Florida Sea Grant College Program
Strategic Plan 2009-2013

Science Serving Florida's Coast

Florida Sea Grant's Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 reflects the input of hundreds of Floridians representing academia, government, industry and citizens. It addresses issues that are important to Florida, the nation and the world. The plan defines Florida Sea Grant's role and strategies for addressing critical coastal and marine issues in the framework of four programmatic focus areas – *healthy coastal and marine ecosystems*; *sustainable and hazard resilient coastal communities*; *seafood production and safety*; and *climate change: impacts and adaptations*. It also identifies three cross-cutting goals: *provide sound scientific information*; *develop an informed citizenry that understands the value and vulnerability of coastal and marine resources;* and *support a decision making process that involves the full range of coastal interests*. As such, the plan aligns thematically with focus areas and goals set forth in the strategic plan of the National Sea Grant College Program.

The programmatic focus areas and their associated goals and strategies were developed through a year-long process that included an issues survey completed by members of regional advisory committees and Florida residents, and a two-day workshop in Florida attended by more than 80 educators, university and agency scientists, resource managers, extension specialists and representatives from the private sector. This plan considers Sea Grant's future role in Florida in coordination with the Florida Ocean and Coastal Council, the Governor's Action Team on Energy and Climate, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, and the NOAA Gulf of Mexico and Southeast Atlantic Regional Research Plans. Finally, the plan reflects Florida Sea Grant's partnership with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), allowing an integrative consideration of the land-water interface when conducting research, education and extension programs.

Florida Sea Grant's Vision and Mission

Florida Sea Grant envisions a future where people use our coastal and marine resources in ways that capture the economic and recreational benefits they offer, while preserving their quality and abundance for future generations.

Florida Sea Grant's mission is to support integrated research, education, communication and extension to enhance the responsible use and conservation of coastal and marine reuecese to

Program Structure and Approach

Florida Sea Grant operates through a university-based research, education and extension partnership with state and federal agencies, businesses and citizens. This partnership involving university faculty and the public was established nationally in 1966 with the passage of federal legislation that created the National Sea Grant College Program. The US Secretary of Commerce designated the State University System of Florida as a Sea Grant College in 1976 and the program is hosted by the University of Florida (UF). The management team and support staff is housed at UF and the coordination of activities among the 16 universities and laboratories participating in Florida Sea Grant is conducted by means of Campus Coordinators, who are appointed by the presidents of their respective institutions. Extension and communication programs are conducted in cooperation with the UF/IFAS and the Florida Cooperative Extension Service.

The University of Florida is the state's largest and most comprehensive university. It is a major research institution, a member of the American Association of Universities and one of the two federally designated Land Grant universities in Florida. The University of Florida builds on its Land Grant traditions and embraces and embodies the Sea Grant concept and program. The University of Florida is statewide and reaches into all 67 counties of Florida with extension offices, and with additional UF/IFAS Research and Education Centers in many counties. Florida Sea Grant builds on this network in the 35 coastal counties and expands it beyond the state's borders and even into international arenas.

This setting gives Florida Sea Grant strong state and local foundations and ensures its ability to seek additional resources at the national, state and university levels. The use of existing management infrastructure enhances the program's cost effectiveness.

Today 32 Sea Grant Programs, based within the academic structures of their states, together form the national program. The Florida Sea Grant College Program focuses on marine and coastal issues with research, education and extension activities. Research is funded on a state-wide competitive basis and is conducted by faculty at Florida's academic institutions. Education programs focus on supporting graduate students using both public and private funds. An organized extension program, with on-campus specialists and off-campus marine extension faculty around the coast of Florida, provide research results in a format that citizens and private businesses can use. The extensive network of local extension faculty also identifies new research, education and outreach needs from stakeholders. No other academic program or university has this breadth and depth of focus on state-wide marine and coastal issues.

Using research, education and extension to address complex coastal and marine issues and societal needs requires a strategic approach and tailored tools and techniques designed to solve specific problems. One problem may require a substantial research effort while another may need the transfer of existing information through education and outreach. The solution to other problems may require

networking with agencies, industries or communities to bring people together in a common activity. Florida Sea Grant has a demonstrated track record of success in designing the best possible approach to resolving the issues that arise when a growing human population interacts with the state's coastal environment. This plan builds on that track record and with the input of program partners and stakeholders provides strategic approaches for targeting the scope of services that Florida Sea Grant can bring to bear on critical issues.

