

Coral Restoration Consortium - Governance Document

This governance document was drafted to develop an internal structure for the newly formed Coral Restoration Consortium. This document can and will be updated in the future. Comments are welcome.

Vision: In response to rapidly deteriorating climate, land, and ocean conditions and the concomitant expansion of active coral restoration in the Caribbean, the Coral Restoration Consortium has been created as a coordinating body that seeks to disseminate best practices, foster technological innovation, and identify and facilitate addressing of key research gaps in order to improve the efficiency with which coral reefs are restored in the wider Caribbean such that reef ecosystems can protect coastlines, foster fisheries, serve as the basis for many economies, and be enjoyed for their diversity by future generations.

Mission: The Coral Restoration Consortium's mission is to foster collaboration and technology transfer among coral restoration scientists, practitioners, and managers, and to facilitate a community of practice that will advance the multiple, rapidly changing paths to active coral restoration such that reef restoration keeps pace with rapidly changing ocean and environmental conditions.

Values: The Coral Restoration Consortium is driven by action and results. We believe that through innovation, open access to data and education, and a collaborative, coordinated approach, we can provide goal setting and supporting resources to restore coral reefs in an ecologically meaningful manner to help ensure their sustainability for future generations. We act with honesty, respect, and integrity at all times, promoting inclusion and diverse opinions while focused exclusively on achieving the consortium's mission above any personal agendas (see *Attachment A - Coral Restoration Consortium - Code of Ethics*). Our decisions are fact-based. We work to promote a positive, collaborative environment that fosters teamwork and information sharing.

Priorities that arose from the November 2016 Workshop to Advance the Science and Practice of Coral Restoration: Coordination and facilitation of the following priorities will be undertaken by one or more working groups (see below) composed of consortium members:

1. Restore reefs in targeted sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of restored reefs in enhancing ecosystem function, including but not limited to decreasing wave impacts and coastal degradation, thereby improving coastal protection.
2. Dramatically increase the efficiency and scale of coral restoration to achieve the overall goal of establishing self-sustaining, genetically diverse, sexually

- reproductive populations of key species of framework-building and threatened corals.
3. Develop monitoring guidelines that cover both basic and detailed levels of information (e.g. genetics and demographics of out-planted corals, areal extent of hard coral cover, ecosystem functioning, and metadata on restoration behavior), and share data to facilitate regional understanding of ecosystem status. (To be done with respect to the newly developed GCRMN monitoring guidelines.)
 4. Develop recommendations on several issues related to coral genetics (e.g., guidelines on how to characterize out-planted genotypes, a clearinghouse of genotypic information on outplants, quantitative recommendations on how to maintain and enhance genetic diversity to maximize persistence and resilience of restored populations in near-future environments.

Membership: The consortium consists primarily of individual practitioners of reef restoration, scientists and researchers working on corals and reef restoration, and reef managers.

- Both experienced and new practitioners should be active members of the consortium to encourage technology transfer, to enhance learning from challenges experienced across various geographies, and to expand the scale of restoration across the region.
- Researchers should be engaged to work closely with practitioners to integrate the latest science into restoration practices, to collaborate on experimentation that would improve restoration practices, to understand the most pressing restoration challenges, and to develop science that helps address those challenges.
- To facilitate multi-disciplinary solutions, membership should include individuals from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to MPA managers, technologists, and community organizers, communicators and educators.

Responsibilities and Deliverables: The Steering Committee will:

- Develop a 5-year strategic vision to maximize the potential for the successful restoration of corals throughout the wider Caribbean. This will include refining the above priorities and prioritizing questions/issues that need to be immediately addressed. The working groups will implement the plan.
- Coordinate with the working groups to develop annual operating plans that will achieve the 5-year strategic vision.
- Promote communication across working groups.

- Promote communication and knowledge dissemination across non-consortium stakeholders. Develop new relationships that can facilitate the five-year strategic vision.
- Identify the need for/approve the establishment of new working groups
- Ensure that any products of the consortium are publicly available to enhance broad adoption. A focus on marketing and messaging could arise after the Consortium's initial two years, in the meanwhile any messaging will utilize the communications offices of members on the steering committee.

