

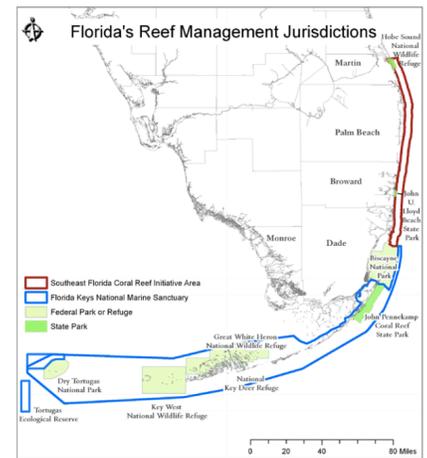
Evaluation and Assessment of the Climate Action Plan for the Florida Reef System



Project Purpose: To evaluate the implementation of the [Climate Change Action Plan for the Florida Reef System 2010-2015](#) (Action Plan) and assess future needs.

Background: Climate change is acknowledged as one of the most serious threats to the long-term health of coral reefs worldwide. Already, in many places around the world such as the Maldives, Seychelles and northeastern Caribbean Sea, coral bleaching has severely degraded more than 50 percent of reefs.

Florida's 300-nautical-mile reef system comprises the only barrier reef in the continental United States. These reefs are critical habitats for the plants and animals that live there from lobster to parrotfish. Reef-related expenditures also generate 71,000 jobs annually with US\$6.3 billion in sales and income. Climate change impacts such as increased ocean temperatures and ocean acidification, along with localized stresses including overfishing, land-based sources of pollution, and direct habitat degradation from human activities, have been accelerating the decline of the health of the Florida's reefs. The Action Plan, released in 2010, was the culmination of five years of collaboration between a broad spectrum of coral reef scientists, managers, and users that recognized the need for a holistic strategy to protect and manage the geographic range of Florida's coral habitats given the inevitability of warmer, more acidic oceans and rising sea levels.



The Action Plan identifies ways to increase reef resilience to climate change and minimize negative impacts on reef-dependent industries, such as diving and snorkeling tourism, and commercial and recreational fishing. The Action Plan includes three main outcomes, 12 objectives, and 40 actions intended to increase the tract's resilience.

Priority actions included recommendations to develop a marine zoning plan that incorporates resilience-based concepts and decreases the likelihood of negative impacts from other users; to increase awareness and appreciation; to forecast potential social and economic effects; and to ensure long-term monitoring of the reef tract.

Objectives:

This project will evaluate the degree to which actions identified in the Action Plan are being implemented as planned. Using a scorecard, we will identify the current status as well as the projected trajectory of each of the 40 action items. This project will improve the awareness and appreciation of the Florida reef tract, ensure that signatories of the Action Plan are held accountable for progress, and make recommendations on future needs by:

- Surveying the south Florida coral reef community on if outcomes have been achieved and to what extent;
- Identifying which actions have been addressed and assessing their status;
- Developing a scorecard based on progress;
- Assessing future needs of the Florida reef community; and
- Making recommendations for next steps.

Key Participants:

- Florida Reef Resilience Program
- The Nature Conservancy
- NOAA Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
- Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative
- Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Diving and fishing community

Are the actions being implemented as planned and outlined in the Action Plan to increase the Florida's reef tract resilience?



Some progress in key aspects of compliance *and* enforcement



Failing on key aspects of compliance *and* enforcement



Failing on key aspects of compliance *or* enforcement



EcoAdapt, founded by a team of some of the earliest adaptation thinkers and practitioners in the field, has one goal - creating a robust future in the face of climate change. We bring together diverse players to reshape planning and management in response to rapid climate change.

This project is part of our State of Adaptation Program. Climate change adaptation is a nascent field and many planners and managers are in need of real-life, practical examples and resources that demonstrate ways to prepare for and respond to the effects of climate change. This program is designed to facilitate adaptation action by surveying practitioners; assessing adaptation activities; writing case studies to catalyze creative thinking; and synthesizing the information collected to further develop the field of study and action. The results of this program, including synthesis reports and case studies, are used to populate the Climate Adaptation Knowledge Exchange (CAKE, www.CAKEx.org), a free online resource where users can access data, tools, and best practices for adaptation.

Other State of Adaptation Projects and Products are available at www.EcoAdapt.org.

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- **CONTACT** Project Manager, Alex Score at Alex@EcoAdapt.org.