Core Values

Every Florida Sea Grant activity must be based on a strong rationale, demonstrate scientific or educational merit and produce results that are clearly useful to citizens and applicable in industry, management or science. Six core values allow Florida Sea Grant to deliver results based on these criteria.

Excellence. Research is funded on a competitive basis, with scientific merit as a major criterion. Extension programs are based on reviewed faculty plans of work. Communication efforts use the latest technology and appropriate methods to achieve maximum output, visibility and citizen receipt of science-based information generated by researchers and extension specialists.

Relevance. Research, extension and education activities are aligned with goals and strategic priorities identified in consultation with our program partners and stakeholders in Florida and with priorities of the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program.

Participation. High value is placed on the involvement of stakeholders, industries, citizens and a large number of participating institutions in research, education and extension. Graduate students are actively engaged in research funded by Florida Sea Grant, and a diverse male and female faculty is involved, from assistant to full professors.

Accountability. External and internal processes are used to measure program accomplishments. These include identifying the contribution to society of scientific discoveries, measuring how citizens respond to education and outreach programs with increased knowledge or through changes in behavior, and determining the economic impact resulting from Sea Grant supported projects.

Connection with Users. A strong advisory process is used to guide overall program direction, to plan extension programs, and to gauge program impacts. It also is used to build public and private support for Florida Sea Grant.

Partnerships. Faculty, students and citizens all benefit when working in partnership mode. Scientific results and education projects reach greater levels of success when they are implemented with

partners, from agencies to businesses. Greater emphasis is placed on creating public-private and agency partnerships under this new strategic plan.

Florida's Coastal Wealth

For Florida's 18 million residents and nearly 80 million annual visitors, the coast and its resources are a major attraction and a vital part of their environment. Nowhere in the United States are so many people in such close proximity to such an extensive and economically valuable coastline. Florida's population in the "coastal corridor," the 35 counties that touch the ocean, is over 14 million and expected to grow to 23 million by 2025. The coastal corridor is responsible for 79 percent of the state's economic output, jobs and value-added income. The state's annual ocean-related economy is estimated at $25 billion dollars and its shoreline coastal economy exceeds $550 billion. A visit to Florida's coast reveals incomparable natural beauty. It also reveals a set of resources for which intense competition exists. Recreational and commercial fisheries, recreational beach activities, boating, marinas, marine industries, unique ecosystems, productive wetlands, urban and rural development and the amenity-based economic and social lives of our coastal communities all are combined to place Florida's coastal development and resource protection in a fragile balance. Working together, all Floridians must find a socially acceptable way to satisfy the demand for the coastal and marine resources while also ensuring their sustainability.

Forces of Change

Increasing populations along the coast, increasing dependence on coastal waters for food, employment and recreation, and a host of other socio-economic changes make Florida Sea Grant's role in advancing the understanding and sustainable use of coastal resources more critical. Looking ahead, population increases will continue to tax the efforts of coastal planners and community leaders. Hurricanes and other natural disasters will continue to impact our natural and built coastal environment, and climate-related changes including sea level rise will create long-term stress requiring purposeful and strategic adaptations. Florida Sea Grant, with its partner institutions, will continue to be a leader in addressing the anticipated economic and environmental impacts on the coastal and marine environment through science-based research, education and extension.

Responding with Research and Education

Through "Science Serving Florida's Coast" Florida Sea Grant responds to the forces of change to help Florida provide economic leadership, sustain the quality of its coastal and marine ecosystems, and develop its human resources in order to create a sustainable economy and environment.

The pressures, wants, needs and dollars represented by the huge number of people who use Florida's coastal resources all combine to make understanding and managing one of the most fragile environments on earth a difficult and often controversial undertaking. Florida Sea Grant has a vital role to fill in this complex endeavor. Through Sea Grant research efforts, the transfer of information via the Sea Grant Extension Program, and the outreach provided by Sea Grant communication and education efforts, Floridians and tourists can better understand the state's unique environment and what they can do to become more effective stewards. Sea Grant programming is intended to help meet the critical

challenge to rationally manage continued growth in the coastal zone and equitably address the ever increasing demand and competition for coastal resources. Florida Sea Grant has assumed a leadership role in the creation of a better informed public that recognizes the need for actions to ensure that Florida continues to be of the nation's best places to live.

