



**FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE GOVERNORS' SOUTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE  
Savannah, Georgia  
September 7-8, 2011**

Representatives of all member states and affiliated organizations met for the first annual South Atlantic Alliance (SAA) meeting at the Hilton DeSoto Hotel in historic downtown Savannah, Georgia, on September 7 and 8, 2011. Approximately 80 participants from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida attended to discuss the recently developed Action and Implementation Plans with the specific goal of gaining Steering Group approval and prioritizing specific actions to be taken over the next 12 months. Due in part to the challenging national economy and reductions in state budgets, it was necessary to ensure continuing commitment by the member states to this important regional partnership. A strong commitment is present. The Steering Group voted affirmatively on 2-year terms for the chairperson as well as on the same basic process for responding to Federal Funding Opportunities as done this past year. The SAA will respond to Federal Funding Opportunities by NOAA as well as others. Unrelated to the chair term issue, Steering Group chairperson Earl Hunter announced that he was retiring in February 2012. Secretary Dee Freeman of the NC Department of Natural Resources agreed to take on the leadership role subsequent to Mr. Hunter's departure.

The meeting was held jointly with and sponsored by the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Association (SECOORA). Many SECOORA members also serve on the four SAA technical issue area workgroups: Healthy Ecosystems, Clean Coastal and Ocean Waters, Working Waterfronts, and Disaster-Resilient Communities. Thanks indeed are appropriate for SECOORA in performing most of the logistics related to this joint meeting.

This first annual meeting commenced in the afternoon on the first day and the SAA membership received updates on the status of the regional partnership. Specifically, members were informed about recent changes in governorship in two of the states, individual state programmatic updates, Executive Planning Team updates, and Federal and Partner Chair status reports. A large number of Federal and other partners also attended and participated. A

social outing and informal get-together was held at the nearby Skidaway Institute of Oceanography that evening.

A joint session of both SAA and SECOORA was held on the morning of the second day, with several breakout sessions involving the Issue Area technical workgroup members in the afternoon. Important issues including data management needs and internal and external communications were discussed in addition to the numerous discussions on priority actions.

The following prioritized action items were chosen by the four Issue Area technical teams to be accomplished over the next 12-18 months. SAA will post these on the website and provide periodic progress status reports.

#### Working Waterfronts

- WW2B1 - Protect Military Waterfronts: Develop an inventory/collect information on state-specific military base locations. Coordinate with the SAA Federal Arm. Use SERPPAS as a "backup".
- WW1C1 - Develop Common Definitions: Each state will collect existing definitions for commercially, recreationally, culturally important, and historic waterfronts and make into a regional inventory.

#### Healthy Ecosystems

- HE1A - Map known distributions of key estuarine/marine habitats/land use cover in each state: determine spatial extent (beach-out first), develop query template for states to capture all appropriate data elements, summarize, and identify common concerns.
- HE3A - Marine spatial plan for location of key coastal/marine resources and activities for multi-use management decisions: identify major activities (shipping lanes, artificial reefs, ocean disposal areas, sand borrow areas, military use, etc.), determine locations and what data exists, and determine common framework of mapping standards and how to bring data into portal.

#### Disaster-Resilient Communities

- DRC3A - Evaluate nationwide Post-Disaster Redevelopment Planning initiatives to improve understanding of post-disaster redevelopment options.
- DRC3B - Develop guidance to improve redevelopment considerations in hazards mitigation plans, and local comprehensive and growth management plans.

### Clean Coastal and Ocean Waters

- CCOW1A - Establish a regional technical level work group for the purpose of sharing watershed water quality improvement processes.
- CCOW1C - Develop recommendations on processes and protocols to transfer knowledge/implement BMPs for point and non-point source controls, and to encourage smart growth and green infrastructure (including monitoring-based performance measures). Potential focus is TMDLs.

Overall, the meeting was highly successful and productive. Next year's meeting will be scheduled at a later date and as voted on by the Steering Group, outside of hurricane season.