

Quarterly Newsletter

NOAA Southeast and Caribbean Regional Team

CaribbeanNews@noaa.gov

NOAA IN THE CARIBBEAN

CONNECTING NOAA & PARTNERS ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN



NOAA in the Caribbean Community Group,

A few weeks have now passed since Hurricane Beryl, a powerful Category 4 hurricane, made landfall and devastated Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, Mexico, and the United States. I wanted to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thoughts to all of those currently suffering. As I write the opening statement for this quarter's newsletter, the Atlantic is now waking back up as we approach peak hurricane season.

I was in Puerto Rico when Hurricane Maria hit in 2017, and saw this destruction and anguish firsthand. Since then, the start of every hurricane season has always brought a mixture of fear and anxiety for me. I find myself thinking, what will we lose this year? What helps quell some of these emotions is knowing that, as a member of the NOAA in the Caribbean Executive Team, I can play a small role in connecting the Community Group with the resources that NOAA provides for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

NOAA plays a crucial role in monitoring and providing information about hurricanes including: forecasting and predictions, research, education and outreach, data collection and monitoring, and supporting emergency response. Stay updated with forecasts and information at the [National Hurricane Center](#) website and with your local [Weather Forecast Office](#) in San Juan. You can learn more in depth about NOAA's role in disasters using the [Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Guide](#). This upcoming fiscal year, we are planning to refresh our disaster guide and will translate the updated guide into Spanish. Overall, NOAA's comprehensive efforts play a vital role in mitigating the impacts of hurricanes and ensuring the safety and resilience of communities vulnerable to these powerful storms.

I wanted to take a moment to remind the Community Group that NOAA in the Caribbean is here to serve you during these trying times. If you ever have any questions, need to make a connection, seek collaborations, want to provide feedback, or wish to better understand a resource that NOAA provides, you can always reach out to us via email at region.secarib@noaa.gov.

I also wanted to take a moment to welcome Yaritza Rivera-Torres as the new Chair of NOAA in the Caribbean. Yaritza is currently the Caribbean Regional Coordinator for NOAA's Marine Debris Program. We will be featuring Yaritza in our next newsletter so more information soon.

As we work towards recovery, let's hold onto hope and look towards brighter days ahead. NOAA in the Caribbean is here to provide the critical information and resources you may need.

Sincerely,

Katharine Egan, on behalf of the NOAA in the Caribbean Executive Team

NOAA IN THE CARIBBEAN

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NOAA in the Caribbean 2024 Partners Meeting Recording and Slides Now Available

On May 30, 2024, NOAA in the Caribbean hosted its annual virtual partners meeting focused on ecosystem restoration in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and in the international Caribbean. The recording of that meeting is now available on SECART's YouTube channel with both Spanish and English subtitles ([recording available here](#)). Our speakers also graciously provided their slides and contact information ([slides and contact information available here](#)). On behalf of the NOAA in the Caribbean Executive Team and Community Group, we would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to our speakers for taking the time to discuss their work and the work of their organizations:

- Dr. Nicole Angeli (U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife)
- Jendahye Antoine (Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service)
- Aric Bickel (SECORE)
- Dr. Natalie Boodram (Caribbean Natural Resources Institute)
- Dr. Dinorah Chacin (NOAA Fisheries)
- Dr. Kristin Wilson Grimes (University of the Virgin Islands, Center for Marine and Environmental Studies)
- Dr. Nilda M. Jiménez (Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources)
- Dr. Robert J. Mayer (University of Puerto Rico Aguadilla)
- Dr. Elizabeth Shaver (The Nature Conservancy)
- Nicole M. Pillot Torres (BoriCorps)



NOAA in the Caribbean Annual Partners Meeting 2024



Upcoming: Community Group Meeting

September 20, 10:30am - 12pm EDT

Meeting link [here](#)

Save event to your calendar [here](#)



Biden-Harris Administration invests \$60 million to build a climate-ready workforce through Investing in America agenda

Story originally published by [Sea Grant](#) on June 11, 2024. Written by Amara Davis, Outreach Coordinator, National Sea Grant

Funding from NOAA's Climate-Ready Workforce initiative will support training and jobs to accelerate climate resilience

Today, the Department of Commerce and NOAA announced \$60 million in funding to help train and place people in jobs that advance a climate-ready workforce for coastal and Great Lakes states, Tribes and Territories as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda under the [Inflation Reduction Act](#). To date, awards like these from President Biden's Investing in America agenda have created more than 270,000 jobs across the country.

