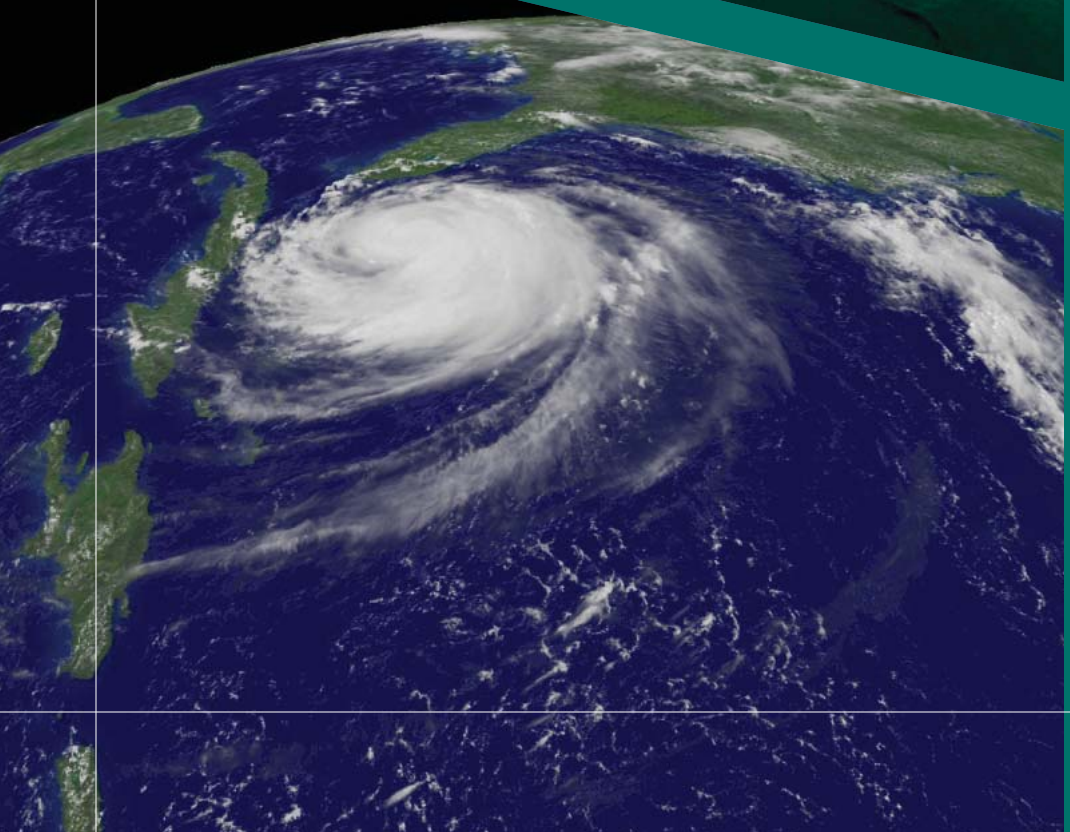
MMS OCEAN SCIENCE
VOLUME 3 ISSUE 5
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006
THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY JOURNAL OF THE MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE



Special Interagency OAP Issue!

Advancing our Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Policy

A Presidential Response – The U.S. Ocean Action Plan

Viewing Ocean Policy Through Aqua-Colored Glasses

Ocean Ed 101

ORRAP

SIMOR Work Plan

Regional Partnerships Preserve and Protect Resources

JSOST in Time – Setting Ocean Science and Technology Priorities

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MMS OCEAN SCIENCE is published bi-monthly by the Minerals Management Service to communicate recent ocean science and technological information and issues of interest related to offshore mineral recovery, ocean stewardship, and mineral revenues.

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ABOUT THE COVER

Top: From *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century* Final Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

Bottom: Hurricane Frances regional imagery, 2004.09.03 at 1645Z. Centerpoint 25°32'20"N latitude, 76°15'03"W longitude. *Photo courtesy NOAA.*

Back: Background platform image by Gregory S. Boland

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From *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century* Final Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

AS ONE VOICE

ADVANCING OUR OCEAN, COASTAL, AND GREAT LAKES POLICY

This issue of *MMS Ocean Science* is devoted to our Nation's new ocean governance structure evolving under the U.S. Ocean Action Plan (OAP). It was produced with the assistance of two guest editors, Dr. Gerhard F. Kuska from the Council on Environmental Quality and a Co-Chair of *SIMOR;* and Dr. Dan Walker from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and a Co-Chair of the *JSOST.*

Over the last several decades, we have come to realize and appreciate the significance of our ocean resources to our future as a Nation. The oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes serve as sources of energy, food, medicine, recreation, transportation, and security. Ocean policy over the years, however, has been fragmented; it is spread among many interests, jurisdictions, and agencies. It is clear to all concerned that ocean management benefits from a clear and consistent voice. In 2004, the President released his U.S. Ocean Action Plan (OAP), which provides the foundation to advance the next generation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes policy.

