

Our Florida Reefs Strategic Communications Plan, 2013-2016

Prepared for:
Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative and Florida Department of
Environmental Protection Coral Reef Conservation Program

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Introduction

This document provides an overview of communications planning efforts for the Our Florida Reefs community engagement effort (formally, Management Options Identification Process). Our Florida Reefs is used throughout this Strategic Communications Plan to indicate the multi-year, multi-step planning process to engage and solicit input for stakeholders, ocean users and the general public in the management of Southeast Florida's reefs.

The intent of this document is to develop a strategic plan to clearly and transparently communicate the Our Florida Reefs public engagement process to stakeholders, ocean users and the general public and to detail the strategies and associated communication products to be undertaken until the end of June 2013, plus recommendations and a broader outline for the period from July 2013 until 2016. The intended audiences, or users of this plan, are the FDEP-CRCP staff members who coordinate the SEFCRI and the SEFCRI Process Planning Team (PPT) members.

Program Mission and Background

The mission of the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative is “to develop and support the implementation of an effective strategy to preserve and protect southeast Florida’s coral reefs and associated reef resources, emphasizing balance between resource use and protection, in cooperation with all interested parties.” It is administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and its Coral Reef Conservation Program.

The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) was launched in 2004 as the first and only coordinated effort to address the conservation of the Florida Reef Tract and that is located north of the Florida Keys and along the Florida mainland. This local initiative developed from the nation’s first coordinated coral reef conservation effort, the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF). As one of USCRTF’s Local Action Strategies, SEFCRI gathers and coordinates the actions of interested stakeholders in Florida. Funding comes primarily from NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

SEFCRI coordinates dozens of partners from a broad spectrum of public and private interests. From 2004 – today, SEFCRI has successfully completed 128 of 140 projects within four focus areas – Fishing, Diving and other Uses (FDOU), Awareness and Appreciation (AA), Land-Based Sources of Pollution (LBSP), Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts (MICCI).

In 2009, SEFCRI supported the creation of the Florida Coral Reef Protection Act, which establishes financial penalties for people who damage corals. In 2012, the SEFCRI Charter was amended to further emphasize stakeholder participation. By then, SEFCRI had nearly finished the 140 projects first identified in 2004. To learn more about these projects, visit this page from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/reports/>.

The Reef Area

A unique part of the greater Caribbean, Florida’s reefs and related resources generate more than \$6 billion per year (Johns et al 2001; Johns et al 2004). The mainland reefs overseen by FDEP CRCP represent the northernmost reach of tropical corals in the continental U.S. These reefs near the mainland (as opposed to the islands of the Keys) cover the northern 105 miles of the 350 miles of the Florida Reef Tract—the third longest reef in the world. Although it is one connected system, the Florida Reef Tract is not fully protected and managed. The southern portion of the Florida Reef Tract is protected and managed by the Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and by Biscayne National Park.

SEFCRI’s area of concern extends from the northern boundary of Biscayne National Park, near Miami, to north of the St. Lucie Inlet, near Stuart, and includes the four counties of Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin. In terms of reef-building

corals, this area hosts habitat for the two coral species listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the staghorn coral and the elkhorn coral. Another species in southeast Florida, pillar coral, is listed as endangered by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Florida's mainland reefs are in close proximity to a highly urbanized coastline of nearly continuous coastal development from greater Miami to Fort Lauderdale to Palm Beach, and they face many localized threats. At the same time, their position within relatively cooler waters than the rest of the Caribbean may offer some protection from the effects of global warming that have devastated reefs across the region. In this regard, they may represent the reefs of the future.

The orientation of Florida's mainland reefs is easy to visualize, since they are essentially ridges that run parallel to the coast. There are three main reef ridges, with sand in between, and the longest, outer ridge runs nearly continuously from Miami to Palm Beach. The mainland reefs are relatively close to shore, and none of the reef ridges extends more than two miles offshore. In addition to the three main ridges, patchy inshore hard bottom reefs exist closest to the beaches.

Recently, these reefs have experienced a period of stability, according to an evaluation project from 2003 to 2011 (Gilliam 2012). Sponges and octocorals, or soft corals, are the most common features on the seafloor. Hard corals have relatively low abundance, with most sampled sites having less than 3% of hard coral cover. The reef is home to more than 6,000 species, including 28 reef-building corals and hundreds of fish species.

Regarding perceptions of coral reef health, there is a shared concern across local stakeholder groups that reef conditions have not improved based on their years of experience in southeastern Florida (Shivlani 2011). Respondents reported that overall resource conditions and coral reef conditions in the region were in fair to moderately poor condition, and there was a concern across working group panels that the trend was one of moderate decline. However, there are mixed feelings among users about the need for new management measures.

Literature and Market Review

The published literature on environmental communication campaigns or stakeholder-driven public planning initiatives is limited and provides mainly theoretical concepts with little to no monitoring and/or evaluation on the success of these theoretical concepts in real-world settings. In addition, the recent emergence of new modes of communication (e.g. social media) has been scarcely reviewed in published literature.

Some concepts, however, are well understood. Two-way interactions between the public and decision-makers provide the benefit of increasing the legitimacy and quality of government decisions (National Research Council 2008). Recently, there have been a few significant and successful initiatives to solicit stakeholder participation in the environmental decision-making processes, and there is a clear trend among resource managers and conservationists alike that favors an increase in such interactions. Land-based conservation leaders such as Peter Forbes are emphatic about it: “The most important work that can be done today is to create safe harbors where different people can have honest and sustained dialogue with one another about the land: its meaning, what we value in it, our vision about it, and our capacity for sharing it. We need places where people can ask reciprocal questions: Why do I need you, and why do you need me?” (Knight 2009).

Regional outreach and engagement planning is essential to help inform the design of the most effective communications strategies and products to support multi-way dialogues and integrate the diverse stakeholders and/or geographic communities into a public planning process.

In recent years, there has been an increase in stakeholder-driven decision-making in ocean resource planning in the U.S. Several communications models of public participatory processes with significant stakeholder engagement were studied to develop the strategies outlined in this plan, including the California MLPA Initiative, NOAA’s Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Dry Tortugas National Park.

