In 2004, a local group of individuals, non-profit organizations, and agency representatives formed the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI) to better understand our reefs in southeast Florida. The group has been working collaboratively to gather information on the location, health, and threats to the natural coral reefs of mainland southeast Florida, including the reefs from the northern border of Biscayne National Park in Miami-Dade County to the St. Lucie Inlet in Martin County.

In 2013, SEFCRI began **OUR FLORIDA REEFS**, a community planning process to discuss the future of southeast Florida's coral reefs. The body of science-based knowledge that SEFCRI has gathered will now be used by Community Working Groups to achieve SEFCRI's mission: “to develop and support the implementation of an effective strategy to preserve and protect southeast Florida's coral reefs and associated reef resources, emphasizing the balance between resource use and protection, in cooperation with all interested parties.”

**Why is this region important?**

Coral reefs worldwide face many global and local threats. Atlantic and Caribbean reefs are considered some of the most threatened ecosystems in the world, and they are declining at alarming rates. This includes the coral reefs that stretch from the Dry Tortugas in Monroe County to the St. Lucie Inlet in Martin County, called the Florida Reef Tract.

The mainland southeast Florida region, including Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties, was chosen by SEFCRI specifically because its coral reefs:

- Are extensive and close to shore
- Exist by intensely urbanized areas
- Are economically and ecologically valuable
- Lacked coordinated management

**What has SEFCRI accomplished?**

Since 2004, **SEFCRI has completed 128 projects** across four priority focus areas:

- Appreciation and Awareness
- Fishing, Diving, and Other Uses
- Land-based Sources of Pollution, and
- Maritime Industry and Coastal Construction Impacts
SEFCRI continues to work on additional projects to provide the most relevant, reliable, and current scientific knowledge about southeast Florida’s reefs. Some of our accomplishments include:

**Maps:** Before 2004, no one knew the extent of coral reefs offshore of mainland southeast Florida. SEFCRI’s reef maps provided the first comprehensive view of the seafloor within the four-county region of Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties.

**Reef Health:** SEFCRI established the first ever region-wide monitoring for coral, water, and fish.

**Threat Reduction:** Reef cleanups sponsored by SEFCRI collect hundreds of pounds of marine debris annually. In 2013, a dangerous 1,000-pound abandoned fishing net was removed!

**Education:** More than 400 teachers completed SEFCRI’s coral reef curriculum training, and they annually reach more than 50,000 students across the region.

**Protection:** SEFCRI partners helped pass the Florida Coral Reef Protection Act, which makes it illegal to injure the coral reefs in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties.

For detailed reports of SEFCRI projects, visit the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Coral Reef Conservation Program website at: [www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/reports/](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/reports/)

### What You Can Do

Effective management options do exist, and everyone has a role in the stewardship of Florida’s ocean resources. Help identify management options to ensure a future of healthy coral reefs in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties.

For more information and to provide your input on the future of southeast Florida’s reefs, please visit: [www.OurFloridaReefs.org](http://www.OurFloridaReefs.org)