The OAP outlines a framework for ocean governance that includes participation by a full range of stakeholders from the Federal and State agencies to industry and local citizens, and attempts to bring all concerned to the table. The Committee on Ocean Policy spearheads this effort, while the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration and its subcommittees (the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology and the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources) provide a working support and advisory system.

As the OAP is implemented, the objective is to work with Federal, State, and local agencies and governments; tribes; academic institutions; industry; and private citizens to make our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes cleaner, healthier, and more productive.

Many acronyms are repeatedly used throughout this issue of *MMS Ocean Science.*

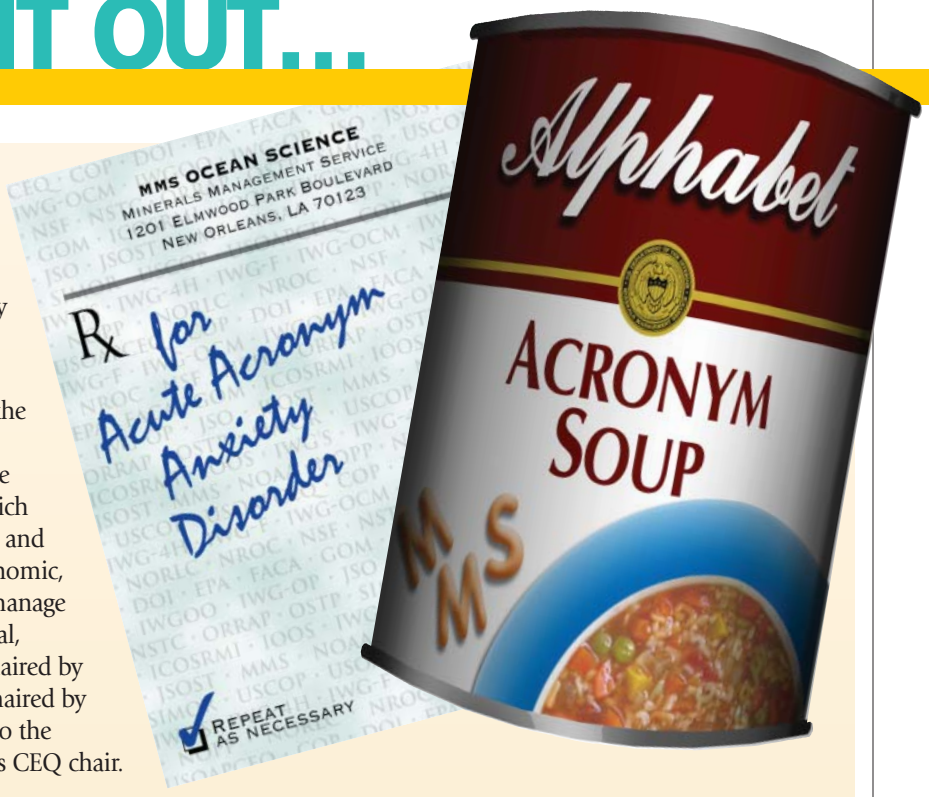
To familiarize readers with the new, developing ocean governance structure, see our Acronym Alphabet Soup guide on the next page.

IS THIS THE OCEAN OR ALPHABET SOUP?

SPELLING IT OUT...

As in many areas of public policy, our Nation is faced with an affliction familiar to scientists, engineers, resource managers, and particularly government officials. The affliction? Acute Acronym Anxiety Disorder (AAAD).

For those who suffer from this affliction, the new, developing structure may provide little relief. Consider the data: The Plan calls for the formation of two subcommittees: JSOST (which will guide the development of ocean sciences and technologies to meet the Nation's social, economic, and security goals) and SIMOR (which will manage ocean resources to promote the Nation's social, economic, and security goals). JSOST is co-chaired by OSTP, NSF, and NOAA, while SIMOR is co-chaired by CEQ, EPA, DOI, and NOAA. They all report to the ICOSRMI and, ultimately, to the COP with its CEQ chair.



Here is a guide to help reduce the effects of AAAD.

CEQ ..... Council on Environmental Quality
COP ..... Committee on Ocean Policy
DOI ..... Department of the Interior (includes MMS – Minerals Management Service)
EPA ..... Environmental Protection Agency
FACA ..... Federal Advisory Committee Act
FSTT ..... Federal/State Task Team
GOM ..... Gulf of Mexico
ICOSRMI ..... Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (also known as the "Aqua Box")
IMDCC ..... Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee
IOOS ..... Integrated Ocean Observing System
IWG's ..... Interagency Working Groups
IWG-4H ..... Interagency Working Group on Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Human Health
IWG-F ..... Interagency Working Group on Facilities
IWG-OCM ..... Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping
IWG-OE ..... Interagency Working Group on Ocean Education
IWG-OO ..... Interagency Working Group on Ocean Observation
IWG-OP ..... Interagency Working Group on Ocean Partnering
JSOST ..... Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology
MMS ..... Minerals Management Service
NOAA ..... National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOPP ..... National Oceanographic Partnership Program
NORLC ..... National Ocean Research Leadership Council
NROC ..... Northeast Regional Ocean Council
NSF ..... National Science Foundation
NSTC ..... National Science and Technology Council
OAP ..... U.S. Ocean Action Plan
ORRAP ..... Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel
OSTP ..... Office of Science and Technology Policy
SIMOR ..... Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources
USCOP ..... U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy

