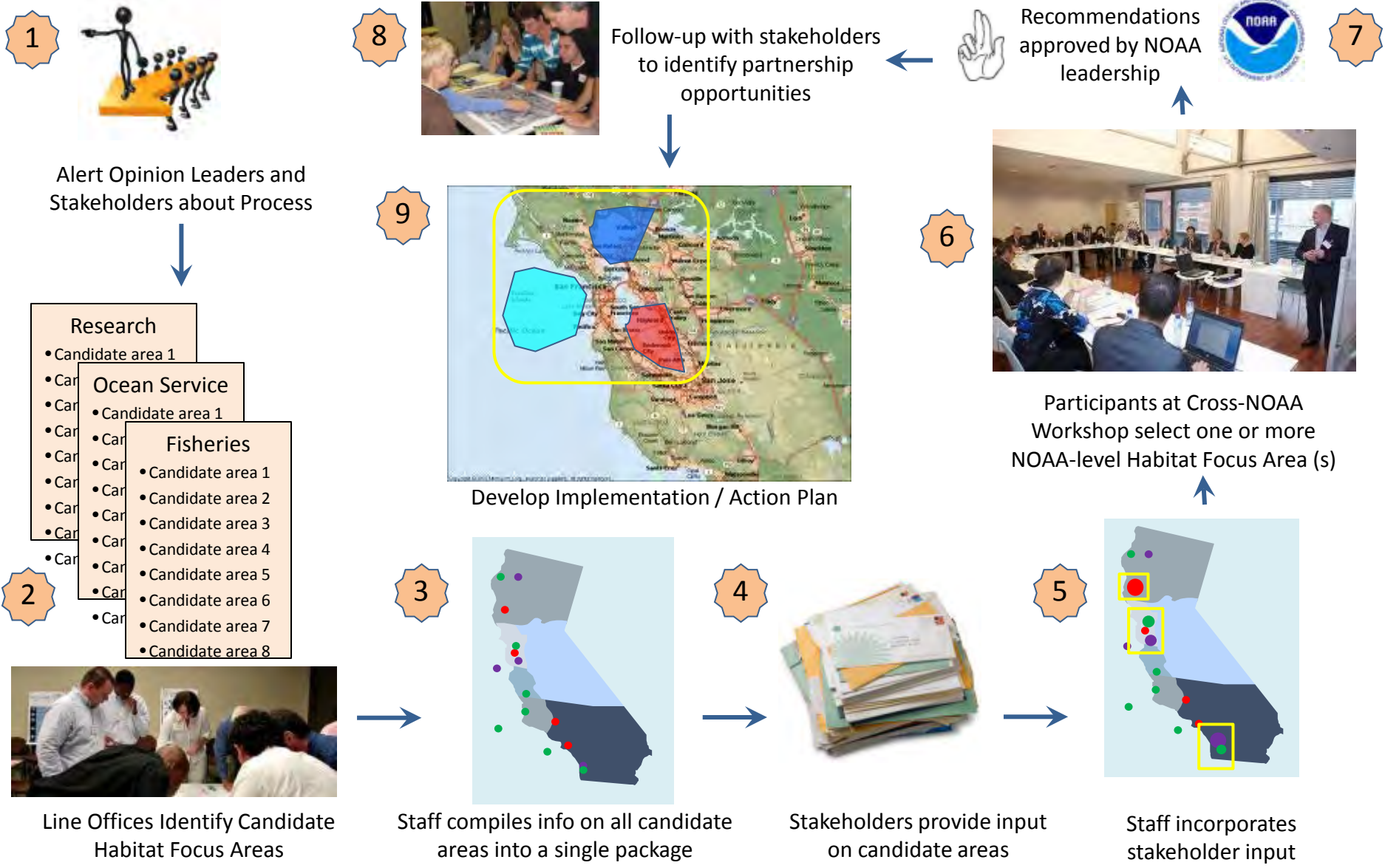
Must support at least one of the five Blueprint Outcomes

- Sustainable and abundant fish populations
- Recovered threatened and endangered species
- Protected coastal and marine areas and habitats at risk
- Resilient coastal communities
- Increased coastal/marine tourism, access, and recreation

Eight Decision Criteria identified with proposed scoring rubric

- Potential to Demonstrate Long-Term Impact
- Measurable Progress over the Next Three to Five Years (Feasibility)
- External Partnership Potential
- External Resources and Leveraging
- Cross-NOAA Collaboration
- Alignment with NOAA-wide Priorities
- Improves Scientific Understanding of Habitat Function
- Transferability

THE FOCUS AREA SELECTION PROCESS



NOAA Candidate Focus Areas



Main Criteria for California RPT

The Habitat Focus Areas had to be:

- Valuable for telling a clear story about the need for and benefits from NOAA's habitat conservation efforts
- Demonstrate clear progress in 3-5 years
- Multiple line office collaboration

Russian River Watershed



Why the Russian River?

