

Resilience Action Plan for Florida's Coral Reef

2021-2026



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Florida Reef Resilience Program



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An underwater photograph showing a diver in the upper left quadrant, looking down at a large, dome-shaped brain coral in the foreground. The coral has a complex, maze-like pattern. The background is filled with various other coral species and a clear blue water environment.

Florida Reef Values

- Biological Diversity
- Aesthetic and Cultural
- Fisheries and Tourism
\$4.4B/year
- Coastal Protection
\$675M/year



Threats to Coral Reefs

- Climate change/coral bleaching/ocean acidification
- Water quality/coral disease
- Acute local impacts



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GOALS

- Enable resilience-based management of Florida's Coral Reef
- Support public policy that creates the enabling conditions for reef recovery
- Enable stakeholders to support the future of the reef and those who depend on it

GOAL 1: Enable resilience-based management of Florida's Coral Reef

- **Objective 1: Abate Threats**

- Reduce water quality impacts
 - Action example – Modernize wastewater infrastructure
- Reduce direct impacts to reef habitat and species
 - Action example - Reduce impacts from marine debris on reefs
- Reduce climate change and ocean acidification impacts
 - Action example - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

GOAL 1: Enable resilience-based management of Florida's Coral Reef

- Objective 2: Enhance reef ecosystem condition with disease interventions and restoration
 - Coral disease intervention
 - Action example – Gene banking
 - Coral propagation and restoration
 - Action example - comprehensive restoration planning and coordinated implementation

GOAL 1: Enable resilience-based management of Florida's Coral Reef

- **Objective 3: Conduct research to support threat abatement and restoration**
 - Action example – identify Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease pathogen/cause
 - Action example – coral larval connectivity modeling
 - Action example – maintain and improve long-term, question-driven monitoring programs that identify climate impacts, key species population changes, and environmental conditions

GOAL 2: Support public policy that creates the enabling conditions for reef recovery

- **Objective 1: Incorporate the economic values of Florida's Coral Reef into decision making**
 - Action example – incorporate spatially explicit economic data into regulatory decisions
 - Action example – FEMA should classify coral reefs as “natural infrastructure”

GOAL 2: Support public policy that creates the enabling conditions for reef recovery

- **Objective 2: Educate Florida's leaders on coral reef-related issues and policy priorities**
 - Action example – strengthen penalties for reef-related violations
 - Action example – reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 or a similar new authority

GOAL 2: Support public policy that creates the enabling conditions for reef recovery

- **Objective 3: Enhance sustainable funding for coral reef management**

- Action example – coral disease coordination and response

- Action example – water quality infrastructure funding

GOAL 3: Enable stakeholders to support the future of the reef and those who depend on it

- **Objective 1: Support individual reef users in becoming champions for coral reefs**
 - Action example – establish or maintain reef education communications campaigns
 - Action example – promote participation in reef management, restoration, and citizen science programs

GOAL 3: Enable stakeholders to support the future of the reef and those who depend on it

- **Objective 2: Promote businesses and institutions efforts to protect, restore, and sustainable use reefs**
 - Action example – engage business leaders
 - Action example – promote participation in industry accreditation programs (e.g., Blue Star)

Resilience Action Plan X Other Plans and Efforts

- RAP complements other plans and efforts such as -
 - SCTL D Response Strategy
 - Coral Disease Intervention Plan (under development)
 - Statewide Reef Restoration Strategy (under development)
 - Mission Iconic Reefs and other specific restoration efforts
 - Management plans (e.g., FKNMS's which is undergoing revision and the new plan being developed for mainland reefs)
- RAP is not a regulatory document, nor a promise that everything recommended will take place
- RAP is the body of work suggested by reef managers to protect and restore Florida's Coral Reef while supporting private and commercial uses that benefit individuals, communities, the State of Florida, and the nation.

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