THE U.S. OCEAN ACTION PLAN

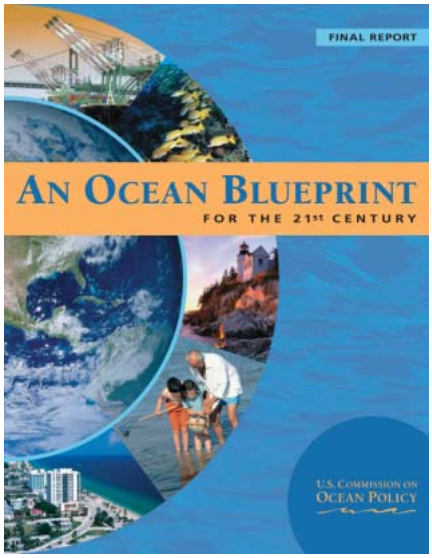
A PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSE

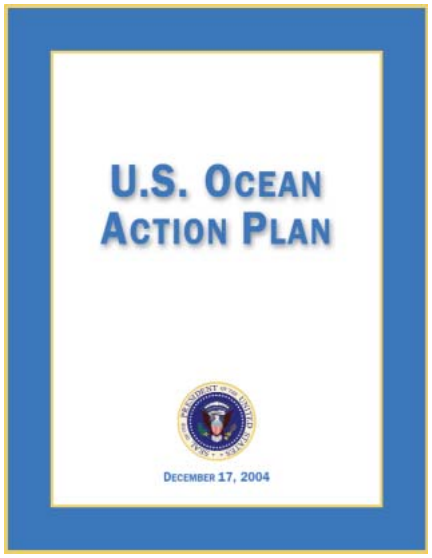
OAP U.S. Ocean Action Plan

On December 17, 2004, President Bush released the U.S. Ocean Action Plan (OAP), the Administration's response to *An Ocean Blueprint*, the final report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP). The Commission provided a comprehensive look at our Nation's ocean science and policy framework and made a series of recommendations regarding research and resource management needs.

Through the OAP, the President created a cabinet-level voice for the oceans. As outlined in his plan, the Committee on Ocean Policy (COP) was created by Executive Order. This COP, chaired by the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, advises the President and coordinates the executive branch departments and agencies to advance the environmental and economic interests of present and future generations of Americans. Reporting directly to the Chair is the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI) and its subcommittees, the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) and the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST). These subcommittees, together with a Federal advisory committee and strong linkages to other ocean and coastal related groups, represent the new coordinated ocean governance structure.

The OAP identifies six key areas and proposes responsible and aggressive





action to bring about positive change. The key areas are:

1. Leadership and Coordination
2. Knowledge and Understanding
3. Use and Conservation
4. Coastal and Watershed Management
5. Transportation
6. International Science and Policy

Under these key areas are a number of action items that represent both those activities that can be undertaken immediately as well as other, longer term priorities. For example, pre-existing projects and research, such as the Integrated Ocean Observing System, commonly known as IOOS, will receive enhanced focus. The activities outlined in the OAP represent a first step in addressing the recommendations of the USCOP. Excellent progress has been made over the past 18 months in all six key areas.

Notably, on June 15, 2006, President Bush signed a Proclamation establishing the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument covering an area of nearly 140,000 square miles, which represents the largest protected marine area in the world and the largest single act of conservation in our Nation's history. White House photo by Eric Draper

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

U.S. Ocean Action Plan

Website: ocean.ceq.gov/actionplan.pdf

USCOP's Final Report

Website: www.oceancommission.gov/documents/full_color_rpt/000_ocean_full_report.pdf

The evolving Integrated Ocean Observing System, or IOOS, is a coordinated national network of observations, data management and communications, and analyses that will disseminate information regarding the status of our oceans, coastal waters, and Great Lakes.

Consider IOOS as a "Weather Channel" for our water world.

IOOS INTEGRATED OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM™

From *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century* Final Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

