



Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Transmission Planning

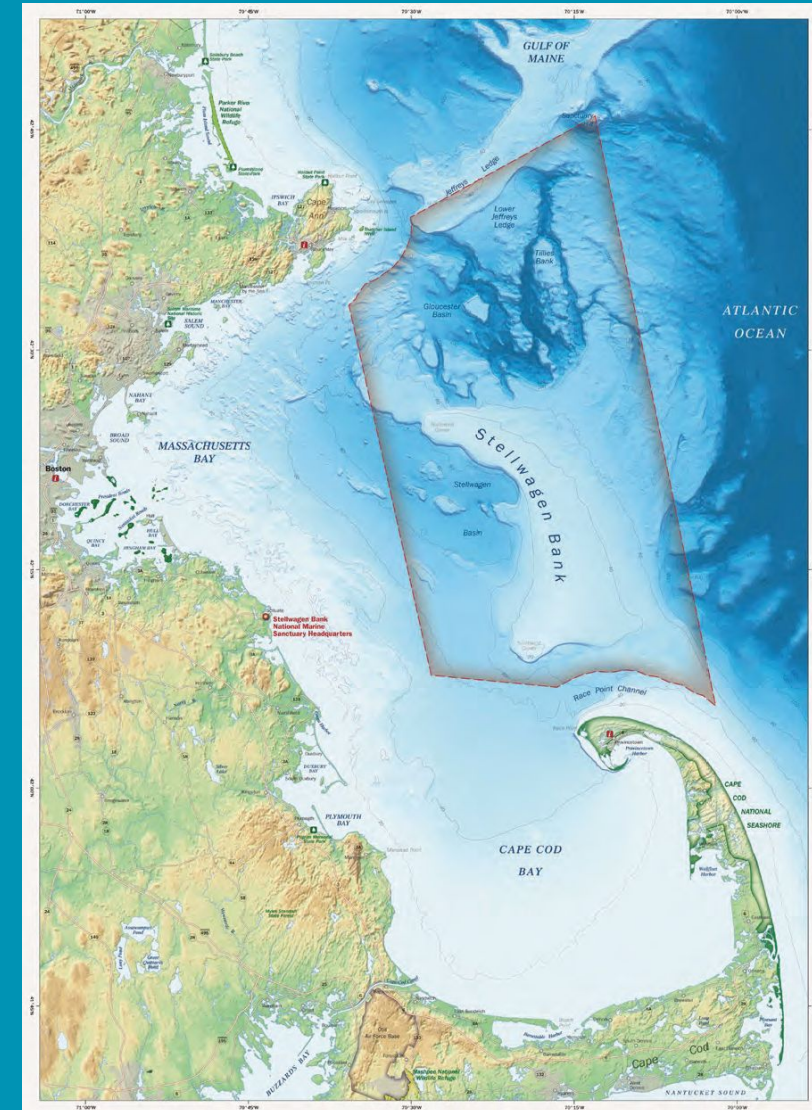
NROC Transmission Working Group
November 12, 2024

