



**Gulf of Maine
Council on the
Marine Environment**

Council Briefing Packet

Version 1

Portsmouth, New Hampshire • December 9-10, 2009



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Council Agenda

Wednesday, December 9, 2009, Hilton Garden Inn

1:30 PM	Portsmouth Athenaeum Private tour for the Council to learn out the maritime and local history of the region (www.portsmouthathenaeum.org/). Meet in the hotel lobby for a five-minute walk to Market Square, downtown Portsmouth
6:00-8:00 PM	Awards reception Hilton Garden Inn dining room

Thursday, December 10, 2009, Hilton Garden Inn

8:00 AM	US and Canada Association meetings Continental breakfast provided
9:00 AM	Welcome, introductions, and overview and objectives for the meeting <i>Mike Walls, NH Department of Environmental Services Assistant Commissioner and Council Chair</i>
PAGE 4	Consent agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council June 2009 meeting summary ▪ Committee and Subcommittee reports acceptance ▪ Annual Indirect rate approval ▪ Adjusted July 2009 – June 2010 budgets (sent as an attachment to the briefing documents e-mail)
9:15 AM PAGE 9	Council business session Dues structure <i>Mike Walls, NH Department of Environmental Services Assistant Commissioner and Council Chair and Ted Diers, NH Department of Environmental Services and Working Group Chair</i> Background: The dues structure was reviewed and revised about two years ago. Two years ago, the new structure was made effective. The Council may wish to review the success of the new dues rate and discuss any further revisions including adding other agencies. Outcome/Desired Action: The Council will provide guidance to the Working Group on any dues structure revision. Measuring success of the 2007-2012 Action Plan and preparing a framework for 2013-2018 <i>Discussion leader to be determined</i> Background: The Council is more than midway through its current five-year action plan. It is also nearing the year when it will begin its next planning cycle. The Council has discussed the options of an organizational action plan or a strategic plan for the Gulf and how it might combine both models. Outcome/Desired Action: The Council will provide guidance to the Working Group on the model with which it should use when planning for the 2012-2018 document. Celebrating 20 years of the Council: Oceans Day 2010 <i>Theresa Torrent-Ellis, Maine State Planning Office, GOMC Outreach Committee co-chair</i> Background: Theresa will bring to the Council the plans and the partners that are in place for WOD and Council recognition event. Outcome/Desired Action: There will be details in the presentation that will need Council input and direction.
PAGE 10	State of the Gulf of Maine Report <i>Jay Walmsley, Chair, Ad Hoc Task Group on State of the Environment Reporting</i> Background: The Task Group has developed a workplan for a State of the Gulf of Maine Report that is due to be launched at the 2010 20-year celebrations. Outcome/Desired Action: Council approval of the workplan



<p>9:30 AM PAGE 11</p>	<p>Great Waters Initiative Gulf of Maine Conservation and Restoration Initiative <i>Theresa Torrent Ellis and David Keeley</i> Background: At their October 2009 meeting the Working Group discussed the evolving Gulf of Maine Conservation and Restoration Initiative and developed recommendations to Council on the role it might take in this effort. Then on November 20, the Initiative's ad-hoc steering committee convened a meeting in Gloucester, Massachusetts of 40+ public, private and non-profit stakeholders to discuss both the framework for a GOM Conservation and Restoration Plan and advocacy efforts to promote implementation of that Plan. Outcome/Desired Action: To act on the Working Group's recommendation concerning the role of the Council in this initiative.</p>
<p>10:00 AM</p>	<p>Fundy North Fishermen's Association Ghost Lobster Trap Recovery in Saint John Harbor project <i>Maria Recchia, Fundy North Fishermen's Association</i> Background: FNFA is the first recipient of the Council's Industry Award. This agenda item will provide information on the project that was the basis for the organization's nomination. Outcome/Desired Action: Awareness of the Council's new award and its first recipient and industry's attempts to mitigate ghost fishing and be good environmental Stewards, and an opportunity for the Council and Working Group to interact and engage in a dialogue with industry.</p>
<p>10:30 AM</p>	<p>Break and welcome to Gulf of Maine foundation representatives</p>
<p>10:45 AM</p>	<p>GOMC science perspective and RARGOM Symposium meeting and Council response <i>Rob Stephenson and John Annala, Senior Science Gulf of Maine Councilors</i> Background: The RARGOM Gulf of Maine Symposium - Advancing Ecosystem research for the future of the Gulf was held in St. Andrews, NB October 4-9, 2009. Co-convenors Rob Stephenson and John Annala will provide the Council with a summary of the symposium and discuss conclusions and potential next steps. Outcome/Desired Action: Increased awareness of recent progress, current status, and priorities for science in support of the ecosystem approach; awareness of RARGOM strategy for future meetings; and feedback from the Council on on these two outcomes.</p>
<p>11:45 AM</p>	<p>Luncheon on your own</p>
<p>1:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSION FOR FUNDERS</p>	<p>Gulf of Maine Funders Forum Welcome, Introductions, and Context Hosted by Clean Air - Cool Planet <i>Peter Lamb, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and NH Private Sector Councilor</i> Council overview and Action Plan review <i>David Keeley</i> Foundation and Council development priorities <i>All</i> Wrap up and suggestions for future interaction</p>
<p>1:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSION FOR COUNCILORS PAGE 20</p>	<p>Update on U.S. Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force Report and its Potential Benefits and Role for the GOMC <i>Betsy Nicholson and Peter Colosi, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Mel Coté, US Environmental Protection Agency</i> Background: The US Ocean Policy Task Force will be submitting a National Ocean Policy and a Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Framework to President Obama on December 9th. These deliverables will be implemented in the New England region beginning next year, and will require action on the part of federal agencies, states and tribes to develop a comprehensive coastal and marine spatial plan within five years. Discussion will cover how GOMC can benefit from these activities, including a Canadian partner being invited to serve as an ex officio member on the regional ocean planning body that will oversee these marine spatial planning efforts. Outcome/Desired Action: Council is up to speed on Task Force developments and understands how the GOMC could both become involved and benefit from these activities.</p>



2:00 PM	<p>Gulf of Maine Times: A Strategy for Sustainability <i>Theresa Torrent-Ellis, US Co-chair, Outreach Committee and David Keeley, Development Coordinator</i> Background: The Council requested a set of recommendations, which will address the discussion at the June Council meeting, to maintain a high quality publication which remains a voice for the Gulf of Maine and an exceptional outreach and awareness tool for the GOMC. Outcome/Desired Action: Adoption of the proposed strategy for funding and sustaining the <i>Times</i> and its current purpose as a voice for the Gulf of Maine.</p>
2:30 PM	<p>Atlantic Regional Adaptation Collaborative <i>Diane Kent Gillis, NB Department of Environment</i> Background: Atlantic communities are already experiencing the effects of climate change and this is expected to intensify in the future. Communities will need tools to make informed decisions and policies to strengthen their resiliency. The Atlantic Regional Adaptation Collaborative (RAC) is a cooperative undertaking of the four Atlantic Provinces, with funding from Natural Resources Canada, designed to build supportive frameworks and resources to help incorporate adaptation into policy, planning, and operations. The Atlantic RAC is designed to improve the adaptive capacity of vulnerable Atlantic coastal and inland communities; build on existing knowledge and modify tools to meet community needs; mainstream climate change adaptation considerations into land use planning and development, infrastructure design and placement and water management policies; and promote meaningful regional collaboration, coordination and sharing of good practices on integrating climate change into policy planning. The RAC will emphasize working with willing communities to develop adaptation tools. Outcome/Desired Action: The Council is kept aware of the RAC and any collaboration opportunities.</p>
2:45 PM	<p>Joint Council and Foundation Session <i>Mike Walls, Council Chair and Peter Lamb, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation</i> Outcome/Desired Action: Develop joint suggestions on future interaction</p>
3:30 PM	<p>June meeting plans, closing remarks, and adjourn <i>Mike Walls</i></p>

