

Alabama Coastal Management Program Assessment and Strategy

2026 to 2030

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Introduction

The Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP) is a voluntary federal/state partnership established by the Alabama State Legislature in 1979 in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA). The ACAMP is administered by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), State Lands Division (SLD). The Alabama Department of Environmental Management implements the Division 8 coastal permitting, regulatory, and enforcement functions of the ACAMP. The national program is administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office for Coastal Management (OCM) with 34 states and territories participating in the program.

The ACAMP is intended to balance economic growth with the need for conservation of Alabama's coastal resources for future generations. The ACAMP promotes wise management of the cultural and natural resources of the state's coastal areas and fosters efforts to ensure the long-term ecological and economic productivity of coastal Alabama. Planning functions of the ACAMP are implemented throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties, while ADEM administers the Division 8 regulations in the legislatively defined Alabama Coastal Area, which extends from the continuous 10-foot contour seaward to the 3-mile limit.

While the states must follow basic requirements set forth by the CZMA and the national program, states are also given the flexibility to design unique programs that best address their coastal challenges and regulations, with the intent to leverage expertise and resources and strengthen the capabilities to address coastal issues.

The Section 309 Coastal Zone Enhancement Program (309 Enhancement Program) encourages state and territorial coastal management programs to strengthen and improve their federally approved coastal management programs in one or more of nine areas. These "enhancement areas" include wetlands, coastal hazards, public access, marine debris, cumulative and secondary impacts, special area management plans, ocean and Great Lakes resources, energy and government facility siting, and aquaculture.

In order to comply with the 309 Enhancement Program, the ACAMP staff adhered to the Section 309 Program Guidance – 2026 to 2030 Enhancement Cycle developed by NOAA. This required the staff to conduct self-assessments of the ACAMP to determine challenges and enhancement possibilities within each of the nine enhancement areas. This included assessing the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address identified problems, high priority management issues, and important needs and information gaps the program must fill to address these issues and provide opportunities for enhancement.

The self-assessment includes stakeholder input. ACAMP staff solicited stakeholder input by developing and distributing, via email, a survey to stakeholders in Mobile and Baldwin counties leveraging representation through the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) management conference committee network as well as the Plan Lower Alabama Now (PLAN). Outreach through the MBNEP and PLAN provided access to individuals representing state and federal agencies, local governments, academia, non-governmental organizations and private industry. Responses were collected, organized, analyzed and incorporated into the self-assessment.

ACAMP staff utilized the self-assessment to aid development of strategies for certain high priority areas to improve operations in a manner that will address management needs. Following the public comment period, staff will submit the resulting draft 309 Assessment and Strategy document to NOAA OCM for review and final approval. Upon NOAA's approval of a final document, the state will be eligible to receive Section 309 funding to implement the strategy described in the approved document.

Public Review and Comment

The draft 309 Assessment and Strategy document was posted on the ACAMP webpage at <https://www.outdooralabama.com/coastalprograms> on January 13, 2026 and original survey recipients were made aware of the public comment period via email. Comments were received through February 12, 2026.

Summary of Recent Section 309 Achievements

In the period since the last Section 309 assessment and strategy, ACAMP staff continued to work with local governments to accomplish the objectives of the 2016-2020 Community Resilience Initiative. A highlight amongst this work was providing funding and technical assistance to the City of Foley to develop a Coastal Flood Response Plan for the City and later a Stormwater Management Plan for the Beulah Heights community. Completion of these planning efforts positioned the City to secure additional grant funds through the MBNEP to begin implementation of stormwater infrastructure improvements in the community.

ACAMP staff are currently collaborating with the University of South Alabama Stokes School of Marine and Environmental Sciences to complete the Coastal Riparian Structure Inventory. This inventory will supply information on overwater structures to support management needs.

Phase I Assessment

Wetlands

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Protection, restoration, or enhancement of the existing coastal wetlands base, or creation of new coastal wetlands. §309(a)(1)

Note: For the purposes of the Wetlands Assessment, wetlands are “those areas that are inundated or saturated at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.” [33 CFR 328.3(b)]. See also pg. 14 of the CZMA Performance Measurement Guidance¹ for a more in-depth discussion of what should be considered a wetland.

Phase I (High-Level) Assessment: (Must be completed by all states.)

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. Using the tables below as a guide, provide information on the status and trends of coastal wetlands. Be as quantitative as possible using state or national wetland trend data.² The tables are information presentation suggestions. Feel free to adjust column and row headings to align with data and time frames available in your state or territory. If quantitative data is not available for your state or territory, provide a brief qualitative narrative describing wetlands status and trends and any significant changes since the last assessment.

Current state of wetlands in 2021 (acres): 516473.6 acres (EMW & WDW)

Coastal Wetlands Status and Trends

Change in Wetlands Baldwin County	from 1996-2021
Percent net change in total wetlands (% gained or lost)*	-1.81% ↓
Percent net change in freshwater (palustrine wetlands) (% gained or lost)*	-1.99% ↓
Percent net change in saltwater (estuarine) wetlands (% gained or lost)*	2.53% ↑

¹ coast.noaa.gov/data/czm/media/czmapmsguide.pdf

² National data on wetlands status and trends include NOAA’s Land Cover Atlas (coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/lca.html), the U.S. Geological Survey’s National Land Cover Database (usgs.gov/centers/eros/science/national-land-cover-database), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wetland Inventory data (fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory).

Change in Wetlands Mobile County	from 1996-2021
Percent net change in total wetlands (% gained or lost)*	-2.38% ↓
Percent net change in freshwater (palustrine wetlands) (% gained or lost)*	-2.29% ↓
Percent net change in saltwater (estuarine) wetlands (% gained or lost)*	-1.01% ↓

How Wetlands Are Changing

Land Cover Type	Area of Wetlands Transformed to Another Type of Land Cover between 1996-2021 (Sq. Miles)
Development	7.26 (HID, LID, OSD)
Agriculture	1.75
Barren Land	0.9
Water	2.69

Management Characterization

1. Indicate any significant changes at the state or territory level (positive or negative) since the last assessment that could impact the future protection, restoration, enhancement, or creation of coastal wetlands.

Significant Changes in Wetland Management

Management Category	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	N
Wetlands programs (e.g., regulatory, mitigation, restoration, acquisition)	N

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information.
 - a. Describe the significance of the changes;
 - b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes; and
 - c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High X
Medium
Low

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

Wetlands provide wildlife habitat, recreational space, and serve to filter, capture, and infiltrate stormwater runoff in coastal areas. Continued degradation and loss of coastal wetlands can result in enhanced susceptibility to coastal storm impacts, flooding, and degradation of water quality. Given the ability of local governments to manage wetlands within their jurisdictions through the comprehensive planning process and local ordinances, prioritization of wetland enhancement during this cycle is warranted.

Stakeholder Response:

Wetlands ranked 1st in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of the 16 individual responses, 13 ranked wetlands as a top three priority. Six ranked wetlands as a primary priority, and four ranked wetlands as a secondary priority. Wetlands received three responses ranking it the third highest priority area. All groups were represented in the 13 responses.

Coastal Hazards

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Prevent or significantly reduce threats to life and property by eliminating development and redevelopment in high-hazard areas, managing development in other hazard areas, and anticipating and managing the effects of potential sea level rise and Great Lakes level change. §309(a)(2)

Note: For purposes of the Hazards Assessment, coastal hazards include the following traditional hazards and those identified in the CZMA: flooding; coastal storms (including associated storm surge); geological hazards (e.g., tsunamis, earthquakes); shoreline erosion (including bluff and dune erosion); sea level rise; Great Lake level change; land subsidence; and saltwater intrusion.

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: (Must be completed by all states.)

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization:

1. In the table below, indicate the general level of risk in the coastal zone for each of the coastal hazards. The following resources may help assess the level of risk for each hazard. Your state may also have other state-specific resources and tools to consult. Additional information and links to these resources can be found in the “Resources” section at the end of the Coastal Hazards Phase I Assessment Template:
 - The state’s multi-hazard mitigation plan
 - Coastal County Snapshots: Flood Exposure
 - Coastal Flood Exposure Mapper
 - Sea Level Rise Viewer/Great Lakes Lake Level Change Viewer

General Level of Hazard Risk in the Coastal Zone

Type of Hazard	General Level of Risk ³ (H, M, L)
Flooding (riverine, stormwater)	H
Coastal storms (including storm surge)	H
Geological hazards (e.g., tsunamis, earthquakes)	L
Shoreline erosion	H
Sea level rise	H
Great Lakes level change	L
Land subsidence	L
Saltwater intrusion	M
Other (please specify)	

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional data or reports on the level of risk and vulnerability to coastal hazards within your state since the last assessment. The state’s multi-hazard mitigation plan or risk assessment or plan may be a good resource to help respond to

³ Risk is defined as “the estimated impact that a hazard would have on people, services, facilities and structures in a community; the likelihood of a hazard event resulting in an adverse condition that causes injury or damage.” *Understanding Your Risks: Identifying Hazards and Estimating Losses. FEMA 386-2. August 2001*

this question.

