



Recommendations for a New Approach For Changing Times

A Report to the Gulf of Maine Council

by

Peter Alexander
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A Note to the Members of the Gulf of Maine Council

June 4, 2008

Dear Members of the Council:

I feel quite privileged to have been able to work on this project evaluating and making recommendations for the future of the Gulf of Maine Times. I was already a fan of the Times, but as I have conducted interviews of key personnel my respect has multiplied for the talent, hard work, and sincere dedication of all involved. The Times and its new website are excellent communications and outreach tools, and both hold tremendous potential for further development.

In developing the recommendations in this report I have approached the work as if the Times were my own business venture, informing every facet of the operations with the underlying question “What would I do if my own money was involved, and my own future depended on the decisions and recommendations I am making?”

These are not simply hypothetical questions, for I have started and run several of my own businesses, and over the years have learned to make pragmatic choices to test options and opportunities before committing significant resources to them. You will find this approach informing the analysis and recommendations throughout this report.

It should be noted that in the short time available for this study and report I tried to stay focused on the “big picture” questions of strategic direction, format, and financing. My views about the details of things like production efficiencies and web software are incomplete, and are probably better left to the incoming editor and other contractors.

Finally, a note about the urgency of time: the current budget allows for only two more print editions in this fiscal year, and if the Times is to remain viable, there are many actions—especially related to generating revenue—that will need to be undertaken in the very near future. Recognizing that some of the recommendations herein are significant departures from the way the Times has been published and financed in its 15-year history, I remain available to discuss and clarify any part of this report.

I look forward to many successful outcomes, and to seeing the Gulf of Maine Times as a thriving and vital communications resource for the region well into the future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Alexander". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored rectangular background.

Peter Alexander

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gulf of Maine Times serves as the primary public face of the Gulf of Maine Council. For fifteen years it has been published quarterly as a tabloid-sized newspaper with news and feature articles about conservation initiatives throughout the Gulf of Maine. Since its inception the Times has benefited from a talented and devoted team of staff, consultants, and writers who have generated excellent editorial content (meaning *all* the articles, not just “editorials”). Recent improvements in the graphics, and the addition of a web-based version have turned it into a first rate publication that is both attractive and accessible. However, due to changing circumstances, the Gulf of Maine Council now seeks ways to make the publication more financially self-sustaining. To that end, the Council commissioned this study, seeking recommendations to maximize the Times’ effectiveness as a communications and outreach vehicle, and to ensure the highest possible economic efficiencies.

This report begins by analyzing the Times’ purpose, its target audiences, and its optimum content. It then outlines a number of publishing scenarios and provides side-by-side comparisons of the various options. Numerous ways of generating revenue are also presented for side-by-side comparison. The report concludes with recommendations for immediate next steps. Following the report are appendixes containing data upon which the comparisons and conclusions rely. These include summary results of a subscriber survey conducted for the Council by ERG, and a spreadsheet with detailed information about more than a dozen other similar publications.

In today’s world the importance of electronic media cannot be overestimated. The new web version of the Times is an excellent start, but for a very small investment its functionality can be greatly improved and it can be turned into a highly effective communications tool. As the foundation publication of the Council (to be maintained even if all else fails), the Times’ website should be optimized for functionality and content. The following steps should be undertaken immediately:

- 1) Add interactive user tools such as polls, user comments, discussion forums, photo, audio, and video galleries, and RSS and Atom feeds.
- 2) Update the online version with far greater frequency: new material should be added weekly, or at least monthly. This can be done with a minimum of additional staff time once the systems are in place.
- 3) Develop the tools and systems to regularly notify subscribers of new web content.

Although the options for publishing print editions presented in this report are many, it is recommended that the Council pick the two or three most promising for further study. These include:

- 1) Obtain funding to continue publishing and distributing in-house (several funding options are presented later).
- 2) Develop a public private partnership with an existing for-profit newspaper publisher to handle printing, production, and distribution of several regional editions (with content provided by GOMT staff).
- 3) If these options do not work out, consider developing strategic partnerships with other like-minded publications so that editorial content from the Times’ website can be made available to them either for free or for a fee.

This report contains many options for generating revenue, and they are all worthy of further exploration. Some, however, could be implemented or begun immediately. These include:

- 1) Set up an online credit card processing facility and start charging \$10 per year for the print edition (for quarterly editions starting with the Fall issue). Response will quickly show whether this is a viable approach.
- 2) Set up an online credit card processing facility to take donations, and place a link to it on every web page.

- 3) Seek grant funding. (The EPA is fully supporting the Chesapeake Bay Journal, a monthly paper distributed to 50,000 people in the Chesapeake region.)
- 4) Request that each GOMC member agency contribute \$2,000 - \$5,000 to ensure that the foundation of GOMT editorial content and web presence are maintained and enhanced.

Reader feedback confirms that the Gulf of Maine Times has become an invaluable communications and outreach tool. It plays a significant role in raising awareness among decision-makers, conservation professionals, residents, visitors, and users of the marine environment in the Gulf of Maine. However, the publication is at a crossroads: it could fade from the scene for lack of financial support, or it could prosper and grow, increasing its reach and impact, and serving a vital role in fulfilling the mission of the Gulf of Maine Council as it was originally conceived.

SECTION I: Purpose and Content

There has been considerable debate over the years about what the purpose of the Gulf of Maine Times should be. Is it a newsletter for the Council, providing news about Council activities? Is it an educational tool to raise awareness among Gulf of Maine residents and visitors about the impacts of their life-style choices? Is it an information-sharing vehicle for the individuals and organizations actually involved in the work of environmental protection and restoration in the Gulf of Maine? Resolution of this debate is critical, for it will fundamentally inform the future direction of the Gulf of Maine Times.

Ultimately, the decision is up to the Council members, but a reasonable conclusion would be that the Gulf of Maine Times should primarily serve the mission of the Council as outlined in the “short-term and mid-term outcomes” of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. These include:

SHORT-TERM--Raise Awareness:

- among Coastal Lawmakers about
 - invasive species
 - impacts of land-based activities on the coastal environment
 - the need to reduce the release of “priority pollutants” into the marine environment
 - “ecosystem-based management”
 - the relevance of incorporating “natural capital” concepts in coastal decision-making
 - creative approaches to protect and manage the working waterfront
- among commercial and recreational users of the Gulf of Maine about invasive species and actions to prevent their spread
- among local, non-profit, and corporate funding sources about the need to increase funding for restoration of regionally significant coastal habitats
- among coastal residents about
 - the impacts of their lifestyle choices on the marine environment
 - products and services developed with alternative energy sources or fuels
- among industry managers about “best practices”

MID-TERM—Influence Change in Policies and Behaviors such that:

- Policy-makers, regulators, and municipalities enact and enforce policies and programs to:
 - minimize impacts of invasive species
 - prevent land-based activities from adversely affecting the coastal environment
 - continuously improve local planning codes and practices
 - make infrastructure improvements to minimize adverse impacts on coastal environment
 - effectively manage marine resources
 - reduce contaminant levels according to consistent standards
 - address social, cultural, environmental and economic concerns related to marine-dependent industries
 - incorporate Regionally Significant Coastal Habitats (RSCH) in restoration plans
 - incorporate “coastal natural capital” into decision-making
- Resource Managers (“practitioners”) implement regional restoration monitoring standards
- Users of the Marine Environment:
 - enact “best practices” to minimize impacts of invasive species
 - accelerate the adoption of practices to become more sustainable.
 - utilize renewable and nonrenewable resources in ways to maintain ecosystem integrity
- Watershed Residents (and/or Businesses)
 - seek to minimize the effects of their land use decisions on the coastal environment
 - demonstrate increased stewardship of the marine environment
 - implement voluntary lifestyle actions to reduce their use and release of contaminants
 - are willing to pay a fair price for sustainable produced marine products and services

- GOMC “Partners” leverage and invest funds for the restoration of RSCH’s

Lori Valigra, the Times’ departing editor, offers the following description of the current content of the Times, which matches well with the Council’s above-stated goals:

“Our stories range from news and feature stories to more personal accounts of issues and experiences impacting the Gulf of Maine. Topics include protection and restoration of regionally significant coastal habitat such as salt marsh, forests or estuaries; restoration of fish or bird species or habitats; protection of human health and ecosystem integrity from toxic contaminants; new technologies to understand and monitor conditions within the Gulf of Maine and its watershed; working shoreline issues; renewable resources; fisheries and aquaculture; legislative issues; ecosystem management; and many more.”

How this content is presented is critically dependent upon what audience is being targeted. For example, a purely scientific article, or an “insider’s” policy piece would likely fall on deaf ears with a tourist on a whale watch trip, while a general interest piece (such as an article about a family’s day trip to the beach) would probably be of little interest to a policy maker or resource manager. (The current editorial staff of the Times is acutely aware of the competing interests and wide range of ecological literacy of the publication’s diverse readership, and has been careful to present articles that, while solidly based in science, are equally accessible for any well-educated audience.) Consideration of the publication’s format (various print and electronic options) also needs to be informed by an understanding of its current and intended audiences.

It is important to note that there are three major audience groups considered in the Action Plan.

- 1) The first we can call “GOMC stakeholders”. These include:
 - Gulf of Maine Premiers and Governors
 - Coastal lawmakers
 - Coastal decision-makers
 - Coastal managers
 - Scientists and Academics
 - [I would add here “Environmental advocacy groups” and “Conservation organizations”]
- 2) The second audience is “marine-dependent industries.”
- 3) The third is “Gulf of Maine residents and visitors.”

