

Draft Northeast Ocean Plan

Compendium of E-mailed Comments

Compiled by Eastern Research Group, Inc.

August 2016

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Lauren Sinatra, Town of Nantucket

Original Comment from Lauren Sinatra

Subject: Nantucket substations
From: Lauren Sinatra <lsinatra@nantucket-ma.gov>
Date: 2 June, 2016 11:50:43

Hello,

I am emailing you directly after countless failed attempts trying to submit the contact form online (constant problems with captcha feature)...

In viewing the (impressive) interactive Energy & Infrastructure map, I am confused as to why Nantucket's two substations are not listed. These assets are incredibly important to the island's energy plan. My hope is that the Nantucket map be as accurate as possible to better inform Ocean Planning decision-making, specifically regarding the potential feasibility of directly connecting Nantucket island to the BOEM offshore wind development projects for power and/or to feed the offshore wind power back to Cape Cod via our Candle Street substation and two submarine cables.

I would appreciate more information.

The two substations on Nantucket are located at Candle Street and Bunker Road, both National Grid-Nantucket Electric assets.

Thank you,
Lauren

--

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Follow-Up Comment from Lauren Sinatra

From: Lauren Sinatra [mailto:lsinatra@nantucket-ma.gov]
Date: Wed, 8 June, 2016, 10:34:00

Hi Nick,

I appreciate your feedback. From what I understand, Nantucket's assets are not listed on the ISO New England map because there is no transmission level voltage at the Nantucket stations (they are served at 46kV).

However, for the purpose of the Ocean Planning map, I would suggest that even subtransmission stations be listed, especially for island communities as it may very well be relevant for offshore energy distribution planning.

I have no concerns about these comments being submitted publically.

Best regards,

Lauren

Tom Nies, New England Fishery Management Council

Subject: Values
From: Tom Nies [mailto:tnies@nefmc.org]
Date: Mon, 6 June, 2016, 11:54:00
To: John Weber <jweber@northeastoceancouncil.org>

John

Thanks for speaking with me today. I think Mark Alexander is headed to the Rockland hearing for us.

Here is the section of the document we think is behind Hauke's comment (but we are not certain of this).

http://neoceanplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Baseline-Assessment_Draft-May-2016_Sec5.pdf

Figure 49 shows that commercial fishing/aquaculture/seafood processing/seafood markets contributes \$1 billion in GDP. The text says this value comes from section 4 of the baseline report. Looking section 4, however, table 2 shows living resources (commercial fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing) as contributing \$1.8 billion to GDP in 2013, while table 5, which includes indirect and induced impacts, bumps that up to \$3.4 billion. These latter numbers are closer to the values in the recently released NMFS report for 2014.

Tom
tnies@nefmc.org
978-465-0492 ext 113

Kathleen Leyden, Maine Coastal Program

Subject: critical error in NEOP baseline assessment

From: Leyden, Kathleen [mailto:Kathleen.Leyden@maine.gov]

Date: Mon, 6 June, 2016 14:02:00

Cc: Couture, Steve <Steven.Couture@des.nh.gov>; Diers, Ted (Ted.Diers@des.nh.gov) <Ted.Diers@des.nh.gov>

Page 43. "Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, New Hampshire" should be Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine.
We won that fight. kl

KATHLEEN LEYDEN | DIRECTOR, MAINE COASTAL PROGRAM

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Porter Hoagland, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

Original Comment from Peter Hoagland

Subject: Re: Baseline Assessment comment
From: Porter Hoagland <phoagland@whoi.edu>
Cc: Hauke Kite-Powell <hauke@whoi.edu>
Date: Mon, 7 June 2016, 06:34:00

Just a note, but not a big deal. On pages 117 and 172, carbon sequestration and nutrient assimilation are described as "passive uses" in the section 5.4. By passive uses, I really meant existence, option, and bequest values. Sequestration and assimilation are more like active, indirect uses (Figure 68). Sometimes in this framework, active uses are called "use values" and passive uses are called "non-use values." Sequestration and assimilation may then sometimes be listed under non-use values.

This was my (too) loose writing. Let me know if there is a chance to make edits, and I'll fix it.

Porter

Follow-Up Comment from Porter Hoagland

From: Porter Hoagland <phoagland@whoi.edu>
Cc: Hauke Kite-Powell <hauke@whoi.edu>
Date: Mon, 16 June 2016, 13:26:00

Katie:

Attached are some very minor suggested edits in two sections: 5 (p. 117) and 12 (pp. 165-167). These edits comprise strikethroughs and inserts.

For Ch. 12 (App. E), I think that the use of the term "endpoint" is unclear and doesn't add any insight. Consequently, I've suggested deleting it.

The document as a whole is very well executed, and it should make an useful contribution to regional ocean planning.

Great job to all!

Porter

Robert Faunce, Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

Subject: Draft NE Ocean Plan
From: Robert Faunce [mailto:rfaunce@lcrpc.org]
Date: Thu, 16 June, 2016 15:03:00

Hi John –

If I'm not mistaken we are former Maine colleagues although it must be at least 15 years since you left Maine for MA. I reviewed the draft NE Ocean Plan and I am planning to attend the Portland meeting but I wanted to send you some comments on the plan so as to not unnecessarily waste time on them at the meeting.

- The plan refers to only two of the four federally designated Maine Indian tribes. Both the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes manage tidal lands. Was this an oversight or did they choose not to participate in the project?
- P8 – “Native people still depend on coastal waters for transportation, *trade*, recreation and ceremonial purposes.” Trade is, I believe, a mischaracterization of their ocean-related commerce and implies a barter system. They engage in fishing, shellfish harvesting, lobstering, seaweed harvesting, etc., just like non Native Americans in Maine. I would substitute commerce or fishing .
- P9 – the inset lists several organizations involved in ocean science and research but Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Science in Boothbay, Maine, one of the world's foremost ocean science institutions, is not included. I am sure it is just an oversight but it should be included here. <https://www.bigelow.org/>
- P9 – it discusses the “ocean economy”, which is defined to include among other things ship and boat building yet with the exception of references to the Kittery and Bath shipyards, the rest of the commercial and recreational ship and boat building industry is not mentioned. This industry is very important in Maine and it's economic health and future viability are reflective of many of the issues addressed elsewhere in the plan, such as better coordination for environmental and development permitting, coastal access, health of fisheries, residential development, recreation including whale watching, etc. We have a number of shipyards in Lincoln County. In fact, the shipyards are a major employer for skilled workers. I hope this can be addressed before the plan is finalized.
- P103 – You might consider updating the energy and infrastructure section. UMaine has received an award from the feds to construct a full-scale off-shore floating wind turbine facility off Monhegan Island. The plan only shows the 1:8 scale test turbine site off Castine. <http://composites.umaine.edu/2016/05/30/new-england-aqua-ventus-i-selected-by-the-doe-for-additional-funding/>

Thanks for including me on the mailing list for the draft plan. Very well done.

Bob Faunce, Lincoln County Planner

Duncan C. Mellor, Tighe & Bond

Subject: Underwater noise & marine construction
From: "Duncan C. Mellor" <DCMellor@TigheBond.com>
Date: Mon, 20 Jun 2016, 18:18:03

Underwater Noise Monitoring & Construction Restrictions:

Recent underwater noise monitoring of pile driving and caisson drilling has shown errors in prior studies, including the use of inappropriate transducers. This highlights the lack of knowledge with the regulators in this issue and has resulted in un-workable restrictions in the NH PGP that have not been applied to the other NE general permits. Requests to the Corps to obtain the point of contact at NOAA responsible for these pile driving restrictions are unanswered.

