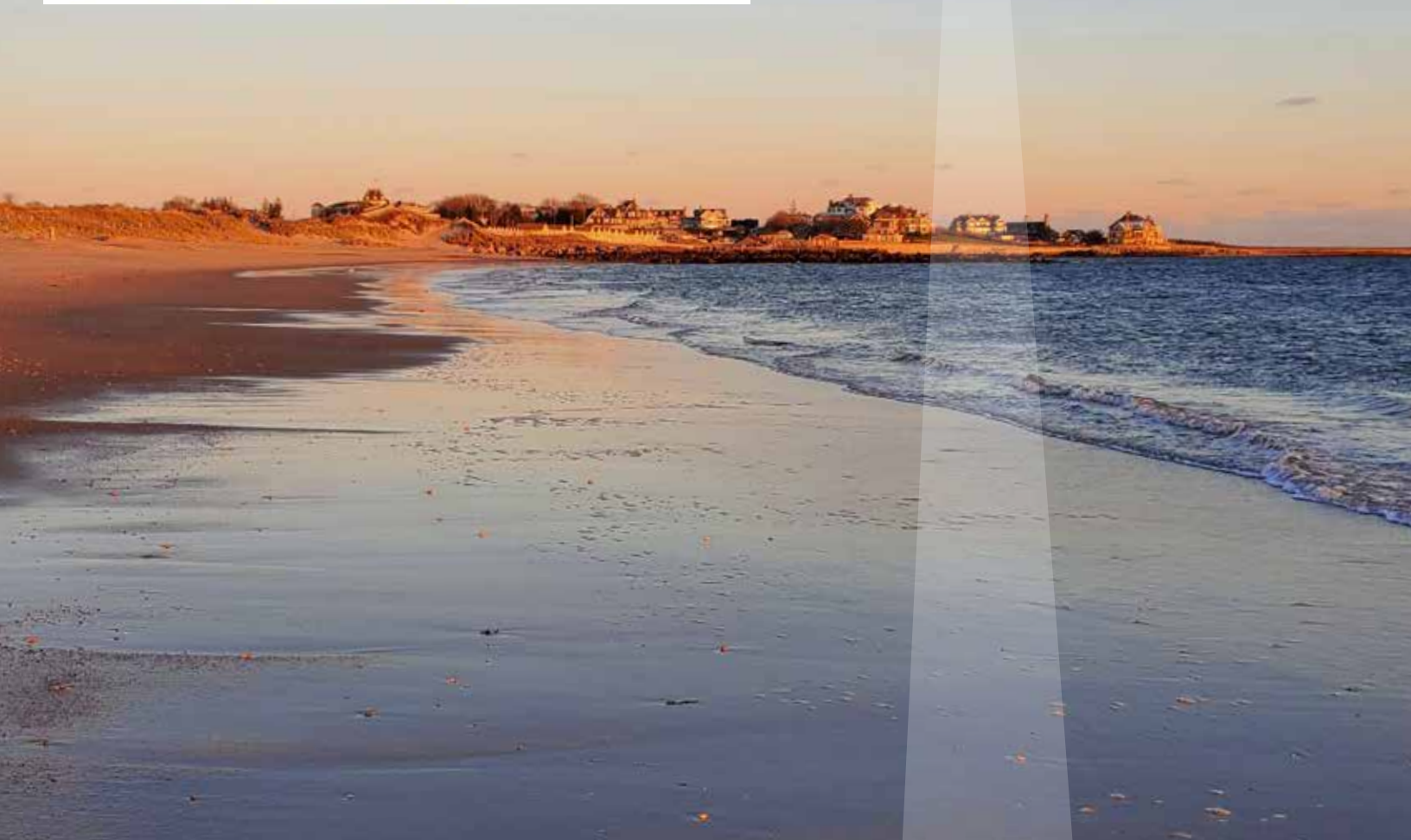
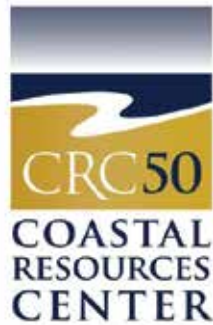