Consent Agenda June 2009 Council Meeting Summary

**Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment
Meeting DRAFT Summary Notes from MLT**
 Environment Canada • Dartmouth, NS
 June 24-25, 2009

Councilors present: John Annala, Gulf of Maine Research Institute; Patricia Brooks*, Conservation Law Foundation; Pete Colosi*/Betsy Nicholson for Pat Kurkul, National Oceans and Atmospheric Administration; Mel Coté*/Ann Rodney for Stephen Perkins, US Environmental Protection Agency; Tim Hall for Michael Murphy, Department of Fisheries and Oceans; NB Department of Fisheries; Diane Kent-Gillis/Jane Tims for Roland Haché, NB Department of Environment; Julia Knisel for Darrin Babb-Brott, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management; Daniel Lebel, Environment Canada; Kathleen Leyden*, ME State Planning Office; Jim McKay for Rick Doucet; NB Department of Fisheries; Greg Roach, NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture; Susan Russell-Robinson for Marvin Moriarty, Department of the Interior; Rob Stephenson, St. Andrews Biological Station; Michael Walls for Tom Burack, NH Department of Environmental Services; and Jack Wiggin, Urban Harbors Institute.

Others present: Jennifer Anderson*, National Oceans and Atmospheric Administration; Wayne Barchard, Environment Canada; Paul Boudreau, COINAtlantic; Michelle Chisholm, GOMC Administrative Assistant; Ted Diers, NH Department of Environmental Services; Lucia Fanning, Dalhousie University Maine Affairs Program; Russ Henry, NB Department of Aquaculture; Larry Hildebrand, Environment Canada; Patricia Rae Hinch, Working Group Chair Emeritus; Justin Huston, Working Group Chair, NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture; Eric Hutchins*, National Oceans and Atmospheric Administration; Cindy Krum*, US Gulf of Maine Association; Marc Sheeran, Environment Canada; Jack Schwartz*, MA Division of Marine Fisheries; Michele L. Tremblay, Council Coordinator; Jay Walmsley, Department of Fisheries and Oceans; and Peter Wells, Dalhousie University.



*via conference call or video conference

DAY 1 – June 24th

Presentation of the annual budget

Cindy Krum, Executive Director, US Gulf of Maine Association

Cindy reviewed the budgets and outlined the program areas that do not currently have funding for the upcoming fiscal year beginning July 1st. This overview was given to prepare Council for its discussion on core programs on Day 2.

Council Forum: Options for bi-national agreements in the Gulf of Maine

Lucia Fanning, Director of Dalhousie University's Marine Affairs Program

Lucia provided an overview of the purposes for bi-national agreements and highlighted some of the key agreements that exist between the US and Canada. Lucia reviewed previous action plans of the Council back to 1996 and reviewed the three major goals of the GOMC & how they have changed and what has remained consistent. Lucia presented what she was able to identify as consistent elements of the Council over the past 20 years:

- 1) Consensual decision making & collaboration
- 2) Enhance Accountability (long, medium & short term outcomes)
- 3) Continue to engage partners (but who is missing ? ie First Nations ?)
- 4) Leverage resources for shared benefits – there is no ongoing or secure funding for forum

Lucia then led the Council in a discussion about the value of Council and the potential pros and cons of future bi-national agreements concerning the Gulf of Maine. Discussion questions included: What is the cost to everyone around the table of not having the Council & it's products? What are the gaps and deficiencies of Council currently? What would be the basis of a future agreement regarding the Gulf of Maine? The Council?

It was suggested that further thought/effort could be given to explore a future bi-national agreement re: the GOM. The Council acknowledged the subject as an important dialogue to continue in the future and periodically assess the pros/cons of future bi-national agreements, but decided at this time not to pursue additional work/discussion on this topic at this time.

Councillor Field Trip: Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

Councillor Reception

DAY 2 – June 25th

Greg Roach opened the meeting with introductions around the table.

Consent Agenda

From the consent agenda , Diane Kent Gillis requested that the Climate Change Network update be discussed later on the agenda. Robert Stephenson requested to have an opportunity to provide an update on the RARGOM Symposium as well. The consent agenda was otherwise approved.

Presentation on transboundary spill preparedness in the Gulf of Maine

Mark Sheeran, Science Advisor, Environmental Emergencies Program, Environment Canada
Mark provided a presentation on Canada / US oil spill preparedness in the Gulf of Maine.

The future of Council's core programs—function, form, and funding

Greg Roach with support from Justin Huston and Michele Tremblay

At the request of Council in December '08, detailed summaries of each core program were developed to facilitate discussion on the status of funding for Council's core programs. This was compiled in an online Tracking Action Plan Activities System (TAPAS), which was made accessible at: www.gulfofmaine.org/tapas (LOGIN: Councillor and WG email addresses, PASSWORD: *tapas* .). Prior to the meeting, Greg Roach and Justin Huston hosted two conference calls for Councillors to be briefed on the online TAPAS.

Action: Michele Tremblay will work with Yellahouse, LLC on other user printing options for TAPAS vs. the current PDF).



Action: Michele Tremblay will explore the feasibility of resuscitating SAM (Supporting Actions Matrix), its connectivity to TAPAS, its likelihood of its use by GOMC participants, and its value relative to the Action Plan mid-term evaluation, and present options to Management and Finance.

1) Action Plan Grants - No funding is in place this year, as was the case during the previous year.

Decision: Program will be put on hold indefinitely until funding is available

2) Climate Change Network – EC funding has been secured.

The Canadian/US coordination is fully funded to 6 months. Climate Change will continue to function but it is not funded to where it needs to be to achieve all identified actions in the Action Plan. A key point was raised that it doesn't necessarily matter how the work gets done/coordinated, so much as that it gets done.

Significant efforts underway in both the US and Canada via NROC and the RAC respectively. GOMC can be used to support & communicate – information exchange vehicle.

Action: Management and Finance will explore options to provide the Council with a RAC Regional Adaptation Collaborative) presentation at its December '09 meeting with an emphasis on climate change technical resources outlines in the Climate Change Committee's proposed deliverable.

Action: Adrienne Harrison and Gary Lines will continue to work together to ensure that NROC and RAC activities related to coastal hazards remain linked.

3) Ecosystem Indicator Partnership – currently working on securing funds – throughout the last couple of days with EC & DFO – if this money comes through, ESIP will be funded at 50%. A funding shortfall of \$42k will remain for the year, meaning that funding will last until the end of December.

Action: Continue to monitor and re-visit at the December Council meeting or as needed through the fall.

4) Gulf of Main Mapping Initiative: No notes on this. Need input.

5) Gulf of Maine Times : DFO funding would enable one more on-line issue to be produced in October, however, no funding is identified for after this time. Funding applications were submitted, but no funding has been secured to go beyond one further issue. Donations were solicited but only \$2,000 was raised. After discussing options, Council recommended the following actions/decisions:

Decision: Continue to solicit funds for the Times. Although we weren't successful in our previous attempts, it may have hinged more on timing/economic climate.

