

Regional Approaches to Coastal and Ocean Management

The regional approach helps coastal resource managers by improving the ability of NOAA and the NOAA Coastal Services Center to

- **Better address customer needs** through an investment in the time and manpower required to adequately understanding regional customers, priorities, and opportunities
- **Build partnerships** and enhance communication among regional partners
- **Increase the use of NOAA products and services**

Regional staff members from the NOAA Coastal Services Center are located in the West Coast, Great Lakes, Gulf Coast, Pacific Islands, Southeast, and Northeast.

*Customers have better access to NOAA products and services,
as well as other regional and federal information.*

Future

- **Better delivery of products geared to meet regional needs.** From conservation planning to climate change, many of the overarching issues for the nation are similar, but the nation's responses must be tailored to the needs of particular regions.
- **More partnerships that cross program and state lines.** Shrinking budgets and the widespread impacts of climate change are making this a necessity. Regional staff members can make this goal a reality.
- **Continued support of regional ocean governance.** New governance approaches have the potential to change the way coastal resources are managed, with collaboration being a paramount characteristic. In response to one of the key recommendations by the Pew Oceans Commission and U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, state and federal agencies have successfully addressed the need to collaborate on regional issues of importance. Current regional efforts include the
 - Gulf of Mexico Alliance
 - West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health
 - Northeast Regional Ocean Council
 - Chesapeake Bay Program
 - Great Lakes Regional Collaboration
 - Hawaii Ocean and Coastal Council
 - South Atlantic Alliance

Contact

Becky Smyth, Division Chief, Regional Coastal Services
Rebecca.Smyth@noaa.gov
(510) 251-8324



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Coastal and Ocean Management Integration Act

Following are basic principles the NOAA Coastal Services Center proposes be represented in any coastal and ocean bill approved by Congress. These principles reflect what is currently in the administration's Coastal and Ocean Management Integration Act.

NOAA responsibilities include the delivery of high-quality and coordinated coastal and ocean science, technology, data, and services. The goal is to increase the nation's capacity to make informed decisions regarding the long-term sustainability of the nation's coastal communities, economies, and ecosystems.

Priority issues include

- Coastal hazards and climate change
- Competing coastal uses and habitat loss
- Coastal pollution and human health effects

Priority activities include

- Conducting, funding, and delivering integrated natural, physical, and social science
- Providing a broad range of management support, technical assistance, tools, and training to coastal and ocean decision makers
- Developing outreach and education activities for a coastal- and ocean-literate society
- Participating in the management of coastal and ocean resources through various programs and policies, including the National Marine Sanctuaries, the National Estuarine Research Reserves, and state coastal zone management programs

In support of the above, NOAA would be authorized to

- Establish centers that provide focused products and services for decision makers (e.g., coastal services centers, centers for coastal and ocean science, marine protected area centers, integrated ocean and coastal mapping and observing centers, and other institutional arrangements and partnerships)
- Promote and support cooperation and integration among all levels of government and with the private sector, including
 - Entering into contracts, financial agreements, leases, and other financial mechanisms
 - Participating in interagency financing (on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis) and share, transfer, receive, obligate, and expend funds
 - Collecting and using registration fees to support meetings, conferences, and training
 - Paying for travel expenses for persons participating in activities
 - Recognizing and awarding excellence in coastal and ocean management

Contact

Ginger Hinchcliff, Division Chief, Coastal Management Services
Ginger.Hinchcliff@noaa.gov
(843) 740-1184



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Climate Change

Providing assistance and leadership to state and local coastal programs is the role of NOAA's Coastal Services Center. The Center is a critical partner in NOAA's climate adaptation efforts because of the organization's relationship with the coastal management community and the pertinent nature of the Center's core capabilities—fostering partnerships and delivering data, tools, training, and technical assistance.

Current efforts include

- Creating coastal inundation mapping and visualization tools
- Developing Pacific Island and national climate services information portals
- Helping the nation prepare adaptation strategies by fostering partnerships within NOAA, throughout the federal government, and among all sectors in the coastal zone

Internal collaborative efforts include leading interagency efforts to better link the U.S. Climate Change Science Program with the National Science and Technology Council's Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction; working with the U.S. Geological Survey to develop a climate initiative for coastal managers; working through the Coastal Strategy project to implement activities that minimize impacts from coastal hazards; engaging with the National Climate Service for the past two years; and maintaining a strong presence within existing NOAA climate-related programs.

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State and local organizations get the tools and information they need to visualize and communicate information about inundation.

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Future

NOAA Coastal Services Center efforts will continue to address climate change through

- **Collaboration and coordination.** A coalition of natural and social scientists, information brokers, and decision makers will work to identify needs, coordinate planning and activities, and share best practices.
- **Development of decision-support tools and training.** This list includes visualizations, risk and vulnerability assessments, tools for understanding uncertainty, and options for adaptation.
- **Assisting coastal managers with information needs.** Helping coastal managers understand what information is needed for their locale is important.
- **Uncovering information gaps.** When needed, NOAA will find the environmental and social science data most needed to interpret and communicate climate change.

Contact

Mary Culver, Climate Theme Lead
Mary.Culver@noaa.gov
(843) 740-1250

Sandy Eslinger, Hazards Theme Leader
Sandy.Eslinger@noaa.gov
(843) 740-1155



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Pacific Risk Management `Ohana (PRiMO)

The agencies, institutions, and companies that make up the Pacific Risk Management `Ohana (PRiMO) are working together to improve the Pacific region's resilience to coastal hazards. Through this collaboration, important risk management products and services are being developed for Pacific Island communities. Since the group's inception in 2002, the NOAA Pacific Services Center has provided guidance and acted as PRiMO's executive secretariat.

