



Gulf of Maine
Council on the
Marine Environment

COASTAL AND MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING in the GULF OF MAINE



WHAT IS COASTAL AND MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING?

In practical terms, Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) is about proper use and management of ocean and coastal spaces based on publicly agreed upon goals and objectives. It is about ensuring that marine uses are compatible and occur in areas where environmental effects are avoided or minimized. The need for CMSP is the result of increasing competition for ocean space by existing and emerging users. It is now critical to better coordinate decision making to meet both economic and conservation objectives.

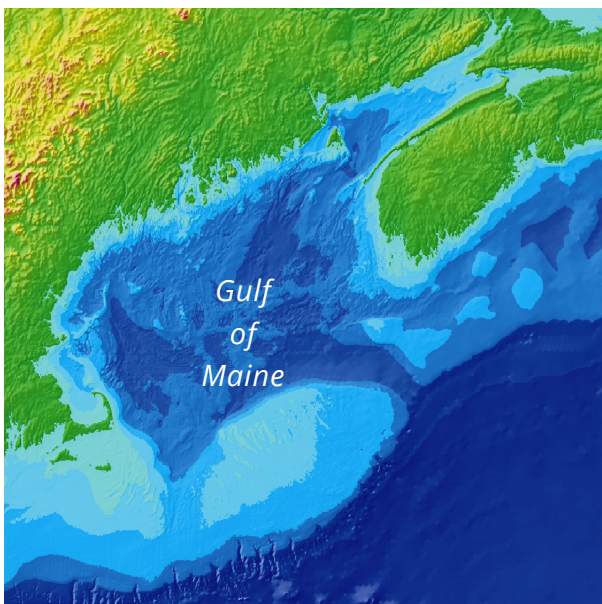
Internationally, CMSP is defined as “a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process” (UNESCO 2009). To date, this has been the general definition followed in Canada, while the United States has defined CMSP as “a comprehensive, adaptive, integrated, ecosystem-based, and transparent planning process, based on sound science, for analyzing current and anticipated uses of ocean, coastal and Great Lake areas” (Ocean Policy Task Force 2010).

CMSP in Canada

The *Oceans Act*, Canada's Oceans Strategy and the Policy and Operational Framework for Integrated Management of Estuarine, Coastal, and Marine Environments in Canada provide the policy framework and guide Canada's approach to oceans management. The approach is centred on the principle of Integrated Management (IM), a commitment to planning and managing human activities in a comprehensive manner for the conservation, protection and sustainable use of ocean resources and shared ocean spaces. Although the *Oceans Act* and associated policies provide the overarching legislative basis for IM in Canada to be led by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, authority rests within existing federal and provincial departments and agencies. The *Oceans Act* does not mention CMSP, however, CMSP tools and approaches are a method for achieving and implementing Integrated Management in Canada; along with enhanced government coordination and stakeholder engagement.

CMSP in the United States

In the United States, the impetus for CMSP came from both individual state efforts and a federal Executive Order in 2010, creating the National Ocean Policy. There is no new legislative basis for CMSP. Existing federal statutes authorize planning with respect to the ocean, coastal and Great Lakes environments. State, tribal and local authorities also have a range of existing authorities to implement CMSP. These government authorities, along with regional governance structures, look to CMSP to provide a framework for proactive, collaborative work to exercise their respective authorities.



A Common Approach for the Gulf

Although, there are differences in terminology and legislation, the approach of each country is similar. In both countries, CMSP will be conducted at the regional level and includes waters from the high water mark out to the 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). CMSP in the Gulf of Maine will occur on the Canadian side through a Regional Oceans Plan for the Scotian Shelf-Bay of Fundy bioregion and on the US side through the Northeast Regional Ocean Plan.

In both countries, authority rests within federal departments' and agencies' existing laws and statutes and the intent is to better coordinate decision making not only among the federal family, but also with provinces, states and tribes. In the U.S., states have authority to manage state ocean waters which typically extent out to three miles from the coast. Regional bodies have been established on both sides of the border to support the development of CMSP, the Northeast Regional Planning Body in the US and the Regional Committee on Coastal and Oceans Management in Canada. Key components of CMSP in both countries include engaging stakeholders in the CMSP process, developing regional objectives and compiling data on human use patterns and ecological information on the region.

ROLE OF THE GULF OF MAINE COUNCIL CMSP COMMITTEE

Successful CMSP requires the compilation of regional information, data, and mapping of human uses and areas of ecological significance. Although political boundaries exist, the Gulf of Maine ecosystem is not confined by these political boundaries. Ecosystem impacts and implications span those borders, which is in part why the Gulf of Maine Council was formed. As both countries proceed with their bioregional planning, it will be important to share information, knowledge and data. This provides an opportunity for countries to learn from each other's experiences with CMSP, to share scientific information and to support collaborative projects to fill knowledge gaps.

The mandate of the CMSP Committee is as follows:

- To investigate and make recommendations on roles/activities for the Council in CMSP.
- To track and exchange information on CMSP policies and activities on both sides of the border.

The CMSP Committee will maintain an open dialogue on CMSP initiatives across the border. The Committee will seek out opportunities where it can learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions. It will share information and knowledge on best practices, tools and techniques, in addition to sharing information on human use patterns and ecological data. The Committee will report to the Council on progress and identify opportunities where the Council can contribute to advancing CMSP within the Gulf of Maine.



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