SUMMARY

Through strategic investment of the resources of the Congressionally-established National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP), an effective National Strategy for ocean and coastal sciences education can be implemented, coordinated and sustained. The leadership of NOPP, in partnership with federal agencies, academia, industry and the private sector, will have far-reaching consequences for improved ocean literacy, outreach and science education in the United States. An ocean-literate populace is our vision.

INTRODUCTION

Quality of life, economic health, and security for people of our nation and the world are increasingly dependent upon the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. A well-informed, scientifically literate populace, capable of making judicious decisions, serves as the vanguard of our society. Yet many recent studies suggest that the general American public is not as knowledgeable about scientific and technical concepts as modern society requires, indicating the need for improved methods to address public education. Too few public education campaigns, severe shortages of well-trained teachers in scientific and technical subjects, and failure to substantially increase the numbers of underrepresented and underserved groups working in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, pose significant obstacles to achieving broad science literacy. Coordinated national efforts are needed to address these obstacles and ensure the health of the education and research enterprises that fuel the prosperity of our nation.

The oceans and coasts are naturally fascinating to humans and have a vast impact on their lives. Ocean-related concepts and technologies offer captivating methods for educating the public about aspects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and can serve as powerful tools for strengthening

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1 NOPP comprises the following federal agencies: United States Navy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Department of Energy (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Minerals Management Service (MMS), Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Department of State, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Additional information regarding NOPP programs is available at the website www.nopp.org.
scientific literacy. There is, however, an equally important, intrinsic need for ocean literacy itself.

Within the realm of the oceans and coastal environment, the interdependence among public need, policy decisions, and scientific and technical knowledge is particularly compelling. It is essential that the public be made aware of the many ways in which the systems of Earth, in particular, the oceans, affect everyday life, as well as the significant influence that people have on the health of the oceans and their coasts. The public must:

- Understand the role of the coupled ocean-atmosphere-cryosphere system that drives our weather and climate;
- Appreciate that environmental pressures introduced on land have consequences that extend through the coasts to the ocean;
- Comprehend how oceanic conditions nurture the continued existence of marine ecosystems and maintenance of sustainable fish stocks; and,
- Encourage exploration into promising new biotechnologies and other yet-to-be-discovered societal benefits uniquely existing within the oceans.

Increasingly, scientific research in the oceans is focused on efforts to deploy observing systems that can monitor those processes of greatest impact on mankind. The use of such systems will require a better public understanding of ocean processes so that the public may use the information effectively, as well as ensure the availability of the technically trained workforce needed to operate these systems.

Public education\(^2\) must be used to achieve the complementary goals of improving ocean literacy and strengthening scientific literacy across every facet of the socio-economic spectrum. Museums, aquariums, science centers, and public/cable television programming offer enriching opportunities for reaching large audiences; and, promoting lifelong learning about science and technology, and communicating the relevance of each to daily life. Existing initiatives promoting systemic reform and further implementation of the *National Science Education Standards*\(^3\) (NSES) offer promising opportunities for increased public knowledge of the oceans and coasts. The inherently multidisciplinary nature of coastal and ocean systems offers an exciting context in which to teach fundamental concepts of physics, biology, chemistry, geology, and mathematics. Ideally, increased exposure to the oceans and coasts using myriad approaches will both increase public support for ocean and coastal research programs and encourage more students from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds to consider pursuing careers in ocean-related professions.

In the United States, many individuals and institutions employ ocean and coastal sciences in the broader context of improving public understanding of science; however, these efforts have not been well coordinated on a national scale. To address this need, several recent meetings have been convened to consider a nationally coordinated effort, or “National Agenda”, for improving education about our coasts and oceans. Important programs initiated within the NOPP agencies offer many of the essential building blocks for a successful national program. Further, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission are actively engaged in assessing the status of national research and education as they relate to the oceans and coasts. Through the efforts of these intra-agency programs and Commission initiatives, a consensus is rapidly emerging that is catalyzing coordination of efforts to reform public education in the ocean and coastal sciences. The NOPP is a Congressionally established umbrella

\(^2\) Public education [in ocean and coastal sciences] is defined as a proactive communication that imparts the knowledge and value of ocean and coastal sciences, products and services to people of the nation and the world; promoting environmental stewardship and public safety; and fostering a sustainable economy. [Adapted from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration education materials.]

\(^3\) *National Science Education Standards*, 1996, National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, National Research Council, 276 pp.
organization linking the many agencies engaged in ocean sciences research and education. NOPP is thus ideally positioned to play a leadership role in the articulation and sustained implementation of this National Agenda for improving ocean literacy and strengthening scientific literacy through the use of ocean and coastal concepts.

**NOPP AND ITS ROLE IN OCEAN AND COASTAL OUTREACH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION**

In 1997, the Secretary of the Navy was charged, in Subtitle E of Title II, Division A, Public Law 104-201, to establish a National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) to:

1. Promote the national goals of assuring national security, advancing economic development, protecting quality of life, and strengthening science education and communication through improved knowledge of the ocean; and,

2. Coordinate and strengthen oceanographic efforts in support of those goals by:
   a) Identifying and carrying out partnerships among Federal agencies, academia, industry, and other members of the oceanographic scientific community in the areas of data, resources, education, and communication; and,
   b) Reporting annually to Congress on the Program.

Public Law 104-201 clearly delineates both the goal of NOPP in the area of science education and the strategy needed to achieve this goal. Since 1997, NOPP has sponsored six (6) education programs that are aimed at reaching these goals (see Appendix A). The challenge for NOPP is to clearly understand the role it plays relative to its member agencies and within the larger context of enhancing systemic efforts to strengthen public understanding of science in our nation. Many partners within NOPP have well-established or recently initiated programs concerning ocean and coastal sciences education that have been designed to address priorities aligned with their stated agency missions. Collectively, these funded initiatives serve to address many of the objectives emerging within the National Agenda to improve public knowledge of the oceans and coasts. In most cases, however, these programs have been established with limited inter-agency communication. The greatest strength of NOPP lies in its ability to offer a centralized infrastructure for coordinating initiatives so as to: (1) best use human and financial resources in a cost- and time-effective manner; (2) minimize duplication of programs across agencies; (3) identify and fill important gaps that are not covered by individual agency efforts; (4) facilitate continuation of and sustained support for the commitments of its partners; and, (5) initiate and/or expand programs that are beyond the missions of individual partners. Additionally, the pivotal role of NOPP, in the development of the next generation of infrastructure for ocean exploration, observing, monitoring, modeling and information management, provides an excellent opportunity to foster the use of such systems to enhance the public understanding of the oceans and coasts.

**STRATEGIC AGENDA**

**OVERALL GOAL:** To lead the Nation in articulating, implementing, coordinating, assessing, and sustaining a National Agenda that improves public ocean and coastal literacy and strengthens science and technology education through an enhanced understanding of ocean and coastal concepts and their interrelationship with the atmosphere, cryosphere, geosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere.
SPECIFIC GOALS: NOPP serves the Nation by coordinating federal agencies, academia, industry, and other members of the oceanographic, scientific and technical communities to:

I. Catalyze, strengthen, and sustain effective outreach and public education programs that involve the ocean and coastal sciences;

II. Facilitate the use of the national infrastructure for ocean exploration, observing, monitoring, modeling, and information management in advancing the overall goal of improving ocean literacy and strengthening science and technology education;

III. Promote the development and diversity\(^4\) of the ocean-related workforce; and,

IV. Formulate a policy/investment plan designed to maintain a viable ocean-related education infrastructure to address ocean and coastal literacy needs.

PLANNING STRATEGY: SPECIFIC GOALS

NOPP serves the nation by coordinating federal agencies, academia, industry and other members of the oceanographic scientific community to:

I. Catalyze, strengthen, and sustain effective outreach and public education programs that involve the ocean and coastal sciences.

Successful ocean and coastal sciences outreach and public education programs funded by the individual NOPP-member agencies exist; however, minimal coordination between agencies has resulted in duplication of efforts and failure to address some critical needs. Unfortunately, many highly successful federal programs falter after a few years of “start-up” funding because sustaining these efforts does not fall within the mission guidelines of the funding agency. Further, the lack of examples, identifying how ocean-related concepts can be used to support teaching, significantly hampers demand by teachers for the many ocean-related education products that NOPP and its member agencies have developed. Programs that promote lifelong learning about the oceans and coasts must be extended both in content and reach. Appropriate linkages between outreach and education programs and between pre-college, undergraduate, and graduate level training need to be better defined and encouraged. To improve outreach and public education programs, NOPP should:

a. Promote broad dissemination of ocean and coastal sciences concepts via public outreach and educational opportunities;

b. Define a slate of ocean and coastal concepts that serve to ensure that the public better understands the relationship of these concepts to areas of science, mathematics, geography, and history; This knowledge base will incorporate connections between the science of the oceans and coasts and quality of life, national security, and economic development;

c. Document existing science education materials that align with existing academic content and technology standards and can be used to address the objectives of a National Agenda for ocean sciences education;

\(^4\) Diversity refers to all underrepresented or underserved groups in ocean-related careers, and includes ethnic and cultural minorities, persons with disabilities, and women.
d. Encourage the development and use of NSES-aligned coastal and ocean sciences concepts within print and video materials in areas that include physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, earth science, technology, economics, history, and public policy;

e. Integrate ocean and coastal sciences research into all avenues of public education by incorporating it into existing education and outreach programs of NOPP agencies;

f. Serve as a catalyst for developing partnerships between Schools of Education and Science within Institutions of Higher Education;

g. Assess the need for teacher professional development programs aligned with national standards involving ocean and coastal concepts and encourage development of such programs where necessary;

h. Develop a network of scientists and educators who can provide input at the state and local levels in defining local public outreach programs and science curricula, standards, and assessment methods that include the ocean sciences; and,

i. Develop a framework for assessing the impact and effectiveness of ocean-related educational programs designed to improve ocean and coastal literacy.

II. Facilitate the use of the national infrastructure for ocean exploration, observing, monitoring, modeling, and information management in advancing the overall goal of improving ocean literacy and strengthening science and technology education.

On-going, real-time, collection of surface and sub-surface oceanographic data via coastal and ocean observing systems is a major thrust of the research programs supported by NOPP. Additionally, NOAA and other NOPP partners have been involved formally and informally with ocean exploration, an initiative with tremendous outreach potential. These data sets provide an opportunity for a variety of exciting simulations and hands-on learning experiences for the public, students, and teachers that will foster awareness and understanding about ocean sciences and technologies. Observatory and exploration data streams can be used as the foundation for an array of public service announcements, instructional materials, museum exhibits, and website activities that excite and engage a large segment of the public about the oceans. Public involvement in these activities will help “bridge the gap” between the public and research communities, thereby demonstrating the need for continued support of ocean and coastal systems. Effective use of observatory and exploration data for educational purposes will require careful consideration of the pre- and post data acquisition and management needs and early coordination during the development of infrastructure. To capitalize on the educational opportunities of ocean research, NOPP should:

a. Develop projects that seamlessly link data acquisition and management structures and protocols to education and outreach activities and products;

b. Establish and sustain a clearinghouse, aimed towards the enhanced integration of ocean and coastal sciences into outreach and education, to disseminate existing projects that use ocean and coastal data and are aligned with curricular resources;

c. Encourage development of ocean sciences instructional materials that align with academic standards and complement national observatory and exploration efforts and/or utilize data generated by them; and,

d. Facilitate participation by members of the public in ocean exploration, observing, and modeling, and information management-related projects.
III. Promote the development and diversity of the ocean-related workforce.