The funding will support nine projects around the nation, with \$50 million going directly to the projects and \$10 million for technical assistance to support the grantees.

These funds, part of NOAA's Climate-Ready Workforce initiative, will allow [NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program](#), [Climate Program Office](#) and [Office for Coastal Management](#) to fund sectoral partnerships that will develop and implement job training programs. These programs will include wraparound services to help make training opportunities more accessible.

"Thanks to the leadership of President Biden, this major investment in public, private and educational organizations will train workers from around our coasts and help them find good-paying jobs that strengthen climate resilience and local economies," said U.S.

Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. "Climate change accelerates the need for a new generation of skilled workers who can help communities address a wide range of climate impacts including sea level rise, flooding, water quality issues and the need for solutions such as renewable energy."

Modeled after the Economic Development Administration's successful [Good Jobs Challenge](#), the Climate-Ready Workforce initiative is uniquely focused on preparing and placing people in good jobs that will advance climate resilience nationwide, ensuring coastal communities are prepared for the worst impacts of climate change. The program will also assist employers in developing a 21st-century workforce that is climate literate and skilled at addressing climate challenges.

"Our goal of building climate resilience across the nation depends upon creating a trained, well-paid and supported climate-ready workforce," said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D. "Each of these projects in coastal, Tribal and Territorial communities is tailored to tackle the most pressing climate needs of their communities and will focus on recruiting people for training and jobs from disadvantaged communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts."



Workers from marine companies that focus on coastal resilience are installing oyster habitat, called oyster castles, made of oyster shells and concrete in a channel of Whittaker Creek in Gloucester, Virginia, to support healthy oysters on Aug 15, 2023. (Photo by Lathan Goumas | Virginia Sea Grant)

jobs from disadvantaged communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts.”



Today’s announcement builds on more than \$50 billion of resilience investments across the President’s Investing in America Agenda, which includes investments designed to ensure communities across the country are prepared for the worst impacts of climate change.

Nine projects located across the country were selected through a competitive process.

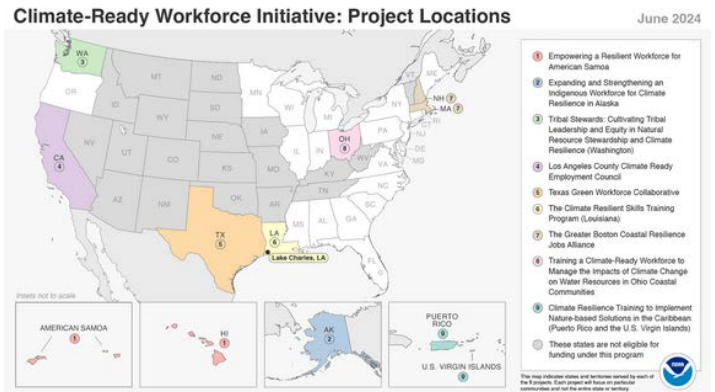
Selected Projects

The Climate-Ready Workforce for Coastal States, Tribes and Territories Initiative advances the Biden-Harris Investing in America agenda in multiple ways. First, this work is a component of the \$3.3 billion investment in NOAA’s Climate-Ready Coasts and Communities Initiative through the Inflation Reduction Act to help American communities prepare, adapt and build resilience to weather and climate events. Visit NOAA’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act websites to learn how NOAA is collaborating with communities to build a Climate-Ready Nation and to see current and future funding opportunities.

“Sea Grant and our partners are pleased to address these critical workforce development needs to support our coastal and Great Lakes communities across the nation,” said Jonathan Pennock, director of NOAA’s National Sea Grant College Program. “Sea Grant is uniquely positioned to help meet these needs through our emphasis on regional and place-based partnerships, leveraging local expertise and resources to make a meaningful impact on coastal communities.”

Second, the Climate-Ready Workforce initiative also advances the Department of Commerce’s workforce agenda, which focuses on preparing workers with the education and skills necessary to accelerate the development and deployment of critical and emerging technologies, which are essential to U.S. economic competitiveness and national security. As first developed under the Good Jobs Challenge and now through the Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative, the Department’s approach to workforce investment programs is employer-led, worker-centric and focused on equity.

Third, every awarded project supports communities that have been identified as disadvantaged by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, including Tribes and other communities on the frontline of the climate crisis. This program advances President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative, which sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution



This map indicates the states and territories served by each of the nine Climate-Ready Workforce projects. Each project will focus on particular communities and not the entire state or territory. Credit: Ashlyn Shore, Nicole Rucker and Ned Gardiner | NOAA) [Download a complete list of the funded projects and descriptions here.](#)

and intensifying climate impacts.



