

NOAA IN THE CARIBBEAN

CONNECTING NOAA & PARTNERS ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN



NOAA in the Caribbean Newsletter - Autumn Edition

Hello NOAA in the Caribbean Community,

If you would like to join our NOAA in the Caribbean Community Group, please [let us know using this form](#). We would love to have you join us for the Community Group bi-monthly meetings. You do not need to be a part of NOAA to join this group.

The end of this newsletter contains links and more information on funding opportunities. If you have questions or want more information, please contact CaribbeanNews@noaa.gov. We hope to see you at our NOAA in the Caribbean Annual Partner Meeting in Spring 2023!

Thank you,
The NOAA in the Caribbean Executive Team

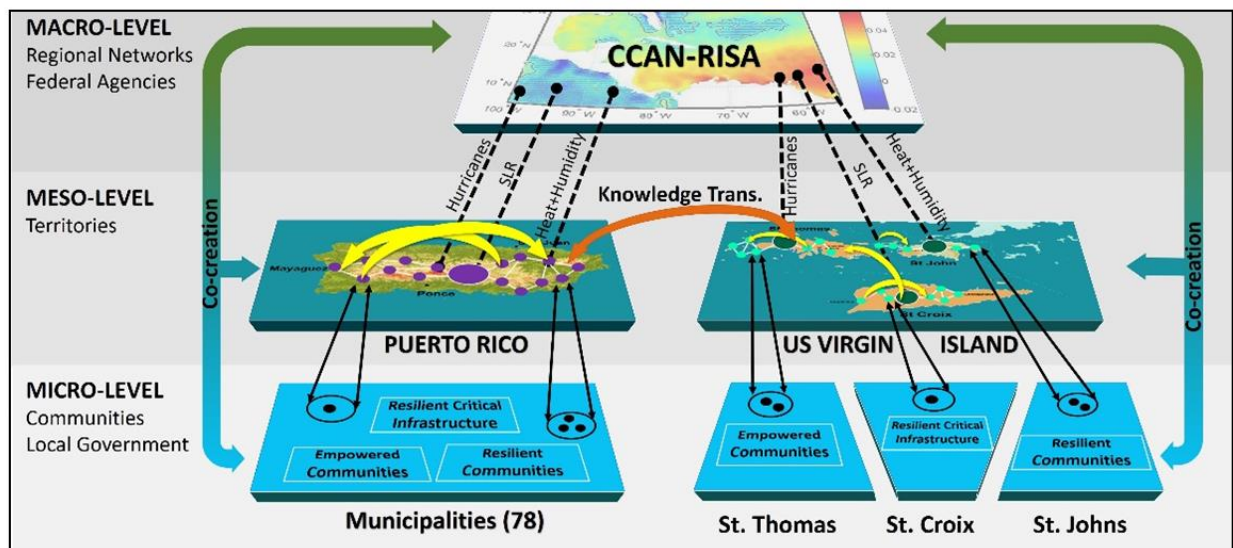
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New NOAA Climate Adaptation Partnership Program in U.S. Caribbean

By: Caitlin Simpson, NOAA RISA/CAP Program Manager

NOAA's Climate Program Office's [Climate Adaptation Partnerships program, formerly the Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments \(RISA\) program](#), is pleased to announce the first-ever 5-year CAP/RISA team award for the U.S. Caribbean. The award will advance just and equitable adaptation across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands through sustained regional research and community engagement. CAP/RISA teams focus on multiple climate and society issues, and develop a set of interconnected projects that build the capacity of regional partners to act on those issues. The competitively selected CAP/RISA team is awarded a cooperative agreement with slightly more than \$6 million of funding over five years.



(Caption: Illustration of the networked approach to engage actors at multiple levels of governance in the co-production of community adaptive capacities in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.)

