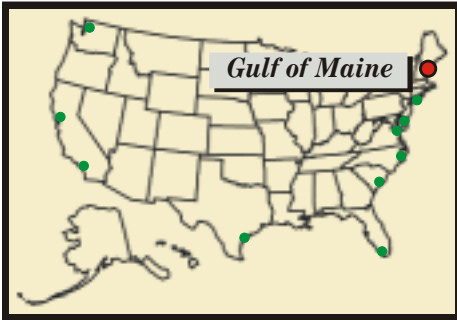




U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Coastal Program

Success in the Gulf of Maine



Caring for Our Coastal Habitats



*GIS maps provide valuable tools for resource managers.
Photo by Jennifer Greiner/USFWS*



Head-of-tide dam on Sheepscot River, one of many small dams identified as barriers to Atlantic salmon migration in Maine rivers. Photo by Jennifer Greiner/USFWS

Building Strong Partnerships

The Service's Gulf of Maine Coastal Program protects and restores economically, recreationally and ecologically important coastal fish and wildlife habitat through partnerships in the Gulf of Maine watershed. Using existing biological data, state-of-the-art computer mapping and management capabilities, Gulf of Maine Program biologists analyze data, identify and map important fish and wildlife habitat, and recommend and implement habitat protection and restoration projects. These biologists work with interested parties—Federal and state agencies, statewide conservation groups, local land trusts, fishermen's interest groups, industry representatives, and willing landowners—to catalyze action by providing outreach assistance in collaborating with decision-makers, identifying Federal funding opportunities and helping partners successfully compete for grants, sharing biological and habitat restoration expertise, and providing partners with access to Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping capability and products.

On-the-Ground Results

The Gulf of Maine Program has focused its efforts on protecting and restoring coastal wetlands, shorebird nesting islands, and riverine habitat for Atlantic salmon and other migratory fish. From 1994 to 1998, using a non-regulatory partnership approach, the Gulf of Maine Program has played a key role in:

- protecting more than 10,000 acres through fee or easement acquisition, including 26 coastal nesting islands, 35 wetlands and 12.5 river-miles of Atlantic salmon habitat,
- restoring 12 coastal nesting islands, plugging ditches and resizing culverts on coastal wetlands,
- removing obstructions (including small dams), and repairing fish passage structures on 15 river-miles used by migratory salmon, and
- leveraging more than \$17.5 million in habitat protection and restoration funding.

Partnership Tips

What other, less tangible things does Gulf of Maine Program “bring to the table” to make our partnerships work? Here are some lessons learned:

Respect each other, personally and professionally

Understand individual and organizational strengths and weaknesses

Look for intersecting interests

Don't make work for partners that their organizations won't support

Bring tangible goods (money and knowledge) to the partnership

Be generous sharing information

Recognize that it'll take time

Delegate workload and establish accountability procedures

Have “broad shoulders”

Be generous giving credit to others

Focus on an overall goal that everyone endorses

There's no real cookbook. Be flexible!



Key Ingredients for Partnerships

By integrating collective strengths and maintaining a flexible, non-regulatory and voluntary approach, the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program and its partners are turning their ambitious conservation agenda into reality. “Our habitat protection and restoration success stories are about the best in partnerships,” says Project Leader Stewart Fefer. “By working together, we are accomplishing goals that none of our organizations could achieve independently.” The Coastal Program supplies four tangible commodities in building its partnerships: biological expertise, GIS mapping and habitat prioritization skills, outreach capability, and knowledge of Federal funding sources. Partners provide the other key ingredients for success. State agencies, for example, can provide biological data and may offer long-term management of protected lands. Statewide conservation groups provide legal expertise regarding conservation options for private landowners and frequently identify potential acquisition sites and contact landowners. Local conservation groups can provide site-specific knowledge and are often best suited to approach individuals and businesses in their community who might be receptive to conservation opportunities. Local groups can also offer long-term stewardship for protected or restored lands and waters. All partners provide matching funds for Federal grants.

Little Thrumpcap Island, one of 26 coastal shorebird nesting islands protected through the joint efforts of the Gulf of Maine Program and its partners. USFWS photo

“I want to highlight the important role that the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program plays in making our partnerships for conservation succeed...(their) technical assistance has led to dozens of cooperative efforts to protect and restore nationally important fish and wildlife habitat. At Maine Coast Heritage Trust ... we depend on the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program to help guide our land protection initiatives toward the protection of high value fish and wildlife habitat and to assist us with federal grants for habitat protection and restoration.”

Jay Espy, Executive Director, Maine Coast Heritage Trust and President of the Land Trust Alliance