Ensuring American workers have the skills and training necessary to tackle the climate crisis is critical, which is why President Biden Launched the [American Climate Corps](#) – a groundbreaking, workforce training and service initiative that will put tens of thousands of young Americans to work fighting the impacts of climate change.

“Our climate is changing rapidly and the demand for authoritative climate information, tools, knowledge and resources is growing to keep pace,” said Benjamin DeAngelo, Climate Program Office acting director. “These Climate-Ready Workforce projects will enable the equitable provision of climate services in the form of job creation across a diverse range of communities and economic sectors.”

Learn more about the 11 new two-year resilience projects in FY23 in the [Caribbean and Pacific Islands](#).

NOAA confirms 4th global coral bleaching event

Story originally published by [NOAA](#) on April 15, 2024.

The world is currently experiencing a global coral bleaching event, according to NOAA scientists. This is the fourth global event on record and the second in the last 10 years.

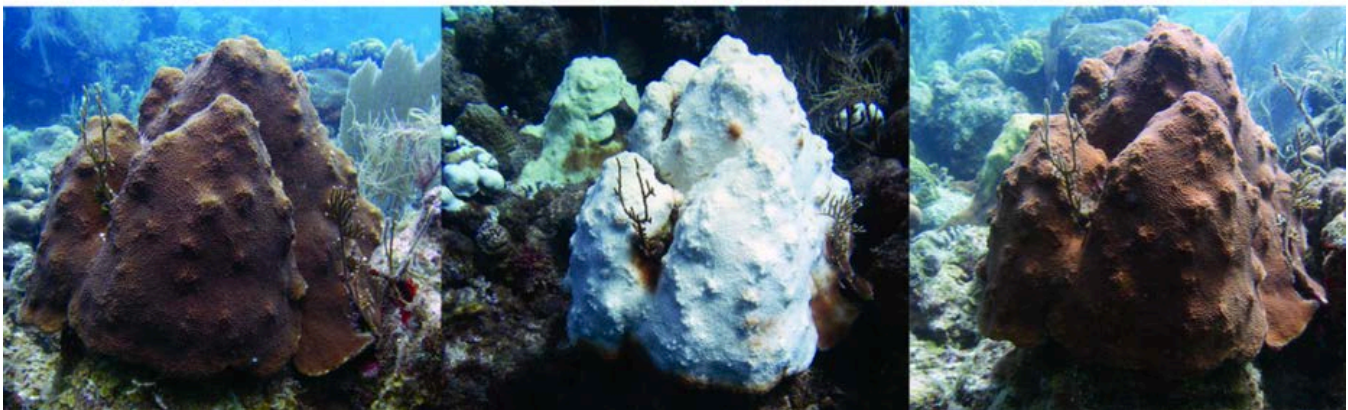
Bleaching-level heat stress, as remotely monitored and predicted by [NOAA's Coral Reef Watch](#) (CRW), has been — and continues to be — extensive across the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean basins. CRW's heat-stress monitoring is based on sea surface temperature data, spanning 1985 to the present, from a blend of NOAA and partner satellites.

