



October 14, 2016

Deerin S. Babb-Brott
Director, National Ocean Council
Executive Office of the President
722 Jackson Place
Washington DC 20008

Dear Mr. Babb-Brott,

On behalf of the Northeast Regional Planning Body, we are proud to submit the Northeast Ocean Plan for review and certification by the National Ocean Council.

Since the Regional Planning Body was formed in November 2012, we have conducted a comprehensive, ecosystem-based, and transparent process to produce a regional plan that, when implemented, will promote healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, enable effective decision-making, and pursue compatibility among and between ocean uses in New England waters. The Plan resulted from a consensus-based process among the federal, state, tribal and fishery management council members, informed by extensive stakeholder engagement across the region.

We look forward to your review and certification, and to continuing this important work in the Northeast. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Nicholson".

Betsy Nicholson
Federal Co-Lead, Northeast Regional Planning Body

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Getchell".

Richard Getchell
Tribal Co-Lead, Northeast Regional Planning Body

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grover Fugate".

Grover Fugate
State Co-Lead, Northeast Regional Planning Body



NORTHEAST OCEAN PLAN

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NORTHEAST REGIONAL PLANNING BODY

SIX STATES

- Connecticut
- Rhode Island
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Maine
- Vermont

SIX FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES

- Aroostook Band of Micmacs
- Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council
- Mohegan Indian Tribe of Connecticut
- Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island
- Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

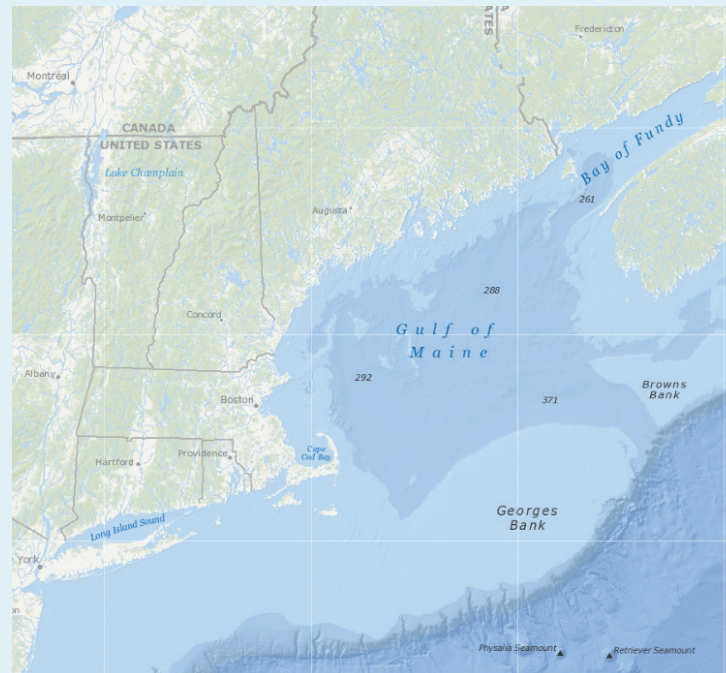
NINE FEDERAL AGENCIES

- Joint Chiefs of Staff
- US Department of Agriculture
- US Department of Commerce
- US Department of Defense
- US Department of Energy
- US Department of Homeland Security
- US Department of the Interior
- US Department of Transportation
- US Environmental Protection Agency

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

- New York
- Canada





THE NORTHEAST OCEAN PLAN

This Plan summarizes the ocean planning process and is a guide to informing agency decisions and practices in order to continue making progress toward achieving regional goals for the management of our public ocean resources.

This Plan recognizes that these goals and a desire to move toward an ecosystem-based approach to management must be achieved through existing legal frameworks by using the best available information and by ensuring public and scientific input in every decision. Therefore, the work is not done, and this Plan serves as the foundation for continued progress.

Contents

These chapters describe the path forward for achieving the Northeast Ocean Plan's goals—a path that reflects the Regional Planning Body's interest in continued public engagement, in a foundation of sound science, and in advancing an adaptive approach to managing the ocean ecosystem.

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CHAPTER 1 describes the unique characteristics of the Northeast US and the need for and benefits of ocean planning.

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CHAPTER 2 summarizes the ocean planning process to date, including the development of ocean planning goals, the Northeast Ocean Data Portal, and the Northeast Ocean Plan (Plan).

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CHAPTER 3 summarizes the regulatory framework for managing ocean and coastal resources. It then provides an in-depth look at the 10 primary ocean resources and activities for which this Plan will guide and inform decision-making:

- 38 Marine Life & Habitat
- 60 Cultural Resources
- 68 Marine Transportation
- 78 National Security
- 86 Commercial & Recreational Fishing
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- 124 Offshore Sand Resources
- 134 Restoration

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CHAPTER 4 describes how the Regional Planning Body (RPB) will implement the Plan. This discussion includes best practices for intergovernmental coordination and stakeholder engagement, Plan implementation and oversight responsibilities, and commitments to developing frameworks for monitoring and evaluating plan performance and ocean and ecosystem health.

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CHAPTER 5 identifies knowledge and information gaps and organizes those gaps under six primary science and research priorities. These data and information gaps were identified throughout the planning process by the RPB, stakeholders, and scientists. Agencies' decisions will be enhanced as each of these gaps is filled by the RPB and the broader community over time.

- 179 Endnotes
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