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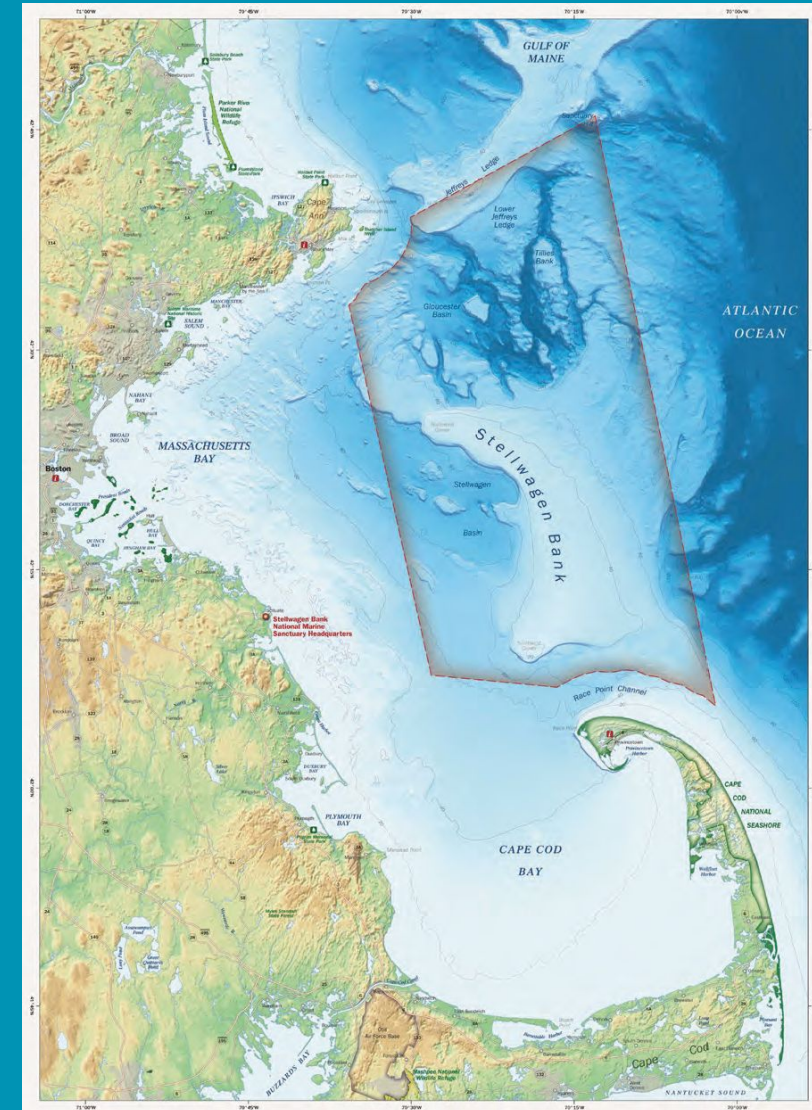
James Morris, NOAA/NCCOS



National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA)



- National Marine Sanctuaries Act passed in 1972
 - Designate as sanctuaries areas of special national significance
 - Facilitate to the extent compatible with the primary objective of resource protection, all public and private uses.
- Congress designated Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary in 1992 as part of NMSA reauthorization.
 - Lies entirely in federal waters
 - Protects marine mammals and habitats, maritime and cultural heritage