Suggestions:

- Adopt standards, means and methods for underwater noise monitoring of construction, including correct transducers. If you don't understand the science, consult experts (and not just college professors with no construction experience)
- Develop science based underwater noise standards that are species specific and include consideration of frequency (see UK standards). When the issue is sturgeon, be specific, verify the sturgeon existing in the vicinity of the proposed work/season, and apply this uniformly to all NE GP's. If you don't have the budget to establish the issue, don't apply arbitrary restrictions
- Include the same standards for caisson drilling, micropiles, directional drilling and hoe-rams. Some recent data suggests caisson drilling in rock is more impacting in UW noise than pile driving. For timber pile driving, which has been shown to be orders of magnitude below the noise thresholds, don't require expensive consultant monitoring
- Develop consistent NE standards for pile driving and make sure those standards are consistent with pile driving practices and capacity determination. Using recommendations developed on the west coast for concrete piles are not appropriate to steel piles. The regulators need to observe piles being driven and understand the acceptance criteria for pile capacity. Let them place a wood "cushion" on a steel pile and watch what happens. Let them try a bubble curtain in a 4 knot current.
- Apply these standards to all, including DOT's and the Navy. The Navy restricts diving at their facilities over a large area unless sonar transducers are tagged out. If the sonar will injure a diver, chances are those sonars will adversely impact fish and marine mammals.
- Encourage dialog between regulators, contractors and engineers before setting arbitrary restrictions

Duncan Mellor, P.E. | Principal Coastal Engineer
Tighe & Bond | 177 Corporate Drive | Portsmouth, NH 03801 | 603.433.8818

Capt. Michael Pierdinock, CPF Charters “Perseverance” – New Bedford

Subject: Re: Comments to Northeast ("NE") Ocean Plan

From: Michael Pierdinock <cpfcharters@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, 27 Jun, 2016 at 12:04:00

Cc: Rruais <rrouais@aol.com>, Ralph Pratt <ralph.pratt@verizon.net>, Raymond Bogan <rbogan@boganlawoffice.com>, Dave Waldrip <captdave@relentlesscharters.com>, Barry Gibson <barrygibson6@aol.com>, Charlie Wade <cwade440@yahoo.com>, John Depersenaire <jdepersenaire@joinrfa.org>, David Schalit <dschalit@gmail.com>, Beth Casoni <beth.casoni@lobstermen.com>, "Pierce David (FWE)" <david.pierce@state.ma.us>, John Bullard <john.bullard@noaa.gov>, Tom Nies <tnies@nefmc.org>, Moira Kelly - NOAA Federal <moira.kelly@noaa.gov>, Mark Grant <mark.grant@noaa.gov>, Brad McHale <brad.mchale@noaa.gov>, Bruce Carlisle <bruce.carlisle@state.ma.us>

Original Comment from Captain Pierdinock

Betsy:

Thank you for your recent presentation at the SBNMS SAC meeting concerning the Northeast Ocean Plan and use of the Northeast Data Portal. Consistent with your email, the Northeast Data Portal and Northeast Ocean Plan focus primarily on recreational boating but the plan utilized data provided by the pilot project conducted by a select few charter boat captains from CT/RI/NY (<http://neoceanplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FactsheetPartyCharter.pdf>). My comments to the NE Ocean Plan is set forth below.

The level of detail found within the plan provided by the pilot project conducted by a select few charter boat captains transiting from home port to sea and back is concerning. NOAA and specifically GARFO understand that such detail is confidential and is not necessary to manage the fishery. For example, Northeast Federally Permitted charter boat or for hire vessels complete VTRs that provide the center point where fish were landed for the day (that does not include the latitude/longitude minutes and seconds) and the associated "chart area" designated by NOAA. NOAA only requires that level of detail to manage the fishery any more additional location data is confidential information that is not necessary to manage the fishery. GARFO has specifically indicated that proposed electronic VTR monitoring and reporting if required from their office in the future will only require that level of detail presently found on VTRs since they understand the confidential nature of such data.

Additional data could result in denying anglers access to the fishery that is inconsistent with the basic foundation of the laws of the United States that we are not to be denied access to the fishery. For example, it was not until recently that haddock was found at significant levels in the Stellwagen Bank waters. Haddock were rare to land 20 to 50 plus years ago in the Stellwagen area. If one was to conclude that we don't fish for haddock on Stellwagen Bank because none were present based on the last 40 to 50 years of data one could theoretically shut that area down to haddock fishing for some other use since it is assumed we don't fish within these waters. Today haddock are found throughout Stellwagen Bank and elsewhere. Fish have tails, they move to different areas over time, to use historical fishing data to conclude that we don't fish in an area is neither reasonable or appropriate. Haddock, Bluefin tuna, and other select species are just a few examples that one can use to point out the flaw in such an approach.

Therefore, regardless on whether we are dealing with recreational anglers or the for hire charter boat community we are adamantly against providing detailed locations of vessel routes and landings since it is not required by NOAA, is considered confidential information by NOAA that could be put to misuse and deny us access to the fishery. We would hope that the public is well informed of such in the future in order for the public to understand that the additional details that they are providing is not required and confidential. Therefore, we recommend that

landing data only include the level of detail to manage the fishery (latitude and longitude only that does not include minutes and seconds) and associated chart area consistent with NOAA requirements that maintains the confidentiality of such information. Please discontinue providing such data to the public.

If you have any questions, please email or give me a call.

Thanks

Capt. Mike Pierdinock

CPF Charters "Perseverance" - New Bedford

Recreational Fishing Alliance - Massachusetts Chairman

Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association - Board of Directors

Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

NMFS - Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel

New England Fishery Management Council - Recreational Advisory Panel

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Follow-Up Comment from Captain Pierdinock

From: Michael Pierdinock <cpfcharters@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, 27 Jun 2016, 12:04:00

Betsy:

Thank you for your response. You are correct that the captains gave permission and/or volunteered the information that is concerning since such information can be put to misuse.

Your example that the data was put to use particularly to site offshore wind turbines is an acceptable use of such data "because it allowed them to quantify where fishing occurred, something that they couldn't do in the past." My haddock example in the email below (as well as many other examples, notably Bluefin tuna) contradict this approach. The proposed wind turbines south of the Vineyards are in prime fishing grounds. Where one transits and fishes for large pelagics in 2016 may be different than 10/20 or 50 years ago. The fish come and go and move based upon many factors (temperate, forage fish, etc), to rely on such a limited data set to claim that one doesn't fish in a certain area is not reasonable or appropriate.

If you have any questions, feel free to email or give me a call.

Thanks

Capt. Mike Pierdinock

Art Sears

Subject: Ocean acidification
From: asears@maine.rr.com
Date: Wed, 29 Jun 2016, 08:45:21

Hello,

I am not sure I can wrap my arms around this. At the city and State and Federal level we spend enormous resources to test acidification levels yet every July 4th we launch firecracker missals loaded with poison into the very bay we claim we are trying to cleanup. Even at Mt Rushmore they have stopped the fireworks which contain poison. When are we going to wake up???? I love Fireworks but I'll take a cleaner Casco Bay instead

Thanks, Art Sears
Art or Anne

Ellen Keane, NOAA

Subject: Re: Catch Up

From: Ellen Keane <ellen.keane@noaa.gov>

Date: Tue, 5 July, 2016 at 11:13:00

Hi Betsy,

Chip and I took a look at the pages you mentioned below and have a few comments. Chip - I edited a couple of yours that overlapped with mine. Let me know if I changed any meanings or if there is anything to add. No showstoppers but wanted to share them for your consideration. Let us know if you have any questions.