Action: The Secretariat Team and Management and Finance will work with the Outreach Committee and Editorial Team to re-scope the Gulf of Maine Times Editor 2009 contract to provide deliverables that include exploring the editorial and technical aspects of transitioning to an "evergreen" publication with issue closing dates so that the static versions of editions of the Times are archived). The intent of this action item is to stretch the limited funding available for the Times so that it does not end abruptly with one last electronic issue.

5) Gulf Watch : There is currently a \$10k funding shortfall which is needed for inorganic analysis & data report/management.

Action : Jack Schwartz will explore the option of freezing & storing samples to be analyzed when funds become available..

6) Web Services : Funds will cover Web Services for the year, if the dues come through. However, the web services will no longer be able to provide services to committees unless the funding is secured by the committees. Web Services will only be available to maintain the basic website and core web requirements of the Council

Option to shift from a dedicated server \$6500 to a shared server that will cost \$1800.

Decision : Council agreed in principle to shift to a shared server, however, M & F will discuss the issue in conjunction with web services coordinator to resolve specific technical concerns.



7) Secretariat : Core services are critical to the day-to-day operations of Council, and needed to remain the same as past years. The funding shortfall will be approx. \$16k – but only if the dues come in. So at this point, each of the contractors will be working on a 6 month contract.

Action: Cindy Krum will reallocate the amount of \$6,500 to the income section of the TAPAS for Secretariat.

Decision: There will be a \$50 meeting fee for each Working Group member or each Council member.

Decision: The Council accepted the new policy of requesting a registration fee of \$50 per person per meeting for Council and Working Group meetings. It is the intent of this decision that a member's inability to pay will not hinder his/her participation. We will look to the host jurisdiction (where the meeting is being held) to help defer costs of hosting – ie : room rental, or providing lunch, etc.

7) Securing Funds to Implement Council Programs 2009-2010 : Shortfall of \$26k – although if all dues come in, we will be covered for the next 6 months. WG feels this is a major component and feels that this should remain unchanged. This is the first year this was a full time position, so not easy to measure the outcomes in just one year. WG needs to continue to explore other options and approaches to maximize results. Councilors also stressed the importance of engaging the NGO leaders of Council and partner organizations for assistance in improving Council's fund development approaches.

Decision : The 15% reduction from last year funding levels from the Fund Development position – will be reinstated.

Action: The Secretariat will explore hosting the Gulf of Maine Funders Forum in conjunction with the October Working Group meeting or the December Council/Working Group meeting

Action: The Secretariat will work with the current fund development contractor to re-scope his 2009 six-month contract with an emphasis on foundation prospect development and more defined deliverables.

8) Habitat Restoration: Funding is in place for the Habitat Restoration Grants program, however there is still a \$26,636 short fall to cover the Coordinator position. A large percentage of Council's indirect funding for cores services and the US Association comes from this NOAA Grant, and it therefore imperative that this program continue. NOAA has always requested that we match – either through in kind of non-federal dollars. We have enough of the NOAA grant to fully fund this program through the end of the year. This is the last year of the NOAA grant.

Decision: This remains the number one funding priority for Council.

Action: Fund Development will work with the Restoration subcommittee and Secretariat to submit an application to NOAA to seek additional funding..

9) Habitat Monitoring: No funding has been secured. Therefore the web-based habitat monitoring tool will remain a pilot project until new funding is identified.

Approval of the Budget

Decision: The budget was approved with the changes identified during the TAPAS discussion.

Scoping a State of the Environment report for the Gulf of Maine

Tim Hall and Jay Walmsley, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

A scoping document was presented outlining what a State of the Gulf report might look like, Council's potential roles and the implications for the Council. There was general consensus around the table that Council was in a unique position to champion this type of effort. The Council agreed with the recommended approach which consists of taking a module approach, anchored by an overarching, relatively unchanging reference document on the Gulf of Maine region, and a series of distinct theme papers focused on specific issues or aspects of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem. Further, these theme areas would focus on the areas currently being developed through ESIP. Council emphasized the importance of ensuring that ESIP and the SOE initiative are closely linked.

Action: Jay Walmsley to lead a SOE task group to flesh-out in more detail the State of the Gulf concept, including the drafting of the general overview report, deciding on initial theme papers, funding required, and potential leads. The results will be reported to the Council in December.

Celebrating 20 years of the Council: Oceans Day 2010

Justin Huston, Working Group Chair

Justin communicated that Theresa Torrent-Ellis was leading efforts to hold a small celebration to recognize Council's 20 years of work in the Gulf of Maine, to be held in conjunction with an International Oceans Day event in Portland, Maine on June 8, 2010.

Decision: Council agreed in principle to the concept and to shifting the Council meeting from NH to Portland, ME.

Adopting a Indirect Rate for 2010

ISSUE: The Council needs to accept a new annual Indirect Rate that would be used by the Association of US Delegates to the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (USGOMA).

Background: The FY09 (July1–June 30) USGOMA audit is complete. The auditor has recommended a new indirect rate of 19.24%. The new indirect rate would go into effect December 11, 2009 and remain in effect until the 2010 December Council meeting.

In December 2008 the Council approved a 16.59 % indirect rate for all funds flowing through the USGOMA. In December 2007 the Council approved a 19.19 % , indirect rate. These rates were recommended by the auditor using the “look back” method which is set by reviewing the prior fiscal year. Our auditors have used this method for the past six years. Following is text explaining the method from the 2009 audit “Indirect Cost Letter” from Marshall and Libby, LLC, the auditors for the USGOMA.

“There are various acceptable alternatives to calculating and negotiating indirect costs under federal regulations. We have set up your allocation using a simplified method, which separates direct costs of programs from indirect costs, then divides the total allowable indirect costs by direct costs. The resulting percentage for year ended June 30, 2009 is 19.24%. This means for every dollar of direct expense the Association incurs, it needs to raise an additional 19 cents to cover the indirect costs mentioned above.”

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the new 19.24% rate to go into effect December 11, 2009 through the December Council meeting, 2010.

Submitted by Cindy Krum, US Gulf of Maine Association

Gulfwatch Contaminants Monitoring Subcommittee Update

The Gulfwatch Program completed the 2009 field season. Samples were delivered to the Environment Canada Laboratory in Moncton for organics analysis with results expected by March 31, 2010. Samples destined for metals analysis were archived due to the lack of funds. Field teams reported a significant decline in mussels of the required size and abundance at several stations.

The 2007 and 2008 Gulfwatch annual data reports were completed, and their corresponding contaminant data was delivered to Jim Craddock, GOMC data manager, in the format prescribed by Jim. The 2007 and 2008 data reports were made available to the public on the Gulfwatch web page. Additionally, all annual data reports missing on the web page from prior years were located and added to the web page. Thus with the completion of the 2008 activities, Gulfwatch has provided all contaminant data it produced to the GOMC data manager, and disseminated all annual data reports to the public that were issued since the program's inception.

