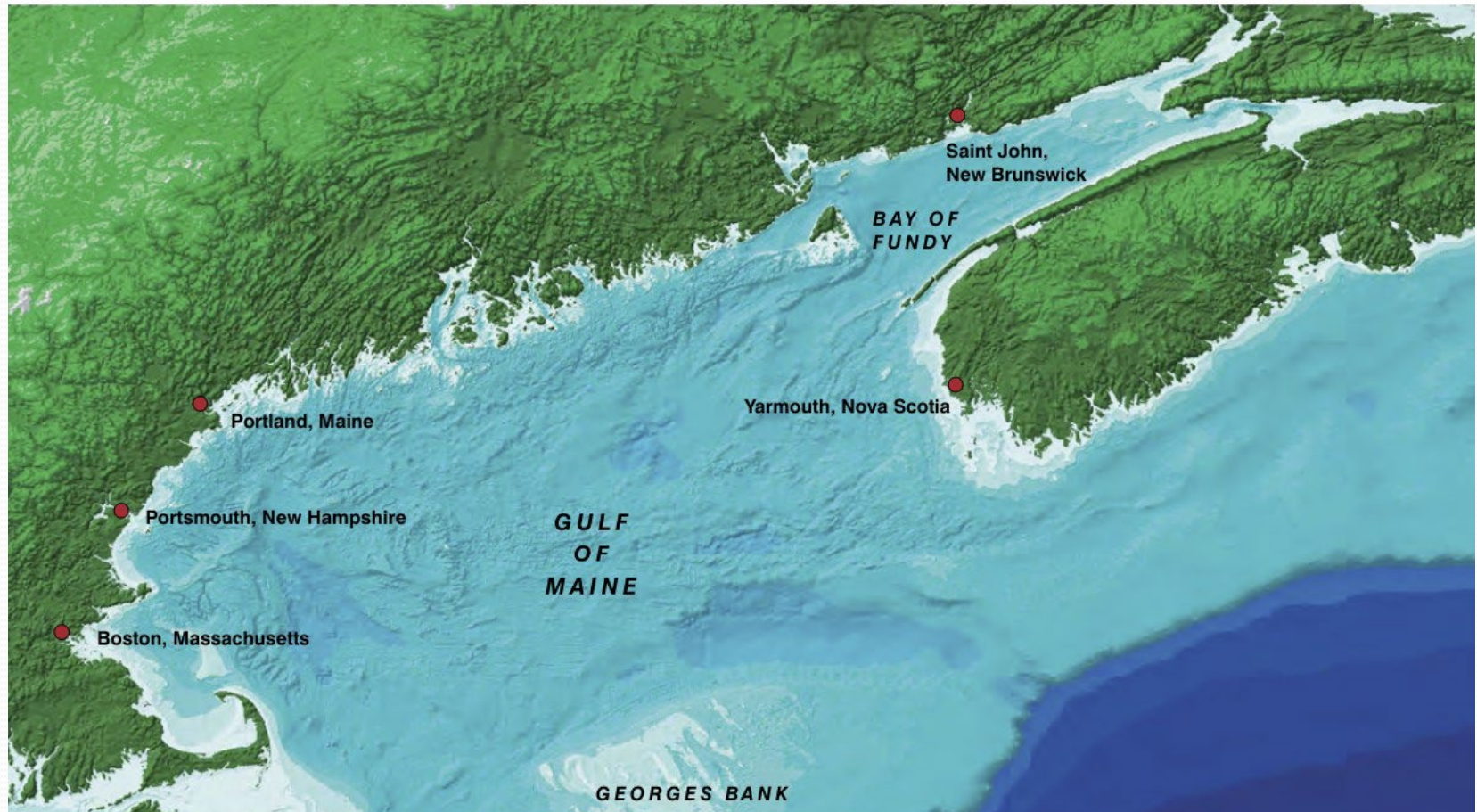




## **Gulf of Maine Council Update NROC Meeting**

Joan LeBlanc, Executive Director  
US Association of Delegates to the Gulf of Maine Council  
November 13, 2024

# Focus Area: Gulf of Maine Watershed



# United States / Canada Partnership

**2024-2026 Secretariat:** NH DES / USGS

## **State / Provincial Jurisdictional Agencies**

New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government (CA)

