



Fall 2017

Compact Currents is a quarterly newsletter from the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact highlighting the progress of the Compact, the counties, and the municipalities in Southeast Florida.

The Business of Resilience



On December 14 and 15, more than 700 individuals—including business leaders; local, state, and federal government officials; and climate experts—will gather in Fort Lauderdale for the 9th Annual [Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit](#) to discuss climate change, sea level rise, renewable energy, and resilience. This year’s sold-out Summit will focus on “The Business of Resilience,” engaging the business and wider community in critical planning to secure economic opportunities for the region as counties and cities address challenges posed by sea level rise and climate change.

This year’s Summit is on track to bring together a record number of participants, reflecting the growing need for government and private sector collaboration to build resilient economies and regional prosperity. The Summit will feature panels and keynotes from local and national leaders, as well as the unveiling of the 2017 [Regional Climate Action Plan](#) (RCAP 2.0).

Drawing on insights and lessons learned since the publication of the original RCAP in 2012—as well as feedback from local government staff, key

stakeholders, and the public—RCAP 2.0 includes new sections on economic resilience, equity, and public health, as well as updates and improvements to existing recommendations.

If you're unable to join us in person in Fort Lauderdale, [follow us on Twitter](#) at [@SE_FL_Compact](#) for real-time updates, explore RCAP 2.0 online when it launches at the event, and stay tuned for email updates about the exciting news and developments coming out of the Summit.

Case Study

The City of Delray Beach Partnership Increases Tree Canopy

Photos courtesy of Mark Cassini and Ana Pulzkin

Tree canopies are one of the most cost-effective resilience solutions a city can pursue. In forested states, the [U.S. Forest Service](#) recommends cities—like the City of Delray Beach—establish urban tree canopies covering 40-60% of the city. While [certain neighborhoods in Delray](#) have as much as 37% tree canopy, others—particularly limited-income neighborhoods like those in the northwestern part of the city—are closer to 19%. According to [Mark Cassini](#), co-founder of local nonprofit [Community Greening](#), this makes trees not just an environmental issue, but also an issue of social justice.

The City of Delray Beach has partnered with Community Greening to grow the urban tree canopy in neighborhoods across the city. With the help of more than 500 community volunteers, the partnership has planted over 500 trees in vacant lots, parks, and neighborhoods across Delray Beach. Biodiversity experts from [The Institute for Regional Conservation](#) work closely with Community Greening to ensure the species planted are appropriate for the local environment.

“Each native tree that is planted provides a range of ecosystem services for years to come. Each person who gets involved in a planting event leaves with a renewed passion to participate in meaningful sustainable actions, and becomes an advocate for trees and tree canopy,” said George Gann, director of The Institute for Regional Conservation.

Healthy [urban tree canopies](#) do more than improve air quality and filter water—they help mitigate extreme temperatures, reduce noise pollution, and improve quality of life. **The new trees in Delray Beach will save 438 kWh of energy, filter 20,509 gallons of stormwater, and remove 1,791 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.** They are an important component of community resilience—particularly as sea levels continue to rise and [heat waves](#) become more extreme and more frequent—which is why the RCAP highlights [urban tree canopy maintenance and restoration](#) as an important action for municipalities.

[Explore more case studies here.](#)

New Municipality Joins the Compact!

The **City of North Miami's** mayor and city council signed the Compact [Mayors' Climate Action Pledge](#) over the summer, becoming the Compact's newest municipal partner. The city joined a [group of 35 municipalities](#) formally committed to supporting the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact and the [Regional Climate Action Plan](#).

Partner Updates

New Micro-regional Collaborative

Every few months, a small group of community representatives known as the [Southeast Palm Beach County Micro-regional Group](#) meet for informal brown bag sessions. At these meetings, they talk about local climate impacts, share information and ideas for solutions, and work on policy recommendations that could be adopted by multiple communities.

What started as an inlet-to-inlet (Boca Raton to Boynton) collaborative with Boca Raton, Highland Beach, Delray Beach, and Boynton has expanded to include Lantana, Lake Worth, and Ocean Ridge. These Intracoastal Waterway municipalities are foregoing individual approaches—which can sometimes undercut efforts in neighboring communities—in favor of using collaboration and communication to amplify their efforts.

“It makes sense to work with our neighboring communities who face similar climate impacts on comparable time scales. The micro-regional group allows us to get to know our counterparts in neighboring communities, work through common challenges, share best practices, and achieve collective benefits,” said Rebecca Harvey, the sustainability coordinator for Boynton Beach.

“By strengthening relationships at the local level we can more easily ‘scale up’ to address regional goals articulated in the RCAP.”

After only two meetings, the representatives already have plans underway to create a joint public communications campaign, allowing them to have a consistent message and share costs. They’ve also discussed future opportunities to share findings from municipality-commissioned research.

As they continue to collaborate, the micro-regional collaborative will build momentum for implementing the RCAP by allowing the municipalities to share best practices, find efficiency through economies of scale, and take synergistic, complementary approaches to implementation.

Miami-Dade Awarded DOE Grants

The [Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience received three grants](#) from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to help with countywide greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts. These grants will offer assistance for best practices in energy and water efficiency, provide assessments to determine capacity for solar PV technology, and analyze trends in greenhouse gas emissions inventories.

