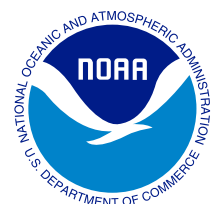


# National Coastal Zone Management Program

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Strategic Plan 2018-2023

NOAA Office for Coastal Management



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## Introduction

The coastal zone is vital to the health, well-being, and prosperity of the United States. The coasts are home to roughly half of the nation's population and support important natural and cultural resources. The National Coastal Zone Management Program embodies the work of coastal states, territories, and NOAA to address some of today's most pressing coastal issues, including the growing number of people moving to the coasts, increasing flooding risks, and the need to responsibly plan for, balance, and site coastal development and economic activities.

U.S. coastal communities are home to over 124 million people, support 53.6 million jobs, and contribute \$7.6 trillion to the U.S. economy, accounting for 46 percent of the nation's economic output. In 2014, ocean-dependent businesses employed more than three million people, with nearly three-quarters of these jobs in the tourism and recreation sector, and paid \$123 billion in wages. This represents more jobs than U.S. building construction, telecommunications, and crop production combined. If the nation's coastal counties were an individual country, it would rank third in the world in gross domestic product, surpassed only by the United States and China.

While the coastlines are among the most economically productive regions in the United States, they are also some of the most vulnerable, and are home to some of the most at risk populations, including children, the elderly, households where English is not the primary language, and those in poverty. As a recent reminder of these vulnerabilities, three major hurricanes made landfall in the United States in 2017: Harvey, Irma, and Maria. These storms resulted in the losses of lives and property and caused \$265 billion of dollars in damages.

In addition to the increased threats posed by severe storms, "nuisance flooding" at high tide is becoming more problematic for U.S. coastal communities. Several coastal cities already flood 10 to 20 days or more per year, creating public health and safety impacts through road closures, overwhelmed storm drains, and compromised infrastructure and water quality. Nuisance flooding has increased by over 300 percent since the 1960s, and the majority of U.S. coastal communities are projected to experience 30 days of tidal flooding annually by 2050. Given the importance of the coasts to the nation and the growing risks that they face, coordinated and science-based management is needed now more than ever to meet both long-standing and new challenges.

## Who We Are

The National Coastal Zone Management Program, authorized by the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972, is a partnership between the federal government and U.S. coastal and Great Lakes states and territories, designed to address national coastal issues. The program is administered by NOAA to protect, restore, and responsibly develop the nation's diverse coastal communities and resources. To meet the goals of the Coastal Zone Management Act, the national program takes a comprehensive approach to coastal resource management—balancing the often competing and occasionally conflicting demands of coastal resource use, economic development, and conservation. Currently, 34 of the 35 eligible coastal and Great Lakes states and territories participate in the program.

Participation in the program provides a number of advantages, including

- A national framework and federal support to help states conduct comprehensive coastal management.
- Funding for program development, administration, implementation, and enhancement efforts.
- A framework to address emerging issues and long-standing challenges, through the Section 309 Coastal Zone Enhancement Program.
- The ability to ensure that federal activities that affect state coastal uses or resources (both within and outside a state's coastal zone) are consistent with the state's or territory's approved program through the federal consistency provision of the act.
- Access to informational products and technical assistance.

States and territories work with local communities, across state and territory agencies, and in coordination with federal agencies to implement their coastal management programs through a number of roles and activities, such as planning, permitting, and enforcement, federal consistency, land acquisition, local and state capacity building, education and outreach, public involvement, and government coordination.

While the Coastal Zone Management Act includes a set of specific requirements and programmatic components for state partners, it also allows the flexibility needed to design programs that best address local challenges and work within state and local laws and regulations. By leveraging federal and state funds and expertise, the program strengthens the capabilities of each partner to address coastal issues. A wide range of issues are addressed through the program, including coastal development, water quality, public access, habitat protection, energy facility siting, ocean governance and planning, coastal hazards, and weather and climate resilience.



## About the Plan

The 2018 to 2023 National Coastal Zone Management Program Strategic Plan was developed by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, with participation from the Coastal States Organization and the 34 state and territory coastal management programs.

### Vision

Through a strong federal, state, and territory partnership, the nation's oceans and coasts are economically vibrant, resilient, and healthy for this and future generations.

