

TREASURE

OUR

american samoa

COASTS

and

ESTUARIES

American Samoa, the only U.S. territory south of the equator, consists of five rugged, highly eroded volcanic islands and two coral atolls. The five islands total approximately 76 square miles and support one of the world's largest tuna fishing and canning industries. The territory must address such environmental issues as coastal hazards (including typhoons and flooding), marine debris, degradation of fishery habitat, and loss of wetlands. Population growth and developmental pressures threaten water quality, wetlands, and solid waste disposal systems. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) provides the framework necessary to sustain the cultural, economic, and ecological value of American Samoa's coastal areas. This law recognizes a national interest in our coastal and ocean areas, but allows states and territories, not the federal government, to determine how best to balance conservation of the coastal environment with human uses that depend on coastal resources.

miles of coastline
126

coastal population in 2000
57,291

fy03 czma core (section 306)
funding
\$882,000

fy03 czma enhancements
(section 309) funding
\$76,000

fy03 coastal nonpoint
implementation
\$78,000

THE CZMA IN AMERICAN SAMOA

The CZMA establishes programs to balance the use and protection of America's coasts. The Coastal Management Program gives states and territories a flexible framework to address a broad range of community development, economic, and natural resource issues at the state, territory, and local level.

American Samoa Coastal Management Program

Approved: 1980

Lead Agency: American Samoa Department of Commerce

American Samoa faces a unique planning context to address growth-related and transboundary pressures. Contemporary Samoa is a society in transition, espousing much of the amenity and culture of modern American life amidst a background of traditional village-based political economies, social organization, and culture. Villages in American Samoa, like other island societies in the Pacific,



are based on very localized social systems in which family leadership (*matai*), and village council (*fono-a-matai*) have historically managed local coastal and marine resources in a communal manner. But tradition has been challenged in recent decades, and many villages now demonstrate a mix of private property and communal perspectives. Some villages have begun to participate in regional government resource management, while others have retained more localized control of resources. Central to life in all the coastal villages and to the very essence of being Samoan is the ocean and use of ocean and coastal resources.

The American Samoa Coastal Management Program has built upon this foundation and has developed a unique approach to coastal management that incorporates both western and traditional Samoan systems of management. Program implementation relies heavily upon inter-agency partnerships. As the chair of the permitting board, the American Samoa Coastal Management Program coordinates the inter-agency permit review and compliance monitoring program. This coordination has been instrumental in promoting a number of comprehensive coastal resource management initiatives.

The Coastal Management Program is establishing an Ocean Resource Management Plan. When completed, the plan will provide a structure to implement and integrate existing resource management plans and gradually engage the full range of traditional and transitioning coastal villages in American Samoa.

The Coastal Management Program has received funding to develop a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan to address flooding from natural events, such as hurricanes, tropical storms, severe thunderstorms and tsunami events. The plan will assist the government by identifying resources, information, and strategies for flood risk reduction. The plan will also guide and coordinate mitigation activities throughout the Territory.

The Coastal Management Program developed, and continues to refine and expand, a community-based wetlands protection program, which reflects the traditional Samoan approach to land use. Working with village chiefs, the coastal program delineates village wetlands and enters into a cooperative protection agreement with the community. Similarly, the coastal program is working with the territorial marine resource agency to develop and implement a community-based coral reef fisheries reserve program.

The Coastal Management Program has created a comprehensive outreach and education program to provide current information about coastal resource issues to the public. As with other components of the coastal program, outreach combines aspects of Samoan culture with programmatic initiatives. For example, an ongoing consciousness project brings awareness of the importance of coastal stewardship to the religious community.

Finally, the Coastal Management Program is leading a multi-agency effort to develop and implement the first land use plans for the main island of Tutuila. To date, this work has produced a draft Territorial Master Plan and the Tualauta County Master Plan.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The American Samoa Coastal Management Program plays a strong local, regional, and national role in addressing coral reef issues. As part of the American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group, the coastal program supported the development of a five-year coral reef management plan and worked closely with NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to remove grounded fishing boats from coral reefs in Pago Pago Harbor.

Designated by the Governor, the American Samoa Coastal Management Program has led a task force responsible for developing a strategy to address the territory's growing population. The Coastal Management Program's leadership in the Population Task Force has brought this critical issue to the forefront of territorial planning efforts.