***Orbicella franksi* (boulder star coral), St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands**

May 2023 - Healthy

October 2023 - Bleached

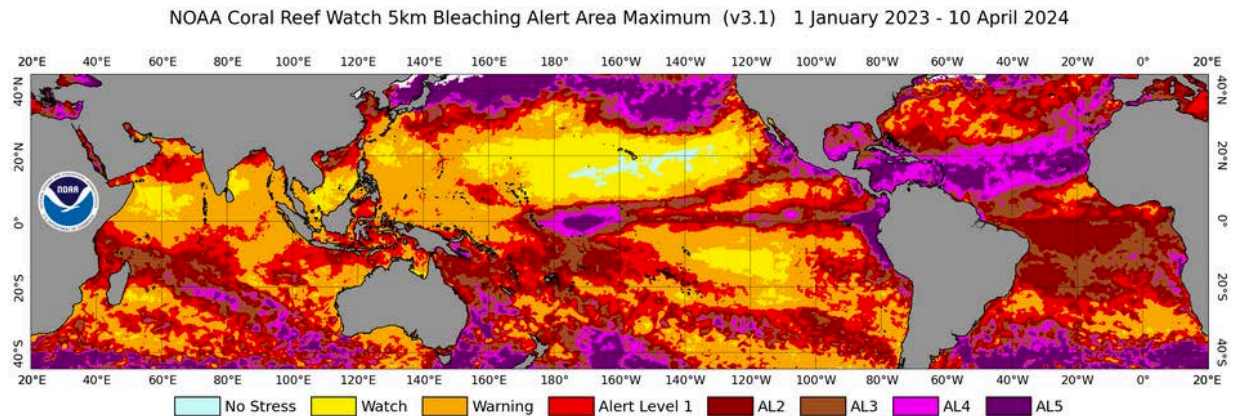
March 2024 - Recovered



This three-panel image shows a boulder star coral in St. Croix, USVI, as it shifted from healthy (May 2023), to bleached (October 2023), to recovered (March 2024), following extreme marine heat stress throughout the Caribbean basin in 2023. (Image credit: NOAA)

"From February 2023 to April 2024, significant coral bleaching has been documented in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres of each major ocean basin," said Derek Manzello, Ph.D., NOAA CRW coordinator.

Since early 2023, mass bleaching of coral reefs has been confirmed throughout the tropics, including in Florida in the U.S.; the Caribbean; Brazil; the eastern Tropical Pacific (including Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia); Australia's Great Barrier Reef; large areas of the South Pacific (including Fiji, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Samoas and French Polynesia); the Red Sea (including the Gulf of Aqaba); the Persian Gulf; and the Gulf of Aden.



NOAA Coral Reef Watch's global 5km-resolution satellite Coral Bleaching Alert Area Maximum map, for January 1, 2023 to April 10, 2024. This figure shows the regions, around the globe, that experienced high levels of marine heat stress ([Bleaching Alert Levels 2-5](#)) that can cause reef-wide coral bleaching and mortality. (Image credit: NOAA)

NOAA has received confirmation of widespread bleaching across other parts of the Indian Ocean basin as well, including in Tanzania, Kenya, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Tromelin, Mayotte and off the western coast of Indonesia.

“As the world’s oceans continue to warm, coral bleaching is becoming more frequent and severe,” Manzello said. “When these events are sufficiently severe or prolonged, they can cause coral mortality, which hurts the people who depend on the coral reefs for their livelihoods.”

Coral bleaching, especially on a widespread scale, impacts economies, livelihoods, food security and more, but it does not necessarily mean corals will die. If the stress driving the bleaching diminishes, corals can recover and reefs can continue to provide the ecosystem services we all rely on.

“Climate model predictions for coral reefs have been suggesting for years that bleaching impacts would increase in frequency and magnitude as the ocean warms,” said Jennifer Koss, director of NOAA’s [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#) (CRCP).

Because of this, the NOAA CRCP incorporated resilience-based management practices and increased the emphasis on coral restoration in its [2018 strategic plan](#), and funded a National Academies of Sciences’ study, which led to the publication of the [2019 Interventions to Increase the Resilience of Coral Reefs](#).

Koss said, “We are on the frontlines of coral reef research, management and restoration, and are actively and aggressively implementing the recommendations of the 2019 Interventions Report.” The 2023 heatwave in Florida was unprecedented. It started earlier, lasted longer and was more severe than any previous event in that region. During the bleaching event, NOAA learned a great deal while engaging in interventions to mitigate harm to corals. Through its [Mission: Iconic Reefs program offsite link](#), NOAA made significant strides to offset some of the negative impacts of global climate change and local stressors on Florida’s corals, including moving coral nurseries to deeper, cooler waters and deploying sunshades to protect corals in other areas.



This global event requires global action. The [International Coral Reef Initiative \(ICRI\)](#), which NOAA co-chairs, and its international members are broadly sharing and already applying resilience-based management actions and lessons learned from the 2023 marine heatwaves in Florida and the Caribbean. ICRI and its members are helping to advance coral interventions and restoration in the face of climate change by funding scientific research on best management practices and implementing its [Plan of Action](#).

[NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program](#) is a partnership across multiple NOAA offices and programs that brings together expertise for a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and conserving coral reef ecosystems.

TNC USVI Coral Innovation Hub Receives NOAA's Coral Research Center Designation

Story originally published by [The St. Thomas Source US Virgin Islands](#) on April 5, 2024.

The Nature Conservancy's U.S. Virgin Islands Coral Innovation Hub, a laboratory dedicated to advancing coral restoration science in the Caribbean and across the planet, has been designated as a Coral Reef Research Center (CRRC) by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Conservation Program.