The [2023 Alabama State Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) notes that large population increases in Mobile and Baldwin counties are of particular concern due to significant exposure of this region to coastal hazards, including hurricanes and sea level rise. The plan highlights concentrated population growth in economically desirable coastal areas that are at high risk of coastal flooding, storm surge, and wind damage. Increases in impervious surfaces associated with this development can increase stormwater runoff, which can worsen flooding hazards. Additionally, Mobile and Baldwin counties have the highest total payments and average payments among National Flood Insurance Program serial repetitive loss claims in the state. While the plan includes a Hazus analysis for sea level rise and coastal land change, the risk, vulnerability, and loss estimates are limited to state-owned or state-insured facilities.

Management Characterization

1. In the tables below, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) have occurred that could impact the CMP's ability to prevent or significantly reduce coastal hazards risk since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Hazards Statutes, Regulations, Policies, or Case Law

Topic Addressed	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Elimination of development/redevelopment in high-hazard areas ⁴	Y- Division 8 Coastal Program Regulation	Y	N
Management of development/redevelopment in other hazard areas	Y- Division 8 Coastal Program Regulation	Y	N
Sea level rise or Great Lakes level change	Y	Y	N

Significant Changes in Hazards Planning Programs or Initiatives

Topic Addressed	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Hazard mitigation	Y	Y	N
Sea level rise or Great Lakes level change	Y	Y	N

Significant Changes in Hazards Mapping or Modeling Programs or Initiatives

Topic Addressed	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Sea level rise or Great Lakes level change	Y	Y	Y
Other hazards	Y	Y	Y

2. Briefly state how “high-hazard areas” are defined in your coastal zone.

⁴ Use the state's definition of high-hazard areas.

High hazard areas are defined based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood map nomenclature and ADEM Division 8 Coastal Regulations. ADEM, through its Administrative Code and Division 8 Coastal Program Regulations, permits, regulates, and monitors uses and activities having a direct or significant impact on coastal Alabama and its resources. One way is by using a Construction Control Line (CCL) to provide protection for the primary dunes, beach sands, and covering vegetation in the Alabama Coastal Zone. The CCL is a defined, surveyed line essentially paralleling, and setback from, the Gulf shoreline. Structures located seaward of this line are not permitted by the program. The CCL was designed to provide long-term protection of the beaches and dunes by prohibiting construction seaward of this established setback line. The CCL helps protect property value and minimize damage from storm surge and other natural hazards. Developers are not allowed to remove primary dune or beach sands and/or vegetation between the CCL and the mean high tide.

3. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
 - a. Describe the significance of the changes;
 - b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes; and
 - c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

The [Alabama Coastal Comprehensive Plan](#) (ACCP) is a high-level planning tool commissioned by the ADCNR and developed by the USACE to identify coastal vulnerabilities and characterize the resilience of both built and natural environments under a suite of sea level change and coastal storm intensities. The tool highlights existing plans that promote resilience, identifies social, economic, and environmental visioning gathered from stakeholder interactions, and highlights projects and other opportunities to develop coastal resilience. The interactive mapper allows planners to visualize potential property losses under a range of conditions and to identify vulnerabilities within their communities. ACAMP staff were involved in the conceptualization, development, and pilot testing of the tool.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High	<u>X</u>
Medium	_____
Low	_____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

While there has been tremendous effort put forth in the state to address coastal hazards, the enhancement area remains a high priority due to continued increase in coastal population and exposure of coastal environments and inhabitants to coastal hazards. As coastal communities continue to grow, local governments will need to adapt planning documents and ordinances to address the exposure and vulnerability of their jurisdictions to increased risks associated with coastal hazards.

Stakeholder Response:

Coastal hazards ranked 2nd in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of 16 individual responses 10 responses ranked coastal hazards a top three priority. Five responses ranked coastal hazards a first

priority, three responses ranked hazards as a secondary priority, and two responses ranked hazards as third priority. All groups were represented in the 10 responses.

Public Access

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Attain increased opportunities for public access, taking into account current and future public access needs, to coastal areas of recreational, historical, aesthetic, ecological, or cultural value. §309(a)(3)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: (Must be completed by all states.)

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. Use the table below to provide data on public access availability within the coastal zone.

Public Access Status and Trends

Type of Access	Current number ⁵	Changes or Trends Since Last Assessment ⁶ (↑, ↓, -, unknown)	Cite data source
Beach access sites	22	↑	Gulf Shores Orange Beach Tourism & Dauphin Island Park and Beach websites, Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022, Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map, OutdoorAlabama.com
Shoreline (other than beach) access sites	171	↑	Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022, Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map, OutdoorAlabama.com
Recreational boat (power or non-motorized) access sites	46 boat ramp sites, 86 carry down water access sites	↑	Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022; Baldwin County Commission , OutdoorAlabama.com , Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map
Designated scenic vistas or overlook points	141	↑	Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022, , Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map
Fishing access points (i.e. piers, jetties)	86	↑	Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022; SeekAlabama.com , OutdoorAlabama.com
Coastal trails/ boardwalks <i>(Please indicate number of trails/boardwalks and mileage)</i>	48 boardwalks/45 trails/23 bike trails/>160 miles of trails and boardwalks	↑	Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022; Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map, OutdoorAlabama.com

⁵ Be as specific as possible. For example, if you have data on many access sites but know it is not an exhaustive list, note “more than” before the number. If information is unknown, note that and use the narrative section below to provide a brief qualitative description based on the best information available.

⁶ If you know specific numbers, please provide. However, if specific numbers are unknown but you know that the general trend was increasing or decreasing or relatively stable or unchanged since the last assessment, note that with a ↑ (increased), ↓ (decreased), – (unchanged). If the trend is completely unknown, simply put “unknown.”

Type of Access	Current number ⁵	Changes or Trends Since Last Assessment ⁶ (↑, ↓, -, unknown)	Cite data source
Acres of parkland/open space	>78,000 acres of Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust parcels, >5,000 acres of ADCNR State Parks, >49,000 acres other ADCNR owned lands, >9,900 acres of National Wildlife Refuge parcels, numerous local government owned tracts	↑	Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022, Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map, OutdoorAlabama.com, AlabamaForeverWild.com
Access sites that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant ⁷	80	↑	Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment update 2022, Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map, OutdoorAlabama.com
Bartram and Perdido River Canoe Trails	75 miles	↑	OutdoorAlabama.com

2. Briefly characterize the demand for coastal public access and the process for periodically assessing demand. Include a statement on the projected population increase for your coastal counties. There are several additional sources of statewide information that may help inform this response, such as the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan,⁸ the National Survey on Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation,⁹ and your state's tourism office.

Between 2012 and 2022, Baldwin County experienced a 29.6% increase in population to 246,435 residents. During the same time period, Mobile County's population growth was flat, with 411,411 residents. With an overall increasing coastal population, the demand for public access including boat launches, fishing piers, walking trails, and beach access is significant for citizens within the two coastal counties, as well as tourists to the area. The ACAMP assesses demand for public access through regular

⁷ For more information on ADA see ada.gov.

⁸ Most states routinely develop "Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans", or SCROPs, that include an assessment of demand for public recreational opportunities. Although not focused on coastal public access, SCROPs could be useful to get some sense of public outdoor recreation preferences and demand. Download state SCROPs at recro.org/resources--reports/scorp-resources.

⁹ The National Survey on Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation produces state-specific reports on fishing, hunting, and wildlife associated recreational use for each state. While not focused on coastal areas, the reports do include information on saltwater and Great Lakes fishing, and some coastal wildlife viewing that may be informative and compares 2016 data to 2011, 2006, and 2001 information to understand how usage has changed. The most recent survey was conducted for 2022 but due to a change in methodology, results cannot be compared to previous reports. See fws.gov/program/national-survey-fishing-hunting-and-wildlife-associated-recreation-fhwar.

communication with local governments officials, attendance at public meetings, participation in organizations such as the MBNEP and coordination with ADCNR staff working in areas of coastal restoration and various grant programs. Additionally, a public access inventory is maintained, in collaboration with the MBNEP, to keep track of the numbers and types of public access points within each of the coastal counties. The importance of public access in coastal Alabama is reflected in the yearly emphasis on 306a funded public access improvements in the ACAMP competitive call for project proposals.

3. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional data or reports on the status or trends for coastal public access since the last assessment.

