

Puerto Rico & USVI



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Overview

In 2010, President Barack Obama issued an Executive Order that established the first-ever national ocean policy, created a National Ocean Council composed of cabinet-level officials, and directed federal agencies to implement [coastal and marine spatial planning \(CMSP\)](#) consistent with the Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force.

In response to this order, the Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership (CROP) was formed in 2012, and is led by the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.

The CROP establishes mechanisms to improve regional collaboration on ocean management in order to reduce user conflicts, improve cohesive regional planning, and support healthy communities and ecosystems for present and future generations. The CROP also plans to address

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cumulative effects from anthropogenic activities to ensure the protection, integrity, maintenance, resilience, and restoration of coastal and ocean Caribbean ecosystems, while promoting multiple uses.

Main objectives of the CROP are:

- Strengthening regional ocean governance mechanisms to improve understanding of coastal and ocean ecosystems
- Defining local and marine use objectives
- Addressing fragmented planning and management of societal uses of coastal ocean lands and waters
- Facilitating the effective management of ocean and coastal resources across jurisdictional boundaries by improving communications, aligning priorities, and enhancing resources sharing
- Promoting collaboration among governments, communities, NGOs, and the private sector of the participating jurisdictions in order to facilitate sustainable marine and coastal uses
- Coordinating with existing regional organizations
- Providing an enhanced voice and point of access with Federal agencies regarding ocean and coastal issues
- Support efforts to harmonize policy, legal, and institutional frameworks among the participating Caribbean jurisdictions including neighboring jurisdictions
- Enlisting and seeking the assistance of non-governmental organizations to provide facilitation and project management services in order to effectively fulfill the intent of this partnership

The CROP will continue identifying marine management priorities that require a coordinated regional response. In order to reduce user conflicts and support healthy communities and ecosystems for present and future generations, the CROP will foster cooperation and increased collaboration between stakeholders. We will work to implement an effective CMSP program in PR and the USVI and promote multiple ocean uses based on sound science and the best available information in the wider Caribbean.

TNC Role

- Advisory
- Science/technical expertise
- Process facilitation

The Nature Conservancy conducted several human use mapping workshops and created a [data portal](#) to used to host all spatial data associated with the planning process. TNC also led the production of outreach materials to disseminate information about the effort.

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Project Partners

Lead Institutions: U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

Project Partners: Puerto Rico Coastal Zone Management Program, US Virgin Islands Coastal Zone Management Program, NOAA

Status

While the planning process has begun, plan completion and implementation is pending additional funding.

Fact Sheets and Links

[Outreach Document](#)

[CROP Website](#)

[CROP Portal](#)

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