In a letter to TNC, the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program director stated, "Your Coral Reef Research Center Interest Form demonstrated that TNC USVI Coral Innovation Hub meets the statutory criteria for a qualifying institution in a covered State under the Coral Reef Conservation Act (CRCA). 16 U.S.C. § 6411(b)." The NOAA correspondence goes on to state, "TNC USVI Coral Innovation Hub has been designated as a Coral Reef Research Center."



Coral Restoration practitioner Delsa Gonzalez adds newly fragmented coral arrays to a nursery table for grow-out. (Photo courtesy TNC)



The CRCA, a landmark legislation enacted to address the urgent need for coral reef protection, designates certain institutions as qualifying entities, empowering them with resources and support to advance critical research, conservation, and restoration efforts. The TNC USVI Coral Innovation Hub's recognition as a qualifying institution underscores its pivotal role in the preservation and sustainable management of coral reefs in the United States Virgin Islands and beyond, according to the press release.

With the CRCA designation, the St Croix-based hub may participate in federal and non-federal coral reef stewardship partnerships, is eligible to apply for coral conservation grants under the Ruth D. Gates Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program, and can also apply for designation as the Atlantic Reef Research Coordination Institute, the press release stated.



Macallan Durkin, V.I. Aquaculture associate, demonstrates how to fragment corals for asexual reproduction. (Photo courtesy Marjo Aho)

Through cutting-edge research, innovative technologies, and strategic partnerships, the TNC USVI Coral Innovation Hub has demonstrated the ability to safeguard these vital marine habitats for future generations. According to NOAA, coral reef animals and plants provide potential medicinal cures for cancer, arthritis, human bacterial infections, viruses, and other diseases. From coral restoration initiatives to community engagement programs, the Hub's multifaceted approach exemplifies collaboration and innovation to restore the long-term health effects of coral reef ecosystems, the release stated.

Celeste Jarvis, director of the TNC USVI Program, expressed profound gratitude for the institution's recognition under the CRCA. "This designation represents a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to protect and restore coral reefs in the United States Virgin Islands," said Jarvis. "We are honored to be entrusted with this responsibility and we are dedicated to advancing coral reef conservation through science, innovation, and community engagement."

The recognition of the TNC USVI Coral Innovation Hub as a qualifying institution under the CRCA underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing the global coral reef crisis. Through the collective expertise and resources of organizations, governments, and communities, a more sustainable future can be led for our planet's coral reef ecosystems and the people who depend on them, according to the release.

Located at Estate Little Princess, the U.S. Virgin Islands Coral Innovation Hub was inaugurated in May 2023 and serves as a center for science and technology development that shares research and knowledge throughout the region and the world. The lab is located on the beachside of a 25-acre TNC nature preserve, it said.

For more information, contact Cleveland Sam at cleveland.sam@tnc.org.



Announcements



The **Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5)** is the preeminent federal report describing the impacts of climate change in the United States and how the Nation is responding. NCA5 was written by 500 scientists and published in November 2023. We are very pleased to announce the publication of the NCA5 in Spanish, the first translation of the assessment in its entirety. With this effort, we hope to make the report even more accessible, especially for Spanish-speaking communities across the country. Find NCA5 En Español here, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy announcement here.

April 25, 2024, NOAA released the **Economics: National Ocean Watch** for the **U.S. Territories**. These new data will be added to the existing **ENOW Explorer** tool, and will be available for download. The ENOW data set features time-series data focused on the six economic sectors that are dependent on the oceans and Great Lakes, including living resources, offshore mineral extraction, marine construction, ship and boat building, marine transportation, and tourism and recreation. ENOW is produced by NOAA in partnership with the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the U.S. Census Bureau. The territories have not historically been included in this dataset because the source datasets that ENOW uses from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the U.S. Census Bureau do not gather this information for the U.S. territories at a fine enough scale to generate data on the territories' marine economies. However, over the past three years, NOAA has worked with the U.S. Census Bureau and territory statistical offices to use existing datasets in new ways and in some cases to gather this data for the first time.
<https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/enow.html>

NOAA's Sargassum Information Page in Spanish is now LIVE

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/sargassum/welcome.html>

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/sargassum/welcome-spanish.html>





NOAA released the [Equitable Climate Services Action Plan](#), which provides a roadmap for NOAA to better serve our nation's communities as they prepare for and adapt to climate change. The implementation of this Action Plan will help ensure that our climate data, tools, information and decision support are more equitable and accessible to all — especially our most underserved communities. This plan is the culmination of feedback from NOAA's climate service users through a [Request for Information](#). Additionally, on March 18, 2024, the [NOAA Administrative Order \(NAO\) 216-127](#) titled [Providing for a Climate-Ready Nation](#) was finalized. The NAO establishes the structure needed to align NOAA's capabilities to deliver more effectively climate services to the American public — further advancing NOAA's role in translating research into operational climate products and services.