This US Caribbean CAP/RISA team seeks to enhance and expand partnerships through the development and convening of stakeholders in Puerto Rico (PR) and U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and conducting interdisciplinary research focused on their needs. The team will utilize a human-centered design, bringing together impacted community and government stakeholders, and multidisciplinary scientists to develop and co-produce community climate adaptation capacities, strategies, and actions that build on collectively produced insights and realistic locally grounded scenarios. The proposed knowledge-action network is designed to help build adaptive capacities for future climate extremes, plan responses to cascading climate hazards and governance crises.

The team's focus is to address climate hazards related to extreme rainfall, extreme heat, drought, landslides, and coastal and riverine flooding. By utilizing a human-centered design approach, the network will develop effective and scalable climate actions. This project will utilize NOAA and other data products and tools to increase local climate adaptive capacity and resilience in underserved communities. It will increase the capacity in Minority Serving Institutions in both PR and USVI and with project partners to support and sustain education, research, and professional development in NOAA mission areas. The project will engage communities that are typically underrepresented in the U.S. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.) workforce, in policymaking and in decision-making. The lead investigator of the multi-institutional team is Pablo Méndez-Lázaro, University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus / USDA Forest Service.

For more information, contact Caitlin Simpson, NOAA CAP/RISA Program Manager, at Caitlin.simpson@noaa.gov.

Island Based Fishery Management Plans for the US Caribbean

By: Alida Ortiz Sotomayor, PhD., Outreach and Education Advisory Panel– Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Since 1981, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council has managed the fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the U.S. Caribbean (Puerto Rico, St. Thomas/St. John, and St. Croix) with four Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for spiny lobster, reef fish, queen conch and coral across all areas. However, these islands are very different in terms of their history and culture of fishing practices.

In 2019, after discussions and recommendations from fishers and other stakeholders from these islands, separate FMPs for each region were developed. Beginning October 13, 2022, three separate FMPs will be implemented: one for Puerto Rico, one for St. Thomas-St. John, and one for St. Croix.



(Caption: Map of the US Caribbean (Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands) from noaa.weather.com)

Each of the island-based FMPs retains most of the measures established under the U.S. Caribbean-wide FMPs, including seasonal and area closures, minimum size limits, and recreational bag limits. For each island, there are management measures for the Reef Fish Fishery, Spiny Lobster Fishery, Queen Conch Resources and for the Corals and Reef associated Plants and Invertebrates. These are essentially the same species that have been managed in the previous US Caribbean FMPs.

However, new species are also included. Among these are the dolphinfish and wahoo (in all three FMPs), and tuna, mackerel, barracuda, and tripletail in Puerto Rico. Prohibition of fishing for newly included fish species applies to rays, urchins, and cucumbers. All harvest for corals continues to be prohibited.

These FMPs and the Final Rule can be found at: <https://caribbeanfmc.com/>

FMP for Puerto Rico:

www.caribbeanfmc.com/FMP_Island_Based_2019/EA_FMP_Puerto_Rico_Final.pdf

FMP for St. Croix: media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/carib_fmp_st_croix.pdf

FMP for St. Thomas:

https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/carib_fmp_st_thomasst_john.pdf

Coral Reef Ecosystem Goods and Services Valuation

Adapted from [posting](#) on NOAA's Coral Reef Information System

Coral reefs provide a variety of important services and benefits such as food, coastal protection, recreation opportunities, habitat for a variety of species, tourism, cultural heritage, and social connectedness through a sense of place. However, increasing population growth rates along with economic and industrial development, unsustainable fishing, land-based pollution, global forces from climate change, coral bleaching, coral disease, among others, have resulted in unprecedented pressure on coral reefs.



(Caption: Snorkelers in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Photo credit: Matt McIntosh)

These competing uses of the coastal-marine environment and issues at local and global scales merit asking how to ensure the longevity of these special ecosystems that provide incredible value to society, such as: How much are coral reefs worth to society? How much do people care about coral ecosystems? Can we demonstrate the value of these unique ecosystems and account for what we stand to lose if they are irreparably damaged? The answers to these questions have the potential to inform the optimal level of protection, the need for funding for interventions that combat coral disease and other threats to reef health, and even levels of insurance under new models that tie local development to the sustained longevity of corals for their coastal protection services.



