

## Talking Points

# Massachusetts participation in the Gulf of Maine Council

### 1. Why do we participate?

- Between 2007 and 2011 Massachusetts received approximately \$1.2 million in habitat restoration grants through the Council's restoration grant program that generated \$1.9 million in matching non-federal support. 29 separate projects involving barrier removal planning or construction benefitting salt marshes, streams, and the species that depend on these systems were funded.
- We can access a regional network (e.g., New Hampshire, Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) of professionals working on watershed and coastal issues important to Massachusetts. As a result we can perform our work in Massachusetts more quickly and efficiently.
- By working through the Council we can address issues that require an inter-state response. Examples of these issues include the restoration of migratory fish stocks that are affected by river barriers; collection and assessment of data on the effects of contaminants on people, marine water quality and shellfish resources; and the impact of human activities on the seafloor.
- State agencies, higher education and non-profit organizations participate in the Gulf of Maine Council committees. Most of their work is performed electronically (e.g., email, conference calls and webinars). Their ongoing, voluntary participation allows them to share their expertise and learn creative approaches from their colleagues that can be applied in Massachusetts.

### 2. What is our "return on our investment"?

- Massachusetts's annual dues are \$18,000. The Commonwealth has three gubernatorial appointments on the Council (e.g., EEA/Office of Coastal Zone Management and non-profit representatives from the Urban Harbors Institute and the F Conservation Law Foundation) that represent Massachusetts's position in two meetings a year.
- Participation in the Council's activities allows Massachusetts to access human and financial resources throughout the region.
- Municipalities and non-profit organizations can receive grant funds related to habitat restoration and community resilience in the face of a changing climate and extreme weather events.

### 3. How does the Council's 2012-2017 Action Plan support state agency priorities?

- The three goals in the Action Plan align directly with the legislative mandates of the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), the Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP), Ecological Restoration (DER), and Fish & Game (DFG), and the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program.
- Action Plan activities of particular interest include those to improve and protect water quality (CZM/DEP), habitat restoration (CZM/DFG/DER), seafloor mapping and spatial planning (CZM), marine and aquatic monitoring (DEP/MWRA/CZM), ecosystem health indicators and environmental reporting (CZM/DFG/MWRA), adapting to a changing climate and coastal storms (CZM), and sustainable communities (CZM).
- Massachusetts's marine environmental monitoring efforts are augmented through the Council's regional data and information management efforts.