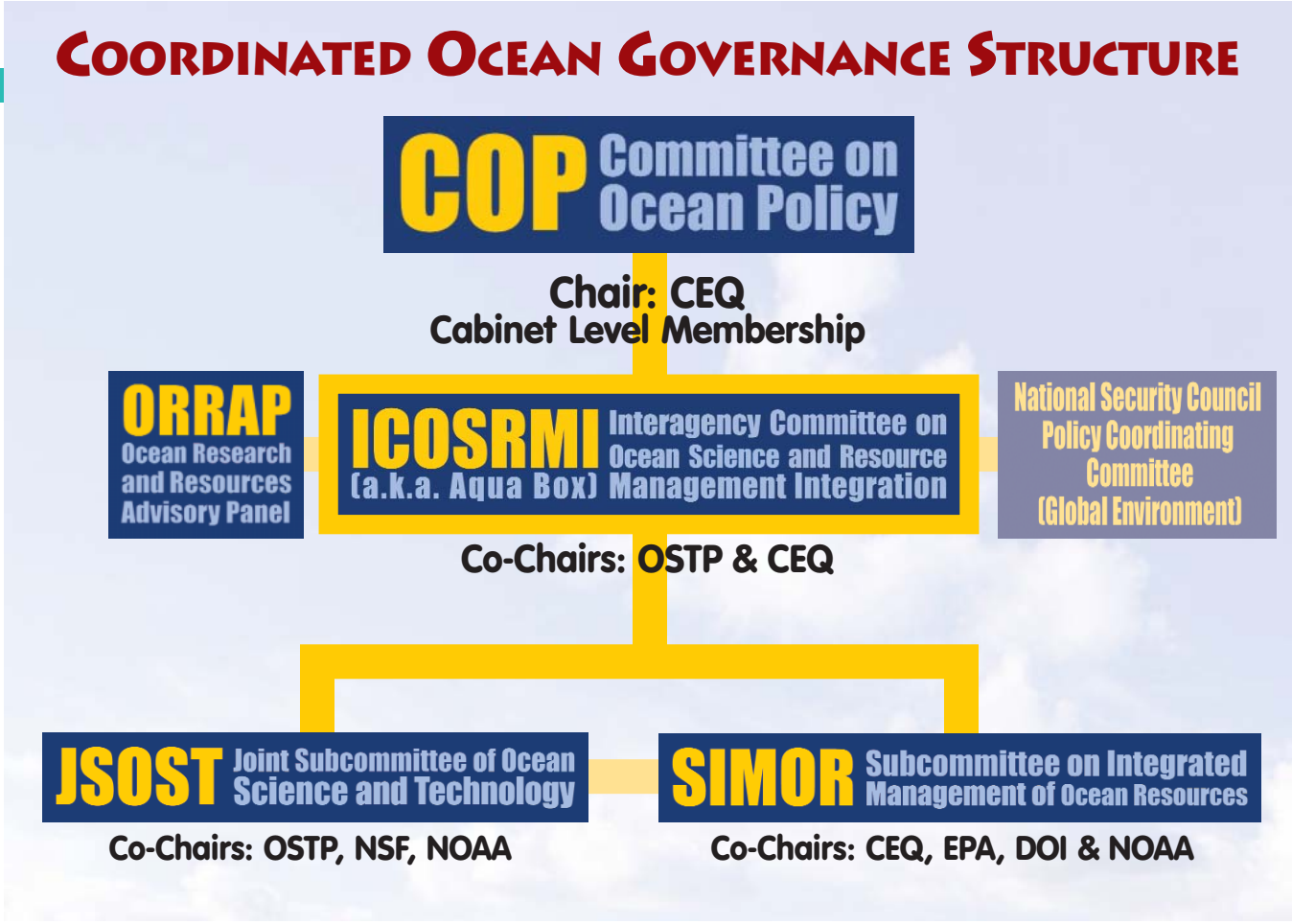
VIEWING OCEAN POLICY THROUGH AQUA-COLORED GLASSES

The Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI) was created in December 2004 by the Administration's U.S. Ocean Action Plan. The ICOSRMI reports directly to the Chair of the cabinet-level Committee on Ocean Policy and is charged with advising the Committee and carrying out its ocean policy, both domestically and internationally. Partly because of the difficulty in pronouncing its acronym, the ICOSRMI is sometimes referred to as the "Aqua Box", based on its representation in the Ocean Action Plan. The ICOSRMI is co-chaired by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Council on Environmental Quality. The ICOSRMI's membership reflects the same structure as the Committee on Ocean Policy but at the Under Secretary/Assistant Secretary level.

One main focus of the ICOSRMI is to coordinate and integrate the activities of ocean-related Federal agencies and to identify statutory and regulatory redundancies and gaps so that conflicts can be resolved, gaps can be filled, and new issues can be addressed quickly and effectively. It also seeks to develop partnerships at all levels, use and deliver

Timeline

Oceans Act of 2000 → **USCOP Final Report September 2004** → **U.S. Ocean Action Plan & Executive Order creating the Committee on Ocean Policy December 2004** → **SIMOR JSOST 2005**



From *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century* Final Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

scientific information effectively, and coordinate educational opportunities.

The ICOSRMI has two subcommittees: the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) and the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST). These subcommittees are the "working" arms of the ocean governance structure.

Through the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), an advisory body ensures that objective and readily accessible advice is rendered to the executive committees of this new ocean governance structure. The Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP) provides independent scientific advice and recommendations to the ICOSRMI. Simply put, ORRAP provides external information and advice to the ICOSRMI, SIMOR, and JSOST which is considered when formulating policy, setting research and management priorities, and developing plans and activities.

