

Highlights from the Climate Change Resilience Workshop

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Challenges

- To develop viable strategies to protect coral reefs and associated marine resources
- To buy time through local management activities to address global climate change
- To improve the bridging of science to stakeholders, managers and policy makers
- To address the essential human behavioral changes needed to protect coral reefs
- To enhance the ability to accurately predict change and prepare for it
- To communicate urgency, as well as solutions

Purpose of the Workshop

- Review status and challenges of coral reef resilience studies and climate change research in American Samoa and the other jurisdictions that comprise the Task Force.
- Define clear links between reef resilience and the behavior of human communities locally and globally.
- Learn about advances in how to build natural and social resilience into adaptive coral reef management plans.
- Discuss how to apply small-scale successes at a larger scale

Progress

- Research in the natural laboratory of American Samoa on climate change and coral bleaching, coral adaptation, resilience, and reducing and reversing coral bleaching through innovation
- Management-directed research to show cause and effect relationships between specific stressors and coral health (identifying the “smoking guns”) and the effectiveness of mitigation activities
- Integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern science
- Climate Resiliency planning in such as Amouli Village as example for future community planning efforts

Lessons Learned

- Resilience exists at three levels: species, ecosystems and human communities. True resilience requires all three.
- Human leaders and communities can embrace adaptive behaviors
- Solutions need to be economically feasible, culturally acceptable and pragmatic
- Don't re-invent the wheel - incorporate CC adaptation into existing community processes
- CC should be addressed among other threats, not in isolation
- Need for locally relevant outreach materials targeted at traditional / community leaders

Opportunities

- Engage leaders about ways to reduce local stressors on coral reefs.
- Use partnerships among communities, agencies, NGO's, scientists (social and natural sciences).
- Use existing legislation (i.e. Clean Water Act) and funding resources to plan and implement measures to reduce local stress on coral reefs
- Communicating that whatever we do for coral reefs is also good for humanity (Why we do coral reef conservation work)

Next Steps/Recommendations

- Establish sound metrics and evaluation criteria for species, ecosystem and community resilience.
- Communicate climate change as a scientific issue and not just a political issue.
- Strengthen education and outreach programs to identify actions that community members can do.
- Improve communications among local and Federal agencies, stakeholders and policy makers.
- Build strategies and priorities that are flexible to allow for differences in cultural, environmental, or situational issues.

Future Scenarios