- Page 3 and a few subsequent places: This identifies federal, state, regional, and tribal bodies as "the caretakers" of the oceans. There are likely many others (NGOs, academics, industry, etc.) that also consider themselves caretakers of the oceans. Maybe change the text a bit so it is not misread to mean these are the only caretakers.
- Page 58 - "*Coastal and offshore areas supported a variety of hunting, harvesting, fishing, and foraging activities for more than 12,000 years before the arrival of European settlers.*" (emphasis added)

The issue here is "offshore areas." Specifically, the document seems to be stating as fact that the tribes fished in the EEZ for the last 12,000 years. If EEZ fishing could be proven, then the proof might establish the underpinnings to an aboriginal right to fish the EEZ. This could potentially create a claim for tribal subsistence fishing rights that are outside NOAA fishing permits and Council FMPs for EEZ species such as cod, scallops, etc. Such subsistence fishing would likely require a re-write of Council FMPs and quotas. That is, of course, fine if that is what the facts are. That is not, however, the present state of the developed facts. In other words, there is no proof (to my knowledge) that the tribes fished in the offshore areas. If a tribe fished offshore thousands of years ago, that present day tribe would still need to establish the connection between it and the historical tribe that did the fishing. I know that GARFO looked at this issue in the past and found no evidence of tribal offshore fishing. Now, that past research might not be dispositive on the issue. Certainly, the tribes can present their own evidence and make their case. But so far, that has not happened... again, to my knowledge.

- Page 147 - "***Indigenous hunting, fishing, and foraging rights*** (a treaty between a tribe and the federal government or as provided for in state statute)—*may reserve or provide special rights, for example, related to subsistence related hunting, fishing, or foraging, to tribal members.*"

This text is ok as it says "may" but might be a bit misleading to readers as there are no treaties between the Federal Govt and tribes in our region.

- Page 148: "Tribal RPB members from both regions will also work together to develop guidelines for incorporating traditional ecological knowledge as an information source in regional ocean plans."

I don't have any issues with this but wanted to make sure that you are aware that the Ecosystem Science and Management Working Group (ESMWG) of the NOAA Scientific Advisory Board is examining the access, assessment, and integration of indigenous and local ecological knowledge (ILEK) in NOAA's natural resources management plans. There may be some overlap between these efforts.

Michael Kersula, Maine Department of Marine Resources

Subject: Missing Scallop Data
From: "Kersula, Michael E" <michael.e.kersula@maine.gov>
Date: Fri, 8 July 2016, 07:52:00

Dear Data Portal Keepers,

Your maps of scallop distribution are missing data from the Gulf of Maine. I work for the Maine Department of Marine Resources and we have data from the federal waters of the Northern Gulf of Maine from surveys from 2009, 2012, and 2016. Please contact me if you would like to expand your dataset.

Thank you,

Michael Kersula
Marine Resource Scientist I
michael.e.kersula@maine.gov

PS I tried to submit this a dozen times on the contact portion of your website. I am able enough at arithmetic that I can assure you that your captcha is not functioning properly. I repeatedly put in the correct number and it informed me that I needed to go back to grade school and could not submit the message.

Michael Kersula
Maine Dept. of Marine Resources
michael.e.kersula@maine.gov

David Dow

Subject: Comments on the Draft Northeast Regional Ocean Plan

From: "David Dow" <ddow420@comcast.net>

Date: Thu, 14 Jul 2016, 21:29:31

I am submitting comments as a grassroots environmental activist from Cape Cod, Ma. I feel that the conceptual model behind the Ocean Plan is fatally flawed and thus I will not be supporting it. Human activities in coastal watersheds have profound effects on the coastal ocean (nutrient enrichment and toxic chemicals), while far field ocean forcing (climate change) has important impacts in coastal embayments (ocean acidification and warming waters). Federal and state ocean jurisdictional waters (0.3 to 300 miles off the coast here on Cape Cod) are naturally linked to conserving wild places, wild things with human socioeconomic activities. Here on Cape Cod the environment and economy are interlinked through natural capital/ecosystem services and the federal/state/local permitting and management processes.

The Regional Ocean Plan focuses primarily on the federal agency's regulatory and management interactions to promote the 3 goals listed (with brief mention of some interactions with the states). My comments will focus on how success of many of these endeavors depends on action and the County and town level here on Cape Cod.

In the past I attended meeting of the NE Regional Planning Body outside of Cape Cod, but these required commutes to push meeting locations in Boston, Ma. or Providence, RI. Since the public was only given 3 minutes to provide verbal comments, I decided that submitting written comments was the best way forward. I found it interesting at the Public meeting in Barnstable Village, the tribal representatives sat out in the audience with the public/various constituent interests. I find that I see the Native American perspective that we need to take actions to preserve the ocean for the next 7 generations in a sustainable fashion. I found it disappointing that the draft report didn't include this perspective. Environmental Justice wasn't even discussed. EJ has been an area of dialog in the Presidential Primary vote here on Cape Cod. In four years will be celebrating the 400th. anniversary of the Pilgrim's landing in Massachusetts and the interaction between our two recognized federal tribes and the larger society is likely to be an area of concern.

As a grassroots environmental activist, I found most of the discussion in the draft report on the interaction amongst federal agencies to be mind numbing and somewhat irrelevant considering the status of the natural ecosystem and socioeconomic supporting our life styles. The wild places, wild things in the ocean surrounding Cape Cod have deteriorated, since I moved here from Louisiana in 1987. The Gulf of Maine Cod stock has collapsed from climate change; natural variability and overfishing, while the working waterfront is rapidly disappearing in favor of more lucrative economic projects. Commercial fishing and saltwater angling are key to drawing tourists; retirees and others to Cape Cod (see John T. Cumbler's- "Cape Cod: An Environmental History of a Fragile Ecosystem").

The residents of Cape Cod will spend \$3-8 billion over the next 20-30 years to address our excess nitrogen loading challenges in coastal embayments under the Clean Water Act section 208 wastewater mitigation program for non-point sources.. Cape Cod is likely to be the link for moving DC energy from offshore wind farms to the regional electric grid. We are the departing point for ferries to the islands and source of many ocean recreational activities. Mashpee and Falmouth are developing oyster aquaculture as a wastewater mitigation tool, while Welfleet is restoring salt marshes and natural shellfish beds. Rep. William Keating recently organized a workshop on "ocean acidity" at the Wood Hole Research Center where aquaculture was a key focus area. The Town Neck Beach Restoration project in Sandwich used sand dredged from Cape Cod Canal by the US Army COE.

As somebody who retired from the Fisheries Lab in Woods Hole, Ma. seven years ago, it is hard for me to envisage how NOAA Fisheries with reduced resources (FTEs and \$) will actually implement its share of Regional Ocean Plan

if it has a life after President Obama leaves office. The Republican Congress is strongly opposed to this Executive Order and it is not clear to me that this would be a Presidential priority in either a Clinton or Trump Administration. The NE RPB team did the best job it could given the limited resources available and the lack of Congressional support.

