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## Envisioning a National System of Marine Protected Areas: A New England Region Public Dialogue

### Breakout Group Responses

This document provides a synthesis of comments received from participants during breakout groups at the May 16, 2005, New England Region Public Dialogue held in Portland, Maine.

#### Background

Marine protected areas (MPAs) in the United States are widely used as a tool for helping conserve the nation's wealth of natural and cultural resources. These precious resources, including coral reefs, kelp forests, whales, shipwrecks, and a wide variety of marine life in the oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes, are vital to the economic sustainability of the nation for current and future generations. MPAs provide recreation and economic opportunities for millions of Americans, help sustain critical habitats and marine resources, and act as an "insurance policy" by helping protect marine resources from human impacts.

Over the past two decades, the use of place-based marine conservation and management tools, including the use of MPAs, has risen dramatically. Currently, there are hundreds of federal, state, territory, and tribal authorities and thousands of sites in U.S. waters. Each site may have varying definitions of types and purposes. These sites range from multiple-use to no-take reserves, although less than 1 percent of MPAs in the U.S. are no-take reserves. The complexity of MPAs and their recognition as vital tools for marine conservation and management are the foundation of Presidential Executive Order 13158 on MPAs, which was signed on May 26, 2000. The Executive Order directs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of the Interior to work with other federal agencies and consult with states, territories, tribes, and the public to develop a scientifically based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. The MPA Center was established to implement this task.

As part of this effort, the MPA Center has outlined a multi-year process to engage the nation in developing the national system of MPAs. This process includes collecting and considering continuous stakeholder and partner input for the development of the national system, enhancing relationships with stakeholder organizations engaged in these issues, developing

and applying sound science about marine resources and their use, and communicating clear, consistent information about the process. Included in this effort is a series of workshops and Regional Public Dialogue meetings to gather input from a wide variety of stakeholders and partners to inform the development of the draft framework for the national system of MPAs.

### New England Region Public Dialogue

The second in the series of Regional Public Dialogue meetings was held May 16, 2005 in Portland, Maine at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. After initial remarks and presentations from the MPA Center and Mr. George Lapointe, MPA Federal Advisory Committee member, participants met in small groups to discuss the following five questions:

- 1) How could your interests in New England's natural and cultural resource issues benefit from some kind of national system of MPAs?
- 2) What are New England's important marine economic, recreational, and other types of uses and values that you want to be considered in developing a national system of MPAs?
- 3) What are New England's important natural and cultural resources that you think a national system of MPAs should conserve and sustain for future generations?
- 4) How should NOAA and Department of the Interior continue to work with stakeholders like you in New England to develop the vision for the national system?
- 5) Other comments?

The notes below were recorded on paper flip charts during the meeting and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The comments from each individual and group have been aggregated under each of the five respective questions.

All input received during this and other Dialogues is on the public record and will be considered in developing the draft framework for a national system of MPAs. At this preliminary stage in the effort, the MPA Center does not intend to respond to any comments received via these Dialogues. Once a draft framework for the national system is developed, NOAA will publish it in the *Federal Register* for formal public comment and will subsequently provide a formal response to any comments received.

This and other reports from workshops, as well as regularly updated information about the MPA Center's work to develop of the national system of MPAs, can be found at <http://mpa.gov>. For more information, contact Jonathan Kelsey, NOAA National MPA Center, via phone at: 301-713-3155 ext. 230, or by e-mail at: [mpa.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:mpa.comments@noaa.gov).

### Summary of Breakout Group Responses

- 1) How could your interests in New England's natural and cultural resource issues benefit from some kind of national system of MPAs?
  - Standardization of terms
  - Scientific criteria to rationalize design of program (natural and social sciences)
  - Evaluate multiple use issues