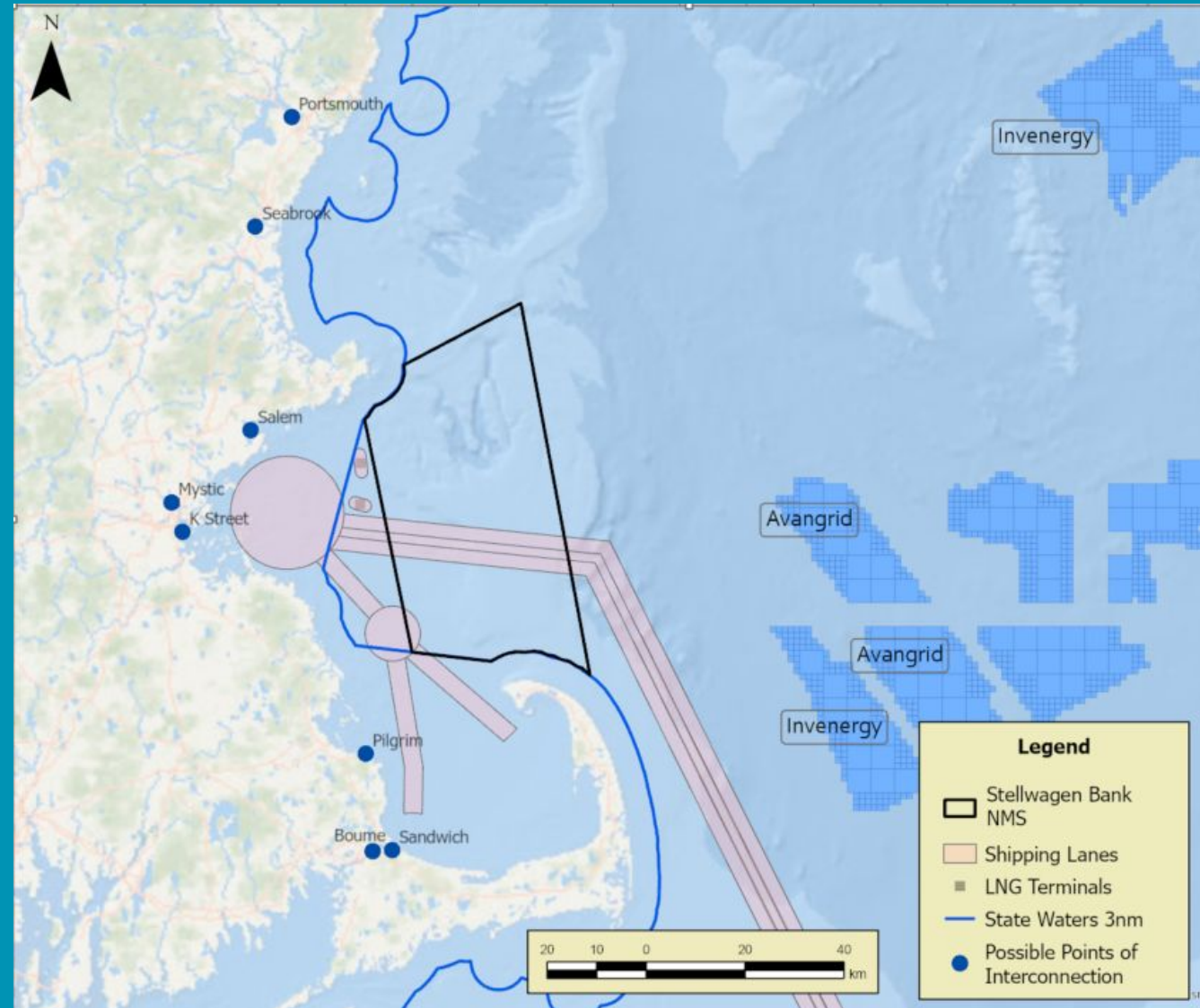


Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS)



Why is SBNMS engaging in transmission planning?

SBNMS is located between the Gulf of Maine lease areas and the most likely shoreside points of interconnection.



Stellwagen Mapping Initiative



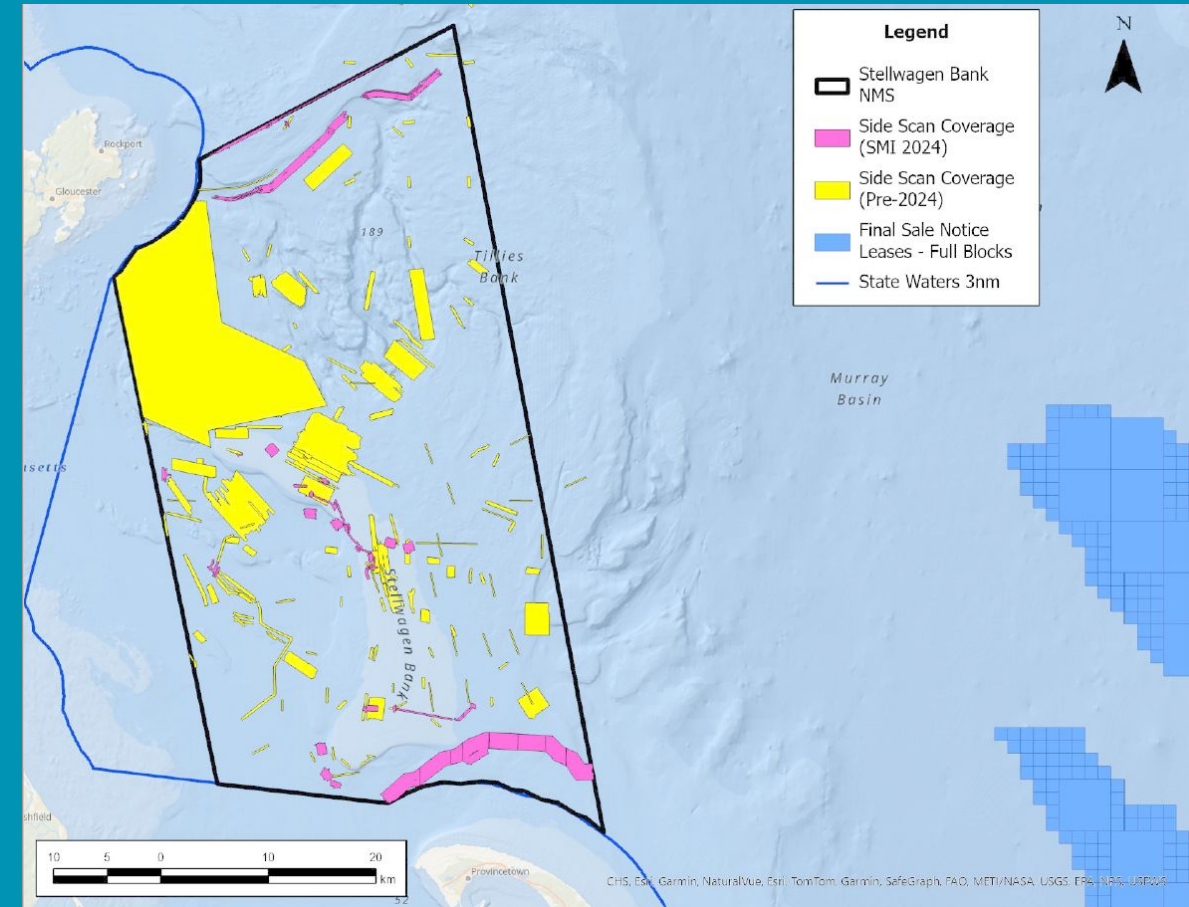
Goal: Side scan survey as much of SBNMS as possible