The forces of change and their impacts to our coasts and economies compel Florida Sea Grant to:

- strengthen its position as Florida's primary state-wide university research, education and extension program in support of coastal use and sustainable management

- assume a leadership role in helping Florida address critical issues including the responsible management and protection of coastal ecosystems, the preservation of public access to ocean and coastal waters, the protection of seafood availability and safety, development of sustainable and hazard-resilient coastal communities and economies, and the widespread understanding of climate-related changes and necessary societal adaptations

- provide a federal-state-local network that integrates research, education and extension to create practical solutions to real problems that strengthen Florida's capacity to deal with the most critical coastal and marine issues

- increase the coordination of resources brought to bear on coastal issues over the next decade through strategic partnerships of Florida Sea Grant with agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector

Programmatic Focus Areas

Florida Sea Grant will direct its resources in four focus areas in order to address the most critical issues affecting Florida's coastal environment and economies, and to align with National Sea Grant strategic planning initiatives. Strategies identified within the four focus areas address goals that were determined to be most important by Florida's faculty, its government agencies, its industries and its citizens.

Healthy Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

Healthy ecosystems are the foundation for the quality of life and economy of Florida's coastal communities. Ecosystem health and sustainability will determine the future of the state's recreational and commercial fisheries, recreational boating and diving, beach-related recreation, tourism, nature observation and a myriad of other natural and societal values. However, increasingly rapid coastal development, overfishing, and other human activities are leading to congestion, water quality degradation, declines in fish stocks, shoreline erosion and loss of critical habitat – thereby threatening the sustainability of the coast and ultimately the quality of life of Florida citizens. Florida Sea Grant will play a leadership role in providing the science, education and outreach needed to address these critical issues. Given the magnitude, complexity and interconnectedness of issues, this will require an increased emphasis on developing multi-institutional partnerships, working more closely with resource

management agencies to identify priorities, helping local governments make sound land use decisions to ensure compatibility with coastal, estuarine and marine resources, bringing together experts and resource managers to identify state-of-science and information and technology needs, and support innovative cross-generational approaches to education, outreach and decision making.

VISION: *Informed decisions by individuals, governments and organizations that result in sustainable and resilient coastal and marine ecosystems with diverse native biota and a wide range of benefits to society.*

GOAL: Education systems that impart widespread acceptance of the values of healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and foster actions by the public to sustain them.

Strategies:

- Advance coastal and ocean literacy and stewardship through formal and informal learning opportunities using innovative new technologies and methods that effectively support learning across generations and cultures.

- Support the development and promulgation of measurable indicators of ecosystem health so that the public becomes increasingly aware of both critical issues and improving trends that may occur in response to increased coastal and marine stewardship.

- Provide effective outreach and training programs that foster behaviors that sustain coastal, estuarine and marine ecosystems.

GOAL: Sound science supports ecosystem-based coastal and marine management.

Strategies:

- Support research that quantifies how marine fish and other biota are affected by recreational fishing, fisheries management options, or by other man-made or natural changes to critical habitat, food resources or predation risk across their life cycles.

- Support the development and evaluation of effectiveness of models, policies and technologies to support ecosystem-based adaptive management of fisheries and other marine resources. Inter-disciplinary work that links biology with other disciplines including socioeconomics will be particularly supported.

- Support the development of methods and standards that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of ecosystem-based management approaches and guide future actions to comprehensively manage coastal and marine resources.

GOAL: Restored diversity, function and productivity of coastal and marine ecosystems.

Strategies:

- Support the development of science-based best management practices, approaches and technologies that will protect, restore and enhance coastal, estuarine and marine water quality, habitats and food webs.

- Support the development and/or evaluation of methods to promote behavioral changes

- Support decision processes and forums to build on multi-agency and public consensus regarding community resiliency, economic vitality, coastal resource stewardship and ecosystem-based management.

- Increase coastal science and policy literacy through formal and informal communication and teaching/learning opportunities.

- Develop educational programs and information for elected officials regarding how land use and waterway management decisions may affect sustainability of coastal and marine resources.

GOAL: Products and policies support the sustainable use of coastal land and water resources.

Strategies:

- Support the development of uniform, science-based information, public engagement processes, planning guidelines and policies to ensure safe and sustainable public and commercial use of and access to waterfronts and waterways.

- Support outreach programs that result in the increased use of products and applications that increase energy efficiency and water conservation by coastal communities.

GOAL: Increased community resiliency to natural and human-induced hazards.

Strategies:

- Work with coastal communities and marine enterprises to identify methods for increasing their resistance and resilience through natural and artificial means.

- Support improved prediction of the impacts of storms, community planning for and response to storms and development of building products and construction standards that minimize impacts of storms on coastal communities and marine enterprises.