CRC@URI

Coastal Resources Center in the Graduate School of Oceanography
at the University of Rhode Island

Five Year Strategic Plan | 2021-2026

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF OCEANOGRAPHY

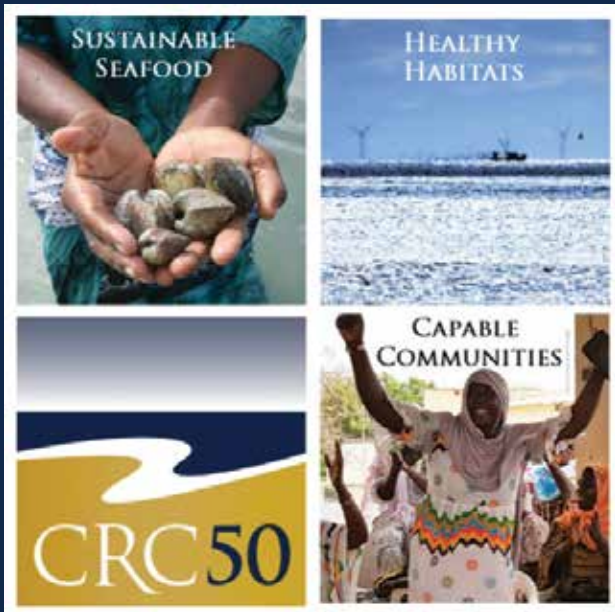


INITIATION LETTER

To Colleagues, Partners and Interested Individuals,

The Coastal Resources Center (CRC) is an important and highly impactful entity in the Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) at the University of Rhode Island (URI). Over the last 50 years it has brought science to bear on coastal challenges facing communities, countries, and citizens. Our portfolio of work includes attention on wild and farm-raised seafood, coastal resilience to storms and sea-level rise as well as marine spatial planning and blue economic growth. From CRC's original home in a trailer on the Narragansett Bay Campus, it has expanded its footprint and focus. Today, we work across New England and engage nationally on many science and management aspects, and we operate internationally in partnership with government and other entities, often focused on critical issues and capacity building in developing countries with USAID support.

With the dawn of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Science Development, CRC is well-poised to lead locally and globally as coastal communities confront climate change, seafood limits and aspirations of economic growth. The Strategic Plan presented here aims to outline how we will continue to be effective and even expand our emphasis into emerging areas. Also, the Plan recognizes that we have opportunities and challenges that we must consider to maintain our progress.



We whole-heartedly thank Mark Amaral with Lighthouse Consulting for shepherding us through this process during the COVID crisis. We thank the staff and the students that participated in the process for giving their input, honestly and openly. The leadership and partnerships at GSO and URI are greatly appreciated for helping us operate and grow, and this plan is borne out of decades of collaboration with other staff, students, partners, and program alumni of the CRC.

Our new Strategic Plan outlines our broad goals and specific anticipated actions to continue to expand our activities and influence. Now we need to roll up our sleeves, sharpen our powerpoints, put on our sunscreen or don our foul-weather gear to address the many aspects identified in the Plan. We look forward to having great success over our next 50 years, and we believe this Plan will help keep us on a strong and sustainable path.

Thank you,

J.P. Walsh
CRC Director

Jennifer Critcher
Assistant Director

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a strategic plan for the Coastal Resources Center (CRC) in the Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) at the University of Rhode Island (URI) for the period of July 2021 to June 2026. The strategic plan focuses on how CRC can deliver its work effectively and with greater results. It communicates internal programmatic priorities and provides a framework to guide decisions about how to align personnel and financial resources with the Program's mission in ways that maximize CRC's impact in Rhode Island and around the world.