In regards to an ecosystems-based approach for fisheries management (A, EbM), I would prefer to see the limited available resources going to support the Ecosystems Assessment Group which converts monitoring data and modeling results into information useful to policy makers; constituents and the general public. The Data Portal and maps of plant/animal distribution and human activities is a valuable accomplishment of the NE RPB, but this would require a lot of Executive Branch or Congressional resources (\$ and people) to carry on into the future. I don't see these resources to be forthcoming, so that I would prefer that the investment be made to support the existing EA Group.

I chaired two monitoring committees when I worked at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and have a high priority for implementing a monitoring program to implement A, EbM for the living marine; protected and natural trust resources managed by NOAA. I participated in the EMaX modeling project which explored the effects of the grazing food chain and microbial food web to LMRs; PRs and NTRs on the Northeast Continental Shelf. I presume that similar resource constraints exist in other federal agencies. When I worked at NASA, I served on the Source Evaluation Board for developing a new contract and I am not convinced that having the work done by a bunch of contractors rather than civil servants is a more cost efficient way of doing business (i.e. NASA has 3-4 contractors for every civil servant). Since the NE RPB had much of its support work done by contractors, you can form your own decision on the efficacy of this process for planning, regulation and management.

Even though the development of the NE RPB Ocean Plan engaged many stakeholders and held numerous public meetings, it doesn't appear to me that it has that much grassroots support amongst the public (which is key to obtaining bi-partisan political support at the federal, state and local levels). There is a lot of public recognition of the CWA section 208 wastewater mitigation endeavors on Cape Cod and some support for climate adaptation action under the FEMA Community Rating System (in order to reduce flood insurance rates), but most people are unaware of the Ocean Plan development process. There was no interaction between the NOAA Fisheries Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2; draft Regional Ocean Plan and Section 208 wastewater planning and implementation process here on Cape Cod. Barnstable and Falmouth are considering ocean outfalls for treated sewage effluent which contain contaminants of emerging concerns. Monitoring by the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies shows that we already have ceccs in Nantucket Sound and our coastal embayments. This will be exacerbated by ocean outfall for treated sewage effluent.

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) extends into state jurisdictional waters (0-3 miles), so that reduction in nitrogen loading from the CWA section 208 program and efforts to reduce the effects of ocean acidity will impact the "productive capacity of EFH" in state waters. It is extremely unfortunate that none of these planning and management endeavors interacted with one another. Cape Cod is not the only place along the Atlantic seaboard where wild places, wild things are effected by eutrophication and climate change. Excess growth of macro algae from excess total nitrogen exacerbates the low pH conditions in the sediments as these plants decay on the bottom. The increased inshore water temperature in the Summer has forced lobsters further offshore, while Summer flounder are slowly replacing Winter flounder as a target of commercial and recreational fishermen/women. The warming inshore waters have attracted great white sharks which feed on the recovering pinniped populations.

In November 2015 BOEM held a Task Force meeting on Cape Cod that discussed transition corridors for transmitting 2000 mw of DC energy from offshore wind farms to the New England Regional Energy Grid. The Oak Street facility in Hyannis and the Canal Electric Plant in Sandwich were two sites locally that could accept this offshore renewable energy and convert it to a form for connection to the regional grid. Federal/state/local governmental entities have to agree with plans to bring this electricity from large scale wind farms in federal waters to Cape Cod and then the regional grid. It was unclear at this meeting whether a new power line would be required to move this energy from our sandy coast to the connection facilities in Hyannis or Sandwich. In Europe

this link between offshore wind farms and regional power lines on land have constrained the development of more renewable energy. To construct a new power line on Cape Cod for this process would be a permitting and regulatory nightmare and the weak link in this project.

One could make a similar argument in regards to the Town Neck Beach Nourishment project in Sandwich where shoreline homeowners balked at providing an easement to the US Army COE for the use of dredge spoils from the Cape Cod Canal. Town residents had to assume the full cost of Phase 1 of this project and its implementation was delayed. The Regional Ocean Plan ignores the role of local decision making and home rule in moving forward with projects that are approved at the federal (BOEM) and state (Massa. Ocean Management Plan) levels. Dredging of sand for Phase 2 of this beach nourishment project is likely to be opposed by fishermen/women that harvest seafood for which sand is an Essential Fish Habitat. EFH in coastal embayments on Cape Cod include: salt marshes; eelgrass and shellfish beds which are threatened by climate change and eutrophication. Two of the rationales for state and federal ocean planning are to encourage large scale wind farm development and dodging of offshore sand deposits for beach nourishment on land.

The importance of the the linked ocean/coastal embayment/watersheds to biodiversity and ecosystem services/natural capital coupled with diverse political and socioeconomic concerns at the federal/state/local level convinced me that supporting the draft Regional Ocean Plan was not feasible. Myself and other grassroots activists work on issues that require better integration and more cost effective approaches than what is described in this plan.. To engage in greater bureaucracy and more costly processes seems to run counter to the political changes here on Cape Cod. President Obama's original Executive Order advocated for sites within coastal watersheds where pilot projects could test out new ideas. I have supported the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve as a potential case study here on Cape Cod for dealing with the challenges of being data rich, but information poor (science translation) and doing outreach on public policy and planning endeavors that impact both constituents and the wider public.

There is no indication in the draft report on how decisions will be made in protecting wild places, wild things, while allowing compatible uses. This has been a topic of public comment at the NE RPB meetings which I have attended in person. This decision making process extends beyond cost/benefit analysis and the economic multiplier effect in local communities. One needs to consider EJ; historical context; diverse cultures and value systems; etc.

Thanks for your consideration of these individual comments. Too much of the dialog at the NE RPB meetings is dominated by special interest groups and their paid spokespersons. Many ENGOs supported the use of MOMP and the Rhode Island SAMP as models for the NE Regional Ocean Plan, but I feel that this is where this process went wrong and deviated from the President's EO. If this plan is implemented, it will generate a lot of public opposition which will not bode well for the federal/state agencies that are implementing it.

Yours truly,

Dr. David Dow
18 Treetop Lane
East Falmouth, Ma. 02536-4814
508-540-7142; ddow420@comcast.net

Multiple Commenters, Conservation Law Foundation – Version 1

Subject: Please consider these comments for the Northeast Regional Ocean Plan

From: Carol Justice, Laurie Burrage, David Wilson, Marion Gordon, Matthew Genaze, Kathleen Williams, Maria Manuela Lopes, Jose Diaz, Elaine Fischer, Gary Thaler, Lisa Mazzola, Paul Runion, Carolyn Villanova, Hon. Tiffany Snyder, Kathleen Thanas, Dr. James Lazell, Virginia Green, Donald DiRusso, Patricia Carpenter, Kalliope M., and Amy Haseotes" <e-info@clf.org>

First message received: Thu, 14 Jul 2016, 13:20:50

Final message received: Thu, 15 Jul 2016, 16:21:07

Northeast Regional Planning Body

To Regional Planning Body,

The creation of the first-ever Regional Ocean Plan in New England shows the importance of a healthy and effectively managed ocean for our region. The plan's primary goals of maintaining coastal and ocean ecosystem health, improving decision-making among federal agencies, and coordinating existing and future uses will have lasting positive impacts for our region's ocean and all of us who depend on it.

As you review the plan, please consider these points:

Important Ecological Areas can and must be identified in the final plan, along with clear commitments from decision makers to protect these areas from potentially damaging uses. This work, and all future planning work, must be done through the lens of how climate change is impacting our region's ocean waters.