The [Innovate Alabama](#) initiative, developed by Governor Kay Ivey, works to promote and grow the technology sector and overall economy of Alabama. A key component of this sustainable growth is positioning outdoor recreation and lifestyle assets as economic drivers in the state. To this end, the Council on Outdoor Recreation, chaired by ADCNR Commissioner Chris Blankenship, was established in 2022. This council is working to expand the outdoor recreation industry in Alabama through actions to inventory, brand, market, improve and expand outdoor recreation opportunities across the state. This initiative underscores the commitment of the state, and the ADCNR, to support and enhance public access to Alabama's natural resources. As part of this initiative, [SEEK AL](#) (in ongoing development) provides an interactive guide to experiencing many of the recreational opportunities available in coastal Alabama and state-wide.

The ADCNR supports public access in coastal Alabama through maintenance and enhancement of sites including Gulf and Meaher State parks, 36 state-owned public-access boat launches, multiple fishing piers, hiking and canoe trails, and more than 116,000 acres of wildlife management areas. The Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust, as administered by the ADCNR, has acquired more than 78,000 acres for public benefit in the two coastal counties since 1994. Since 2021, funds received through the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) federal revenue sharing and administered through the ADCNR as a state-based grant program have supported land acquisition and public access improvements in Mobile and Baldwin counties totaling more than \$126 million in partnership with local governments. Additional improvements also have been implemented through GOMESA federal revenue sharing proceeds distributed directly to the two coastal counties pursuant to GOMESA provisions.

The ADCNR also serves as the lead trustee in administering projects funded as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlements. The [Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map](#) contains descriptions and implementation status of projects including land acquisition for public access, improvement of existing access sites and creation of new public water access and recreational trails in partnership with local governments totaling more than \$140 million.

The Mobile County Blueway project is conducting an inventory of current water access and is gathering stakeholder input and conducting analysis to enhance access in the county. [Mobile County Blueway](#)

The Scyphers' lab at the University of South Alabama Stokes School of Marine and Environmental Sciences is characterizing public water access in the two coastal counties and conducting visitor use surveys at these sites. [Public Access Sites](#)

Management Characterization:

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state- or territory-level management changes (positive or negative) that could impact the future provision of public access to coastal areas of recreational, historical, aesthetic, ecological, or cultural value.

Significant Changes in Public Access Management

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	N
Operation/maintenance of existing facilities	Y	Y	N
Acquisition/enhancement programs	Y	Y	N

2. Indicate if your state or territory has a publicly available public access guide. How current is the publication and how frequently it is updated?¹⁰

Publicly Available Access Guide

Public Access Guide	Printed	Online	Mobile App
State or territory has? (Y or N)	N	Y	N
Web address (if applicable)	-	seekalabama.com outdooralabama.com	N
Date of last update	-	In ongoing development	N
Frequency of update	-		N

[OutdoorAlabama](#) serves as the primary landing page for information related to public access managed by the ADCNR. The site provides interactive maps detailing coastal boating access, coastal and freshwater fishing access, Alabama State Parks, State Lands canoe trails, Alabama birding trails, hiking trails, hunting access sites and wildlife management areas, and recreational opportunities on Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust tracts.

[SeekAL](#) is currently under ongoing development as a comprehensive guide to natural resource related public access in Alabama.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High
Medium
Low

¹⁰ Note some states may have regional or local guides in addition to state public access guides. Unless you want to list all local guides as well, there is no need to list additional guides beyond the state access guide. You may choose to note that the local guides do exist and may provide additional information that expands upon the state guides.

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

The ACAMP staff is active in public access planning efforts and routinely provides 306a funding to local and state governments to plan and implement public access improvements throughout the coastal area. ACAMP staff partnered with the MBNEP to update and validate the Mobile and Baldwin County Public Access Assessment and released the resulting public access inventory in September 2022. ACAMP staff also continues to coordinate with ADCNR divisional staff including DWH Coastal Restoration staff, State Lands Division GOMESA state grant program staff, and State Lands Division staff which implement the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust Program regarding ongoing public access improvement efforts.

Stakeholder response:

Public access ranked 6th in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of the 16 individual four responses ranked public access a top three priority. Two responses ranked public access as second highest priority area, and two responses for third highest priority area. Two groups were represented in the four responses: non-profits, and municipalities. While identification and implementation of additional public access improvements remains an ADCNR priority in coastal Alabama, the variety of existing programs and associated funding opportunities provide a more direct opportunity for resulting impact than development of a 309 strategy specifically for this focus area. However, ACAMP assistance to local governments related to comprehensive planning efforts could inform and enhance ongoing public access initiatives throughout coastal communities.

Marine Debris

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Reducing marine debris entering the nation's coastal and ocean environment by managing uses and activities that contribute to the entry of such debris. §309(a)(4)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: (Must be completed by all states.)

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, characterize the existing status and trends of marine debris in the state's coastal zone based on the best-available data.

Existing Status and Trends of Marine Debris in Coastal Zone

Source of Marine Debris	Significance of Source (H, M, L, unknown)	Type of Impact ¹¹ (aesthetic, resource damage, user conflicts, other)	Change Since Last Assessment (↑, ↓, -, unknown)
Beach/shore litter	M	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, human health issues	-
Land-based dumping	M	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, human health issues	-
Storm drains and runoff	H	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, impaired water quality, human health issues	-
Land-based fishing (e.g., fishing line, gear)	M	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, impacts to recreational activities	-
Ocean/Great Lakes-based fishing (e.g., derelict fishing gear)	M	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, impacts to recreational activities	-
Derelict vessels	M	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, impacts to recreational activities; human health and safety hazards	↑
Vessel-based (e.g., cruise ship, cargo ship, general vessel)	L	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, damage to recreational activities	-
Hurricane/Storm	H	Aesthetically detrimental to tourism, resource damage, damage to recreational activities; human health and safety hazards; water quality impacts, high economic impacts	-
Tsunami	N/A		-
Other (please specify)			

¹¹ You can select more than one, if applicable.

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends or potential impacts from marine debris in the coastal zone since the last assessment.

NOAA's Marine Debris Program developed a plan to specifically address "acute" waterway debris incidents, such as debris generated by natural disasters, in Baldwin and Mobile counties. The purpose of the plan is to improve preparedness for response and recovery operations following an acute waterway debris incident in coastal Alabama. The plan states that Coastal Alabama is vulnerable to many natural and man-made hazards that could result in an acute waterway debris incident. An overview of the risk of occurrence for hazards that could result in a release of waterway debris in Mobile and Baldwin counties showed that there is a high risk of incidents resulting from the three hazards that routinely occur in Coastal Alabama: flooding, hurricanes/tropical storms; tornado/windstorms. It is important to note that the plan does not address chronic waterway debris issues.

This guide is updated every 3 years and was updated in 2022. Follow link to view/download:
<https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/emergency-response-guides/alabama-marine-debris-emergency-response-guide>

The State of Alabama in 2018 passed the Alabama Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Act, placing administration and implementation of the act under the jurisdiction of the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency *Ala. Code § 33-5A-1 (1975)*. The statute was subject to rulemaking in 2020, and provisions for notification related to removal, storage, and disposal of derelict vessels were established. At this time, dedicated funding for a vessel removal program related to this act have not been established, however, the Gulf of America Alliance (GOAA) received over \$7 million dollars to remove abandoned and derelict vessels and other large marine debris in Alabama and in other Gulf Coast states. NOAA's Marine Debris Program supported the project which was funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. GOAA coordinated with state programs to remove 45 vessels in Alabama, 20 in Texas, and 25 in Mississippi during the first phase of the project. Following this effort, a second phase to identify and remove additional vessels and other large marine debris items from locations in all five Gulf states began in 2024.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state- or territory-level management changes (positive or negative) for how marine debris is managed in the coastal zone.

Significant Changes in Marine Debris Management

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Marine debris statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	N	N
Marine debris removal programs	Y	Y	N

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium X
Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

Marine debris issues are being addressed through cleanup events, including the Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup coordinated by the ACAMP in partnership with the Alabama People Against a Littered State. While marine debris control remains a constant need in coastal areas, educational efforts, cleanup events, and enforcement of litter laws in Alabama remain effective tools in addressing marine debris. In addition, funding for litter mitigation has been provided through additional funding sources such as GOMESA.

Stakeholder Response:

Marine debris ranked 7th in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of the 16 individual responses marine debris had one response ranking it as a top three priority. The one response that ranked marine debris as a number one priority was an engineering firm.

Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Development and adoption of procedures to assess, consider, and control cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, including the collective effect on various individual uses or activities on coastal resources, such as coastal wetlands and fishery resources. §309(a)(5)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: (Must be completed by all states.)

