

Title:

S-103: Incorporate existing, and adaptively integrate, Best Management Practices into project design and construction practices to avoid and minimize impacts to coral reefs from coastal construction projects.

Background:

- This recommended management action relates to coral reefs, seagrass, and all near shore and benthic ecosystems in the entire state of Florida.
- This recommended management action is being put forth because contractors have Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are not, but could be, enforced by state permits. Previous and future best management practice lists generated by the state could be incorporated into permit documents, including turbidity issues and technology improvements. At present there is limited, formal guidance for the delineation of best management practices to inform the regulatory process. This recommended management action would prepare a document that would provide such guidance.

Objective:

- The intended outcome of this action is to reduce and eliminate impacts to coral and hardbottom communities and provide more relevant and consistent best practices within the regulatory process. This recommendation focuses on the construction phase of a project and how the contractor performing the work is operating. The output is best management practices incorporated into permit conditions in order to minimize impacts from coastal construction projects.
- BMPs have been created (see Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative's (SEFCRI) Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impact (MICCI) Project 6), however, they need to be updated and actually required in the permits to be enforceable. There is a need to either reference the entire document in the permit general conditions, or get each respective regulatory agency to do a legal review of each specific best management practice to ensure that it is enforceable by the respective agency, which ultimately would allow them to include the approved BMPs in the special permit conditions.
- This recommendation is to produce a summary document of potentially applicable best management practices for consideration for guidance and possible inclusion within permits. It is acknowledged that the previous MICCI Project 6 will serve as a starting point for this recommendation. Conceivably, the Project 6 document would be reviewed and updated through this action as well.
- This action will work towards minimizing and eliminating impacts such as burials, habitat removal, cable drags, and excessive siltation and turbidity on coral reefs from projects such as beach renourishment and port expansion. It will also address actions to prevent impacts from fuel spills, poor ingress/egress routes, improper discharge of materials, ensure the least impactful equipment is used, that berms are constructed appropriately, and material is deposited appropriately.

Intended Benefits and/or Potential Adverse Effects:

- Benefits of implementation of this recommended management action include healthier reefs and clearer water during construction. BMPs would eliminate burials, minimize impacts from coastal construction, increase water quality and maintain the ecological

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function of the resource, as well as clarifying expectations for the contractor.

- Some possible issues that may arise with implementation of this recommended management action include the increased staff time and additional enforcement needed, which may result in additional cost, and there may be project timelines that need to be extended.
- If this recommended management action is not implemented there will be an inability to require or enforce actions listed in SEFCRI's MICCI Project 6, which could result in an increased likelihood of damage to coastal resources.

Agencies/ Organizations:

- The lead agencies for implementation of this recommended management action would be the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- Other organizations or key stakeholders who could be involved include project sponsors, divers, beachgoers, the tourism industry, and marine contractors.
- The legislative considerations to take into account include possible rule change at the state level, but, if this were to become a guidance document, it would be consistent with current regulation and no action would be required.

Permitting/ Enforcement Requirements of MA:

- There are no permitting or enforcement requirements for this recommended management action.
- A measurable way to show success with this recommended management action is through a reduced number of incidents during construction and/or reduced impacts to resources; although it is not certain how to show a reduced impact to resources when current impacts to resources are not fully documented.
- Documenting the recommendations from SEFCRI's MICCI Project 6 and Project 4 that are incorporated into permits moving forward may be a way of capturing milestones. Ultimately, if there were a policy put forward by the FDEP to use the Project 6 and Project 4 documents as a guide book, this would also be classified as a milestone.

Cost:

- The estimated direct cost of implementing this recommended management could be \$20,000 to \$250,000, depending on the need to hire a contractor or use current staff to guide this process. This would be a discrete one-time effort to implement the action.
- Documents already exist that capture much of what this recommended action hopes to achieve. Implementation is largely an issue of staff/resources and time.
- No funding sources have been identified.

Time Frame & Extent:

- The anticipated timeframe for implementation of this recommended management action is 1 - 2 years.

Miscellaneous Info:

- This recommended management action is linked to S-101, since the best practices that would be incorporated into the permits could be reviewed in a certification course for

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contractors or projects.

- An uncertainty or information gap with this recommended management action is that it is hard to document and delineate impacts that result directly from coastal construction projects, given the large size of the offshore area, and often there are too many unknowns to make definitive connections. Better oversight coupled with an improved understanding of the offshore environment would help to lessen the uncertainty.
- Supporting and relevant data includes the following documents:
 - http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/reports/MICCI/04/MICCI_04_2_1_23_24_Phase_2_Report.pdf
 - http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/reports/MICCI/MICCI_6_BMP_Manual.pdf
- Currently these best management practices exist but there is no initiative to formalize them. The FDEP and the USACE are already incorporating certain best management practices in the current permits, but the effort is not consistent.

Goals/ Objectives to be achieved:

Refer to the [SEFCRI Coral Reef Management Goals and Objectives Reference Guide](#)

- FL Priorities Goal C4 Obj. 4.
- SEFCRI LAS MICCI Conservation Goal C / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 1 Goal / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 1 Goal Obj. 1 / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 1 Goal Obj. 2 / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 2 Goal / SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 4 Goal.