(Caption: Boats on Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.)

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program is now leading a comprehensive Coral Reef Ecosystem Goods and Services Valuation project to provide updated, defensible monetary values of U.S. coral reef ecosystem services in Florida, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Hawai'i, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Pacific Remote Island Areas, and Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.



(Caption: Map of U.S. coral reef jurisdictions where valuation studies will be conducted.)

Project Timeline:

Year 1 (April 2021 - March 2022):

- Conducted a comprehensive review of the coral reef ecosystem service literature
- Performed a gap analysis highlighting areas and services for future consideration
- Held a series of workshops with local stakeholders and socioeconomic, academic experts to inform project planning and guide activities in year two and beyond

Year 2 (April 2022 - March 2023, planned):

- Chart path forward for valuation, starting with two study area jurisdictions
- Develop an approach to incorporate cultural values alongside the economic suite of ecosystem goods and services values

For more information, contact Mary Allen (Mary.Allen@noaa.gov) or Lauren Knapp (Lauren.Knapp@noaa.gov)

Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership

By: Heather P. McCarthy (Executive Director, SCDRP) and Lindy Betzhold (Senior Coastal Management Specialist, Contractor with Lynker in support of NOAA Office for Coastal Management)

The [Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership \(SCDRP\)](#) is a coalition of public and private organizations that collectively seek to strengthen the resilience of communities to manage and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards, disasters, and climate change. The Partnership is the only regional collaboration network for professionals in emergency management, climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, recovery, and resilience specifically focused on the U.S. Southeast and Caribbean. Over the past decade, this networking partnership has evolved into the largest cross-sector regional forum for resilience professionals from the public, private, and non-governmental sectors in these fields in the region. Each year, the group engages hundreds of professionals to build relationships and deepen communities' resilience capacity through targeted regional coordination events, outreach to and engagement with government officials and businesses, support of public policy research, and an annual regional convening.



(Caption: Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership logo)

Founded in 2016 with support from a NOAA Coastal Resilience Grant, the Partnership initially worked to address the recovery priorities of the four southeastern states and promoted information exchange through monthly virtual meetings, email listserv, website and in-person annual meetings to discuss project achievements, public-private

partnerships, and broader topics. As the Partnership evolved, the value of engagement across sectors and geographies on disaster recovery increased beyond the state-based work to include discussion and interest in resilience, adaptation, mitigation, climate change impacts and more. The partnership also grew to engage wider and wider circles of recovery and resilience practitioners.

In 2019, the Partnership modified its strategic focus to make three important changes. The group changed the focus from recovery to the broader umbrella of resilience, which reflected the evolution of the Partnership's interest areas. It joined forces with the [Southeast and Caribbean Climate Community of Practice](#), which is a network of local, state, and federal governments, academia, non-profit and private sector organizations working to build adaptive capacity in the region. This group of practitioners focused on climate impacts, actionable information for decision making, resilience actions, and adaptation strategies, however, their conversation also evolved to include aspects of recovery as a critical part of the disaster cycle. Joining forces was a decision that strengthened both groups and enhanced the membership and composition of the participants in the Partnership. Additionally, at the January 2019 Annual Meeting, the Partnership officially expanded the geographic scope to include the U.S. Caribbean. The profound impacts of Hurricanes Maria and Irma on the islands led the Partnership to extend the knowledge exchange and network benefits to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Broadening the geographic scope allows both regions, facing many of the same coastal hazard challenges, to learn from one another and share experiences with equitable recovery, building resilience capacity, nature-based solutions for hazard mitigation, and more.

The Partnership continues to promote learning across boundaries on a wide variety of resilience, recovery, and adaptation topics through a monthly speaker series, a newsletter, and an annual in-person meeting. In April of 2022, the Partnership once again expanded its boundaries to engage professionals in the greater Caribbean nations with the support of the Department of State and recognition as a regional leader in convening on resilience, recovery and adaptation.