The NOAA Voices Oral History Archives ([NOAA Voices](#)) currently archives and shares over 2,400 oral history interviews related to the changing environment, climate, fisheries, oceans, and coasts from around the U.S. and its territories. These data are created by

NOAA staff, external researchers, universities, historical societies, and other partners and shared here so that they can be easily discovered, accessed and considered together as a critical part of the NOAA data landscape. Together, these stories illustrate our connections to each other and to the world around us - whether as a scientist studying fisheries or weather patterns, or as a fisherman at sea, or a community recovering from the impacts of a hurricane.

Two recent collections have been shared with us. To that end, we are happy to share the following two collections that have been recently address and shared so that others can learn from these experiences:

[Droughts and Hurricanes in the U.S. Caribbean](#): This collection was created through a partnership between the Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center and the U.S. Geological Survey documents stories of extreme storms including Hurricanes Irma and Maria, as well as stories of slower-moving chronic issues like drought and how they impact communities and ecosystems alike.

[Oral Histories about Great Pond Lagoon, St Croix](#): St. Croix, USVI has only a handful of coastal lagoons that serve as critical habitats for many commercial marine fish species, as well as providing other ecosystem services for the small island community. As part of restoration planning for the Great Pond Lagoon, these oral histories were conducted with community leaders. Their perspectives provide historical context and characterization of Great Pond over time and highlight the importance of restoration for the future.

Reach out to Voices@noaa.gov to learn more or share a project you think should be added!



BOEM is seeking ideas for baseline environmental and socioeconomic studies to inform decisions on OSW activities in U.S. territories. The deadline for responding is August 23, 2024. If you have interested colleagues in the territories, please share this information with them. If you have ideas about study requests that NMFS should request, please reach out and we can consolidate responses through the SE Wind Team.



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Marine Debris Program is pleased to announce two Fiscal Year 2025 Notices of Funding Opportunity for both Marine Debris Removal and Interception Technologies under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The NOAA Marine Debris Program will award up to \$54 million across two funding opportunities: **Fiscal Year 2025 NOAA Marine Debris Removal under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law** with Letters of Intent due on September 27, 2024, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time and the **Fiscal Year 2025 NOAA Marine Debris Interception Technologies under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law** with Letters of Intent due on October 09, 2024, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. For more information, please visit the Removal and Interception Technologies opportunities on Grants.gov and the NOAA Marine Debris Program’s website.

GEOXO: SUPPORTING NOAA INTO A NEW ERA OF EARTH OBSERVATION



The Future of Aquatic Management from Ocean Color Satellites Symposium: July 29

[click here for registration information](#)

EVENTS



GeoXO Program Status Update
Hosts: Pam Sullivan and Andy Latta

July 1 2:00-2:30 PM EDT

[click here to register](#)



Complete this brief survey.

Engage with the GeoXO community in working towards revolutionizing how we observe and understand Earth's weather, oceans, and climate

Speak to us directly by emailing geoxo.satellites@noaa.gov.

GeoXO wants to hear from you.



IN COORDINATION WITH NWS OFFICE OF OBSERVATIONS

NESDIS Weather Satellite Symposium: August 13

[click here for registration information](#)



Spread the news

Partners, forward this email to your networks.

GeoXO is essential for continuing NOAA's mission to monitor and protect the environment.





Job Postings

Postdoctoral Scholar in Climate Justice

Southeast CASC, in partnership with consortium host North Carolina State University, is seeking a [Postdoctoral Scholar in Climate Justice](#) to further climate adaptation science and practice in the Southeast and US Caribbean region. They seek a Postdoctoral Scholar to study the equity of climate adaptation actions in the Southeast CASC footprint. The position is open until filled.

Resources

SECART Hurricane Awareness Webinar Series

- Lessons Learned from the 2023 Hurricane Season and What's New for 2024 (ENGLISH) - [Video Link](#)
- 2023 Lessons Learned and a 2024 Outlook (SPANISH) - [Video Link](#)
- The power of data synthesis for understanding the effects of coastal hurricanes - [Video Link](#)
- Planning for the Unplanned: Responding to Marine Debris After Disasters - [Video Link](#)

Caribbean Currents is a quarterly online program produced by **The Nature Conservancy**. Each program focuses on a topic related to TNC's work in the Caribbean and features TNC staff as well as partners or stakeholders. The [most recent episode](#) addresses the topic of Sustainable Fisheries in the Caribbean. It features fishers from The Bahamas and Grenada and two TNC members of staff, one from the Eastern Caribbean Office and one from The Bahamas Office.