Nova Scotia Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (CA)

Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (US)

Maine Department of Marine Resources (US)

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (US)

## **Federal Partners**

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.S. Department of Interior

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

*Their efforts are enhanced by Canadian and US scientific advisors and non-governmental, First Nations, tribal, and academic representatives*

# Recent Priority Issues

- Promoting climate and coastal resilience
- Achieving 30 x 30 marine conservation goals
- Sustainable offshore wind development
- Protecting marine habitat & endangered species such as the North Atlantic Right Whale
- Addressing the environmental problem of marine debris





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

## *Regional Collaboration to Address Marine Debris in the Gulf of Maine*

### Funding (USD):

- NOAA: \$367,839
- Match: \$522,805
- Total: \$890,644

### Project Period:

- October 2021 – July 2024



United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USCMA)

# US/Canada Partnership

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment

## **CANADA**

- Huntsman Marine Science Centre
- Nova Scotia Beach Garbage Awareness
- New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government
- Nova Scotia Department of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada

## **US**

- Surfrider Foundation
- Center for Coastal Studies
- Urban Harbors Institute, University of Massachusetts
- Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation
- Maine Division of Marine Resources
- New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
- Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

# Marine Debris Removal

- **552 cleanups** across Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick
- **57,343 lbs.** of debris removed
- **4,673 volunteers**
- **An additional 21,780 lbs.** of rope collected for recycling, repurposing, or disposal
- **7,549 acres** of coastal habitat restored





# Outreach and Education

- **667 students + 484 adults** through formal education
- **17,181 youth and adults** through informal education
- Hosted **5 US / Canada International Forums**
- Panel presentations and poster session at **7th International Marine Debris Conference** in South Korea
- Outreach to **thousands of recreational boaters** at New England Boat Show (2022, 2023, and 2024)





# Example of business engagement

*Signed up ocean-friendly restaurants*



**WE ARE AN  
Ocean Friendly  
Restaurant**

To learn more about the Surfrider Foundation  
and Ocean Friendly Restaurants, visit  
**[SURFRIDER.ORG/OFR](https://surfrider.org/ofr)**

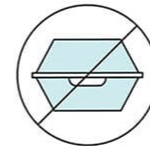


## Mandatory Criteria

ALL 7 REQUIRED



**Only reusable  
foodware for  
onsite dining**



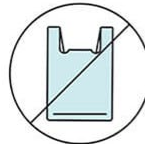
**No expanded  
polystyrene  
(aka Styrofoam)**



**Paper straws only  
upon request**



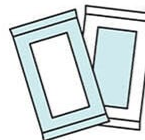
**No beverages  
sold in plastic  
bottles**



**No plastic bags  
for takeout**

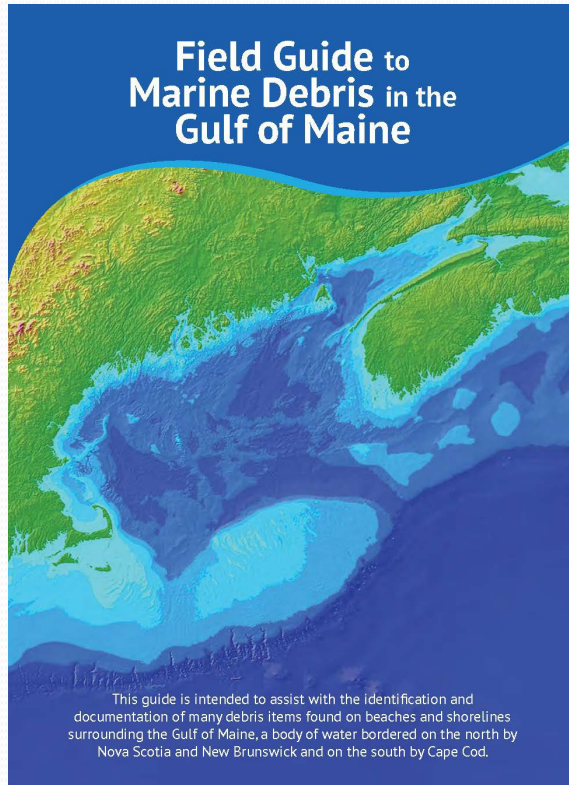


**Proper recycling  
practices**



**Single-use utensils, straws, condiments,  
and accessory items only upon request**

# New resource for future efforts



## M.V.T. (Most Valuable Trash)

4

### Lobster Trap ID Tags

Rigid plastic bands in various colors, each stamped with unique information (year of issue, license #, state, fishing zone). Please hold and send to CCS, or send a clear photo of full tag. Data are used to support the development of new trap ID methods.