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. Using National Ocean Economics Program Data on population and housing,¹² please indicate the change in population and housing units in the state's coastal counties between 2017 and 2021. You may wish to add additional trend comparisons to look at longer time horizons as well (data available back to 1970), but at a minimum, please show change over the most recent five-year period data is available (2017-2021) to approximate current assessment period.

Trends in Coastal Population and Housing Units

	2017	2021	Percent Change (2017-2021)
Number of people	626,566	657,929	5.00%
Number of housing units	297,768	318,459	6.95%

2. Using the tables below as a guide, provide information on land cover changes and development trends. Be as quantitative as possible using state or national land cover data.¹³ The tables are a suggestion of how you could present the information. Feel free to adjust column and row headings to align with data and time frames available in your state or territory. If quantitative data on land cover changes and development trends are not available, provide a brief qualitative narrative describing changes in land cover, especially development trends, including significant changes since the last assessment.

¹²www.oceaneconomics.org/. Enter “Population and Housing” section and select “Data Search” (near the top of the left sidebar). From the drop-down boxes, select your state. Select the year (2021) then select “coastal zone counties.” The default comparison year will be 2017 so no need to select a comparison year.

¹³ National data on wetlands status and trends include NOAA’s Land Cover Atlas (coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/lca.html) and the U.S. Geological Survey’s National Land Cover Database (usgs.gov/centers/eros/science/national-land-cover-database).

Distribution of Land Cover Types in Coastal Counties

Land Cover Type	Land Area Coverage in 2021 (Acres)	Gain/Loss Since 1996 (Acres)
Developed, High Intensity	39,084.8	10,713.6
Developed, Low Intensity	108,000	14,355.2
Developed, Open Space	47,475.2	6,867.2
Grassland	93,369.6	-10,374.4
Scrub/Shrub	170,144	13,536
Barren Land	20,115.2	1,766.4
Open Water	529,657.6	358.4
Agriculture	245,875.2	-5,299.2
Forested	574,528	-21,836.8
Woody Wetland	455,270.4	-24,281.6
Emergent Wetland	61,203.2	14,188.8

Development Status and Trends for Coastal Counties

	1996	2021	Percent Net Change
Percent land area developed	6.9	8.3	19.6
Percent impervious surface area	2.1	2.65	23.5

How Land Use Is Changing in Coastal Counties

Land Cover Type	Areas Lost to Development Between 1996-2021 (Acres)
Barren Land	1,056
Emergent Wetland	499.2
Woody Wetland	3,974.4
Open Water	211.2
Agriculture	7,155.2
Scrub/Shrub	4,019.2
Grassland	3,424
Forested	11,603.2

3. Briefly characterize how the coastal shoreline has changed in the past five years due to development, including potential changes to shoreline structures such as groins, bulkheads and other shoreline stabilization structures, and docks and piers. If available, include quantitative data that may be available from permitting databases or other resources about changes in shoreline structures.

With the increase in coastal population and ongoing repair related to storm damaged structures (most significantly following Hurricane Sally in 2020, primarily in Baldwin County), there has been continued permitted development along coastal waterways. Data below reflect approvals of Notice to Impact Submerged Lands as permitted by the ADCNR SLD.

Approved Notice of Intent to Impact Submerged Lands	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Pier/Dock/Pilings/Boathouse/Boat Ramp	92	127	161	188	133	107
Dredge	5	22	14	22	16	17

Bulkhead	11	20	20	31	21	16
Living Shoreline/Rip Rap/Beach Fill	8	5	9	34	20	9
Reclamation	2	4	8	4	3	6

4. Briefly summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, such as water quality, shoreline hardening, and habitat fragmentation, since the last assessment.

The [2025 State of Alabama's Estuaries and Coasts](#) (2025 MBNEP) summarizes data and trends related to water quality, shoreline condition, and habitat fragmentation over timescales including the previous assessment period. In general, water quality trends reflect long term variability expected in an estuarine driven environment. However, pathogen loading, increased turbidity in freshwater inputs, and declines in dissolved oxygen concentrations are noted as significant issues affecting the Alabama coast. The report recognizes the challenges associated with balancing economic growth with the need to maintain ecological health of coastal environments. Increased stormwater runoff, habitat fragmentation, and shoreline changes are noted as significant impacts of coastal growth and development. However, the report highlights significant conservation and restoration efforts including land acquisition, living shoreline installations, and enhancements in local land use regulations that are helping to address these issues and support local communities.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state-level changes (positive or negative) in the development and adoption of procedures to assess, consider, and control cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, including the collective effect on various individual uses or activities on coastal resources, such as coastal wetlands and fishery resources, since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Management of Cumulative and Secondary Impacts of Development

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	N
Guidance documents	Y	Y	N
Management plans (including SAMPs)	Y	Y	N

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium
Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

Continued population growth and development of both coastal and upland areas of Mobile and Baldwin counties have driven the need to better understand the cumulative and secondary impacts of these activities as they relate to the sustainability of healthy coastal ecosystems. Population growth brings increased demands associated with coastal resources such as recreation, storm-water management, and erosion prevention. This enhancement area, while important, is primarily driven by place-based development patterns and pressures that extend beyond the immediate influence of the coastal program. The coastal program will continue to provide technical support and resources to stakeholders interested in assessing and balancing these impacts.

Stakeholder Response:

Cumulative and secondary impacts ranked 4th in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of 16 individual responses seven responses ranked cumulative and secondary impacts as a top three priority. Two responses ranked cumulative and secondary impacts as second highest priority and five responses ranked it third highest priority. Three groups were represented in the seven responses: city municipalities, a non-profit, and an independent contractor.

Special Area Management Planning

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Preparing and implementing special area management plans for important coastal areas. §309(a)(6)

The Coastal Zone Management Act defines a special area management plan (SAMP) as “a comprehensive plan providing for natural resource protection and reasonable coastal-dependent economic growth containing a detailed and comprehensive statement of policies; standards and criteria to guide public and private uses of lands and waters; and mechanisms for timely implementation in specific geographic areas within the coastal zone. In addition, SAMPs provide for increased specificity in protecting natural resources, reasonable coastal-dependent economic growth, improved protection of life and property in hazardous areas, including those areas likely to be affected by land subsidence, sea level rise, or fluctuating water levels of the Great Lakes, and improved predictability in governmental decision making.”

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states and territories.)*

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, identify geographic areas in the coastal zone subject to use conflicts that may be able to be addressed through a SAMP. This can include areas that are already covered by a SAMP but where new issues or conflicts have emerged that are not addressed through the current SAMP.

Geographic Area	Opportunities for New or Updated Special Area Management Plans Major conflicts/issues
None	None

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends of SAMPs since the last assessment.
N/A

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state- or territory-level management changes (positive or negative) that could help prepare and implement SAMPs in the coastal zone.

Significant Changes in Special Area Management Planning

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
SAMP policies, or case law interpreting these	N	N	N
SAMP plans	N	N	N

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium _____
Low X

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

No gaps have been identified that can be addressed by a SAMP, which targets use conflicts within a geographic area. Needs and potential information gaps relevant to the Alabama Coastal Area can be more appropriately addressed under one of the other eight enhancement objectives.

Stakeholder Response:

Special area management planning was ranked 3rd in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of 16 individual responses seven ranked special area management planning as a top three priority. Special area management planning received four votes ranking it first priority, two votes ranking it second highest, and one for third highest. All groups were represented in the seven responses.

Ocean and Great Lakes Resources

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Planning for the use of ocean [and Great Lakes] resources.
§309(a)(7)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states and territories.)*

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. Understanding the ocean and Great Lakes economy can help improve management of the resources it depends on. Using Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW),¹⁴ indicate the status of the ocean and Great Lakes economy as of 2021 (the most recent data) in the tables below. Include graphs and figures, as appropriate, to help illustrate the information. Note ENOW data are not available for the territories. The territories can provide alternative data, if available, or a general narrative, to capture the value of their ocean economy.

Status of Ocean and Great Lakes Economy for Coastal Counties (2021)

	All Ocean Sectors	Living Resources	Marine Construction	Ship & Boat Building	Marine Transportation	Offshore Mineral Extraction	Tourism & Recreation
Employment (# of Jobs)	38,009	1,345	493	3,953	8,204	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	19,498
Establishments (# of Establishments)	1,354	35	24	30	141	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	1,077
Wages (Millions of Dollars)	1.3 billion	25.3	88.4	284.4	302.3	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	484.2
GDP (Millions of Dollars)	2 billion	56	48.4	683.3	393.5	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	1.1 billion

¹⁴coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/enow.html. If you select any coastal county for your state, you are directed to various data displays for that county. In the upper left of the screen, click the “State” box, to the left of the county box so that the state name will be highlighted. Now the data will reflect statewide data for all of the state’s coastal counties. Make sure “2021” is selected for the year (top right corner). You can then click through the sector types by selecting the icons along the top and the type of economic data (employment, wages, GDP, etc.), by clicking through the icons on the left.