This report is based on: interviews conducted with 20 individuals that represent key clients, constituents, or thought leaders; several workshops with the CRC staff; an extensive online survey; and meetings with leadership and Program staff. Actions identified in this plan will be achieved through targeted efforts, as outlined below, and will be reviewed and reevaluated annually during CRC's newly created annual work-planning process.

MISSION AND VISION

The Coastal Resources Center (CRC) is an interdisciplinary research and engagement center in the Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) at the University of Rhode Island (URI). CRC works with partners and communities in Rhode Island, and globally, to manage shores and seas for sustainability and prosperity. Working in interdisciplinary teams, CRC supports communities to identify and implement best practices, craft sound policy, and promote equitable governance. The organization works to empower communities by facilitating collaboration, advancing knowledge, building capacity, and providing management tools. CRC seeks to share its experiences by focusing on the research-to-practice continuum and thought leadership excellence within its areas of core competence. The Center is significantly grant funded, with some core support provided by GSO and URI.

The CRC mission is to advance coastal sustainability through inclusive and collaborative science, governance, and capacity building.

The CRC vision is for communities around the world to be capable, effective stewards of their coastal and marine resources to ensure sustainability and prosperity.

VALUES

Organizational values represent a foundation on which the organization is formed and define the ideas that are core to its delivery of services.

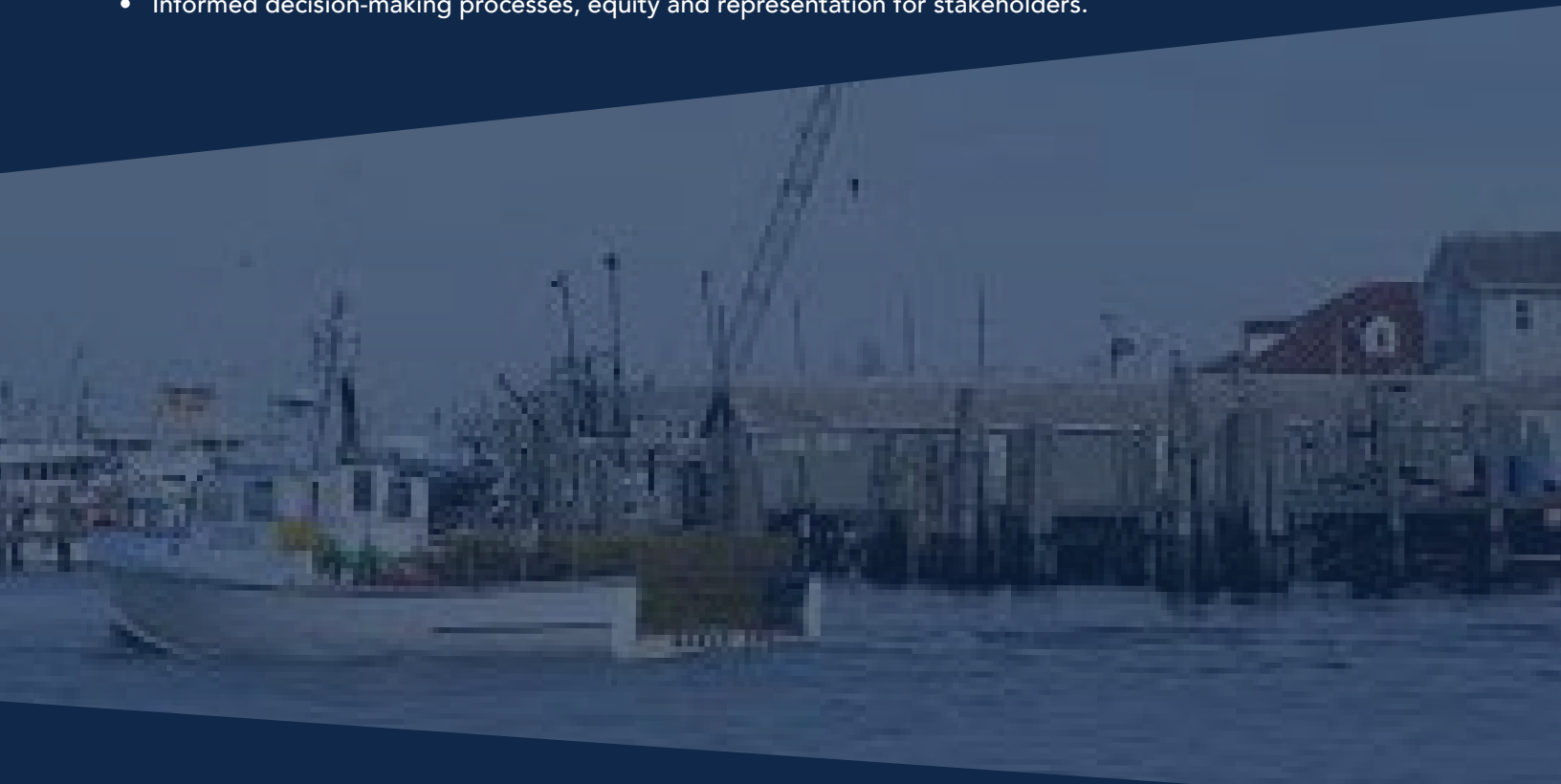
As an organization, and as individuals within that organization, CRC is committed to the following values:

- Promoting the principles of social justice, equity, accessibility and inclusion.
- Partnering with communities and academia to build capacity and advance knowledge.
- Delivering easy-to-use, practical, demand-driven, and innovative science and tools.
- Maintaining independence and objectivity.
- Training and mentoring the next generation of diverse coastal managers.
- Facilitating collaboration and collective action.
- Embracing organizational learning and adaptive management.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Applying its values, CRC will work to create:

- Productive and healthy coastal ecosystems, including sustainably managed fisheries and aquaculture.
- Enhanced wellbeing and benefits for communities locally and globally.
- Resilient and empowered communities adapting to climate change, protecting lives and property, and ensuring livelihoods and food for the future.
- Innovative management tools and approaches.
- Informed decision-making processes, equity and representation for stakeholders.



STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

Strategic goals define the general direction an organization desires to move in the future, and how the work will be accomplished. Typically, these are cross-cutting strategies that support the outcomes and values. This section captures CRC's strategic goals and the priority objectives and/or actions. These priorities were identified as those that needed to be implemented first. The full list of actions arrayed by strategic goals is in the next section. The numbering notations reference the specific goal and action the priorities are drawn from.

1 GOAL

Increase CRC's impact by growing its portfolio, performance and partnerships; diversifying funding sources; and increasing the level of revenue and unrestricted support.

- 1. Expand the business-development project pipeline in existing and strategic new areas by proactively developing partnerships and pursuing opportunities of collaboration around URI and beyond.**
- 2. Continue to carefully consider project proposals to ensure they meet CRC's core criteria.**
 - Advance CRC's mission and vision.
 - Align with CRC's values.
 - Contribute to desired outcomes.
 - Intersect with emerging and/or ongoing priority areas. Limit one-off proposals that are not strategically advantageous.
- 3. Sustain and improve upon CRC's existing administrative and financial management systems and methods used to track, report, and manage project funds and staff to support existing work and future growth:**
 - Completing a needs assessment of CRC's administrative systems to determine areas where uniform center-wide processes and/or methods could be adopted to encourage consistency and efficiency.
 - Develop center-wide transfer of knowledge process and action steps to be taken as retirements are announced to ease transitions.
- 4. Develop a CRC-wide annual work plan and budget that defines cross-cutting goals, establishes specific growth targets, and identifies external funding possibilities.**

2 GOAL

Maximize CRC's organizational design and placement to advance its mission, extend its impact, and increase its visibility within URI.

- 1. Build direct bridges with GSO and strengthen this relationship. CRC's objective is to create new engagement points with GSO faculty, staff and students.**
 - a. Identify opportunities to meet and greet faculty, staff and students.
 - b. Consider engaging existing or new people for collaboration on projects.
 - c. Actively engage on GSO committees and at events, such as the Narraganset Bay Campus Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) committee and Open House.
 - d. Seek operational efficiencies with GSO operation support units.