Based on the demographics of new electronic subscribers since February 2008—most of whom are “GOMC stakeholders”—it is evident that many people from this audience are comfortable with the web version (though some current subscribers have indicated they prefer print). The “marine-dependent industries” are probably a crossover group, more accessible through print than through the web, as evidenced by the strength of “Commercial Fisheries News”, a monthly that sells for \$2.75 in marine-related stores and business throughout the Northeast. “GOM residents and visitors” are also likely best reached with print editions distributed through coastal businesses such as restaurants, ferries, whale watch tour operators, etc. Clearly, if there is a way to do both print and web editions, the Council will be most effective in reaching the full range of its target audiences. There are numerous options for how this can be accomplished, which will be outlined in Section III. Also, in Section III and Section IV there are side-by-side comparisons of both publishing and financing options for the Gulf of Maine Times.

SECTION II: Production and Logistics

Background

In order to make informed recommendations for the future production and format of the Gulf of Maine Times, we reviewed numerous publications from other organizations that deal with ecosystem wide, or international regions including:

- Puget Sound Partnership
- Freshwater Future
- US FWS Southeastern Region
- Manomet
- Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence (CoSEE New England)
- Great Lakes Commission
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust
- Maine Audubon
- Biodiversity Project
- Western Shorebird Reserve Network

[IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT SOME CANADIAN PUBLICATIONS ALSO SHOULD BE INCLUDED HERE]

Formats and Media

Of these organizations, the only two that continue to use print as the *primary* media for the quarterly publication are the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, both of which are membership organizations with paying members. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation produces a 32 page, full color glossy magazine that is mailed quarterly to 110,000 paying members. It also offers a free monthly electronic newsletter to which anyone can subscribe via their website. The Maine Coast Heritage Trust sends its 7,000 paying members and subscribers a 6-page tri-fold (folded to 9" x 11") printed in duotone. Although it was helpful to look at both of these publications and to talk with their staff, the organizational missions and structure are so different from that of the GOMC that they should probably not serve as an example of best practices for the Times.

Several of the other organizations, however, are similar in structure and mission to the GOMC, including the Puget Sound Partnership, the Great Lakes Commission, the Western Shorebird Reserve Network, CoSee, and to a lesser degree, the US FWS Southeastern Region. All of these organizations now primarily or exclusively use a variety of electronic media including:

- simple, non-personalized, text-based email with full stories included in the message
- web-based stories, with no email notification
- email with index or headlines only, linked to website or to web-based stories and articles
- personalized email, leading with hypertext linked index, then headlines and partial text (with link to full story located in HTML on website.)
- email notification with link to single, downloadable PDF file
- personalized email with partial lead story (teaser) and links to web-based (HTML) articles, daily updated content, and archive with interactive content.

Each of these formats has advantages and drawbacks as outlined in the following table.

FORMAT	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Simple, non-personalized text with full stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets through most email servers without a problem since there is no HTML and no attachments • Requires no graphic and design skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to read • Most people don't like long email messages • Sent as bulk email it could get ID'd as SPAM.
Web-based stories, no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works well for closely connected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts burden on people to

notification	networks	remember to log on
Email with index or headlines only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works well for news and information services if audience is highly interested and motivated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not “draw people in” • Can look overwhelming
Personalized email, leading with hypertext linked index, then headlines and partial text (with link to full story located in HTML on website.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives readers a quick overview so they can cut to the stories that interest them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not very graphically interesting • requires higher level of skill • Some email systems will not accept HTML code
email notification with link to single, downloadable PDF file	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple format requires only a short email message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires extra step to download the document • requires a fast internet connection to handle what is usually a very large file
personalized email with partial lead story (teaser) and links to web-based (HTML) articles, daily updated content, and archive with interactive content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attractive and interesting graphics—especially with thumbnail photos—draw people in. • “teaser” format is tried and true (see Google News) • continually updated content keeps readers engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires higher skill level and staff time • Some email systems will not accept HTML code

Frequency

Most of the electronic publications are either weekly or monthly and contain a mix of news, announcements, and feature stories. The monthlies tend to focus more heavily on feature stories and to contain more photographs.

Production Budgets

Production budgets vary widely, from over \$400,000 per year for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s quarterly magazine, to less than \$25,000 per year for the Biodiversity Project’s “Great Lakes Town Hall” (not counting initial programming and set up costs). Most of the electronic publications cost less than \$40,000 per year.

Production Costs

There are numerous costs involved in producing the Gulf of Maine Times. They include:

- 1) Editorial Staff
- 2) Writers’ fees
- 3) Layout and Design
- 4) Printing
- 5) Mailing preparation
- 6) Postage
- 7) Web design and maintenance

Currently, it is costing about \$9,500 to print and mail each edition of the Times. About half that cost is for the postage and mailing service. Of the total print run of just under 10,000 are sent to individuals, and most of the rest distributed in bulk.

Printing and mailing houses are both competitive industries, and with many publications such as the Portland Herald now carrying excess printing capacity it is likely that good deals can be had for the asking. Any thought of switching suppliers and service providers, however, should be weighed against

any benefits of existing relationships, such as reliability, predictability, familiarity with the Times' product and process, etc.

Recommendation: Regularly seek new quotes for printing and mailing services

Writers' fees are a significant cost item, about \$2,000 per issue. The Gulf of Maine Times currently pays up to \$350 for a major feature article, \$250 - \$300 for shorter features, and \$125 for book reviews. Although these rates are far below market, Working Waterfront, the monthly publication of the Island Institute, pays its writers only about \$200 per feature article. As the web edition gains prominence it will become easier to recruit high quality writers who are even willing to donate content. The Biodiversity Project's on line forum, *Great Lakes Town Hall* (www.greatlakestownhall.org), has only two paid "moderators" who submit occasional content, but whose primary task is to recruit voluntary submissions from other writers from a variety of fields. A review of their content shows a remarkable number of articles submitted free by well-known scientists, writers, journalists, conservation professionals, environmental activists, policy-makers, and more.

As the Times' web presence grows (it is already getting over 5000 readers per month) the perceived benefit of exposure on the web and the prestige of writing for the Times may help offset some future content costs. This will be especially important if, as recommended, the website is updated much more frequently, and if it becomes possible to boost the number of print editions each year.

Currently, there appear to be some inefficiencies happening with the work of laying out the Times. Although a contractor is being paid \$1,300 per issue to provide print-ready electronic files, the current editor has been doing all the layout first by hand, then providing artwork to the contractor to be converted to print-ready files. It takes up to a week of the editor's time to do this for each issue—time that is contributed above and beyond her work as editor. However, it appears that much of the design has now been set up in templates, which should make the layout tasks a great deal easier in the future. Nonetheless, this is something the new editor should pay attention to.

Evaluation

Evaluation of comparable publications varies widely, from no tracking and evaluation whatsoever for "Southeast Currents" (the US FWS monthly web-based news archive), to occasional surveys and questionnaires (Chesapeake Bay Foundation), up to monthly or semi-monthly tracking of reader editorial preferences (CoSEE and Biodiversity Project). The ERG survey was a good start in evaluating the Gulf of Maine Times, and it generated some useful information—especially some of the reader comments and suggestions (see Appendix A). However, it is quite easy to set up an electronic survey tool using Survey Monkey (free version) or Constant Contact (low cost, integrated with electronic mailing list). Using these tools, the Times could seek regular reader feedback from both web and print subscribers.

Email vs. Print

There are many reasons to consider email over (or in addition) print these days. Email is much more portable, easier to share, easy to archive, more environmentally benign, faster, and far less expensive to produce and deliver. Some people still prefer to hold and read a printed document, especially if there is a lot of content, in-depth general interest stories, and photographs. However, the trend for newsletters and other publications is definitely moving toward electronic media. We are not recommending that the Times print edition be eliminated. But greater attention should be paid to upgrading the electronic version to keep current with evolving standards and reader expectations.

A few things to be concerned about with electronic media include making sure that messages are compatible with various operating systems and firewalls. For example, many universities and government agencies do not allow HTML emails through their systems—they allow only basic text, with no graphics and no photos. For CoSEE New England's "New Waves" news brief this has presented a significant problem, in part because recipients did not report back that they were having difficulty reading

the messages. This problem can be resolved by creating two versions for each email message: an HTML version with graphic content, and a text-only version for those who cannot receive HTML. Assuming a web-based subscription page is used, both plain text and HTML can be offered (with an explanation for those who don't already know) at the time of signing up.

There are other potential advantages to print media. Some audiences—in particular senior citizens, the less affluent, and the less educated—tend to be less computer literate (or may not like—or even HAVE a computer). Residents and visitors to the Gulf of Maine are also more likely to pick up a print version at a store, restaurant, or other coastal business. Another advantage to print is that it can carry display advertising. Unfortunately, selling advertising space is a labor-intensive undertaking and requires an additional level of production and management oversight. Further, web-based advertising and “sponsor links” have come into such common usage that print media may no longer have an advantage in this regard. Equally important, there are not likely to be many potential advertisers that will see an advantage in reaching the enormous geographical coverage of the Gulf of Maine Times. This challenge could be resolved if there were regional editions, but this would only be feasible if the circulation were much greater.

Other Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Electronic Media

As indicated above, electronic publications currently come in a surprising number of formats. We have already mentioned the main disadvantage of HTML. However, HTML has many advantages, too: mainly that it can present exciting, compelling graphics and photographs instead of the rather dreary impact of plain text. Chesapeake Bay Foundation produces one of the most attractive HTML email publications. Its format and content are also echoed on the CBF website, providing a seamless reader experience.

With HTML it is also possible to provide “hot links” that make navigation to various articles, websites, and downloads quite easy. With a plain text message, the reader has to copy and paste a URL address into his web browser—an extra step that substantially impedes navigation and reduces readership. Some organizations have compromised by sending plain text emails with an invitation or description and a single URL for a web-based publication, or a link to a downloadable PDF file of the complete publication, formatted for printing. The reader has the option of reading this file on his or her computer, or of printing it out and reading it in hard copy. An example of this approach is the “Advisor”, a 12-16 page quarterly newsletter published by the Great Lakes Commission (an international body made up of the Governors and Premiers of the 8 states and 2 Canadian provinces that surround the Great Lakes.) The Advisor is laid out for printing on a standard 8.5 x 11 paper.