A large segment of the ocean research and technical communities will retire or leave the profession in the near future. Some federal laboratories, for example, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, anticipate losses of greater than 30% of the workforce by the end of the decade. Conversely, demand for a well-trained population of ocean sciences and technology professionals will likely increase in response to growing concerns related to climate change, coastal development and pollution, and over-utilization of marine resources. New ocean observing systems will require a sustained corps of ocean literate, technically-trained personnel for routine operation and data management and interpretation. Projections based on current elementary school enrollments show that profound demographic shifts toward significantly higher minority populations are occurring in the United States. Currently, the ocean sciences community does not adequately attract minority students into its professions. Therefore, effective strategies for recruiting and retaining students from all population segments must be developed, implemented, and sustained. To maintain an effective ocean-related workforce, NOPP should:

a. Assess the status of the existing workforce and identify the workforce needs of current and future oceanographic (and related industries) communities;
b. Collect data for all NOPP-funded initiatives that define the demographics of personnel and students involved and encourage member agencies to collect these data as well;
c. Encourage further development of high quality information on ocean sciences-related careers (both print and web-based) and facilitate the broad dissemination of this information, particularly in underrepresented communities;
d. Facilitate establishment of additional internships, Model Congress programs, science fair projects and other ocean-related, lifelong learning experiences for people interested in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, economics, and public policy;
e. Develop mechanisms to identify and increase the national visibility of ocean scientists as career role models; and,
f. Use observatory infrastructure to provide opportunities for students and professionals to experience ocean-related careers.

IV. Formulate a policy/investment plan designed to maintain a viable ocean-related education infrastructure to address ocean and coastal literacy needs.

As the coordinating organization for the scientific community in areas of ocean and coastal sciences, NOPP resides at the apex of a pyramid of influence over its members and constituents. Included within the construct of NOPP are a variety of institutions that have different, and potentially competing priorities, such as:

- Federal agencies with distinct missions and operational strategies;
- Academic institutions that serve to educate and advance knowledge in all areas that impact quality of life, national security, and economic development; and,
- Private industries that provide goods and services under constraints dictated by consumer expectations and profitability.

If NOPP is to take a leadership position in articulating, implementing, coordinating, assessing, and sustaining a National Agenda to strengthen ocean science education, it must be cognizant of the principal focus of each member organization. NOPP must also develop programs that advance a shared vision of its members and communicate the reality that each member is critical to ensuring that the National Agenda is realized. The complexity of achieving this strategic goal
requires a systems approach. A well-designed implementation plan must build cooperation and partnerships among its varied members and constituents. In addition, a well-formulated, sustainable implementation plan must include assessment and evaluation metrics. To sustain effective ocean and coastal public education programs, NOPP should:

a. Prepare a clear and concise annual report that delineates accomplishments related to implementation of a National Agenda; This report will provide a review of the partnerships and agency-specific initiatives that serve to advance the vision and purpose of NOPP;
b. Develop criteria needed to assess and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and projects as a mechanism to document national benefits and to project needed investments;
c. Prepare an annual operational/tactical plan that guides the direction of the National Agenda and its programs and identify funds needed to achieve and sustain annual objectives; and,
d. Develop a dissemination plan for programs, materials, and products that includes public and private media (e.g., National Public Radio, public television, and local weather broadcasts) and that both generates and benefits from co-marketing opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Public education in ocean and coastal sciences must be ongoing, since both the oceans and our knowledge about them are forever changing. Through combined outreach and public education channels, awareness of the ocean and coastal environments can be introduced to people throughout their lives and, therefore, can be infused into their lifelong consciousness. Strategic investment of the resources of NOPP can be used to implement an effective National Agenda for ocean and coastal outreach and education that will have far-reaching consequences for improved public understanding of science in the United States. Implementation of this strategy rests on the availability of a diverse, ocean-related workforce and is structured around three key components – effective coordination that builds on individual agency education and outreach programs; outreach and educational opportunities being advanced by NOPP collectively and by its members individually; and the inherent potential of using the oceans and coasts as a conceptual model for teaching national education standards.

Upon implementation of the National Agenda, the following major outcomes are expected:

- A well-educated and diverse workforce, motivated by the innate sense of wonder and excitement engendered by ocean exploration, that can fully exploit the knowledge harnessed by an integrated ocean observing system; and,
- An ability by the public to understand and communicate the significance of ocean and coastal events and to promote responsible policy decisions.
Since its inception, NOPP has supported (in several cases with co-funding) six (6) main programs regarding ocean sciences education.

1. The Bridge is a central clearinghouse website maintained by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (Principal Investigator (P.I.): Lee Larkin) that provides extensive information about ocean concepts; teacher-reviewed samples of classroom activities and educational resources involving ocean science; links to recent oceanographic data and research programs, including real-time ship and submersible expeditions; and subscription lists for discussing marine education with other interested parties. The National Marine Educators Association and the national network of NOAA/Sea Grant offices are among the co-sponsors.

2. Project Oceanography is a live, weekly television program, operated by the College of Marine Science at the University of South Florida - St. Petersburg (P.I.: Paula Coble) in which researchers discuss the scientific objectives associated with their on-going research projects with a middle school student audience. Interactive question and answer periods between the students and researchers and supporting materials for each program (teacher background material packets, examples of related classroom activities, and glossaries) are included in this program.

3. The Coastal Ocean Observatory Laboratory room, or COOL Classroom, is operated by the Rutgers University Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences (P.I.: Michael DeLuca). This website offers on-line learning activities for middle and high school students in conjunction with the LEO-15 coastal observatory. LEO-15 provides real-time data on the temperature and currents off of the New Jersey coast, in formats that are easily used in the classroom, as well as information about the scientists involved in the research. In addition to educational users, many other public sectors, including fishermen, recreational boaters, and swimmers, use this site for up-to-the-minute conditions and forecasts.

4. The Consortium for Oceanographic Activities for Students and Teachers (COAST), maintained by The University of Southern Mississippi (P.I.: Sharon Walker), offers an array of educational and career information resources for middle and high school teachers that builds upon the nationally recognized Operation Pathfinder program. The website offers interactive oceanographic examples in the form of an Oceanography and Coastal Processes Resource Guide that includes visualization modules. This Resource Guide is NSES-aligned and facilitates integrating these examples with other aspects of the high school science curriculum by differentiating topics related to biota and biological processes from those concerning physical and chemical parameters and processes. COAST also places teachers on U.S. Navy oceanographic survey ships to work side-by-side with scientists.

5. In collaboration with the JASON Project (P.I.: Robert Ballard), NOPP supported efforts associated with the JASON IX Expedition. Key components of this project included using interactive Internet technologies to bring students and teachers into direct contact with researchers participating in a cruise to the East Pacific Rise and developing a permanently accessible set of ocean-oriented web-based educational resources for K-12 classrooms.

6. NOPP has also supported development of the National Ocean Sciences Bowl (NOSB®), now in its 6th year of existence. The quiz-bowl formatted NOSB® provides a nation-wide forum for high school students to excel in mathematics and science, particularly as they relate to the marine world, and promotes factual learning about the marine sciences using teamwork in a competitive environment. The NOSB® is run annually by the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE), which is an association of sixty-six (66) U.S. laboratories, universities, research institutions, and aquariums engaged in ocean research and education. Approximately 7700 students and teachers from 1000 U.S. high schools have participated since 1998 at one of the program’s 22 regional sites. Rewards for participation include hands-on field experiences, material resources for the team’s schools, and collegiate scholarships.
THE WHITE HOUSE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Interim Report
Of The
Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force

September 10, 2009
I. Introduction

On June 12, 2009, you issued a Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies in which you stated: “In order to better meet our Nation’s stewardship responsibilities for the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes, there is established an Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, to be led by the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality.” That Presidential memo charged the Task Force as follows:

1. Within 90 days from the date of this memorandum, the Task Force shall develop recommendations that include:
   
   a. A national policy that ensures the protection, maintenance, and restoration of the health of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources, enhances the sustainability of ocean and coastal economies, preserves our maritime heritage, provides for adaptive management to enhance our understanding of and capacity to respond to climate change, and is coordinated with our national security and foreign policy interests. The recommendation should prioritize upholding our stewardship responsibilities and ensuring accountability for all of our actions affecting ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources, and be consistent with international law, including customary international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

   b. A United States framework for policy coordination of efforts to improve stewardship of the oceans, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. The Task Force should review the Federal Government’s existing policy coordination framework to ensure integration and collaboration across jurisdictional lines in meeting the objectives of a national policy for the oceans, our coasts and the Great Lakes. This will include coordination with the work of the National Security Council and Homeland Security Council as they formulate and coordinate policy involving national and homeland security, including maritime security. The framework should also address specific recommendations to improve coordination and collaboration among Federal, State, tribal and local authorities, including regional governance structures.

   c. An implementation strategy that identifies and prioritizes a set of objectives the United States should pursue to meet the objectives of a national policy for the oceans, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

2. Within 180 days from the date of this memorandum, the Task Force shall develop, with appropriate public input, a recommended framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning. This framework should be a comprehensive, integrated, ecosystem-based approach that addresses conservation, economic activity, user conflict, and sustainable use of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources consistent with international law, including customary international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
II. Structure and Operation of the Task Force

The Task Force is comprised of 24 senior policy-level officials from executive departments, agencies, and offices across the Federal Government, and is chaired by the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). (Task Force membership list attached.) The Task Force established a Working Committee comprised of senior officials from these executive departments and agencies. The Working Committee’s role was to develop initial suggestions based on the guidance and direction it received from the Task Force. To focus its work, the Committee established four subgroups: Policy, Coordination Framework, Implementation Strategy, and Public Engagement.1

The Task Force first met on June 22, 2009, and has convened an additional four times through September 10. Task Force meetings were devoted to learning more about the relevant issues, discussing outstanding matters and options, and providing additional guidance and direction to the Working Committee. In preparing this interim report, the Task Force, Working Committee, and subgroups discussed key issues with a variety of knowledgeable sources, including Federal, State, tribal, and regional representatives, scientists, legal and policy experts, and the public. The Task Force also reviewed reports from two ocean prominent bodies, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (2004) and the Pew Oceans Commission (2003). In doing so, however, it recognized the significant environmental changes and scientific and legislative advances that have taken place since those Commissions completed their reports.

The interim report has been coordinated with our national security and foreign policy interests and reflects a careful balancing of stewardship with these long-standing and well-established interests.

III. Public Engagement

The Task Force initiated a public engagement process throughout the first 90-day period to receive input for consideration as it developed this interim report. This builds on the comprehensive reports of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, which were based on significant scientific, public, and stakeholder input. CEQ, on behalf of the Task Force, organized and hosted twenty-four expert roundtables to hear from a broad range of stakeholders and interest groups. The roundtables included representatives from sectors including energy, conservation, fishing, transportation, agriculture, human health, State, tribal, and local governments, ports, recreational boating, business, and national and homeland security. Several Task Force or Working Committee members attended each roundtable.

1 A fifth subgroup on Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning has also been established for the development of the recommended framework for coastal and marine spatial planning.
There was robust participation, and the Task Force received many valuable comments and perspectives for its consideration during each session. The Task Force will host additional roundtables during the next 90 days as it develops a possible framework for coastal and marine spatial planning.

On behalf of the Task Force, CEQ also set up a website to accept public comments. To date, the Task Force has received over five-hundred comments from a range of affected parties, including academia, citizens, commercial interests, non-governmental organizations, and States, tribes, and regional governance structures. Many of the groups commenting represent constituencies of hundreds or thousands of members.

Additionally, the Task Force will host six regional public meetings. These meetings are scheduled to take place in the following cities: Anchorage, Alaska (held on August 21, 2009); San Francisco, California; Providence, Rhode Island; Cleveland, Ohio; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Honolulu, Hawaii. All but the first of these public meetings will be held during the second 90 days of the Task Force’s work, which is focused on coastal and marine spatial planning. Consequently, the Task Force expects most of the input at these meetings to be focused on that topic, although comments on the report will be welcome.

The public meetings, roundtables, and website showcased a strong desire and enthusiasm among participants for a National Policy that provides clarity and direction regarding how the Nation will better care for the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. A valuable and wide diversity of interests were represented, and several key themes emerged. While not exhaustive, these include:

- Support for adopting ecosystem-based management as a guiding principle, acknowledging regional differences, and practicing adaptive management;
- Support for embracing science-based decision-making and investing in ecosystem-based science, research, and ocean observations, including comprehensive research on the linkages among ecosystem health, human health, economic opportunity, national and homeland security, social justice, and environmental change, including climate change;
- Desire for improved coordination and collaboration across Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, and regional governance structures, and for improved transparency and public participation, while avoiding new layers of bureaucracy and unnecessary costs;
- Support for improving both formal and informal education about the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes;
- Support for ensuring that policies are adequately funded; and

The Task Force’s deliberations benefitted from this input as it developed its report. To complement these efforts, and to be responsive to numerous requests, the Task Force strongly endorses issuing this interim report for 30 days of public comment. This would allow for additional public engagement to help you and your Administration make a more informed decision on what actions to take in response to these suggestions.