Change in Ocean and Great Lakes Economy for Baldwin County (2005-2021)¹⁵

	All Ocean Sectors	Living Resources	Marine Construction	Ship & Boat Building	Marine Transportation	Offshore Mineral Extraction	Tourism & Recreation
Employment (# of Jobs)	8,108	261	44	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	648	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	7,250
Establishments (# of Establishments)	339	5	-2	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	5	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	318
Wages (Millions of Dollars)	305.9	1.8	4.8	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	25.8	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	272.9
GDP (Millions of Dollars)	645.5	3.4	9.7	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	30.5	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	613.6

Change in Ocean and Great Lakes Economy for Mobile County (2005-2021)¹⁶

	All Ocean Sectors	Living Resources	Marine Construction	Ship & Boat Building	Marine Transportation	Offshore Mineral Extraction	Tourism & Recreation
Employment (# of Jobs)	13,850	310	90	1,617	6,767	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	1,326
Establishments (# of Establishments)	108	-3	4	-3	-8	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	120
Wages (Millions of Dollars)	617	9.7	6.6	177.7	241.1	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	69.4
GDP (Millions of Dollars)	293.6	25.4	13.2	437.9	297.2	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	148.6

Change in Ocean and Great Lakes Economy for Coastal Counties Merged (2005-2021)¹⁷

	All Ocean Sectors	Living Resources	Marine Construction	Ship & Boat Building	Marine Transportation	Offshore Mineral Extraction	Tourism & Recreation
Employment (# of Jobs)	21,985	571	134	1,617	7,415	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	8,576

¹⁵ Trend data is available at the bottom of the page for each sector and type of economic data. Mouse over the data points for 2005 and 2021 to obtain the actual values and determine the change by subtracting 2005 data from 2021.

¹⁶ Trend data is available at the bottom of the page for each sector and type of economic data. Mouse over the data points for 2005 and 2021 to obtain the actual values and determine the change by subtracting 2005 data from 2021.

¹⁷ Trend data is available at the bottom of the page for each sector and type of economic data. Mouse over the data points for 2005 and 2021 to obtain the actual values and determine the change by subtracting 2005 data from 2021.

Establishments (# of Establishments)	447	2	2	-3	-3	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	438
Wages (Millions of Dollars)	922.9	11.5	10.8	177.7	266.9	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	342.3
GDP (Millions of Dollars)	939.1	28.8	22.9	437.9	327.7	<i>data not available on ENOW</i>	762.2

While updated data for offshore mineral extraction is not available on the *Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW)* data viewer tool, natural gas and oil production in the near-shore waters of Alabama is an important component of the coastal economy. The [State of Alabama Oil and Gas Board](#) maintains data on offshore production. Production in 2005 was reported as 153,737,172 Mcf of natural gas and 37,323 barrels of oil. Yearly output has steadily declined in the interim with production in 2024 reported as 30,279,967 Mcf of natural gas and 13,661 barrels of oil.

2. Understanding existing uses within ocean and Great Lakes waters can help reduce use conflicts and minimize threats when planning for ocean and Great Lakes resources. Using Ocean Reports,¹⁸ indicate the number of uses within the ocean or Great Lakes waters off of your state. To avoid duplication, energy uses (including pipelines and cables) are reported under “Energy and Government Facility Siting” in the following template. However, feel free to include energy uses in this table as well if listing all uses within ocean and Great Lakes waters in one place is preferred. Add additional lines, as needed, to include additional uses that are important to your state. Note: The Ocean Reports tool does not include data for the Great Lakes states. Great Lakes states should fill in the table as best they can using other data sources.

Uses within Ocean or Great Lakes Waters

Type of Use	Number of Sites
Federal sand and gravel leases (<i>Completed</i>)	0
Federal sand and gravel leases (<i>Active</i>)	1
Federal sand and gravel leases (<i>Expired</i>)	0
Federal sand and gravel leases (<i>Proposed</i>)	0
Beach Nourishment Projects	5
Ocean Disposal Sites	52
Principle Ports (<i>Number and Total Tonnage</i>)	1 port 58,594,752/year
Coastal Maintained Channels	19
Designated Anchorage Areas	2
Danger Zones and Restricted Areas	2
Other (please specify)	

¹⁸ coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/ort.html. Select the “view quick reports” button and enter the name of your state or territory in the search bar. Some larger states may have the “quick reports” for their state waters broken into several different reports. Click on the “state waters” reports to view. Note the Ocean Reports tool also generates “quick reports” for national estuarine research reserve boundaries in your state. These reports are just a subset of the “state waters” report(s) so you can ignore the reserve “quick reports.” Use the icons on the left hand side to select different categories: general information, energy and minerals, natural resources and conservation, oceanographic and biophysical, transportation and infrastructure, and economics and commerce. Scroll through each category to find the data needed to complete the table. The top six categories in the table above are in the “energy and minerals” section while the other information to complete the table can be found under the “transportation and infrastructure” section.

3. In the table below, characterize how the threats to and use conflicts over ocean and Great Lakes resources in the state's or territory's coastal zone have changed since the last assessment.

Significant Changes to Ocean and Great Lakes Resources and Uses

Resource/Use Change in the Threat to the Resource or Use Conflict	Since Last Assessment (↑, ↓, -, unknown)
Benthic habitat (including coral reefs)	-
Living marine resources (fish, shellfish, marine mammals, birds, etc.)	-
Sand/gravel	-
Cultural/historic	-
Other (please specify)	-
Transportation/navigation	-
Offshore development ¹⁹	-
Energy production	-
Fishing (commercial and recreational)	-
Recreation/tourism	-
Sand/gravel extraction	-
Dredge disposal	-
Aquaculture	-
Other (please specify)	-

4. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends of ocean and Great Lakes resources or threats to those resources since the last assessment to augment the national data sets.

N/A

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if any significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) in the management of ocean and Great Lakes resources have occurred since the last assessment?

¹⁹ Offshore development includes underwater cables and pipelines, although any infrastructure specifically associated with the energy industry should be captured under the “energy production” category.

Significant Changes to Management of Ocean and Great Lakes Resources

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	N
Regional comprehensive ocean/Great Lakes management plans	N	N	N
State comprehensive ocean/Great Lakes management plans	N	N	N
Single-sector management plans	N	N	N

2. Indicate if your state or territory has a comprehensive ocean or Great Lakes management plan.

Comprehensive Ocean/Great Lakes Management Plan	State Plan	Regional Plan
Completed plan (Y/N) (If yes, specify year completed)	N	N
Under development (Y/N)	N	N
Web address (if available)	-	-
Area covered by plan	-	-

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium _____
Low X

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

No new significant threats for ocean resources were identified during this assessment.

Stakeholder Responses:

Ocean resources ranked 5th in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of 16 individual responses three ranked ocean resources as a top three priority. Two responses ranked ocean resources as a second highest priority and one response ranked ocean resources as third highest. Three groups were represented in the three responses: a non-profit, a city municipality, and a private contractor.

Energy and Government Facility Siting

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Adoption of procedures and enforceable policies to help facilitate the siting of energy facilities and Government facilities and energy-related activities and Government activities which may be of greater than local significance. §309(a)(8)²⁰

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: (*Must be completed by all states and territories.*)

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, characterize the status and trends of different types of energy facilities and activities in the state's or territory's coastal zone based on best-available data. If available, identify the approximate number of facilities by type. For ocean-facing states and territories (not Great Lakes states), Ocean Reports²¹ includes existing data for many energy facilities and activities.

²⁰ CZMA § 309(a)(8) is derived from program approval requirements in CZMA § 306(d)(8), which states:

“The management program provides for adequate consideration of the national interest involved in planning for, and managing the coastal zone, including the siting of facilities such as energy facilities which are of greater than local significance. In the case of energy facilities, the Secretary shall find that the State has given consideration to any applicable national or interstate energy plan or program.” NOAA regulations at 15 C.F.R. § 923.52 further describes what states need to do regarding national interest and consideration of interests that are greater than local interests.

²¹ coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/ort.html. Select the “view quick reports” button and enter the name of your state or territory in the search bar. Some larger states may have the “quick reports” for their state waters broken into several different reports. Click on the “state waters” reports to view. Note the Ocean Reports tool also generates “quick reports” for national estuarine research reserve boundaries in your state but this is just a subset of the “state waters” report(s) so you can ignore the reserve “quick reports.” Click on the wind turbine icon on the left (“energy and minerals”) for information on energy production. While outside your coastal zone, you may also want to consider facilities/activities in “federal waters” that may have effects on your coastal zone.