The final plan should clarify federal agencies' commitments to improving ocean health and management using stronger language, rather than saying the agencies will use the data "to the extent practicable."

Members of the public should have a seat at the table through the creation of a formal Stakeholder Engagement Committee to ensure robust stakeholder engagement during plan implementation and while developing future iterations of the plan.

The final plan should include specific objectives to measure success. Will it be considered successful if there are fewer ship strikes on endangered whales? Or when it takes less time to site a development project? How will an Ocean Health Index (OHI) specifically lead to a healthier ocean? Knowing these measures will help with analysis of whether the plan is meeting its goals.

Because the ocean is and will continue to be a source of recreation, livelihood, and cultural significance for our region, a strong Regional Ocean Plan that includes these measures is critically important.

Multiple Commenters, Conservation Law Foundation – Version 2

Subject: Please consider these comments for the Northeast Regional Ocean Plan

From: “Deanna Mezoued, Carol Powley, Charles Caruso, Suzan Ballmer, Susan Etsy, Ellen Curren, Charles Shiimon, Edmund Chun Taite, Julie Jette, Hope Moffat, Uma Mirani, Nina Kornstein, Kim Twist, Stephanie Scheer, Heather Gray, Ellen Goodman, Stephen Hart, Christine Weiss, Kristi Perry, Jane Vieira, Jenna Valente, Kerry Mackin, Deborah Evans

First message received: Tue, 19 Jul 2016 12:10:05

Final message received: Thu, 21 Jul 2016, 11:57:35

Northeast Regional Planning Body

To Regional Planning Body,

The creation of the first-ever Regional Ocean Plan in New England is a major milestone in the management of New England's cherished ocean waters. Effective implementation of the plan will have lasting positive impacts on our region's ocean and all of us who depend on it.

As you review public comments and revise and finalize the Northeast Regional Ocean Plan, please consider making the following changes:

Identify and Conserve Important Ecological Areas: Important Ecological Areas (IEAs) are areas that are critical to the long-term health of New England's ocean wildlife and ecosystem. Knowing the location of these special places enables ocean resource managers, businesses and stakeholders to make better decisions about how we use and conserve our ocean. IEAs (including all five components of the IEA framework) can and must be identified, mapped and included in the Ocean Data Portal by the end of 2016, along with clear agency commitments to conserve these vitally important areas. Protecting our ecologically and economically valuable ocean wildlife and habitat should be a best practice.

Strengthen and Clarify Agency Commitments: The final plan should include strong agency commitments to implement the plan's provisions to the fullest extent consistent with the law. The plan should provide greater detail on how agencies will implement intergovernmental coordination best practices.

Provide for Meaningful Public Engagement: Public engagement is critical to the long-term of the ocean plan. The final plan must provide clear and detailed provisions for ongoing public engagement in plan implementation. As soon as possible, the Regional Planning Body should create a Stakeholder Liaison Committee that will support and inform the plan going forward.

Understand and Plan for Climate Change: A comprehensive understanding of the vulnerability of our regional ocean ecosystem to climate change is imperative to this plan's success. The final plan should include strong provisions for collaborative research on the impacts of climate change, and future ocean planning should be conducted through this important lens. The Regional Planning Body should commit to building a comprehensive climate change information base as a theme component on the Ocean Data Portal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Peter Zaykoski, Seaplan

Subject: Small error in Party / Charter Pilot section of NE Plan
From: Peter Zaykoski [mailto:pzaykoski@seaplan.org]
Date: Friday, 22 July, 2016, 15:08:00

Hi Nick,

I was going back through my notes on the plan and saw that I had put a note in the Commercial / Recreational fishing section. Under the "Charter/party fleet" section (pg. 89), the draft plan states that the project tested the potential for a *smartphone*-based system. The application we use is actually tablet-based and cannot be used on smartphones.

Just a little tweak!

I hope all is well.

Best,
Peter

Peter Zaykoski – Project Manager

Mobile: 617.721.5976

WWW.SEAPLAN.ORG

89 South Street, Suite 202, Boston, MA 02111

Mason Silkes, American Mussel Harvesters

Subject: Promote Aquaculture, Promote Ocean Planning
From: "Mason" <mason@americanmussel.com>
Cc: "Bill" <bill@americanmussel.com>, "Adam" <adam@americanmussel.com>, "Greg" <gsilkes@americanmussel.com>
Date: Fri, 22 Jul 2016, 17:05:07

Dear Regional Planning Body Co-leads:

For the past 30 years, American Mussel Harvesters, our Rhode Island-based family business, has been growing, harvesting and marketing farmed and wild-caught shellfish including mussels, oysters and clams. The market demand for farmed shellfish is growing rapidly. Fifteen years ago, we developed Saltwater Farms, our aquaculture operations at two carefully sited locations in Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island Sound. With our experience both living and working in New England, we are pleased to have an opportunity to provide comments on the draft Northeast Ocean Plan.

Shellfish farmers need space to operate in. For generations, our coastal areas have been used by shippers and sailors and industries like ours; however, in recent generations our traditional marine industries must find ways to co-exist with new industries such as offshore wind and a growing number of recreational users. The need to balance these uses and ensure we can all operate collectively in the ocean was why we got involved in ocean planning and the Rhode Island Special Area Management Plan. We want to ensure that decision makers understand that shellfish farming is an economically valuable offshore activity, and that our current and future needs are considered when decisions are being made that affect the ocean space. We see the value in ocean planning and hope our comments will be used to improve the ocean plan.

We applaud the Northeast Regional Planning Body (RPB) for including aquaculture within the Northeast Ocean Plan and for describing the future growth potential for aquaculture in New England. American Mussel Harvesters would like to continue and thrive as new technologies emerge and production increases. We additionally applaud the characterization of challenges surrounding offshore aquaculture including the complex permitting process in federal waters. Our hope is the ocean plan will be used to improve offshore aquaculture by reducing permit complexities, given its importance as a sustainable food source.

The first ever maps characterizing the regional scale of aquaculture in New England that are included in the portal and plan are a helpful tool. We encourage the RPB to maintain and update these maps and the data portal as they are useful both for the aquaculture industry and coastal managers to identify potential sites for expansion of the aquaculture industry and illuminate potential conflicts.

We recognize that this plan is the first iteration and work is ongoing. However, we would like to see a stronger commitment to advance aquaculture with offshore energy projects. It is important that the RPB agencies hold firm on their commitments to continue the aquaculture interagency work group and to advance national and regional initiatives to support and promote marine aquaculture. Specifically, we believe co-location with projects such as wind farms would limit ocean user conflicts, while advancing the aquaculture industry. Offshore aquaculture has the potential to be a multi-million dollar industry, and the job growth that accompanies that could be hugely beneficial to our region. It will promote local food producers, and decrease the seafood trade deficit that amounts to \$9 billion annually. Despite these benefits, there is currently no clear process for permitting aquaculture farms in the vast federal waters surrounding our nation. We hope that the RPB will use the regional ocean plan to bring together the many parties with an interest in this issue, and map out a clear and predictable pathway to moving aquaculture projects forward including co-location with wind energy projects. We understand it is difficult to blaze a new trail with the federal government, and more support will come in time as the industry is established and

grows to a notable size; however, our hope is that RPB member agencies will commit to advance permitting processes so our industry can thrive with new, emerging technologies. Specifically, we encourage the RPB to develop a policy work plan as part of the plan appendices to support the interagency workgroup commitment to inform regulatory and siting issues (*Aquaculture Action 6*).