(Caption: Graphic for SCDRP upcoming Annual Meeting)

The Partnership is excited to engage their membership at the upcoming [SCDRP Annual Meeting](#), January 24-25, 2023 in Miami, Florida. All are welcome at this flagship event, whose theme is *“Responding to the Urgency: Working Together to Build Effective & Inclusive Resilience.”* At the meeting, the group will engage experts from across the U.S. southeast and Caribbean, present cutting-edge work on risk reduction and climate extremes, explore use of partnerships to advance resilience efforts and learn from perspectives and knowledge from the greater Caribbean region.

If you’d like more information about the Partnership, please visit the website or contact scdrp@secoora.org.

NOAA Hurricane Preparedness Summit 2022

Adapted from [report on NOAA’s Hurricane Preparedness Summit 2022](#)

NOAA’s Disaster Preparedness Program partnered with the Coastal Response Research Center to facilitate three webinars focusing on NOAA’s hurricane preparedness and readiness for personnel (people), mission, and infrastructure (PMI). The virtual event entitled “NOAA Hurricane Preparedness Summit 2022,” helped put NOAA in a better posture for the 2022 hurricane season by identifying best practices and lessons learned from the 2021 season, recognizing challenges specific to the Pacific Islands, and socializing tools and resources available to support different stages of storm landfall. Participants represented academia, federal, state, and local agencies.

Specific objectives of the event were to:

1. Understand best practices and lessons learned from the 2021 hurricane season;
2. Become knowledgeable about PMI topics;
3. Work towards improving consistency in response between federal and state partners;
4. Recognize challenges for the next hurricane season;
5. Introduce and familiarize tools and resources; and
6. Understand gaps given the current limitations.

The summit included plenary presentations from federal and state agency representatives outlining: resilient communications, storm specific lessons learned, communication of severity of risk, facility and staff readiness, pandemic fatigue, mental health, challenges in the Pacific Islands (climatological impacts and infrastructure, communication, and supply chain challenges), and available tools and resources. Presentation slides are included in the report. Question and answer sessions were included throughout the summit, as well as polling to obtain feedback from participants.

Common themes emerged from discussions during the summit including:

- Communications will always be a challenge for conveying pre-/during-/post-storm information about preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.
- Pre-planning and engagement with the local community can be critical for saving lives and creating communities that can self-sustain until outside help arrives.
- COVID continues to be a factor in response capacity and capabilities.
- NOAA should continue pre-planning and coordination with federal and state partners to enhance readiness to meet its responsibilities and designated MEFs before, during, and after a major hurricane makes landfall.
- NOAA and partner facilities may not be sufficiently resilient to storm impacts, specifically from hurricanes.
- NOAA has a wide range of digital response and planning tools that can be used for hurricane planning, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

A survey of stakeholders was conducted prior to the summit. The 21-question survey received 109 responses between February 7 – 22, 2022. It inquired about general demographics (i.e., organization name, NOAA line office, region), hurricane preparedness and response plans, Mission Essential Function (MEF)/Emergency Support Function (ESF) roles, anticipated challenges, mitigation strategies, digital response and planning tools, and personal preparedness measures. More information about the survey and the results can be found in the pre-summit survey [technical report](#).

UNESCO/IOC-led Workshop Supports Capacity Enhancement Towards Tsunami Ready Communities in the Caribbean

By: Alison Brome (UNESCO/IOC CTIC), and Christa von Hillebrandt-Andrade and Desiree Bayouth García (ITIC-CAR)

As a key contribution to the roll out of its global Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme (UNESCO/IOC- TRRP) the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/ Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's (UNESCO/IOC) Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre (CTIC) hosted a [Sub-Regional Training Tsunami Ready Mapping Workshop in Bridgetown, Barbados 08-12 August 2022](#). The workshop was convened in association with key regional partners US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) International Tsunami Information Center Caribbean Office (ITIC-CAR), the National University of Costa Rica, and the Government of Barbados.



