



NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Region Science, Service, and Stewardship

From the Carolinas to the Florida Keys and the U.S. Caribbean, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is working with partners and communities to address both national priorities and the critical challenges that define this region.



NOAA Priorities Addressing Regional Issues

Building a Climate Ready Nation

NOAA plays a critical role in providing localized climate data and services. For the Southeast and Caribbean, this includes enhancing resilience against climate impacts like hurricanes, sea level rise, and changing weather patterns. NOAA collaborates with state and local agencies to improve climate adaptation strategies, ensuring communities have access to the best available information to prepare for and respond to climate challenges.

Integrating Equity

NOAA is committed to addressing disparities in climate resilience across underserved and vulnerable communities in the Southeast and Caribbean. This includes working with historically underserved populations to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. NOAA's initiatives focus on making climate data and resources accessible, promoting community engagement, and building partnerships to strengthen equity in climate response efforts.

Promoting Economic Development

The Southeast and Caribbean regions are vital for the New Blue Economy, with rich marine resources and coastal ecosystems. NOAA supports sustainable fisheries, tourism, and coastal restoration projects that promote economic growth while protecting environmental health. Efforts include working with local stakeholders to develop sustainable practices that balance economic needs with conservation goals and ensuring long-term viability for communities dependent on ocean and coastal resources.

Improving Services Regionally through Collaboration

NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team

To improve NOAA's responsiveness to challenges in this region, the **NOAA Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team (SECART)** fosters collaboration internally and with partners to improve delivery of NOAA products and services and promotes awareness and understanding of NOAA's regional capabilities. SECART operates under three priority areas:

- **Engagement:** Improve efficiency and effectiveness of NOAA's mission execution through engagement across the agency and with partners.
- **Resilience:** Improve economic, environmental, and social resilience of communities to weather, water, and climate Impacts.
- **Ecosystems:** Promote the sustainability of the region's coastal and marine ecosystems.

Selected activities SECART is focusing on for fiscal year 2025

Coordinating on *Sargassum* Management and Disaster Preparedness

Sargassum provides habitat and supports fisheries, but it can also be a harmful algal bloom that disrupts marine ecosystems and affects tourism. NOAA manages *Sargassum* as both Essential Fish Habitat and as a harmful algal bloom, reflecting its complex impacts. SECART plans to improve collaboration at NOAA through a workshop to clarify NOAA's roles. The anticipated outcomes include clearer understanding and strategies for NOAA's management and research roles, and improved preparation and response strategies for *Sargassum* inundation events.

Collaborating with Gullah/Geechee Communities

Following a series of successful workshops, SECART will develop a water quality initiative for the Gullah/Geechee Nation. This program will enhance community capacity for water quality testing at key fishing and shellfishing sites and promote sustainability through intergenerational training. The initiative aims to increase community awareness, strengthen environmental stewardship, and foster a collaborative relationship with NOAA. Ultimately, it seeks to empower the Gullah/Geechee Nation to safeguard their waterways and cultural heritage amidst growing environmental challenges.

Supporting NOAA Collaboration in the Caribbean

SECART will continue to support NOAA in the Caribbean, a forum to facilitate communications and collaborations with NOAA and partners in the Caribbean basin via four main products: a listserv of NOAA personnel and partners living and working in the Caribbean, bimonthly Community Group meetings, quarterly newsletters translated into Spanish, and an annual partners meeting.

Hurricane Awareness Webinar Series

SECART will continue its successful webinar series to educate partners and constituents about improvements in NOAA hurricane forecast products. The reach of this project has grown by increasing the scope of the webinars and including a Spanish language summary of the webinars.



To learn more about SECART and NOAA activities, products, services, partnerships, and assets in the Southeast and Caribbean region, contact the Southeast and Caribbean Regional Coordinator (region.secarib@noaa.gov) or scan the QR code to visit our website.