In November a meeting of the Gulfwatch Contaminants Monitoring Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Gareth Harding, was convened at the St. Andrews Biological Station. The Subcommittee agreed to explore funding opportunities through Environment Canada to complete metals analysis for the 2009 samples. With the looming scarcity of funding, the Subcommittee felt it was most important to collect samples in 2010 even if they were only to be archived until funding materialized. The spatial and temporal distribution of certain analytes has not changed over extended periods of time and therefore the committee agreed that these categories do not need to be analyzed more than approximately once every five years. PCBs and organochlorine pesticides fall into this category. Regular sampling

for PAHs should continue since they continue to be produced from crude oil and/or petroleum products/byproducts and because Gulfwatch has the ability to distinguish natural, i.e. fires, from anthropogenic sources, i.e. fuel combustion/production. The Subcommittee also decided to add new categories of so-called contaminants of emerging concern to the Gulfwatch Program for which methodologies are currently under development at the Environment Canada Laboratory in Moncton.

*Submitted by Jack P. Schwartz, Ph.D., US Co-Chair
November, 2009*

Council Business Session

Dues Structure

Current GOMC Dues Allocation and need for Dues

Background:

For the past two years we have requested the amount of dues listed in the following table from member agencies. In our current fiscal year, all agencies listed below have been able to pay dues either in cash or in-kind except for the Maine Department of Marine Resources.

Current dues structure:

Member Agency Name	Amount	Amount in USD*
Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans	\$15,000 CA	\$11,400
Environment Canada	\$15,000 CA	\$11,400
Nova Scotia Department of Environment	\$10,000 CA	\$7,600
Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture	\$10,000 CA	\$7,600
New Brunswick Department of Environment	\$10,000 CA	\$7,600
New Brunswick Department of Fisheries	\$10,000 CA	\$7,600
Maine Department of Marine Resources	\$9,000 US	\$9,000
Maine State Planning Office	\$9,000 US	\$9,000
Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management	\$18,000 US	\$18,000
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services	\$18,000 US	\$18,000
Total		\$107,200

*based on lowest bank exchange rate over prior 12 months -- .76

The table below shows the amount needed to cover basic core services and other additional dues needs for a one-year period. Indirect rate is included where appropriate.

Annual costs for core services:

Service	Amount in USD
Council Coordination	\$40,050
Fund Development Coordination	\$47,750
Information Technology Services	\$23,900
Total Services covered July 2009- June 2010	\$111,700
Gulf of Maine Times – 4 online issues	\$53,750
Total Core Services	\$165,450
Additional Annual Dues need if next Round of Restoration Partnership grant is awarded	\$10,000
Final total	\$175,450

Recommendation: Council discuss options for additional dues paying organizations/agencies. Some of the organizations suggested on the last Management and Finance call were: Piscataqua Regional Estuarine Partnership (PREP), NH Fish & Game, Natural Resources Canada, NS Department of Natural Resources, and Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Another suggestion made was that NGOs, which do not currently pay, be asked to pay full or reduced dues.

State of the Gulf of Maine Report

The *Ad Hoc* Task Group for State-of-the-Environment Reporting was established following the Council meeting in June 2009. The main objective of this group until December 2009 has been to finalize the workplan for the *State of the Gulf of Maine Report*. The workplan is based on the premise that the first version of the *State of the Gulf of Maine Report* will be ready for the June 2010 celebrations of the 20-year anniversary of the Council. The development of the report will be ongoing incrementally after that.

The workplan has been tabled as a separate document. A summary is provided below.

General

The *State of the Gulf of Maine Report* will be a modular document. The main products are: 1) a context document; 2) theme papers, and 3) a website. A wiki will not be established for reporting purposes yet, although the need will be re-evaluated at a later stage.

Context Document

The context document will be a relatively static document that provides an introduction to the *State of the Gulf of Maine Report*. A contractor, Colleen Thompson, has been hired by DFO to develop a first draft of the context document by early December 2009. The document is currently under review.

Theme Papers

The theme papers will provide an evaluation of priority issues that are of interest in the Gulf of Maine. An incremental approach will be taken to develop the theme papers, with the first three theme papers ready for publication on the website by May 2010.

A short list of theme papers, based on the six ESIP priority areas, has been identified by the Task Team and Working Group (Table 1).

Table 1: Short List of Theme Papers for State of the Gulf of Maine Report

Priority Area	Theme Paper
Climate Change	Climate Change and its Effect on Humans
	Climate Change and its Effect on Ecosystems, Habitats and Biota
Fisheries and Aquaculture	Aquaculture in the Gulf of Maine
	Commercial Fisheries and Fish Stock Status
Coastal Development	Land Use and Coastal Development
Contaminants	Toxic Contaminants
	Microbial Pathogens and Toxins
Eutrophication	Eutrophication
Aquatic Habitats	Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats
	Offshore Ecosystems and Habitats
	Watershed Status
Other	Invasive Species
	Species at Risk
	Emerging Issues
*Note: Titles provided are not final	

Recommendations from the task Group are that authors for theme papers should be technically competent (having some recognized expertise in the subject matter) and have the ability to write well. Institutional authorship will not be encouraged, with the exception of GOMC committees. GOMC member organizations and committees have been requested to identify possible paper authors, and any resources that they are willing to commit to the process.

A review process will be in put place to ensure that the theme papers are of the highest technical quality; that language used in the papers is appropriate for the target audience, and that the publication requirements of the GOMC are met. One or more peer reviewers will be chosen for each paper. Peer reviewers will be chosen as leaders in their field.



The structure for the theme papers will be the Driving Forces-Pressures-State-Impacts-Response (DPSIR) framework, as recommended in the Scoping Document. Jay Walmsley will assist authors with the development of the table of contents of each paper, which will be reviewed by an editorial committee before writing commences.

State of the Gulf of Maine Web Portal

The development of the web portal is critical to the distribution of the *State of the Gulf of Maine Report*. The Maine State Planning Office has offered to include the design of the website in a current contract with Jim Cradock (Yellahoose), who is designing the GOM Times website. A draft design will be available at the end of 2009. Website development will also be through Jim Cradock.

Budget

A three-year budget has been provided in the workplan. We currently have tentative financial support for the project that will allow the first version of the *State of the Gulf of Maine Report* to be developed for June 2010.

Request to Working Group/Council

The Task Group requests the Working Group and Council to consider progress thusfar, and:

- 1) Approve the workplan for further development of the *State of the Gulf of Maine Report*.
- 2) Support the establishment of an Editorial Committee by the current Task Group for the period from December 2009 to June 2010, for the development of version 1 the report.

*Submitted by Jay Walmsley, PhD
Chair Ad Hoc Task Group on State-of-the-Environment Reporting
November 2009*

Great Waters Initiative Gulf of Maine conservation and Restoration Initiative

A Priceless Ecosystem at Risk

The greater Gulf of Maine—with the coastal shorelines of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and the Canadian Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia—is vital to human health and the region's economy: millions of people depend on the Gulf of Maine watershed for food, recreation, transportation, and drinking water. It is a unique ecosystem, whose beauty and biological diversity enrich the lives of all who live, work and visit here. Yet each day, the greater Gulf of Maine—its streams, lakes, bays, and beaches—is damaged by untreated sewage, toxic pollution, invasive species, loss of wildlife habitat, abandoned fishing gear and other human-caused impacts. The problems are serious and many of them have reached or are reaching crisis proportions. There are manageable solutions—some already in various stages of implementation—but if we don't move quickly the problems will only get worse and the solutions more expensive.

A Comprehensive Framework

The *Gulf of Maine Restoration and Conservation Initiative* is a collaborative effort focused on developing a strategic framework for a unified and comprehensive restoration and conservation strategy for the bi-national Gulf of Maine. The framework identifies seven key "issue areas," including:

- 1) Coastal Fish and Wildlife Populations and their Habitats
- 2) Coastal Water Quality
- 3) Invasive species in the coastal and marine environment
- 4) Abandoned fishing gear and other debris
- 5) The impacts of climate change
- 6) Long-range planning, science, and communication in collaboration with states, Tribes, NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations) and other stakeholders
- 7) Measuring and monitoring improvements (or declines) over time.