Email Management

Anyone who has participated in a list serve, or tried to send a message to multiple addresses, knows that managing email subscriptions can be very tricky and even risky—and the challenges grow geometrically with the size of the subscription list. Numerous services have sprung up in recent years to assist businesses and non-profits manage email lists. Among these, the two best known are “Convio” and “Constant Contact.” Convio is very sophisticated and expensive, with many capabilities such as sales and credit card processing. It is used by many of the major regional and national nonprofits, such as the National Wildlife Federation, to keep in touch with their members and promote sales and donations.

Constant Contact is a lower cost version, designed to handle smaller lists (from less than 500 up to as many as 50,000). Constant Contact allows for personalized messages (“Dear Stephanie”) and can be subscribed or unsubscribed by the recipient. It has many highly advanced features that allow for detailed monitoring, tracking how many of the messages get opened, and how many of the articles get read. It can even identify WHO is reading which articles! Combined with subscriber profile information this feature could be extremely helpful in planning content on an ongoing basis. Constant Contact has a sliding scale fee structure, based on the number of subscribers being managed. For 5,000 to 10,000 subscribers the monthly cost is \$75 for managing email. For an additional monthly fee the company can

also provide survey services. Fortunately, GOMT is already using Constant Contact for its electronic subscribers, so growing the subscriber lists and increasing the frequency of updates will be easy.

Recommendation: use Constant Contact's management system to notify subscribers of each new issue, and of significant content updates to the website. Create two email lists: one to receive an HTML notifications (with graphics and hot links), and one for text only messages (for those who cannot receive HTML). For HTML mail, utilize a graphic format similar to Chesapeake Bay Foundation's, in which recipients view key story headlines and teaser text with hot links to web-based articles.

One very important consideration with email notifications is that people tend to change email addresses quite often. MoveOn.org, one of the largest managed lists, with nearly 3 million subscribers, loses up to 1/3 of its subscribers each year because people change email addresses and forget to re-subscribe using their new address.

Recommendation: Every email message from GOMT should contain a note at the bottom, reminding people to re-subscribe if they are changing email addresses. Additionally, a field could be created on the online subscription form for a "secondary" email address to which a reminder note can be sent if messages to the primary address start bouncing.

SECTION III: Publication Options

As mentioned earlier, the web version of the Gulf of Maine Times should be the cornerstone of the publication. It is already getting more than 5,000 discreet visitors per month. If user features and functionality are added, it is updated often, and some attention is paid to promoting it, the site will quickly become a “go to” source for people looking for information about the ecology and environment of the Gulf of Maine. The options explored in this section are for the print version only, and assume that the website will be maintained and improved in any event.

The following options for the print edition are presented in order of preference.

Option I: Convert current readers to paid subscribers.

The ERG survey (Appendix A) indicates that 70% of readers polled are willing to pay at least \$10 per year to continue receiving the Times four times per year in the print edition. This figure has not been tested, and there is considerable question about the statistical reliability of the survey. Nonetheless, the response is encouraging. The Times currently has nearly 9,000 subscribers. If 70% of them (6,300) were to pay \$10 each for a subscription, the Times' current revenue problems would be largely alleviated. Obviously, this should be tested as soon as possible.

One concern is that the Times does not currently have the administrative capacity to handle thousands of checks. However, an online subscription facility can easily and inexpensively be set up that is linked to an online credit card payment facility, and everything can be handled automatically. There are scores of companies that provide on line credit card processing services, but the easiest is PayPal, which also has no monthly administrative costs (though their per transaction cost is a little higher). If the volume of subscriptions grows large enough, it would be easy to switch to a different credit card service provider later.

The best way to solicit subscriptions is to contact current readers with a letter or postcard whose ONLY purpose is to notify them of the change and to get them to log in on the subscription page. Postage cost is 22.5¢ per card in the US and 72¢ to Canada. If printing and labeling can be contributed in-kind, the total cost of mailing 9,000 postcards should be approximately \$3,000.

Recommendation: Set up an online subscription facility and send a postcard to all readers asking them to log on and pay \$10 for their annual subscription. This can be done anytime prior to the fall issue of the Times.

Another related concept that should be explored at the same time is to sell the Times in bulk to coastal stores and other businesses who would either sell it at retail or provide it free to their customers. The Times is already distributed in bulk free of charge to about 30 locations, and one of them, a whale watch operator who participated in the ERG survey, indicated she would be willing to pay. Some other likely prospects are ferry companies, windjammer cruise companies, tour boats, fishing expedition contractors, and others.

Recommendation: Have staff or consultant explore the market for distributing in bulk. A few calls to key businesses should provide ample indication whether a more significant marketing effort is warranted.

Option II: Seek funding from government and foundation sources

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, a non-profit located in Pennsylvania, publishes the Chesapeake Bay Journal, a monthly newspaper similar to the Gulf of Maine Times, which is distributed to over 40,000 readers each month. It is paid for by a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. It is certainly worth exploring the possibility of procuring similar funding for the Times from a government agency or a

private foundation. The least expensive way to do this would be for Council members to research the possibilities. If the Council does not have the time or capacity to do this, it should consider paying GOMT staff or hiring a consultant to handle it.

Option III: Partner with a Private Sector Newspaper Publisher to handle production, printing, advertising, and distribution

This approach may seem foreign at first, but it is remarkably simple and has enormous potential. In this scenario, Times staff would focus only on developing content (articles, photos, editorials, etc) and maintaining the web edition. A private company would take over all the actual production, printing, and distribution, and would make a profit by selling advertising, probably in numerous “local” editions. Times staff would retain complete control of content and appearance. The potential benefits of this approach are many. First, it allows staff to put their full energy into the “message” instead of the mechanics of publishing and distribution. Secondly, it removes the enormous financial burdens of production, layout, printing, and distribution. Instead, it would put those tasks (and costs) into the hands of a company that already has the expertise and capacity to maximize efficiencies, as well as a financial motive to expand the distribution as broadly as possible.

Such an arrangement would likely be very attractive to a newspaper publisher, too, because it would essentially “outsource” the entire “newsroom.” The publisher would be getting the benefit of a prestigious, high quality publication with a 15-year track record and a confirmed readership of 10,000 people. A partnership could also be structured with a revenue sharing component that could eventually provide enough funds to completely support the GOMT staff. There are numerous organizations that might be a good match for such a partnership, such as The Forecaster, which publishes five regional editions each week covering from Portland to Lewiston, or Compass Publications, Inc., which publishes six marine-industries related newspapers including Commercial Fisheries News.

In order to pursue this option further, some research needs to be done to identify other potential partners and to begin exploratory conversations with them. This work should be done by someone who understands business, negotiation, and the basics of the publishing industry.

Option IV—Seek Sponsorship Support

The advantage of sponsorship over advertising is that sponsors typically give money far in excess of the value of the space set aside for recognition. Sponsors are not just paying to put their name or product in front of the readers; rather, they are saying “WE SUPPORT THE MISSION of the organization (and we want your readers to know it).” Sponsors can be given recognition in many ways including:

- 1) Corporate logo on GOMT website, with hyperlink to sponsor’s own site (like banner advertising)
- 5) Logo and tag line in newspaper
- 6) Space for corporate message proportional to size of contribution: “XYZ, maker of fine widgets, is proud to support GOMT, etc”

Although sponsorships are not likely to cover the full costs of the Times, they can be an important source of revenue. They are relatively easy to implement and should definitely be pursued. A first step should be to have a few conversations with potential sponsors (preferably some that are already on a friendly basis) to explore what kind of dollar range and what kind of benefits would have the greatest appeal. Assuming that these conversations yielded encouraging results, the next step would be to develop a “sponsor benefits package” to serve as a “sales tool” in approaching prospective sponsors. The package should “make the case”—spelling out the reasons why sponsorship of the Times is a good and important thing for the prospect to do—and outline the range of benefits based on the amount of sponsorship contribution.

Clearly, this will take an investment of staff or consulting time, but the up front risk is very low (a few preliminary conversations with prospective sponsors) and it is extremely likely to be time and money well spent.

Option V: Sell Advertising Space to Generate Revenue

There are many commercial examples of this approach, but not many non-profit ones other than Working Waterfront, the monthly publication of the Island Institute. Working Waterfront distributes over 40,000 copies of each issue: about 20,000 by “box-holder” 3rd class mail (providing complete coverage to about 50 island and coastal communities), 5,000 to Island Institute dues-paying members, about 15,000 in bundles of 50 dropped off at several hundred retail locations along the coast, and about 200 mailed to subscribers who pay \$10 per year. The most recent edition was 28 pages and contained a total of 75 display ads (filling 8 full pages, or 29% of the total page area) with a rate sheet value of \$9,900. According to their founding editor, David Platt, that income is enough to cover less than 50% of their costs, and he does not think they can do much better than that. David was quite outspoken about not using commissioned salespeople to sell advertising (the normal practice in for-profit publications) because there is not sufficient income potential to make it worth doing. (Working Waterfront’s advertising sales person is a full time staff person who also performs other duties for the paper and for the Institute.)

There are numerous potential challenges for the Gulf of Maine Times to sell advertising space. The first is the need to hire additional staff to sell advertising and handle the extra design, layout, and production work. One of the biggest challenges is the large geographical range of the publication. Local businesses are not going to find “10,000 people spread across three states and two provinces” to be a compelling market. There might be a market, however, for suppliers of municipal services (like waste water engineering firms) and other businesses interested in reaching the policy makers and conservation professionals who make up at least a portion of the Times’ readership. However, this type of business might better be approached for sponsorship contributions rather than paid advertising.

Option VI—Sell “Editorial Space” in Paper

This approach has many potential problems. If the space is being “sold” it will generate revenues comparable to advertising space. It would be much better to offer editorial space as a “sponsor benefit” to major donors. However, strict editorial controls would need to be exercised, and the Council would be well advised to craft a very tight policy on editorial content (as well as criteria for sponsors) in order to preserve both the image of the paper (and the Council) and its editorial integrity.