IV. Interim Report of the Task Force

In developing its interim report, the Task Force reviewed a number of Federal, State, and foreign policies and models, past and pending legislation, the recommendations contained in the two earlier Ocean Commissions’ reports, and public comments. The following brief synopsis provides an overview of the suggested National Policy, Policy Coordination Framework, and Implementation Strategy.

Suggested National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes

The Task Force believes that the policy should contain the following elements:

1. A vision of what a National Policy should achieve for the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes;
2. A brief context section describing the value of these important areas, the various issues confronting them, and the urgency to take effective action;
3. The statement of our National Policy; and
4. A set of overarching guiding principles for United States management decisions and actions affecting the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

The suggested National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes would provide a comprehensive national approach to uphold our stewardship responsibilities; ensure accountability for our actions; and serve as a model of balanced, productive, efficient, sustainable, and informed ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes use, management, and conservation within the global community. The National Policy recognizes that America’s stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes is intrinsically and intimately linked to environmental sustainability, human health and well-being, national prosperity, adaptation to climate and other environmental change, social justice, foreign policy, and national and homeland security.
Policy Coordination Framework to Improve the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes

The Task Force reviewed the existing coordination framework, with a particular focus on the existing Committee on Ocean Policy (COP), established by Executive Order 13366 in 2004. The COP has been moderately effective in establishing forums for bringing Federal agencies together to coordinate on ocean-related matters. However, numerous parties from both within and outside the structure have strongly suggested to the Task Force that the design could be improved. Key themes for improvement included:

- The need for a strong, clear, overarching policy mandate and the setting of national ocean priorities;
- The need for high-level direction and policy guidance from a clearly designated and identifiable authority;
- The need for more consistent and sustained senior-level participation and attention on ocean-related issues from all member agencies and departments;
- The advantages of stronger linkages between management and science;
- The need for an improved, clear structure for ongoing and active engagement with State, tribal, and local authorities, and regional governance structures to address relevant issues; and
- The need for improved coordination with other Executive branch policy committees.

The Task Force recognized that various options could be pursued. After careful and deliberate consideration of various models, the Task Force suggests a combination of modifications to the structure of the existing COP, a stronger mandate and direction, and renewed and sustained high-level engagement. The Task Force is confident that this combination of improvements provides a framework for more successful policy coordination to improve the stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

Subject to later refinements, the Task Force suggests the following:

- Consolidating and strengthening the Principal- and Deputies-level components within a single National Ocean Council (NOC) structure;
- Strengthening the decision-making and dispute-resolution processes by defining clear roles for the NOC, and the NOC leadership;
- Creating a Governance Advisory Committee to formally engage with State, tribal and local authorities, and regional governance structures;
- Strengthening the link between science and management by creating an integrated Steering Committee of the NOC; and
• Strengthening coordination between the NOC, the National Security Council, the National Economic Council, the Office of Energy and Climate Change, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Office of Management and Budget, and other White House entities.

Implementation Strategy
The Task Force considered a number of options for outlining initial strategies to implement the National Policy. There was an array of views on this strategy among Task Force members, stakeholders, and the public, ranging from developing a very detailed action plan to providing for more general categories from which detailed plans would develop over time. The Task Force recognized that within a 90-day timeframe there were limits to what could or should be accomplished and noted that it was directed to suggest a strategy as opposed to a plan. However, the Task Force felt strongly that regardless of the level of specificity of these priority objectives, actions to implement them must, at a minimum, have clear direction, measurable goals and outcomes, and timeframes for completion. The interim report seeks to also ensure coordination and collaboration with State, tribal and local authorities, and regional government structures, as appropriate.

The Task Force’s suggested implementation strategy identifies the following nine priority objectives that our Nation should pursue to implement the National Policy.

• **Ecosystem-Based Management:** Adopt ecosystem-based management as a foundational principle for the comprehensive management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

• **Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning:** Implement comprehensive, integrated, ecosystem-based coastal and marine spatial planning and management in the United States.

• **Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding:** Increase knowledge to continually inform and improve management and policy decisions and the capacity to respond to change and challenges. Better educate through formal and informal programs the public about the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

• **Coordinate and Support:** Better coordinate and support Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Improve coordination and integration across the Federal Government, and as appropriate, engage with the international community.

• **Resiliency and Adaptation to Climate Change and Ocean Acidification:** Strengthen resiliency of coastal communities and marine and Great Lakes environments and their abilities to adapt to climate change impacts and ocean acidification.
• **Regional Ecosystem Protection and Restoration:** Establish and implement an integrated ecosystem protection and restoration strategy that is science-based and aligns conservation and restoration goals at the Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional levels.

• **Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land:** Enhance water quality in the ocean, along our coasts, and in the Great Lakes by promoting and implementing sustainable practices on land.

• **Changing Conditions in the Arctic:** Address environmental stewardship needs in the Arctic Ocean and adjacent coastal areas in the face of climate-induced and other environmental changes.

• **Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Observations and Infrastructure:** Strengthen and integrate Federal and non-Federal ocean observing systems, sensors, and data collection platforms into a national system and integrate that system into international observation efforts.

These priority objectives provide a bridge between policy and specific actions, but do not prescribe in detail how individual entities will undertake their responsibilities. Instead, the NOC would develop strategic action plans for each of the priority objectives, focusing on key areas identified by the Task Force. This would allow adequate time to fully consider the necessary details for implementation, and, as appropriate, to coordinate with States, tribal, and local authorities, regional governance structures, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private enterprise.

**Conclusion**

The Task Force is pleased to submit this interim report and fulfill the first part of its charge. Having considered a broad range of public comments, this report reflects the requests and concerns of all interested parties. Though the main focus of the Task Force now turns to developing a framework for coastal and marine spatial planning, due to the President by December 9, 2009, the Task Force anticipates that this interim report will continue to be refined as the Task Force receives further thoughtful input from stakeholders. With this continued public participation, the Task Force will be able to provide the President with the best possible final set of recommendations.
PROPOSED NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE OCEAN, OUR COASTS, AND THE GREAT LAKES

I. Vision
An America whose stewardship ensures that the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured so as to promote the well-being, prosperity, and security of present and future generations.

II. National Policy Context
The Value of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes
America is intricately connected to and directly reliant on the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Each of us – whether living and working in the country’s heartland or along its coasts – affects and is affected by these places. Their beauty inspires us, and their bounty contributes to our national well-being and security. Nearly half of our population is located in coastal counties. Our rich and productive coastal regions and waters account for the great majority of the national economy, totaling trillions of dollars each year, and support distant communities that may not even be aware of the connection between the land and sea. Millions of visitors enjoy our Nation’s seashores each year, contributing not only to the economy, but also to personal and communal satisfaction and fulfillment. The sea is both a refuge for spiritual reflection and a powerhouse of excitement for educating students of all ages and interests.

With over 95,000 miles of coastline and the largest exclusive economic zone in the world, our Nation benefits from a wealth of goods and services derived from the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. They provide food, fresh water, minerals, energy, and other natural resources and ecological benefits. They support tens of millions of jobs, and are a source of recreation. They also play a critical role in our Nation's transportation, economy, and trade, as well as in the global mobility and readiness of our Armed Forces and the maintenance of international peace and security.

The ocean supports human health and well-being in myriad ways, including as a source of healthy foods, pharmaceuticals, and other beneficial compounds. The ocean is a source of existing energy and offers numerous opportunities for renewable energy, which can help to secure our energy independence and mitigate climate change.
The ocean and Great Lakes exert significant influence over how our planet functions. Covering over 70 percent of the Earth, the ocean plays a primary role in our planet’s environment and natural operations, including weather and climate. The ocean’s ability to absorb and store heat from the atmosphere and transport it to other parts of the globe keeps daily temperatures within a livable range. The Great Lakes are the largest freshwater system on Earth, with 10,000 miles of shoreline and some 95 percent of the Nation’s fresh surface water. While we commonly refer to different oceans (Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, etc.), it is important to recognize that all of these bodies of water are connected and influenced by each other. These linkages require our Nation to recognize that we benefit from and affect one global ocean.

The ocean shapes and sustains all life on Earth. We are dependent on the ocean for the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink. Though we may not think about it, processes on land and in the water, including biological processes, are intricately linked so that changes in one can have profound effects on the other. The ocean is both the beginning and the end of the Earth’s water cycle. Water that evaporates from the surface of the ocean becomes rain that falls on our fields and fills our aquifers. Much of this precipitation eventually finds rivers which flow back to the sea, starting the cycle once more. Half of the oxygen we breathe comes from microscopic plants living in the ocean. Coastal barrier islands, coral reefs, mangroves, and wetlands serve as buffers between coastal communities and damaging floods and storms. Coastal wetlands are a nursery for many recreational and commercial fish species, provide essential habitat for many migratory birds and mammals, and serve as a natural filter helping to keep our waters clean. Ocean and coastal ecosystems absorb and detoxify many pollutants, recycle nutrients, and help control pests and pathogens. Marine ecosystems house biological diversity exceeding that found in the world’s rain forests.

Challenges Facing the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes
The importance of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems cannot be overstated; simply put, we need them to survive. It is clear that these invaluable and life-sustaining assets are vulnerable to human activities and, at the same time, human communities are rendered more vulnerable when these resources are degraded. Yet, ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems are experiencing an unprecedented rate of change due to human activities. We are only now beginning to understand the full extent of the direct and indirect consequences of our actions on these systems.

Climate change is impacting the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Increasing water temperatures are altering habitats, migratory patterns, and ecosystem structure and function. Coastal communities are
facing sea-level rise, inundation, increased threats from storms, erosion, and significant loss of coastal wetlands. The ocean’s ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere buffers the impacts of climate change, but also causes the ocean to become more acidic, threatening not only the survival of individual species of marine life, but also entire marine ecosystems. The ocean buffers increased global temperatures by absorbing heat, but increasing temperatures are causing sea levels to rise by expanding seawater volume and melting land-based ice. Increased temperatures may eventually reduce the ocean’s ability to absorb carbon dioxide. Conversely, climate change is predicted to lower the water levels of the Great Lakes, thereby altering water cycles, habitats, and economic uses of the lakes.

Along many areas of our coasts and within the Great Lakes, biological diversity is in decline due to overfishing, introduction of invasive species, and loss and degradation of essential habitats from coastal development and associated human activities. The introduction of non-native species can carry significant ecological and economic costs. Human and marine ecosystem health are threatened by a range of challenges, including increased levels of exposure to toxins from harmful algal blooms and other sources, and greater contact with infectious agents. Reasons in numerous bays, estuaries, gulfs, and the Great Lakes are now consistently low in or lacking oxygen, creating dead zones along our bays and coasts. Unsustainable fishing (e.g., overfishing) remains a serious concern with consequences for marine ecosystems and human communities. In the Arctic, environmental changes are revealing the vulnerability of its ecosystems. These changes are increasing stressors and impacts on the ecosystems, people, and communities in the region, and are presenting new domestic and international management challenges.

Many of these concerns are attributable not only to activities within marine and Great Lakes ecosystems, but also to actions that take place in our Nation’s interior. For example, our industries, agricultural and transportation operations, cities, and suburbs generate various forms of pollution. Industrial operations emit pollutants, such as nitrogen and mercury, into the atmosphere that often find their way into the ocean and Great Lakes. Rain washes residues, chemicals, and oily runoff from our roadways into our estuaries and coastal waters. Heavy rainfall events can wash sediment, pesticides, and nutrients from our fields, lawns, and agricultural operations into our waters. Urban and suburban development, including the construction of roads, highways, and other infrastructure, as well as modification to rivers and streams, can adversely affect the habitats of aquatic and terrestrial species.

