

Smart Choices for a Healthy Ocean



Ocean Conservancy
Start a Sea Change

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Ocean Planning in New England

The United States, and the rest of the world, is facing a rising tide of competition for valuable ocean resources. The 21st century economy depends on our ocean, coasts and Great Lakes. From energy production to commercial fishing to shipping and transport, millions of American jobs depend on access to marine resources, and New England is no exception.

A healthy marine environment provides recreational value, wildlife habitat and, in many New England communities, cultural identity.

But increasing pressure and uncoordinated development could threaten our ability to responsibly use, protect and enjoy our valuable resources. Wind and other energy facilities, commercial fishermen, anglers and divers, ship pilots and military training operations are all vying to use the same waters—along with whales, birds, sea turtles and other important wildlife.

Dozens of federal bureaucracies assert jurisdiction over ocean uses without coordinating with each other. Information about how the ocean is being used is incomplete, hard to find and inconsistent.

Without smart ocean-use planning, we end up with haphazard and uncoordinated development—an ocean traffic jam. The United States is missing opportunities to maximize what we get out of the ocean while minimizing the threats to its health.

New England Is Leading the Nation

In the face of this uncoordinated competition for ocean resources, New England states are taking action by providing a forum for citizens and ocean users to have a say in what happens with this valuable shared resource.

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) was established in 2005 by the six New England governors to collaborate on region-wide goals for managing coastal and ocean resources across multiple sectors. NROC priorities include planning for ocean energy, protecting ecosystem health and reducing the impacts of weather- and climate-related events on coastal communities. In the summer of 2011, they launched the Northeast Ocean Data Portal as a tool for regional ocean planning. Data collection, mapping and availability are essential elements of smart planning.

Working Waters



\$8 billion

earned by NROC residents in
ocean-dependent jobs

365,000

jobs in coastal counties of NROC
states that depend on ocean resources

Wind Energy Potential



10 percent

U.S. offshore wind energy potential lies in
waters off NROC states

250,000

potential jobs in the next 20 years—many
of them in New England



The National Ocean Policy established by President Obama has provided a pathway for efforts like NROC, which bring together state, tribal, local and federal agencies in a public, hands-on process to better manage important ocean and coastal resources for generations to come. Congress must do more to support these initiatives.

Engaging the public and all ocean users to make smart, balanced choices will help the ocean—and those who depend upon it—thrive.

New England Benefits from Smart Ocean Planning

All along the New England coast, communities are facing ocean-use conflicts: In Massachusetts, ship pilots will need to be able to navigate safely and efficiently among newly sited wind-farm developments. Fishermen and lobstermen are hoping to protect key fishing grounds as offshore wind and tidal power projects move forward. Narragansett tribe members in Rhode Island want to safeguard sacred places on now-submerged ancestral lands of the Outer Continental Shelf.

Making smart, balanced choices through comprehensive ocean planning will help the ocean and these communities thrive. By listening to the needs of all ocean users, better choices can be made about how to preserve a thriving economy and a healthy

ocean. More and better data means greater efficiency, maximized resources and a better job of protecting the ocean.

Smart planning for marine resources will require coordinated policy—based on science—to balance ocean uses.

For more information, visit: www.oceanconservancy.org/cmosp

How to plan for the ocean of the future:

- **Create an ocean atlas** that allows everyone to see what's going on in U.S. waters.
- **Invite** all stakeholders to **ocean town hall meetings** and other open forums that give everyone a say in decisions about how to use and protect ocean resources.
- **Empower** those whose lives are most impacted by the ocean to plan for the future.

“*The lobster industry is not against wind farms, but we have numerous concerns. The potential impact to the existing resource is completely unknown, and there are issues related to exclusive area rights that will be granted as well. When access to huge areas in the ocean in which the fishing industry has historically fished is limited or denied, this allows them less space in which to fish. Less space in the ocean crowds together gear sectors that have for years worked diligently to avoid one another—especially the mobile- and fixed-gear fleets. The impact to habitat and loss of space in the ocean are significant matters.*

-Bonnie Spinazzola, Executive Director, Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association