(Caption: Workshop group photo- listed left to right (front row): Pablo Torres, Humanitarian Logistics Specialist, United States Agency for International Development/Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA); Mrs. Christa von Hillebrandt-Andrade, Manager, ITIC-CAR; the Honorable Wilfred Abrahams M.P., Minister of Home Affairs and Information, Barbados; Ms. Kerry Hinds, Director, Department of Emergency Management, Barbados; Dr. Leo Brewster, Director, Coastal Zone Management Unit, Barbados; and Ms. Alison Brome, Program Officer Tsunamis and Other Coastal Hazards, UNESCO/IOC-CTIC)

Workshop facilitators from UNESCO/IOC, ITIC-CAR, and the National University of Costa Rica conducted sessions on tsunamis and other coastal hazard early warning systems

(CARIBE EWS). They also discussed the guidelines and considerations for developing tsunami evacuation maps utilizing the QGIS platform. A workshop study tour focused on the community of Christ Church West, Barbados that is being nominated for Tsunami Ready recognition. Through the study tour, regional participants gained practical experience and skill in the verification of tsunami inundation maps and strategically assessing communities to designate evacuation routes and assembly points/safe areas. An evening engagement session with workshop participants and community members was also attended by the community's politically elected representative. Presentations by lead workshop facilitators evoked robust discussion on the draft evacuation map.



(Caption: Study tour discussions led by Dr. Leo Brewster, Director, CZMU, Barbados involving Alison Brome and Christa von Hillebrandt-Andrade (back))

The 20 participants attending the Workshop hailed from Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Saint Lucia. Regional partners at the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) were also in attendance. At the end of the workshop, participants presented 17 draft evacuation maps that were well received by facilitators, national authorities and community representatives.

Caribbean MPA Managers Get Ready for Coral Rescue

By Dana Wusinich-Mendez, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program

Marine protected area (MPA) managers, coral reef resource managers, coral restoration practitioners, and scientists from 12 countries and territories across the wider Caribbean region came together in Key Largo, Florida for a workshop entitled "Planning for Coral

Rescue as a Response to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) in the Caribbean” on September 26, 2022. In conjunction with the 2022 Reef Futures Symposium, this group prepared for and began to plan coral rescue efforts in a peer to peer learning exchange convened through the [MPAConnect](#) learning network. NOAA’s Coral Reef Conservation Program, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment (AGRRA), and Florida Sea Grant hosted the in-person workshop. The workshop assisted coral reef managers and conservation practitioners in their efforts to plan for and implement the rescue of coral species that are being affected by SCTLD.



(Caption: MPAConnect Caribbean coral rescue workshop attendees. Photo credit: Tori Barker)

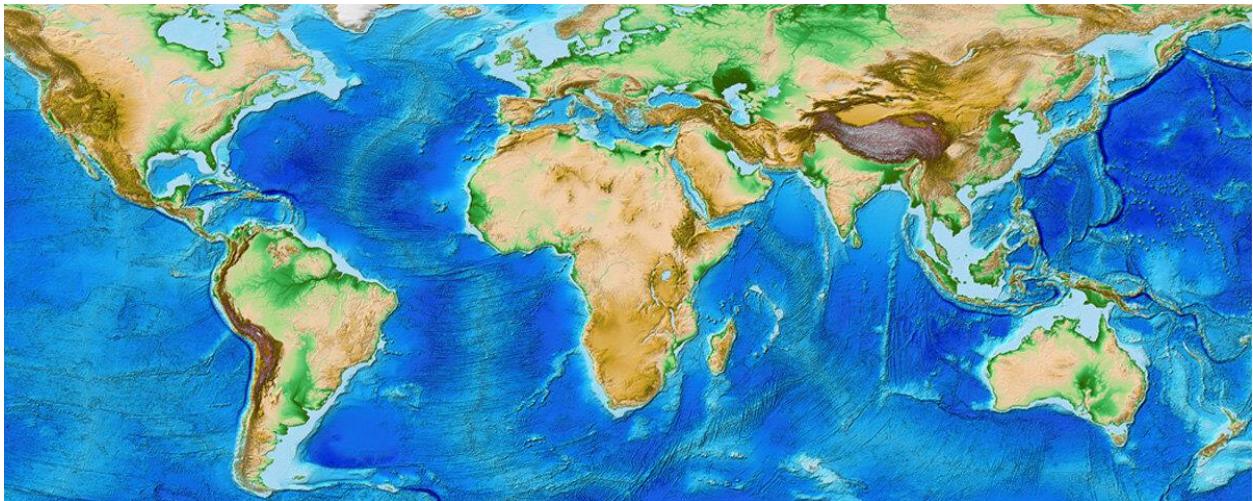
Expert speakers from Florida, Honduras, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the US Virgin Islands took a deep dive into coral rescue, sharing information about coral rescue planning, goals, strategies, technology, financing mechanisms, and partnership-building. Participants worked to select rescue approaches that could be implemented on their reefs and had the opportunity to speak to coral experts directly through an interactive “Coral Rescue Cafe” and map out their plans for coral rescue in their respective jurisdictions. The hosting organizations will be working both through MPAConnect as well as the Caribbean cooperation team of Florida’s SCTLD response