The Working Groups will:

- Develop and implement annual operating plans that will achieve the priorities outlined in the 5-year strategic vision and will contribute to the overall knowledge base in a systematic way
- Draft best-practice recommendations – to be approved by the steering committee
- Maintain broad understanding of all activities within their subdomain and make information/introductions available to all
- Catalyze new approaches that increase “success” in each of their domains
- Coordinate between different entities so that work is consistent and reduces duplication where possible

Governance Structure

Steering Committee

- Standing Committee of no less than seven and no more than 12 individuals representing various interest groups (NGO, Government, Academic)
- Committee Members
 - Serve a 3-year term
 - To ensure diversity, each year 4 members will rotate off allowing for a fresh cohort of 4 steering committee members
 - The founding steering committee will have its members volunteer for 1, 2 or 3 year terms to allow for the aforementioned turnover,
 - Can only serve two consecutive terms then must take a one-year break before any subsequent terms.
 - Are elected onto the steering committee:
 - Annual meeting, first of year
 - Nominations can be submitted by anyone (including self-appointed)

- Elected by majority vote of the steering committee and working group chairs.
 - Are preferably not simultaneously serving as a working group chair.
 - Coordinator – *ex officio* but non-voting on steering committee. To be appointed by the chair as their support.
 - NOAA and UN representative have a permanent place on the steering committee to ensure federal buy-in and regional coordination.
- Roles
 - Chair – elected for 3-year term
 - Co-chair – NOAA representative
 - Coordinator – coordination and administrative; meeting notes
- Quorum – simple majority of committee members
- Sub-Committees: Standing and ad-hoc to be determined based on defined need

Working Groups - Structure and function of the working groups should be consistent (generally) across the different working groups. The inaugural working group chairs should define these parameters with the steering committee.

- Generally, each working group has two levels of participation – a “core” group of ~10 experts, researchers, scientists, and professionals that work on coral research or restoration daily and are dedicated to achieving working group priorities within a 3-5 year time frame, and a “broad interest group” that is interested in the progress and results of working group activities.”
- The number and topic of working groups should correspond roughly to the number of priorities in the Consortium's strategic vision
- There is no limit on the number of members in any particular working group
- Each working group should have at least one chair who is an expert on that particular topic
- Working groups can have sub-groups if desired
- Roles
 - Chair
 - Initial chairs selected by steering committee from pool of interested candidates
 - Secretary – elected by committee
 - Individuals cannot chair more than one working group at a time.

Attachment A - Coral Restoration Consortium - Code of Ethics

(Draft 2017_7_24, revisions 2017_8_1)

Introduction

The Coral Restoration Consortium (CRC) brings together diverse restoration practitioners and researchers from many institutions, countries, and cultures. Therefore, in order to fulfill our charge and achieve our goals the CRC must be able to speak with authority, credibility, and a singular voice that places the conservation of corals and their ecosystems first. To achieve these goals the CRC must have unwavering confidence by the public, politicians, the research and conservation communities and, most importantly, amongst the CRC members themselves. It is a necessity, and therefore an obligation of each individual member, to maintain the highest standards of ethical integrity.

One of the goals of the CRC is to promote the exchange of information and ideas from current and future projects that will help advance this field of work to recover depleted coral populations. To achieve this, participants must be confident that the information shared will be utilized in an ethical manner that safeguards the concept of intellectual property. All CRC members must adhere to the following guidelines regarding the appropriate use of shared information.