Option VII—Sell or Give Editorial Content to Other Complementary Publications

This approach should be considered only if the Council is unable to generate enough revenues to continue a print edition of the Times. [However, allowing other publications to reprint GOMT articles is always a good idea, provided proper attribution is given, along with the Times’ web address.] This approach may not be an easy “sell”, either. David Platt of Working Waterfront was adamant that their publication produce 100% of their own original content, and though he would be very willing to take suggestions for story ideas, he would want his own stable of writers to produce the stories. On the other hand it should be noted that Working Waterfront has its own mission and is subsidized to a large extent by the Island Institute. Other market publications that are not so tied to an organizational mission may be more interested in free or low-cost, high-quality content.

The following table provides side-by-side comparisons of various approaches to publishing the Times.

Format/Approach	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost	Notes
1) Minimum: Web-based News/ Features w/ email notification to subscribers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexpensive • Flexible and dynamic content (easy to publish weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly editions) • Easy to track and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people prefer print and/or don’t have web or email access. • Cannot be distributed in stores and other coastal locations 	\$30,000 - \$40,000 per year for editorial content and web and email management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email notifications should be formatted both for HTML (with graphics) and in plain text to accommodate different ISP

	<p>evaluate: Email management program and webstats can provide enormous amount of info on reader trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily promoted through partners' websites and publications • Banner advertising or sponsor links can provide revenue • Portable (content can be sent or downloaded electronically) • "New Media" (like You Tube) provide multiple ways to engage readers • More environmentally friendly • Easy to format (content does not have to fit within defined space) 	<p>frequented by residents and visitors</p>		<p>protocols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web content should be updated often (some new content added every week or two at most) • Many more features can and should be added ASAP • GOMT web should be considered the cornerstone of the publication's public presence.
<p>2) Web-based News PLUS print edition</p>	<p>All the advantages above PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print edition can be distributed at businesses and other coastal locations, easily reaching residents and visitors • Print edition can carry traditional advertising to generate revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production, printing, mailing, and distribution of print edition add very significant costs. • Much more difficult to handle design and layout due to defined space limitations (requires a lot of staff time). • Print version is a static product (cannot be updated once printed) 	<p>Assuming 4 print issues per year, \$40,000 - \$50,000 per year for production, plus \$1.00 per copy for printing and distribution. Assume \$5,000 production cost for each additional print issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 issues of 10K=\$80K/yr • 10 issues of 50K=\$600K/yr 	<p>This option is best if a combination of paid subscriptions, sponsorships, and grant-funding can be procured sufficient to cover costs.</p>
<p>3) Web-based News with Print version spun off</p>	<p>All of the above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimizes costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of finding appropriate private "partner" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30,000-\$40,000 for Web-based News, plus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible revenue sharing agreement with private partner

<p>to private company (GOMT controls content and design)</p>	<p>to GOMC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilizes market forces to spread message • has unlimited potential for massive circulation 		<p>estimated \$10,000 per year for staff or consultant to manage relationship with private partner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content costs could increase with more frequent publication schedule 	<p>might eventually pay for GOMT staff costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if a good partner could be found, this would appear to be offer the best of all worlds.
<p>4) Web-based News plus “sell” editorial space in print edition to other organizations and businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates Revenue • Reduces writing burden on editorial staff • Provides opportunities for multiple points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could put at risk the editorial integrity • Untested model 		
<p>5) Web-based News; No print edition; Supply editorial content to other organizations’ publications (including for profit newspapers and magazines)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimizes costs • Potential for wide distribution of GOMC messages to huge and diverse audiences (imagine inserting articles in publications ranging from “Northern Forest Alliance Newsletter” to Yankee Magazine) • Can be implemented incrementally • Interested readers can be converted to GOMT web-subscribers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncertainty of business model (has this been done before?) • need to develop relationships • may be a problem providing identical content to competing publications 	<p>\$30,000 - \$40,000 per year plus estimated \$20,000 for staff or contractor to develop package and manage relationships with other publications</p>	<p>Editorial content could be provided free, or offered for a fee, on the model of the Associated Press.</p>
<p>6) Web-based News; no print edition. Purchase editorial space in other publications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for wide distribution of GOMC messages to huge and diverse audiences (imagine inserting articles in publications ranging from “Northern Forest Alliance 		<p>At least \$50,000 per year PLUS unknown costs of buying editorial space.</p>	<p>Should only be considered if Option 4 doesn’t work.</p>

	Newsletter” to Yankee Magazine) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be implemented incrementally• Interested readers can be converted to GOMT web-subscribers			
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SECTION IV: FINANCING OPTIONS

Revenue Sources

There are several potential sources of revenue for the Gulf of Maine Times. These include:

- Foundation and Government Grants
- Member contributions (paid by participating GOMC agencies)
- Sponsorships
- Subscriptions
- Advertising (both for print and web)
- Donations

The following table compares these and other options

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Costs/Staff time	Potential revenue
Grant funding	Once in place it allows for full energies to be devoted to publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to procure • Uncertain outcomes and timing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantwriter and good connections needed 	Varies. (EPA grant pays for Chesapeake Bay Journal 10 issues per year, 50K copies each)
GOMC Member Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreads cost among many agencies • Provides solid base for operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets are tight and not predictable 	\$2K - \$5K per agency, depending on format and frequency of publication	\$32,000 - \$80,000
Corporate and Agency “Sponsorship” (recognition such as logo banner with hyperlink)	Provides lump sums in varying amounts with few strings attached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of “market” or perceived value to potential sponsors. • Need to create schedule of benefits 	Estimated up to 240 hours of staff time to design benefits package and “sell” sponsorships	Varies
Conventional Print Advertising	Multiple sources of revenue reduce overall risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of perceived value to potential advertisers: • Working Waterfront distributes 40K+ copies and charges \$1098 for a full-page ad. • Brunswick Times Record distributes 10K+ daily and charges \$1070 for the same amount of space as a WW full page(!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as now except additional production staff time to design and lay out advertising, and advertising sales staff, plus costs of media kit. • need to add 8 pages of advertising to maintain current amount of editorial content • Because of size of the region, local advertisers not motivated unless regional editions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain: with Current distribution of 10K copies per issue, revenue potential is approximately \$3,000 per issue at Working Waterfont’s rates, or \$10,000 per issue at Brunswick Times Record rates.

			are offered.	
Paid Subscriptions	Reliable income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could lose some current readers • Might lose access to many “casual” readers (visitors and residents) 	If subscriptions can be managed electronically, some additional staff time needed for managing list	ERG’s survey appears to indicate that a subscription rate of \$10 or less would be acceptable to 70% of current readers (Needs to be verified). If accurate, income potential with current readers alone is \$60,000+
Sell copies in bulk to coastal businesses to be given or sold to their customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely prospects include whale watch, tour boat, and windjammer cruise operators, ferries, harborside restaurants, etc. • Could be sold at cost (\$0.50 or less per copy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an effective way to reach GOM visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some logistics and costs involved in distribution 	Suggest charging 50¢ per copy in bulk.
Sell Banner Ads on website	Can generate substantial revenues at almost no cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clutters up website a little • Requires sales staff, or at least part time attention of staff 	Very little design and IT time	Can charge per click (from \$0.10 to \$50 per click), or by the month. Current potential at nearly 9000 visits per month is as much as \$5K/month
Collect Donations	• Easy to implement and administer on website.	No downside, but need 501(c)3 and Canadian equivalent for tax-deductible gifts	Nominal setup time	Revenue not usually great, but certainly worth the effort; occasional major gifts.

SECTION V: Next Steps

Recognizing that the Council needs to move quickly in making some important decisions about the future of the Gulf of Maine Times, there are a number of priority steps that should be undertaken immediately. The following steps should be taken during July, if possible:

1) UPDATE WEBSITE

- a. Put the Times web pages into Movable Type, a content management system (CMS) that facilitates the following features and more.
- b. Add interactive user tools such as polls, user comments, discussion forums, photo, audio, and video galleries, etc.
- c. Rework Subscription Page, adding credit card payment facility for paid print subscriptions.*
- d. Add a general donation facility with a link to it from every page on the site.*
- e. Start updating the online content with far greater frequency: new material should be added weekly, or at least monthly.**

ESTIMATED COST: \$2,000 for consultant [quoted by Jim Cradock] plus staff time to place content on web. *PayPal credit card facility is free, but charges per transaction—an ideal way to test the market. **This suggestion does not necessarily entail more content or cost; rather, once the system is set up, staff can place content on the site as it is created.

2) PROMOTE THE SITE

- a. All GOMC member agencies can put up a link to the TIMES site on their own home pages
- b. Add promotional signature line with web address on any GOMC outgoing email messages
- c. Ask all partner organizations to put link to TIMES on their websites

ESTIMATED COST: a small amount of staff time

3) DEVELOP TEMPLATE FOR EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS*

- a. Two formats need to be developed: one for HTML and the other for plain text.
- b. As soon as templates are developed, notifications of updates on the website can be sent out monthly using Constant Contact.

ESTIMATED COST: 2 – 4 hours of staff or consultant time (up to \$500)
*Email notifications are needed for people who are subscribers to the electronic edition of the Times. Notifications can be sent whenever a substantial amount of new material has been placed on the site—probably at least once a month.

4) SEEK PAID SUBSCRIPTIONS

- a. As soon as subscription page has been updated to receive credit card payments, send a postcard to all print subscribers notifying them that they can either subscribe for the free to the electronic edition, or pay \$10 for an annual print subscription, and refer them to the subscription page of the website. This will very quickly indicate whether paid subscriptions are a viable approach. (70% of respondents to ERG's survey said they would pay at least \$10 for a subscription).

ESTIMATED COST: \$3,000 for postage, seek in kind for printing

5) BEGIN RESEARCH FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNER

- a. The ideal candidate would be a company that already has several newspapers throughout the region (such as The Forecaster, which has 5 regional editions) and has the capacity and infrastructure to sell advertising and efficiently handle production, printing and

distribution through the three States and two Provinces. (GOMT staff would completely control content and appearance.)