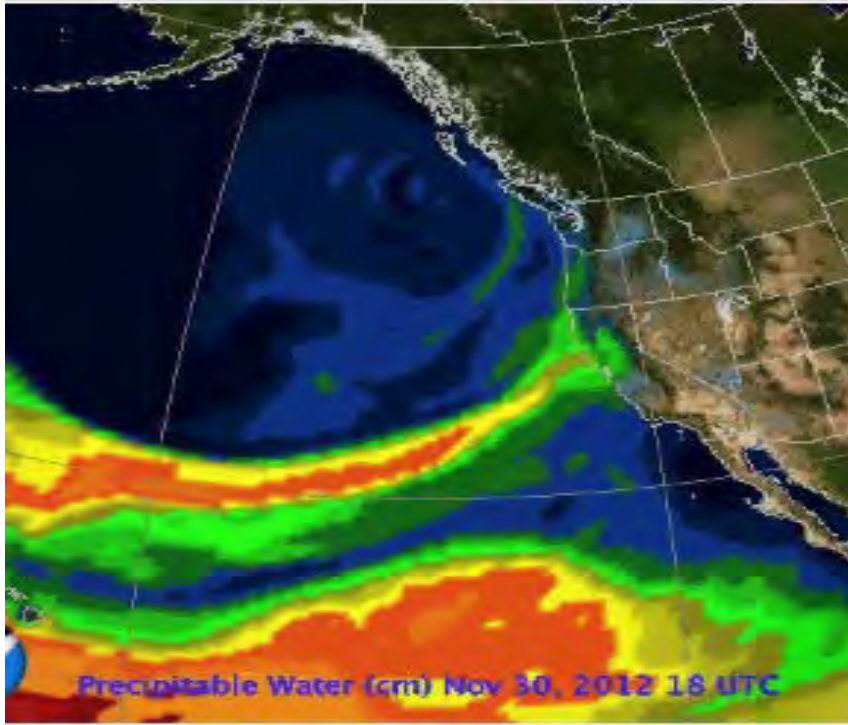
- Habitat restoration needed for ESA-listed Coho, chinook, steelhead stocks
- Communities and businesses subject to frequent and severe flooding
- Competing uses for the River's water
- Multiple cross-NOAA projects already underway
- Active stakeholder / partner community
- NOAA leadership will make a significant difference
- Real progress achievable in 3 to 5 years



Flooding in Guerneville, CA, along the Russian River

Atmospheric Rivers (ARs)

AR impacting the U.S. west coast: Nov. 26 – Dec. 4



- Atmospheric Rivers (ARs) are narrow regions in the atmosphere that transport lots of water vapor
- Significant AR events contribute to strong winds and can stall, causing extreme rainfall and floods
- Significant events can disrupt travel, induce mud slides, and cause damage to life and property
- Not all ARs cause damage – many are weak and provide beneficial rain and snow that are crucial for water supply

AR Quick Facts

- 30-50% of annual precipitation in west coast states occurs in just a few AR events
- A well-known type of AR that can hit the U.S. west coast is called the “Pineapple Express” due to their ability to bring moisture from the tropical regions near HI to the U.S. west coast
- ARs are about 200-400 miles wide



Frost Protection Measures





NOAA Training Programs

Our Coast – Our Future

Hazards and Climate Adaptation

Habitat Priority Planner

Coastal Inundation Toolkit



- Model vulnerabilities from sea level rise and storm hazards, including factors such as water levels, wave heights, flooding, and erosion.
- Obtain insight and feedback on stakeholder information needs through regional workshops.
- Map infrastructure and ecosystem vulnerabilities to sea level rise and storm hazards at the scale needed for management action.
- Communicate the products in accessible, user friendly formats to apply to local adaptation and response strategies.
- Provide training on the use of the decision support tools and interactive maps.

Dry Creek Restoration





Side Channel Habitat in Action





Off-channel habitat from gravel mines





Captive Broodstock Program



Lagoon improvements for steelhead





Russian River Deliverables In 3 – 5 Years

- More streams with coho salmon and steelhead trout
 - 3 miles of stream restored in Dry Creek
 - Better management of the lagoon at the river mouth
 - Improved flood prediction
 - Gravel mines developed into off-channel habitat for salmon
- Better information for water management
 - Better frost prediction models
 - Progress on improved flood forecasting
- Additional projects to be determined



