

The Northeast Regional Planning Body (RPB) is responsible for developing New England's ocean plan. The National Ocean Policy, established by Presidential Executive Order in 2010, called for the formation of nine regionally focused RPBs to better manage the nation's oceans and coasts. New England was the first region in the nation to respond to this call, launching the Northeast RPB in November 2012.

The Northeast RPB includes representatives from the six New England states, ten federally recognized tribes, ten federal agencies, and the New England Fishery Management Council. The RPB has no authority to create new regulations. Its mandate is to create a plan and oversee its implementation, with many opportunities for public participation.

The Northeast RPB has adopted the following principles for ocean planning:

- Meaningful public participation.
- Sound science.
- A comprehensive, ecosystem-based approach.
- Transparent, efficient government decision-making.
- Adaptive management.



Get Involved!

The success of ocean planning in the Northeast depends on your participation. To learn about what's new and how to participate, visit neooceanplanning.org, scan the QR code to the right, or contact ocean planning staff:

John Weber (jweber@northeastoceancouncil.org);
Nick Napoli (nnapoli@northeastoceancouncil.org).



 **OCEAN PLANNING**
IN THE **NORTHEAST**

 **OCEAN PLANNING**
IN THE **NORTHEAST**

Northeast Regional Planning Body

The ocean and the livelihoods it supports are vital to New England. People in New England greatly value our ocean heritage and are seeking basic needs from the ocean—jobs, food, energy, and recreation, among others—in new and increasingly complex ways. At the same time, environmental changes are affecting the health of the ocean and its creatures.

Ocean planning is a way to meet these challenges. Government agencies and stakeholders can work together to anticipate needs, set priorities, and make decisions from a regional perspective.

The result? Better, more efficient decisions, with more public input, about how to protect New England's oceans and sustainably use its resources.

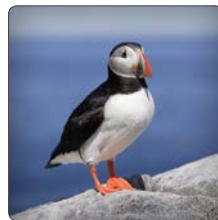
The Northeast Regional Planning Body (RPB) is leading the creation of New England's ocean plan.

Learn more about the work of the RPB. »

OCEAN PLANNING IN THE NORTHEAST

Timeline 2014–2016

To develop the first iteration of the regional ocean plan, the Northeast Regional Planning Body is committed to the following schedule, which includes many opportunities for public participation.



2014	
JANUARY	Northeast RPB meeting: Approve goals and objectives; move forward on related tasks.
MAY/JUNE	Public engagement: Topical workshops and focused engagement to discuss progress toward goals of Effective Decision-Making and Healthy Ocean and Coastal Ecosystems.
JUNE	Northeast RPB meeting: Review progress toward all goals.
FALL	Public meetings/workshops and Northeast RPB meeting: Feedback on progress toward each goal.
2015	
SPRING	Workshops/public meetings: Review draft baseline assessment and progress on the use of marine life and ocean use data, regulatory coordination, and future scenario development.
MAY/JUNE	Northeast RPB meeting: Review draft products for each goal; discuss options for the future of the RPB and ocean planning products.
FALL/ WINTER	Northeast RPB meeting and public meetings: Review revised products for each goal; discuss future work of the RPB.
2016	
WINTER	Northeast RPB meeting: Approve final products for each goal—collectively, the regional ocean plan—and determine the RPB’s future.

Goals and Objectives

After receiving input from the public, the Northeast RPB approved the following goals and objectives for the region’s ocean plan. The RPB has also specified actions, outcomes, tasks, and timelines to move forward on each objective (go to neooceanplanning.org to learn more). The RPB anticipates that priorities will evolve as knowledge is gained and as management issues arise.

Goal: Healthy Ocean and Coastal Ecosystems

- Characterize the region’s ecosystem, economy, and cultural resources.
- Identify and support existing non-regulatory opportunities to work toward conserving, restoring, and maintaining healthy ecosystems.
- Produce a regional ocean science plan that prioritizes ocean science and data needs for the region for the next five years.

Goal: Effective Decision-Making

- Coordinate existing federal and state decision-making processes.
- Implement specific actions to enhance public input in decision-making.
- Incorporate maps and other products into agency decision-making processes.
- Improve respect for the customs and traditions of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes.
- Improve coordination with local communities in decision-making processes.

Goal: Compatibility Among Past, Current, and Future Ocean Uses

- Increase understanding of past, current, and future interactions among ocean uses and the ocean and coastal ecosystem.
- Ensure that regional issues are incorporated in ongoing efforts to assess new and existing human activities.

All Goals

- Periodically assess progress toward achieving regional ocean planning goals.

Public Participation

The Northeast RPB is committed to a transparent, open approach that engages the public and involves stakeholders throughout the planning process. Some of the ways the RPB involves stakeholders are:



- Public input at Northeast RPB meetings.
- Public meetings at key decision points in the ocean planning process.
- Input through state advisory entities.
- Input through the Northeast RPB website.
- Stakeholder engagement in RPB ocean planning projects (commercial fisheries mapping; recreational boating; other recreation interests; maritime commerce, energy, and aquaculture sectors; natural resources characterization).

The stakeholder input received informs formal RPB decisions and the development and implementation of RPB projects.

See the Northeast RPB website, neooceanplanning.org, for details and updates about public involvement in the ocean planning process.