Federal Funding Required

The scale of funding needed to address the many problems impacting the Gulf of Maine watershed is far beyond the means of states, provinces, municipalities, NGOs and the philanthropic community, and far above historical levels of federal investment in regional restoration and conservation programs on both sides of the border. Although there is good work underway, truly significant progress will require substantial increases in federal funding. Numerous other

regional aquatic ecosystems in the US have had considerable success in procuring increased federal funding by organizing and advocating around “comprehensive” restoration strategies. The 2010 Interior Appropriations Bill provides \$641 million for the implementation of restoration plans for the Great Lakes, Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Coastal Louisiana, San Francisco Bay, Gulf of Mexico, and several others. Of those funds, \$475 million alone is dedicated to restoration of the Great Lakes, the result of a well-funded advocacy campaign by the Healing Our Waters®--Great Lakes Coalition (a coalition of over 100 zoos, aquariums, conservation, business and environmental groups). Unfortunately, there is no funding in the bill for the Gulf of Maine. The reason for this, as explained by congressional staffers, is that until now there has been no “Comprehensive Plan” for the Gulf of Maine, and no advocacy effort except for individual programs and organizations.¹ That is now changing.

Questions and Answers

1. How does this initiative relate to the current habitat and other restoration work already planned or underway in the Gulf of Maine?

The *Gulf of Maine Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation Initiative* builds on the good work already underway by numerous agencies and organizations active in the Gulf of Maine. It seeks to bring many diverse efforts under a single “comprehensive plan” on a scale similar to what is already in place for other “Great Waters” ecosystems, including the bi-national Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Everglades, Louisiana Coast, and Puget Sound. The main benefits of such a plan are 1) to eliminate redundancy and ensure that efforts are coordinated for maximum efficiency, and 2) to ensure that the Gulf of Maine region gets equal consideration with the other large aquatic ecosystems for US (and Canadian) federal funding for ecosystem restoration. The US budget contains \$671,000,000 for restoration of the Great Lakes and other Great Waters and provides a powerful example of the importance of having a comprehensive plan in place.

2. How will the comprehensive plan be used?

Once the comprehensive plan has been completed², Gulf of Maine stakeholders will work together to ensure that federal, state, and provincial governments provide sufficient funding to fully implement it over time. This will require a very significant education and outreach effort similar to that undertaken for the Great Lakes restoration strategy by the Healing Our Waters®--Great Lakes Coalition. It is a process in which private citizens, foundations, NGOs, and businesses will play a major role.

3. How were the “Issue Areas” determined?

In the spring of 2009 a Steering Committee formed to take on the tasks of determining the need, scope, and scale of a “comprehensive strategy” and to design an inclusive process by which the strategy would be developed. The group started with the creation of the Table of Issue Areas relevant to the Gulf of Maine. Through an iterative process the Issue Areas were refined with broad stakeholder input. The current version (see below) incorporates the work of seven “Issue Area Strategy Teams” at a second major planning meeting in November 2009. Additional stakeholder input, including a broad public engagement effort, will inform the final Table of Issue Areas.

4. What is the makeup of the Steering Committee and Strategy Teams?

The Steering Committee is composed of state and federal agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations throughout the Gulf of Maine states, with “observer” participants from Canada. The 40+ members of the Strategy Teams include representatives from the Maine Coastal Program, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (Division of Ecological Restoration), the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, the US Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Restoration Center (Gloucester MA), the National Wildlife Federation, the Ocean Conservancy, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the New England Ocean Science Education Collaborative, Friends of Casco Bay, Conservation Law Foundation, Talking Conservation, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Mount Desert Island Biological Lab, Casco Bay Estuary Program, Sierra Club, Society for the Preservation of New Hampshire Forests, Ocean River Institute, Biodiversity Research Institute, and others.

In addition, there are numerous organizations that have been involved in an advisory capacity, including the Maine Environmental Funders’ Network, The Nature Conservancy, and others. The Steering Committee and Strategy

¹ This year the National Wildlife Federation convened an “America’s Great Waters” program to bring all the individual regional restoration advocacy campaigns together for a more effective presence on Capitol Hill. Although the Gulf of Maine is nominally a part of this program, the lack of a formal comprehensive plan and a viable coalition for the Gulf of Maine has so far prevented the region from receiving federal “Great Waters” restoration funding.

² It is contemplated that there will be parallel plans and processes on each side of the border, and that implementation of the two plans will be integrated and coordinated.

Teams are not intended as exclusive groups, and the process of completing the comprehensive strategy is open to all stakeholders.

Gulf of Maine Restoration and Conservation Initiative Table of Issue Areas.

The following issue areas, including the “examples and responses” are not listed in order of priority. Broad stakeholder and public input will help inform the final version.

Protect and Restore Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Populations	
Examples of Issues	Potential responses
Many commercial fisheries are in poor condition and as a result the resilience of coastal economies and ecosystems is threatened.	Drawing from principles of ecosystem based management, marine spatial planning, and other best practices, assist managers and stakeholders in developing recovery alternatives that facilitate economic and ecosystem resilience .
Thousands of barriers to prime aquatic habitats hinder fish restoration efforts and degrade aquatic ecosystem health.	Develop aquatic habitat restoration strategies that fully assess/prioritize regional impacts and implement corrective actions in an integrated fashion.
Coastal development and habitat loss imperils plant and animal populations.	Assess, regulate and negotiate land protection and acquisition as needed to protect priority habitats, including the coastal upland buffer zone.
Salt marsh ecological functions and services to people are degraded.	Restore natural hydrology, morphology, and control invasive plant and animal species. Use acquisition, regulation, and other means to protect adjacent uplands.
Better data and planning are needed to ensure efficient and adequate restoration and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, including the following:	Determine needs and conduct appropriate research and planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on the amount and distributions of nearshore subtidal habitat is lacking. 	Develop a gulf-wide program to comprehensively map nearshore subtidal habitats.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Few protocols exist for assessing improvements to fish and wildlife populations resulting from habitat restoration efforts. 	Develop and implement ecologically relevant goals and protocols for measuring and monitoring success of fish and wildlife restoration programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Location and siting of offshore wind energy operations may exacerbate habitat loss 	Coordinate offshore energy planning with long term marine planning effort and land acquisition planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marine fish spawning grounds need special protection. 	Map and work to protect all spawning ground habitat used by fish in the Gulf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ecological function and ecological services value, as well as economic value of restored and conserved ecosystem need to be established. 	Commission study on economic value of ecosystem services, and economic impacts of restoration and conservation efforts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to focus on critical assessment of fish and wildlife habitats and develop priority list of most sensitive areas 	Effort should link mapping and critical assessment efforts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build upon/refine existing data sets e.g. Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, Essential Fish Habitats, Bird conservation regions designated area. 	Need support for large scale synthesis of existing data sets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordination and standardization is needed for data collected by community groups. 	Work with community groups to establish additional shared criteria and standards for collecting and sharing data.
Remove Marine Debris	
Examples of Issues	Potential responses
Abandoned fishing gear is hazardous to living resources and fishermen.	Remove gear on sea floor & in water column.
Debris along shorelines is hazardous and represents public health and ecological risk.	Remove and dispose of debris; Target debris abatement at its sources.
Assess and Reduce Toxic Pollution	
Examples of Issues	Potential responses