Status and Trends in Energy Facilities and Activities in the Coastal Zone

Type of Energy Facility/Activity	Exists in Coastal Zone (# or Y/N)	Change in Existing Facilities/Activities Since Last Assessment (↑, ↓, -, unknown)	Proposed in Coastal Zone (# or Y/N)	Change in Proposed Facilities/Activities Since Last Assessment (↑, ↓, -, unknown)
Pipelines	Y	—	N	—
Electrical grid (transmission cables)	N	N	N	—
Ports	1	—	N	—
Liquid natural gas (LNG)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Oil)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Gas)	4	—	Y	—
James M. Barry Plant – Mobile Co (Coal and gas)	1	↑	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Nuclear)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Wind)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Wave)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Tidal)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Current.ocean, lake, river)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Hydropower)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Ocean thermal energy conversion)	0	—	N	—
Electric Power Facilities (Solar)	1	↑	Y	↑
Electric Power Facilities (Biomass)	1	—	N	—
Renewable Natural Gas (RNG)	2	↑	N	—

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific information, data, or reports on the status and trends for energy facilities and activities of greater than local significance in the coastal zone since the last assessment.

No facilities and activities of greater than local significance have been proposed or developed since the last assessment.

3. Briefly characterize the existing status and trends for federal government facilities and activities of greater than local significance²² in the state's coastal zone since the last assessment.

No facilities and activities of greater than local significance have been proposed or developed since the last assessment.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) that could facilitate or impede energy and government facility siting and activities have occurred since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Energy and Government Facility Management

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpretations	Y	N	N
State comprehensive siting plans or procedures	Y	N	N

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium _____
Low X

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

There were no significant changes in energy siting or activities since the previous assessment.

Stakeholder response:

Energy and government facility siting ranked 9th in priority out of nine enhancement areas. Out of 16 individual responses none ranked energy and government facility siting as a top three priority.

²² The CMP should make its own assessment of what government facilities may be considered "greater than local significance" in its coastal zone, but these facilities could include military installations or a significant federal government complex. An individual federal building may not rise to a level worthy of discussion here beyond a very cursory (if any at all) mention.

Aquaculture

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Adoption of procedures and policies to evaluate and facilitate the siting of public and private aquaculture facilities in the coastal zone, which will enable states to formulate, administer, and implement strategic plans for marine aquaculture. §309(a)(9)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: (*Must be completed by all states and territories.*)

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, characterize the existing status and trends of aquaculture facilities in the state's coastal zone based on the best-available data. Your state Sea Grant Program may have information to help with this assessment.²³

Status and Trends of Aquaculture Facilities and Activities

Type of Facility/Activity	Number of Facilities ²⁴	Approximate Economic Value	Change Since Last Assessment (↑, ↓, -, unknown)
Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture	19	~ \$3,200,000 farm gate value (2023)	↓ in facilities, ↑ in Economic Value
Gulf of Mexico Integrated Multitrophic Aquaculture demonstration project	1	unknown	↑

The Gulf of Mexico Integrated Multitrophic Aquaculture demonstration project is a three-year pilot project (deployed in 2025) to assess the viability of offshore floating platforms to produce Red Drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*), Eastern Oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) and Graceful Red Seaweed (*Gracilaria tikvahiae*). The project is a collaborative effort between the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the University of Southern Mississippi, and the University of New Hampshire. Funding for the project was provided by NOAA through the *Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Aquaculture Program*.

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends or potential impacts from aquaculture activities in the coastal zone since the last assessment.

As reported in the [Alabama Shellfish Aquaculture Situation and Outlook Report: Production Year 2023 \(ANR-2997\)](#)

- Ten commercial oyster aquaculture operations reported harvests in Alabama.

²³ While focused on statewide aquaculture data rather than just within the coastal zone, the *Census of Aquaculture* (agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Census_of_Aquaculture/) may help in developing your aquaculture assessment. The census is conducted every 10 years and the last report was released in 2018. The report provides a variety of state-specific aquaculture data to understand current status and recent trends.

²⁴ Be as specific as possible. For example, if you have specific information of the number of each type of facility or activity, note that. If you only have approximate figures, note "more than" or "approximately" before the number. If information is unknown, note that and use the narrative section below to provide a brief qualitative description based on the best information available.

- The farm gate value for Alabama commercial oyster farms was estimated to be \$3,200,000 based on personal conversations with farmers regarding wholesale prices.
- The number of farmed single-market oysters harvested based on converting meat pounds was estimated at 5.2 million*.
- One commercial hatchery and two commercial nurseries were operational in Alabama.

Sixty-one acres were permitted for commercial oyster aquaculture with 45 acres used in production.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) that could facilitate or impede the siting of public or private aquaculture facilities in the coastal zone.

Significant Changes in Aquaculture Management

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Aquaculture comprehensive siting plans or procedures	Y	N	Y
Other aquaculture statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	N	N

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
 - a. Describe the significance of the changes;
 - b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes; and
 - c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

Since the previous assessment, the ADCNR has developed a comprehensive [Alabama Oyster Aquaculture Planning and Siting Guide](#). The site provides a comprehensive guide for current and prospective oyster farmers and contains a tool to guide site selection for new oyster farms.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium _____
Low X

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

The State of Alabama has in place programs and policies to guide and support the growth of the aquaculture industry outside of the purview of the ACAMP.

Stakeholder Response:

Aquaculture ranked 8th in priority out of the nine enhancement areas. Out of 16 individual responses three responses ranked aquaculture a top three priority. One response ranked aquaculture as second highest priority and one response ranked it as third highest. Two groups were represented in the three responses: a government entity and a non-profit.

Phase II Assessment

Wetlands

In-Depth Resource Characterization

Purpose: To determine key problems and opportunities to improve the CMP's ability to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands.

1. What are the three most significant existing or emerging physical stressors or threats to wetlands within your coastal zone? Indicate the geographic scope of the stressor, i.e., is it prevalent throughout your coastal zone, or are there specific areas that are most threatened? Stressors can be development/fill; hydrological alteration/channelization; erosion; pollution; invasive species; freshwater input; sea level rise/Great Lakes level change; or other (please specify).

	Stressor/Threat	Geographic Scope (throughout coastal zone or specific areas most threatened)
Stressor 1	Hydrologic Alteration	Functional wetlands without surface connection to navigable water
Stressor 2	Development/Fill	Throughout
Stressor 3	Sea level rise	Erosion and/or conversion of coastal salt marsh

2. Briefly explain why these are currently the most significant stressors or threats to wetlands within your coastal zone. Cite stakeholder input and/or existing reports or studies to support this assessment.

The State of Alabama's Estuaries and Coast (2025 MBNEP) provides the most recent summary related to stressors and threats to wetlands in coastal Alabama. Hydrologic alteration and fill related to development contributing to the loss of isolated wetlands (non-jurisdictional) is more difficult to evaluate and is a stressor burden that generally falls most directly on local governments for detection and management.

3. Are there emerging issues of concern but which lack sufficient information to evaluate the level of the potential threat? If so, please list. Include additional lines if needed.

Emerging Issue	Information Needed
n/a	

In-Depth Management Characterization

Purpose: To determine the effectiveness of management efforts to address identified problems related to the wetlands enhancement objective.

1. For each additional wetland management category below that was not already discussed as part of the Phase I assessment, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) have occurred since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Wetland Management

Management Category	Employed By State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Wetland assessment methodologies	Y	Y	N
Wetland mapping and GIS	Y	N	N
Watershed or special area management plans addressing wetlands	Y	Y	N
Wetland technical assistance, education, and outreach	Y	Y	N
Other (please specify)			

3. Identify and describe the conclusions of any studies that have been done that illustrate the effectiveness of the state's or territory's management efforts in protecting, restoring, and enhancing coastal wetlands since the last assessment. If none, is there any information that you are lacking to assess the effectiveness of the state's or territory's management efforts?

The State of Alabama's Estuaries and Coast (2025 MBNEP) documents the considerable success of the partners comprising the MBNEP management conference in protecting and restoring Alabama's coastal wetlands through large scale living shoreline installations, targeted acquisition of coastal habitats, and riparian restoration efforts. Many of these efforts have been funded through DWH restoration funding (project status can be viewed at the [Alabama Coastal Restoration Project Map](#)) and State GOMESA funding. While these efforts have been overwhelmingly successful and high-profile, they are primarily targeted at tidally influenced wetlands and often publicly owned areas. Loss of isolated wetlands (non-jurisdictional) is more difficult to manage and monitor and is often most directly managed at the local government level.

