



Governors' South Atlantic Alliance Priority Issues

- **Healthy Ecosystems**
- **Working Waterfronts**
- **Clean Coastal and Ocean Waters**
- **Disaster-Resilient Communities**

Background

Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina share a rich array of ocean and coastal resources that provide economic, environmental and social benefits for the citizens of each state. Recognizing the critical importance of protecting these valuable resources, the Governors of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida signed a Partnership Agreement in May 2009 establishing the Governors' South Atlantic Alliance. The mission of the Alliance is to significantly increase regional collaboration among the four states, with support from federal agencies, universities, regional organizations, NGOs, private businesses and the public as partners, to sustain and enhance the region's coastal and ocean resources for the betterment of its citizenry. The initial focus areas addressed by the Alliance are:

Healthy Ecosystems

The South Atlantic supports a diverse array of coastal and marine environments vital to the ecological and economic stability and sustainability of the Southeast. The Alliance will undertake activities to:

- enhance and support ecosystem-based management for the biological resources of the region;
- improve ecosystem structure and function by developing and applying sound scientific data to support habitat conservation, enhancement, and restoration;
- increase understanding of the scope and scale of the region's human and natural resources; and
- develop communication networks, research frameworks, and outreach/education initiatives.

Working Waterfronts

Working waterfronts include water-dependent facilities and related shore-side infrastructure offering access or support for a wide variety of public, business, recreation, and commercial uses. Challenges facing waterfront users include declining water quality, loss of public access and traditional uses, population growth, and threats from climate change. The Alliance will undertake activities to:

- sustain and enhance robust waterfront cultural traditions, commerce, and uses of public trust; and
- integrate coastal and land use planning tools to balance new development, historic uses, port expansion, and sustained resources for the future.

Clean Coastal and Ocean Waters

Significant impacts to water quality and coastal ecosystem health are predicted as a result of population growth and land use change, increasing urbanization, point and non-point source pollution, and climate change. The Alliance will undertake activities to:

- enable coastal managers and decision-makers to predict, prevent, enforce, respond, and mitigate ecosystem and human health impacts; and
- provide consistent data through integrated coastal and ocean observing and monitoring system.

Disaster-Resilient Communities

Both episodic (e.g., hurricanes) and chronic (e.g., sea level rise) impacts from weather and climate change are major concerns. These phenomena threaten public safety, property, and infrastructure in coastal and watershed communities, as well as multi-billion dollar tourism and fishing industries. The Alliance will undertake activities to:

- enhance understanding of ocean and weather dynamics, including short-term coastal hazards and long-term climate change; and
- share best practices to minimize losses and accelerate recovery, while implementing new and more effective coastal and land use strategies to minimize future risk.

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