- Support education and outreach programs that increase the availability and usefulness of hazard-related information and forecasting for citizens, industries and decision-makers in coastal communities, across generations and cultures.

- Use Sea Grant's local knowledge and contacts to help local and state agencies and governments prepare for and respond to natural coastal hazards.

Seafood Production and Safety

The rising demand for fish and rapidly increasing recreational fishing activity have increased the pressure on Florida's limited fishery resources, resulting in adverse impacts on fish populations and user groups, and a need for more effective fisheries management. This requires a more complete knowledge about the biological, economic and social dynamics among fishers, consumers and resource managers,

as well as a better assessment of fish abundance, health and habitat quality. New and innovative ways are needed to identify and maintain critical habitats, manage resources and evaluate effects of management decisions on fisheries and user groups. Aquaculture may create new opportunities to meet the rising demand for seafood however a number of issues must first be addressed for this potential to be realized. Florida's tropical waters, high production, and huge imported fish market create significant and recurring issues about aquatic food product safety and quality, an area where Florida Sea Grant has been a national leader for many years. Taken together, these challenges will require an integrative approach where Sea Grant specialists work closely with regulatory agencies and the seafood industry to ensure the sustainability, safety, diversity and quality of Florida seafood products.

VISION: *A sustainable and vibrant domestic seafood industry that harvests, produces, imports, processes, markets and serves seafood and aquaculture products in a manner that is consistent with regulatory and consumer expectations for safe, healthy and sustainable choices.*

GOAL: Seafood supply is maximized through sustainable fishing and angling practices, by maintaining and enhancing high quality fish habitat, and through the further development of aquaculture.

Strategies:

- Develop methods and technologies for sustainable aquaculture including: diversification of candidate species, maximizing energy efficiency and water conservation, minimizing environmental impacts, optimizing aquatic animal health, and developing value-added products.

- Support the development of information, technologies or social marketing methods required to support sustainable harvesting of fish and other marine organisms.

GOAL: The economic viability and sustainability of the domestic seafood industry is enhanced.

Strategies:

- Support the development and implementation of innovative methods for safe seafood processing, packaging and by-catch reduction.

- Support the development and implementation of innovative methods for by-product use from commercial fisheries, fish processing facilities and aquaculture operations, and identify & comprehensively evaluate opportunities for developing value-added products.

- Identify ways to increase production, energy efficiency, public demand and value of fish and shellfish products and develop protocols for grower / harvester access to direct seafood markets.

GOAL: Seafood is consistently safe and consumers understand both the health benefits and how to evaluate the safety of products they buy.

Strategies:

- Develop a highly informed seafood workforce that can build public awareness of differences in quality, safety, sustainability and nutritional benefits of different seafood products so that consumers can make informed choices.

- Increase public understanding of aquaculture by providing factual information about product quality, environmental issues, product safety and health benefits, across generations and cultures.

- Support research and outreach with state and federal agencies and private sectors to develop methods for the rapid evaluation of seafood product source and quality.

Climate Change: Impacts and Adaptations

Florida is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its low topography, concentration of residents and infrastructure along the coast, and strong dependence on coastal and marine ecosystems to support its economy. Climate-associated changes, including sea level rise, increased ocean temperatures, altered rainfall and storm dynamics, and ocean acidification are expected to have impacts that span all of the coastal and marine sectors of the state. In the marine ecosystem, the distribution of native and exotic species may change with increased water temperature, as may the prevalence of disease in keystone animals such as corals and the occurrence and intensity of toxic algae blooms. The viability of Florida's shellfish industry may be threatened, and coastal communities that were designed to resist storm surges based on historical information may be at considerable risk should relative sea level rise 1 or 2 feet during the service life of infrastructure. To some extent, these impacts may be mitigated through reductions in atmospheric CO_2, but there is strong evidence that changes will occur and that coastal communities will need to adapt. Florida Sea Grant will play a lead role in supporting the necessary research, education and outreach to create a citizenry that is informed about climate effects and that collectively takes strategic, reasoned and effective actions to minimize impacts. Likewise, Sea Grant will partner with communities and agencies to accurately project risks and develop adaptations that will allow sustainable coastal living in the context of changing climate and ocean environments.

VISION: *Widespread understanding of the processes of climate change and its effects on coastal natural and human-built communities, and use of effective strategies for adapting to change.*

GOAL: **A robust program of research, education and outreach that supports effective decision-making and public behavior change related to climate.**

Strategies:

- Partner with state and federal agencies to support coastal mapping, sea level monitoring and modeling at spatial and temporal scales that are relevant for planning decisions, and considers environmental, social and economic attributes.