- Social risk management assessment (as done by Department of the Interior)
- Research and education
- Protection of the marine environment
- Better coordination, transparency of process and assurance that government is being good steward
- Standardize types/criteria for sites state by state
- Federal funding to regional entities
- Federal funding to support research for baseline studies
- Sustainable fisheries
- Increased tourism of natural resources
- Formal role for human use
  - Part of ecosystem
- Protect commercial fishermen and communities as a cultural resource (e.g., Monhegan island, Maine; George's Bank and adjacent communities)
- Non-managed species and biodiversity protection
- Shipwreck protection (e.g., Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, U.S.S. Portland)
- Natural features protection (e.g., deep sea corals, no-take MPAs in canyons)
- Develop common language and terminology
- Inter-agency coordination and research output communication
- New MPAs established
- Protection of highly migratory species (e.g., whales)
- Improve stakeholder involvement
- Improve education (e.g., on diversity of uses and resources (recognize value))
- Improve natural resource stewardship
- Improve mapping and visualization
- International issues and cooperation
- Separating conflicting uses
- Unique partnerships between tourism and heritage (e.g., commercial fishing and fishing communities)
- Hoping process will yield a more coherent approach
- Re-contextualize human activities
  - Human activities managed in a context of ecosystem integrity
- Rare habitats and species important
- Flexible in space and time
- Existing areas: sharing goals
  - System more responsive to many goals, rather than one site's goals
- Idea of national overseer of the national system → uncomfortable
- Many existing marine managed areas: basically entire Gulf of Maine with rolling closures, etc. at various times of year
- Many marine managed areas in New England make it difficult for commercial fisherman to make a living because of it
- Areas on marine managed areas map that are missing
- Right now in North Sea cod moved north because of change in temperature, so MPAs in federal register not effective for long term – need to be more flexible
- Need guidelines for cultural resource management in Gulf of Maine
- Cultural resources are marginalized – need to be better integrated into national system
- Government is best left at the local level
- Keep as much discussion at local and town levels
- New England Fishery Management Council can only comment on land-based activities: biggest deficiency in New England is what's happening on land
- No one is regulating cultural resources: this is needed
- Coordination is needed
- Land based activities get a free pass – destroying my home that make living from
- Gulf of Maine and adjacent watersheds equals most of New England
  - Difficult to make connections between watershed and sea

- People that manage fisheries know about areas that need to be managed/protected
- Fishermen have been wrongly blamed for stocks not rebounding
- Seen too many cases where special interests get through back door when can't get through front
- Need to leave control at local and regional levels
- Confusion with natural and cultural resources and three tracks natural heritage, cultural heritage, and sustainable production
- Where do traditional ways of life fit in?
- Cultural resources need maintenance and investment just like natural resources and traditional ways of life
- Advantage of greater science on MPAs with national system
  - Need to express good science in a way that is useful → on a website is not enough
  - Need to integrate with people involved in planning, management, etc.
- Federal agencies need to sit with states and local partners or else they will miss the boat
- Current mechanisms to coordinate with states and tribes is inadequate
- Since the Executive Order, MPA issues are growing and the national system could help coordinate across agencies at the federal, state, and tribal level
- [Need] Input from stakeholders on benefits before declaring benefits
- Two levels [of benefits]
  - ecosystem integrity
  - business standpoint
- Inventorying what's there and what we have to promote understanding of what's out there
- Makes sense to have national network because species are moving and habitats are used by various species
  - Tool for ecosystem approach
  - Tool to address network for multi-species habitat
- Culture shift in how we look at oceans, [national system] is a tool supporting culture shift toward more integrated management of the oceans and uses
- Fostering community ownership
- Coastal communities on the ground need funding available for ideas at the local level (e.g., Cape Cod Hook Fishermen, [Maine's] Bay Management)
- Cultural component of management is as important as science-based management
- Integration of stakeholders throughout [MPA process]
- Right whale MPA will cost a lot of funding, could cost communities
- For deep water corals – appropriate use and benefit
  - Some areas where low impact uses are allowed (multiple use areas)
- Sensible approach to managing uses, conservation, and access
- Many different groups could be impacted depending on how they are set up – need to be careful not to leave out users – and [the national system] needs input from a wide variety of stakeholders
- Integrate scientists more into the process, to help shape the process and help with interpretation of science (e.g., collaboration of New England Fishery Management Council, fishermen and scientists on the sea urchin zone)
- Collaborative research
- Could promote coordination if funding is available
- National commitment and political will
- Improve ecological integrity
- Protect cultural resources
- Increase integrity and legitimacy of MPA concept
- Standard and coherent for talking about MPAs and how they relate to each other
- Consistency
- Develop best practices for specific goals
- Reduce redundancy and increase efficiency
- Shared understanding
- Coordination, collaboration and clearinghouse on resources and expertise that can be shared