- 2. Proactively identify and build relationships with URI departments for collaboration with CRC:**
 - a. Identify and engage with URI faculty and staff who possess skills and talents that augment CRC's capacity.
 - b. Create an affiliate group of URI faculty and staff that respond to needs raised by stakeholders or to propel research initiatives.
 - c. Develop a short document that clearly describes how to collaborate with CRC, highlighting the opportunities and direct benefits.

- 3. Embrace student, intern, and mentoring opportunities:**
 - a. Integrate with URI's academic programming, such as the continuation of capstone efforts or enabling experiential learning.
 - b. Consider enhancing support for students, including ongoing and new opportunities for student workers.
 - c. Identify a strategy for reaching out to students and potentially offering relevant scholarships.

3 GOAL

Increase the organization's visibility at URI, locally and globally, to expand its pipeline of projects and increase the uptake of CRC's approach and material.

1. Work with the new GSO Dean and incoming Sea Grant Director to build a mutual understanding of CRC's brand, such as how it represents itself, its abilities, its intellectual products and tools, and its skills. Learn how each can mutually support the other and build synergy.
2. Build CRC's recognition on the U.S. and world stage as a thought leader in areas of core competence.
 - a. Join thought leadership forums and organize and lead online discussions on current trends.
 - b. Encourage opportunities to reflect, learn and share project outcomes and insights internally and externally, e.g., at conferences or in publications.
 - c. Explore the feasibility of CRC hosting a high-level conference at GSO on sustainable coastal development issues in the next two years.
3. Identify actions to increase CRC's presence in Washington, D.C. networking circles. Meet with GSO Dean and other URI officials, as appropriate, to provide and seek input on D.C. engagement efforts and identify opportunities and priorities e.g., sponsorship of donor meetings, special events, and/or social gatherings.
4. Develop a plan that defines the priorities for cross-portfolio, non-project specific, communications and marketing and how these can be effectively delivered. Hire an external consultant to help outline a communications plan and approach to guide CRC communications.

4 GOAL

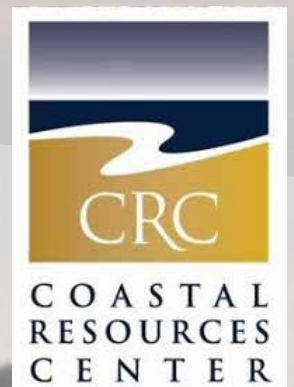
Invest in people and build capacity that can meet future demand, recognizing that CRC's most important asset is its people.

- 1. Actively engage in organizational learning and adaptive management and encourage internal learning and sharing around CRC subject matters.**
 - a. Seek a funder that would support an internal learning agenda.
 - b. Continue to acknowledge and celebrate individual and team success.
- 2. Identify anticipated gaps in capacity given the expected retirements in key technical and administrative positions and hire new talent that meets CRC-vetted criteria.**
- 3. Create and maintain a list of external people that have skills outside or beyond those currently held by CRC team for short- or long-term work. Include candidates from CRC's extensive global alumni network, in-country partners, students, interns, and past project staff.**
- 4. Embrace flexible work options to increase administrative and programmatic efficiencies and opportunities, where allowed by URI. This may be a means of diversifying CRC's workforce for short- and long-term efforts.**

CONCLUSION

CRC is a unique and important entity at URI working to bridge the gap between science and society, and it has made tremendous positive impacts around the world on many coastal concerns. Celebrating its 50th year in 2021, CRC should be proud of and showcase its successes. While this Strategic Plan identifies steps for growth, it must be remembered that CRC is already a global leader on marine issues and capacity development, and it is well-poised to continue its impact over the next century.

To see a full copy of the Center's strategic plan, including implementation details, click [here](#).



Coastal Resources Center
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881 USA
1.401.874.1000