- Support an increased understanding of how man-made physical alterations, including seawalls, dredging and ground water depletion, may interact with sea level rise to affect coastal ecosystems and the services they provide to society.

- Engage scientists and resource managers in prioritizing the additional research, education and outreach that is needed to address linkages between human actions, ecosystems and climate-related changes along the Florida coast.

GOAL: Citizens are prepared for and effectively respond to climate change.

Strategies:

- Develop education and outreach programs to improve knowledge about climate change across generations and cultures, and facilitate the transfer of knowledge from scientists to extension agents, resource managers, planners and decision makers.

- Engage communities in the development of policies and actions to adapt to climate change, using science-based information and outreach to support improved understanding and responsible allocation of resources in an effective manner and priority.

GOAL: Governments incorporate climate change effects into decisions and policies.

Strategies:

- Work with state and federal agencies to incorporate climate change and future coastal development scenarios into coastal hazards mapping.

- Work with coastal communities to identify and evaluate a suite of policy options for adapting to climate change and sea level rise, clearly identifying the benefits of considering climate change in coastal planning as well as costs of strategic retreat performed now vs. in the future.

- Provide risk information and analysis to policy makers, regarding how current decisions about the natural and built coastal environment may be affected later by sea level rise.

Cross-Cutting Goals

During the development of strategies associated with the programmatic goals, three cross-cutting issues consistently arose – a need for research that provides resource managers, decision makers, citizens and industry with objective scientific information; a need for education and outreach programs that result in an informed citizenry that takes actions consistent with environmental and economic sustainability; and support for an effective decision making process, particularly at the community level. These same cross-cutting issues were identified in the 2009-2013 strategic plan of National Sea Grant, and are presented here as cross-cutting goals of the Florida Sea Grant College Program.

Florida Sea Grant has a long history of supporting cutting-edge science and technology to better understand and sustain the state's ocean and coastal resources. The program will continue to support research that generates the scientific, technical, legal and socio-political information that is needed to protect coastal and ocean resources, to foster the development of new businesses, products, tools and technologies, and to answer the most pressing questions about use and sustainability of coastal resources.

GOAL: Sound scientific information to advance understanding of the nature and value of coastal and marine resources, to identify new ways to conserve and use the resources, and to support and evaluate the environmental impacts and socio-economic trade-offs involved in coastal decision-making.

Strategies:

- Support research to produce the scientific, technical and legal information and the new tools and technologies needed to increase understanding of coastal and marine processes.

- Enhance the amount of socio-economic research available to help decision-makers evaluate trade-offs and assess risks to the future health and productivity of coastal and marine resources.

- Integrate, translate and disseminate research findings and technological discoveries to resource managers, decision-makers, citizens and industry who need the information to capitalize on opportunities and make wise management decisions.

Restoring and sustaining our marine and coastal resources will require not only sound science, but also an informed and engaged citizenry. Florida Sea Grant must play a lead role in developing a cadre of scientists, planners, developers, engineers and people involved in water-related enterprises who

understand the interactions between human activities and ecosystem health, and who will take actions that are consistent with long-sustainability.

GOAL: An informed and engaged public that understands the value and vulnerability of coastal and marine resources, that demands informed science-based decisions about the conservation, use and management of those resources, and a well-trained workforce that will make this a reality.

Strategies:

- Advance coastal and marine literacy across generations and cultures through formal and informal learning opportunities in our schools, museums, aquariums and other educational forums, including web-based and interactive media that will engage all generations.

- Use Florida Sea Grant's strong university partnerships to create new education opportunities in coastal and marine science for graduate and undergraduate students and develop information products and training opportunities that will help build the workforce capacity for coastal-related jobs and professions.

- Collaborate with state and federal agencies and other partners to build public awareness about critical coastal and marine issues, using the integrated research, education, extension and communication capacities of the Sea Grant network.

Florida Sea Grant also will play a lead role as an honest broker for decision making related to complex coastal and marine issues, based on best available science. There is considerable conflict among the various sectors that depend on Florida's coasts, and decision making is highly fragmented. Sea Grant's long-standing relationship with a wide variety of stakeholders and its reputation as a source of unbiased information will enable it to play a leadership role in promoting effective information sharing, consensus building and integration of efforts in the coastal arena. The following strategies will be followed in order to accomplish this goal.