Demands on the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are intensifying, spurred by population growth, migration to coastal areas, and economic activities. Energy development, shipping, aquaculture, and emerging security requirements are examples of new or expanding uses expected to place increasing
demands on our ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems. As these demands increase, we must also preserve the abundant and sustainable marine resources and healthy ecosystems that are critical to the well-being and continued prosperity of our Nation.

The State of the National Framework for Policy Coordination
The challenges we face in stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes lie not only within the ecosystems themselves, but also in the laws, authorities, and governance structures intended to manage our use and conservation of them. United States governance and management of these areas span hundreds of domestic policies, laws, and regulations covering international, Federal, State, tribal, and local interests. These issues range from stewardship and resource use, to maritime safety and commerce, national security, water quality, ports and other transportation infrastructure, and energy. Challenges and gaps arise from the complexity and structure of this regime.

These challenges are not limited to our domestic governance and management regimes. Our Nation, as a major maritime power and coastal State, has a large stake in the development and interpretation of international law and policy applicable to the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Our national security interests are tightly linked to navigational rights and freedoms, as well as to operational flexibility. Our national security and economic interests are also linked to our ability to secure U.S. sovereign rights over resources in extensive marine areas off our coasts, to promote and protect U.S. interests in the marine environment, and to ensure that our maritime interests are respected and considered internationally. The Administration’s support for accession to the Law of the Sea Convention reflects several important objectives, including strengthening our Nation’s ability to participate in and influence international law and policy related to the ocean.

Time to Act
The time has come for a national policy to uphold our stewardship responsibilities, ensure accountability for our actions, and serve as a model of balanced, productive, efficient, sustainable, and informed ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes use, management, and conservation within the global community. Today, as never before, we better comprehend the linkages among land, air, fresh water, ocean, ice, and human activities. We recognize that change is occurring rapidly and must be addressed. Advances in science and technology provide better and timelier information and understanding to guide decision-making. By applying the principles of ecosystem-based management (in which we integrate ecological, social, economic, commerce, health, and security goals, and recognize humans as key components of the ecosystem and healthy ecosystems as essential to human well-being) and adaptive management (whereby
we routinely assess management actions to allow for better informed and improved future decisions) in a coordinated and collaborative approach, the Nation can improve its response to environmental, social, economic, and security challenges. With a clear national policy and a revitalized, empowered, unifying, and comprehensive framework to coordinate efforts among Federal, State, tribal, and local authorities, including regional governance structures, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and the public, we can work together toward the changes needed to secure the health and prosperity of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

III. Policy

America’s stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes is intrinsically and intimately linked to environmental sustainability, human health and well-being, national prosperity, adaptation to climate and other environmental changes, social justice, international diplomacy, and national and homeland security. Therefore, it is the policy of the United States to:

1. Healthy and Resilient Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes
   - Protect, maintain, and restore the health and biological diversity of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources;
   - Improve the resiliency of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems, communities, and economies;
   - Bolster the conservation and sustainable uses of land in ways that will improve the health of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems; and
   - Use the best available science and knowledge to inform decisions affecting the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes, and enhance humanity’s capacity to understand, respond, and adapt to a changing global environment.

2. Safe and Productive Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes
   - Support sustainable, safe, secure, and productive uses of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes;
   - Respect and preserve our Nation’s maritime heritage, including our social, cultural, and historical values; and
   - Exercise rights and jurisdiction and perform duties in accordance with applicable international law, including respect for and preservation of navigational rights and freedoms, which are essential for the global economy and international peace and security.
3. Understood and Treasured Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes
   - Increase scientific understanding of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems as part of the
     global interconnected systems of air, land, ice, and water, including their relationships to humans
     and their activities;
   - Improve our understanding and awareness of changing environmental conditions, trends, and
     their causes, and of human activities taking place in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes waters; and
   - Foster a public understanding of the value of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes to build a
     foundation for improved stewardship.

The United States will promote the objectives of this policy by:
   - Ensuring a comprehensive and collaborative framework for the stewardship of the ocean, our
     coasts, and the Great Lakes that facilitates cohesive actions across the Federal Government, as
     well as participation of State, tribal, and local authorities, regional governance structures, non-
     governmental organizations, the public, and the private sector;
   - Cooperating and exercising leadership at the international level, including by joining the Law of
     the Sea Convention; and
   - Supporting ocean stewardship in a fiscally responsible manner.

IV. Principles
1. United States management decisions and actions affecting the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes
   will be guided by the following stewardship principles to further this policy.
   a. As responsible environmental stewards we will protect, maintain, and restore the health,
      productivity, and resiliency of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems (including their waters
      and resources). Policies, programs, and activities of the United States should be managed and
      conducted in a manner that seeks to prevent or minimize adverse environmental impacts to the
      ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes ecosystems and resources, including cumulative impacts,
      and to ensure and improve their integrity. They should be managed and conducted in a manner
      that does not undermine efforts to protect, maintain, and restore healthy and biologically diverse
      ecosystems and the full range of services they provide;
   b. Decisions affecting the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes should be informed by and
      consistent with the best available science. Decision-making will also be guided by a
      precautionary approach as reflected in the Rio Declaration of 1992 which states in pertinent part,
      “[w]here there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall
not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation”; and

c. Actions taken to protect the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes should endeavor to promote the principles that environmental damage should be avoided wherever practicable and that environmental costs should be internalized, taking into account the approach that those who cause environmental damage should generally bear the cost of that damage.

2. Human activities that may affect ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems should be managed using ecosystem-based management and adaptive management, through an integrated framework that accounts for the interdependence of the land, air, water, ice, and the interconnectedness between human populations and these environments. Management should include monitoring and have the flexibility to adapt to evolving knowledge and understanding, changes in the global environment, and emerging uses.

3. Current and future uses of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources should be managed and effectively balanced in a way that:

a. maintains and enhances the environmental sustainability of multiple uses, including those that contribute to the economy, commerce, security, and human health;
b. harmonizes competing and complementary uses effectively;
c. integrates efforts to protect, maintain, and restore the health, productivity, and resiliency of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and the services they provide; and
d. recognizes environmental changes and impacts, including those associated with an increasingly ice-diminished Arctic, sea-level rise, and ocean acidification.

4. The United States should support disciplinary and interdisciplinary science, research, monitoring, modeling, forecasting, exploration, and assessment to continually improve understanding of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems. These efforts should include improving understanding of physical, biological, ecological, and chemical processes and changes, their interconnectedness with other parts of the Earth system, and with human populations, and the potential social and economic consequences of management decisions on the long-term health and well-being of the population, including human health and safety. This knowledge should be applied through ecosystem-based management and adaptive management. Information resulting from these efforts should be easily accessible to the public.
5. The United States should develop an improved awareness of changing environmental conditions and trends, and their causes, and of human activities that take place in the ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes environments.

6. United States policies, programs, and activities should enhance formal and informal education about the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes and their uses to build a foundation for greater understanding and improved stewardship, and build capacity to produce future scientists, managers, and members of a dynamic and innovative workforce.

7. The United States should cooperate and provide leadership internationally in the protection, management, and sustainable use of the world’s ocean, coastal regions, and the Great Lakes in keeping with applicable conventions and agreements, and with customary international law, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention.

8. United States programs, policies, and activities that may impact ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes ecosystems, or engage the use of their resources, should be designed to meet measurable benchmarks in support of clear goals and objectives related to stewardship of these ecosystems.
   a. These goals and objectives of programs and activities should be periodically reevaluated and their effectiveness assessed. This information should be used to adjust management priorities and guide future management and resource decisions; and
   b. The United States should develop appropriate standards and methods for measurement and assessment of parameters associated with the health of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems.

9. United States policies, programs, and activities that may impact ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes ecosystems, or engage the use of their resources, should be assessed and conducted within an integrated and comprehensive interagency planning framework that:
   a. considers and addresses the full suite of impacts on resources, biological diversity, and ecosystems;
   b. is based on the best available scientific knowledge;
   c. considers and addresses potential use conflicts;
d. ensures and advances coordination and collaboration across Federal, State, tribal, and local jurisdictional lines, and with regional governance structures, the private sector, foreign governments, and international organizations, as appropriate;

e. is coordinated and promotes consistency with our homeland and national security and foreign policy interests;

f. is coordinated and promotes consistency with other national strategies that include environmental stewardship components relevant to the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes;

g. considers and respects our Nation’s maritime heritage, including our social, cultural, historical, and aesthetic values;

h. aims to maximize long-term net benefits to society by considering a range of reasonable alternatives that balance potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; distributive impacts; social justice and equity;

i. operates through an open and transparent approach that encourages broad public participation;

j. ensures consistency with management and budgetary goals and compliance with relevant legal requirements;

k. seeks to eliminate redundancy and encourage efficiencies and synergies; and

l. includes a reporting and accountability mechanism.

Implementing a number of the policy elements and principles directed above will require appropriate resources and assets. Departments and agencies shall work to identify future budgetary, administrative, regulatory, or legislative proposal requirements to implement these elements within the budgetary and management guidelines of the President’s budget.
PROPOSED POLICY COORDINATION FRAMEWORK

The proposed policy coordination framework suggests a combination of modifications to the structure of the existing Committee on Ocean Policy, a stronger mandate and direction, and renewed and sustained high-level engagement. This combination of improvements provides a framework for more successful policy coordination to improve the stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. The proposed policy coordination framework would provide a reinvigorated structure that would strengthen ocean governance and coordination by providing clear and visible leadership and sustained high-level engagement within the Federal Government. Additionally, the structure would provide for greater participation by, and coordination of, State, tribal, and local authorities, and regional governance structures. The linkage between management and science would be strengthened, as would coordination with other senior level entities on relevant economic, climate, and security matters. The Task Force is confident that this combination of improvements would enhance the stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

I. National Ocean Council

Structure

The National Ocean Council (NOC) would be a dual Principal - and Deputy- level committee. Membership of the NOC would include: the Secretaries of State, Defense, the Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Commerce, Labor, Transportation, Energy, and Homeland Security; the Attorney General; the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ); the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the Director of National Intelligence; the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP); the Director of the National Science Foundation; the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Assistants to the President for National Security Affairs, Homeland Security, Domestic Policy, and Economic Policy; an employee of the United States designated by the Vice President; and such other officers or employees of the United States as the Co-Chairs may from time to time designate.
Co-Chairs
The NOC would be Co-Chaired by the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. This construct would provide the NOC with balance of equities at the most senior level of its leadership and better facilitate interagency cooperation and collaboration.

There would be a NOC Steering Committee (described below) comprised of CEQ, OSTP, and the Chairs of the proposed Ocean Resource Management Interagency Policy Committee (ORM-IPC) and the proposed Ocean Science and Technology Interagency Policy Committee (OST-IPC).

Function
Subject to the direction of the President and unless as otherwise provided for by law, the NOC would perform the following functions:

1. Tier-one functions of the NOC (Principal level). The National Ocean Council has overall responsibility for implementation of the National Policy. Functions would include: (1) periodically update and set national priority objectives; (2) review and provide annual direction on National Policy implementation objectives based on Administration priorities and recommendations from the Deputies’ level; and (3) be a forum for dispute resolution and decision-making of issues that could not be resolved at the Deputies’ Level. The NOC would be required to meet a minimum of twice per year, but the Co-Chairs could call additional meetings as necessary for dispute resolution or other purposes.

2. Tier Two (Deputy level) functions would include: (1) ensure execution of National Policy implementation objectives; (2) transmit Administration priorities to the ORM-IPC and OST-IPC; (3) ensure activities of and products from the ORM-IPC and OST-IPC are consistent with Administration policy; (4) coordinate with the OSTP, the National Security Council (NSC), National Economic Council (NEC), Office of Energy and Climate Change (OECC), and other offices as appropriate; (5) provide direction and feedback to, and receive external input and advice from, its advisory bodies; and (6) dispute resolution and decision-making, and if unable to do so, to forward the issues to the Principal level. This

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2 Coordination with the existing Committee on the Marine Transportation System would be done through the National Economic Council, at both the Principal- and Deputy- level. Coordination with the ORM-IPC and OST-IPC would also be developed, as appropriate.
group would also assume the duties of the statutorily mandated National Ocean Research Leadership Council (NORLC) under 10 U.S.C. § 7902.