initiative to provide follow up support to participating managers as they continue to develop and ultimately implement their own unique approaches to coral rescue in the face of SCTLD.

The World in Relief in ETOPO

Adapted from [news article](#) by NOAA National Center for Environmental Information

By combining land topography, ocean bathymetry, and shoreline data, NOAA's Earth TOPOgraphy (ETOPO) shows the world in relief. An even more comprehensive version of the model, [ETOPO 2022](#), brings greater, more accurate details to the geophysical characteristics of Earth's surface.



(Caption: Global topographic-bathymetry elevation dataset. Image courtesy of NOAA NCEI)

ETOPO, derived from the words Earth and topography, uses high-resolution renderings to model the contours and features of the planet, both above and below sea level. With this visualization, the characteristics of our world become more than two dimensional. In science, researchers use ETOPO models for many purposes:

- Tsunami forecasting, modeling, and warning
- Understanding tectonic formation and activity
- Visualizing ocean circulation
- Exploring the effects of climate change

ETOPO comes in two versions: Ice Surface, which depicts the surface of the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets; and Bedrock, which depicts the bedrock underneath the ice sheets.

The release of ETOPO 2022 adds enhanced resolution that incorporates recent advances in data sources and processing techniques. ETOPO 2022 uses a combination of numerous airborne lidar, satellite-derived topography, and shipborne bathymetry datasets from U.S. and global sources. Its predecessor, ETOPO1, has been an important modeling tool for the tsunami community since its introduction more than a decade ago. The new ETOPO 2022 resolution will be four times higher than ETOPO1.

The NCEI scientific team behind the update notes, “We built and deployed state-of-the-art computational methods to measure the accuracy of our input data as well as the final ETOPO 2022 product with more than 800 billion laser-ranging measurements from NASA’s ICESat-2 satellite spanning nearly the entire globe over the calendar year 2021.”

The update is the latest since ETOPO’s previous release in 2010. Dr. Christopher Amante, an NCEI geospatial research scientist with the [Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences](#) (CIRES), originally developed ETOPO1 when he was a [NOAA Hollings Scholar](#). His work with the project continues, and he participated on the team producing ETOPO 2022.

Announcements

NOAA Adaptation Sciences (AdSci) Program FY2023 Funding Competition: Island Resilience

The NOAA Climate Program Office Adaptation Sciences (AdSci) Program is now accepting proposals for research projects beginning in Fiscal Year 2023. Through the FY2023 competition, NOAA’s AdSci Program is soliciting proposals for interdisciplinary and participatory research activities that address island-identified resilience needs in the Caribbean and Pacific; with an emphasis on projects that result in:

1. contextually relevant and usable information about climate impacts, vulnerabilities and solutions;
2. the evaluation, identification and strengthening of the adaptive capacities of institutions, communities, sectors and islands;
3. and/or the integration of climate information in adaptation planning, action and long-term resilience strategies.