Contaminant levels in the environment exceed levels warranting public health and ecological concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and remediate toxic hot spots • Facilitate safe disposal of toxic materials (e.g. waste oil from fishing/recreational vessels) • Reduce atmospheric and other diffuse sources of toxic contaminant releases
Toxic contaminant concentrations, spatial distributions and health/ecological effects are not sufficiently understood to confidently assess their implications on human and ecosystem health and guide corrective actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the geographic range and frequency of sampling • Expand the range of species and sampling media used • Explore trophic linkages between species to confidently characterize human health/ecological risk • Prioritize regionally relevant chemicals of concern with attention to "emerging" contaminants • Refine tools for understanding risk to human and ecosystem health
There is insufficient progress in abating regionally important airborne toxic contaminants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policy tools to effectively address diffuse sources of toxics

Prevent and Control Invasive Species	
Examples of Issues	Potential responses
Protocols are needed for early detection, eradication, and control of invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support research into efficacy of known control measures • Develop and implement risk assessments for existing and incipient introductions as well as known transport vectors • Improve monitoring for early detection
Enhanced regulations and enforcement are needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop science-based policy recommendations and enhance the capacity of states to minimize introduction through enforcement action
Need to prevent transport and dispersal of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support on-the-ground efforts to restore degraded systems • Support early detection and eradication efforts • Minimize disturbance that facilitates the spread of AIS • Support research into the role of activities and industries in reporting AIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Commercial shipping --Recreational boating --Fishing and aquaculture --Research and education --The pet trade

Improve Coastal Water Quality (Water Quality is the basis for restoration, and protection)	
Examples of Issues	Potential responses
Improve water quality for impaired waters. Maintain water quality for non-impaired waters. Is the Clean Water Act enough? We do not know the water quality of the Gulf of Maine from a system perspective	Create water quality goals that are relevant to the range of ecosystem/human needs and are informed by historical baselines. TMDL areas need to be more comprehensive. Clarify Anti-degradation policies, and implement policies.
Ecologically comprehensive water quality assessments and monitoring are lacking.	Collect needs assessments from the states (SRF, 319, storm water MS4's, stimulus monies), town plans; review for comprehensive data coverage; and design assessments for "missing" data. Develop comprehensive monitoring plans at all levels of geographic scales.
Failing residential septic systems contaminate local waters and shellfish beds.	Implement correct site selection; identify non-compliant systems; repair systems; maintain systems; improve technology; expand municipal sewage treatment infrastructure.
Inadequate municipal sewage treatment and combined sewer outfalls discharge pollutants into aquatic resources.	Upgrade systems based on ecologically appropriate standards (nutrient remove). Advance technology to improve the unintended results of higher energy consumption. Increase funding for SRF.

Non-point source pollution, including air deposition, impairs coastal, near waters, and blue water ecosystem function.	Identify, correct and prevent non-point sources. Identify sources, develop additional sources (cranberry farms, horse farms, etc.). Gather current comprehensive data sources, and supplement that data. Review current management practices (land use), and supplement these practices. Implement management practices and assess progress. Understand the link between estuarine and blue water.
Sewage discharges from vessels degrade coastal water quality.	Increase infrastructure of vessel sewage disposal, designate and enforce "no discharge zones". Improve Marine Sanitation Device (MSD) Type III technology, revise standards.

Promote Ecosystem Resilience to Climate Change	
Examples of Issues	Potential responses
There is no coordinated establishment of climate change readiness priorities/policies.	Reassess state & provincial programs/policies in light of climate change projections.
Data and standardized methods for vulnerability assessments of at-risk coastal natural resources and infrastructure are lacking.	Design vulnerability assessments, collect baseline data; implement monitoring and modeling.
There are no adaptation or resiliency plans for natural resources important to human communities.	Prioritize at-risk resources for acquisition and regulatory protection to facilitate resiliency in coastal ecosystems and economies.
Climate-driven geographic shifts in plants and animals threaten ecosystem integrity and coastal economies.	Reduce stressors to species such as overexploitation and habitat loss.
Land-use guidelines do not yet adequately consider climate change projections.	Update zoning, flood maps, open space ordinances.
Storm intensity/frequency is projected to degrade water quality.	Reassess stormwater discharge guidelines.

Long-range planning, science, and communication	
Examples of Issues	Potential responses
Existing sub-regional plans for habitat restoration and conservation were developed independently by various public and non-profit organizations, at different times and for different purposes.	Gather seminal plans and synthesize key results and recommendations. Contact lead organizations and document plan development and implementation lessons-learned. Inquire how organizations can improve collaboration and communications.
Messages by public and non-profit organizations about restoration and conservation are sometimes confusing or contradictory.	Develop shared communications tools, resources and messages; provide communications training as needed to participating organizations.
Numerous aspects of the coastal and marine environment remain unexamined by science, and their implications and interactions little understood.	Engage academic and research institutions, user groups and managers in a concerted effort to secure resources to address priority science gaps.
Restoration and conservation efforts are accomplished on a site-by-site basis do not explicitly address broader ecosystem management considerations.	Choose one or more geographic regions and over 2-3 years demonstrate how a more integrated investment strategy can produce greater environmental results. (e.g., sewage upgrades, remove abandoned gear, install boat pump-outs, address non-point sources that close shellfish flats, etc.)
The public and decision-makers are not sufficiently aware of the region's restoration and conservation needs nor of the benefits (e.g., economic, social, environmental) when restoration or conservation is performed.	Identify priority audiences and learn of effective messaging. Provide educational and outreach opportunities to increase public and decision-maker understanding of coastal resources and the need to conserve and/or restore them.
Staff capacity in municipal, provincial, state, and federal agencies is insufficient to manage increases in funding for restoration and conservation in the Gulf	As funding levels for restoration and conservation increase, appropriate staffing levels for planning, implementation, oversight, and evaluation need to be determined and put in

of Maine.	place.
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Canadian Background Experience from Great Lakes Initiative

Recent conservation efforts in the Great Lakes provide important examples for the Gulf of Maine conservation community as we organize to prepare a comprehensive restoration and conservation plan. A key question has been what parallel efforts are underway on the Canadian side of the Lakes that could serve to inform a similar approach for New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

There are four important documents that could eventually inform a comprehensive Canadian Great Lakes restoration and conservation strategy. The first is a collaborative “blueprint” for restoration created by a number of NGOs including Ecojustice, Environmental Defense, Canadian Environmental Law Association, Great Lakes United, Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, and Sierra Club of Canada. The blueprint includes recommendations that have been made in numerous other documents and by many other groups. It focuses on the following policy recommendations. (These are closely related those in the Great Lake Regional Collaborative Strategy that is a US document.)