The Deputies would be required to meet a minimum of quarterly.

II. Authorities and Responsibilities of the National Ocean Council Co-Chairs

1. Advise the President on the National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes

The Co-Chairs would advise the President on matters regarding implementation of the National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes (National Policy), consistent with the consensus views of the NOC. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Co-Chairs would provide their own views equally with the views of each member of the NOC.

2. Implementation of the National Policy

On behalf of the NOC, the Co-Chairs would have overall responsibility for coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the National Policy, subject to the direction of the NOC and the President, including the following:

- **Development of Implementation Plans** - The Co-Chairs would facilitate development by the NOC of implementation plans to further the National Policy and identify progress toward meeting defined goals and objectives.
- **Reporting and Accountability** - The Co-Chairs would be responsible for: (1) coordinating interagency reporting on implementation and progress; (2) monitoring and ensuring effective implementation of policy decisions; (3) providing oversight and accountability for document preparation; and (4) coordinating and expediting interagency review and clearance of documents and reports within the NOC purview.
- **Budget** - The Co-Chairs would coordinate the development of an annual budget guidance memorandum on ocean priorities consistent with the goals and objectives of the National Policy. While it is understood that the Co-Chairs’ authority would not be construed to impair or otherwise affect the function of the Director of OMB, they would work with OMB to issue interagency budget guidance consistent with annual priorities, develop crosscuts to inform the annual priorities on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes stewardship, and consult with OMB, OSTP, and the NOC to identify programs that contribute significantly to the National Policy. The Co-
Chairs also would work with OMB to coordinate preparation of the biennial Federal Ocean and Coastal Activities Report mandated by Section 5 of the Ocean Act of 2000.

- **Emerging Issues** – The Co-Chairs would bring any Presidential ocean actions or priorities to the NOC, as appropriate, for action and implementation and would coordinate proper management of and response to emerging issues of relevance to the National Policy.

- **International** – In implementing this policy, the Co-Chairs would coordinate with the Secretary of State and the heads of other relevant agencies on matters related to the policy that arise within the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, International Whaling Commission, Arctic Council, International Maritime Organization, regional fishery management organizations, and other similar international organizations.

3. **Co-Chairs of the NOC**
   - The Co-Chairs shall have authority to call NOC meetings, draft the agenda, prioritize issues, and call deputies meetings.

4. **Coordination and Integration**
   - The Co-Chairs would be the point of contact to coordinate with the National Security Advisor (NSA), National Economic Council (NEC) Director, and Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change (APECC), and other senior White House officials as appropriate. The Co-Chairs would have authority to request meetings with these entities for the purposes of coordination and resolution of issues of overlapping responsibility.

5. **Decision-Making and Dispute Resolution**
   - The Co-Chairs would seek to encourage decisions and recommendations based on consensus of the NOC.
   - Disputes that could not be resolved at the Deputy-level would be referred to the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs would facilitate resolution among the Principals.
   - With respect to those matters in which resolutions or consensus could not be reached, the Co-Chairs would coordinate with the APECC, NEC Director, and NSA, as appropriate, to frame the disputed issue or issues for decision by the President.
   - The establishment of the NOC would not be construed to impair or otherwise affect: (1) authority granted by law to an executive department or agency or the head thereof; or (2) functions assigned by the President to the National Security Council (or subordinate bodies) relating to matters affecting foreign affairs, national security, homeland security, or intelligence – any of
these matters that are not resolved by consensus within the NOC will be forwarded to the NSC for resolution.

III. Steering Committee

Structure
The Steering Committee would be a high-level, streamlined body of four members from OSTP, CEQ, and one Chair each of the ORM-IPC and OST-IPC. The Steering Committee would meet at least every other month, but more often as issues require, and work in consultation with NSC and OMB to ensure their respective input on relevant matters, as appropriate.

Function
The Steering Committee would be the key forum for ensuring integration and coordination on priority areas within the NOC. In particular, it would ensure that there is coordination of management and science issues and that the activities of the ORM-IPC and OST-IPC are aligned to fully support implementation of the National Policy, and priorities agreed upon by the NOC. The Steering Committee would identify key issues and assist in developing the agenda for the NOC. In addition, the Extended Continental Shelf Task Force would report to the Steering Committee.

IV. Ocean Resource Management Interagency Policy Committee

Structure
The Ocean Resource Management Interagency Policy Committee (ORM-IPC) is the successor to the current Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources. Chairs of the ORM-IPC are designated by the NOC. The members would consist of Deputy Assistant Secretaries or appropriate representatives from the Executive branch agencies and departments of the NOC. The ORM-IPC reports to the NOC. The ORM-IPC may establish sub-IPC’s as necessary, as approved by the NOC.

Function
The ORM-IPC would function as the ocean resource management body of the NOC, with an emphasis on ensuring the interagency implementation of the National Policy, national priority objectives, and other priorities defined or approved by the NOC. This would include the development of strategic plans, in coordination with the OST-IPC, for the implementation of priority management objectives, with clear outcomes, milestones, deadlines, designated agencies, and performance measures with an adaptive review process. The ORM-IPC Chairs would develop a charter for the operation of the body, to be approved by the NOC, including, but not limited to, membership, meetings (e.g., requiring that it meet at least every
two months); development of a new or updated work plan based on direction from the NOC, and a process for external input (e.g., State, tribal, local, regional, and the public).

VII. Ocean Science and Technology Interagency Policy Committee

Structure
The National Science and Technology Council’s (NSTC) Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST) would serve as the Ocean Science and Technology Interagency Policy Committee (OST-IPC). Chairs of the OST-IPC would be appointed through NSTC procedures in consultation with the NOC. The group would consist of Deputy Assistant Secretaries or appropriate representatives from the Executive branch agencies and departments of the NOC. The NSTC would direct the OST-IPC to advise and assist the NOC in consonance with this National Policy and to work with associated bodies (e.g., the ORM-IPC) accordingly.

Function
The OST-IPC would function as the ocean science and technology body of the NOC, with an emphasis on ensuring the interagency implementation of the National Policy, national priority objectives, and other priorities for science and technology objectives. This would include the development of strategic plans (e.g., the Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy), in coordination with the ORM-IPC, for interagency implementation of priority science and technology objectives, with clear outcomes, milestones, deadlines, designated agencies, and performance measures with an adaptive review process. The OST-IPC Chairs, in close coordination with the NOC, would develop a charter for the operation of the body, to be approved by the NSTC, and would include, but not be limited to, membership, meetings (e.g., requiring that it meet at least every two months), development of a new or updated work plan based on input from the NOC, and a process for external input (e.g., State, tribal, regional, and public). The OST-IPC would also retain the legislatively mandated functions of JSOST, report to the NSTC’s Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, and maintain an intimate operational relationship with the NOC. It would continue to adhere to the rules and regulations of the NSTC. The ORM-IPC may establish sub-IPCs as necessary, and will do so under NSTC procedures and in close coordination with the NOC.
VIII. Governance Advisory Committee

Structure
The NOC would establish the Governance Advisory Committee (the Advisory Committee) that would consist of thirteen members from States, tribes, and regional governance structures. The membership would be comprised of: (1) one representative from each of the six regions, chosen by the NOC, in consultation with regional ocean councils (Great Lakes Commission, Governors’ South Atlantic Alliance, Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean, Northeast Regional Ocean Council, and the West Coast Governors’ Agreement on Ocean Health); (2) two at-large representatives from inland States, chosen by the NOC, in consultation with the National Governors Association; (3) one representative from Alaska, one representative from the Pacific Islands, and one representative from the Caribbean, chosen by the NOC, in consultation with regional groups; and (4) two at-large tribal representatives, chosen by the NOC, in consultation with the National Congress of American Indians, tribal councils, and regional tribal organizations. Representatives would serve for staggered two-year terms.

Function
The role of the Committee would be to provide input to the NOC on issues of inter-jurisdictional collaboration and cooperation on the National Policy and related matters, including providing advice on long-term strategic management and research priorities. The Committee would also provide, at the request of the Steering Committee, input to the IPCs.

IX. Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel

Structure
The Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP) is a legislatively established body that advises the NORLC under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

Function
The ORRAP would provide independent advice and guidance to the NOC. Current membership is comprised of individuals from the National Academies, State governments, academia, and ocean industries, representing marine science, marine policy, and other related fields. However, ORRAP

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3 This may be a FACA committee based on representation. If it is, then the Committee would be first be established with State, tribal, and regional representation (consisting of State officials), and then expanded via the FACA process to allow for additional membership.
membership would be reviewed to determine whether to include additional representatives to broaden the level of expertise in support of the goals of the National Policy. The NOC would routinely provide guidance and direction on the areas for which it seeks advice and recommendations from the ORRAP.

X. Review and Evaluation

Aft er 12 months of operation, the National Ocean Council will conduct a review of the governance structure to evaluate its effectiveness and make any necessary changes or improvements.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

PROPOSED NATIONAL PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

HOW WE DO BUSINESS

1. **Ecosystem-Based Management**: Adopt ecosystem-based management as a foundational principle for the comprehensive management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

2. **Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning**: Implement comprehensive, integrated, ecosystem-based coastal and marine spatial planning and management in the United States.

3. **Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding**: Increase knowledge to continually inform and improve management and policy decisions and the capacity to respond to change and challenges. Better educate the public through formal and informal programs about the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

4. **Coordinate and Support**: Better coordinate and support Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Improve coordination and integration across the Federal Government, and as appropriate, engage with the international community.

AREAS OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS

1. **Resiliency and Adaptation to Climate Change and Ocean Acidification**: Strengthen resiliency of coastal communities and marine and Great Lakes environments and their abilities to adapt to climate change impacts and ocean acidification.

2. **Regional Ecosystem Protection and Restoration**: Establish and implement an integrated ecosystem protection and restoration strategy that is science-based and aligns conservation and restoration goals at the Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional levels.

3. **Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land**: Enhance water quality in the ocean, along our coasts, and in the Great Lakes by promoting and implementing sustainable practices on land.

4. **Changing Conditions in the Arctic**: Address environmental stewardship needs in the Arctic Ocean and adjacent coastal areas in the face of climate-induced and other environmental changes.

5. **Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Observations and Infrastructure**: Strengthen and integrate Federal and non-Federal ocean observing systems, sensors, and data collection platforms into a national system and integrate that system into international observation efforts.
1. Introduction
The proposed National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes would provide our Nation with a comprehensive approach, solidly based on science and technology, to uphold our stewardship responsibilities, and ensure accountability for our actions to present and future generations. Furthermore, the United States intends, through the National Policy, to serve as a model of balanced, productive, efficient, sustainable, and informed ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes use, management, and conservation within the global community. This strategy suggests a clear set of priority objectives that our Nation should pursue to further the National Policy.

Overview of National Priority Objectives
This implementation strategy proposes nine priority objectives. The first four, which together frame How We Do Business, represent overarching ways in which the Federal Government must operate differently or better to improve stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. The implementation of ecosystem-based management embodies a fundamental shift in how the United States manages these resources, and provides a foundation for how the remaining objectives would be implemented. Within that construct, the implementation of coastal and marine spatial planning and management would mark the beginning of a new era of comprehensive, integrated techniques to address conservation, economic activity, user conflict, and sustainable use of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. The other overarching objectives – to better inform decisions and improve understanding by the public through a strengthened ability to obtain and use science and information, and to better coordinate and support science-based management across various authorities and governance structures are, in and of themselves, not new concepts. However, these efforts have suffered from the lack of a clear National Policy and a comprehensive framework within which to achieve desired outcomes.

The implementation strategy also identifies five Areas of Special Emphasis, each of which represents a substantive area of particular importance to achieving the National Policy. These priority areas of work seek to address some of the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. For many years, scientists, resource managers, private industry, and others have been wrestling with these issues, with a variety of existing Federal Government programs in place to address them. While those efforts have delivered their share of results, in each of these critical areas more can – and must – be done. In many cases, we have lacked the capability and understanding – both scientific and technical – to affect the type of change required. In the last several years, however, science has significantly evolved and advanced, and our capacity to respond to environmental and technological changes in these five areas has
improved substantially. With this strategy, these specific areas of work should be viewed as National priorities, with a renewed and coordinated effort at finding and implementing solutions.

