



SERPPAS and the South Atlantic Alliance (SAA)

SERPPAS Principals from North Carolina and NOAA held a shared vision to encourage the development of a state-federal regional ocean partnership for the U.S. South Atlantic area.

Other SERPPAS partners, including the military, share the interests of ensuring healthy ecosystems, clean coasts and ocean waters, disaster-resilient communities, and working waterfronts.

Background

SERPPAS formed the Marine/Coastal Committee in 2006 with goals to further coastal and offshore mapping and develop a regional ocean partnership framework.

This was based on the recommendation of SERPPAS state members who chose not to form a new or separate body outside of SERPPAS. The Committee subsequently split into two distinct work groups – one for regional mapping and one for the South Atlantic Alliance (SAA).

The SAA work group developed a Framework document with four regional priorities – healthy ecosystems, clean coasts and ocean waters, disaster-resilient communities, and working waterfronts. Given the role of SERPPAS in the drafting of the Framework, military readiness and training concerns were integrated throughout.

Milestones

- ▶ The Steering Group organized in March 2010 and has met with the Federal Co-Chairs on a regular basis. The Federal Co-Chairs are working with the Southeast Natural Resources Leadership Group to integrate federal support and information relating to the Alliance.
- ▶ The four SAA Issue Area Technical Teams were established in February 2010 and developed actions to support the goals of the Governors' South Atlantic Alliance. SERPPAS, USMC, NOAA, EPA and USGS were represented in the action planning in addition to the four states. These Actions were approved by the SAA Steering Group.
- ▶ The resulting Draft Action Plan was released for public input in September 2010. The Plan is expected to be presented to the Governors for signature before January 2011.
- ▶ SERPPAS formally identified a Liaison with both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Alliances.



SERPPAS endorsed the establishment of a Governors' South Atlantic Alliance in May 2007. The SAA work group eventually expanded to become the SAA's Executive Planning Team which then developed a draft Partnership Agreement, signaling the move from under the SERPPAS founding umbrella. The SAA was formally announced October 2009 and the White House Council on Environmental Quality recognized the alliance and named NOAA, EPA, and USGS as the SAA Federal co-chairs. In addition to the four member states and the three federal co-chairs, critical supporting partners include the Navy, USMC, the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association, The Nature Conservancy, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and academia. Other partners will be identified as the SAA implements its Action Plan.

Accomplishments

- ▶ The developmental history of the SAA through SERPPAS is unique among the regional ocean partnerships. The SAA is the only Regional Ocean Partnership incorporating National Defense within its priority issues.
- ▶ The Action Plan includes National Defense explicitly as an objective: Ensure sustainable economic viability of working waterfronts while preserving traditional uses, including national defense, by balancing suitable public, commercial, port, residential and environmental uses with best management practices.
- ▶ A specific priority is to "Protect U.S. military waterfront access and water-dependent land use related to military footprint, operational readiness, and training missions by engaging military representatives in the identification of sites that support military operational and training capacity and national defense mission."