



# AIC Chair's Report

Fran Castro Houk  
Chair, U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)

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36<sup>th</sup> U.S. Coral Reef Task Force  
September 22, 2016 | Saipan, CNMI

An underwater photograph showing a dense field of yellowish-brown coral in the foreground. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering through from above, creating a shimmering effect on the surface. A dark red horizontal bar is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing the text 'Hafa adai and welcome' in white.

*Hafa adai* and welcome



# AIC Updates

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# AIC Updates



Finalized our AIC Action Plan, 2016-2020

- Internal working doc and spreadsheet of actions
- Supplemental to AIC Strategic Plan

AIC Chair position held by Fran Castro extended 1 more year.





# AIC Priorities

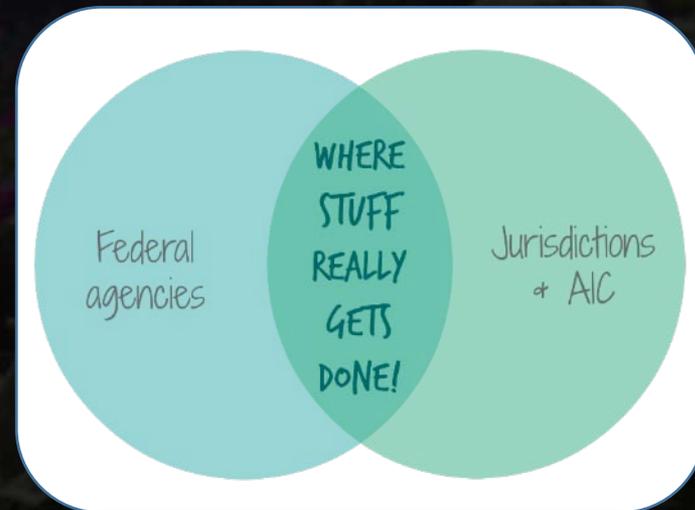
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# AIC Priorities

## Federal-Jurisdiction Integration

- Critical to the effective management and conservation of our coral reefs.
- Task Force = OPPORTUNITY
- Increased communication & outreach → increased collaboration
- **SUGGESTIONS?** What can we do to increase our outreach to and engagement of federal agencies and the greater Task Force?



# AIC Priorities

## Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program

- Thank you to NOAA CRCP, DOI Office of Insular Affairs, Nova Southeastern University, & local agency leadership
- Updates in AIC Chair's Report
- *In and out of the box* ways to sustain this program long term
- This capacity-building program should be formally supported by the USCRTF.



Puerto Rico's Coral Fellow, Mariana León, presenting her work and preliminary results at the Priorities and Recommendations Workshop. (DNER)

# AIC Priorities

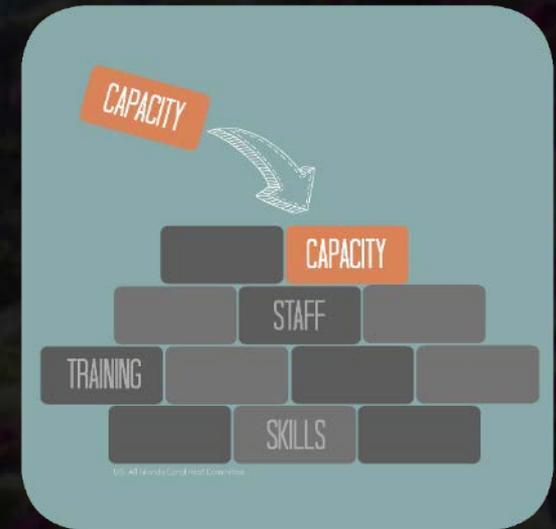
## USCRTF: Capacity-building

- USCRTF target issue (Strategy, Resolution 34.1)
- Benefits for all Task Force members
- Benefits to coral reef resources

**New DRAFT Resolution:** *To Support a Sustainable Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program for the Jurisdictions of the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee*

- Work together as a Task Force
- A plan for sustainable support and funding

Work with TF Steering Committee for potential adoption before end of year.



