



**SOUTHEAST FLORIDA
REGIONAL COMPACT**

**CLIMATE
CHANGE**



Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact 2017 Compact Activities Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year marked the ninth year of successful regional collaboration by Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach Counties under the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact (the Compact). Throughout 2017, the Compact has made significant progress in implementing regionally-scaled climate policies while deepening the capacity of the metro region to work collectively at a four-county scale. The Compact saw several notable transitions, significant accomplishments on the scope of work, and valuable new initiatives and partnerships.

A major milestone was the development and launch of the second [Regional Climate Action Plan](#) (RCAP 2.0), a living document that will serve the region over the next five years. RCAP 2.0 features new focus areas on regional economic resilience, social equity, and public health, which address the need to build community support with civic organizations, the business community, and community-based organizations representing low-income and underserved populations. The development of RCAP 2.0 provided an opportunity to strengthen the Compact's stakeholder engagement process and build on the impressive momentum achieved over the past nine years since inception.

Further progress included increased attention to greenhouse gas emissions reduction as an equal goal to climate adaptation. This came about as the members of the Compact Staff Steering Committee grew to appreciate the limits to local/regional adaptation as climate impacts continue to accrue more quickly than forecasted. This increased attention was reflected within RCAP 2.0 recommendations.

This annual update features policy coordination; the Annual Climate Leadership Summit; technical tools and the Regional Climate Action Plan; and outreach initiatives, recognition, and media coverage of the Compact in 2017.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the past year, the Compact has broadened and deepened the capacity for local climate action in the Southeast Florida region through targeted capacity building, regional initiatives and partnerships, and improved processes and platforms for resource sharing.

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In 2017, the Compact undertook a year-long process to refresh the first RCAP, originally published in late 2012, through extensive stakeholder engagement, expert direction, and public input. In response to practitioner feedback, the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) redesigned the RCAP interface and content to create a platform that better enables a broader range of practitioners to access technical and peer support. The RCAP refresh began with an assessment of the existing RCAP design and recommendations. Stakeholders validated that the basic structure and content of the RCAP has supported local implementation. Improving on the original RCAP premise, [RCAP 2.0](#) enables practitioners and communities to sort the recommendations based on their role and local context (read more about RCAP 2.0 in the Regional Climate Action Plan section below).

Throughout 2017, the Compact piloted and helped to expand the [Resilience Dialogues](#) program in Southeast Florida, bringing local and national resources and expertise to three cities in the Compact: Coral Gables, Boynton Beach, and Hallandale Beach. The Resilience Dialogues began as a partnership between the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy and the American Geophysical Union to provide facilitated expertise to White House Climate Action Champion communities (the Compact region was selected as a Champion in 2014). ISC staff served as facilitators between subject-matter experts and city staff on locally-defined challenges, connecting practitioners to Compact resources and tools. After the initial pilot phase, the program expanded to serve a greater number of communities and leverage the expertise of a broader network of nonprofit and academic partners, including ISC, American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP), American Meteorological Society, Meridian Institute, and MIT Climate CoLab. ISC is currently in discussions to bring the Resilience Dialogues opportunity back to Southeast Florida to work with two more municipalities in 2018.

The Compact has catalyzed numerous regional partnerships and facilitated collaboration with the private, academic, and nonprofit sectors to build the region's capacity to meet climate goals.

- *Business Community:* At the [Ninth Annual Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit](#), the Compact announced a new collaboration for regional economic resilience in Southeast Florida through a [joint statement with key business leaders](#). This collaboration will be critical for the region to realize shared community goals for climate resilience and prosperity.
- *Academic Community:* The Compact has deepened its partnership with the [Florida Climate Institute](#) (FCI), representing a shift in how academia and local government engage on shared goals. FCI is a virtual "center of excellence" that brings faculty together from several disciplines across nine universities in Florida to address pressing climate change issues statewide. The FCI-Compact partnership has provided the Compact with support for local research proposals. It has also enabled access to academic resources for Compact technical capacity building activities and established regional [Southeast Florida Climate Indicators](#). Together, FCI and the Compact are conducting applied research on the current network of institutions working on climate change in Southeast Florida, examining the strength and nature of connections and external communications.
- *Utilities:* The Compact structure has become a local model for collaboration in the region, inspiring the formation of the [Resilient Utility Coalition](#), a regional partnership bringing together utilities, water engineering experts, professional organizations, and academia to develop strategies to advance utility infrastructure resiliency efforts. The Coalition has convened for the past two years and launched its first annual summit in January 2018.

The Compact has seen a steady increase in the number of communities endorsing the [Mayors' Climate Action Pledge](#) to support the Compact's regional mission and contribute to its climate goals. Three new

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municipalities—including Miami, the state’s largest city—signed in 2017. Currently, 35 municipalities, over one-third of the 109 municipalities in the region, have signed the Pledge. The Compact launched a set of “[Past the Pledge](#)” resources for municipalities to take the first steps of climate action after signing.