Identification of Priorities

1. Considering changes in wetlands and wetland management since the last assessment and stakeholder input, identify and briefly describe the top one to three management priorities where there is the greatest opportunity for the CMP to improve its ability to more effectively respond to significant wetlands stressors. (Approximately 1-3 sentences per management priority.)

Management Priority 1: Increasing Consideration of Wetland Conservation in Local Government Planning Documents

Description: The ACAMP plays an important role in providing technical assistance and providing funding for local government comprehensive planning efforts through its annual competitive call for projects and subsequently administering subawards. Currently, there has been no assessment of consistency, successful practices, and potential gaps in the resulting comprehensive planning documents (or local government planning documents development through other funding sources). Such an assessment could lead to information sharing related to planning document components, successful planning and subsequent practices, efficiencies in local ordinance development and potential adoption, and enhanced success in addressing wetland conservation efforts in Alabama on a local level.

2. Identify and briefly explain priority needs and information gaps the CMP has to help it address the management priorities identified above. The needs and gaps identified here do not need to be limited to those items that will be addressed through a Section 309 strategy but should include any items that will be part of a strategy.

Priority Needs	Need? (Y or N)	Brief Explanation of Need/Gap
Research	Y	Identification and analysis of local government comprehensive planning documents
Mapping/GIS	N	
Data and information management	N	
Training/capacity building	Y	Provide technical assistance and potentially training to enhance local government capacity to support comprehensive planning efforts
Decision-support tools	N	
Communication and outreach	Y	Communication of case studies and successful planning practices to local governments
Other (specify)		

Enhancement Area Strategy Development

1. Will the CMP develop one or more strategies for this enhancement area?

Yes X
No _____

2. Briefly explain why a strategy will or will not be developed for this enhancement area.

A core function of the ACAMP is to provide technical assistance to local governments in support of local planning efforts and, as possible, to also provide funding assistance for such efforts. Developing a strategy to understand and enhance how wetland conservation is addressed by local governments through planning efforts and subsequent local decision making in implementation of those efforts would support local governments and enhance coastal management in Alabama.

Coastal Hazards

In-Depth Resource Characterization

Purpose: To determine key problems and opportunities to improve the CMP's ability to prevent or significantly reduce coastal hazard risks by eliminating development and redevelopment in high-hazard areas and managing the effects of potential sea level rise and Great Lakes level change.

1. Based on the characterization of coastal hazard risk, what are the three most significant coastal hazards²⁵ within your coastal zone? Also indicate the geographic scope of the hazard, i.e., is it prevalent throughout the coastal zone, or are there specific areas most at risk?

	Type of Hazard	Geographic Scope (throughout coastal zone or specific areas most threatened)
Hazard 1	Storm surge/erosion	Shorelines, riparian areas
Hazard 2	Flooding	Prevalent throughout
Hazard 3	Tropical storm winds	Prevalent throughout

2. Briefly explain why these are currently the most significant coastal hazards within the coastal zone. Cite stakeholder input and/or existing reports or studies to support this assessment.

Alabama experiences significant annual weather events that occur throughout the year including hurricanes (June-November), major rainstorms, high winds, lightning, hail, flash floods and tornados. Because of potential risk from storms, flooding, and sea level rise, there is a continuing need to assist coastal communities in understanding the benefits and use of various methods of risk assessment tools and planning opportunities, as well as maintaining and enhancing at-risk coastal resources both before and after a hazardous event.

3. Are there emerging issues of concern, but which lack sufficient information to evaluate the level of the potential threat? If so, please list. Include additional lines if needed.

Emerging Issue	Information Needed
n/a	

In-Depth Management Characterization

Purpose: To determine the effectiveness of management efforts to address identified problems related to the coastal hazards enhancement objective.

1. For each coastal hazard management category below, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there has been a significant change since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Coastal Hazards Statutes, Regulations, and Policies

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Change Since the Last Assessment (Y or N)
Shorefront setbacks/no build areas	Y	N	N

²⁵ See list of coastal hazards on pg. 27 of this assessment template.

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Change Since the Last Assessment (Y or N)
Rolling easements	N	N	N
Repair/rebuilding restrictions	Y	Y	N
Hard shoreline protection structure restrictions	Y	Y	N
Promotion of alternative shoreline stabilization methodologies (i.e., living shorelines/green infrastructure)	Y	Y	Y
Repair/replacement of shore protection structure restrictions	Y	Y	N
Inlet management	Y	N	N
Protection of important natural resources for hazard mitigation benefits (e.g., dunes, wetlands, barrier islands, coral reefs) (other than setbacks/no build areas)	Y	Y	N
Repetitive flood loss policies (e.g., relocation, buyouts)	N	N	N
Freeboard requirements	Y	N	N
Real estate sales disclosure requirements	N	N	N
Restrictions on publicly funded infrastructure	Y	N	N
Infrastructure protection (e.g., considering hazards in siting and design)	Y	Y	N
Other (please specify)			

Significant Changes to Coastal Hazard Management Planning Programs or Initiatives

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Change Since the Last Assessment (Y or N)
Hazard mitigation plans	Y	Y	N
Sea level rise/Great Lake level change or adaptation plans	Y	Y	N
Statewide requirement for local post-disaster recovery planning	N	N	N
Sediment management plans	Y	N	N
Beach nourishment plans	Y	N	N
Special Area Management Plans (that address hazards issues)	N	N	N
Managed retreat plans	N	N	N
Other (please specify)			

Significant Changes to Coastal Hazard Research, Mapping, and Education Programs or Initiatives

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Change Since the Last Assessment (Y or N)
General hazards mapping or modeling	Y	Y	Y
Sea level rise mapping or modeling	Y	Y	Y
Hazards monitoring (e.g., erosion rate, shoreline change, high-water marks)	Y	Y	N
Hazards education and outreach	Y	Y	N
Other (please specify)			

State legislation (AL Code § 9-7-13.1) was enacted in 2024 to encourage the use of living shoreline techniques in coastal areas in lieu of vertical seawalls, revetments, or bulkheads. The legislation authorized a 50% reduction of fees charges for dredge permits for severance of sediments from adjacent state-owned submerged lands for the construction of residential living shorelines.

The [Alabama Coastal Comprehensive Plan](#) is a high-level planning tool commissioned by the ADCNR and developed by the USACE in 2023 to identify coastal vulnerabilities and characterize the resilience of both built and natural environments under a suite of sea level change and coastal storm intensities. The tool highlights existing plans that promote resilience, identifies social, economic, and environmental visioning gathered from stakeholder interactions, and highlights projects and other opportunities to develop coastal resilience. The interactive mapper allows planners to visualize potential property losses under a range of conditions and to identify vulnerabilities within their communities. ACAMP staff were involved in the conceptualization, development, and pilot testing of the tool.

2. Identify and describe the conclusions of any studies that have been done that illustrate the effectiveness of the state's management efforts in addressing coastal hazards since the last assessment. If none, is there any information that you are lacking to assess the effectiveness of the state's management efforts?

There have been no comprehensive studies to date that specifically assess the effectiveness of management efforts in addressing coastal hazards. Documents such as the State of Alabama's Estuaries and Coast (2025 MBNEP) summarize many of the restoration and regulatory efforts that have been implemented to address coastal hazards. However, the cumulative beneficial impact of these efforts in mitigating coastal hazards has not been quantified. While multiple state agencies provide preparedness/response technical and on-the-ground assistance (as well as some potential restoration funding opportunities), much of the burden for mitigating and subsequently responding to coastal hazards falls most immediately on local municipal and county governments. There is not currently a comprehensive assessment of the various techniques, ordinances, planning opportunities/efforts or guidance documents employed by local governments to address mitigation of coastal hazards.

Identification of Priorities

1. Considering changes in coastal hazard risk and coastal hazard management since the last assessment and stakeholder input, identify and briefly describe the top one to three management

priorities where there is the greatest opportunity for the CMP to improve its ability to more effectively address the most significant hazard risks. (*Approximately 1-3 sentences per management priority.*)

Management Priority 1: Increase consideration of coastal hazards in local government planning documents.

Description: The ACAMP plays an important role in providing technical assistance and providing funding for local government comprehensive planning efforts through its annual competitive call for projects and subsequently administering subawards. Currently, there has been no assessment of consistency, successful practices, and potential gaps in the resulting comprehensive planning documents (or local government planning documents developed through other funding sources). Such an assessment could lead to information sharing related to planning document components, successful planning and subsequent practices, efficiencies in local ordinance development and potential adoption, and enhanced success in addressing coastal hazards in Alabama on a local level.

2. Identify and briefly explain priority needs and information gaps the CMP has for addressing the management priorities identified above. The needs and gaps identified here should not be limited to those items that will be addressed through a Section 309 strategy but should include any items that will be part of a strategy.