National Geodetic Survey released 4 more educational videos available in Spanish. Watch all the education videos [here!](#)

- Geospatial Infrastructure for Coastal Communities: Informing Adaptation to Sea Level Rise - [Link](#)
 - La infraestructura geoespacial en las comunidades costeras informa la adaptación al aumento del nivel del mar - [Link](#)
- Best Practices for Minimizing Errors during GNSS Data Collection - [Link](#)
 - Mejores prácticas para minimizar los errores al recopilar datos GNSS - [Link](#)
- Geodetic Control in Land Surveying: Active vs. Passive - [Link](#)
 - Control geodésico en levantamientos: activo o pasivo - [Link](#)
- Location Science Improves Everyday Life - [Link](#)
 - La ciencia de la localización mejora la vida diaria - [Link](#)

Leatherback Sea Turtle Nesting Habitat Restoration in Puerto Rico

Project sponsored by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, and their eight community-based sea turtles groups and National Wildlife Refuge.

- Tackling Light Pollution on Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches Dashboard - [Link](#)
- Leatherback Nesting Habitat Restoration Project Dashboard - [Link](#)

Meet Your Executive Team!

Sammi Ebersole (formally Dowdell) - *Senior International Relations Specialist, NOAA Office of International Affairs*



Diving in Roatán, Honduras, after a work meeting in 2019.

Sammi grew up just outside of DC in Arlington, VA, went to undergrad in New England, and got her Master's at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School. She came back to the DC area in 2018 as a John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellow in NOAA's Office of International Affairs and have been with her office ever since! In her spare time, she enjoys traveling; reading (she's currently very into mythology-inspired fiction); hiking; and spending time on, in, or near the water.

Q: How long have you been working with NOAA in the Caribbean?

A: *I started working with NOAA in the Caribbean in 2019, when I began covering NOAA's international engagements in the Caribbean for my office. The past five years have truly flown by!*

Q: What is your personal connection to the Caribbean?

A: *I took my first extended trips to the Caribbean as an undergraduate student, when I spent a number of weeks in the Cayman Islands and on Bonaire. Both experiences instilled a deep appreciation for the diversity of Caribbean cultures, as well as Caribbean peoples' inherent connection to the natural world. I then spent a few years in Miami for graduate school, where I gained a better understanding of the interconnectedness of Caribbean communities and ecosystems. I currently cover NOAA's engagements in the Caribbean for the Office of International Affairs and have the pleasure of working with colleagues from across the region. I'm constantly inspired by the work our partners are doing and the steps we're taking together to advance everything from ocean science to weather modeling to climate change adaptation to management of marine and coastal ecosystems and species in the region.*



Celebrating the launch of the Atlantic Tradewind Ocean–Atmosphere Mesoscale Interaction Campaign (ATOMIC) field campaign in Barbados in early 2020.



Representing the United States at a meeting of Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean in Aruba in October 2023.

Q: We want to get to know you! What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: *I'm a BIG fan of key lime pie and miss sampling the plethora of options in Key West. I have yet to attempt making my own, but my freezer is full of the Trader Joe's version!*

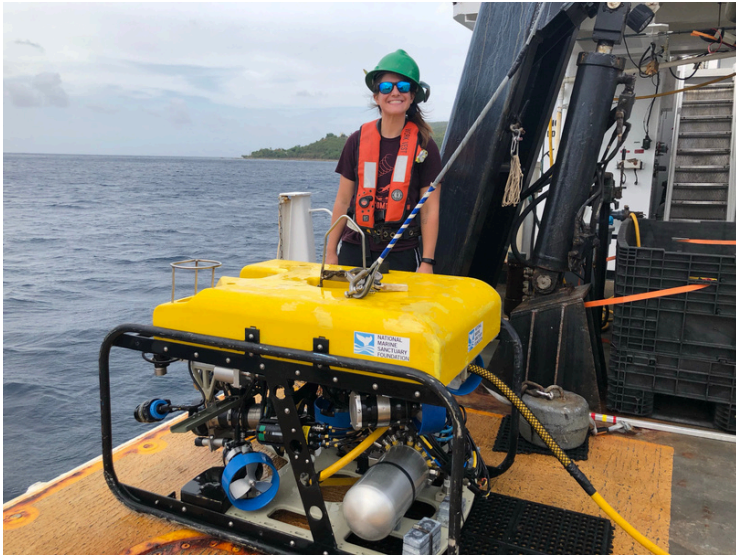
Q: What is something you want the NOAA in the Caribbean Community to know?