The RPB provides a unique forum for relevant government agencies and those with a vested interest in the ocean, like American Mussel Harvesters, to come together to address how we manage our ocean. We strongly urge the RPB to continue and strengthen its efforts to engage stakeholders as the plan is implemented. While the plan does make general commitments to engage affected stakeholders early in the permitting process, those commitments are fairly generic. While we understand the need for the plan to be broad in its commitment to stakeholder engagement—specifics of how that happens will need to change based on the issue at hand—we urge the RPB member agencies to take these commitments seriously. The ability to bring all the relevant stakeholders to the table together early in the process is important to us as permit applicants because it can help decrease risk and increase permitting reliability. We, therefore, urge the RPB member agencies to begin to clearly identify specific actions they will take to engage stakeholders earlier and more effectively in decision-making processes. In the case of the aquaculture industry as a whole, the RPB’s aquaculture workgroup is a good place to discuss how the industry would like to be engaged as a stakeholder when other decisions are being made that might affect us, and also how the RPB can help facilitate multi-stakeholder, multi-agency dialog when an aquaculture project is being developed. We welcome future opportunities to discuss our industry and its relevant needs, particularly as policies advancing co-location are developed. Our belief is that an open dialogue with all ocean users makes ocean management better for all.

Lastly, we are excited to see the RPB prioritize science and research associated with aquaculture and are willing to assist in any way that we can. Specifically, research aimed at understanding ocean acidification impacts to shell-forming organisms is critical to our industry’s future. We urge the RPB not only to prioritize this research, but also to use it to help industries adapt to changing ocean conditions. Future iterations of the plan should continue to incorporate and reflect the lessons learned from this research.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Northeast Ocean Plan. We congratulate you on the work done to get to this stage and we look forward to working with you in the future to further advance aquaculture in New England.

Sincerely,
Bill Silkes Mason Silkes Greg Silkes Adam Silkes
American Mussel
165 Tidal Dr.
North Kingstown, RI 02852
www.americanmussel.com

Thomas Balf, Maritime Gloucester

Subject: Comments from Thomas Balf, Maritime Gloucester
From: "Thomas Balf" <tbalf@maritimegloucester.org>
Date: Mon, 25 Jul 2016, 13:20:49

July 25, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments on the draft Northeast Ocean Plan.

I have reviewed the draft document and attended a public session, at Maritime Gloucester, where various elements of the Northeast Ocean Plan were presented.

My comment -- and it is one that I also made at the session at Maritime Gloucester -- is that I believe that the role of citizen science should, at a minimum, be identified and at a maximum, be encouraged, as part of the future plans to continue to obtain better ocean data that becomes integrated into the data portal and ultimately used for enhanced decision-making.

I believe that there are multiple opportunities in the plan that go uncaptured to promote the potential, future use of citizen science. In all the data sections (in Chapter 3), reference is typically given to existing, standard or emerging data projects and no reference given to the role of citizen-led efforts to capture potentially useful data. With respect to the recognition in the Plan for the need for more localized marine habitat information or more information on individual species, there is no mention of the role that citizen scientists could play in this endeavor. With respect to the six research priority areas described in Chapter 5 (Science and Research Priorities), there is no recognition of the role that citizens could play in the research priorities or that promoting these citizen efforts (and the development of inexpensive sensing equipment) could be a research priority itself. Throughout the plan, citizen engagement and public participation is encouraged -- but not at the front end of the process where data is collected.

I believe that this is unfortunate because there is an emerging revolution going on with respect to new, inexpensive environmental sensors and the role that citizens can play in capturing data for the purpose of (a) screening environmental issues; or (b) informing decision-making by providing "co-located" data.

I know that the Obama Administration agrees. On September 30th, 2015, the White House office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued a Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, "Addressing Societal and Scientific Challenges through Citizen Science and Crowdsourcing." This memorandum outlined principles that agencies should apply in order to ensure future use of citizen science and crowdsourcing, and directs agencies to "catalogue agency-specific citizen science and crowdsourcing projects on a government-wide online database and website-- to be developed by the General Services Administration (GSA)."

I would hope that the final version of the Northeast Ocean Plan will be more effectively aligned with this Memorandum and the opportunities to engage the public in the collection of data. One would hope that this engagement could contribute meaningfully to sound decision-making and public engagement and trust in effective management of our oceans in the 21st century.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Respectfully,

Tom

--

Thomas Balf
Executive Director
Maritime Gloucester
23 Harbor Loop
Gloucester, MA 01930
[978-281-0470](tel:978-281-0470)
www.maritimegloucester.org

Eleanor Mariani, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Subject: Draft Northeast Ocean Plan
From: Mariani, Eleanor [mailto:Eleanor.Mariani@ct.gov]
Date: Monday, 25 July, 2016, 14:21:00

Hi John,

I don't know if you are still taking comments on the plan. If so, on page 140, Early Agency Coordination for State agencies, please consider adding "boating" as part of the state agencies.

Thank you,

Eleanor Mariani
Director DEEP Boating Division/ State Boating Law Administrator
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
333 Ferry Road, PO Box 280, Old Lyme, CT 06371-0280
P: 860.447-4359 | F: 860.434-3501 | E: Eleanor.mariani@ct.gov

Jason Kelly, Moran Shipping Agencies, Inc.

Subject: Submission of Comments on the Draft Northeast Ocean Plan

From: "Jason E. Kelly" <jkelly@moranshipping.com>

Date: Mon, 25 Jul 2016, 14:39:32

Ms. Betsy Nicholson
Federal Co-Lead, NE Regional Planning Body
Northeast Regional Coordinator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Mr. Grover Fugate
State Co-Lead, NE Regional Planning Body
Executive Director
Coastal Resources Management Council
Oliver H. Stedman Government Center
4808 Tower Hill Road
Wakefield, RI 02879

Chief Richard Getchell
Tribal Co-Lead, NE Regional Planning Body
All Nations Consulting
P.O. Box 326
Mapleton, ME 04757

RE: Submission of Comments on the Draft Northeast Ocean Plan

Dear Regional Planning Body Co-leads:

Next year, Moran Shipping Agencies will be proudly celebrating 80 years of steamship agency excellence. From our humble beginnings as a family owned operation in Providence, Rhode Island in 1937, to becoming the largest independent steamship agency in North America today, we are proud to provide full Agency Services at over 90 ports in North America. We are a world leader in the maritime industry, and operate a vessel agency and maritime consulting firm where we serve many of the world's most prominent ship owners, operators, and charterers. We currently have 25 offices in the United States and service ports along the East, Gulf and West Coasts, and vessels of all sizes, ranging from the Ultra Large Cargo Carriers to the smallest fishing boat.

We are proud to see the nation's first ocean plan come out of the Northeast, where Moran Shipping first began and where our Corporate Headquarters remains, in Providence, RI. We are pleased to provide comments on this draft plan, which will undoubtedly benefit our operations throughout the region.

We applaud the RPB's engagement of the maritime community and NROC's Maritime White Paper – the components of which we were happy to see included in the draft plan and the Northeast Ocean Data Portal. We encourage the RPB to continue to maximize its engagement with our industry and to reach out to us and other stakeholders as needed to keep plan data and information current and relevant.