The importance of integrating effective communication strategies into the public planning process is being recognized at the highest levels. While the study of coral reefs has typically focused on ecosystems more than on the societies living near them, there is a call from NOAA and other leading agencies to change this imbalance. NOAA’s Coral Reef Conservation Program in particular has changed its emphasis from a program that focused primarily on research and observations to a multidisciplinary approach to managing and understanding coral reef ecosystems and an increase in “on-the-ground, and in-the-water action” that connects people with their ocean resources (NOAA website).

In southern Florida, lessons can be garnered from the experiences of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, established in 1990, and related research and personal

experiences deserve further consideration. A primary lesson learned here is that the public can be volatile, and early engagement of the public is highly recommended.

Regarding perceptions of coral reef health, according to a recent report, there is a shared concern across stakeholders that reef conditions have not improved based on their years of experience in southeastern Florida (Shivlani 2011). Respondents reported that overall resource conditions and coral reef conditions in the region were in fair to moderately poor condition, and there was a concern across working group panels that the trend was one of moderate decline. However, there are mixed feelings among users about the need for new management measures. A majority of the stakeholders interviewed favored continuing with the present form of management, but many argue that the enforcement needs to be improved.

In addition, here are some takeaway lessons about communications from a few studies related to the marine environment:

1. Word-of-mouth information sources rank highest (Shivlani 2008; Leisher 2012).
2. Outreach materials also have major impact (Leisher 2012).
3. Stakeholders in Southeast Florida reported primary sources of information as the Internet (48%), dive shops (24%), and magazines (22%) (Berry 2011).
4. People with negative preconceptions did not change, whereas youth and other less-informed groups can be the most receptive cohorts (Leisher 2012).

During this campaign, takeaway lessons can continue to be discovered and shared in order to improve our communications strategies and tools for environmental decision-making processes.

The Southeast Florida Market

First, it should be recognized that the term “Southeast Florida” might cause confusion. Technically the term includes the eastern Florida Keys, yet the area of interest to SEFCRI does not. SEFCRI uses this term to refer to the region of Martin, Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

Perhaps more importantly, this term is not used in common parlance to refer to this region of the state. Media and the public preferentially use the term “South Florida” to refer to this area, even though it is inaccurate in its exclusion of southwestern Florida. This confusion will not be resolved here, but we can remain sensitive to potential conflicts of usage. One potential solution is the use of the term “mainland,” as in “mainland reefs,” which would exclude the Florida Keys. Another distinguishing term is “urban,” due to their close proximity to the most concentrated population and development in the state.

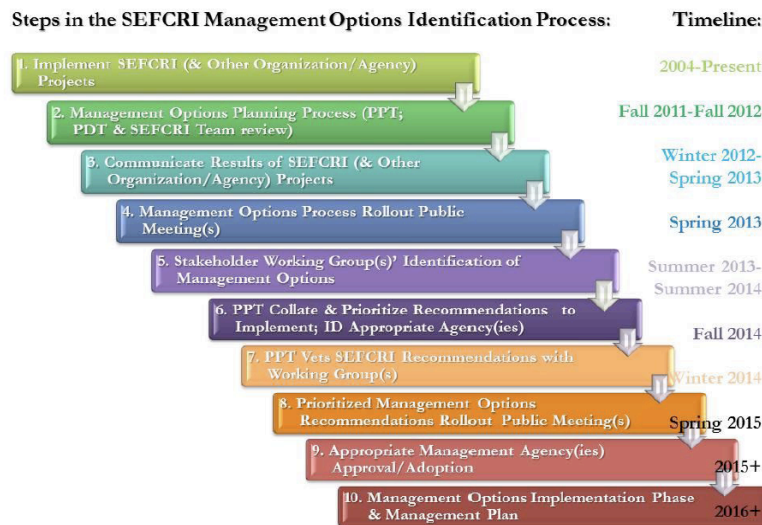
Southeast Florida’s mainland communities are mostly coastal, urban, and new, having been rapidly developed within the past 50 years. Development along the coast is nearly continuous from Miami to Fort Lauderdale to Palm Beach, with a gradual lessening of

population as one moves north. The area contains approximately 6 million residents, which is almost one-third of the state’s population. Unique ocean user communities exist within and across each one of the four counties in the Southeast Florida region, and each user group interacts with the reefs in distinct ways.

The region’s largest economic sector is tourism, which is concentrated along the coast. Tourism attracts visitors from across the world to southern Florida. Ports for cruise lines are the world’s busiest. Profitable activities along the mainland reefs include recreational fishing and boating, SCUBA diving, and sailing. Aquatic activities closer to shore would include kite-surfing, paddle-boarding, kayaking, snorkeling, and swimming, although it would be fair to say that the most common activity would be sunbathing and otherwise relaxing on or near the beach.

Of the approximately 6 million residents in South Florida, it has been documented that many lack knowledge and a general awareness about the mainland reefs in the four-county region (Shivlani 2006). Much of this ignorance may stem from the casual association of coral reefs with the Florida Keys, which has an extreme economic dependence on its reefs. South Florida’s economy, on the other hand, is much more diverse and not constrained by the geography of islands.

Other factors within this market deserve consideration. South Florida is much more difficult to characterize and stereotype than in years past. Retirees have settled further north and young immigrants have settled across the area, making South Florida an area of young, multi-lingual people. This newer, younger population may lack the older generation’s awareness of the natural features of Florida.



This graphic is used through the Strategic Communications Plan to reference the internal process planning steps and short- and long-term phases in SEFCRI’s public planning effort.

Communications Goals

Lack of public awareness is one of the six primary threats to coral reefs that demands immediate action at the local level, as identified by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force in their National Action Plan of 2000 as well as a major focus area identified by the SEFCRI stakeholders in 2004. Therefore, all communications efforts can contribute to this overarching, national goal of increasing public awareness about coral reefs.