A: *My experience in the Caribbean is limited to southeast Florida and the international Caribbean, and it's such a privilege to learn from those of you with experience living in and working with Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Thank you for your engagement in and contributions to this Community!*



Hiking in Triglav National Park, part of the Slovenian Alps, in July 2023.

Katharine Egan - NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Coordinator



Sailing on NOAA Ship Nancy Foster in 2019. We were mapping and characterizing mesophotic and deep coral ecosystems around St. Croix.

Katharine was born and raised in Milford, Pennsylvania, and went to undergrad at the University of Rhode Island where she majored in marine biology. She got my Master's at the University of the Virgin Islands where her thesis work was focused on creating spatial predictive models of threatened coral species in shallow and mesophotic reef ecosystems. Katharine has been working at NOAA in some capacity for 10 years now! She started as a Hollings Scholar in 2014 with the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS). Afterwards, she was a contractor with NCCOS, working as a GIS Analyst and on coral reef related projects. Katharine was a Knauss Fellow in 2019 with NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research where she then spent the last five years

as a contractor then federal employee. She currently reside in the Florida Keys, and in her spare time she enjoys reading, running, and spending time with her partner and their three cats.

Q: How long have you been working with NOAA in the Caribbean?

A: *I started as the Southeast and Caribbean Regional Coordinator last summer for a four month detail before permanently moving into the position at the end of January. That was my first experience working with NOAA in the Caribbean!*

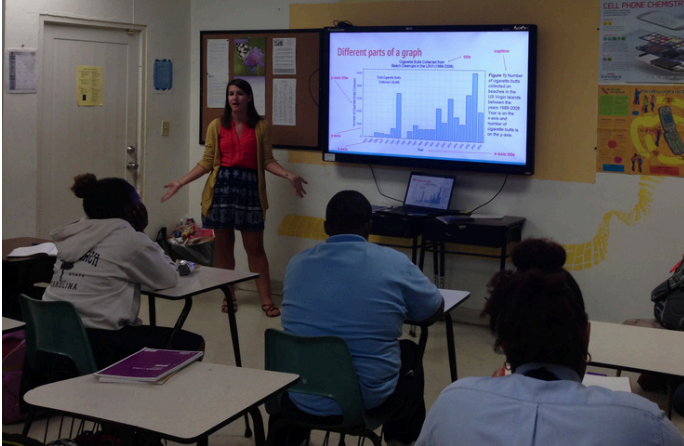
Q: What is your personal connection to the Caribbean?

A: *My first experience in the Caribbean was in 2014 when I traveled to Puerto Rico to assist with benthic data collection as part of NOAA's National Coral Reef Monitoring Program. This occurred during my tenure as a Hollings Scholar, which solidified my research interests in Caribbean coral reef ecosystems. Since then, I have been fortunate to study and enjoy the beauty of the Caribbean's reefs, including those in Bonaire, and both the U.S. and British Virgin Islands. Knowing I wanted to pursue this field, I attended the University of the Virgin Islands and lived on St. Thomas for a year. There, I made friends with fellow graduate students and discovered an amazing community of people. I also met my partner, Jack, in St. Thomas; he was a graduate student at the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez, working at the marine lab in La Parguera. Because we were in a long-distance relationship, I spent significant time exploring Puerto Rico with him and discovered another wonderful community there.*



*Surveying fish communities around outplanted *Acropora cervicornis* in St. Thomas.*

My personal connection with the Caribbean deepened due to the devastating impacts of the 2017 hurricane season. I witnessed the physical devastation to places I once called home and the emotional toll on the communities and friends I had connected with. The experience was profound for me, and since then, my goal has always been to return to work in the Caribbean in some capacity. I feel fortunate to be in my current role, I work to raise awareness and connect people to ensure NOAA provides necessary services for these communities.



Teaching students at Charlotte Amalie High School about how to visualize data. These students were analyzing historical marine debris data from beaches in St. Thomas.

Q: We want to get to know you! What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: I'm an ultramarathon runner!



Running my first ultramarathon in 2022 in north Florida.

Q: What is something you want the NOAA in the Caribbean Community to know?

A: *How much I am looking forward to learning from the Community. My experience is limited to marine science, and I can't wait to listen and learn more from you all on how we can make NOAA in the Caribbean the best it can be. I also appreciate your engagement and contributions!*