Ocean Ed 101

Following the release of the Ocean Action Plan (OAP), the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI) tasked the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) and the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST) with developing recommendations on ocean education. In July 2005, the SIMOR and JSOST Co-chairs established an ad-hoc Joint Task Force on Ocean Education. The task force was asked to develop options for implementing the education-related portions of the OAP, with a focus on increasing coordination between Federal agencies involved in ocean education efforts.

Following task force recommendations and a request by the SIMOR and JSOST Co-Chairs to the ICOSRMI, the Interagency Working Group on Ocean Education (IWG-OE) was created. Activities being pursued by the IWG-OE include enhancing ocean education efforts among public, private, governmental and academic partners; coordinating education and outreach messages about oceans and coasts; ensuring that data collected through ocean and Earth observations are translated into useable forms for educators and the public; and assessing the current and future ocean workforce and ocean-related academic programs.

ORRAP OFFERS SPECIALIZED
EXPERTISE AND ADVICE

The Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP) is an expansion of the Ocean Research Advisory Panel, formerly chartered to advise the governing body of the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP), the National Ocean Research Leadership Council (NORLC).

ORRAP
Ocean Research & Resources Advisory Panel
A United States Federal Advisory Committee

The ORRAP is mandated by the U.S. Ocean Action Plan (OAP) and chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to serve an independent advisory role to the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI).

The ORRAP membership is composed of non-Federal individuals specializing in science, marine policy, and resource management. The National Academy of Sciences, State governments, academia, ocean industries, and other interested parties are represented. Members are appointed for up to four years.

The wealth of knowledge and information residing in the ORRAP is invaluable to the committees who receive their advice, and represents the primary, though not the only means of providing external input into the Federal process.

The National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) is a collaboration of 15 Federal agencies created to provide leadership and coordination of national oceanographic research and education initiatives.

The OAP called for ICOSRMI to incorporate the activities of NOPP's National Ocean Research Leadership Council within its broader mandate that includes ocean resource management.

NOPP
National Oceanographic Partnership Program

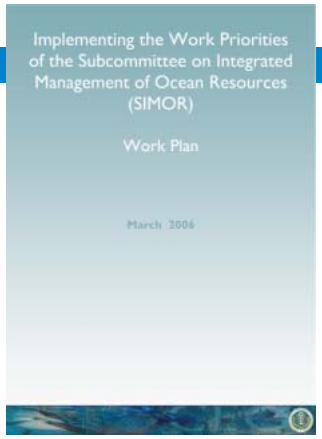
THE SIMOR WORK PLAN

The Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) is one of two working subcommittees formed by the U.S. Ocean Action Plan to operate under the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI). The subcommittee is co-chaired by the Council on Environmental Quality and agency representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of the Interior.

As outlined in its Work Plan, SIMOR's primary focus is to "seek to identify and promote opportunities for collaboration and cooperation among federal agencies and to build partnerships among Federal, State, Tribal and local authorities, the private sector, international partners, and other interested parties." The SIMOR developed its Work Plan with input from the 19 SIMOR agency members.

The SIMOR Work Plan is meant to be a framework for additional activities based on four priority areas identified by the Subcommittee:

1) Support Regional and Local Collaboration
2) Facilitate Use of Ocean Science and Technology in Ocean Resource Management
3) Enhance Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Resource Management to Improve Use and Conservation
4) Enhance Ocean Education



To coordinate the implementation of the Work Plan items, SIMOR has formed work groups of individuals with expertise in management, science, education, and technology. The SIMOR is reaching out to stakeholders, including groups representing environmental, offshore industry, fishing, and agricultural interests, initially through listening sessions. The SIMOR is also engaging with the states through the Coastal States Organization and the Coastal Coordination Committee. The SIMOR has also engaged the JSOST in the development of the Ocean Research Priorities Plan through SIMOR's Federal/State Task Team (FSTT), which includes State resource managers. As groups talk, exchange ideas, identify problem areas, and propose solutions, the Ocean Action Plan, and activities that move beyond it, will benefit from SIMOR's commitment to the development of dynamic, transparent, and comprehensive management processes for our Nation's marine and coastal resources.

U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY

OCEANS ACT IN ACTION

As a Nation, we have benefited – and continue to benefit – from our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. It is expected that by 2025, approximately 75 percent of Americans will live in coastal areas. As more of our population, economic centers, tourist destinations, and energy production facilities continue to concentrate near the ocean coasts, the potential stress of this population growth on the coast and ocean ecosystems is a matter of concern to scientists; local, State, and Federal public officials; and private citizens. We see a key challenge in developing management strategies that ensure continued conservation of coastal and marine habitats, and living resources, while at the same time ensuring that the American public enjoys and benefits from those resources. However, the number of overlapping laws, jurisdictions, and sometimes conflicting interests has made it difficult to formulate and implement clear and coordinated solutions to address our most important problems and challenges.