Broad communication goals provide guidance for choosing how to raise awareness and how to inspire action. Major **goals** for this outreach campaign by SEFCRI include:

1. To communicate the results of relevant SEFCRI (and other agency/organization) projects to the general public and stakeholders.
2. To define a clear, transparent and multi-directional communications approach for general public and stakeholder participation in the Our Florida Reefs public planning process.
3. To identify the most relevant communications products and pathways to ensure continuous public and stakeholder engagement throughout the multi-step, multi-year Our Florida Reefs planning process.

Those goals will continue to evolve as the public outreach process progresses through its 10 steps until 2016. For the more immediate future during 2013, **objectives** of the Our Florida Reefs communications strategy include the following:

- Increase by 20-50% the number of new members of the public/stakeholders knowledgeable about FDEP-CRCP/SEFCRI (based on current number of 4,100 stakeholders)
- Distribute the FDEP-CRCP/SEFCRI message to at least 10% (600,000 people) of the region's population
- Increase the open rate of FDEP-CRCP/SEFCRI e-newsletters beyond the current level of 25%
- Increase FDEP-CRCP/SEFCRI existing public outreach distribution list by 25%
- Achieve a turnout of 75 or more people per public meeting
- Double the amount of annual website hits from current levels
- Has at least 300 stakeholders to provide spatial use data using the online mapping tool during the data accumulation stage of the Our Florida Reefs process
- Receive at minimum one article in the major newspapers for the region by June 2013

(Please note: these measureable objectives were developed based upon the responses provided by FDEP-CRCP staff and SEFCRI Team members in the Feb 2013 communications questionnaire conducted by the SOS team.)

These goals and objectives require that high-quality communication remains a priority instead of an afterthought. Also, instead of seeking a singular or short-term solution, a successful communication campaign must enable the use of various methods over the long term. Moreover, it should be nimble. Strategies may need to be adjusted as pertinent information becomes available. Overall, the communication process can thrive when communications are clear, accurate, timely, transparent, and inclusive.

Summary of Communication Audit

The majority of FDEP-CRCP staff and SEFCRI team members surveyed indicated that the former name Management Options Identification Process (MOIP) was too representative of government jargon and too difficult to communicate to the public. The survey responses made it clear that SEFCRI has an immediate need to develop a public-friendly brand to communicate its intent to facilitate a stakeholder-driven planning process that supports broad public participation. A secondary, longer-term interest, in defining a communications approach that advances a multi-directional dialogue to increase stakeholders and public involvement in the protection of Southeast Florida's coral reefs, was also identified.

Some existing products of SEFCRI remain viable during Our Florida Reefs, and some can be revised and refined to better reflect longer-term communication interests.

Review of Existing Communication Products

SEFCRI website

Website: <http://www.southeastfloridareefs.net>

This official website of 11 main pages has wide-ranging information. During the public engagement phase of the Our Florida Reefs planning process, the SEFCRI website should clearly identify how the public can learn about, provide input, and ask questions regarding the planning process and should provide a clear and easy to follow link to the Our Florida Reefs website. The official SEFCRI website should provide web visitors with results of SEFCRI projects applicable to Our Florida Reefs, links to SEFCRI projects to date and Key Messages relating to the "State of SEFCRI: what we know now that we didn't know in 2004."

FDEP webpage about SEFCRI

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/sefcric.htm>, is maintained by Florida's Department of Environmental Protection and is not linked with the SEFCRI website.

Some information is available on both sites, such as PSA videos, while some content is unique to each site. A prominent link to the Our Florida Reefs website should be added to this webpage during the public planning process.

SEFCRI e-Newsletter

Subscription is available online from the homepage,

<http://www.southeastfloridareefs.net>, making the newsletter appear to be the primary form of outreach. The current e-newsletter, "Southeast Florida Reef News," lacks consistency and a brand identity for the public to easily identify the sender or what SEFCRI is/does. An e-newsletter that has a standard branded template format for recipients to easily identify what SEFCRI is and that provides information directly to recipients without them having to take additional steps/links to retrieve the information will be critical to help identify SEFCRI as a trusted source for news and information about the Our Florida Reefs planning process among stakeholders and the community.

Currently, SEFCRI newsletters are achieved in two separate web locations. One is on the state site at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/updates/News.htm>, ranging from 2007 to 2009, while the SEFCRI site has archives here, <http://www.southeastfloridareefs.net/news/newsletters/>, from 2009 to the present. This division gives the impression that SEFCRI was created in 2009, after a period under different management. All SEFCRI e-newsletters and other relevant archives should be readily available on the SEFCRI website for easy public accessibility.

SEFCRI Brochures

A four-fold brochure has basic information about SEFCRI and coral reefs. Assuming that many remain available, it can continue to be used. We are proposing a separate brochure-type product on the Our Florida Reefs public planning process that could complement this existing brochure.

Two informational brochures, Florida's Coral Reef Protection Act, and one about fertilizer/pesticide use, can continue to be used as is.

Video PSAs

FDEP-CRCP and SEFCRI have developed several video PSAs in the past and are currently in the process of developing new PSAs. The development of new PSAs should align with the goals of the Our Florida Reefs strategic communications plan to ensure consistent messaging.

SCUBA Placards

Three waterproof versions are available, and these can continue to be used as is.

SEAFAN

This ocean-related program of the FDEP has its own brand identity, including a logo, tagline, brochure, and website, SEAFAN.net, which redirects to <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/seafan.htm>. Although not a project (or product) of SEFCRI, some components of the SEAFAN product are part of SEFCRI, the 1-page SEAFAN folded brochure includes the SEFCRI logo and is provided in the SEFCRI media kit.

This SEAFAN 1-page folded brochure can be used during the Our Florida Reefs planning process as an additional piece of collateral material available at public outreach events since both projects target nearly identical audiences.

Local Action Strategy booklet/CD

The 29-page booklet and CD are dated December 2004 on their respective covers, although the booklet's first page states, "Second printing, June 2007." It is outdated or mis-dated, full of lists, and not useful for the public. This type of information should exist online only. Existing copies could be distributed in media kits. The synthesis 1-pagers being developed could be used (See Products Step 3) to communicate the results of the SEFCRI projects identified in the Local Action Strategy booklet.