ESTIMATED COST: \$1,500 - \$2,000 for consultant to conduct research and make exploratory contact with prospective partners.

6) BEGIN OUTREACH TO BULK DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS

- a. The Times currently is distributing about 1,500 copies in bulk to about 30 locations. One Whale Watch Tour Operator who responded to the ERG survey said she would be willing to pay in order to provide them to her customers. A few phone calls will indicate whether other coastal businesses such as ferries, general stores, restaurants, fishing tours, etc. will be also interested in purchasing the TIMES in bulk, either as a giveaway or as a retail item for their customers. If response is positive, further time and energy will need to be devoted to marketing through this avenue.

ESTIMATED COST: 2 – 4 hours of staff or consulting time (up to \$500) for preliminary research

7) BEGIN RESEARCH FOR GRANT FUNDING

- a. Seek major funding for entire operation (like the EPA grant that pays for the Chesapeake Bay Journal)
- b. Seek “strategic planning” or “organizational development” grant from foundation to facilitate the switch to a sustainable (instead of earmark-funded) publication.

ESTIMATED COST: 10 – 20 hours staff or consulting time (up to \$5,000)

8) ASK EACH GOMC MEMBER AGENCY TO CONTRIBUTE FUNDS TO FACILITATE TRANSITION

- a. There are insufficient funds in the current GOMT budget to cover the business development costs anticipated here—investments which hold the prospect of a bright and financially sustainable future for the Times.

SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION: \$2,000 -- \$5,000 per agency

**APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF ERG SURVEY of Gulf of Maine Times Readers
(provided by Peter Alexander)**

Recently, the consulting firm ERG, conducted an email and web-based survey of Gulf of Maine Times' readers in an effort to gauge the effectiveness and usefulness of the publication. Unfortunately, the results do not have much statistical validity, in part because of the small sample size (318 respondents), but more because it was not a *random* sample: only readers with email addresses were contacted, and those who chose to participate in the survey were "self-selected." Of the people who did respond there appear to be many who are very enthusiastically engaged with the Times, and at least some of the responses provide some useful insights. For example, when asked about the topics that interested them most, readers responded:

Answer	Number
Activities in the Gulf of Maine	214
Research and monitoring techniques	213
Fisheries	159
Invasive species	155
Gulf of Maine regional news	149
Near shore	141
Policy	136
Native species	134
Working coast	107
Biographic profiles	50
Other?	16
Total respondents	318

Other Topics
Aquaculture (4 mentions)
Biology of marine organisms
GIS and Remote Sensing
Renewable ocean energy
Conservation
Climate change
Diadromous fish restoration and management
Impact of ecological studies on legislation
Ecology
Habitat restoration
Herring and Bluefin Tuna
Salt Marshes and Wetlands
MPAs
Nitrogen
Sewage
Data Sources
Pharmaceuticals in the environment
Science translation
Wastewater management

These readers almost universally rated the information in the Times as very useful or somewhat useful, and found the articles easy to understand. They also expressed high levels of overall satisfaction with

the content and the design of the publication, and many took the time to respond to open-ended questions and to offer suggestions. Some of the more interesting suggestions follow.

I know cost of printing is an issue, but I'd love to have more copies to distribute aboard whale watch boats and the sightseeing boats we work on. We have an audience who is really looking for reading material during some of the cruising time, and they're already out in the Gulf of Maine, so it would be a perfect venue to help them become more informed and involved. We might be able to even sell copies aboard the boats to help pay for printing.

If a free electronic version was available, I am sure my agency would use it rather than pay.

If you have to charge for paper copies, I suggest you go all electronic.

Keep it free, even if web only

Maybe add a section about community based science research: for example, spotlight on a local non-profit that is using science and research to improve the community. I am thinking of the group in East Machias that is trying to bring back salmon via a hatchery but also teaching children about water quality, fish habitat, and environmental stewardship.

Overall, I have been very disappointed with the "customer service" side of the Gulf of Maine Times. I have had to change address several times due to job changes and personal moves. Each time, I try to change my address with the Gulf of Maine Council, and each time, the address does not change. There was a period where I was not receiving the print version nor the email version, and I fell out of interest. This really should be improved.

Provide an advanced search capability of archived issues. Provide a multiyear index.

Shifting to electronic format and exploring wiki and blog type technologies to encourage interaction among Times readers.

Solicit articles more broadly from partner organizations

When asked if they would continue subscribing if the publication was available only electronically, only 11 said "no". As noted earlier, however, the survey itself was sent electronically, significantly limiting the number of print subscribers and readers who could answer this important question. When asked what a "fair" subscription rate over 2/3 responded between \$5 - \$20. However, when asked a more open-ended question ("...how much would you be willing to pay?) nearly 1/3 said they wouldn't pay at all. However, another 1/3 would pay up to \$10, and 1/4 would pay up to \$20. If these numbers would bear up through the entire readership, there could be a strong argument for continuing a print version by subscription. **[If two thirds of the current subscriber base of about 10,000 were to each pay \$10 per year for the Times, it would generate nearly \$70,000 in annual revenue.]** However, because of the questionable statistical accuracy of the survey, and because people often behave differently in the real world than they say they will during a survey, it would be risky to depend on a paid subscription option for the future of the publication, especially because a print edition requires a larger investment in design and layout—not to mention the cost of printing

The survey ended with some demographic questions. Of the more than 300 respondents, 50 identified themselves as conservationists or environmental non-profit workers, 49 as scientists, 42 as resource managers, 34 as educators, 10 as technologists, 9 as editor/ writer/ artist, 7 as legislators, 6 as students, and the balance from a wide assortment of professions. The median age range was 50 – 59, with only 15 respondents under 30. About half live in a coastal community along the Gulf of Maine, and were spread out fairly evenly (proportionally) among the three states and two Canadian provinces, with about 15% from outside the Gulf of Maine region.

As noted earlier, there is not enough statistical accuracy in the survey sample to depend on these results for any significant decision-making, even for planning editorial content. It should be noted, however, that using Constant Contact (an email management system already in place for the Times’ list) and an email/web-based news and feature format, staff would be able to continuously and accurately track who is reading which editorial content, providing information that *can* be relied upon for editorial decisions.

One very interesting outcome of the survey was the collection of comments stimulated by the question “Compared to other publications, what do you think makes the articles in the Gulf of Maine Times unique?” The responses were encouraging...

Answer	Number
It is the best source of information specific to the Gulf of Maine region	164
It is the best way to keep up with the people doing research and restoration in the Gulf of Maine region	132
It does a great job translating science and research into management	108
It is the best source of information on emerging environmental policy issues in the region	78
Other?	13
Total respondents	318

But some respondents found the prescribed answers too limiting:

Other*
I would like to check "great job translating science and research into management" and "best source on environmental policy issues" but unfortunately little emphasis is placed on those issues in the Times these days.
It does some of all the above but is not the best or only source of such information
It is good for many of the check-offs...but not the best.
It is one source of info specific to the GOM
It's a good general source of information. Particularly in disciplines outside my own.
It's a great education tool for environmental permitting boards

* Some responses left out here for brevity. For full responses see the appended Survey Summary.

These comments raise the question: what is the unique niche that the Gulf of Maine Times fills, or can fill, for the region? Clearly, it is not just another free, general tabloid paper, of which there are dozens throughout the region (Casco Bay alone has “Working Waterfront”, “Harpwell Anchor”, “the Coastal Journal”, “the Midcoast Forecaster” and several others). If the publication is to be true to the mission of the Gulf of Maine Council it needs to provide content of interest to, and supportive of the individuals and organizations most directly involved in carrying out the work described in the Council’s mission of

“maintaining and enhancing the environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine.” It might be helpful, then, to think of three levels of “audience” for the Times. The primary audience is made up of elected leaders, agency personnel, conservationists, scientists, educators, and journalists. The secondary audience is among marine-related industries, and the third is the public served by all these individuals, agencies, and groups—“Gulf of Maine residents and visitors.”

Recommendation: For the primary and secondary audience, content should focus on best practices, new science, new policies, success stories, challenges, economic impacts of environmental conditions and policies, and profiles through which GOMC stakeholders and people involved in Marine-related industries can be introduced to emerging leaders, and learn about each other’s work. A second purpose is served by making sure that articles are written in an accessible way that is easily understood by a layperson, and by encouraging GOMC stakeholders to use the Times editorial content in their own organizations’ communications and outreach to Gulf of Maine residents and visitors.

**APPENDIX B
ERG SURVEY ANSWERS**

Percents may not sum to 100% due to rounding or allowing respondents to choose more than 1 response.

Open text responses are verbatim and have been edited for content and clarity.

Q1. Do you subscribe to the print or electronic version of the *Gulf of Maine Times*?

Answer	Number	Percent
I subscribe to the print version	149	46.86
I am not a subscriber to the <i>Gulf of Maine Times</i>	84	26.42
I subscribe to the electronic version	61	19.18
I subscribe to both the print and electronic versions	24	7.55
Total respondents	318	100

Q2. To what extent do you read every issue of the *Gulf of Maine Times*?

Answer	Number	Percent
I read every issue	108	35.64
I read most of the issues, but not all	132	43.45
I rarely read it	63	20.79
Total respondents	303	100

Q3. Of the issues that you read, what category best describes how much of the content of the *Gulf of Maine Times* you read?

Answer	Number	Percent
I read almost everything	81	27.00
I read more than half	123	41.00
I read less than half	56	18.67
I read a minimal amount	40	13.33
Total respondents	300	100

Q4. When is the last time you read articles in the *Gulf of Maine Times*?