GOAL: Decision-making processes that involve the full range of coastal interests, integrate efforts of public and private partners at regional, state and local levels, and provide mechanisms for establishing a common understanding and outcomes that balance multiple interests.

Strategies:

- Use Sea Grant's research, education and extension capabilities to encourage and support the creation of public decision making processes that minimize overlap, maximize effectiveness, and provide an integrated response to coastal problems and opportunities.

- Build consensus on such complex issues as coastal land use, energy development, public access and climate change impacts by supporting cutting-edge research, building broader understanding among various constituency groups and convening diverse groups of stakeholders to work together to find common solutions.

- Strengthen partnerships to promote regional, state and issue-related collaboration among government programs and other partners in order to support more effective and integrated coastal decision making.

Strategic Program Management

Florida Sea Grant has a history of wisely using its financial and personnel resources to provide cutting edge scientific information, innovative and effective education, communication and outreach programs to address critical issues affecting Florida's coast. Now more than ever, with scarce financial resources, strategic program management is required to identify novel ways to tackle the diverse, interconnected and complex issues identified in this plan. Continuing to aggressively address coastal and marine issues is critical for sustainability of the Florida coastal environment and economy. With such an intimate linkage between its residents, economy and coastal resources, and with the pressing need for practical solutions to problems faced by coastal communities around the world, Florida has the opportunity to be a model of success that can be applied world-wide.

Strategies:

- Florida Sea Grant will identify and implement partnership agreements with state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations aimed at cooperatively addressing common mission elements of the respective programs.

- As examples, the missions of Sea Grant, NOAA Coastal Services Centers and NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserves may be facilitated by development of specific partnership agreements related to jointly sponsored research, education and/or outreach.

- Public-private partnerships also will be pursued to accomplish research, education and outreach to foster sustainable operations and create growth opportunities for particular coastal and marine sectors.

- Florida Sea Grant will identify and pursue opportunities to coordinate inter-institutional responses to requests for proposals from state, federal and private funding sources where it is clear that this approach can effectively address pressing coastal and / or marine issues.

- A coordinated program will be implemented with guidance from the Advisory Council and in cooperation with the University of Florida Foundation to establish an increased endowment base for Florida Sea Grant, to provide the program with additional resources needed to address its mission.

- Florida Sea Grant will continue to support professional development opportunities for its marine extension faculty.

- A process will be developed whereby input from the various marine extension agent advisory councils can be provided on a regular basis to the Director, for ongoing consideration as program activities are implemented and adjusted over the next four years to best meet the needs of coastal resources and communities.

- A set of state-wide education and extension programs will be developed focused on strategies identified in this plan. These may include, for example, programs that provide citizens with objective information on how coastal environments and economies are expected to be affected by climate change, information regarding actions that citizens can take to mitigate societal impacts to coastal and marine ecosystems, and information on safe and healthy seafood choices.

- Florida Sea Grant will remain actively involved with regional councils and programs including the Florida Oceans and Coastal Council, Florida Oceans Alliance, Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Gulf of Mexico and Southeast Atlantic Regional Research Plans, and the Coastal Ocean Observing System (Gulf, SE Atlantic and Florida) to maximize opportunities for coordinated research, education and outreach activities.

Making it Happen

In the upcoming year, Florida Sea Grant will develop a program Implementation Plan that describes the specific research, education, communication and extension/outreach actions that will be taken in order to advance the strategies identified in this Strategic Plan. The Implementation Plan will be developed with further input from members of the Florida Sea Grant network and our partners, and will include a retreat with our marine extension agents and specialists, to identify how ongoing regional and local programs align with the new Strategic Plan and to begin to develop state-wide initiatives to address new program areas where there currently is not a focus – e.g., climate change. A meeting of the Florida Sea Grant Advisory Council also will be held in early spring in order to obtain input from our stakeholders and partners regarding building stronger partnerships, proposed implementation plans, anticipated outcomes and impacts, and measures of program success. The Advisory Council also will work closely with the Director in the upcoming year to garner the additional resources required by the program to meet the ambitious goals and objectives of this plan.

Florida Sea Grant will revisit this plan and its priorities often to ensure that the organization is maintaining focus, staying alert to new trends and opportunities, and moving towards its strategic goals. This coordinated strategic planning and implementation process will allow Florida Sea Grant to play a lead role in responding to urgent challenges facing the ocean and coastal resources.

Web-Based Appendices

The following items can be found at: http://www.flseagrant.org/about_us/strategic/index.htm

I. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis
II. Four year planning cycle
III. Stakeholder survey and report