Media Kit/Fact Sheets

An attractive blue folder with a set of seven fact sheets. The text is very long and does not convey information clearly for media use. A revision of this product is expected in the near future. An online media kit should be considered for the SEFCRI website and for the Our Florida Reefs planning process.

Posters

A professionally designed poster, "Florida's Coral Reefs," can continue to be used as is, especially for classrooms and other educational purposes. Online it is available on the FDEP webpage at

http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/reports/LBSP/LBSP_24_Watershed.pdf.

The online and printed version may be useful for public outreach purposes during the Our Florida Reefs planning process.

Coral Grief/Relief Portable Exhibit

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/reports/AA/Project04-exhibit.pdf>

This conference-type display offers a useful introduction to SEFCRI by showing a large map of the region and several photographs illustrating problems and solutions relating to coral reefs. The display's colors and logo/name at the top effectively demonstrate the SEFCRI brand, and it could serve as a centerpiece at exhibits. Another portable exhibit of coral species has been used (personal observation), but by comparison it would seem that the Grief/Relief display is newer and more engaging.

Promotional Products

These products include pencils, pens, reusable BPA-free water bottles and reusable grocery tote bags. These products are deemed adequate for their purposes, and no additional products are recommended at this time for Our Florida Reefs.

Communications Strategies

The communication strategies identified below should be designed and implemented tactically for each step in the multi-year process planning to ensure the communications highlight a community- and stakeholder-driven planning process. Products related to these strategies are listed in a separate section that follows the strategies.

Online Engagement Website

A distinct and focused website will become the hub for online discussion and information dissemination related to the Our Florida Reefs planning process. This site will provide a unified platform to inform, engage, solicit input from and listen to the South Florida community about the management of Southeast Florida reefs.

The microsite will function as a discrete site with its own domain name specifically designed to engage visitors with the Our Florida Reefs planning process (for reference on what a microsite is, visit: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsite>). It will invite community-based discussions and offers opportunities to engage at many levels using social networking tools. The site will focus on allowing the community to Learn, Engage, Participate, and Share. Both website domains, Ourfloridareefs.com and Ourfloridareefs.org, will direct users to the microsite.

Working with FDEP-CRCP staff, Process Facilitator and GIS Contractor, or others as appropriate, we will identify the most appropriate platform and public engagement tools to be used on the site. The site will provide clear and easy to understand language on what Our Florida Reefs is and how the public can participate, along with a timeline of the multi-year, multi-step process. The public engagement tools may include, to the extent feasible: discussion forums, social commenting apps, ability for administrators to post questions and/or polls, social media buttons to allow visitors to spread the word about the process through their online social networks, event calendars, section on GIS mapping tool, and mechanisms for public input and feedback.

Media Plan and Protocol for SEFCRI

An internal media plan and protocol for SEFCRI interactions with the media during the entire public planning process is key. This plan should include a media contact list (see Appendix III) and a protocol for media interactions involving FDEP-CRCP staff, SEFCRI partners, as well as stakeholder working group members involved in the process.

The plan should identify process spokespersons and include a procedure for how/when to respond to inaccurate news stories, and/or utilize official statements, letters to the editors, Op-Eds, editorials, as well as inaccurate news posted in online forums or other sites. This plan may require media training for process spokespersons, including FDEP-CRCP staff and SEFCRI team members to effectively deliver consistent key messages throughout the process.

Establishment of a Key Communicators Network

Each person has a sphere of influence, although they may lack inspiration to communicate certain messages within that sphere. If SEFCRI provides that inspiration, this network will spread the word quickly. Most likely, many of these key communicators will be stakeholders who have been connected to SEFCRI for years and will be pleased to participate.

A Key Communicators Network is a proven public relations tool to provide ongoing, two-way communications from a trusted source. Older than the telephone, this concept may lack the appeal of flashy technology, but it deploys the most effective form of communication ever known: person-to-person. A defined plan for a Key Communicators Network should be established. The plan should establish a protocol for those members of the public who are interested in becoming engaged in the process and deliver information/updates during each step in the process to their constituents and/or community. The protocol will identify the most appropriate procedures for the SEFCRI and FDEP CRCP staff to maintain a two-way dialogue with key communicators in order for key communicators to provide the SEFCRI with vital information on the most effective communications tools to reach their constituents and/or communities and any direct feedback for them on priorities and/or concerns being expressed by constituents. This information would allow the SEFCRI to more quickly respond to issues and address them through FAQ and/or other communications products. Key communicators will be provided with Our Florida Reefs communications materials (downloaded through the website and/or printed) in order for them to provide the information about the process directly to their constituents and/or community. Once established, this network will serve SEFCRI in invaluable ways in the future. The foundation for this network could be the existing SEFCRI speakers' bureau members as well as all interested SEFCRI partners. The current speakers' network should define the procedures/protocols for its expansion as new community and stakeholders groups engage in the process.

Branded Newsletter Template

Email has been one of the fastest growing and most ubiquitous forms of communication ever seen, and it is not going to disappear anytime soon. People want to receive email from friends and desired contacts, and if SEFCRI is considered "friendly," it can remain connected to many people and reach many new ones through an electronic newsletter.

A new e-newsletter template will make it easy to produce and distribute, both by email and on a website. A standard template branded to reflect SEFCRI as the primary facilitator of the planning process will help to establish SEFCRI as a trusted go-to source for information on the Our Florida Reefs planning process.

A survey of e-newsletter recipients should be conducted at various times during the planning process to solicit input from stakeholders on the effectiveness of the communications strategies employed, to monitor stakeholder knowledge and perception

of SEFCRI, and to identify how the key messages and/or communications products are being perceived by the target audience.

Spanish-language Outreach Plan

Although the translation of some products is included within Task 7, a larger effort is needed to define how SEFCRI will solicit input from and engage the Spanish-language community through communication products during Phase II. South Florida, and particularly Miami-Dade County, has a large percentage of residents that are foreign-born and use Spanish as the primary language in the home. Moreover, local Spanish-language media is well established and can have international influence. Other large foreign language groups also have established communities and deserve consideration for future outreach.

The level of engagement that is warranted for the FDEP-CRCP staff and SEFCRI partners must be considered when defining a Spanish-language outreach plan for the public planning process as well as SEFCRI public engagement efforts beyond 2016.