After reviewing the draft ocean plan, and in order to ensure the long-term success of the plan, we ask the RPB to consider the following:

1. Continue to improve and update the maritime data within the Northeast Ocean Data Portal;

This includes not only data on current uses, but also continuing to map out future trends and navigational safety needs of the maritime industry. This type of forward-looking information is important to provide to agencies making decisions on potential development projects, so that they understand how potential projects could affect our industry. In addition, it is imperative that AIS data be maintained and we ask the RPB and agency members to provide the resources necessary to ensure continued updates of AIS data within the Ocean Data Portals.

2. Fully implement the objectives to improve agency coordination;

We were happy to see agency commitments to improve coordination, especially with respect to the Coast Guard, MARAD, and Army Corps of Engineers. We urge the RPB agencies to fully implement these actions. In particular, we would like to see the Coast Guard continue to take a leadership role in this process. We know that the Coast Guard has been involved in the Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study; no doubt there is potential for this information to be used to improve navigational safety.

3. Continue robust stakeholder outreach within the maritime commerce community;

The cumulative impacts over time of navigating around new fixed projects, for example offshore wind, can have real world, navigational safety implications and add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenue over the course of a year simply in fuel costs. Engaging industry and responding to such concerns will be critical for our continued support in this process. We urge the RPB to take the commitments for stakeholder outreach seriously and outline a plan of action for how agencies will identify and engage stakeholders more effectively within the decision-making process.

4. Ensure harmonization with the Mid-Atlantic ocean data portal and regional plan.

The shipping industry operates in most coastal regions, so continuity between regions is critical.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Northeast Ocean Plan. We look forward to continuing to participate in the planning process and hope our comments will be useful as you work to finalize our nation's first regional ocean plan.

Sincerely,

Jason E. Kelly
Executive Vice President
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jkelly@moranshipping.com www.moranshipping.com

Please visit [Ports Serviced](#) for complete contact details.

Heather McElroy, Cape Cod Commission

Subject: comment on the Draft NE Ocean Plan, Cape Cod Commission staff

From: "Heather McElroy" <hmcelroy@capecodcommission.org>

Cc: "Sharon Rooney" <srooney@capecodcommission.org>, "Patty Daley" <pdaley@capecodcommission.org>

Date: Mon, 25 Jul 2016, 18:30:35

Hi Betsy,

I am writing to thank you, the Northeast Regional Planning Body planning team, and the NE RPB, for all your work on the Draft Northeast Ocean Plan. The plan is a terrific compilation of the years of work, public meetings, data, maps, and action items, oriented toward improving our understanding and management of our ocean resources. From my perspective, several strengths of the plan include:

- § The NE Ocean Data Portal – the portal translates loads of previously unavailable data on ocean resources and uses. This effort to collect and present data into an easily accessible online resource will empower all ocean stakeholders in the dialogue about ocean management.
- § Simple but powerful Goals – the plan collects and presents science-based information and data-layers and integrates them with actions and federal agency commitments to improve cross-disciplinary decision making.
- § Assessment of cumulative impacts – the consideration of cumulative impacts to sensitive resources is an important element found throughout the plan. The science priorities aim to improve our understanding of cumulative impacts, and are integrated with and support the plan goals. I look forward to future iterations of the plan where greater understanding of cumulative impacts is incorporated into ocean management decision-making.

I also want to pass along an observation about the assessment of Important Ecological Areas (IEAs). I had a much better understanding of the authors' intent in identifying IEAs as a result of the discussion at the Ocean Advisory Commission meeting on June 27th; specifically, that identifying IEAs serves to fill one component of ecosystem based management, but that IEAs do not represent a scientific consensus on the most biologically significant parts of the ocean. However, given concerns expressed by stakeholders (some fearing more regulation and others wanting more), I think it is very important to clarify in the text that the purpose of identifying IEAs in the plan is one of improving our understanding of relationships of organisms in the ocean, and not for the purposes of creating a data layer that federal agencies will incorporate into their regulations. That being said, I think that the criteria outlined in the plan for identifying IEAs make a lot of sense, and it will be interesting to see the results of the planned analysis.

The Draft Northeast Ocean Plan is a great effort which advances our understanding of the myriad ecosystem services and uses the ocean provides. Thank you for your work on the plan, and for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Heather McElroy

Heather McElroy
Natural Resources Specialist
Cape Cod Commission
508.362.3828
hmcelroy@capecodcommission.org

Helen Brohl, U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System

Subject: Comments to the NE Ocean Plan

From: Helen.Brohl@dot.gov

Cc: Pat.Mutschler@dot.gov, Jaya.Ghosh@dot.gov, james.d.jenkins@dot.gov, Helen.Brohl@dot.gov

Date: Mon, 25 Jul 2016, 22:21:21

Betsy Nicholson, NE RPB Federal Co-lead
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276.

Dear Ms. Nicholson:

The US Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS) is a Cabinet-level interagency committee directed by Congress to coordinate Federal maritime transportation policy amongst the 25+ Federal agencies engaged in the Marine Transportation System (MTS). I am pleased to provide the following short remarks to the Northeast Ocean Plan.

Despite the citation to the following, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics reports that international trade via vessel is less than noted, i.e. 76% by weight. We recommend a double check on this notation.

*Nationally, almost 90 percent of everything we consume arrives via ship, and the Northeast region is no exception.*³

Regarding this statement: *Several federal agencies share authority to maintain the MTS, including the USCG, USACE, and Maritime Administration (MARAD). The USCG has a unique multi-mission role involving both waterway safety and regulatory authority.*⁶ *The USACE is responsible for permitting waterway infrastructure projects and maintaining navigable waterways. The MARAD manages several programs that promote the use of the MTS, including ports, and has authority for the licensing of offshore LNG- and oil-receiving port facilities.*

We recommend that it be modified to state, "Over 25 federal agencies are directly or indirectly engaged with the MTS, including the USCG, USACE, Federal Maritime Commission (FMC), Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to name a few. [cite <http://www.cmts.gov/Resources/Compendium.aspx>] The USCG has a unique multi-mission role involving both waterway safety, security, environmental protection and regulatory authority.⁶ The USACE is responsible for permitting waterway infrastructure projects and maintaining navigable waterways. MARAD manages several programs that promote the use of the MTS, including ports, and has authority for the licensing of offshore LNG- and oil-receiving port facilities. NOAA provides all nautical charts and maps and geodetic measurements, including developing strategies for coastal mapping. The FMC is an independent federal agency responsible for regulating the U.S. international ocean transportation system for the benefit of U.S. exporters, importers, and the U.S. consumer.

Before the MAPS and DATA discussion, we recommend the additional statements.

The Federal MTS agencies engage through the US Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS). The CMTS was established by Presidential Directive in 2005 and authorized in statute in 2012 to regularly assess the state of the MTS; ensure that the MTS is integrated into other modes of transportation including the environment; and to coordinate Federal maritime policy. The CMTS interagency teams are developing enhanced marine safety information for the mariner; harmonizing amongst the navigation agencies the geospatial and referential information of navigable waterways; addressing MTS resilience risk factors; engaging academia to collaborate on

research, development, and technology within the MTS; enhancing interagency cooperation with vessel pollution treatment technologies; and investigating the use of public-private partnerships for infrastructure development. The CMTS is a one-stop-shop portal to engage the many Federal MTS agencies in a holistic manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. Please contact me if I can provide additional information.