- 1) Improve Governance
- 2) Enable Effective Public Participation
- 3) Connect Water Quality and Quantity
- 4) Practice Ecosystem-based Stewardship
- 5) Eliminate Pollution
- 6) Upgrade Sewage Infrastructure
- 7) Halt Aquatic Invasive Species
- 8) Protect Water Levels and Flows

The second document is from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources entitled “Healthy Great Lakes, Strong Ontario.” It outlines five broad goals for the region:

- **Resilient ecosystem:** The Great Lakes can respond to changes and stresses without losing important species, ecosystem functions and amenities
- **Human health and well-being:** Ontarians enjoy safe Great Lakes beaches, drinking water, food and fish, and recreational, cultural and spiritual benefits
- **Green, diverse economies:** The Great Lakes Region is a centre of economic activity and its quality of life attracts and keeps the workforce for a vibrant and innovative economy
- **Sustainable natural resources:** Resources like fish and wildlife, water quantity and energy generation potential are sustained over the long-term
- **Strong communities:** Great Lakes’ communities are thriving and attractive, and practice good stewardship of the lakes

It also contains nine proposed Strategies aimed at achieving the five Goals:

- 1) Clean up Great Lakes Hot Spots and the Legacy of Past Pollution
- 2) Protect Human and Ecosystem Health from Toxics and Pathogens
- 3) Restore Great Lakes Habitats and Protect Biodiversity
- 4) Adapt to Climate Change
- 5) Understand and Deal With Ecosystem Change
- 6) Influence the Bi-National Agenda
- 7) Enhance Lake-Based and Watershed-Based Planning and Action
- 8) Increase Appreciation and Stewardship of the Great Lakes
- 9) Develop Sustainable Great Lakes Economic Opportunities.

Third is the 2007 Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem (COA), which is intended to “help meet the challenges presented to the Great Lakes by a growing population as well as continue cleaning up the legacy of past pollution.” The 2007 COA is the seventh such agreement to be signed by the governments of



Canada and Ontario since 1971. Through the COA, the governments pool their resources and funds to work with a variety of partners at the local level in the Great Lakes community with the goal of restoring and maintaining the health of the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem.

The 2007 COA builds on achievements under the 2002 COA, as well as previous agreements, to continue efforts at reducing pollution, cleaning up degraded hot spots, dealing with invasive species and protecting the biodiversity of the Great Lakes Basin, which contains 180 fish species. COA also includes two entirely new areas – determining the impacts of climate change and protecting sources of drinking water.

The 2007 COA has been signed by the Ministry of the Environment with the Ministries of Natural Resources and Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, and six federal departments and one federal agency. The Ontario Government has committed more than \$32 million to COA from 2007 to 2010.

Finally, a (2007) report by McAllister Research, summarizing a body of public opinion research about Canadian attitudes towards the Great Lakes shows a remarkable depth of support for federal and provincial investments in restoration and conservation activities. Among some key findings:

“Over three in four Ontarians describe the Great Lakes as vital to our survival (78%), vital to quality of life (74%), a place of beauty (72%), and an economic resource (71%). Ontarians tend to express a stronger sense of connection and pride regarding the Great Lakes than Quebecers, and older men 55+ in particular, tend to think of the Lakes as a national treasure (68%).”

“Asked specifically whether they favour or oppose spending two billion dollars per year over 10 years to clean up the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, a strong majority of three in four (78%) Great Lakes residents say they are in favour, while just 16 percent are opposed and six percent are undecided. Provincially, 75 percent of Ontarians and 81 percent of Quebecers say they are in favour of such spending. Montreal residents are slightly more likely than other Quebecers to express strong support, while in Ontario, there are no major regional differences. “

Conclusions:

Funding for environmental restoration and conservation activities in Canada traditionally comes from a mix of municipal, provincial, and federal sources. However, the recent change in federal administration has taken some momentum out of Great Lakes cleanup efforts, and there is currently not a cohesive or sufficiently funded effort underway. However, the Canadian Great Lakes NGO community is hopeful that the significant commitment on the US side (\$475 million this year from the federal government for Great Lakes restoration and conservation activities) will provide an added incentive for a parallel commitment on the Canadian side of the border.

As in the Great Lakes region, a bi-national Gulf of Maine restoration and conservation plan will need to engage municipal, provincial, and federal governments. Though the political process differs substantially in the two countries, many of the issue areas, goals, and tactics contained in a comprehensive plan for Canada and the US will likely be similar.

Further information about Canadian Great Lakes conservation initiatives is available from any of the organizations cited in this paper, or from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment Sharon Bailey, Director of the Land & Water Policy Branch (sharon.bailey@ontario.ca) / Carolyn O'Neill, Manager of the Great Lakes Office (carolyn.oneill@ontario.ca) at <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/greatlakes/index.php>.

- Canadian Environmental Law Association: www.cela.ca
- Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy: www.cielap.org
- Ecojustice: www.ecojustice.ca
- Environmental Defense: www.environmentaldefence.ca
- Great Lakes United: www.glu.org
- Sierra Club: www.sierraclub.org

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Working Group Recommendations to Council

Conservation and Restoration Initiative

A bi-national partnership working to make on-the-ground improvements to coastal fish and wildlife populations and their habitats, coastal water quality, invasive species in the coastal and marine environment, abandoned fishing gear and other debris and address the impacts of climate change on the region's ecosystem. It has three inter-related phases:

- Initiative development;
- Advocacy & outreach; and
- Implementation

Background

A project steering committee was formed in early 2009.³ It consists of more than twenty US and Canadian representatives of leading non-profit organizations and the public agencies often responsible for regulating, funding and/or conducting coastal conservation projects. This initial collaborative approach to priority setting has established the need to pursue two inter-related paths.

Path One: Making the case -- organizing a bi-national Gulf of Maine conservation and restoration initiative

The steering committee has discussed a series of steps to create the initiative including:

- Engage key stakeholders throughout the Gulf of Maine to determine priorities. Examples of activities include: assessment of existing conservation and restoration programs (e.g., frequency and methods to identify priorities; interaction with program staff, assessment of funding sources, etc.); understand current and prospective roles of local/state/provincial/federal governments and non-profit environmental organizations in conducting conservation and restoration, etc.).
- Identify the desired scope of conservation and restoration activities. Collect and analyze data regarding conservation and restoration projects that are underway or planned.
- Identify gaps in planning, implementation, or funding.
- Prepare implementation strategies, including legislative remedies, benchmarks, and measures.

Deliverables: A consensus document articulating the region's conservation and restoration needs and strategies to address those needs and secure the funding required.

Path Two: Creating an informed constituency -- facilitating the creation of a sustainable gulf-wide alliance

While effective restoration and conservation advocacy exists in pockets around the Gulf there is no concerted and sustained advocacy for these issues in the bi-national Gulf of Maine. This advocacy effort needs to engage non-profits, government, foundations and the business community. (It should be highlighted that the immediate need for an informed constituency relates to conservation and restoration. However, once in place it is expected the alliance will address other issues.) Specifically, we need to make opinion leaders, decision-makers and others more aware of the region's restoration and conservation needs. Key steps may include:

- Describe the organizational options for a sustainable Gulf of Maine alliance, identify and engage initial participants, and create the alliance.
- Assess public perception related to conservation/restoration, their awareness of the GOM ecosystem, and determine messages that elicit the desired responses.
- Develop outreach materials and use them to communicate the region's needs.

Successful restoration alliances and campaigns (e.g., Great Lakes, Puget Sound, Chesapeake Bay, etc.) were started with multi-year support from the philanthropic community. The considerable success they have all had in procuring US federal funding for restoration activities demonstrates that such investments are effective and are highly leveraged. It appears the minimum start-up time is about three years. Proponents of this effort in the Gulf of Maine are acutely aware that while seed funds may be available to form the alliance they need to actively consider ways to sustain such an effort. One promising opportunity is to partner with the business community (e.g., engineering and design firms, construction companies etc.) that will perform the actual restoration work. (Rebuilding and upgrading water infrastructure is the single greatest cost item for the ecosystem restoration efforts around the country. The EPA estimates that nearly \$400 billion is currently needed nation-wide to fix aging waste and storm water systems.) We have initiated conversations with the business community and the results are encouraging. We will explore other approaches as well.