The High or Low Technology Road

Audiences today are very segmented, and their preferences for receiving information vary widely. Technology offers great advantages, but it cannot be considered a panacea for all users. Even if we assume that everyone has a cell phone and a computer, we cannot assume that everyone knows how to use them.

Specialized audiences such as the boating community may be reached in ways that would have no relevance to non-boaters. Younger audiences may ignore messages that cannot be shared electronically. Older audiences may expect to interact with someone face-to-face. Therefore, a range of options must be offered to reach a diverse population and different audiences.

Key Messages

What is the one thing that you want your audience to remember? It is important to start with the positive before hitting them with the negative, because not only do you want to build awareness in your audiences, you also want to inspire action. These messages will need to be repeated often, in various formats, and at different times. The messages should be simple enough to be memorable while also conveying important information. Many other sub-messages can be derived from them, as these core messages provide guiding reference points for future messages that can be tailored for specific events and audiences. Key Messages will be developed and incorporated into all communications products used by FDEP-CRCP staff, SEFCRI partners and Key Communicators as they communicate during each step in the multi-year Our Florida Reefs planning process. (See Appendix II for a list of *draft* key messages).

Products (Steps 3-5)

Products are organized by levels of intensity in terms of a higher-time commitment versus a lower-time commitment. Within each of these categories, products are listed in the order of recommended priority so that choices about where to allocate resources can be made with greater efficiency.

Several products detailed below allow for the opportunity to target specific demographics with messages relating to their interests. Products, including traditional and social media advertising, as well as the website will allow for the opportunity to craft messages to target specific ocean user groups or communities.

Each product requires approximately five weeks to complete from the first to final draft. The timeline was based upon the tentative public meeting schedule of last week in May and early June, in order to plan adequately for advertisements and other related materials. While products will be completed on a rolling basis, a few key dates can be kept in mind:

May 1: web microsite launch
 May 27: most Step 4 products
 June 30: all products delivered

It is recommended to revisit this schedule on a weekly basis to make adjustments as necessary, as SEFCRI events are subject to change and production issues may complicate the delivery of final products; however, final deadlines should be adhered to as strictly as possible, while earlier deadlines allow for more flexibility.

Product	1 st Draft	2 nd Draft	Final	Quantities
Step 3: Communicate the results of SEFCRI projects	(Mondays)		(Mondays)	
<i>Higher Time Commitment</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site map for new Our Florida Reefs microsite, in outline form 	4-8	4-19	4-29	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Florida Reefs microsite (repeated in Step 4) initial launch 	N/A	N/A	5-1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rack card (a 4-by-9 inch print card) announcing the process, website and how the public can get involved. This will be designed for use with public outreach throughout the entire multi-year process. 	4-8	4-19	4-29	6,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 synthesis one-pager for each of the thematic bins identified by FDEP-CRCP staff (Water, Coral, People, 	4-15	4-26	5-6	1,500 of each =

Habitat, Fish, Management, & Ecosystem) for use at each of the themed kiosks during the June public outreach workshops.				10,500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 synthesis one-pager that covers 1) about SEFCRI 2) State of Reefs & 3) SEFCRI accomplishments for use at the June public outreach workshops. 	4-15	4-26	5-6	1,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Lower Time Commitment</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media outline on how to communicate Step 3 through FDEP-CRCP social media sites 	4-8	4-19	4-29	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-page media Fact Sheet on Our Florida Reefs planning process and stats on SE region with specific and accurate information useful to journalists (for inclusion in media kit) 	4-22	5-8	5-20	500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rumor control fact sheet for print and online use (developed in conjunction with FDEP Communications) 	4-22	5-8	5-20	600
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed outline on the design and procedures of a Key Communicators Network 	4-15	5-1	5-13	
Step 4: Process Rollout Public Meetings				
<i>Higher Time Commitment</i>				
Our Florida Reefs project microsite additions to announce meetings, allow for public input; may include forums and other interactive features for stakeholder groups	4-29	5-10	5-27	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infographic for Steps 3-4 of the process for use on web and/or print materials 	4-15	4-29	5-13	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11x17 direct mail 1-sheet that advertises region-wide meetings (for distribution through FDEP-CRCP/SEFCRI direct mail lists) 	4-15	4-29	5-13	750-1000, based upon final mailing list size)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Relations/Advertising, Phase I including: 				

○ News release with public meeting dates	4-29	5-10	5-20	0
○ Media advisory for calendar editors/media to cover meetings	4-29	5-10	5-20	
○ Graphic advertisement for public meetings for local papers/FB/Online	4-29	5-10	5-20	
○ Radio PSA announcing the meetings and public planning process for Our Florida Reefs)(*See note following table regarding stations/frequency)	5-6	5-17	5-27	
Social media outline on how to advertise public meetings on FDEP CRCP social media sites	4-15	4-29	5-13	
Media Relations plan/protocol for public meetings	5-6	5-17	5-27	
○ Integration of Our Florida Reefs materials with SEFCRI media kit	N/A	N/A	5-27	
○ One hour staff training in media relations/protocol for public meetings	N/A	N/A	6-3	
Media Monitoring and weekly media news hits summary for internal use: FDEP CRCP staff/PPT only	N/A	N/A	5-27	
• <i>Lower Time Commitment</i>				
FAQ document (print and online) on Our Florida Reefs	4-8	4-17	4-29	600
• Hard launch of new brand through public meeting news release and other print collateral distribution	N/A	N/A	5-7	
• Email announcement of public meeting dates for Key Communicators, SEFCRI database	5-6	5-17	5-27	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infographic on socio-economic value of Florida's coral reefs 	5-6	5-17	5-27	
Step 5: Stakeholder Working Groups Identification of Management Options			All Final Products delivered by 6-30	
<i>Higher Time Commitment</i>				
2 synthesis one-pagers 1) outlining where stakeholders can find information to conduct their work and 2) how to use GIS mapping tool	5-27	6-14	6-28 (Fri.)	
FAQ document on the role of the Stakeholder Working Groups and their interaction with other groups, including: PPT, Scientific Advisory Group, FDEP CRCP staff, facilitator	5-20	6-3	6-17	
Media Relations Phase II, including:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications plan to solicit nominees for Stakeholder Working Groups 	5-20	6-3	6-17	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media/Ad products for Stakeholder Working Groups, including 	5-27	6-14	6-28	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News release inviting stakeholder participation in working groups 	5-27	6-14	6-28	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Relations protocol for Stakeholders (they represent a specific stakeholder and not the SEFCRI) procedure for media request about "process" 	5-27	6-14	6-28	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising campaign outline to solicit stakeholder nominations 	5-27	6-14	6-28	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of Media Monitoring and weekly media news hits summary 	5-27	6-14	6-28	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Lower Time Commitment</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email announcement for Key 	5-27	6-14	6-28	