Southeast Florida counties and municipalities made bold moves over the past few years to meet the region’s climate goals. In late 2017, Monroe County announced the first road elevation project of the most flood-prone road in the Florida Keys, in the wake of Hurricane Irma and recent king tide flooding. Broward County developed a series of future conditions maps and integrated them into the Broward County code of ordinances. These future conditions maps, including sea level rise and flooding projections, are now the new standard of county planning. Miami-Dade County created a Rapid Action Plan that assesses the vulnerability of critical infrastructure, creating an online map tool that shows infrastructure that is vulnerable to stormwater surge and sea level rise. Palm Beach County created a new position several years ago to support its initiatives (first named the Climate Change and Sustainability Coordinator and now called the Chief Resilience Officer) and has actively participated in the federal SolSmart program to streamline and improve permitting processes for solar installations.

POLICY COORDINATION

The Compact continues to build capacity for action at a regional level through standing working groups convened around priority areas. In early 2017, the Shoreline Resilience working group, focused on supporting coastal resilience needs, designed and presented a workshop, *Natural Resources Regulations in an Era of Shoreline Change*, and partnered with The Nature Conservancy to publish a [story map of shoreline resilience efforts](#) that shows the range and evolution of resilience along the Southeast Florida coast. The Compact Policy working group continues to strategize on state and federal policy influencing the region, including an annual exercise to develop legislative priorities for the Compact to coordinate effective engagement. Finally, at its retreat in September 2017, the Staff Steering Committee committed to establishing a greenhouse gas emissions reduction working group, which will begin its work in the second quarter of 2018.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Broward County hosted the [Ninth Annual Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit](#) on December 14-15, 2017, at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale. The summit focused on “The Business of Resilience” to engage business leadership and the wider community in critical discussions on climate and energy solutions, adaptation, and resilience. The Summit featured keynotes and panels with business leaders; local, state, and federal government officials; and other experts discussing plans to ensure the region not only survives, but thrives, in the face of sea level rise and other climate impacts. The keynote speakers included Dr. Katharine Hayhoe of Texas Tech University, a leading climate researcher and expert communicator; Dow Constantine, the County Executive of King County, Washington; and Congressman Ted Deutch. Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz also provided comments to open Day 2 of the Summit.

To help guide these plans, the Compact unveiled RCAP 2.0 to the 650 event attendees. ISC’s Director of Urban Resilience Steve Adams walked through the new tool, showing the audience various ways they could use the plan to best suit their needs and priorities.

Another highlight of this Summit was the signing of the [Joint Statement of Collaboration for Regional Economic Resilience in Southeast Florida](#) by Compact County mayors and commissioners and business

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leaders. The statement establishes the initial foundation for a partnership among the mayors of the four counties of the Compact and the regional economic development community within Southeast Florida to cooperate on building regional economic resilience by focusing on the considerable benefits of public and private collaboration.

During the 2017 Summit, Miami-Dade County also announced the date and location for the Tenth Annual Climate Leadership Summit, which will celebrate a decade of progress in Miami Beach on October 24-25, 2018.

REGIONAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2.0

Throughout much of 2017, the Compact worked to refresh the first RCAP (published in 2012) by incorporating lessons learned over the past five years of regional implementation and by engaging with citizens, municipalities, and various stakeholder groups in roundtable discussions, workshops, and online surveys. The development process had several phases. In April, the Compact hosted an [open comment session](#) that drew more than 75 engaged citizens, government officials, and representatives from nonprofits and businesses. Attendees were encouraged to consider social equity, a new focus area to the RCAP, as they reviewed the draft recommendations and to share their ideas about how equity can be incorporated throughout the plan. The event provided an opportunity for the Compact to learn from these community members and understand their concerns and insights, as well as a forum for community members to engage in one-on-one discussions with local government officials from around the region. Following this public comment session, the Compact sent a draft of RCAP 2.0 to its municipal contacts throughout the region for feedback.

In June, the Compact brought the RCAP 2.0 draft to Catalyst Miami's Third Annual Anti-Poverty Summit. The summit gathered community members and public- and private-sector leaders for strategy sessions focused on identifying equitable, collaborative, and sustainable solutions to the region's most significant challenges, including sea level rise. ISC staffed a Compact table at the event and gathered feedback and comments on RCAP 2.0 from summit attendees, again focusing on ensuring that principles of social equity were considered in all parts of the plan. Compact Staff Steering Committee members and other partners also participated in the South Florida Climate Change Equity Solutions Summit convened by the CLEO Institute and the Center for American Progress. That event sought to generate actionable ideas for inclusion in RCAP 2.0 for reducing the vulnerability of under-resourced communities to the impacts of climate change.

Over the following months, Compact working groups—led by Compact Staff Steering Committee members and made up of almost 200 leaders and representatives from local nonprofits, universities, governments, and utilities—prepared the draft RCAP 2.0 based on the extensive input received from the April session and the Anti-Poverty Summit. This draft was published for another public comment period in October and November. In total, the Compact received more than 300 comments from local residents, public and private subject-matter experts, government officials and staff, and nonprofit organizations on RCAP 2.0. This feedback was indispensable in making RCAP 2.0 relevant to, and reflective of, all stakeholders and communities in the region by improving existing focus areas and informing the creation of four new focus areas: Compact Coordination, Public Health, Regional Economic Resilience, and Social Equity.

