



Southeast Florida Regional Climate Compact: *Building Capacity for Implementation*

Key Issues

Southeast Florida, home to the eighth-largest metropolitan population in the U.S., is especially vulnerable to climate change. High-density coastal development, which dominates the state's modern landscape, sits atop a very flat, low-elevation, porous, limestone foundation. This low-lying topography makes Florida's built environment, people, and economy particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels through larger and more powerful storm surges, decreased capacity of gravity-fed stormwater drainage, and saltwater infiltration of the region's drinking-water aquifers. In fact, **nearly 40% of U.S. sea level rise risk is in Florida**. These issues represent an urgent need to implement a comprehensive climate strategy to **manage and reduce climate risks in the state**.

The Challenges:

- Sea level rise 10 – 17 inches by 2030, 21- 40 inches by 2070 (above 2000 sea level)
- Saltwater infiltration of drinking water supplies
- Vulnerable coastal areas & ecosystems
- Population growth & expanding development
- Multiple jurisdictions & lack of cohesion (109 cities & towns in the 4 counties, 2 tribal governments)



The Solution



"Five years ago, local leaders down here, Republicans and Democrats, formed the bipartisan Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact – an agreement to work together to fight climate change. And it's become a model not just for the country, but for the world."

– President Obama, The Everglades, Florida.
April 22, 2015



Project Overview



Areas of Impact

- Intergovernmental coordination
- Regional climate plans
- Climate adaptation & mitigation
- Resilience

Compact Objectives

- Speak with a regional voice on state and federal policy
- Develop and implement a Regional Climate Action Plan
- Meet annually in Regional Climate Leadership Summits

COMPACT COUNTIES

- Broward
- Miami-Dade
- Monroe
- Palm Beach

PARTNERS

- Tribal Governments
- Municipalities
- South Florida Water Management District
- The Nature Conservancy – Florida Chapter
- South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils
- Florida Climate Institute
- Regional Business Leadership Organizations



Southeast Florida Regional Climate Compact

Project Overview

- In 2009, government leaders from Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties came together to form the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. The Compact represents a groundbreaking regional effort to foster sustainability and climate resilience at the regional scale.
- The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) has helped advance the Compact from the planning stage to actual policy implementation – integrating climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, highlighting the importance of addressing natural and built systems holistically, and supporting the work across adjacent jurisdictions, using adaptive management principles to guide the process.
- ISC provides the Compact with direct technical assistance and capacity-building workshops, and supports implementation of its projects by identifying and forging new partnerships, leveraging additional resources and building the social capital needed to institutionalize the Compact for the long term.

Climate Compact Impact

- **Development and implementation of the Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP).** The RCAP, developed with input from community stakeholders and experts, creates a regionally coordinated framework of 142 actions to advance climate adaptation and mitigation by identifying/prioritizing vulnerabilities, actions, and policies.
- **Advancement of key policy initiatives at the state and federal level.** The Compact annually develops a joint policy platform to ensure a unified voice on regional climate and energy issues. As a result, lawmakers have passed measures such as Florida's Adaptation Action Area (AAA) designation, which streamlines funding and technical assistance for areas uniquely vulnerable to climate impacts.
- **Development of regional guidance tools.** The Compact produces region-specific unified planning tools and guidance, such as its regional sea level rise projections or its greenhouse gas inventory. These tools serve as central resources, which local entities can reference to develop interoperable plans and policies.
- **Capacity building and knowledge development of local government staff.** The Compact develops and hosts a series of workshops throughout the region, procuring national and local experts to help build the knowledge base and capacity of local government and other critical stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the Regional Climate Action Plan.
- **Making the Business Case for Resilience in Southeast Florida.** The Compact Counties, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and regional business leadership and philanthropic organizations jointly funded a study by the Urban Land Institute assessing the business case for resilience investments in southeast Florida in 2020. The analysis showed a positive return on both community-wide and building-level investments.
- **Convening the annual Climate Leadership Summit.** The Summit is a regional event, attracting upwards of 700 local and national thinkers and leaders from across the government, business, academic, and nonprofit sectors to share state-of-the-art knowledge and build the region's community-of-practice on climate action.



About ISC

Since 1991, the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) has led more than 115 transformative community-driven sustainability projects in 30 countries including the United States, China, India, and Bangladesh. ISC helps unleash the existing power of local people and institutions to address immediate social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities – all while building those on-the-ground solutions into national and international best practices and policy.

Learn more at sustain.org

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