Above: Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, USN (Ret) Ph.D., Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere; Donald Evans, former Secretary of Commerce; President George W. Bush; James L. Connaughton, Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality; Lynn Scarlett, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior; and Admiral James Watkins, USN (Ret), Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

In 2000, Congress recognized the need for a comprehensive national ocean policy to address those conflicts and enacted the Oceans Act of 2000. The Act created the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP), which was mandated to study current policy on resource protection, ocean use, security, scientific and educational needs, and transportation uses. The USCOP, chaired by Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret), released its final report, "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century" in September 2004. A copy of the report was delivered to each state governor, in addition to President Bush, who then developed his response in consultation with representatives of the governors. The President's response was released in December 2004. His "U.S.Ocean Action Plan" created a coordinated voice in the White House for our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes – a cabinet-level Committee on Ocean Policy.

This advancement of our Nation's ocean policy is the most comprehensive since the 1966 Marine Resources and Engineering Development Act. That Act called for a Presidential commission on marine science, engineering, and resources. The commission, which became known as the Stratton Commission (after its first chairman, Dr. Julius Stratton), took a broad and thorough look at the oceans, establishing national priorities that became the foundation for our ocean policy developments over the last 35 years.

With its study complete and its obligations to Congress and the President fulfilled, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy expired in December 2004. The implementation of the President's Ocean Action Plan addresses the recommendations of the USCOP and serve as the basis for scientific research, environmental safeguards, legislative programs, and economic development for years to come.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy – (l-r) front row: Professor Marc J. Hershman; Dr. Thomas R. Kitsos (Executive Director); Mr. Ted A. Beattie; and Dr. Paul A. Sandifer. Second row: Mr. Lawrence Dickerson; Mrs. Lillian Borrone; Ms. Ann D'Amato; and Mr. Paul L. Kelly. Back row: Mr. Christopher Koch; Mr. Edward B. Rasmuson; Dr. James M. Coleman; Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret) (Chairman); Mr. William D. Ruckelshaus; Dr. Andrew A. Rosenberg; Vice Admiral Paul G. Gaffney II, USN (Ret); Dr. Robert Ballard; and Dr. Frank Muller-Karger.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

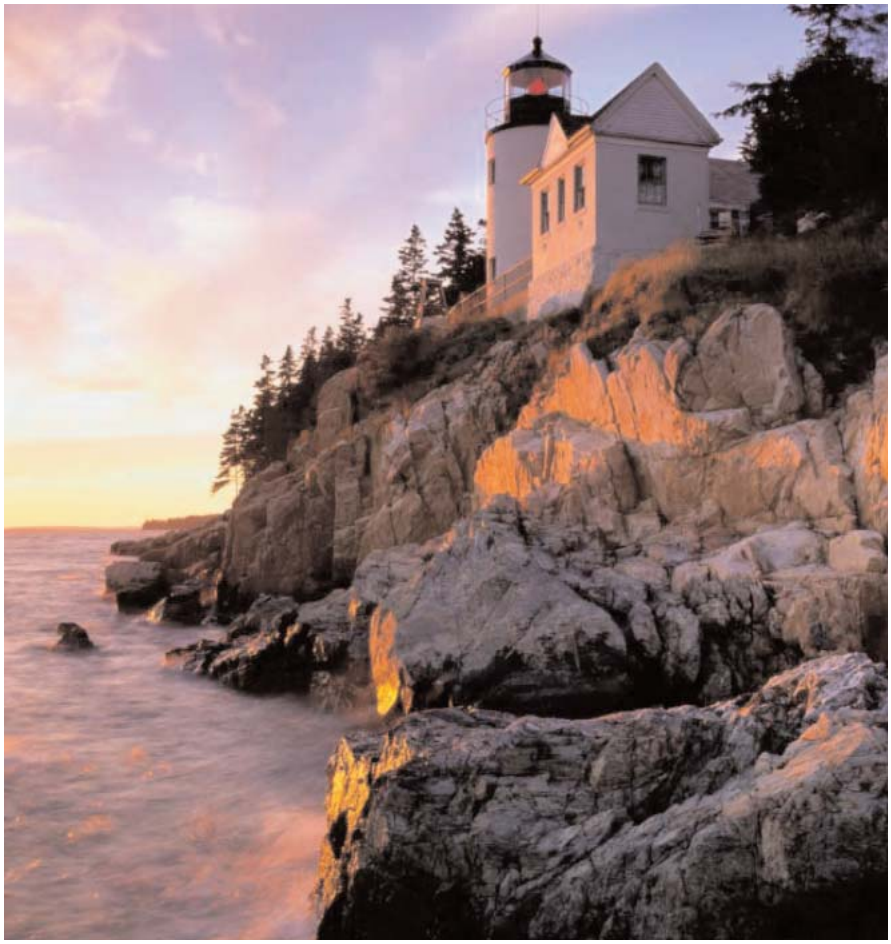
Public Law 106-256

Website: frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=106_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ256.106.pdf

Executive Order: Committee on Ocean Policy

Website: www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/12/20041217-5.html

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



From *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century* Final Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

As initiatives outlined under the U.S. Ocean Action Plan (OAP) begin coming to fruition, some states are already forming regional coalitions and making commitments to address resource conservation issues.