How: Hiring MA fishermen when they're not fishing to tow the side scan in prescribed areas under the guidance of a sonar technician.

Objectives:

1. Characterize habitats and historic resources in potential transmission cable areas
2. Characterize habitats and historic resources outside of potential corridors

Funding: \$1 Million earmark sponsored by Senators Markey and Warren



Current side scan coverage of SBNMS

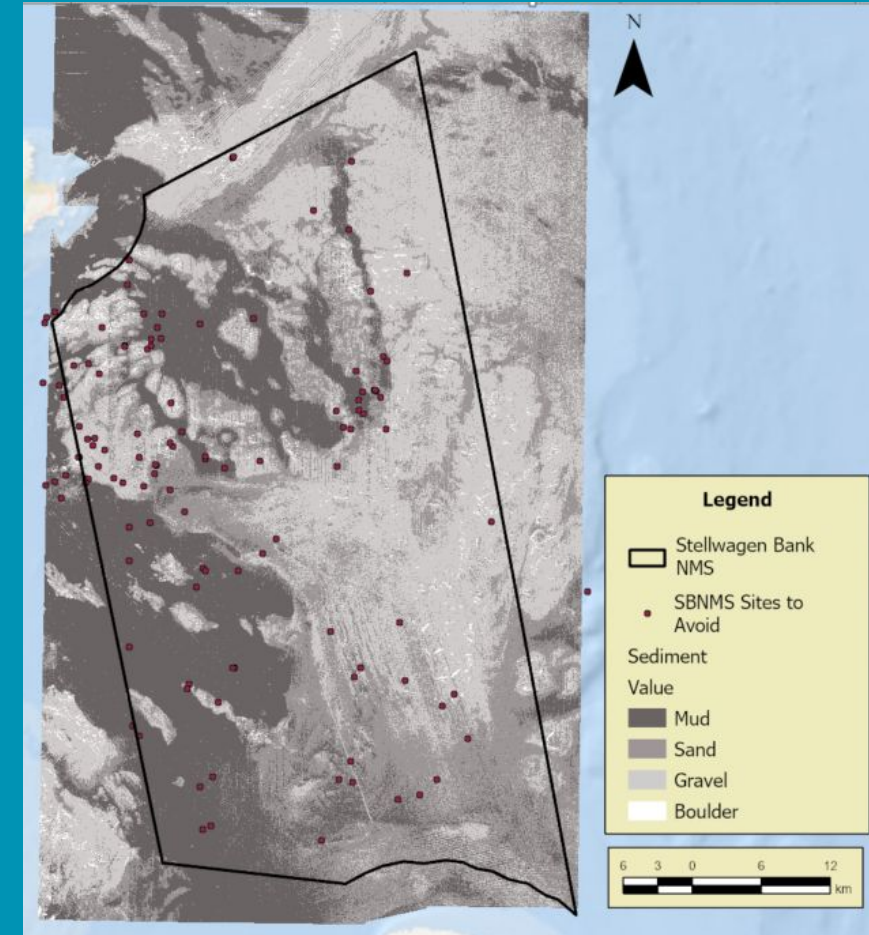
Transmission Planning



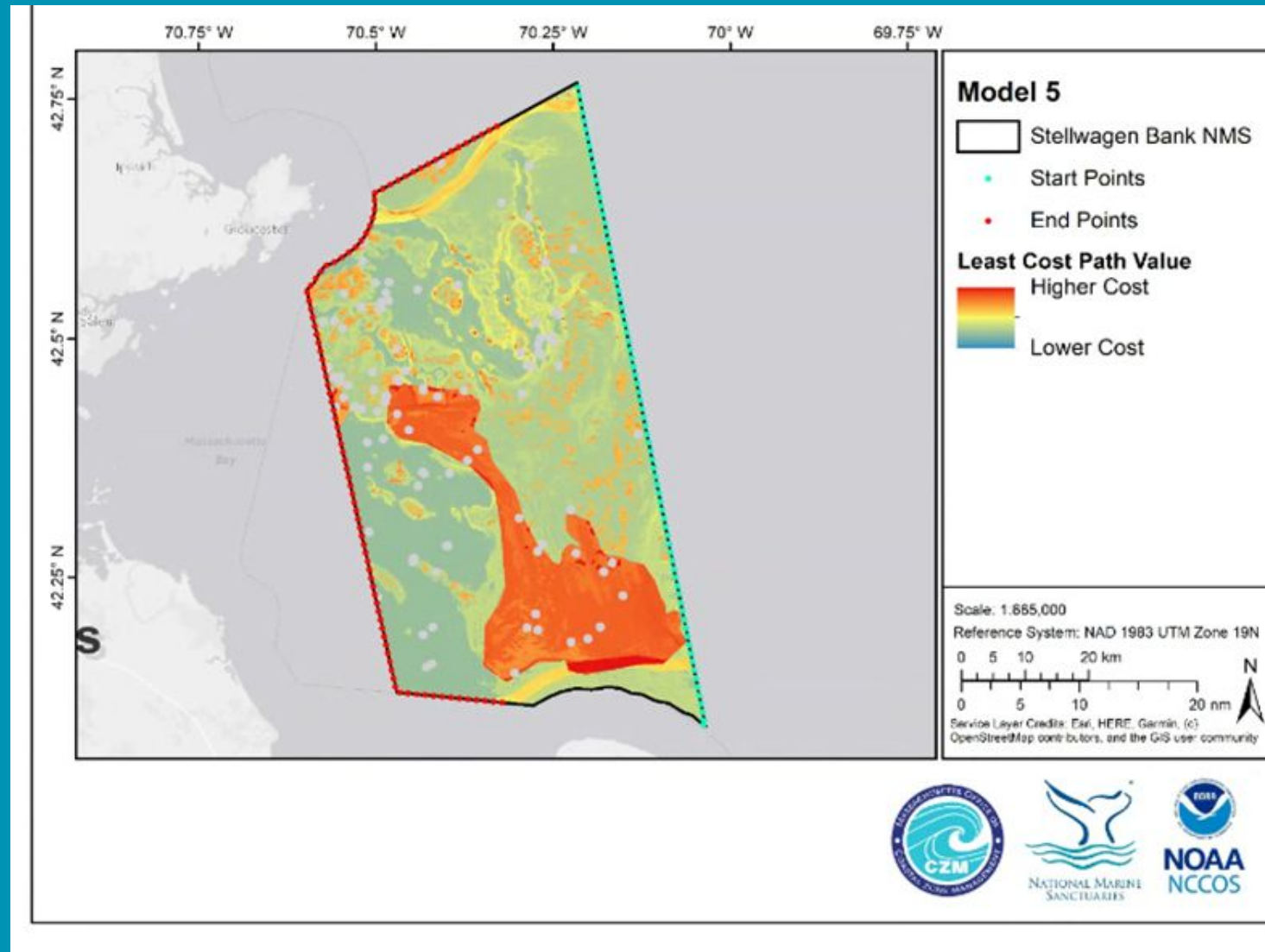
ONMS is working with NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science and MA Office of Coastal Zone Management to assess least and most potentially suitable areas.

- Use available data to assess relative costs.
- Provide this data early in planning process to assist industry

ONMS strongly supports the development of shared transmission in order to minimize impacts to sanctuary resources.



Transmission Planning - Cost Surface



Transmission Planning– Reflections



- First time NCCOS has used suitability modeling for transmission planning in a National Marine Sanctuary
- Goal is to best position the Sanctuary to determine preferred transmission corridors
- Prescriptive routes are not helpful at this time because of technical requirements that are TBD.
- Future modeling work will assess all possible routes and allow ranking/tradeoff analyses to inform industry/BOEM/state consultations.
- Modeling report will be published on website.
- Applicable to other protected areas (National Parks, Refuges, etc.)
- Great teamwork!



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