Communicators, SEFCRI database				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates to the website on what the status of working group meetings and how the public can participate in this step in the process 	5-27	6-14	6-28	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT presentation (a few slides) and talking points and print document for Stakeholders to communicate the process to their constituents 	5-27	6-14	6-28	
Task 7: Spanish Communications Products				
Our Florida Reefs rack card on the multi-year, multi-step process and how the public can get involved in Spanish	4-29	5-10	5-27	2,000
1 synthesis one-pager that covers 1) about SEFCRI 2) State of Reefs & 3) SEFCRI accomplishments for use at the June public outreach workshops in Spanish	4-29	5-20	6-3	1,000
Task 8: Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy				
Final Tracking Report	N/A	N/A	6-30	

* As indicated in the DEP Contract (No. RM132) radio PSAs shall be limited to FM broadcast radio stations with a signal strength of at least 25,000 watts and must run between the hours of 7am to 7pm. In addition, 20% of all radio airtime should play on public radio stations in the region.

Based upon these parameters, the following radio stations have been selected to run the Our Florida Reefs PSA. The broadcast stations use a variety of formats including, country, adult contemporary, rock, easy listening, Spanish-language and talk radio and therefore target a diverse audience of radio listeners in Southeast Florida.

The Radio PSA will air three-weeks prior to first public meeting in specific media market.

Miami-Ft. Lauderdale Media Market

Public Radio Stations: WLRN-FM, WDNA-FM, WKCP-FM

Commercial Stations: WKIS-FM, WLYF-FM, WBGG-FM, WHYI-FM, WFEZ-FM, WSHE-FM

Spanish-language stations: WCMQ-FM, WMGE-FM, WXDJ-FM, WRMA-FM, WAMR-FM

Palm Beach-Stuart Media Market

Public Radio Station: WXEL-FM

Commercial Stations: WRMF-FM, WAXY-FM, WLDI-FM, WIRK-FM, WEAT-FM, WZZR-FM

Calendar to 2016

This calendar correlates to the SEFCRI Process Steps through the year 2016, and it proposes possible communications products for steps 6 to 10. A more detailed calendar with associated communications products will need to be developed as each step approaches and becomes better defined.

Step 6: Collate and Prioritize Recommendations to Implement

Timeframe: September 2014 – November 2014

Primary internal audience: FDEP-CRCP, Process Planning Team, SEFCRI Team

Primary external audience: Stakeholder Constituents

Possible products:

- Specific key messages for step 6
- Summary document of Prioritized Recommendations for Stakeholders
- Content on “where we are in the process” “and how public can provide input” for outreach presentations, website, other materials, as necessary
- SEFCRI community outreach strategy on recommendations and next steps in process
- Dissemination of key messages on “what is happening now” with stakeholders/public through email newsletters, key communicators network outreach, website, and other communications products, as identified
- Updates to website that reflect “where we are in the process” and “next steps”
- SEFCRI information campaign to educate/inform news editorial boards on public outreach, stakeholder involvement in the process
- Monitoring and identification of media opportunities for Op-Eds, news story pitches, Letters to the Editor.

Step 7: Vet Recommendations with Working Groups

Timeframe: December 2014– March 2015

Primary internal audience: Stakeholder Working Groups, Process Planning Team, SEFCRI Team

Primary external audience: Stakeholder Constituents

Possible products:

- Specific key messages for step 7
- Outreach strategy to inform public about recommendations/next steps
- FAQs on how recommendations were developed and by whom
- Monitoring of media and identification of opportunities for media engagement

Step 8: Public Meetings

Timeframe: April 2015 – June 2015

Primary internal audience: FDEP CRCP, PPT, SEFCRI Team

Primary external audience: All Stakeholders, Public, Mass Media

Possible Products:

- Specific key messages for step 8
- Website updates with recommendations and next steps for public input
- Public-friendly one-pagers, brochure, and/or rack card on recommendations and how public can get involved in the recommendation phase
- Rack card/brochure on “how to get involved” and timeframe for public engagement
- One-pager/FAQs on stakeholder-driven process to date
- News release with public meeting dates
- Media advisory for calendar editors/media to cover process
- Media Relations plan/protocol for FDEP-CRCP staff at public meetings
- PPT presentation to introduce process/solicit public input in outreach meetings
- Communications products for each kiosk at public meetings
- Update of one-pagers/timeline on process for media kit
- Identification of opportunities for media outreach, Op-Eds
- Protocol for Stakeholder Working Group members to inform their constituents about the recommendations and process next steps

Step 9: Agencies Adoption

Timeframe: July 2015 – 2015+

Primary internal audience: FDEP-CRCP, SEFCRI Team, PPT

Primary external audience: Agency Stakeholders, Public, Media, TBD

Possible Products:

- Specific key messages for step 9
- One-pagers/brochure on agency approval/adoption timeline
- Updates for website with agency approval/adoption information and timeline and how public can provide input during this stage in process
- Identification of media opportunities, Op-Eds/ Editorials on the public/stakeholder-driven public process
- Blast message for the Agency Approval/Adoption phase
- Coordination of timing and messages for agency adoption news releases
- Monitoring of media

Step 10: Implementation Phase & Management Plan

Timeframe: January 2016 – 2016+

Primary internal audience: FDEP-CRCP, SEFCRI Team, PPT

Primary external audience: All Stakeholders, Public, Media

Possible Products:

- Specific key messages for step 10
- Updates for website with agency implementation information and timeline and how public can spread the word about newly adopted management measures
- One-pagers and FAQ document on newly implemented management measures
- Blast message for the Implementation phase
- News release on implementation dates/management measures
- Other website updates, as deemed necessary, to keep the stakeholder community engaged in the protection of Florida's coral reefs after the process is complete
- Monitoring of media and identification of opportunities for media engagement

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

In order to evaluate a public awareness campaign's success, data on a variety of indicators must be collected before, during and after the campaign. This section identifies the necessary data to be collected and the analytical tools necessary to track the effectiveness of the Our Florida Reefs communications campaign.