Accomplishments

- Formation of an organizational framework and governance structure – Navigators (Council); Steerspersons (working group chairs); and Huis (working groups)
- Development of a coastal community resilience guidebook for the Indian Ocean as a result of participation in the formation of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System
- Development of high-impact decision-support tools such as the Tsunami Risk Assessment Project (TRAP) and the Hazard Education and Awareness Tool (HEAT)
- Incorporation of indigenous knowledge into disaster mitigation and education
- Formation of the Pacific Climate Information System (PaCIS)

PRiMO is the catalyst from which Pacific Island communities are gaining a comprehensive understanding of their hazard risks and are therefore in a better position to make sound social and economic decisions that will enhance their resilience to future disasters.

Future

- Refine and strengthen its collaborative leadership model to ensure sustainability and accountability within PRiMO
- Better align PRiMO systems and resources with its vision
- Emphasize collaboration on projects identified at annual meetings and other opportunities, and through identification of needs, gaps, and synergy
- Continue contributions to multihazard mitigation planning in jurisdictions throughout the region through the expertise and products of PRiMO agencies and programs
- Expand efforts to enhance community resilience through individual and community-based projects, and explore opportunities to establish a local PRiMO presence within Pacific Island jurisdictions
- Bring PRiMO capabilities to bear in support of regionwide efforts to more closely integrate climate change adaptation planning with disaster risk reduction, and in support of the emergence of effective climate information services in and for the Pacific
- Strengthen the PRiMO commitment to advancing the integration of traditional environmental knowledge into emerging efforts to both understand vulnerability and develop effective programs to enhance the resilience of Pacific Island communities

Contact

Bill Thomas, Director, Pacific Services Center
Bill.Thomas@noaa.gov
(808) 532-3963



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Building the Digital Coast

The Digital Coast provides the total package needed by state, local, and nonprofit organizations. The website offers easy access not only to downloadable data, but also to the training, sample applications, and tools needed to turn these data into useful information. The Digital Coast framework and content is led by the Digital Coast Partnership Group, which is composed of the NOAA Coastal Services Center's primary constituents.*

The Digital Coast website and partnership network is

- **User focused.** The website provides the geospatial resources needed to address relevant coastal issues.
- **Innovative and flexible.** As customer needs change, so does the Digital Coast.
- **Concentrated on quality.** Trusted and unbiased geospatial data, tools, and training are featured on the website.
- **Going beyond data.** The unique partnership team leads not only the website, but also a broader initiative designed to use Digital Coast resources to address specific coastal issues.

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This cutting-edge product and the Partnership Group initiative are creating powerful solutions for coastal management issues.

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Future

- **Bring the right data to the right users.** Provide the integrated ocean and coastal mapping community with data delivery mechanism and best practices guidance.
- **Broaden the Partnership Group.** Bring more groups together to prioritize and address coastal issues.
- **Build specific tools to answer specific needs.** Develop more proof of concept projects to bring the ideas from these concepts.
- **Increase content from other organizations.** Broaden the data and tool holdings to include content from other organizations.

Contact

Miki Schmidt, Division Chief, Geospatial Services
Nicholas.Schmidt@noaa.gov
(843) 740-1237

**Note: The Digital Coast Partnership Group currently includes NOAA, the Coastal States Organization, National Association of Counties, National States Geographic Information Council, Association of State Floodplain Managers, and The Nature Conservancy.*



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Conservation

To further the stewardship of this nation's resources, the NOAA Coastal Services Center works with many conservation programs, including the Land Trust Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, National Estuarine Research Reserves, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecosystem Based Management Tool Network, and The Conservation Fund.

The Center's goals for these efforts include the following: a) organizations have the tools and information needed to adequately serve and lead the coastal component of their constituency; b) consistent messages and priorities are found among the organizations; and c) climate change adaptation strategies are incorporated into all coastal management functions.

For these constituents the Center provides

- **Training and Technical Assistance.** Courses include Tools for Strategic Conservation Planning; Collaborative Processes for Ecosystem-Based Management; Green Infrastructure Planning; and Negotiating for Coastal Resources.
- **Data and Tools.** The Center provides not only data but also the tools needed to turn these data into useful information. Examples include land cover data and the Habitat Priority Planner.

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Effective coastal resource management occurs because conservation organizations are working together and are armed with the tools and information they need.

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Future

The NOAA Coastal Services Center hopes to take on an even greater role in efforts to get disparate programs within a region working together. The Center will set up processes and provide services that further

- **Formalized, regional conservation planning.** Regional ocean governance is a good example. It is through efforts like this that regions prioritize their issues and realize the economics and successes of scale as they work toward common goals.
- **Climate change adaptation strategies.** The problem is too big and too costly to work in a vacuum. Pooling resources, ideas, and expertise is the only hope for addressing this elephant in the room.
- **Ecosystem-based management.** Another concept that must become a reality if the nation is to sustain healthy ecosystems for tomorrow is ecosystem-based management. The Center will support this concept by increasing the use of social and economic information and processes.

Contact

Ginger Hinchcliff, Division Chief, Coastal Management Services
Ginger.Hinchcliff@noaa.gov
(843) 740-1184



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