Priority Needs	Need? (Y or N)	Brief Explanation of Need/Gap
Research	Y	Identification and analysis of local government comprehensive planning documents
Mapping/GIS/modeling	N	
Data and information management	N	
Training/Capacity building	Y	Provide technical assistance and potentially training to enhance local government capacity to support comprehensive planning efforts
Decision-support tools	N	
Communication and outreach	Y	Communication of case studies and successful planning practices to local governments
Other (specify)		

Enhancement Area Strategy Development

1. Will the CMP develop one or more strategies for this enhancement area?

Yes X
No _____

2. Briefly explain why a strategy will or will not be developed for this enhancement area.

A core function of the ACAMP is to provide technical assistance to local governments in support local planning efforts and, as possible, to also provide funding assistance for such efforts. Developing a strategy to understand and enhance how coastal hazards are addressed by local governments through planning efforts and subsequent local decision making in implementation of those efforts would support local governments and enhance coastal management in Alabama.

Strategy: Enhance Local Government Planning for Wetland Conservation and Coastal Hazards

I. Issue Area(s)

A. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will *primarily* support the following high-priority enhancement area(s) (*check no more than two*):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy and Government Facility Siting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetlands
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal Hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Debris
<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean/Great Lakes Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Access
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Area Management Planning	

B. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will also support the following enhancement areas (*check all that apply*):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy and Government Facility Siting	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands
<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Debris
<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean/Great Lakes Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Access
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Area Management Planning	

II. Strategy Description

A. The proposed strategy will lead to, or implement, the following types of program changes (*check all that apply*):

- A change to coastal zone boundaries;
- New or revised authorities, including statutes, regulations, enforceable policies, administrative decisions, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement/understanding;
- New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances;
- New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs;
- New or revised special area management plans (SAMP) or plans for areas of particular concern (APC) including enforceable policies and other necessary implementation mechanisms or criteria and procedures for designating and managing APCs; and,
- New or revised guidelines, procedures, and policy documents which are formally adopted by a state or territory and provide specific interpretations of enforceable CZM program policies to applicants, local government, and other agencies that will result in meaningful improvements in coastal resource management.

B. **Strategy Goal:** Increase consideration of wetland conservation and coastal hazards in local government comprehensive planning documents in coastal Alabama.

C. Description

Comprehensive planning is a tool used by local governments to develop and adopt a policy document to guide future growth, development, infrastructure needs, and land use planning. The

plans are typically developed to encompass a 5 to 15-year planning horizon and are developed in accordance with Alabama Code § 11-52-8 through § 11-52-10. The ACAMP has historically provided pass-through Coastal Zone Management Act funding to local governments pursuant to a competitive call for project proposals for the development and updating of comprehensive planning and zoning documents.

This project will provide for a review of existing local government comprehensive planning and zoning documents to identify planning components, planning document commonalities, successful practices, gaps, and model ordinances that may prove useful to other local governments as they consider, develop and update planning documents in the rapidly changing Alabama coastal area. Interviews will be conducted with local municipal and county practitioners to identify relevant case studies demonstrating successful planning and implementation efforts. Following the plan review exercise and interviews, additional consultation with ACAMP staff will inform development of a summary report highlighting findings and successful efforts that is designed to assist local government decision makers. In the final two years of the strategy, funding opportunities will be made available to local governments on a competitive basis to develop and update comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to better address coastal hazards and wetland conservation needs.

III. Needs and Gaps Addressed

This strategy will address the need to evaluate current comprehensive planning documents to better understand how local governments are addressing coastal hazards and wetland conservation. By critically reviewing existing planning documents, the resulting analysis of findings and case studies can be utilized to develop a report providing planners and local government decision makers with a menu of plan components and practices that have proven successful for other local governments that can be tailored to specific needs, threats and stressors found within various coastal communities across coastal Alabama. Resource materials produced as a result of the plan review will prove to be useful as training and support materials for ACAMP staff as they provide technical support to local governments in the development of comprehensive plans. Finally, this strategy will provide competitive funding for local governments to enhance consideration and implementation of wetland conservation and coastal hazards measures in comprehensive planning documents.

IV. Benefits to Coastal Management

Development and implementation of this strategy will result in increased awareness of potential planning document component options and associated opportunities for successful plan implementation, thereby supporting local government efforts to implement strategies designed to address coastal hazards and wetland conservation. This strategy could also increase consistency in coastal management as well as the leveraging of regulatory frameworks in the event local governments adopt similar strategies and ordinances across their jurisdictional boundaries. Enhancing consideration of coastal hazards also may enhance community resilience and support more efficient recovery from storm and flooding events.

V. Likelihood of Success

The strategy goal has a high likelihood of success during the assessment cycle. This strategy aligns well with the current ACAMP implementation, in which the program provides technical support and training to local governments while preserving local autonomy to assess place-based needs and govern within individual local policy frameworks. The ACAMP is committed to maintaining

future support for the strategy by providing continued technical support and programmatic funding to accomplish comprehensive planning with enhanced consideration of coastal hazards and wetland conservation.

VI. Strategy Work Plan

Strategy Goal: Increase consideration of wetland conservation and coastal hazards in local government comprehensive planning documents in coastal Alabama.

Total Years:5

Total Budget: \$460,000

Year(s): 1-3

Description of activities: University of South Alabama provides graduate research assistant and faculty advisor to conduct interviews with municipal planners, conduct policy document review, and develop summary materials in consultation with ACAMP staff to assist and inform local government decision makers. ACAMP staff will support the research effort by providing contacts, introductions, and technical support as needed.

Major Milestone(s): March 2028 - Complete policy document review, interviews with local government planners, consultation with ACAMP staff, and development of written materials.

With support of ACAMP staff, researchers will engage with the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, Plan Lower Alabama Now workgroup, and the MBNEP Government Networks Committee to communicate findings and provide technical training on summary materials.

Budget: \$163,046 (includes 30 months of salary/fringe for Ph.D. student, 2.5 months of salary fringe for PI/Faculty Advisor, travel support to conduct interviews and attend regional workshops related to coastal hazards, supplies, and indirect charges).

Year(s): 4-5

Description of activities: Provide competitive subawards to 4-5 local government entities to update comprehensive planning documents and/or zoning regulations/ordinances to reflect enhanced consideration of coastal hazards and wetland conservation. ACAMP staff will develop a competitive call for comprehensive planning project proposals.

Major Milestone(s): January 2028- Conduct year 4-5 request for competitive proposals from municipalities.

2029-2030- Adoption of enhanced comprehensive planning documents by local municipal governments (typically city council approval).

Budget: \$296,954 (comprehensive plan updates estimated at \$60,000-\$80,000 per plan)

VII. Fiscal and Technical Needs

A. Fiscal Needs:

Section 309 funding will be sufficient to carry out this proposed strategy during the five-year period. Continuation of the strategy beyond the period will be supported, as possible, through 306 operations funding and competitive subaward funding opportunities with local match provided by local governments.

B. Technical Needs:

The ACAMP will enter into a cooperative agreement with the University of South Alabama Stokes School of Marine and Environmental Sciences to conduct the policy/document review, conduct interviews with local government practitioners, and through additional consultation with ACAMP staff develop summary materials to support local government decision makers. The identified principal investigator has expertise in coastal hazards, community resilience, and environmental policy.

VIII. Projects of Special Merit (Optional)

N/A

5-Year Budget Summary by Strategy

Strategy Title	Anticipated Funding Source (309 or Other)	Year 1 Funding	Year 2 Funding	Year 3 Funding	Year 4 Funding	Year 5 Funding	Total Funding
Enhance Local Government Planning for Wetland Conservation and Coastal Hazards	309	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$460,000
Total Funding		\$92,000	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$460,000

Summary of Stakeholder and Public Comment

Stakeholder Groups

Plan Lower Alabama Now
MBNEP Project Implementation Committee
MBNEP Government Networks Committee
MBNEP Science Advisory Committee

In general, stakeholders responded to the self-assessment were most concerned with wetland loss and the risks associated with coastal hazards. Many mentioned rapid development and population growth in coastal Alabama and pointed out the need to protect natural resources in the face of this growth. Water quality degradation and habitat loss associated with cumulative and secondary impacts were also frequently cited as important issues to be addressed. One respondent pointed out the value of comprehensive planning in guiding land use and development and suggested that consistent guidance would be helpful in standardizing land use planning across the coastal area. Several respondents noted the need for additional land acquisition both for habitat protection and as sites for public access. An

increased need for planning across all highly ranked enhancement areas was consistently mentioned by many respondents.

Summary of Public Comment and ACAMP Response

[To be completed following close of the Draft Strategy and Assessment Comment Period]