Planning
Together, these nine priority objectives provide a bridge between the National Policy and action on the ground and in the water, but do not prescribe in detail how individual entities would undertake these responsibilities. For each priority objective, the NOC would be responsible for, and oversee development of, a strategic action plan within six to twelve months from its establishment. The NOC’s Ocean Resource Management and Ocean Science and Technology Interagency Policy Committees would be charged with developing these plans. The plans would address the obstacles and opportunities identified for each objective, and would focus on, but not be limited to, the key areas identified under each objective. In addition, each plan would:

- Identify specific and measurable near-term, mid-term, and long-term actions, with appropriate milestones, performance measures, and outcomes to fulfill each objective;
- Consider smaller-scale, incremental, and opportunistic efforts that build upon existing activities, as well as more complex, larger-scale actions that have the potential to be truly transformative;
- Explicitly identify key lead and participating agencies;
- Identify gaps and needs in science and technology; and
- Identify potential resource requirements and efficiencies; and steps for integrating or coordinating current and out-year budgets.

The plans would be adaptive to allow for modification and addition of new actions based on new information or changing conditions. Their effective implementation would also require clear and easily understood requirements and regulations, where appropriate, that include enforcement as a critical component. Implementation of the National Policy for the stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes will recognize that different legal regimes, with their associated freedoms, rights, and duties, apply in different maritime zones. The plans would be implemented in a manner consistent with applicable international conventions and agreements and with customary international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. The plans and their implementation would be assessed and reviewed annually by the NOC and modified as needed based on the success or failure of the agreed upon actions. Upon identification and finalization of plans, the NOC Co-Chairs, in collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget, would develop an annual interagency ocean budget guidance memorandum.
While these plans are under development, any agency that is conducting an activity that supports or furthers one of the objectives would bring them to the attention of the NOC. The NOC - working with the agency - would review the activity to determine how it might best contribute to overall implementation of the priority objectives, including being incorporated into the relevant strategic plan.

**Collaboration**

The effective implementation of this far-reaching and comprehensive National Policy would require active collaboration of the Federal Government with State, tribal, and local authorities, regional governance structures, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private enterprise. In developing and revising the plans, the NOC would reach out to these interested parties, as appropriate, through the NOC’s Governance Advisory Committee, the Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel, workshops, and by other means.

Furthermore, international collaboration on a broad range of ocean issues is an important component of these objectives. The Nation plays a leadership role in various international forums that deal with these issues, including the Arctic Council, International Maritime Organization, regional fisheries management organizations, and the International Whaling Commission. By joining the Law of the Sea Convention now, we can reaffirm and enhance U.S. leadership in the development and interpretation of international law applicable to the ocean.

**II. National Priority Objectives**

**How We Do Business**

1. **Ecosystem-Based Management**: Adopt ecosystem-based management as a foundational principle for the comprehensive management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

**Obstacles and Opportunities**

Traditional management of resource use and other activities in the ocean, along our coasts, and in the Great Lakes has focused on individual species, resources, areas, or actions with limited consideration for how the management practices of one might impact the sustainability of another. This has often led to disjointed management approaches resulting in loss of resources, economic hardship, and environments at risk. To ensure healthier, more resilient and productive marine and Great Lakes environments, comprehensive management systems are needed that fully integrate ecological, social, economic, and security goals into decisions. Embedding ecosystem-based management, grounded in science, as an
overarching principle would be a fundamental shift in the traditional way the Federal Government approaches management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. It would provide the opportunity to ensure proactive and holistic approaches to balance the use and conservation of these valuable resources. This broad-based application of ecosystem-based management would provide a framework for the management of our resources, and allow for such benefits as helping to restore fish populations, control invasive species, support healthy coastal communities and ecosystems, restore sensitive species and habitats, protect human health, and rationally allow for emerging uses of the ocean, including new energy production.

The Plan Should Address:

- “Best practices” for developing and implementing effective ecosystem-based management systems;
- Identification and prioritization of geographic areas of special sensitivity or in greatest need for ecosystem-based management;
- Establishment of a process for working with States, tribal, and local authorities and regional governance structures to apply the most successful approaches in these areas of the greatest need; and
- Measures to ensure that decisions about ocean activities, uses, and goals are made based on the best available science and incorporate principles of ecosystem-based management.


Obstacles and Opportunities

The ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are host to countless commercial, recreational, scientific, energy, and security activities, which often occur in or near areas set aside and managed for conservation and resource protection goals. Overlapping uses and differing views about what activities should occur and where can generate conflicts and misunderstandings. Coastal and marine spatial planning that fully incorporates the principles of ecosystem-based management will provide a means to objectively and transparently guide and balance allocation decisions for use of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes waters and resources. It will allow for the reduction of cumulative impacts from human uses on marine ecosystems, provide greater certainty for the public and private sector in planning new investments, and reduce conflicts among uses and, between using and preserving the environment to sustain critical ecological, economic, and cultural services for this and future generations.
The Plan Should Address:

- Expansion of the national framework for coastal and marine spatial planning developed by the Task Force;

- Specific time frames for implementation;

- Geographic limits, use of the best available science, protection of ecosystem integrity (e.g., biological diversity, fish and fish habitat), the management of trade-offs, with recognition of uncertainties in decision-making, and provisions for adaptive management; and

- An approach that balances competing uses, including traditional, new, and expanding uses (e.g., energy, aquaculture), minimizes impacts on coastal and ocean ecosystems, ensures sustainable uses under reasonable changes in environmental conditions, and minimizes costs.

3. Inform Decisions and Improve Understanding: Increase knowledge to continually inform and improve management and policy decisions and the capacity to respond to change and challenges. Better educate the public through formal and informal programs about the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

Obstacles and Opportunities

A broad program of basic and applied disciplinary and interdisciplinary scientific research, mapping, monitoring, observation, and assessment, coupled with development of forecasts, models, and other decision-support tools, is required to build knowledge of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and processes and ensure that management and policies are based on sound science. Increased understanding of watershed processes and the linkages with our coasts will be necessary to develop better decision-support tools to adequately manage human uses, human impacts, and watershed conservation activities that affect our ocean and coasts. In addition, increased scientific knowledge and a more comprehensive awareness and a detailed understanding of current and emerging human activities taking place in and around our waters, are essential to sound ocean planning and management. However, there are significant gaps in our understanding of ocean ecosystem dynamics, ocean conditions and trends, and the complex links between these conditions and human health, economic opportunities, national and homeland security and social justice. There is significant opportunity to improve how and what information we gather to better understand change and respond to challenges, better integrate current scientific knowledge and real-time data into decision-making, improve the management and integration of data supporting science and decision-making, and identify and close knowledge gaps necessary to adequately understand the impacts of human activities on the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. A diverse, interdisciplinary, ocean-literate workforce that has the appropriate skills and training to capitalize on these opportunities is
needed. In addition, formal and informal education programs developed and implemented to target grades K-12 and beyond would create opportunities for enhanced appreciation of coastal and ocean issues, and better prepare the workforce of the future. Success in building our knowledge and applying it to improve management also relies on an engaged and informed public. Many Americans do not realize the importance of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes to their daily lives, the benefits they provide, or the possibilities they present for further discovery. There is great opportunity to raise awareness and identify ways we can help protect our waters and their resources.

**Inform and Improve**

**The Plan Should Address:**

- Identification of priority issues in addressing emerging topics and change in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and processes;

- Specific scientific requirements and research needs, including the need for reconciling inconsistent standards, physical infrastructure, research platforms, organizations, and data management, to identify critical gaps, ensure high quality data, and provide information necessary to inform management, including mechanisms to transition research results into information products and tools for management;

- The development of a more comprehensive awareness of environmental conditions and trends and human activities that take place in the ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes environments; and

- Requirements for routine integrated ecosystem assessments and forecasts, including impacts related to climate change, to address vulnerability, risks, and resiliency, and inform tradeoffs and priority-setting.

**Educate**

**The Plan Should Address:**

- Challenges, gaps, opportunities, and effective strategies for training and recruiting the current and next generation of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scientists, technicians, operators, managers, and policy makers, with a particular focus on the needs of disadvantaged or under-served communities; and

- Identification of successful formal and informal education and public outreach approaches, including their application toward a focused nation-wide campaign to build public awareness, engagement, understanding, and informed decision-making, with specific emphasis on the state of ecosystems.
4. Coordinate and Support: Better coordinate and support Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Improve coordination and integration across the Federal Government, and as appropriate, engage with the international community.

Obstacles and Opportunities

One of the significant obstacles to effective management of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes is the complex set of Federal, State, tribal, and local laws, authorities, mandates, and governance structures intended to manage their use and conservation. Consistent approaches to the management of resources, including ecosystem-based and adaptive management, are difficult to achieve given this shared, piece-meal, and overlapping jurisdictional model. Furthermore, the United States is party to numerous international agreements and subject to customary international law regarding use and protection of the ocean. Through increased communication, coordination, and integration across all levels of government, we can streamline processes, reduce duplicative efforts, leverage resources, resolve disparities, and enhance synergy. A set of shared principles and objectives coordinated among all levels of government would translate into effective outcomes consistent with the National Policy.

Coordinate

The Plan Should Address:

- Identification of gaps, inconsistencies, and duplications in statutory authorities, policies, and regulations, and taking necessary and appropriate actions to address them;

- Procedures to identify and align mutual and consistent management objectives and actions across jurisdictions;

- Tangible tools and procedures to prevent and resolve conflicts across jurisdictions and disagreements concerning jointly managed ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources; and

- Opportunities for engaging the international community to further the objectives of the policy, as appropriate.

Support

The Plan Should Address:

- Actions to assist the States in advancing the network of regional alliances to protect ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes health;
Evaluation of existing or new funding sources and options to protect, maintain, and restore ocean resources; and

Legislative or regulatory changes necessary to simplify the sharing and transfer of resources among Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies.

Areas of Special Emphasis

1. Resiliency and Adaptation to Climate Change and Ocean Acidification: Strengthen resiliency of coastal communities and marine and Great Lakes environments and their abilities to adapt to climate change impacts and ocean acidification.

Obstacles and Opportunities

The ocean plays a central role in shaping the Earth’s climate and influencing climate variability. Because of this important relationship and the ecosystem services that the ocean, our coasts, and Great Lakes provide, global climate change and its associated impacts as well as ocean acidification pose some of the most serious threats to these ecosystems and coastal communities. Warming ocean temperatures have a profound impact on the distribution of rainfall over land, the melting of ice sheets, and the distribution and productivity of species. Sea-level rise, increased severe storm events, rapid erosion, and salt water intrusion threaten low-lying coastal communities with the destruction of infrastructure, flood inundation, the potential displacement of millions of people, and the loss of key species and habitats. At the same time, climate change is predicted to lower the water levels of the Great Lakes, thereby altering water cycles and supply, habitat, and economic uses of the Lakes. In addition, ocean acidification is expected to have significant and largely negative impacts on the marine food web, ocean ecosystems as a whole and biological diversity in general. Since climate change and ocean acidification may have widespread impacts, increased coordination of monitoring efforts and improved understanding of the changes in the ocean are vital to minimizing these impacts on our marine and Great Lakes ecosystems and coastal communities. We have an opportunity and a responsibility to develop strategies for reducing the vulnerability, increasing the resilience, and improving adaptation of human and natural systems to climate change impacts.

The Plan Should Address:

- Research, observations and modeling needed to forecast regional and local scale climate change impacts and related vulnerabilities for natural resources, health, infrastructure, and livelihoods, including social and economic impacts;

- Better integration of ocean and coastal science into the broader climate dialogue and measures to improve understanding of the connections among land, water, air, ice, and human activities;
• Evaluation of potential social and economic costs related to sea-level rise, such as accelerating erosion, increased saltwater intrusion, and more severe coastal and inland flooding;

• Adaptive actions to identified climate change impacts, and related vulnerabilities such as ocean acidification, and the development of ecological and economic resilience strategies and priorities for research and monitoring to address these strategies;

• Changes to local and regional ocean and lake management systems that incorporate changing climate risks and elements of resilient systems; and

• A comprehensive approach to understanding human health implications of policies for the ocean, our coasts, and Great Lakes, and for identifying opportunities for the protection and enhancement of human health.

