

REGIONAL OCEAN GOVERNANCE: PROGRESS TOWARD ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT IN SELECTED MULTI-STATE APPROACHES

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The U.S Commission on Ocean Policy, Pew Oceans Commission, and the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative have recommended establishing regional ocean governance initiatives as an implementation approach for ecosystem-based management. Several multi-jurisdictional approaches to addressing ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes issues existed before the Commissions' reports, but since the release of the recommendations, states around the nation have formed a new generation of regional initiatives to address shared issues. In addition, in recent years experts have developed further guidance on how marine ecosystem-based management might be most effectively implemented at various scales. Many of the new generation of regional ocean governance approaches have been in operation for several years, and an update on their status, key challenges, and progress in moving toward an ecosystem-based approach in light of more detailed guidance is timely.

The purpose of this panel is to explore the progress being made and challenges faced by selected multi-state regional ocean governance approaches, each of which has identified its own set of priority issues and processes for coordination and collaboration. The initiatives discussed will include the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, and the Northeast Regional Ocean Council. Panelists will include representatives from these initiatives, as well as staff from Environmental Law Institute, which anticipates releasing in early 2009 *Marine Ecosystem-Based Management: Implementation Handbook*, a guide for managers and decision makers that provides a compelling framework for this discussion. The panel will be moderated by Laura Cantral, Senior Mediator at Meridian Institute and Director of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative.

The panel will set the stage for further discussions at the Café on Regional Ocean Governance, which will use elements of the panel discussion to further explore the challenges faced by a broader suite of multi-jurisdictional approaches that cover various scales and stages of experience.

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