- Education:
  - Information on MPAs
  - A centralized location for information
  - Educational and research purposes
  - See gaps in data and information
- Important to work with neighboring countries
  - May facilitate international/cross-boundary MPAs
  - Should work with Canada, may not lead to international coordination
  - U.S. act as an example to other nations
- Organizations will know better what other organizations or regions are doing
- Not starting from scratch
  - Connecting with other areas and regions
- A representative system to decide gaps (e.g. National Estuarine Research Reserves)
- Opportunity to protect full range of biodiversity
- Communication between regions will help coordinate regional management
  - Fisheries that exist between states/regions will be better managed up and down coast
  - Cooperation and sharing experiences (area based management as a tool)
- Helps define terms and build consensus
  - A common terminology
  - From different regions and stakeholder groups
- Awareness-raising/education
- Potential to deliver ecological sustainability
- Can help maintain issue momentum
- Will help build a national constituency for marine environment
- Common definitions and goals to understand marine managed areas purposes and deficiencies toward coordinated resource management
- Evaluate the effectiveness of sites
- Information exchange with existing regulatory authorities and few resources
- Mirror other federal/state partnerships to utilize resources (incentives to be involved)
- Communications not enough
- Need to integrate Endangered Species Act habitat processes (and other legal processes to designate) or adopt/piggy-back on existing processes and determine what to do if they are different
- Some groups (commercial) feel left out of this process (can reach them through education of the science used). Need to reach out sooner and consistently through an outreach plan with continuity so it's effective
- Identify objective of national system (currently seems broad)
- Prefer places where you can see human impacts and absence of humans (reference sites)
- MPAs to prevent complete loss of components of it and bring sites back to what they were 5-10 years ago.

2) What are New England's important marine economic, recreational, and other types of uses and values that you want to be considered in developing a national system of MPAs?

- Recreational uses (e.g., kayaking, wildlife viewing)
- Commercial fishing
  - Local community preservation and protect historical uses
  - Dynamic system (MPAs static?)
  - Displaced effort
  - flexibility
- Tourism, marine-related
  - Ability to remain attractive
  - Working waterfronts – affordable access to marine environment
    - Resource dependent communities
- Recreational fishing (e.g., striped bass, tuna)

- Non-fishing commercial uses
  - E.g., whale watching, wildlife viewing
  - Open ocean and near shore aquaculture
- Recreational diving resources – MPAs could legitimize and advertise and area by adding value and protection (tap into ecotourism opportunities)
- Commercial and recreational fisheries
- Shipwrecks, historical sites and historical values
- Identify areas that should be allowed access versus areas restricted
- MPAs can facilitate maintaining working waterfront and facilitating uses to give a sense of place, regional identity, and options for quality of life
- Unique habitats such as deep water corals
- Promoting research
- “Tidepooling” – educational, research use that want to be addressed
- Coastal aesthetic
- Concerned that fishing community going to be negatively impacted by this
- Diverse fleet in New England – both large and small boats
  - MPAs in front of harbor have much impact on day-boaters (could force out of business because can’t relocate; someone may have to buy them out)
- One reason cited closures way have allows day boat fleet and larger access
  - Need to preserve the way of life of fishermen
- Example of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge: established for safety and many fish caught close to site
- New England is multiple use marine areas
- National system should look at multiple use, competing uses and how to preserve resources while preserving communities
- Ecosystem provides value
- Want to maintain fishing way of life, keep in community and close to home as much as possible
- Opportunity to look at connectivity between resources and also between land and sea (e.g., cumulative impacts)
  - National system is a way to bring these issues to the forefront
- Restoration of stocks and habitats are also important and play a role
- National system is dangerous if it comes out of Washington, DC.
  - Trade-offs that could come out won’t reflect the region
  - Local control is important
  - Need as much local input as possible
- Commercial and recreation fisheries are very important
- Cultural resources are very important
- National system has to look at all marine resources
- National system may provide mechanism to coordinate on endangered species data and information, where right now there are gaps
- George’s Bank has too many haddock and fish are stunted, so it is best to harvest and let fish grow
  - Also could be result of harvest that fish mature at smaller size
- Need to keep in mind the natural longevity of resources
- No one [kind of] MPA fits every region
- Skeptical that [a system of MPAs] can be done on a national level
- Need civic engagement to get recommendations from the local level
- Fishing heritage is important to recognize in New England, but is difficult because it conflicts
- Important to always look first ant the local communities and go up from there
- Standard should be a bottom up process
- Study using fishermen’s log books on Scotian Shelf for the 1880’s show that there were 1.3 million metric tons of cod biomass then
- Preserving fishing heritage is most important ocean use
- Restoring fish stocks not as important, need connection with ocean use