### Mission

To ensure the conservation and responsible use of the nation's valuable coastal resources by facilitating informed planning and decision making along the coast; increasing the resilience of coastal communities by anticipating and addressing coastal hazards; and ensuring a healthy coast for the public to enjoy.

### Guiding Principles

1. **Collaborative:** Grows an efficient and effective partnership that supports collaboration and coordination at federal, state, and local levels to collectively achieve programmatic goals and objectives.
2. **Empowering:** Assists states and territories in guiding economic development, resource conservation, public use, and enjoyment of their coastlines.
3. **Flexible and Versatile:** Embraces the diversity of coastal resources and recognizes the unique strengths of the state and territory programs in addressing coastal issues and providing services to stakeholders.
4. **Proactive:** Makes investments to address both emerging and long-standing coastal management opportunities and challenges.
5. **Science-Based Decision Making:** Applies science to inform complex decision making in coastal management processes.

## **Roles in Coastal Management**

Implementation of the Coastal Zone Management Act requires close federal and state collaboration and coordination across NOAA, across state and territory agencies, and with the Coastal States Organization. Roles of these groups include the following:

- NOAA Office for Coastal Management – The Office for Coastal Management administers the National Coastal Zone Management Program in partnership with the states and provides support through funding and oversight, implementation, and technical assistance.
- State and Territory Coastal Management Programs – States and territories participating in the program develop and implement federally-approved programs that address national goals, yet are tailored to meet the specific needs of each state.
- Coastal States Organization – A non-governmental entity, the organization works with the coastal states and territories—in collaboration with NOAA—to maintain their leadership role in the development and implementation of national coastal and ocean policy, and serves as an important professional network for state and territory coastal managers.

The actions identified in this plan reflect the combined efforts of the Office for Coastal Management, state and territory coastal management programs, and the Coastal States Organization. The state and territory coastal programs work to coordinate other program efforts on coastal issues. Additionally, the state and territory coastal programs work hand-in-hand with federal, regional, state, and local government partners and non-government organizations. The state and territory coastal management plans maintain direct connections with local partners and provide technical and financial assistance to address coastal resource issues via policy- or project-based solutions.

# Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Over the next five years, NOAA, states and territories, and the Coastal States Organization will work together to execute this plan.

## **Goal 1 – Coastal communities, states, and territories effectively plan and prepare for change.**

America's coastlines are faced with a number of pressures, including rapid increases in the number of residents and visitors, growing risks from extreme weather- and climate-related hazards, and the many demands associated with development and economic activity. These challenges are also opportunities to grow and manage the nation's uses of the coasts and oceans in a way that is balanced, sustainable, and resilient. Over the next five years, NOAA, state, and territory coastal management programs will work hand-in-hand to

- prepare for and minimize the risks to communities from coastal hazards;
- foster integration of social and economic information into coastal management; and
- grow and strengthen coastal and ocean economies.

### **Key Indicators**

- The number of coastal communities worked with to reduce future damage from hazards and increase public awareness of hazards (PM 11)
- The number of coastal communities worked with to develop ways that protect community character and health, and redevelop ports and waterfronts (PM 13)

#### ***1.1 Prepare for and minimize the risks from coastal hazards, changing conditions, and emerging uses.***

1.1.1. Support the development and implementation of state and local policies and plans to effectively prepare for and respond to coastal hazards, such as storms, flooding, erosion, sea level rise, and lake level (variations) change.

1.1.2. Provide technical assistance and guidance to state and local decision makers on best management practices and policies that minimize the risks from coastal hazards and enhance weather and climate resilience, including a focus on the costs, benefits, and effectiveness of different approaches.

1.1.3. Continue to build the capacity of coastal planners to implement hazard risk-reduction activities and ocean management by connecting them to available information, training, and tools through Digital Coast, as well as funding and other resources that meet identified needs.



## **1.2 Foster integration of social and economic information into coastal management.**

1.2.1. Identify existing and emerging economic, social, cultural, ecological, stakeholder, and other relevant data and information, and advance integration of available information into decision-making processes to inform and support coastal and ocean management actions.

1.2.2. Advance quantitative assessments of the impacts of coastal management policies and investments, such as public access, low-cost construction, habitat restoration, and waterfront redevelopment projects, on key coastal economic sectors (such as tourism and recreation), from local to national scales.