Sincere regards,

Helen Brohl

Executive Director
US Committee on the Marine Transportation System
202-366-3612
www.cmts.gov

Mary Ann Nahf, Harpswell Conservation Commission

Subject: Draft NE Ocean Plan

From: "Mary Ann Nahf" <manahf24@gmail.com>

Cc: "Kristi Eiane" <keiane@town.harpswell.me.us>, "Ivy Frignoca" <ifrignoca@casco bay.org>

Date: Mon, 25 Jul 2016, 21:32:02

The members of the Harpswell Conservation Commission concur with the important points brought up by the Friends of Casco Bay Baykeeper, Ivy Frignoca, in regard to the NE Ocean Plan. Harpswell is an island community in Casco Bay with 216 miles of shoreline and the town is defined by its marine environment. Our marine economy is directly affected by what happens on the New Meadows River; we support adding it to the list of priority restoration projects.

Sincerely,

Members of The Harpswell Conservation Commission
Mary Ann Nahf, Chair

Erik Anderson

Subject: Comments io Plan
From: andy42152@aol.com
Date: Mon, 25 Jul 2016, 22:56:51

From: Erik Anderson
38 Georges Terrace
Portsmouth, NH 03801

To: NE Regional Planning Body

Re: Public Comment

Comment 1 - As this commenter recognizes the time that these comments are being submitted it was not well defined in some requests for comment the exact time deadline. Since these comments are being submitted prior to 12:00pm on 7/25/16 I hope they will be accepted into the public comment process.

Comment 2 - The "Plan" as constructed is a comprehensive document from the efforts of the "Planning Body". It has been organized well for understanding in a variety of dimensions but volumetric to bring this effort down to a simple structure for complete purpose.

Comment 3 - In identifying the variety of "users" in the current regime ocean activity it was not organized in a manner that put depth into the longevity of any particular user. With oncoming ventures and up-starts in ocean usage it would have been legitimate for the "Planning Body" to recognize the chronology of users for whatever purpose it might have for future planning and recognition.

Comment 4 - While it has been verbally expressed that this "Plan", "Planning Body" or structure there after will play no guiding roll in regulatory measures, actions, or implementation of measures it is with some apprehension from this commenter that although the "plan" is in its infancy, as it matures it may transition into regulatory functions and authority. Aside from the verbal assurance that was stated at public hearings from "Planning Body" representatives any federal register "Final Notice" should state that this "Plan" will not supercede the authority of the variety of government agencies that participated and comprised the "Plans" creation.

In advance, thank you for letting me submit these comments

Erik Anderson

Dot Kelly

Subject: Comment regarding Active Dredging Disposal in the nearshore waterways including Long Island Sound, Gulf of Maine, Casco Bay, Kennebec River, Penobscot River etc.

From: dot@dkelly.org

Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2016, 08:08:20

Betsy Nicholson,
NE RPB Federal Co-lead National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service,
Northeast Regional Office 55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

July 25, 2016

Dear Ms. Nicholson and NE RPB,

Thank you for taking the lead and drafting the first-in-the-nation Regional Ocean Plan. New England's marine waters define our character and shape our lives. Thoughtful management of this important resource is very important. I support the Draft Plan, offer this comment to supplement it, and look forward to having dredging disposal given a section all to its own.

This comment just highlights one important use of the nearshore areas that is hidden from view, is a remnant from the less thoughtful actions of the past, and deserves added attention, **dredging spoils disposal**.

Please let me know how to interact with the Ocean Planning committee to have a transparent, full discussion about dredging disposal. This section should include dredging disposal, dredging spoils used for "beach nourishment", upland uses of dredging disposal and the appropriate cost of disposal and who should be paying for the cost.

Thanks for considering this comment.

Respectfully submitted,

Dot Kelly
Phippsburg, Maine
dot@dkelly.org
(207) 443-4787

Melissa Gates, Surfrider Foundation

Subject: Surfrider Foundation: self-guided recreation missing in maps & data section of the draft plan
From: "Melissa Gates" <mgates@surfrider.org>
Date: Thu, 28 Jul 2016 09:23:47

Hi Betsy,

It was good to see you yesterday at the EBM meeting in Boston, and to have a hard copy of the draft plan and the RPB's advice brochure - thank you!

One thing I did not include in the Surfrider Foundation's comment letter to the RPB on the draft Plan that I wanted articulate again is that individual non-consumptive ocean recreation is still missing from the explanation of rec maps and data, on page 97. Boating, whale-watching, scuba, rec areas and surveys describing events are included, but the massive undertaking of collecting data points from individual users is missing.

As you know, this important data that the Surfrider Foundation collected as part of the Study provides characterization of how, when and where survey respondents use New England's ocean and coast for self-guided non-consumptive recreation; the data also allows for gap analysis, pointing to areas that still need further research in order to help inform decision-making by better understanding this vital human use, which accounts for the largest single sector of New England's ocean economy: recreation & tourism.

I hope the RPB will consider, as I asked during public comments at the November 2015 RPB meeting, adding self-guided recreation explicitly in its own section on page 97. Please consider adding this most widespread use of our Northeast coast under the title, "Self-guided marine recreation," describing the individual user survey data and citing our project team for this undertaking, and then subsequently altering the current "Coastal use surveys" section to read more accurately in context as, "Marine events," describing the suite of events covered in 2012 and 2015 by the various surveys.

Additionally, I want to echo sentiments Heather made at the EBM meeting yesterday in calling upon the RPB to include more specific articulation in the science and research priorities relating to how the human community is part of the ecosystem. We should be considering how changes in human activity affect the overarching goal of healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, and assessing vulnerability of human communities as part of ecosystem analysis.

Thank you for considering these additional comments.

The Surfrider Foundation looks forward to continuing to help champion this effort, and we GREATLY appreciate all of your enthusiasm, time, expertise, and incredible effort in bringing this process to the point it's at. Thank you!

Melissa

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Jarret Byrnes, University of Massachusetts – Boston

Subject: comments on New England regional ocean plan
From: Jarrett Byrnes <Jarrett.Byrnes@umb.edu>
Date: Fri, 5 Aug 5, 2016, 20:45:00

Dear Northeast Regional Planning Body,

Having read the impressive piece of work that is the Northeast regional ocean plan, I'd like to make a few suggestions.

1) First, the data portal, while incredibly impressive, currently appears mostly useful for spatial data. There appears little ability to include/access small-scale timeseries data, such as local site-specific monitoring. This information is incredibly important in order to understand change over time.

2) Similarly, there exist a number of long-term monitoring programs in the region. For example, MWRA's monitoring program, the Seabrook power plant's monitoring program, etc. These are powerful sources of data that ought to be brought in for the purposes of regional ocean planning and to understand long-term change in the Northeast into the future.

3) There is little language about coordination of regional monitoring and research networks. Given the rise of Biodiversity Observation Networks (BONs) as a key means of assessing the status of ecosystems around the world, local regional networks are likely to play an incredibly important role in understanding the spatial variability and long-term direction of change in Northeast ocean waters. The ocean plan could provide some wonderful opportunities for regionwide research and monitoring coordination that would be a true benefit to the entire region. Particularly if these research networks were included as a funding priority, we could gain much in terms of understanding long-term region-wide change in the Northeast.

Again, amazing work. I think incorporating information that is smaller in scale, but longer temporal focus, making timeseries data accessible, and prioritizing regional research networks, are all goals that would be beneficial to the regional ocean plan. I hope they are able to be incorporated. Wonderful work.

-Jarrett Byrnes, Ph.D.

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