Full applications are due by January 31, 2023. Learn more [here](#).

Serve on the Federal Advisory Council for USGS's Climate Adaptation Science Centers

Below, please find details on an opportunity to serve on a USGS Federal Advisory Council, to advise the nine [Climate Adaptation Science Centers](#). The deadline to apply is January 16, 2023.

The Council will meet approximately one to two times per year. The Secretary of the Interior will appoint members and their alternates to the Council to a 2- to 3-year term. The members of the Council shall comprise approximately 18 members who represent the diversity of this nation's constituencies, and include the following interests:

- State and local governments, including state membership entities
 - Non-governmental organizations whose primary mission is conservation and related scientific and advocacy activities
 - American Indian/Alaska Native/Indigenous organizations
 - Academia
 - Other sectors, environmental justice organizations, private industry
-

NOAA Marine Debris Art Contest Now Open

The [NOAA Marine Debris Art Contest](#) is now open! The contest will close on December 16th, 2022. Check out the [2023 Marine Debris Calendar](#), now available for download!

The NOAA Marine Debris Program holds an annual art contest to reach K-8 students and help raise awareness about marine debris. Marine debris is a global issue and we believe that engaging youth is an important part of addressing the problem. The resulting calendar, featuring the winning artwork, provides a daily reminder of how important it is for us to be responsible stewards of the ocean. Students are highly encouraged to check out resources on this website for information about marine debris.

All students in kindergarten through eighth grade from all U.S. states and territories in recognized public, private, and home schools are eligible to participate. Schools, including home schools, must be in compliance with federal and state civil rights and nondiscrimination statutes. Students may submit entries on their own or as part of a classroom, but must work individually.

Each entry must be composed of a piece of artwork and a description (on the entry form). All must meet the requirements below. A NOAA awards panel will collect all entries and select 13 winners to be featured in a marine debris calendar. Entries will be judged on the creativity, artistic presentation, and relevancy to the theme of:

1. How marine debris impacts the ocean and the Great Lakes environment.
2. What you are doing to help prevent marine debris.

Disney Grant Opportunities

Saving Wildlife

The Disney Conservation Fund is focused on saving wildlife for future generations through grants to leading conservation organizations working together to stabilize and increase the populations of at-risk animals including butterflies, coral reefs, cranes, elephants, gorillas, monkey, and sea turtles. A Disney conservationist works with each organization to identify where Disney expertise can also play a role in reversing the decline of these animals and their habitats.

Inspiring Action

Disney believes in the power within each of us to make a difference for wildlife and wild places. The Disney Conservation Fund provides grants to nonprofit organizations and communities working together on comprehensive conservation solutions and recognizes the inspiring heroes dedicated to ensuring a happier, healthier planet for all.

Protecting the Planet

The Disney Conservation Fund helps to protect the planet through focused grants that address threats to animals and nature and leverage innovation, collaboration and storytelling to protect and restore natural resources and ecosystems.

Teaming up for Wildlife

Disney is committed to sharing the expertise, talent and dedication of its Cast Members and employees to protect the magic of nature. Disney Conservation Team Wildlife works to inspire conservation actions and collaborates globally to share expertise and drive programs to positively impact wildlife and habitats. Some examples of this work follow.

Read more about these opportunities at impact.disney.com/environment/conservation/.

NOAA in the Caribbean Newsletter

If you wish to subscribe to NOAA in the Caribbean's newsletter or the community distribution list, please fill out this [form](#).

If you wish to submit any questions, comments, story ideas, artwork or photographs, please email us at CaribbeanNews@noaa.gov.

NOAA in the Caribbean Newsletter is produced by the NOAA in the Caribbean Steering Committee, including support from NOAA's Office of International Affairs, Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team, Office for Coastal Management, National Marine