In 2004, through the leadership of Florida Governor Jeb Bush, the States of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Florida formed the Gulf of Mexico Alliance to share expertise and resources for protecting the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) ecosystem. The alliance, which has been recognized by the U.S. Ocean Action Plan and received pledges of support from 13 Federal agencies, released a Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts that identifies short- and long-term goals for creating a healthier GOM ecosystem and economy. Their approach demonstrates that regional groups are ideally suited to address the environmental preservation and economic health of a particular geographic location.

In 2005, through the leadership of Rhode Island Governor Don Carcieri, the States of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont agreed to form the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NORC). As a further development, these same states formed a partnership with five Eastern Canadian provinces to recognize their cumulative alignment with and dependence on coastal and marine interests.

The NROC offered the Federal agencies a seat at the table to communicate regional needs and engage the Federal agencies as partners.

Regional partnerships, led by the States and in partnership with the Federal agencies, have the potential to make a huge difference compared with individual State efforts. Key players with shared boundaries, waterways, and common concerns are motivated to seek multistate solutions for problems because they are generally more familiar with localized issues and can be more responsive.

States that join together to form regional coalitions and move toward an ecosystem-based approach to management of the oceans and coasts strengthen the unified effort to protect and manage the ocean environment for current and future generations.

For more information:

Gulf of Mexico Alliance

Website: www.dep.state.fl.us/gulf/default.htm

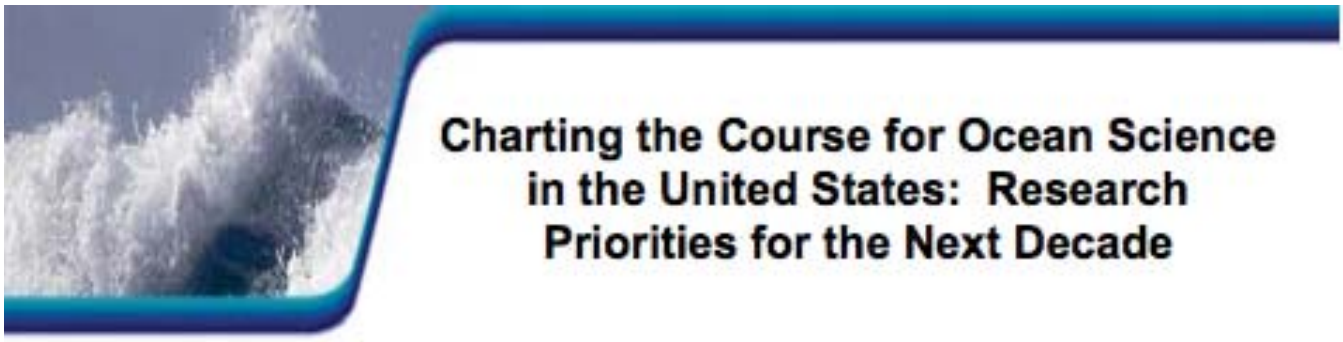
New England Governors Council

Website: www.negc.org/documents/NEGC_Newsletter_905.pdf#search=%22northeast%20regional%20ocean%20council%22

NOAA Pledges Support to New England Governors and Canadian Premiers

Website: www.oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/weeklynews/supp_may06.html

