Coastal & Aquatic Managed Areas

Managing Ecosystems with your help.
Do You Realize That You are a Manager of Florida's Protected Coastal Areas?

Well, you are! Most people don't realize that they share ownership and management responsibility for about 5 million acres of Florida with the Bureau of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (CAMA). These areas include lush coastal hammocks, bountiful estuaries and lagoons, crystal clear rivers and springs, and brightly colored coral reefs.

Our mission... 

CAMA's mission is to protect, conserve and manage Florida's coastal and aquatic ecosystems through environmental education, resource management, scientific research, environmental monitoring, and partnerships. Our approach is to consider the relationships and the needs of animals, plants and humans.

Continued use and enjoyment of these natural areas is up to you... 

Sometimes it is as simple as each one of us doing things a little differently - like not pouring household chemicals down the drain. Sometimes complex issues arise and difficult decisions have to be made - like closing areas to vehicles or boats to protect fragile habitats. You can influence these decisions.

This brochure explains what CAMA is doing to manage its areas and to help you become a better manager. Because in the long run, Florida's environment cannot be protected by government alone - it will require each one of us sharing that responsibility.

Research Helps Us Understand Our Environment

Research is the foundation of resource management. It provides information about natural processes and the effects of our activities - knowledge we need to make effective resource management decisions. Therefore, this information is made available to the public and is interpreted in our education programs.

Research addresses practical issues... 

CAMA conducts and supports scientific research that helps us to better understand the:

- Effects of dock shading on aquatic grasses.
- Effects of trimming mangrove trees.
- Role of estuary waters on fishing.
- Nesting requirements of shore birds.
- Sources of pollution that affect oysters.
- Effective methods of habitat restoration.
- Effects of pesticides on marine animals.

Monitoring helps us recognize changes... 

By regularly measuring certain environmental conditions, early detection of improvement or decline is possible. Research projects and management actions result from monitoring:

- Changes in water quality.
- Abundance and diversity of fish populations.
- Natural replenishment of corals and sponges.
- The effects of boat propellers on shallow seagrasses.
- Effects of freshwater diversion on estuarine habitats.
Education Programs Prepare You to Make Wise Decisions

Understanding the complexities of our resources and learning how we affect these resources, for better and for worse, will improve how we manage our environment. Whether you are a homeowner, student, teacher, land use planner, business owner, landowner, fisherman, boater, visitor or member of a special interest group, we have innovative programs and products designed to meet your needs.

Learning opportunities are interesting & relevant... .

- Through an inshore fishing class, you can learn the habitat requirements of different fishes.
- While hiking in a coastal pineland, your group discusses how prescribed fires reduce the risk of wildfires.
- By measuring the oxygen content in a local river, your club collects useful data and learns how various activities affect water quality.
- By "building" an ocean in your classroom, you are encouraged to think about biological diversity.

You'll have a chance to learn... .

- How your local economy depends on a healthy environment.
- How research is used to make management decisions.
- How household, business, and recreational activities help and hurt the environment in your community.
- More about your local environment.

The information will help you... .

- Understand how animals, plants, people and habitats interact.
- Appreciate your natural surroundings.
- Participate in decisions about local environmental issues.
- Act in ways that help your environment.

Resource Management Naturally Improves Your Quality of Life

CAMA focuses on issues that affect the health of habitats in and around saltwater and freshwater areas. We address these issues by:

- Using prescribed fire.
- Managing human activities.
- Promoting land acquisition.
- Removing exotic plants and animals.
- Restoring upland and aquatic habitats.

Healthy ecosystems... .

- Control floods.
- Purify drinking water.
- Reduce the risk of wildfires.
- Protect shorelines from erosion.
- Sustain commercial and recreational activities.
- Buffer against wind and water damage from storms.

Government alone cannot manage natural resources... .

Resource management works better when we work together. Whether in our homes or in our communities, acting responsibly will meet our needs for a healthy environment.

Balanced, common-sense management can happen only through partnerships. CAMA sites have established or want to develop volunteer programs, citizen support organizations, and partnerships with businesses, industries, other government agencies, and you.
The Bureau of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas is under the Division of Marine Resources in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Through a cooperative agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the National Marine Sanctuary and the National Estuarine Research Reserves are administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Aquatic and Buffer Preserves are managed by the FDEP.

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