Deliverables: Creation of an alliance supported by its members and outreach materials

Options for the GOMC: How it wants to participate

The Gulf of Maine Council can participate in a variety of ways in the development and implementation of the GOM Conservation and Restoration Initiative. (Development of the strategy will occur in 2009-2010. Simultaneously an advocacy effort will work to secure *significant* new resources to implement the strategy via existing state/provincial and federal programs and/or new programs.)

Option One: Regional Convener

Act a bi-national regional convener of the planning process that brings together public, non-profit and private interests to develop the Gulf of Maine Conservation and Restoration Initiative. As a convener it takes leadership in guiding a bi-national steering committee. Representative tasks that contract staff will perform on behalf of the committee include developing agendas and supporting materials, conducting outreach and inviting participants, chairing meetings (both physical and teleconferences), performing networking within and outside the region, preparing meeting summaries and identifying next steps, and managing contracts (e.g., opinion polling, message development

³ Individuals participating in this initiative and the GOMC include: Mel Cote, John Catena, Eric Hutchins, Ted Diers, Slade Moore, Anita Hamilton, Hunt Durey, Stew Fefer, Peter Lamb, Kathleen Leyden and Diane Gould.

and communications, research and synthesis of existing US/CA conservation and restoration programs, Congressional outreach, etc.).

Implications

1. The Council takes an active role, likely for 12-18 months, as a leader of the Initiative. In this context a Councilor from each country (or Working Group members) will commit the time (e.g., multiple hours/week) to assume the visible role of convener.
2. The Council provides directly or secures from other sources the funding (e.g., \$50,000 to \$75,000/year) to support contract staff that will perform the work described above.
3. Acts as fiscal agent (through US GoM Association) to provide the resources needed to perform the work.
4. The Initiative development process would be “an activity of the Council” and the Council embraces the highly collaborative, public & non-profit partnership needed to make the Initiative a success.

Option Two: Regional Facilitator

Act as a facilitator of the planning process that helps public, non-profit and private interests understand their common objectives and assists them in achieving those objectives them without taking a particular position in the discussion. The Council will assist the group in achieving a consensus on any disagreements that preexist or emerge in the development of the Initiative.

Implications

1. As an entity, the Council facilitates the discussion and is viewed as a bi-national leader of a highly collaborative initiative. (Its members are able to participate as they choose.)
2. The Council designates one or more members to represent Council interests and to report back on progress/issues.
3. Council participation is contingent on resources being secured
4. Acts as fiscal agent (through US GoM Association) to provide the resources needed to perform the work.

Option Three: Regional Participant

Join with others as an interested participant in the planning process to create the Initiative.

Implications

1. One or more representatives would be designated by the Council to participate on its behalf. In this capacity these representatives would bring information and advice to the Initiative and report back to the Council.

Working Group recommendations

1. The Council should work in a highly collaborative manner with public, non-profit and business interests as an active, regional facilitator (option #2).
2. The initiative should be consistent with the Council’s Action Plan and build on existing Council priorities (e.g., water quality, monitoring and indicators, habitat restoration, etc.).
3. The initiative should establish conservation and restoration priority themes and identify desired representative activities. It should not identify specific candidate sites
4. The Council should identify complementary Canadian and US programs and work to ensure they are involved.
5. Land conservation, although not a Council priority, is an activity many Council member agencies are involved with. Given the NEGC/ECP September 2009 land conservation resolution and formation of a standing committee the Council should engage that committee.
6. The Council should continue to work with others to secure and manage the planning and constituency building funds needed to perform the two paths described above.
7. The Council should understand that political support for major new conservation and restoration investments at the national level in each country are different. Further, that the capacity of current organizations to address the possible breadth of issues in the initiative varies greatly.
8. The Council’s deliberations and actions should ensure that federal agencies are not perceived as advocating for or lobbying for increased federal funding.
9. Implementation funding for the initiative should be managed by the federal agencies through established competitive processes and programs.
10. The Council should document lessons-learned concerning the role of Ontario and the Canadian federal government in the Great Lakes Healing our Waters.

Gulf of Maine Action Plan and GOM Habitat Conservation and Restoration Initiative: Visualizing the similarities and differences

Background synopsis

- The Gulf of Maine Action Plan (GMAP) was created by the Gulf of Maine Council in 2006. It contains measurable goals and objectives. It is preceded by three other 5-year Action Plans. Focal areas are coastal and marine habitats, ecosystem and human health, and sustainable communities.
- The Habitat Conservation and Restoration Initiative (HCRI) began in 2009 by US and CA organizations (and individuals) involved in the Council as well as many others. It is working to make on-the-ground improvements to coastal fish and wildlife populations and their habitats, coastal water quality, invasive species in the coastal and marine environment, abandoned fishing gear and other debris, address the impacts of climate change on the region's ecosystem, and advance long-range planning and communications.

Similarities & Differences

Content/issue areas	GMAP	HCRI
Watershed, coastal and marine habitat restoration	x	x
Watershed and coastal land conservation/acquisition		x
Ecosystem-based approaches to management	x	x
Water quality protection and monitoring	x	x
Manage invasive species	x	x
Support vibrant coastal communities	x	
Manage effects of marine debris and fishing gear		x
Address effects of climate change on the environment and people	x	x
Advance long-range planning and communications	x	x

Geography	GMAP	HCRI
GOM watershed out to the 200 mile limit	x	x
United States and Canada jurisdictions in the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy	x	x

Governing Board & Participants	GMAP	HCRI
Governor designated representatives and federal agencies	x	
Public, non-profit and for-profit representatives that choose to participate		x

Please note that more than 50% of the people/organizations participating in the Habitat Conservation and Restoration Initiative (HCRI) are active in the Gulf of Maine Council and its committees.

Update on U.S. Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force Report and its Potential Benefits and Role for the GOMC

On June 12, 2009, President Obama sent a [memorandum](#) to the heads of executive departments and federal agencies establishing an Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, led by the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The Task Force is charged with developing a recommendation for a national policy that ensures protection, maintenance, and restoration of oceans, our coasts and the Great Lakes. It will also recommend a framework for improved stewardship, and effective coastal and marine spatial planning.

This Task Force submitted a National Policy and a Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Framework to President Obama on December 9th. These deliverables will be implemented in the New England region beginning next year, and among other actions, will ask federal agencies, states and tribes to develop a comprehensive coastal and marine spatial plan within 5 years, reaching from the mean high water mark to 200 miles offshore.



This is an opportunity for Council members to become better informed on the content and timeframe of this initiative, to discuss its potential benefits to the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and institutions, and to determine what role the Council may play as it unfolds.

Potential roles for the Council:

A Canadian partner has been invited to serve as an ex officio member on the regional ocean planning body that will oversee these marine spatial planning efforts in NE waters. The GOMC could nominate that individual with the intent that this person can also to assist with finding symmetries between US and CA efforts in this region.

Much of the science, data management and decision analysis products that will be developed have multiple applications beyond marine spatial planning. The GOMC could determine how this work matches up with similar efforts in Canadian waters so the combined information can be used to benefit GOM projects.

The Gulf of Maine science and management community are well aware of existing and completed work in this region that should be used to inform this new initiative. The GOMC could serve as a conduit to discover this contributing work to ensure that duplication is avoided and important gaps are filled with resources available.