Ocean Planning Committee (OPC) focus areas

• Coordination and Information Sharing for Ocean Planning Issues

• Best Practices for Ocean Permitting and Management

• Northeast Ocean Data Portal
Coordination and Information Sharing

Offshore Wind Transmission Webinar Series

• Recordings and materials for Jan/Feb webinars: https://neoceanplanning.org/issues/offshore-transmission/

• Potential next steps:
  • Informal discussions between energy/coastal/resource agencies
  • Informational webinars - subsea cable maintenance, siting/installation issues, hard substrate installation, drilling fluids, EMF considerations
  • Data to support cable siting – seafloor habitat; distribution of species sensitive to cable installations
  • National outreach on regional transmission issues
Coordination and Information Sharing

Aquaculture


• Potential upcoming webinar on federal agency permitting responsibilities
DRAFT Best Practices for Ocean Permitting and Management Processes

1. Outreach and Engagement
   - Interactive maps depicting boundaries of proposed agency actions on the Northeast Ocean Data Portal
   - Guidance on public notification about projects
   - Summary of resources to learn more about ongoing projects and related maritime operations
DRAFT Best Practices for Ocean Permitting and Management Processes

2. Agency and Interjurisdictional Coordination

- Identify emerging issues and provide opportunities via NROC for coordination and information sharing
- Identify opportunities to enhance federal agency consultation with tribal governments
- Identify opportunities to enhance coordination between federal and state governments
- Identify opportunities to enhance coordination among federal agencies
3. Use of Data and Information

- Develop communication materials identifying data sources and tools to inform decision making and how they can be used at different stages of the regulatory process
- Integrate data collected by project proponents into regional data products and provide access to data collections, as appropriate
- Engage topical experts to inform data requirements and review draft products
- Permitting and licensing agencies encourage use of Northeast Ocean Data Portal as one tool to inform project outreach, coordination, and pre-application materials
4. Pre-Application

• Develop web pages for project proponents to obtain guidance on pre-application, use of data, and stakeholder engagement

• During a pre-application meeting, create a shared understanding of the regulatory process, including consultations, stakeholder engagement, and timelines
Northeast Ocean Data Portal

- Source of over 5,000 map products showing the footprint and changes over time for economic activities and ecological resources

- Products derived from federal, state, tribal, research/academic, and stakeholder sources

- Informed and vetted by regional experts, agencies, and stakeholders

- Multiple ways to obtain data and information
Ocean Activities and Economics Themes

- Administrative & management areas
- Commercial fishing
- Aquaculture
- Energy
- Marine transportation & maritime
- National security
- Recreation
- Culture
- Socioeconomic

Ocean Resources and Conditions Themes

- Marine mammals & sea turtles
- Fish
- Birds
- Habitat & other marine life
- Oceanography
- Bathymetry
- Geology, sand & sediment
- Water quality
Current Issues

- Quick access to maps and information for agency actions and proposed projects

- Currently:
  - Offshore wind
  - Offshore disposal (archived)
  - Deep sea corals

- Adding:
  - Marine transportation – proposed anchorages; port access route studies (PARS)
  - USACE public notices
  - Aquaculture?
Energy & Infrastructure

- Existing infrastructure - cables, pipelines, LNG terminals, onshore transmission

- Planning areas:
  - Wind energy areas and leases
  - Offshore wind project footprint and turbine layout when project gets to certain stage of regulatory process
  - Also pending hydrokinetic projects

- Directory of offshore wind leases, projects, their status, and links to important information and public meetings / comment opportunities

- Reviewed and informed by states, federal agencies, and industry
Commercial fishing

- Current data:
  - Fishing (Communities at Sea based on VTR) and fishing vessel transit (VMS) activity by fishery and gear type
  - Fisheries management areas

- Recent and pending additions:
  - More comprehensive set of management areas
  - Lobster data from Maine

- Recommendations from project with RODA
  - Updating VMS to match fishing season
  - Considering how to integrate NMFS Fishing Footprints
  - Potential reorganization of all data by fishery
Marine Transportation

- Ports, navigation, vessel traffic, and proposed areas and studies
- Monthly vessel traffic by vessel type and year (2013-2019); 2020 in progress
  - Cargo
  - Passenger
  - Tug-tow
  - Fishing
  - Tanker
  - Pleasure craft
- Outreach to USCG, NOAA, BOEM, port operators groups, and safety and security forums

Gulf of Maine Floating Offshore Wind Research Array Area of Interest with 2019 All Vessel Traffic, Monthly
Recreation

- Recreational boating, SCUBA, whale watching, coastal recreation areas

- Pending updates to SCUBA and whale watching activity based on feedback from industry webinars in 2020
**Project outputs**

1. Standards for a set of specific habitat data products relative to the various phases of offshore wind development and operation (pre-application, environmental impact review, monitoring)

2. Improved understanding of habitat distributions across the region

3. Use Northeast Ocean Data Portal to disseminate standard set of intermediate scale habitat data products for each project
NROC Seafloor Habitat Data Work Group

Jan 22: Work Group Kickoff Meeting

Feb – April: Discussions with Work Group members to identify specific benefits of the project to offshore wind companies and agencies and potential mechanisms for data sharing

Next: Articulate specific benefits, potential standard data types/products, examples of how high-resolution data would be used/integrated

Project: Developing standard approaches to synthesizing, visualizing, and disseminating high-resolution acoustic and imagery data to advance benthic habitat mapping in the wind energy areas of the Northeast

Funding: To INSPIRE Environmental from: MassCEC, BOEM, RI DEM
North Atlantic Right Whale
Monthly predicted density

Habitat management areas + ME/NH trawl and NOAA trawl
American lobster + Redfish biomass NOAA trawl

Surf scoter fall migration

Marine Life
NROC-MARCO Marine Life Work Groups
Marine life Data & Analysis Team (MDAT)

Coordination with variety of active marine life-focused work (e.g., NYSERDA State of the Science Work Groups, BOEM Environmental Studies Program)

New data & updates in 2021

Current distributions and species range shifts

- Updating right whale, sea turtle data
- Updating fish trawl products, new historical products
- New avian movement/migration data products
- New products for sensitivity to stressors:
  - Cetaceans and climate change
  - Cetaceans and ship strikes
  - Fish and submarine cables
Funding from EPA Region 1, Phil Colarusso lead

Methods

- EPA Region 1 coordinates expert work groups
- Apply generalized carbon stock values or multipliers for eelgrass and salt marsh habitats in various environmental settings with the goal of developing a blue carbon “heat map”.

Goals, by…

- Updated regional composite seagrass layer and historical seagrass layer **APRIL 2021**
- Updated regional composite coastal wetlands / tidal marsh vegetation layer **APRIL 2021**
- Generalized blue carbon “heat map” for eelgrass and salt marsh habitats **FALL 2021**

**APRIL 2021**

**FALL 2021**

DRAFT / PROOF OF CONCEPT maps for work group review; include high and low marsh vegetation only