News

Post-Irma Reflections:

[Miami-Dade Walking the Walk on Resilience](#)

Excerpts from post-Irma reflections on Miami-Dade's road to resilience from Miami-Dade County's Deputy Director of Water and Sewer Doug Yoder and Chief Resilience Officer Jim Murley. [Read the full article on Medium.](#)

Hurricane Irma was a visceral reminder to the citizens of Florida of a fact that governs so much of our lives: the Florida Coast is extremely vulnerable to hurricanes. Miami-Dade was spared the worst of Irma's wrath, and as we turn

towards our neighbors in the Keys, Naples, Puerto Rico, and throughout the Caribbean as they're reeling from Hurricane Maria, we're breathing something like a [sigh of relief](#). Unfortunately, science tells us—and other coastal communities around the world—to expect storms like Irma to happen again, with more frequency and severity, in the coming decades.

That's why we feel compelled to share the progress Miami-Dade County has made towards becoming more resilient, and to share lessons on how we've made that progress, in the hope that other coastal communities can learn from our experience and jumpstart their own progress on the road to resilience.

[[Read the full article](#) to learn how Miami-Dade County is building resilience and see the three factors they credit for their success.]

Post-Irma Reflections: Moving Forward in the Keys

Post-Irma reflections from Monroe County Sustainability Program Manager Rhonda Haag.

On September 10, 2017, Hurricane Irma made landfall in Monroe County as a Category 4 with maximum sustained winds of approximately 130 mph. The hurricane caused significant and widespread damage throughout the county, particularly to homes and businesses located in the Lower Keys. Roads and the county's 502 canals were littered with debris, vessels blew away or sank, and long-standing trees came toppling down.

The Florida Keys are part of the [Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary](#) and home to many endangered species, including the [Key Deer](#), so the environmental impacts were just as damaging as the structural and financial

impacts. Despite the devastation, the agency representatives and residents of the Keys immediately pulled together and began the long fight back to normalcy. Donations of all types poured in, and disaster assistance sites were setup to help its residents.

Many, many people worked long and tirelessly to restore the utilities, roads, and services, and to ensure the safety of residents and visitors. Just 60 days after Irma's landfall, a record amount of more than 1 million cubic yards of debris have been removed. Most businesses are back open, and many residents have returned home. Others are still displaced since their homes were destroyed. Officials are working feverishly to devise short and long term solutions to the housing shortage.

If there is a silver lining to this, it's that the county's resiliency efforts will move forward at an even greater pace to protect against the future effects of storms and sea level rise.

Make no mistake, the Keys are coming back strong and are ready for visitors, now and well into the future.

[Climate Cost to Southeast Florida Counties](#)

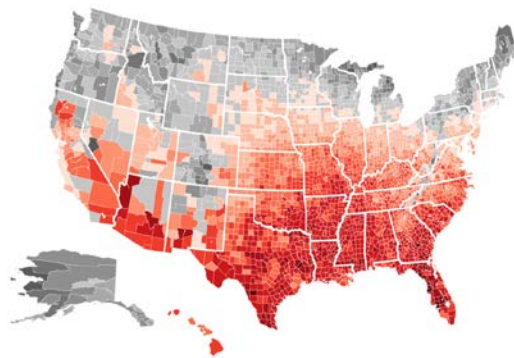


Photo credit: [Governing](#)

Researchers have calculated and [mapped the potential economic impact](#) climate change will have in each U.S. county. The study, titled [Estimating economic damage from climate change in the United States](#) and published in *Science*, linked climate projections with economic effects like mortality, labor productivity, energy demand, and crop yields. Counties in Florida will be especially hard hit because of a large coastal effect, combined with an already warm climate and a large population of elderly residents.

Upcoming Events

[Coastal Inundation Mapping Training](#)

Dec. 4-5 or Dec. 6-7 | FIU's Biscayne Bay Campus GIS Lab

Join the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) for a free course on mapping flooding scenarios using GIS. Co-hosted by [Miami-Dade County](#) and [Florida International University](#), the two-day workshop will feature hands-on exercises to teach participants how to identify different types of coastal inundation, interpret mapping products, access and explore data, create digital elevation models, and map coastal inundation (including sea level rise) using GIS. Participants are required to have intermediate GIS skills (minimum of six months). Registration preference will be given to people working for the public sector, nonprofits, or students. [Register here](#).

[9th Annual Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit](#)

Dec. 14-15 | Broward County Convention Center, Fort Lauderdale, FL



Innovative thinkers and leaders from business, government, higher education, and nonprofits will exchange ideas and dialogue at panel discussions and networking events at the [9th Annual Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit](#). This year's theme—"The Business of Resilience"—reflects the importance of having the private sector, local government, and residents all be in the business of resilience, for the long-term health of our community, economy, and environment. A [draft program](#) of this year's speakers and panels is available now. The event has sold out. You are invited to [register to join the waitlist](#).

[The Compact Calendar](#) is the central location for climate change events happening in Southeast Florida, so [check back regularly](#) for updates. Have an upcoming you would like to share with the public? [Submit your event](#) to the Compact Calendar.

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