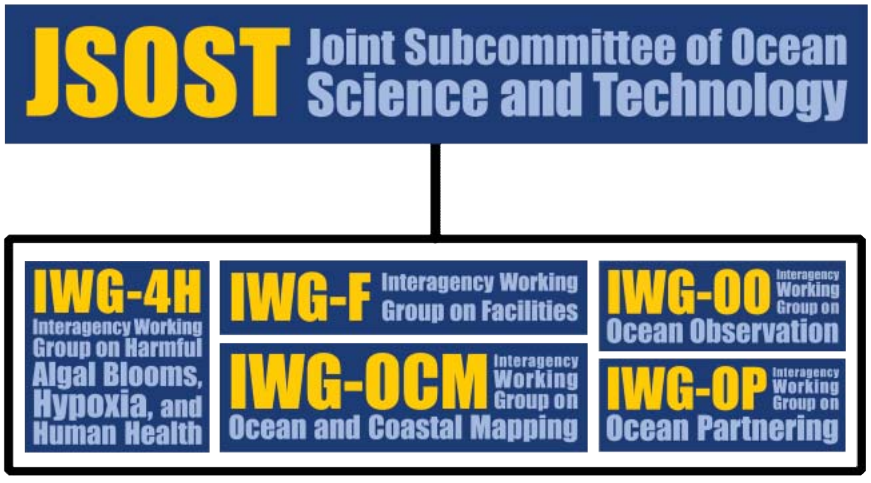
JSOST IN TIME



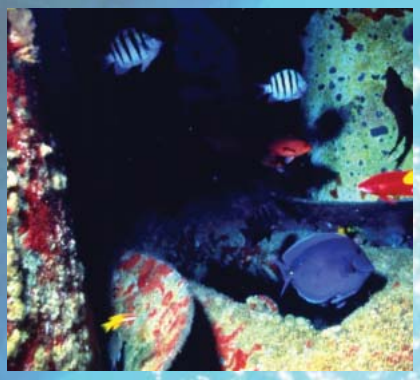
The Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST) is one of two working subcommittees under the direction of the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI or, the "Aqua Box"), as established by the President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan (OAP). The JSOST is an expansion of the Joint Subcommittee on Oceans, which was established in 2003 by the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). The JSOST will continue to report to the NSTC Committee on Science, and the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, in addition to the ICOSRMI. The members of the committee include Deputy Assistant Secretaries and representatives from the Executive branch agencies and departments represented on the Committee on Ocean Policy. The JSOST is co-chaired by representatives from the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

One of the key action items for the JSOST is establishing national ocean science and technology priorities. To that end, the JSOST is currently developing the Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy. "Charting the Course for Ocean Science in the United States: Research Priorities for the Next Decade," a document that outlines national ocean research priorities, is being developed with input from public workshops and comments. At this writing, research priorities have been developed along six societal themes: stewardship of our natural and cultural ocean resources; increasing resilience to natural hazards; enabling marine operations; the ocean's role in climate; improving ecosystem health; and enhancing human health. The JSOST will be soliciting public comment on the research priorities document for a 45-day period beginning in September 2006. The final plan is due around the end of 2006 and will guide future budget decisions for the agencies involved. It will provide guidance on how the various ocean science sectors (government, academia, industry, and nongovernment entities) can and should be engaged, individually or through partnerships, to address the areas of greatest research priority and opportunity.

The JSOST has also established a number of interagency working groups (or IWG's) to advise, assist, and make recommendations pertaining to policies, plans, and implementation strategies where appropriate. The JSOST has chartered five such IWG's: the Interagency Working Group on Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Human Health (IWG-4H); Interagency Working Group on Facilities (IWG-F); the Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping (IWG-OCM); the Interagency Working Group on Ocean Observation (IWG-OO); and the Interagency Working Group on Ocean Partnering (IWG-OP).



MMS – A Leader in Securing the Nation's Domestic Energy Supply

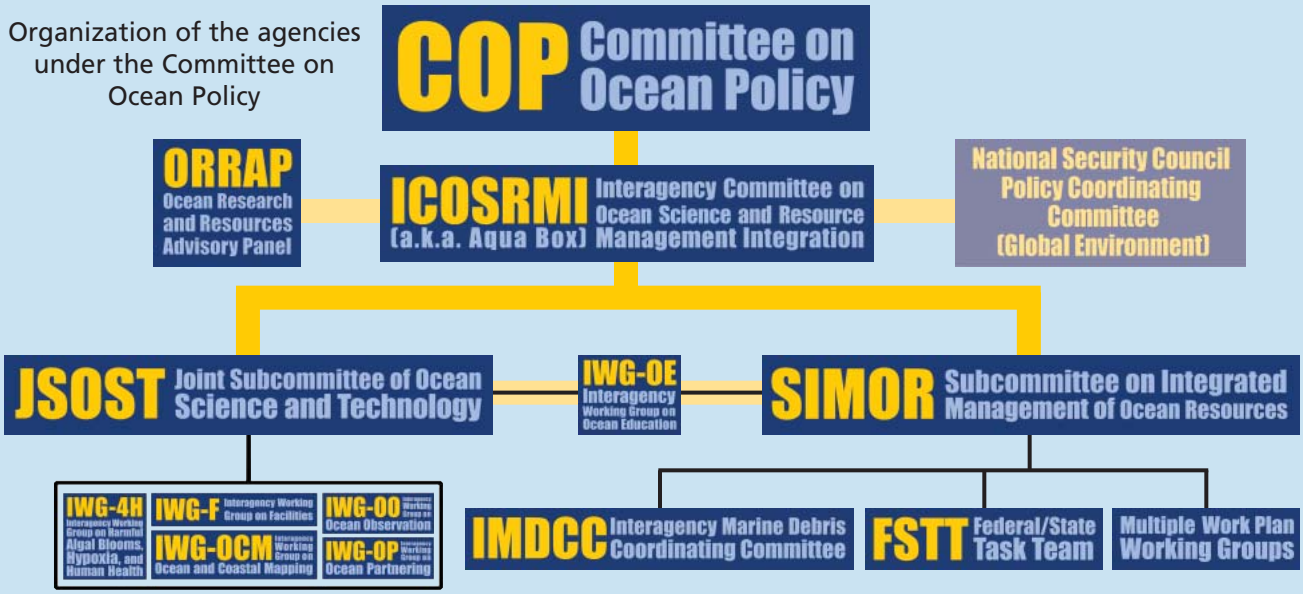


Artificial reef provides habitat for a variety of marine life.

NEW WAVES

Late-breaking News & Information

Organization of the agencies under the Committee on Ocean Policy



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