



2015

Florida Ocean Perspective



Florida Ocean Alliance

2015 Perspective on Florida's Oceans & Coasts

Annual Dispatch to the Florida Governor & Legislature

"2015 represents a historic moment for Florida as our statewide leaders address the serious challenges facing Florida's fragile and valuable water resources."



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Vision for Florida

Global leadership in responsible ocean and coastal economic development, conservation, scientific research, and technology innovation

Priority Ocean and Coastal Issues for 2015

These high priority ocean and coastal issues influence the state's economy with direct and indirect impacts to Florida's natural resources portfolio, job creation/retention, corporate relocations/growth and quality of life.

- **Coastal Community Hazard Preparedness** to address hazards along Florida's coasts. People, businesses and communities on Florida's coasts are at risk from real-time hazards (hurricanes, storm surge, flooding) and future hazards (sea level rise and climate change). Coastal communities need tools, approaches and technologies that can be used to assess their level of risk from contemporary and future hazards. They need effective strategies to reduce their level of impact and increase their resilience when those hazards come their way. Policy Focus 2015 — This is a pre-eminent issue for attention by the State of Florida, given that nearly 80% of the state's gross domestic product is associated with the at risk low-lying coastal counties and that most of our residents live and work there too.
- **Water quality and nutrient impairments** cause harmful algal and cyanobacteria blooms, loss of fisheries, impacts to tourism and pose potential health threats to both humans and animals. Policy Focus 2015 – Caloosahatchee River, St. Lucie River, Indian River Lagoon, Biscayne Bay. Unnatural variations in freshwater flows and discharges threaten coastal ecosystem productivity, fisheries, aquaculture industry, and agriculture. Innovative approaches and new technologies are needed to address this statewide crisis. Policy Focus 2015 – Apalachicola shellfish industry crisis, Lake Okeechobee water discharges, Indian River Lagoon, St. Johns River.
- **Coastal intelligence** to address global and local threats (including climate change, sea level rise and storm/flooding events). Policy Focus 2015 — Two key tools are critically needed:
 1. Coastal and Ocean Observing System (FL COOS) as a tool to establish a comprehensive and fully integrated network using latest technology sensors to track, monitor and predict ocean and coastal conditions and trends for industry, natural resource managers, public safety and homeland security, and
 2. Marine spatial planning as a tool for growing Florida's ocean economy and preventing conflicts between stakeholders.
- **Long-term impacts from the BP oil spill** pose a continuing threat to Florida's natural resource assets and economy. Policy Focus 2015 – the Gulf of Mexico & its coastal communities.

What can the Florida Governor and Legislature do in 2015 to advance Florida as a global economic leader in ocean and coastal conservation, research and innovative technology development?

Florida Ocean Alliance Recommendations for Action

Recommendation 1:

Direct the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to work with the Florida Ocean Alliance in a public-private partnership to create a comprehensive and strategic ocean and coastal plan for the State of Florida that includes:

- Evaluation of social, environmental and economic risks and opportunities with identification of tools to achieve Florida's long-term strategic goals for global leadership.
- Guidance for a Florida Marine and Coastal Spatial Plan.
- A statewide assessment of coastal vulnerabilities and potential opportunities related to climate change and sea level rise.

Recommendation 2:

Develop a Florida long-term restoration plan for the Gulf of Mexico that focuses on a strategic, science-based approach to maximizing and optimizing funds from the RESTORE Act and Deepwater Horizon oil spill recovery to restore our coastal and natural marine resources.

Recommendation 3:

Direct Enterprise Florida Inc. and Workforce Florida Inc. to work with the Florida Ocean Alliance to identify and better understand the economic scope and value of Florida's ocean and coastal economy, industry clusters, and emerging opportunities for technology development. The Florida Ocean Alliance has identified the following industry sectors as high-value opportunities: water pollution and nutrient remediation technology development, ocean energy, aquaculture, marine and maritime industries (working waterfronts), and coastal flooding remediation.

Recommendation 4:

Look to the Florida Ocean Alliance to serve as the state's leading, non-partisan, science-driven, private- and public-sector partnership that can help the Florida Legislature implement new legislation that will be focused on implementation actions to protect Florida's ocean & coastal assets, support restoration of Florida's waters, and support growth and diversification of Florida's ocean & coastal industries cluster.

Recommendation 5:

Enact statewide policies to ensure that a portion of the annual revenues generated from the voter-approved 2014 Water and Land Constitutional Amendment (Amendment 1) are dedicated annually to projects and activities that protect, conserve, manage or restore Florida's precious coastal lands, natural habitats and near shore estuary and ocean waters.



Vision

Position Florida as a global leader in responsible ocean and coastal economic development, conservation, education, and technology development.

Mission

The Florida Ocean Alliance is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to bringing together the private sector, academia, and nonprofit research organizations in Florida to protect and enhance Florida's coastal and ocean resources for continued social and economic benefits.

What We Do

- Serve as a clearinghouse for information on key ocean and coastal issues facing the state in both the public and private sectors.
- Monitor and publicize actions related to the oceans and coasts.
- Assist private and public sector stakeholders to develop community consensus and common-sense solutions to complex coastal and ocean challenges.
- Promote Florida as a global center of excellence in ocean & coastal conservation, research, technology development and economic development.

How We Do It

- Outreach and educational activities for the public and policy makers.
- Conferences and workshops to identify problems and develop consensus solutions.
- Economic studies and issue papers on ocean and coastal policies, challenges and opportunities.
- Expert, multi-industry sector testimony to national or state agencies and commissions concerned with ocean or coastal policy.

Request More Information

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Past Initiatives of the Florida Ocean Alliance

- Florida Ocean Alliance Annual Perspective on Florida's Oceans and Coasts: A Dispatch to the Florida Governor and Legislature (Inaugural dispatch 2014)
- Sponsor of Florida's Oceans Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee, FL (Held annually since 2001)
- Florida's Oceans and Coasts: An Economic Cluster Analysis (2013)
- Healthy Oceans Generate Jobs for Florida's Economy (2013)
- Florida Ocean Alliance Comments on the National Ocean Policy Draft Implementation Plan, filed with the National Oceans Council, Washington, D.C. (2012)
- Oceans of Opportunity: Managing Future Uses of Florida's Ocean Spaces (2011)
- Oceans Generate Jobs for Florida's Economy: The Case for Ocean Management in Florida (2011)
- Florida's Journey Towards Marine Spatial Planning (2010)
- The Next Step in Ocean Management for Florida (2009)