Answer	Number	Percent
Less than one month ago	104	33.99
From one to six months ago	155	50.65
From six months to a year ago	13	4.25
From one to two years ago	4	1.31
More than two years ago	3	0.98

Don't remember	27	8.82
Total respondents	306	100

Q5. Where do you usually read the *Gulf of Maine Times*? (check all that apply)

Answer	Number	Percent
I read it at work	192	60.38
I read it at home or in other casual settings	137	43.08
I read it at school	7	2.20
Other?	3	0.94
Total respondents	318	

Other: On an airplane, at a training facility, I read it before I give it out to program participants as part of a package.

Q6. How do you use the articles in the *Gulf of Maine Times*? (check all that apply)

Answer	Number	Percent
For my own personal interest	217	68.24
At work	157	49.37
For professional research projects	79	24.84
To teach my college undergraduate students	12	3.77
For my own school-related research projects	6	1.89
To teach my high school students	6	1.89
Total respondents	318	

Q7. Which type of articles do you read most often? (check all that apply)

Answer	Number	Percent
Science Insights	249	78.30
Research Update	246	77.36
Feature stories	225	70.75
In the News	150	47.17
Gulf Voices	108	33.96
Book Review	79	24.84
Profile	76	23.90
Q&A	70	22.01
Editor's Notes	70	22.01
Travelogue	46	14.47
Total respondents	318	

Q8. Of the articles you read, what topics are of the most interest to you?

Answer	Number	Percent
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Activities in the Gulf of Maine	214	67.30
Research and monitoring techniques	213	66.98
Fisheries	159	50.00
Invasive species	155	48.74
Gulf of Maine regional news	149	46.86
Near shore	141	44.34
Policy	136	42.77
Native species	134	42.14
Working coast	107	33.65
Biographic profiles	50	15.72
Other?	16	5.03
Total respondents	318	

Other Topics
Aquaculture (4 mentions)
Biology of marine organisms
GIS and Remote Sensing
Renewable ocean energy
Conservation
Climate change
Diadromous fish restoration and management
Impact of ecological studies on legislation
Ecology
Habitat restoration
Herring and Bluefin Tuna
Salt Marshes and Wetlands
MPAs
Nitrogen
Sewage
Data Sources
Pharmaceuticals in the environment
Science translation
Wastewater management

Q9. Overall, how useful do you find the *information* in the articles?

Answer	Number	Percent
Very useful	118	39.20
Somewhat useful	167	55.48
Not useful	2	0.66
Not sure	14	4.65
Total respondents	301	100

Q10. Overall, how understandable do you find the *information* in the articles?

Answer	Number	Percent
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Very understandable	264	87.42
Somewhat understandable	30	9.93
Not understandable	0	0
Not sure	8	2.65
Total respondents	302	100

Q11. Overall, how satisfied are you with the type of *information* included in the articles?

Answer	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	177	58.61
Somewhat satisfied	110	36.42
Not satisfied	1	0.33
Not sure	14	4.64
Total respondents	302	100

Q12. Do you have any suggestions for the type of *information* you would like to see included in the articles?

Suggestions: *Numerous, see attached page at end of survey.*

Q13. How satisfied are you with the *design and layout* of the *Gulf of Maine Times*?

Answer	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	206	68.21
Somewhat satisfied	73	24.17
Not satisfied	0	0
Not sure	23	7.62
Total respondents	302	100

Q14. Do you have any suggestions for improving the *design and layout* of the *Gulf of Maine Times*?

Suggestions
Consider a table of contents that can be scanned faster. Or maybe a multiyear index.
I kind of miss the map
I quite enjoy it and I pass it along to a hostel down the road.
I think it should be longer!! It's too thin!
I would like to see more articles showing researchers and commercial fisherman working together. Too often the media pits the two against each other.
It needs to remain attractive.
Keep the same

Leave it the way it is!
More GIS maps to inform readers and allow interactivity
More pictures of the resources (fish, plants, plankton) more in-depth articles.
No great paper! I use the center pullouts on the city hall environmental news bulletin board frequently.
No it looks great, keep it up.
Not really. I like it the way it is and think everyone who can, should be reading it on-line to protect the environment even more.
Not sure but maybe a smaller size....
Smaller format, 8 1/2 by 11 inches
There seem to significant, recent changes/improvements in the design and layout.
To my way of thinking, it should be offered online (via an email to all interested people) and sent to the people who want it that way. Paper copies should be in limited numbers.

Q15. Thinking about the articles you've read in the *Gulf of Maine Times*, to what extent was the information useful in motivating the following actions related to habitat restoration:

Changes in personal behavior

Answer	Number	Percent
Very Useful	35	12.54
Somewhat Useful	116	41.58
Not Useful	28	10.04
Not Applicable	100	35.84
Total respondents	279	100

Implementing habitat restoration projects

Answer	Number	Percent
Very Useful	49	17.95
Somewhat Useful	71	26.01
Not Useful	33	12.09
Not Applicable	120	43.96
Total respondents	273	100

Pursuing related research projects

Answer	Number	Percent
Very Useful	50	18.32
Somewhat Useful	87	31.87
Not Useful	28	10.26
Not Applicable	108	39.56
Total respondents	273	100

Developing grant proposals

Answer	Number	Percent
Very Useful	25	9.23
Somewhat Useful	74	27.31
Not Useful	46	16.97
Not Applicable	126	46.49

Total respondents	271	100
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Changing teaching curriculum

Answer	Number	Percent
Very Useful	23	8.78
Somewhat Useful	39	14.89
Not Useful	41	15.65
Not Applicable	159	60.69
Total respondents	262	100

Changing local community behavior

Answer	Number	Percent
Very Useful	44	16.36
Somewhat Useful	80	29.74
Not Useful	29	10.78
Not Applicable	116	43.12
Total respondents	270	100

- Q16.** In the space below, please provide some details on the actions in Question 15 above that were motivated by reading the *Gulf of Maine Times*, or feel free to provide details on *other actions* that were motivated by reading the *Gulf of Maine Times* not covered by the list in Question 15.

Describe: *Numerous, see attached page at end of survey.*

- Q17.** To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “The *Gulf of Maine Times* provides *information* that is both relevant and unique to the Gulf of Maine region.”

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	141	47.47
Agree	151	50.84
Disagree	5	1.68
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total respondents	297	100

- Q18.** How frequently do you share articles with friends, colleagues, or students?

Answer	Number	Percent
Very frequently	40	12.58
Somewhat frequently	109	34.28
Not frequently	128	40.25
Never	41	12.89
Total respondents	318	100

Q19. What type of articles have you shared? Check all that apply.

Answer	Number	Percent
Research Update	141	44.34
Science Insights	125	39.31
Feature stories	114	35.85
In the News	59	18.55
I don't remember	43	13.52
None in particular	35	11.01
Book Review	26	8.18
Gulf Voices	24	7.55
Profile	21	6.60
Editor's Notes	16	5.03
Travelogue	14	4.40
Q&A	9	2.83
Total respondents	318	

Q20. Compared to other publications, what do you think makes the articles in the Gulf of Maine Times unique?

Answer	Number	Percent
It is the best source of information specific to the Gulf of Maine region	164	51.57
It is the best way to keep up with the people doing research and restoration in the Gulf of Maine region	132	41.51
It does a great job translating science and research into management	108	33.96
It is the best source of information on emerging environmental policy issues in the region	78	24.53
Other?	13	4.09
Total respondents	318	

Other
Gives a useful overview of the variety of research and marine resource activities in the Gulf of Maine
Good information
I would like to check "great job translating science and research into management" and "best source on environmental policy issues" but unfortunately little emphasis is placed on those issues in the Times these days.
It does some of all the above but is not the best or only source of such information
It is good for many of the check-offs...but not the best.
It is my only source of info on the Gulf.
It is not just about one state
It is one source of info specific to the GOM
It's a good general source of information. Particularly in disciplines outside my own.
It's a great education tool for environmental permitting boards

It is location specific

Q21. What do you like best about the print version?

Answer	Number	Percent
I like having a printed copy in hand	70	41.42
It's easier to read	68	40.24
It's easier to share articles and other content	18	10.65
Other	9	5.33
It's easier to use as a teaching tool	4	2.37
Total respondents	169	100

Other
All of the above
I now prefer the electronic version as this is increasingly the way I receive and read most news updates. Also easier to share with others by forwarding
I would do away with print version - green practice and economically viable. Sharing on-line is easier than physically sharing the document.
I would prefer an electronic version (PDF) to save paper.
I would read it electronically
I wouldn't read it if it was just another email- I get too many of those, I know I should switch to email, but I like to have some things in paper!
It arrives. Sometimes I forget to check the electronic version
It is easier to read and easier to read because I can hold it in my hand. I do not read e-versions of any newsletters - too difficult and out of sight, out of mind.
None of the above
Transportable
We have dial-up internet access only and cannot download huge files/web pages, especially with photos

Q22. If the *Gulf of Maine Times* were to switch only being available in electronic format on the Web, would you continue your subscription?

Answer	Number	Percent
Yes	123	71.10
No	11	6.36
Not sure	39	22.54
Total respondents	173	100

Q23. What do you like best about the electronic version?

Answer	Number	Percent
It saves paper	52	62.65

It's easier to share articles and other content	23	27.71
Other	6	7.23
It's easier to read	1	1.20
It's easier to use as a teaching tool	1	1.20
Total respondents	84	100

Other
A PDF is typically not very easy to read directly from the web. Since it is a PDF of the actual written newspaper, I typically print it out, so this is easier and more compact. It also provides the opportunity for sharing articles electronically.
Accessible anytime, no need to file on site.
All of the above (2 mentions)
Convenience of its arrival
I don't particularly like electronic version
I prefer the print version
Saves paper, less expensive

Q24. What the last *Gulf of Maine Times* issue you accessed on the Gulf of Maine Times web site?

Answer	Number	Percent
Winter/Spring 2008 issue	56	71.79
Before the Winter/Spring 2008 issue	22	28.21
Total respondents	79	100

Q25. If the Gulf of Maine Council of the Marine Environment were to begin charging for subscriptions in order to cover the price of production and publishing, in your opinion, what would you say is a fair annual subscription rate?

