

Five-year Summary of Accomplishments: 2007-2012

Working Collaboratively in the Bi-National Gulf of Maine and Its Watershed

SUMMARIZED BELOW ARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE GULF OF MAINE COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS BETWEEN 2007 and 2012. This work was guided by the Council's 2007-2012 Action Plan, which described how governments, communities, non-profit organizations, and marine commerce interests agreed to address the Gulf's most pressing habitat, environmental, and community issues that require a coordinated regional response.

Goal 1: Coastal habitats are in a healthy, productive, and resilient condition.

Synopsis of accomplishments 2007-2012:

The Council funded [49 new habitat restoration projects](#) that were performed by municipal governments, non-profits, and other partners. Projects conducted during this period received U.S. federal grants totaling US\$2.5 million and attracted US\$3.8 million in matching non-federal support. The projects restored 335 salt marsh acres and approximately 126 miles of barrier-free streams, in addition to improving other subtidal, intertidal, and channel-riparian habitats. The projects opened an estimated 145 miles of streams to fish passage and made 1,562 acres of lakes re-accessible to spawning alewife. The Council produced a [regional framework](#) for science-based monitoring of the ecological outcomes of dam removal and other types of stream barrier removal. The Council's [Gulf of Maine Mapping Initiative](#) (GOMMI) identified regional priorities for mapping of seafloor habitats, and it helped to address these priorities by supporting mapping fieldwork and organizing major workshops. The Council completed documentation of coastal and marine managed areas in the Canadian portion of the Gulf of Maine. Through numerous [publications](#), workshops, and web-based resources, the Council facilitated regional communication and information sharing on habitat restoration, habitat conservation, habitat monitoring, and seafloor mapping.

Goal 2: Environmental conditions in the Gulf of Maine support environmental and human health.

Synopsis of accomplishments 2007-2012:

The Council launched the [State of the Gulf of Maine](#) reporting series, which produces and disseminates peer-reviewed reports with the latest information on leading issues affecting the Gulf of Maine, such as climate change and invasive species, as well as a Gulf-wide synthesis of management issues and responses. The Council's [Gulfwatch Program](#), established in 1991, continued to monitor contamination of coastal waters at sites around the Gulf of Maine, provided the data and findings to resource managers, and facilitated pollution control within a regional context. The Council established the [Climate Change Network](#) to build regional capacity for proactive management and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. The Council's [Ecosystem Indicator Partnership](#) (ESIP) defined a regional framework for ecological indicators, began synthesizing data for six categories of ecosystem health indicators, and produced web-based interactive maps and tools for government, non-profit organizations, and marine businesses.

Goal 3: Gulf of Maine coastal communities are vibrant and have marine-dependent industries that are healthy and globally competitive.

Synopsis of accomplishments 2007-2012:

The Council created the [Sustainable Industry Awards](#), which is the only regional-scale recognition program for businesses that demonstrate innovation and leadership in efforts to improve the wellbeing of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and the communities that call it home.

Overview of Programs and Initiatives

- The [Habitat Restoration Program](#) provided grants, in partnership with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Restoration Center's Community-based Restoration Program, to restore degraded habitats and to support a strategic approach to marine, coastal, and riverine habitat restoration.
- The [Habitat Restoration Web Portal](#) introduces the topic of habitat restoration, documents restoration projects, describes how to conduct a restoration project, and provides a library of restoration materials.
- Published continuously for over sixteen years, the [Gulf of Maine Times](#) is an unbiased source of information about research and management happenings in the Gulf of Maine/ Bay of Fundy. It helps people understand, appreciate, and preserve the region's diverse and complex watersheds and marine environments.
- The [Ecosystem Indicator Partnership](#) upgraded the online [Ecosystem Indicator Reporting Tool](#) and [Ecosystem Monitoring Map](#), produced theme-oriented indicator fact sheets, convened training workshops, and disseminated information about the health of the ecosystem.
- The [State of the Gulf of Maine](#) initiative was launched to provide state-of-the-environment reporting for the region. It produced *The Gulf of the Maine in Context*, an overview of the region's natural and socioeconomic environment and management setting, and a series of theme papers that focus on important issues within the Gulf, based on priorities identified by the Council.
- The [Gulfwatch Monitoring Program](#) measured and reported on contaminants in coastal waters at numerous sites around the Gulf of Maine. The Program conducted a peer review of its science and completed a thirteen-year review and analysis of its data collected.
- The [Climate Change Network](#) brings the latest climate change science, impacts, and adaptation information to the Gulf of Maine community. It commenced work on a highly collaborative two-year initiative that is documenting best practices and innovative municipal adaptation approaches in the region; providing municipal technical assistance grants to implement adaptation approaches; and disseminating adaptation/resiliency communications materials.
- The [Gulf of Maine KnowledgeBase](#) is a searchable online library of management and scientific publications on the region's priority marine and coastal issues. The KnowledgeBase promotes information-sharing about resource management in the Gulf and its watershed.
- The [Action Plan Grants Program](#) offered grants to citizen groups and community organizations to pursue projects that supported priority goals in the Council's Action Plan. Through a competitive grant process, the Program provided awards of up to US\$10,000 to ten projects in 2007-08.

Selected Publications and Communication Products

- The [State of the Gulf of Maine Report](#) provides a peer-reviewed synthesis through a modular series of documents and theme papers on topics such as *The Gulf of Maine in Context*; *Climate Change and Its Effects on Humans*; *Climate Change and its Effects on Ecosystems, Habitats and Biota*; *Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats*; *Marine Invasive Species*; and *Emerging Issues*.
- The Council's website, gulfofmaine.org, is the most comprehensive information source about the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and management actions in the region. It offers a toolbox of publications, social networking resources, databases, and interactive maps.
- [Salt Marshes in the Gulf of Maine: Human Impacts, Habitat Restoration, and Long-Term Change Analysis](#) provides an overview of the valuable ecological functions of healthy salt marshes, human impacts on salt marshes, methods for restoring salt marsh habitats, and the need for a regional salt marsh monitoring program.
- [Status, Trends, and Conservation of Eelgrass in Atlantic Canada and the Northeastern United States](#) describes eelgrass status and trends in the region, habitat functions and values, approaches to setting nutrient and habitat criteria, the effects of invasive species and climate change on eelgrass, and programs and partnerships for eelgrass conservation.
- [Habitat Classification in the Gulf of Maine: A Review of Schemes and a Discussion of Related Regional Issues](#) provides background information on marine habitat classification and current research to develop classification schemes in the Gulf of Maine.
- [American Eels: Restoring a Vanishing Resource in the Gulf of Maine](#) reviews the need, challenges, and methods for American eel restoration in the region.
- [Stream Barrier Removal Monitoring Guide](#) presents a standardized framework for monitoring the ecological changes that occur when dams, culverts, and other stream barriers are removed.
- [Industry Engagement with the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment](#) offers recommendations to the Council in three primary areas: industry engagement; coordination and communication; and services the Council can provide to industry.
- [Gulf of Maine Ecosystem-Based Management Toolkit Survey Report](#) provides region-specific information on management issues to which practitioners seek to apply ecosystem-based management (EBM), discusses critical obstacles to implementing EBM, and suggests tools and information needed to put EBM into practice.