2. Regional Ecosystem Protection and Restoration: Establish and implement an integrated ecosystem protection and restoration strategy that is science-based and aligns conservation and restoration goals at the Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional levels.

Obstacles and Opportunities
Along our coasts and the Great Lakes, essential habitats continue to suffer significant losses and degradation due to coastal development, sea-level rise, and associated human activities. Impacts on these ecosystems and the people and communities in these areas are presenting new management challenges. Additionally, external stressors, including invasive species, are impacting native species. While progress has been made in addressing some of these challenges through ecosystem-based management, the threat of critical habitat loss and degradation of ecosystem services is still apparent in the Gulf Coast, the Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, South Florida, San Francisco Bay, and the Great Lakes. Because climate change is impacting our coastlines, it has become even more important to assess and place priorities on ecosystem restoration projects. These experiences provide valuable lessons for other coastal ecosystems.

The Plan Should Address:
• Prioritization of the locations and geographic scope of coastal and Great Lakes ecosystem restoration projects, including implementation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative;

• Interim and longer term goals and mechanisms to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders to implement projects;

• Best practices for collaborative science-based planning to achieve ecosystem restoration goals building on the lessons learned in ongoing ecosystem restoration efforts;
• Impacts of invasive species on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems, and a range of methodologies for control and prevention of these species; and

• Protection, maintenance, and restoration of populations and essential habitats supporting fisheries, protected species, ecosystems, and biological diversity.

3. Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land: Enhance water quality in the ocean, along our coasts, and in the Great Lakes by promoting and implementing sustainable practices on land.

Obstacles and Opportunities
Nonpoint source pollution (pollution that comes from diffuse sources instead of one specific point), caused by poor land management practices, is the leading cause of water quality problems in the United States and a major cause of rapidly declining ocean and coastal ecosystem health. Runoff from suburban streets and lawns, agricultural and industrial uses, transportation activities, and urban development – even hundreds of miles away – negatively impacts water quality, resulting in deleterious effects on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes systems as evidenced by harmful algal blooms, expansive dead zones, and increased incidents of human illness. Areas with particularly poor water quality are known to experience frequent beach closures, massive fish kills, and areas of toxic sediments. Since this pollution comes from many diffuse sources throughout the country, addressing it requires a strong commitment to coordination and cooperation between multiple sectors and among Federal, State, tribal, local authorities, and regional governance structures. Fortunately, a number of point and non-point source prevention programs are available to State, tribal, local, regional, and private entities to reduce the amount of pollutants that are transported from our Nation’s watersheds and into our coastal waters. There are opportunities to achieve significant reductions in these inputs to our coasts and ocean through concrete mechanisms that integrate and coordinate land-based pollution reduction programs.

The Plan Should Address:
• The major impacts of urban and suburban development and agriculture, including forestry and animal feedlots, on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes waters;

• The relative contributions of significant land-based source of pollutants, sediments, and nutrients to receiving coastal waters and ways to address them, including recommendations of how to integrate and improve existing land-based conservation and pollution programs;

• Best management practices, use of conservation programs, and other approaches for controlling the most significant land-based sources of nutrients, sediments, pathogens, toxic chemicals, solid waste and marine debris, and invasive species; and
• The establishment of a comprehensive monitoring framework and integration with State monitoring programs.

4. Changing Conditions in the Arctic: Address environmental stewardship needs in the Arctic Ocean and adjacent coastal areas in the face of climate-induced and other environmental changes.

Obstacles and Opportunities
Climate change is having a disproportionally greater impact on polar regions than elsewhere, and the Arctic region is faced with serious problems. Permafrost is thawing at an accelerated rate, which leads to the release of large amounts of methane. Multi-seasonal sea ice is rapidly deteriorating. Much of the Alaskan Arctic seashore is threatened by coastal erosion and other environmental challenges. Increased human activity in the area is bringing additional stressors to the Arctic environment, with serious implications for Arctic communities and ecosystems. At the same time, the diminishing ice presents opportunities and pressures for increased development of living and non-living resources and for increased commerce and transportation. Working with all of the stakeholders, including the indigenous communities, we have the opportunity to develop proactive plans, informed by the best science available, to manage and encourage use while protecting the fragile Arctic environment.

The Plan Should Address:
• Better ways to conserve, protect, and sustainably manage Arctic coastal and ocean resources, effectively respond to the risk of increased pollution and other environmental degradation on humans and marine species, and adequately safeguard living marine resources;

• New collaborations and partnerships to better monitor and assess environmental conditions and devise early warning and emergency response systems and procedures to be prepared for and respond to emerging events in the Arctic region, such as environmental disasters;

• Consistency and coordination with the implementation of U.S. Arctic Region Policy as promulgated in National Security Presidential Directive 66/Homeland Security Presidential Directive 25 (2009); and

• Improvement of the scientific understanding of the Arctic system and how it is changing in response to climate-induced and other changes.
5. **Ocean Coastal, and Great Lakes Observations and Infrastructure:** Strengthen and integrate Federal and non-Federal ocean observing systems, sensors, and data collection platforms into a national system and integrate that system into international observation efforts.

**Obstacles and Opportunities**

Our ability to understand weather, climate, and ocean conditions, to forecast key environmental processes, and to strengthen ocean management decision-making at all levels is informed by a sound knowledge base. Efficient and effective coordination of the many available tools, continued development of new tools and infrastructure, and integration of them into a cohesive, unified, robust system is becoming increasingly difficult as an ever increasing number of data collection and processing systems come on line. New ground-breaking observation technologies give us the ability to observe and study global processes at all scales. These new tools, if fully integrated, will significantly advance our knowledge and understanding of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. Furthermore, successful integration of new tools and data will improve our ability to engage in science-based decision-making and ecosystem-based management by ensuring that biological, ecological, and social data and processes are included in the calculus.

**The Plan Should Address:**

- A nationally integrated system of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes observing systems, comprised of Federal and non-Federal components, and cooperation with international partners and organizations, as appropriate;

- Regional and national needs for ocean information, to gather specific data on key ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes variables that are required to support the areas of special emphasis and other national needs;

- The use of unmanned vehicles and remote sensing platforms and satellites to gather data on the health and productivity of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes;

- The capabilities and gaps of the National Oceanographic Fleet of ships and related facilities; and

- Data management, communication, access, and modeling systems for the timely integration and dissemination of data and information products.
ORRAP EDUCATION SUB-PANEL

Ms. Jane Davis (Co-Chair) (ORRAP)
Aquarium Curator
Walt Disney World Animal Programs
2020 North Avenue of the Stars
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
407-560-7534
jane.davis@disney.com

Mr. Kerry St. Pé (Co-Chair) (ORRAP)
Director, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
P.O. Box 2663
Nicholls State University
Thibodaux, LA 70310
kerry@btnep.org

Dr. Matthew Gilligan
Professor, Coordinator
Marine Sciences
Savannah State University
Savannah, GA 31404
912-356-2808
gilliganm@savannahstate.edu

Dr. Blanche Meeson
NASA/GSFC
Mailstop 610.2
Greenbelt, MD 20771
301-614-5315
410-991-8527 (cell)
301-614-5268
Blanche.W.Meeson@nasa.gov

Mr. Larry Murry
421B Pine Top Road
Murfreesboro, NC 27855
252-585-0627
Imurrybhs@yahoo.com

Dr. Miguel Nevárez
University of Texas-Pan American
1201 West University Drive
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-381-2101
Mn38f1@utpa.edu

Dr. Shirley Pomponi (ORRAP)
President and CEO
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution
5600 US 1 North
Fort Pierce, FL 34946
772-465-2400 x449
spomponi@hboi.fau.edu

Dr. Jeffrey Reutter
Ohio State University
Area 100 Research Center
1314 Kinnear Road
Columbus, OH 43212
614-292-8949
Reutter.1@osu.edu

Dr. Denise Stephenson-Hawk
Chairman, The Stephenson Group
1201 Peachtree Street
400 Colony Square, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30361
404-870-9060
TheStephensonGroup@msn.com

Dr. Carolyn Thoroughgood
Vice Provost for Research
University of Delaware
210 Hullien Hall
Newark, DE 19716
302-831-2136
cgood@udel.edu

Ms. Cynthia Vernon
Vice President of Conservation Programs
Monterey Bay Aquarium
886 Cannery Row
Monterey, CA 93940
831-648-7989
cvernon@mbayaq.org

Dr. Sharon Walker
J.L. Scott Marine Education Center and Aquarium
703 East Beach Drive
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
228-374-5550
Sharon.walker@usm.edu
ORRAP INDUSTRY SUB-PANEL

Mr. Paul Kelly, Chair (ORRAP)
Energy & Ocean Policy Consultant
Rowan Companies, Inc. (retired)
5555 Del Monte Drive, Suite T-23
Houston, Texas 77056-4121
713 888-0993
paullkelly@aol.com

Mr. Bill Clark
President
The American Institute for Shippers' Associations, Inc.
P.O. Box 33457
Washington, D.C. 20033
202-628-0933
Fax: 202-296-7374
wh.billclark@clarkconsultinggroupinc.com

Ms. Nancy Colleton
Executive Director
Alliance for Earth Observation
The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
1600 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 901
Arlington, VA 22209
703-312-0823
Fax: 703-312-8657
nancy_colleton@strategies.org

Mr. Randy Fisher, Vice-Chair (ORRAP)
Executive Director
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97202
503-595-3100
randy_fisher@psmfc.org

Mr. Tom Fry
Executive Director
National Ocean Industry Association
1120 G Street, NW, Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-347-6900
tfry@noia.org

Mr. Jim Greenwood
President
Biotechnology Industry Organization
1225 Eye Street NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
202-962-9200
info@bio.org

Dr. Bill Hooke
Senior Vice President & Policy Advisor
American Meteorological Society
Headquarters - 45 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108-3693
617-227-2425
Fax: 617-742-8718
Office in DC - 1120 G Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005-3826
202-737-9006
Fax: 202-737-9050
hooke@ametsoc.org

Mr. Jim Fahey
Consultant
858-207-8005
jfahey@san.rr.com
Mr. Ed Kelly
President
National Association of Maritime Organizations
17 Battery Place, Suite 1115
New York, NY 10004
212-425-5704
Fax: 212-635-9498
themaritimeassoc@erols.com

Ms. Judy Krauthamer
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association
P.O. Box 6879
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-203-1656
maocoora@verizon.net

Ms. Laura Mandala
Managing Director
Mandala Research, LLC
429 North Saint Asaph Street
Old Town Alexandria, VA 22302
703-798-5452
Laura@MandalaResearch.com

Dr. Gus Rassam
Executive Director
American Fisheries Society
5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 110
Bethesda, MD 20814-2199
301-897-8616
grassam@fisheries.org

Dr. Carl Reed
Executive Director
The Open GIS Consortium, Inc.
35 Main Street, Suite 5
Wayland, MA 01778-5037
508-655-5858
creed@opengeospatial.org

Captain Ted Thompson
Executive Vice President
International Council of Cruise Lines
2111 Wilson Boulevard, 8th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201
703-522-8463
Fax: 703-522-3811
info@iccl.org

Dr. Ian Voparil
Shell Global Solutions (US), Inc.
Westhollow Technology Center - Ecology & Emergency Response Dept
3333 Hwy 6 South, Rm EC-135
Houston, TX 77082-3101
281-544-6906
ian.voparil@shell.com
November 11, 2009

Ms. Nancy Sutley  
Chair, Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force and  
Council on Environmental Quality  
722 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Chairwoman Sutley:

Duke University’s Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions and Meridian Institute have been following the work of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force with great interest. We look forward to the Task Force’s recommendations to President Obama regarding a national ocean policy to improve the management of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. One important element of that policy will be the Task Force response to President Obama’s call for a framework for coastal and marine spatial planning.