Answer	Number	Percent
\$5 or less	70	23.97
Between \$5 and \$10	111	38.01
Between \$10 and \$20	94	32.19
Between \$20 and \$30	17	5.82
Total respondents	292	100

Q26. If the Gulf of Maine Council of the Marine Environment were to begin charging for subscriptions, how much would you be willing to pay to continue your subscription?

Answer	Number	Percent
\$0, I would not be willing to pay for a subscription	83	27.85
No more than \$5/year	30	10.07

No more than \$10/year	92	30.87
No more than \$20/year	76	25.50
No more than \$30/year	17	5.70
Total respondents	298	100

Q27. Do you have any suggestions for improving the *Gulf of Maine Times*?

Describe: *Numerous, see attached page at end of survey.*

Q28. Do you have Internet access at home, at work, or by some other means?

Answer	Number	Percent
Yes	313	99.05
No	3	0.95
Total respondents	316	100

Q29. How comfortable are you using the internet to read articles and find information?

Answer	Number	Percent
Very comfortable	233	73.73
Somewhat comfortable	62	19.62
Not very comfortable	18	5.70
Not comfortable	3	0.95
Total respondents	316	100

Q30. What sort of connection do you use to access the internet? (Check the ones that you commonly use)

Answer	Number	Percent
High speed (T-lines)	129	40.57
Cable connection	105	33.02
Digital subscriber line (DSL)	94	29.56
Modem/dial-up	25	7.86
Satellite	6	1.89
Total respondents	318	

Q31. What title would best describe your primary occupation?

Answer	Number	Percent
Other	59	19.60

Resource Manager	42	13.95
Scientist – field	40	13.29
Educator	34	11.30
Conservationist	28	9.30
Consultant	23	7.64
Environmental non-profit worker	22	7.31
Technologist	10	3.32
Scientist – lab	9	2.99
Editor/writer/artist	9	2.99
Legislator	7	2.33
Student	6	1.99
Outreach specialist	6	1.99
Librarian	4	1.33
Fisherman/woman	1	0.33
Attorney	1	0.33
Total respondents	302	100

Other: Numerous, see attached table below...

Q32. Which category best describes your age?

Answer	Number	Percent
30 or under	15	4.78
30-39	53	16.88
40-49	69	21.97
50-59	115	36.62
60 and over	62	19.75
Total respondents	314	100

Q33. Do you live in a coastal community along the Gulf of Maine?

Answer	Number	Percent
Yes	157	49.68
No	159	50.32
I'm not sure	0	0
Total respondents	316	100

Q34. What U.S. State or Canadian Province do you live in?

Answer	Number	Percent
Maine	76	24.44
Massachusetts	73	23.47
Nova Scotia	59	18.97
Other state or province	44	14.15
New Hampshire	37	11.90

New Brunswick	22	7.07
Total respondents	311	100

Other: Numerous, See attached table below...

Responses are verbatim and have been edited for content and clarity.

Q12. Do you have any suggestions for the type of information you would like to see included in the articles?

Suggestions
A regular, graphic report on the health of the Gulf of Maine
A "what is going on at your shore" page
Analyzing volunteer monitoring data for volunteers and community policy boards
As a biologist, I like the articles on different species, such as commercially important species, endangered species, etc. The more detail the better.
As a stormwater management company I am interested in any information that relates to the interaction between stormwater discharge and coastal zone management.
As an educator, I find that I am in the position of "translating" scientific information to the casual citizen. Making the information compelling and understandable is my goal. The articles could include a component for how and where the information is most likely to impact the citizen.
Beach and erosion control
Benefits and outcomes of the many partnerships in the region. How has all the investment being made make a difference to the Gulf's resources?
Continue with an emphasis on science and information; projects and initiatives; not so much on profiles of individuals and human interest
Detailed reports on how effective the information your report is at changing governmental attitude and priorities.
Educational tools/teaching activities. Especially for informal educators.
Give more profile to community groups (eg: watershed groups) so they can relate to the overall efforts being carried out on the BOF
I find the articles on marine hydrology a little bit tedious but that is merely due to my lack of education in that field. I find the articles very interesting and in my opinion it is one of the best if not the best "paper" of its type with respect to natural history topics.
I like the GOM Times because it updates me with projects going on that may not have made it into published literature - and what various regions are doing. My interest in types of articles varies considerably from issue to issue.
I think it is a fine publication the way it is, maybe you could spotlight different towns and cities.
I would like to see a connection to Council activities.
I would like to see information about education efforts and stewardship of the Gulf of Maine. I have not seen the Gulf of Maine Institute featured and I think it deserves featuring.
I would like to see it be more science-based, less book reviews and 'feel good' stories. I like the articles that contain real information and facts.
Keep reaching for the state of the science on issues. I want to know what is current and under consideration in environmental policy, environmental science, public projects, public interest.
Might include more information on activities of various recreational and commercial fishing groups within GOM
More articles on the Upper Bay of Fundy
More articles related to land use planning/zoning/coastal zone management.
More basic marine geology, including geologic history. More basic biology.
More case studies/ profiles of on-going projects related to conservation and restoration in the

GOM. A regular feature on policy issues.
More coastal management and land use stories/experiences/strategies. Particularly interested in salt marshes and estuaries.
More ecosystem science. More fisheries. Less Council news
More GIS maps
More in-depth interviews with varied researchers and stake holders.
More in-depth review of research and economic/political issues
More info relating to inland rivers and lakes in the bay of Fundy region
More information at the high school student level. More information on careers.
More on freshwater tributaries
More on how towns or individuals can make a difference
More on invasive Phragmites control; Native versus invasive Phragmites; how salt marsh restoration differs in northern parts of the Gulf of Maine than in more southerly latitudes.
More on the homes and properties.
More people features, relating the excitement of the work done and the successes achieved. Also include the arts - more photos, quotes from area writers, etc
More science-based, also economic and cross-border issues
More specifics re interspecies ecology, i.e. food chains, disease and symbiotic/predation links
Much less human interest (book reviews, travelogue) and more direct information for those working to improve environmental conditions of the Gulf of Maine
Natural history
Of the articles I choose to read (limited mostly by time and my busy schedule) I find them well written with good graphics and thoughtful
Premiere projects that other regions share
Regularly solicit articles from partner organizations around the GOM.
Research and Data. I educate the public on the status of the Gulf of Maine.
Restoring whole watersheds using an ecosystem approach; river-coastal connectivity; the interconnectedness of the types of things already being reported on
Some articles don't go beyond the basics. They seem to be written for people with little or no science background. These articles do not extend my knowledge or understanding of the topic.
Some of the articles are too long and sometimes have extra "fluff" to make them that length.
The information is good, and in depth. I'd like to see a better summary/table of contents
The spread of articles is very appropriate for both my interests and professional needs.
Updates on past reports of on-going research
We use the paper as a tool to educate and keep the local conservation commissioners and staff informed on coastal/marine issues that may be impacted by on shore development. That connection, between on shore and the marine environment, is something that is not well understood.
What should we actually do about Phragmites based on the experiences of stewards?

Q16. In the space below, please provide some details on the actions in Question 15 above that were motivated by reading the Gulf of Maine Times, or feel free to provide details on other actions that were motivated by reading the Gulf of Maine Times not covered by the list in Question 15.

Responses
Getting in contact with organizers to get involved, becoming aware of activities
A source of ideas for writing grant proposals. A source of information for students in an architectural Design Studio Course.
Articles on fisheries, endangered species, restoration projects provide content and ideas for curriculum development and program planning; Content and language from research and

education articles assist in grant writing; Increased awareness of issues contributes to my ability to make better choices in what I eat, how I live, etc.
As a member of my local conservation committee, some of the info provides ammo for our efforts to prevent pollution, and water conservation in the watershed.
As a resource manager we are charged with implementing restoration projects or conserving habitat, so the Times does not motivate us; however, it is good to keep up with local news, new scientific developments, etc.
As a school library specialist, my function is to locate resources for teacher's use and often did this using The Gulf of Maine Times.
At the NS Museum, we support a number of community and NGO-based initiatives relating to the GoM (the Lower Minas Basin as we call it), so we see the elements of Q14 reflected in the actions of these groups.
Awareness of and participation in volunteer maintenance activities; reinforcement of conservation-oriented personal behavior
Awareness of coastal restoration is relevant to Nova Scotia environmental management and to help inform other individuals and general perspective, but not actually to do projects.
CT DEP staff worked with local academic researchers (lobsters) to get a state of ME grant
During the time that I was on CARP's BOD I believed reading GOMT caused me to be a more effective member
Entered into a grant application with a Maine university to launch a monitoring program for Muscongus Bay. A project that will involve high schools and eventually have a citizen-science component for visitors to our facility.
Excellent source of information on activities in the Gulf useful in the coordination of our actions with those of our US colleagues in NOAA, USCG and EPA.
Find out names of researchers to contact
For local conservation commission, Gulf of Maine Times can inform on current management practices such as impervious surfaces, climate change effects.
Gives important background about what is happening in the region to help with grant proposals.
Gulf of Times focuses on estuarine/inshore issues, but much of my work focuses on offshore portion of GOM, especially the interaction of climate change; fisheries harvesting and natural variability (driven by NAO and ENSO meteorological cycles)
Helps see what work is happening in Gulf that is relevant to watershed work
I am interested but not working in the field. I was given a copy of the paper and followed through with a subscription. I try to talk to like minded people and family (fisherfolk) and share some things. The fact things are being studied is so important. We are battling a salmon farm lease & expansion here in Port Mouton Bay and I think the articles in the paper help point we need to take drastic action to protect and co-habitate with our Bay.
I am outside of the GOM region (Chesapeake Bay) and am using information as examples/models of practices elsewhere.
I do not usually use the articles for project development but rather to see how nearshore habitat data is being applied, what issues are of importance in the Gulf of Maine, and who is doing what work. We've collaborated with Maine on a variety of projects and it helps keep us informed.
I don't know quite how to answer this. The content in articles did not move me personally into an activist arena. I'm not sure, then how to apply and answer to the above.
I have no specific details to offer but I can tell you that the information from the GOMT informs much of my work.
I just basically learned more about the Gulf of Maine, which helps me with my job. I am a librarian and our organization deals with both aquatic resources and oceans management.
I live near Saco River and Saco Bay, so updates on issues affecting either may guide my own actions, and, info pertinent to City policy may be incorporated into background for decision making.
I made some contacts with researchers I am acquainted with