The strategy identifies best practices and information that can be efficiently and realistically gathered during Phase I (Steps 4-5) and Phase II (Steps 6-10) of the public planning process. During Phase I of the communications campaign, the SOS Consultant team will collect and synthesize the data and provide a final synthesis report on Issue Tracking, Framing Analysis, and Public Participation.

Goals

The goal here is to monitor and evaluate the overall performance of the new brand and communications strategies employed during the stakeholder-driven public planning process, and if necessary, to aid in the identification of trajectory corrections to the communications strategy and/or adjustments to communications products, tactics and tools used during campaign implementation. This evaluation strategy is based upon the goals defined in this Strategic Communications Plan.

Strategy

How effectively is this communications campaign reaching target audiences with key messages? Audiences should increase in awareness about SEFCRI, the purpose of the public planning process, and opportunities for public input during the various steps in the public planning process. Another primary goal is to increase public/stakeholder participation in the public planning process. Secondarily, it should augment public understanding of issues relating to coral reef ecosystems in southeast Florida.

These steps will aid in an adaptive approach for the communications campaign:

1. Monitor identity and performance of SEFCRI and Our Florida Reefs brands
2. Monitor the effectiveness of the communication products reaching the target audience and the target audience's response to these products
3. Monitor public perception of the status of coral reefs
4. Monitor public perception of the overall stakeholder-driven planning process throughout its implementation phase
5. Monitor overall traditional and social media coverage of the SEFCRI brands and public process

6. Monitor how products and key messages are conveyed in traditional and social media outlets.

Baseline Information

What is the level of audience knowledge of and attitudes toward your organization and the issues it represents?

According to SOS' survey of FDEP/FCRP staff and PPT members, SEFCRI is not a well-known program among ocean users in Southeast Florida. Over 70% of staff and team members who responded to the survey indicated that SEFCRI is "not widely known by the general public/stakeholders."

The survey responses indicate that there is little, if any, negative public perception to SEFCRI. However, low-public profiles can represent both a positive and negative to the implementation of a public outreach process. No negative public perception can be good to start as a "clean slate" for public engagement while, at the same time, some members of the public may be skeptical to connect with organizations they don't know. Establishing SEFCRI as a trusted go-to source for information and facilitation of a transparent public engagement process will be key to its success.

Baseline data on output-based indicators, such as, the number of website hits, video views, e-newsletter response rates, current number of attendees to FDEP-CRCP/SEFCRI classes, outreach events, as well as from outcome-based indicators from surveys and polls will be collected for the evaluation analysis.

Analysis and Analytical Tools

An analysis will be conducted on three core indicators: Issue Tracking, Framing Analysis and Public Participation. The evaluation report will involve analysis of: outcome-based measures in terms of increased literacy of issues (i.e. knowledge, perceptions, attitudes) and output-based measures (e.g. # media hits, # click-throughs, meeting attendance) using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures.

This evaluation analysis will answer the following questions:

1. How are issues related to SEFCRI and the public planning process being perceived by stakeholders and the general public?
2. How is information related to SEFCRI and the public planning process being framed by the general public and media?
3. In what ways are members of the public participating in the process, and has the number of public participants been increasing?
4. How is the audience responding to the communication products?
5. Are my messages suited for the communication channels that I selected?
6. Are there signs of increase in public understanding of the process?

The following analytical tools will be used to measure outcome- and output-based indicators to answer these evaluation questions.

Google Analytics

The SOS team will use Google Analytics on the new website to measure web traffic, visitor navigation patterns, visitor actions, search, external link and keyword tracking. Google Analytics will be configured to collect data on the number of website hits and where the site's traffic comes from (city, state). These would include the following:

1. Visitor actions: to monitor visitor actions on the site, such as signing up for a newsletter, registration, and participation in online discussions
2. Search tracking: to determine when a visitor has used the search function, as well as what term(s) they searched for
3. External link tracking: to track all links used in e-newsletters, Facebook posts, tweets and online advertising that point to the website, using campaign-tracking parameters.

The SOS team will also use Google Analytics Events and Funnel to capture user activity that goes beyond simply viewing a page on your site. Events will capture information such as when a user starts a video or shares site content on Facebook, Twitter, or some other social media platform. Google Analytics Funnels function will capture data on ease of navigability of the site, such as if visitors follow all steps to sign up for a newsletter or, if not, what step made them abandon the process.

Media Monitoring

Through continued media monitoring, the SOS team will track media coverage in print, broadcast and online outlets, including media hits and coverage analysis during Phase I. This will include quality and quantity of earned media coverage, how the issues were presented in the media and in user-generated comments, as well as use of public service announcements aired by broadcast media.

Constant Contacts Analytics

Using Constant Contacts' campaign tracking analytics, we will collect information on newsletter effectiveness, such as open rates, new signups, click-throughs, unsubscribe rates, and on the number and type of comments received.

HootSuite for Social Media Coverage

Using HootSuite to monitor Facebook and Twitter, we will ascertain the reach of SEFCRI-promoted messages and SEFCRI information originated by other users. Establishing a unique Twitter hashtag, such as #OurFloridaReefs, will allow for the monitoring of social media dialogue. This data would include the number of fans/followers, the number of retweets/shares, how the issue is presented in social media channels, and the number of click-throughs on SEFCRI links.

Paid Advertising Analysis

Depending upon the advertising venue used (print, broadcast, online or social media

outlets) the number of hits, clicks, likes received on online and social media paid ads will be monitored, as well as the number of people reached by print ads.