Research from around the world indicates that, to be an effective tool for ocean management, marine spatial planning requires the active engagement of all ocean and coastal stakeholders, including environmental advocates and the many individuals that depend on ocean and coastal resources for their livelihoods. Ensuring that the U.S. framework for coastal and marine spatial planning includes provisions for participation by all those who use and value the ocean will be a major challenge.

With this challenge in mind, the Nicholas Institute and Meridian Institute have joined in an effort to better understand the opportunities—and potential obstacles—for stakeholder involvement in marine spatial planning. Our intent is to develop an accurate understanding of the perspectives and concerns of ocean and coastal constituents from both the environmental and user communities. Based on our findings, we will offer specific guidance and recommendations for how coastal and marine spatial planning might best be implemented to help achieve the goals of a new national ocean policy for the United States. Attached you will find the first outcome of this ongoing project.

Over the last four months we have convened representatives from a variety of ocean industries—including aquaculture, boating, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, oil and gas, renewable energy, undersea cables, shipping, and tourism—to discuss the concept of coastal and marine spatial planning and hear their thoughts, questions, and concerns. Based on three day-long meetings and numerous personal and group communications, we developed a summary of what we believe are important concerns shared by these ocean users regarding
marine spatial planning. These individuals also conveyed a number of principles and design criteria they believe should inform the development of any national framework for marine spatial planning that might be contemplated.

The attached document provides a summary of what we learned. Although it has been reviewed by those listed at the end, this summary does not reflect a formal consensus of the participants, nor does it indicate any prioritization among their concerns or desires. We hope you will find these initial insights useful and we look forward to sharing additional findings and conclusions from this process as they are developed.

Sincerely,

Laura Cantral, Meridian Institute

Larry Crowder, The Nicholas School, Duke University

Morgan Gopnik, The Nicholas School, Duke University

Linwood Pendleton, The Nicholas Institute, Duke University
Ocean User Perspectives on Marine Spatial Planning

November 11, 2009

Beginning in July 2009, Duke University’s Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions and Meridian Institute hosted three full-day meetings (on July 16, September 2, and September 25, 2009) to establish a dialogue with representatives from ocean industries (see list at end of document) about marine spatial planning as a tool to manage ocean resources. Over the course of these meetings, participants expressed their views regarding: (1) concerns and questions about how marine spatial planning might proceed in the U.S., (2) principles that should guide and underpin any marine spatial planning framework, and (3) design considerations for any implementation of marine spatial planning. This document summarizes what the meeting’s conveners heard from participants about these issues. It is not intended to represent a group consensus, but rather to accurately reflect the perspectives of meeting participants.

What is Marine Spatial Planning?

The recently-released Interim Report of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force outlines recommendations for a new National Ocean Policy that promotes the ecological and economic health of our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. Furthermore, the Task Force calls for the policy to be grounded in an ecosystem-based management approach and to employ coastal and marine spatial planning as an important tool for implementing the national ocean policy. While a number of definitions for marine spatial planning (MSP) exist, meeting participants worked with one proposed by Ehler and Douvere, which includes elements similar to those highlighted by the Task Force:

*Marine Spatial Planning is the public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process. MSP should be ecosystem-based and is an element of sea use management.*

Concerns about Marine Spatial Planning

Ocean users expressed a variety of questions and concerns about implementation of MSP in the U.S. These concerns include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Decision-makers need to be more explicit about why MSP is needed, what problems it will address, and how it improves upon existing management approaches.
- There is a continuing concern about inadequate industry input to date regarding MSP.

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• MSP will be unwelcome if it adds further regulations, requires additional layers of agency review, or creates new grounds for litigation over ocean uses.
• The terminology of MSP is often unclear and inconsistent.
• The data needed to carry out MSP effectively, including human use and economic data, may not be available.
• MSP design and implementation could interfere with ongoing economic activities and permitting processes.
• Some stakeholders may not have the capacity to participate fully in an MSP process due to insufficient resources or time.

Guiding Principles for Marine Spatial Planning

Participants identified the following as important principles that should be incorporated into any marine spatial planning framework.

Goals and Time Horizon
• MSP should be driven by long-term national economic, social, and environmental goals.
• MSP should be forward looking, incorporating projections of future ocean uses and environmental conditions.

Economics and Human Uses
• Ecosystem-based management must include humans as both users of ocean resources and beneficiaries of ocean ecosystem services.
• MSP should carefully balance economic, social, and environmental goals.
• MSP should encourage and facilitate compatible or synergistic ocean uses.

Stakeholder Participation
• MSP should be conducted in an open, transparent, and participatory fashion that ensures that all stakeholders, including representatives from existing and emerging ocean industries, have an active role in all stages of the MSP process.
• The MSP process should be one in which all participants have confidence.

Adaptation and Flexibility
• The MSP process should accommodate change and promote innovation and collaboration, particularly with respect to emerging ocean industries and users.
• A national framework for MSP should allow for regional flexibility in process, planning, and implementation.

Regulation
• MSP should increase ocean investors’ certainty about future regulation.
• MSP should not add to the regulatory burden faced by ocean industries.
• MSP needs to work in harmony with international treaties to which the US is a party or which it recognizes (e.g., UNCLOS).

Design Elements for Marine Spatial Planning

Beyond the core principles that should guide the development of a national framework for marine spatial planning, the ocean user participants also identified a number of design elements that they believe would be critical for effective implementation of MSP.
• MSP should explicitly recognize and account for the heterogeneity of ocean space, its uses, and the social and political contexts of different regions.
• MSP should identify and acknowledge user conflicts upfront, while encouraging the co-location of ocean uses wherever possible.
• MSP should include clear plans to obtain, organize, centralize, and make available to the highest degree possible good spatial data, including data on human uses.
• MSP should build on existing regional bodies, including multi-state regional partnerships.
• MSP should be implemented through existing authorities, regulations, and legal frameworks to the greatest extent possible.
• The federal government should provide support and incentives to facilitate MSP, including help with pilot projects to begin the planning process.
• Sufficient time should be allotted to guarantee that MSP reflects the concerns, needs, and interests of all stakeholders, including ocean users, and allows for the collection of good data and use of sound science.
• Existing permitting processes should go forward while MSP is under discussion and development.
• Once a spatial plan is approved, a streamlined permitting process should be instituted for uses compatible with the plan and redundant layers of review should be eliminated.
• MSP should include a process of monitoring, periodic review, and adaptation.

Meeting Participants*

Sebastian Belle, Maine Aquaculture Association
Mathew Dunn, National Marine Manufacturers Association
John Henderschedt, Phoenix Processor Limited Partnership
Paul Holthus, World Ocean Council
Paul Kelly, Energy & Ocean Policy Consultant, Gulf of Mexico Foundation
Donald Kent, Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute
Richard Langan, Atlantic Marine Aquaculture Center, University of New Hampshire
Ryck Lydecker, Boat Owners Association of the United States (BoatU.S.)
Terry O'Halloran, Tourism Business Solutions, Change Strategies & Innovation
Sean O'Neill, Ocean Renewable Energy Coalition
Matt Paxton, Coastal Conservation Association, Ball Janik LLP
Ian Voparil, Shell Global Solutions (US) Inc.

*Note: This dialogue was initiated under a promise of confidentiality to encourage candor and innovative thinking; two additional participants have asked to remain anonymous and are not listed above. Affiliations are provided for identification purposes only; no endorsement by the listed organizations is implied.
Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP)
Statutory name: ORAP
A FACA Panel

A Progress Report and Work Statement Review
Statutory Mission*

- Advise the NORLC* on policies and procedures to implement NOPP*
- Advise NORLC* on selection of partnership projects and allocation of funds ... for implementation of projects
- Advise NORLC* on ... national oceanographic data requirements
- Any additional responsibilities [that] NORLC* [desires]

* Indicates statutory reference, hereinafter
ORRAP Recent Output

- Commented on SIMOR’s Work Plan and Interagency Working Group on Ocean Education’s Implementation Strategy
- Delivered an “Ocean Research-to-Applications Transition” study. Fully endorsed by ICOSRMI.
- Commented on national “Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy”
  - Will work with JSOST and comment on its draft revision in 2009
- ORRAP Chair nominally briefs NORLC*/ICOSRMI leadership (at least) annually
- Planned and participated in high-level Conference on Ocean Literacy
- Coordinated with Interagency Working Groups on Ocean Education and Ocean Observations
  - Joint meetings have occurred
- Received briefings on contemporary issues from Federal Offices and other issue leaders
  - Expose issues to a wider community, including Industry; public discourse
- Developed an ORRAP Ocean Priorities List for the Obama Administration; delivered immediately after the election
- ORRAP Working Group providing ad hoc advice on Coastal Inundation Planning
- Hosted Education Workshop in November 2009 with goal of revising ORRAP Education Strategy
- Drafted letter to Secretary of Education urging ocean content in national curricula standards
- Drafted letters to JSOST/SIMOR and OPTF endorsing key ocean observing priorities
  - ORRAP Chair briefed the Ocean Policy Task Force in August
ORRAP
“Priorities for New Administration”

• Increase and stabilize the fraction of the nation’s research budget directed at the ocean.

• **Support the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)** to provide the data and information needed to manage our ocean and Great Lakes resources.

• **Exploit advances in knowledge** to resolve major problems facing the nation.

• **Promote and “incentivize” an ocean renewable energy industry** to support America’s energy security and stimulate significant job growth.

• **Reclaim America’s leadership position in science and technology on the world stage** by building a workforce that excels in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

• **Pass an Organic Act for NOAA** so it has the authority, tools, and responsibility needed to lead the nation’s ocean enterprise.

• **Establish a National Ocean Advisor to the President** and promote partnerships among federal agencies.

• **Pass critical pieces of ocean legislation.**
Proposed Work 2010-11

• Respond to NORLC*/ICOSRMI, in the meantime ...

• Continue:
  – Promote recommendations in our Priorities for the New Administration Report
  – Ocean Industry Sub-panel thrusts
    • Intersection of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and offshore industries (fish, oil/gas, trans, ports, recreation, renewable energy, research infrastructure)
    • Make recommendations for improving the Federal offshore renewable energy permitting and regulatory processes
  – ORRAP pay close attention to Ocean Observing (IOOS principally)
  – Ocean Education Sub-panel thrusts
    • Recommendations that enhance “informing voters” on ocean issues
    • Recommendations for ocean competency standards and more K-12 studies “out-of-the-classroom”
  – Advise on Coastal Inundation Conference in December 2009

• New: Committee-as-a-Whole
  – Conduct annual NOPP partnership review*
  – Provide timely advice to NOPP project selection team and future NORLC*
  – Await opportunity to help comment on new ORPPIS
  – Potential call to set up ORRAP panel on Ocean Acidification
Analysis (backup)

- Good record, contributory to the Federal agencies, yet maintained independence
- **“ORRAP Priorities for Obama Administration” is strong and current**
- Mostly connected to JSOST, less to SIMOR, virtually none to ICOSRMI as they have not met recently
- Strong Ocean Observing Sub-panel
  - Strong recommendations continue on proper support for IOOS;
  - Continue to review integration of NOAA IOOS effort with NSF’s OOI effort; especially in data management and communications
  - Strong recommendation about other agencies’ participation with NOAA (lead agency for IOOS)
- Strong recommendations from Ocean Industry Sub-panel
  - ORRAP recommendations made in Report to Obama Administration
  - Reviewing contributions of offshore industry to ocean data collection needs
  - Continuing review of Federal permitting difficulties for offshore renewable energy projects
  - Intends to review intersection of marine industry sector with the concept of Marine Spatial Planning
- Trusted, credible ally of the Ocean Education community. Ocean Education Sub-panel parallels an IWG
  - ORRAP recommendations in Report to Obama Administration
  - Recent focus on ocean competency standards and “out-of-the-classroom” experiences for K-12
  - New attention to education for the general public on ocean issues
- No unfulfilled taskings from ICOSRMI
- Statutory Mission issue to be addressed going forward
  - Become involved in NOPP project review process*