## **1.3 Grow and strengthen coastal economies.**

1.3.1. Work with state and territory coastal programs to support coastal communities in updating policies and plans to prioritize redevelopment of port or waterfront areas, with an emphasis on coastal-dependent uses, to ensure that they are more resilient to coastal hazards and vital components of the local economy.

1.3.2. Facilitate the risk-wise siting of coastal-dependent uses (e.g., aquaculture, fishing, infrastructure, energy development, ports, tourism) in the coastal zone through improved partner coordination, Coastal Zone Management policy and guidance development, regulatory efficiencies, and outreach.

### **Goal 1 Case Study: Texas Coastal Resiliency Master Plan Guides Hurricane Preparedness and Recovery**

The Texas coast is home to about 6.5 million people, with total wages topping \$37 billion, along with bustling ports, military installations, 25 percent of the nation's refining capacity, and most of the nation's strategic petroleum reserve. The Texas coast has undergone massive hits from recent hurricanes, and this, combined with the fact that 65 percent of the state's Gulf shoreline is eroding at an average rate of two feet per year, means Texas is losing beachfront and leaving homes and businesses prone to flooding and storm surge. Realizing the severity of the situation, the Texas General Land Office, with grants and assistance from NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, developed a Coastal Resiliency Master Plan. The plan will help to safeguard and enhance the natural beauty of the Texas coast through marine debris clean up and the restoration of dunes, beaches, wetlands, oyster reefs, and a rookery island. In addition, the plan includes a vision for stabilizing the Texas Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and strengthening protective barriers surrounding the Houston shipping channel to protect industries and densely populated neighborhoods. The plan is providing valuable guidance to inform recovery and resilience efforts in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.

## **Goal 2 – Coastal and ocean ecosystems are protected, preserved, and restored for use and enjoyment.**

Americans want clean beaches and beautiful places for recreation and enjoyment. The National Coastal Zone Management Program is working to maintain and improve the health of the nation’s coastlines. Despite progress to date, there is still a need to increase the adoption of policies and practices that reflect science-based understanding of, and the multiple benefits provided by, intact ecosystems. Beaches, marshes, and other coastal systems are places for tourists and residents to enjoy, and they also serve as habitat for fish and wildlife and help to buffer communities from flooding and storms. Over the next five years, NOAA and state and territory coastal management programs will work together to

- preserve and restore coastal and ocean ecosystems;
- facilitate the adoption of natural and nature-based coastal infrastructure solutions; and
- improve public access to enhance recreation and enjoyment for all.

### **Key Indicators**

- The number of acres of coastal habitat protected and under restoration (PM 8)
- The number of public access sites created and enhanced (PMs 5, 6)

#### **2.1 *Preserve, restore, and better understand the services provided by coastal and ocean ecosystems.***

2.1.1. Protect and restore coastal ecosystems through acquisitions, easements, mitigation actions, and the adoption of plans and policies.

2.1.2. Identify, assess, quantify (where possible), and communicate the value of coastal and ocean ecosystem services and functions, including how changes in these ecosystems are impacting coastal communities.

2.1.3. Develop, implement, and share innovative practices and policies to address locally-relevant threats to ecosystems, including nonpoint pollution, in ways that reflect understanding of current and future coastal change.

#### **2.2 *Facilitate the adoption of natural and nature-based coastal infrastructure solutions.***

2.2.1. Improve understanding and awareness of the methodologies, effectiveness, costs, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing natural and nature-based coastal infrastructure projects.

2.2.2. Identify—and integrate into existing policies and plans—mechanisms and regulatory efficiencies to facilitate and incentivize implementation of natural and nature-based coastal infrastructure solutions.

**2.3. *Improve public access to the coasts to enhance recreation and enjoyment for all.***

2.3.1. Conduct demographic and geospatial assessments to identify areas that should be prioritized for the creation or enhancement of coastal access sites, including consideration of equity and justice concerns.

2.3.2. Increase the public's ability to enjoy the coast through creating and enhancing safe access sites for all people, including underserved and disadvantaged communities.

2.3.3. Enhance the awareness of public access opportunities along the coast through improved signage and outreach and engagement (including through innovative technologies); when possible, translate communications into multiple languages to broaden access to information.