The Compact also focused on updating the RCAP platform to make it more accessible and easier to use. Each recommendation within RCAP 2.0 was tagged with keywords and other categorical information to

allow for a filtered search. Users can now locate the aspects of the action plan that are most applicable to them. These filters include the practitioner role, type of organization likely to be engaged in implementation, and key focus areas. The easy-to-use online tool allows various stakeholders to build customizable implementation plans based on their roles—a local government staffer, the director of a utility, or a community member—and their priorities. The user can then download their custom plan, to keep it on hand whenever they want to refer to their unique climate action plan. This new tool offers 2,700 possibilities of custom implementation guides for various audiences, interests, and priorities. RCAP 2.0 is also mobile-friendly, allowing Southeast Florida stakeholders to access this tool at any time.

The digital version of RCAP 2.0 also connects case studies and resources directly to the recommendations, giving the user immediate access to a curated library of online resources. RCAP 2.0 also ties recommendations to local agency contacts who have successfully implemented the recommendation. It is also designed to highlight progress for each of the region's 109 municipalities. Each municipality has its own page with basic location information and a list of recommendations it has reported as completed, via implementation surveys conducted by ISC in 2014 and 2016.

Initial response to RCAP 2.0 has been positive. Many stakeholders are encouraged by the openness and collaboration the updated plan and digital tool promote. In an interview with [WLRN radio](#), Nancy Metayer, a climate justice organizer for the New Florida Majority, said, "I believe this [the RCAP 2.0 digital tool] will be useful in being very transparent on how we're dealing with climate issues in South Florida." Overall, RCAP 2.0 is a tool that allows the Compact to engage with specific audiences within the region with greater consistency and context, to help the region pull in one direction, and speak with one voice, when addressing the region's climate challenges.

OUTREACH, RECOGNITION, AND MEDIA

In 2017, the Compact sent out four editions of the Compact Currents, a quarterly newsletter highlighting the progress of the Compact, the counties, and the municipalities in Southeast Florida in their efforts to address climate change and sea level rise. The newsletters are sent out to a list of more than 2,000 subscribers that includes individuals from local government, nonprofits, academia, utilities, media, and general public. The 2017 Compact Currents shared resources, such as webinars and a king tide toolkit; case studies of local municipalities or organizations implementing recommendations from the original RCAP; partner updates, including news about new cities signing the Mayors' Climate Action Pledge; and upcoming public events.

Over the past year, ISC developed its customer relationship management (CRM) and marketing tools. ISC made significant advancements to its Salesforce CRM tool, which allows it to more effectively track with whom the Compact is engaging, when, and on what topic. ISC also switched from the email marketing tool MailChimp to Campaign Monitor, which integrates seamlessly with Salesforce. These two tools working in tandem allow ISC to strategically tailor communications to the Compact contact list of over 2,250 subscribers.

The Compact also expanded its public outreach through the Compact website and Twitter. In 2017, the website received an update, making it more aesthetically appealing and easier to navigate. This refresh included updated navigation, improvements to the [Compact event calendar](#), a more curated section of [Compact-specific documents](#), and an easier way for users to [contact us](#). The Compact events calendar has proven to be an effective tool for communicating with municipalities, stakeholders, as well as others

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outside the region about upcoming event opportunities. This calendar will support the Compact's upcoming RCAP 2.0 outreach and implementation support, which will feature a combination of workshops, design charrettes, webinars, and policy and planning meetings. The Compact's [Press Hub page](#) will also support the Compact's outreach by facilitating communications with local, national, and international members of the media, allowing them easier access to accurate information on resilience work in the region. More than 15,225 new users visited the website in 2017, up from 12,315 in 2016.

The Southeast Florida Twitter has also garnered a large following, gaining an average of 18 new followers a month between January and December—resulting in a total of more than 700 followers by the end of the year—and getting 4,302 profile visits over the year. The 223 tweets sent out by the @SEFL_Compact handle made 100,400 impressions and earned a total of 429 link clicks, 334 retweets, and 445 likes. We were mentioned in other users' tweets 318 times.

The Compact was featured or mentioned in stories by the following media outlets in 2017:

- All Things Considered (National Public Radio)
- BBC
- Business Insider
- The Guardian
- Huffington Post
- Miami Herald
- Miami Today News
- New York Times
- Next City
- Palm Beach Post
- Reuters
- South Florida Sun-Sentinel
- The Tampa Bay Times
- U.S. News and World Report
- Vogue
- Vox
- Wall Street Journal
- Washington Post
- WLRN-FM

The 9th Annual Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit also received positive media coverage from the Miami Herald, the South Florida Sun Sentinel, Palm Beach Post, WLRN-FM, and Local 10 News (ABC affiliate).