Contact CCS to report or send tags: [ccs@coastalstudies.org](mailto:ccs@coastalstudies.org)



Link to the guide: <https://www.gulfofmaine.org/public/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Field-Guide-to-Marine-Debris-in-the-Gulf-of-Maine.pdf>

# Key Lesson Learned (1 of 2)

- *International collaboration is critical for protecting cross-boundary waters from marine debris*
  - Consider ecosystem-based impacts
  - Track movement of debris across jurisdictional and national boundaries
  - Share tools and strategies across jurisdictional and national boundaries
  - Leverage additional funding and impact



*Explosive shock tubing found throughout the Gulf of Maine*



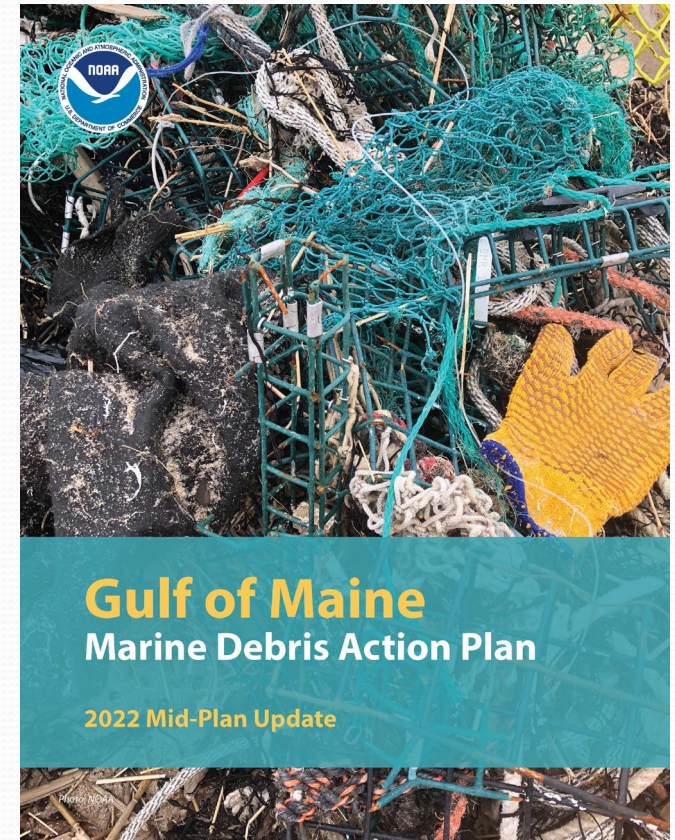
# Key Lesson Learned (2 of 2)

- ***International collaboration is critical for protecting cross-boundary waters from marine debris***
  - Develop regional plans, strategies, and tools for removal, prevention, outreach, and education
  - Working across sectors and communities (business, fishing industry, schools, artists, boaters, underserved communities, academia, government, etc.)
  - Build lasting relationships



# Next Steps

- Partner with NOAA and US/Canada organizations to implement the Gulf of Maine Marine Debris Action Plan
- Provide a forum for US / Canada sharing of tools, approaches, programs, and strategies for addressing marine debris in the Gulf of Maine



# GOMC Upcoming

- GOMC Virtual Meeting, December 4, 2024
- 2025 Awards Program – Call for Nominations, December, 2024
- GOMC 2-Day Meeting and Awards Ceremon May 28-29, 2025, St. Andrews, NB



# Thank You!

Joan LeBlanc, Executive Director  
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Gulf of Maine Council website: <https://www.gulfofmaine.org/public/gulf-of-maine-council-on-the-marine-environment/>

Marine Debris Project website: <https://www.gulfofmaine.org/public/marine-debris/>