Member Code of Ethics

Regarding the Organisms and Ecosystems in our Charge

- Assisting in achieving the conservation and survival of species must be the aim of all members of the profession. Any actions taken in relation to an individual animal, e.g. euthanasia or contraception, must be undertaken with this higher ideal of species survival in mind, but the welfare of the individual animal should not be compromised.
- Recognize the moral responsibilities of the individual and the institution to the animals under our care, as well as to the public, our employees, and our professional associates.
- Minimize and justify any adverse effect your work may have on people, animals, and the natural environment.
- Promote the interests of wildlife conservation, biodiversity, and animal welfare to the public and to colleagues.
- Co-operate with the wider conservation community including wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, and research institutions to assist in maintaining global biodiversity.
- Co-operate with governments and other appropriate bodies to improve standards of animal welfare, protection of natural habitat, and the general welfare of organisms both in our charge and in the wild.

- The CRC feels that more important than restoring ecosystems, we must preserve and protect reef ecosystems that exist today. While mitigation of unavoidable damage to reef environments is critically important, it is not the CRC's goal to facilitate, promote, or otherwise condone mitigation for avoidable reef destruction.

Regarding the public, media, and all stakeholders

CRC members shall:

- Use only legal and ethical means when seeking to influence governmental legislation or regulations
- Maintain high standards of personal, professional, and business conduct and behavior
- Not knowingly engage in activities contrary to local, state, federal, or international laws, as such laws relate to our work and profession.
- Encourage research and dissemination of achievements and results in appropriate publications and forums
- Seek to discuss the issues that our science and conservation work raises for society. Listen to the aspirations and concerns of others.
- Not knowingly mislead, or allow others to be misled, about scientific matters. Present and review scientific evidence, theory or interpretation honestly and accurately

Regarding Professional Colleagues

CRC members shall:

- Display the highest integrity, the best judgement or ethics possible, and use of professional skills to the best interests of all.
- Deal fairly with members in the dissemination of professional information and advice, respecting the rights and reputations of others.
- Declare any conflicts of interests promptly and clearly, recusing oneself from further discussion as necessary.
- Keep in mind and appropriately respect that some of the information provided in meetings, on conference calls, and shared during project work may be considered intellectual property.
- Clearly state when a concept or method they are sharing is considered their intellectual property.
- Avoid utilizing or presenting ideas and methods obtained through the CRC without first obtaining explicit permission from the person presenting the information.

- Give full and proper credit to the work and ideas of others that participants gain through the CRC.
- Make every effort to avoid misrepresentation of the work presented by CRC members.
- Avoid making representations about the origins of well-established and widely utilized restoration methods, as these discussions do not provide a useful exchange of ideas.
- Not knowingly misinform others regarding records, information, experimental results, professional information, advice and so forth.
- While members may represent their organization as an active member of the CRC, no one member may speak for on behalf of the entire CRC. It is not appropriate for any member to act, or be perceived to act, as leveraging the skills, resources, network, etc. of the CRC for any specific reason or personal gain, such as grant applications.
- In situations where a member feels it would be appropriate or advantageous to leverage the skills, resources, network, etc. of the CRC for the gain of a group of members or as part of a grant application, that member(s) must explicitly gain the permission of the steering committee.

Deviations from CRC's Code of Ethics

The work of the consortium can only be achieved through the work of its members. Therefore, it is critically important that individual members maintain the highest ethical standards and professional integrity. The CRC is an informal membership group, where membership is entirely voluntary and the acceptance of a prospective member by the CRC is voluntary. Therefore, the consortium has the right to deny admission, or exercise dismissal, of any member that it feels has violated either the letter or the spirit of the CRC's code of ethics.

References and Resources:

Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Code of Ethics. www.aza.org/code-of-ethics

IUCN. Guidelines for Applying the Precautionary Principle. elibrary.cenn.org/Biodiversity/Guidelines%20-%20for%20Applying%20the%20Precautionary%20Principle%20to%20Biodiversity%20Conservation%20and%20Natural%20Resource%20Management.pdf

Universal Ethical Code for Scientists. webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070603172611/http://www.dti.gov.uk/science/science-and-society/public_engagement/code/page28030.html

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Code of Ethics and Animal Welfare. www.waza.org/en/site/conservation/code-of-ethics-and-animal-welfare