

The logo graphic for NROC features a stylized map of the Northeast United States coastline in white, set against a background of overlapping blue and dark blue circular shapes.

NROC

Northeast Regional
Ocean Council

Work Plan for IIJA Funding

January 4, 2023

Context

- NROC has operated since 2005 with three Committees that reflect shared regional priorities
 - Coastal Hazards Resilience
 - Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health
 - Ocean Planning
- NROC hosts many crosscutting initiatives, including the Northeast Ocean Data Portal, Integrated Sentinel Monitoring Network, & the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind



Context

- NROC develops work plans every two years; the most recent work plans are the basis for the projects that were submitted for IJA funding
- Important to note that many subcommittee activities and projects are likely relevant to multiple committees and NROC priorities
- In year 1, staff will work with the committees to update the work plan for five years to ensure years 3 through 5 build on activities and investments in years 1 and 2



Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee Projects

1. *Establish a water level sensor community of practice in New England*
 - Host a workshop including a showcase of water level sensors and networks and a regional discussion on sensor requirements and data management
 - Develop a fact sheet on sensor types and deployment tips
 - Deploy sensors across the region
2. *Advancing living shorelines in New England (Phase 3)*
 - Host a forum to consider regulatory challenges and mitigation opportunities
 - Host a workshop focusing on habitat tradeoffs of living shoreline projects
 - Assess the success of pilot living shoreline projects; share results protocols, monitoring metrics, and best practices
 - Conduct outreach with landowners, engineers, and communities

Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee Projects

3. *Develop approaches for integrating updated sea level rise projections into planning tools and policies*
 - Host a roundtable on updated SLR projections and planning guidance
 - Host a NOAA training related to new SLR projections

Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health Committee Projects

1. *Update the ISMN Science and Implementation Plan*
 - Regularly convene the ISMN Oversight Committee
 - Inventory and review monitoring, data development, and reporting for each sentinel indicator to better understand progress developing the ISMN and where additional effort may be necessary
 - Identify other regional or basin wide monitoring and assessment programs to better understand existing efforts in the region and where additional coordination may be necessary
 - Produce a report that summarizes progress developing the ISMN, identifies priorities for the next three to five years, and recommends updates to the ISMN Science and Implementation Plan

Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health Committee Projects

2. *Advance mapping and monitoring of coastal vegetation and estimates of blue carbon stores*

- Continue to convene an expert coastal vegetation and blue carbon work group
- Update coastal vegetation and blue carbon products on the Northeast Ocean Data Portal
- Develop a pilot retrospective analysis of blue carbon change over time
- Host a workshop to identify additional regional sentinel sites and consistent monitoring protocols for coastal vegetation already being applied in the region such as SeagrassNET; develop monitoring standards for sentinel sites resulting from the workshop
- Provide support for data collection and monitoring at sentinel sites

Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health Committee Projects

3. *Develop a regional system for monitoring ocean and coastal acidification*
 - Organize and host regional workshops and webinars and develop a regional OCA monitoring plan
 - Integrate OCA data into the Northeast Ocean Data Portal and the NERACOOS Ocean Climate Tool to provide spatial and temporal perspectives of ocean acidification and change over time
 - Establish a challenge fund to accelerate implementation of the regional OCA monitoring plan
 - Initiate new monitoring activities, including microhabitat characterization in the rocky intertidal zone and utilizing fishing vessels as ships of opportunity (SOOPs)

Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health Committee Projects

4. *Identify high priority areas for comprehensive seafloor mapping and advance mapping of those areas*
 - Convene the HCOM to continue identifying high priority areas for high resolution multibeam bathymetry and seafloor characterization via video and sediment collection; develop a plan for mapping and conducting seafloor surveys in those areas.
 - Advance comprehensive seafloor mapping of a high priority area of the GOM

Ocean Planning Committee Projects

1. *Advance interjurisdictional coordination and the use of best practices in ocean planning*
 - Support interjurisdictional coordination through regular meetings of the OPC
 - Provide information and opportunities for coordination around specific ocean planning, regulatory, and management activities in New England
 - Finalize and communicate a set of Best Practices for Ocean Permitting and Management Processes

Ocean Planning Committee Projects

2. *Upgrade and enhance the Northeast Ocean Data Portal website, map interfaces, data services, and IT infrastructure*
 - Upgrade Portal technology, including back-end data storage/management architecture and front-end mapping functions and tools
 - Redesign and modernize Portal website
 - Produce and implement a five-year plan for consistent Portal technology and website updates
 - Advance the Gulf of Maine Portal to support offshore wind planning

Ocean Planning Committee Projects

3. *Update marine life data on the Northeast Ocean Data Portal and conduct new analyses that assess changes over time and inform the wildlife and habitat components of the ISMN*
 - Continue annual marine life updates, including products derived from the most recent cetacean and avian models
 - Develop new sea turtle products, leveraging soon-to-be completed modeling efforts by NOAA AMAPPS and the US Navy
 - Develop products for new species groups in response to management needs
 - Integrate data products for focal fish species from the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment into the Portal
 - Develop innovative products showing change over time, distribution and abundance at varying scales, and integrate marine life products with the work of the ISMN and RWSC (in addition to their availability via the Portal)

Ocean Planning Committee Projects

4. *Update and reorganize the commercial fishing data on the Northeast Ocean Data Portal*
 - Organize a work group composed of state, federal, tribal, and fishery management council members to inform and review portal development
 - Continue developing VMS derived data products, integrate the fishing footprints data in the Portal, and update and maintain a library of fisheries management data products
 - Identify new data needs and, if possible, develop or integrate those products. This includes new products such as depicting the directionality of tow, heading or bearing, transit, the Loran-C navigation system, and others identified by the industry and agencies
 - Reorganize data products per industry recommendations to better depict fishing areas, vessel operations, and management for each fishery

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RWSC

Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative
for Offshore Wind