- Small fishing ports are decimated in New England
- If MPAs caused further decrease in ports, get opposite effect of massive offshore catcher-processor fishing fleet (i.e., a pressure shift)
- MPAs going overboard could out the local guy out of business
- Need to try to reach smaller, grassroots organizations
- Scientific research
- Tourism and economy
  - Should be some untouched areas and some less-developed access areas
- Fishing: commercial and recreational
  - Aquaculture: inshore and offshore
- Windfarms and other renewable energy issues: discussion and education
- Existence value
- Ecosystem services values
- Aesthetics
- Whale watching/ecotourism and recreational boating
- Uses: oil and gas, shipping, liquefied natural gas
- Spiritual: sense of place
- Cultural and traditional uses and values, including historical
  - Development/working waterfront
  - Native American fishing areas
- Education: field trips
- Lobstering (the main livelihood of Maine towns) and fishing industry – loss can lead to job loss and impacts on families (personal impact) – shouldn't underestimate this value
- Estuarine resources and freshwater interface
- Cultural definitions – Maine water marks are different from other states
- Polluting industries that affect estuaries and the species, along with water quality (how much of a reach will the national system have?)
- Avoid harm provision – how does it fit in? Use it for clout? Regulatory through and interstate body?
- Networks could have political influence – consider as a part of the process
- Look at main species (i.e., herring) that are important to others
- Provide stability to marine transportation system
- Tourism will be more important, especially in state government
- Benefits of healthy ecosystem vs. national system

3) What are New England's important natural and cultural resources that you think a national system of MPAs should conserve and sustain for future generations?

- Healthy marine-related communities (human and natural)
- Commercial/sport fishermen are important constituency for marine environment.
- Maritime heritage
- Abundant resources
- Preserve biodiversity
- Sustainable resource use
- Broad range of constituency – they just don't know it.
- Orderly disposition of uses (new and existing)
- Tidepools
- Biodiversity
- Shipwrecks
- Coastal aesthetic
- Seal rookery
- Unique habitats
- Uses and resources are very link, hard to distinguish and there is a need to blur the line as interconnections are important

- Cultural heritage is tied to quality of resources
- Geologically dynamic areas, such as shoals, edge communities, ecotones, and boreal species
- Endemic species or those with restricted ranges
- Rocky substrates
- Marine alga
- Natural → habitats and biodiversity
- Renewable → wind/tide, etc.
- Protected islands: are many in Maine → use sustainably (Maine Island Trails)
- Nursery grounds → lobsters
  - Fishery nursing grounds and protection of breeding areas
  - Spawning areas (Some Maine MPAs already protect these areas): help to recognize gaps in this
- Protect many ecosystems
  - Wetlands, tide pools, dunes, etc.
- Watersheds provide habitat for some species – connectivity of system, species and habitats: coordinate management
- Corals – deepwater
- Groundfish – preserving traditional fishing fleets and culture (not just large boats)
  - Lobstering culture: local involvement is critical
  - MPA cannot protect a local fleet itself, but us as a tool
  - Underwater geological formations can be protected, e.g., seamounts
- Plants/endangered species
- Shipwrecks
- Pelagic birds/marine mammals
  - Endangered
  - Charismatic megafauna
- Air and water quality: power plant pollution
- Undeveloped coastal islands (e.g., Maine)
- Marine birds (e.g., puffins)
- Keystone species (e.g., sandlance)
- Important species (e.g., marine worms)
- Important feeding areas and spawning grounds
- History and tradition of fishing families and communities
  - Capacity to fish or ability to fish
- Unexplored archeological sites/indigenous peoples
- Water quality
- Biodiversity, species richness
- Cold water corals
- Lots of habitat to identify
- International trans-boundaries
- Interstate provinces on various issues – use as model (like Gulf of Maine Council) – acknowledge in framework

4) How should NOAA and Department of the Interior continue to work with stakeholders like you in New England to develop the vision for the national system?

- Test-case to consider approaches
- Lessons learned from other areas
  - What types of resources are being protected elsewhere? What is unique here?
- Elements of case study
  - Process
  - Reason/motivation for process
  - Types of resources
- Broader outreach to other regions bigger than Gulf of Maine



