

## Gulf of Maine Ecosystem Indicators Partnership (ESIP)

### Program Vision

Citizens and decision makers in the Gulf of Maine and the Bay of Fundy region will possess the necessary information to preserve ecological integrity and to sustain economically and socially healthy human communities.

<b>Gulf of Maine Indicators Listening Sessions and Evaluation of Tides of Change Report</b> Della Valle, E.A., 2006, Gulf of Maine Council <a href="http://www.gulfofmaine.org/esip/docs/esiplistening.pdf">www.gulfofmaine.org/esip/docs/esiplistening.pdf</a>	<b>Strategy for Gulf of Maine Ecosystem Indicators and State of the Environment Reporting</b> Mills, K.E., 2006, Gulf of Maine Council <a href="http://www.gulfofmaine.org/esip/docs/esipstrategy.pdf">www.gulfofmaine.org/esip/docs/esipstrategy.pdf</a>
<p><b>Thirty-six professionals</b> participated in four listening sessions in Portsmouth NH and Moncton NB to discuss needs, uses, and goals of regional indicators, consider ways to improve indicator development, and to assess whether current approaches to state of the environment reporting should continue.</p> <p><b>Participants</b> said that regional indicators should <i>assess and monitor health</i> of the Gulf, <i>inform the public and build coalitions</i> to protect and improve the Gulf, and <i>advise regional/national governance</i> of policies, investments and programs. The importance of <i>ecosystem-based management</i> was a strong theme, integrating environmental, social, cultural, and economic features. To be successful, ESIP must <i>harmonize</i> existing indicator and monitoring efforts.</p> <p><b>Twenty-five representatives</b> of target audiences were interviewed by phone about the 2004 “Tides of Change” report. Nearly all liked the format, felt the level of detail was appropriate, and 75% thought the same approach should be used again, with a focus on quantitative, concise, and summarized results linked to program objectives.</p> <p><b>Seven state of the environment reports</b> were reviewed. Reports were available on the web, color-printed, rich in graphics, and used case studies to reinforce findings.</p>	<p><b>Strategic core principles</b> for a Gulf-wide indicator and reporting structure are designed to ensure the production of a high quality product that is <i>relevant</i> for its users and that is developed through a <i>transparent, science-based</i> process that <i>engages</i> a wide group of <i>interdisciplinary partners</i>.</p> <p><b>ESIP is organized</b> as a standing committee of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, with a steering committee and dedicated program manager.</p> <p><b>Activities</b> of ESIP initially center around regional practitioners convening as focus groups in six indicator areas: coastal development, contaminants and pathogens, eutrophication, aquatic habitat, fisheries and aquaculture, and climate change. Indicator development builds upon “Tides of Change” to integrate regional data as a new reporting system for marine ecosystem monitoring.</p> <p><b>Actions</b> for building a Gulf of Maine indicators and reporting system include defining program goals and <i>ecosystem objectives, engaging and harmonizing existing efforts, creating regional indicators, developing a data and information management structure, building and sustaining partnerships, and providing effective communication and outreach</i> to the public and decision-makers.</p>