**Goal 2 Case Study: Beach Access App Connects Visitors to the South Carolina Coast**

Coastal tourism is a major contributor to South Carolina's economy, and a key policy goal of South Carolina's Coastal Management Program is the preservation, enhancement, and promotion of public access. The new South Carolina Beach Guide makes finding beach access much easier for visitors. The mobile app provides detailed information about beach access sites and water quality. Users can explore over 620 public access points along the state's 187 miles of shoreline and get detailed directions, as well as information about parking, restrooms, handicapped accessibility, and water quality conditions and advisories.

### **Goal 3 – Strengthen the program’s ability to advance coastal management.**

The National Coastal Zone Management Program, including NOAA and the state and territory coastal management programs, working in coordination with the Coastal State Organization, has a rich history of collaborating to advance coastal management. The growing demands on coastlines, however, require new and strengthened partnerships and improved awareness of the program’s resources. This necessitates more communication and collaboration, both inside and outside of the national network. Over the next five years, the National Coastal Zone Management Program will

- strengthen the national network and grow partnerships;
- increase capacity for national program implementation; and
- enhance awareness of the national program and associated resources.

#### **Key Indicators**

- The number of decision makers trained in coastal management issues (PMs 4, 7, 10, 12, 15)
- The number of federal actions affecting coastal uses and resources that improved to ensure consistency with coastal policies (PM 1)

#### **3.1 *Strengthen national coastal zone management network and grow partnerships.***

3.1.1. Increase collaboration across state and territory coastal management programs by sharing lessons learned and proactively identifying opportunities to work collectively across scales on areas of cross-cutting interest and need.

3.1.2. Identify and expand key relationships with other NOAA programs and other federal agencies to collaboratively address priority coastal management challenges at a state or territory level.

3.1.3. Identify and expand strategic relationships with other external partners, including state and territory agencies, tribes, nongovernmental organizations, and non-traditional partners, to grow engagement in and effectiveness of coastal management activities.

3.1.4. NOAA will provide objective management assistance and training opportunities for key partners (coastal management programs, NOAA, other federal agencies) to address Coastal Zone Management Act consistency and program change requirements.

#### **3.2 *Increase state, territory, and local coastal zone management implementation capacity.***

3.2.1. Support the enhancement of programmatic and technical proficiencies of new NOAA and state and territory coastal management program staff members, and enhance professional development and learning opportunities for established staff members.

3.2.2. Identify and implement programmatic efficiencies within the National Coastal Zone Management Program across activities, such as management of cooperative agreements, Section 312 evaluations, Section 306A and 309 guidance, environmental compliance, and program changes, to improve the ability of states to work with NOAA on implementation of their coastal management programs.

3.2.3. Build and leverage the Digital Coast partnerships and resources to efficiently address the goals of the National Coastal Zone Management Program.

### **3.3** *Enhance local, state, and national awareness of the National Coastal Zone Management Program and resources.*

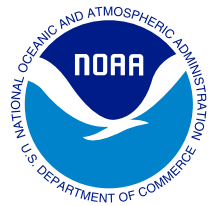
3.3.1. Build the knowledge base of local, state, and federal officials around the national program to ensure alignment with relevant policies and priorities.

3.3.2. Develop focused messaging and communications around the value and impact of the National Coastal Zone Management Program, including the environmental, economic, and social values of the program, as related to specific program priorities.

3.3.3. Continue and expand collaboration between NOAA and the Coastal States Organization on strategic communications, and foster a stronger sense of program connectedness through the development of shared messages and stories.

#### **Goal 3 Case Study: Growing Knowledge on the National Coastal Zone Management Program**

In 2015, a number of new staff were joining coastal management programs in the Pacific Islands region. The managers in the region identified the need for training resources to help their new employees gain knowledge and understanding of the program's federal-state partnership and common coastal management program activities. This need was echoed by other program managers across the country. To address this demand, NOAA collaborated with the Pacific Islands programs and programs across the national network to develop a new series of learning modules on the Coastal Zone Management Act and programmatic activities. The "CZMA 101" self-guided resources, available through the Digital Coast, provide introductory information and activities to help new staff learn about key elements of the act, how this legislation connects to and supports the daily work of a state coastal management program, and basics of common program activities. These informational resources are also accessible and useful to a broader audience, including students, educators, and coastal management professionals outside of the national program network.



## **The National Coastal Zone Management Program**

*[coast.noaa.gov/czm](http://coast.noaa.gov/czm)*