# AIC Priorities

## Coral Reef Conservation Act Reauthorization

- 114<sup>th</sup> Congress: H.R. 5771 and 5821
- Communications with Congressional offices
- Continue work with the USCRTF on the reauthorization of CRCA (e.g., finding areas of common ground).

CORAL REEF  
CONSERVATION ACT  
16 U.S.C. 6401 ET SEQ  
DECEMBER 23, 2000



# AIC Priorities

## USCRTF Strategy, Mitigation Handbook, & Watershed Partnership Initiative Strategy

- Appreciate USCRTF collaboration, time, and work
- Informative and impressive documents
- Great example of collaborative nature of USCRTF

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Strategy, FY2016-2021

USCRTF Handbook on Coral Reef Impacts: Avoidance, Minimization, Compensatory Mitigation, and Restoration

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Watershed Partnership Initiative Strategy





# Jurisdictional Updates

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# Member Updates

## American Samoa

- COTS outbreak managed
- Faga'alu Community MPA
- Marine Debris Action Plan & trash collection + campaigns a success
- Needed: Funding and technical support for derelict vessel removal

Members of the community in Faga'alu meet to discuss the establishment of a MPA in community waters. CRAG



## CNMI

- Resilience assessments
- Community reporting via new website & mobile app
- Shoreline development, bleaching, vessel groundings
- Needed: Funding and support for bleaching and disturbance response plan



Rota volunteers and Ridge to Reef Eco Camp students plant vetiver grass at the Talakhaya Revegetation Site. J. Buniag



# Member Updates

## Florida

- Pillar coral emergency efforts
- Our Florida Reefs completed
- Needed: Emergency funding and response capacity for coral reef events



Significant decline of Pillar coral led to emergency management actions to preserve genetic diversity. FDEP



Volunteers helping with bamboo removal in Manell-Geus watershed. A. Simeon

## Guam

- Interagency Reef Response team
- Invasive bamboo removal success, resilience assessment
- Needed: Water quality and enforcement assistance

# Member Updates

## Hawai'i

- Coral Bleaching Management Plan
- Senate Bill 2453
- Kaupulehu Marine Reserve established
- Needed: Federal support for beach renourishment and support for management strategies in South Kohala, Big Island



Public meeting for the establishment of the Kaupulehu Marine Reserve. *DAR*



Focus group, with marine recreation concessionaries, working on the NE Reserves and Culebra. *A. Montanez*

## Puerto Rico

- Review of coral reef priorities
- NOAA Habitat Blueprint Implementation Framework
- Needed: Funding and surveillance support of coral reefs in protected areas

# Member Updates

## U.S. Virgin Islands

- Vessel grounding response team
- Derelict vessel survey in St. Croix
- Baseline data @ 2 monitoring sites
- Needed: Research support on invasive seagrass management



## Federated States of Micronesia

- Commercial sea cucumber harvest
- Micronesia Regional Collaboration and Enforcement Workshop
- Needed: Enforcement resources, outreach and communications support



# Member Updates

## Republic of the Marshall Islands

- Resource management plans for 2 new proposed MPAs
- CMAC Strategic Action Plan and Terms of Reference
- Baseline assessments for fish, coral and inverts (Reimaanlok for Ebon, Ujae, Lae, & Wotho)



## Republic of Palau

- Underwater and landings fisheries surveys in northern reef
- Ecological monitoring of all MPAs with coral and seagrass conducted
- 1st coral recruitment assessment completed

# Acknowledgements



Dr. Héctor Ruiz

- Governor Ralph DeLeon Guerrero Torres and Governor Eddie Baza Calvo
- Task Force co-chairs
- Task Force members & member agencies
- CNMI BECQ and Guam BSP – Jihan Buniag, Lola Leon Guerrero, and their teams
- Austin Shelton and Raymond Jualin
- AIC Secretariat



# Questions?