I only go to the Gulf of Maine in the summer, but it's helpful to know about projects and their status.
I read GOM Times to find out what others are doing around the watershed
I read it mainly to stay current on conservation issues in the Gulf of Maine
I tend to be a bit more observant when on the local shoreline which is a daily occurrence. We teach a 1 week marine ecology field trip course in the fall so it provides more materials on the Gulf and issues in the area.
I use it to increase personal knowledge, and to keep me aware of environmental issues and how to improve my own actions.
I use the publication for general information on salt marshes and to receive an update of what researchers are doing in the Gulf of Maine.
I use the Times as an addition to my 4th grade curriculum covering the Gulf of Maine. The articles about commercial fishing are useful, the maps and graphs help illustrate important info for my young learners, and the writing about native species helps to increase their understanding about the Gulf.
I was motivated to teach about issues that were raised in the Gulf of Maine Times. This also helped me develop grant proposals.
I work for conservation corps that teaches environmental education to the communities and schools. We work with different watersheds, etc.
Ideas and information for planning policy actions on ecosystem and fisheries management
Identified useful analyses, active projects, and sources of data.
if the Gulf of Maine Times was applicable to my research or I was a teacher I think I would use it for those purposes... I like to read it to see what is going on in the GofM!
I'm a grant reviewer for proposals that include habitat restoration among others. Reading pubs like this help me stay current.
I'm a newspaper reporter and I use the GOMT for story ideas and contacts.
Implementing habitat improvement projects at work
In '98 I had organized with the province to maintain dykes for a local tenant hay farmer on 50 abandoned acres of DU marsh. The landowner had agreed in principle but finally decided to flood it instead, returning it to salt marsh. The farmer and I were quite disappointed until GoM explained why flooding was really the best thing and we have both gone on to advocate more.
Increased education on activities in the GOM led me to follow up on websites listed in articles for more information.
info used for lake monitoring projects
Information contributed to my understanding of regional issues, which I bring to planning my organization's work in the region. I also appreciate being able to stay up to date with research, meetings, initiatives etc.
Inspired nutrient research
It doesn't apply so much to us as we are a network. So we pass the information to local groups working on these issues.
I've often used the information within lessons I'm teaching or shared it with staff (and even my own family)
Just gained a better understanding of the Gulf of Maine.
Keeps me informed; teaches my students about GOM
Last action I recall was working with other regional organizations to nominate Evan Richert for Visionary Award.
Learned about research activities of others
Mitigation/restoration design and implementation as well as monitoring guidance
More informed local beach patrol and reporting for town meetings
N/A I read GoMT for pleasure
Not to sure how to answer this as I have been interested in environmental issues most of my life.

Past articles on both native and invasive species has provided guidance for restoration and protection efforts, and has lead to the education of volunteers on various environmental committees here in NH.
Provides a source of information to continue help me feel connected to the GOM region.
Read for personal interest only
Reading about the details of several habitat restoration projects helped convince us to take when on in our area.
Reading the articles is interesting but does not motivate me to action in habitat restoration. I do not work in habitat restoration.
Recently I have been modifying and developing the curriculum for an Aquaculture course. I use the Gulf of Maine Times to emphasize local implications.
Recognition of opportunities for restoring coastal and fresh water habitats and possible partnerships and collaborations available.
Salt marsh restoration, ballast discharge education, more knowledgeable permitting by the commission. public outreach and education efforts
Shoreline Online Group Page
The appearance of articles and information in the GOMT relating to salt marsh restoration in the Bay of Fundy and our project in particular (Cheverie Creek) was an important component of the success of the project. I still use that article, and other articles relating to salt marshes and restoration in my work.
The book on habitats was very useful to me on my own research with seaweeds. I use the references as a starting point for further investigation.
Use information to research topics and to provide background ideas for monitoring program development
We use the articles often to get discussions going with home school families (who attend our programs)
We use the GOM Times in general to keep up on current issues and threats to the GOM to better inform the public in our educational programs.

Q27. Do you have any suggestions for improving the *Gulf of Maine Times*?

Suggestions
As I suggested before, more biology, and go electronic.
Declaring a policy of free subscription.
Have 4 (quarterly) issues a year, and no less!
I belong to a non profit organization. Since we only deal with freshwater issues, I probably would not subscribe to your magazine.
I do not currently have access to the GOMT but because of my connection to Maine, New Brunswick and my current home in Nova Scotia, these issues are very important and vital to share. I may subscribe personally when I retire.
I know cost of printing is an issue, but I'd love to have more copies to distribute aboard whale watch boats and the sightseeing boats we work on. We have an audience who is really looking for reading material during some of the cruising time, and they're already out in the Gulf of Maine, so it would be a perfect venue to help them become more informed and involved. We might be able to even sell copies aboard the boats to help pay for printing.
If a free electronic version was available, I am sure my agency would use it rather than pay.
If it was longer I would pay more, and I think there should be a student rate.

If the GofM Council started charging for publications, my organization would not likely permit all of us to get a subscription - we would have to share one.
If you have to charge for paper copies, I suggest you go all electronic.
Keep it free, even if web only
Keep up the good work.
Listings of internet sites applicable to GOM issues
Maintain updated list of key people in GOM provincial state and federal environmental, resource and planning agencies, including contact info and summary of person's role
Make it bigger.
Make links to interactive portals more visible
Maybe add a section about community based science research: for example, spotlight on a local non-profit that is using science and research to improve the community. I am thinking of the group in East Machias that is trying to bring back salmon via a hatchery but also teaching children about water quality, fish habitat, and environmental stewardship.
Maybe shorter articles so can put more stories into an issue
More info on habitat functions & values
More science and fisheries stories.
None - You are doing a great job!
Not really but want to qualify that although I would not pay a cash fee for the GOM times I believe our organization should and would.
Overall, I have been very disappointed with the "customer service" side of the Gulf of Maine Times. I have had to change address several times due to job changes and personal moves. Each time, I try to change my address with the Gulf of Maine Council, and each time, the address does not change. There was a period where I was not receiving the print version nor the email version, and I fell out of interest. This really should be improved.
Provide an advanced search capability of archived issues. Provide a multiyear index. Convey an accurate picture of funding prospects rather than optimistic possibilities.
Shifting to electronic format and exploring wiki and blog type technologies to encourage interaction among Times readers.
Solicit articles more broadly from partner organizations
Stay electronic and reduce costs of distribution to all interested parties. Many NGO's, especially local groups have small or unreliable budgets. Electronic versions are easily forwarded and are the best way to heighten awareness to issues and inform all stakeholders.
The Times should have a clear mission, centering on forwarding the work of those who are looking to improve environmental management in the region. A strategy should be developed to ensure that the appropriate information is delivered to the appropriate audiences in the appropriate tone to deliver on that mission.
To defer costs, make it purely electronic
Wider coverage of research
You need to get the word out there that such a publication exists. I just had dinner with faculty chairs at Antioch University New England Environmental Department and they had not heard of it, so I forwarded the web page to them. Do you send complimentary subscriptions to college/university environmental departments without their requesting it? Maybe you should?

Q31. What title would best describe your primary occupation?

Occupation
Account manager
Administrator
Agency scientist, both field and lab
Agricultural

Aquarium curator
Architect
Artist
Aspiring writer/artist
Biologist (3)
Bureaucrat
Canadian Federal Government
Corporate Environmental Specialist
Curator of Zoology
Currently working as a website manager, bookkeeper and tax preparer but have past work experience as an environmental non-profit worker and sit on the board of an environmental non-profit
Design/build company for Low Impact Development
Engineer (4)
Environmental -Government
Environmental Specialist- Govt
Environmentalist
Environmentalist planning my own ocean education website
Facilities worker/ part time lobsterman
Federal Gov
Federal government bureaucrat
Federal Government, Biologist
Filmmaker
Fisheries technician
GIS Manager
Government employee
Government policy/program advisor
Gov't
Interested citizen
IT Manager
Local govt.
Marina owner
Marine Fisheries Biologist
Marine Industry
Municipal Planner
NEP Director
Planner
Program coordinator
Program manager
Program Support Assistant and I work in the Laboratory Library
Project Manager
Public Information/Public Relations/Government
Regional planner
Research Administrator
Research engineer
Research manager
Research Manager
Retired (6)
Retired Museum curator
Retired teacher
Retired, active in coastal community affairs

Roof Thatcher
Sales
Scientist - field/lab Ecotoxicology
Scientist - government
Scientist and resource manager
Shellfish Constable/Alewife Warden
State government--health planner/epidemiologist
Sustainability Coordinator with municipal association
Volunteer - Sackville Rivers Association- Habitat Restoration
Volunteer monitoring coordinator
Wetlands project Coordinator

Q34. What U.S. State or Canadian Province do you live in?

State or Province
Alaska
Cape Cod - Buzzards Bay side
Connecticut (3)
Florida
Georgia, USA
Live in ME, work in NH
Louisiana
Maryland (3)
Minnesota
Montreal in the winter
NC
New Jersey
New York (3)
NEWFOUNDLAND
North Carolina
Nova Scotia,; originally from CT, USA
Ohio (2)
Ontario (2)
Oregon
part time/ summer house/Vinalhaven
Prince Edward Island (2)
Puerto Rico
Quebec
Rhode Island (5)
South Carolina (5)
Texas
Virginia (3)
Washington
Washington, DC (3)
Wisconsin