- Marine Policy Program at University of Rhode island as a venue for these discussions
- Provide forums up and down state [Maine]
  - Train the trainer programs to take discussions up and down state, with industry, refuge, and scientist hosts
  - Community level approach
- Develop on-going dialogue that is a part of everyday work and processes (e.g., lobster town meeting structure)
- Interviews and newspaper coverage (front page)
- Gulf of Maine Research Institute – used to visit towns regarding technical upgrades
- Increase knowledge before they get to the meetings
- Institutionalize the system of input with regional representation
- Ongoing process at all scales
- Institutionalize lines of communication
- Put a local face on national efforts
- Identify those at the local level who can carry the charge to give a sense of ownership
- Rhode Island and other New England states
- Maine fishermen’s forum
- Boat shows
- Local libraries
- Educator’s associations – Gulf of Maine Marine Educators Association
- Gulf of Maine Council
- Regional Association for Research in the Gulf of Maine (RARGOM)
- Saltwater Conference
- Wood’s Hole Oceanographic Institution
- Museums and Aquariums
- National Estuarine Research Reserve meetings (science meetings)
- Center for Coastal Studies forums in Provincetown
- Chat rooms (e.g., recreational fishing, etc.)
- Island Institute
- College of Atlantic groups
- Marine Environmental Research Institute (MERI)
- Lobstermen’s Association
- Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
- Coastal Conservation Association
- Advisory Councils
- Fish Expo
- Coastal Advocate’s Network (Boston: Conservation Law Foundation)
- Universities
- Mixed stakeholder groups
- Going to get more genuine information if reach diverse audiences
- Too many [MPA] processes going on
- Feeling that going to fish until someone tells that can’t is a common perspective
- Recreational fishermen came up with freedom to fish [act]
- Clarification from Congress on who is in charge, then have a chain of command and know who to talk to
- Commercial fishery management areas are so complicated, so easy to be in the wrong area
- Too many ‘Dear permit holder’ letters
- Don’t mix apples and oranges → tropical systems are different than temperate (e.g, fish move enormous distances in temperate areas with temperature)
- Creating MPAs with fish conservation as a goal is complex
  - Need to look at where fish summer and winter
- Need to keep going to people and ask for innovative ideas
  - Install vessel monitoring systems on whales? (may be more practical than creating closures)

- Need to find innovative ways to solve problems other than closures
- Science models are only as good as the data inputted
  - Models have problems and many are disputed
- Fish caught should be landed
- [In] New England there is a need to protect working waterfronts as areas for fishing heritage (these are under much pressure)
- Fisherman – “fishermen forum” in Maine
  - Time of year matters for meetings with stakeholders
- Meeting format important – large group or smaller dialogues/educational methods, creative methods, etc. – “appropriate meetings”
- Extension specialists (Sea Grant)
- Training from agencies
- Coordinate with fishing guides and dive guides
  - Charterboat association
- Scientists
  - Ties to communities
  - Disseminate information
  - Attend ‘big’ scientific conferences, e.g., Ecological Society of America
  - Train the trainer programs
- To general public (not just traditional user groups)
  - Local new/celebrities
  - Aquariums
  - Libraries
  - Universities
  - Public service announcements
  - Public schools
  - Teachers
  - Environmentalists and activists
  - Top down and bottom up are both important
- Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Non-fishery regulatory agencies: communication and dissemination (e.g., EPA)
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission involvement
- Better understanding of regional coordination approach/strategy
- Appears focus in on fishing-related MPAs
  - Need to focus on other areas/topics
- Regional land protection plan
- Connect Marine Managed Areas Inventory to land-based protected areas
- Follow up needed on how this public input will be used
- Hear voices of different sectors (and sub-sectors) and weigh them equally
- Build partnerships between conservation organizations (government and non-government) and fishing communities.
- Have regional vision before national vision
- Regional ocean council needed. What role will national ocean council (Cabinet-level Commission on Ocean Policy) play?
- Clarity of MPA Center in region and retention of state control
- Work bottom up – with existing authorities. Use relationships built on collaborative research and education (science and fishermen – cooperative research). It’s a 2-way street. They must be engaged.
- Capture public input through town/community level meetings (this regional meeting is ok, but really need to educate at a smaller scale)
- Regional informational MPA center in New England
- Create stewardship within non-traditional audiences
- Coordinated government efforts needed!!
- Use educational programs to build partnerships between traditional and non-traditional audiences
- Process needed for updating inventory – education must be ongoing

- MPA Center needs a “sound bite” message
- Clarify ‘cultural’ – shipwrecks or communities. Should include both and match the classifications used.
- Establish regional committees to focus on local stakeholders – regional directors that NOAA and the Department of the Interior work with might help reach groups that feel under represented and help identify educational opportunities
- Existing NOAA and Department of the Interior outreach coordinators can help with education
- Existing regional groups should elect their own representatives (not be appointed by NOAA/Department of the Interior)
- Keep having stakeholder meetings like this one
- Partner/identify existing groups that NOAA and Department of the Interior can address
- Some industries should serve as advisors with understanding that MPAs need to protect sustainable resources
- Resources as focus of protection

#### 5) Other comments?

- Federal coordination on MPA, energy, and other emerging issues. Non exists - start now. What is the role of states? How does policy keep up with technology?
- Not clear where “cultural resources” fit in three themes: sustainable production; natural heritage; cultural heritage. Often the three are linked.
- How do you distinguish among regional cultural heritage definitions? Will be defined differently region to region.