Public Participation Analysis

During the public meeting phases, data on the number of meeting participants by region/venue and public willingness to participate in the process will be gathered through on-site communications products, such as meeting sign-in sheets administered by FDEP-CRCP staff.

Surveys/Polls

Direct integration of data collection methods with communications products, such as surveys/polls via online (website, social media) or e-newsletter, will collect data on the effectiveness of communications products and key messages to target audiences. This information can provide information on the quality of communication exchanges with your audience, public action and perception in support of the process.

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Appendix 1: Regional Stakeholders Groups

For stakeholders in government, business, and academia, the SEFCRI database will be consulted to expand upon the groupings as documented in Table 2 in DEP Contract RM132. Listed below is an initial compilation of additional organizations and other entities that will be targeted for outreach.

Informal Education, Parks and Nature Centers

- Florida Sea Grant
- Florida Marine Science Educator's Association
- League of Environmental Educators in Florida
- Environmental Education Providers of Miami-Dade County
- Miami Seaquarium
- Marjorie Stone Douglas Biscayne Nature Center
- Ft. Lauderdale Museum of Discovery and Science
- Miami Museum of Science and Space
- Gumbo Limbo Nature Center
- IGFA: International Game Fish Association
- Loggerhead Marine Life Center
- Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center

Conservation and Environmental NGOs

- Sierra Club
- Audubon
- The Nature Conservancy
- Ocean Conservancy
- Surfrider
- Coral Reef Alliance
- Palm Beach County Reef Rescue
- Marine Animal Rescue Society
- Friends of the Everglades
- Citizens for a Better South Florida
- Kids Ecology Corps
- Ocean Rehab
- The Big Blue & You
- Anglers For Conservation
- Environmental Coalition of Miami & the Beaches
- Shake a Leg Miami
- Urban Paradise Guild
- Coral Restoration Foundation
- REEF
- Florida Native Plant Society
- Cry of the Water
- Blue Water Initiative

Other Stakeholders

NOAA's Coral listserv
The Living Sea
Force-E SCUBA Centers
South Florida Divers

Appendix II: Key Messages

The following key messages, organized into four categories, are for Phase I (Steps 3-5) and will be expanded upon during Phase II of the Our Florida Reefs planning process. Each begins with a core message and is followed by supporting messages that can be used as needed. These key messages may be adapted as necessary based upon the communications products used and target audience. Additional messages may be identified as each step of the planning process progresses.

About Coral Reefs

Florida's reefs offer us protection, but not all of them are protected.

- Florida's coral reefs, the 3rd longest in the world, protect hundreds of miles of beaches and shoreline by reducing wave action and the impact of major storms.
- One section of Florida's coral reefs, extending 105 miles north of the Florida Keys, is not comprehensively protected.
- Florida's coral reefs are ancient and began forming about 7,000 years ago, when sea levels rose following the last Ice Age.
- Corals grow slowly—most less than 1 inch per year—so they build a reef very, very slowly.
- South Florida's mainland coral reefs are closer to the beach than I-95.
- Sea turtles can ride the Gulf Stream into our reefs, have dinner, and visit a cleaning station “spa.” Other large visitors or inhabitants include sharks, rays, eels, groupers, and dolphins.
- Southeast Florida's coral reefs feed us, and nearly 5 million pounds of reef fish, such as groupers and snappers, are landed here yearly.
- Popular reef fish depend on mangroves to develop, but most local mangroves are gone, and worldwide they are disappearing faster than rainforests.
- Seagrass meadows are an important part of the wider reef ecosystem, providing food for manatees and sea turtles, a place for small fish and crabs to hide from predators, and a nursery for Florida's recreationally and commercially important marine life.
- Our reefs are some of the most threatened in the world.
- Coral reefs are the rainforests of the sea.
- Did you know that ... [various points from SEFCRI synthesis 1-pagers]?
- Healthy coral reefs, seagrass meadows, and mangroves are key to a healthy ocean in South Florida.

About the SEFCRI

One alliance brings together the people of South Florida to protect their reefs.

- Who we are: The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) is a collaborative partnership to promote local action to protect our coral reefs.

- What we do: SEFCRI partners research and monitor of coral reefs, and they interact with concerned citizens to advance their protection.
- Where we work: 4 counties—Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin—with a population of nearly 6 million people.
- SEFCRI has been promoting local action to understand and protect Southeast Florida’s reefs since 2004.

About Human Use & Socioeconomics

Our tourism-based economy depends on a healthy reef ecosystem.

- Southeast Florida’s reefs account for more than \$6 billion in income annually and 70,000 jobs for the local economy. \$6 billion each year! Enough jobs to employ every household in Fort Lauderdale!
- People are an integral part of the ocean—especially here in South Florida.
- Beaches are nourished and protected from erosion by reefs.
- In a recent study of 11 reef fish species in southeast Florida, 10 of them were being fished at unsustainable levels.
- Commercial fish catch dropped 50% in one decade, from 1990 to 2000.
- Pollution coming from land-based sources (nutrients, heavy metals, pharmaceuticals, pesticides) is stressing out our coral reefs.
- Our reefs have 216 mooring buoys that allow boaters to visit them without risking the damage from a heavy anchor.
- South Florida, do you know where your reefs are?

About Our Florida Reefs Planning Process

Our Florida Reefs needs you! The choice is yours.

- You have a voice in deciding how to manage South Florida’s reefs.
- Our Florida Reefs is a science-based, stakeholder-driven effort to manage Florida’s coral reefs effectively.
- Think globally, act locally by joining Our Florida Reefs, the future of the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative.
- We are taking action, as a community, to protect Florida’s coral reefs.
- Take the Initiative.
- A community action project to protect Florida’s coral reefs.
- South Floridians agree that our reefs need protection; “doing nothing” is not an option.

Phase II: The following categories require the development and expansion of key messages in Phase II (Steps 6-10).

- Stakeholder Working Group process
- Recommendation Rollout meetings
- Agency Approval/Adoption process
- Implementation phase

Appendix 3: Media Contacts

See spreadsheet of broadcast and print media contacts from the four-county region.

End of Document