
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

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Ocean Planning: Protecting Coastal and Ocean Resources

The goal of ocean planning is to protect coastal and ocean resources, reduce potential user conflicts and facilitate compatible uses. People use the ocean's resources for food, energy, shipping, recreation and more. In recent years, there have been major advances in understanding and mapping the resources and uses of New England's coastal and ocean waters. This work has resulted in the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#) (Data Portal), a website-based mapping tool, as well as the [Northeast Ocean Plan](#) (Plan).

The information gathered to date shows that there are few unused coastal and ocean areas in New England and that many uses occur in the same places. In other words, conflicting uses already exist and will likely increase as new users, such as energy generation and transmission facilities, consider ocean locations. The Plan serves to guide decisions and practices that advance progress toward regional goals for the management of public ocean resources in New England, including New Hampshire. The Data Portal is an important tool for implementing the Plan by providing user-friendly, easily accessible, expert-reviewed data on human uses and activities for use by a broad range of government agencies, industries, non-government organizations, academic entities, and individuals.

New Hampshire's participation in regional ocean planning occurs through its membership in the [Northeast Regional Ocean Council \(NROC\)](#), a federal and multi-state partnership formed in 2005 by the Governors of the New England states. NROC's mission to provide a voluntary forum for New England states and federal partners to coordinate and collaborate on regional approaches to support balanced uses and conservation of the Northeast region's ocean and coastal resources. Research, data collection and public input are all important parts of ocean planning. NROC has worked extensively with marine-based industries, including aquaculture, commercial fishing, energy, maritime commerce and recreational boating to identify key issues and trends relevant to ocean planning in the region. New Hampshire is represented on NROC by the NHDES Coastal Program.

From November 2012 until June 2018 New Hampshire was a member of the Northeast Regional Planning Body (RPB), which was one of nine planning bodies under the National Ocean Policy established by Presidential Executive Order 13547 in 2010. The Northeast RPB was charged with leading a cooperative effort to develop a regional ocean plan for better managing its oceans and coasts, and overseeing the implementation of that plan. The Northeast RPB included representatives from all six New England states, six federally-recognized tribes, 10 federal agencies, and the New England Fishery Management Council.

On June 19, 2018, [Presidential Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13840](#) was signed. It is intended to advance the economic, security and environmental interests of the United States through improved public access to marine data and information, efficient federal agency coordination on ocean-related matters, and engagement with marine industries, the science and technology community, and other ocean stakeholders. The E.O. establishes an interagency Ocean Policy Committee (Committee) and directs the Committee, in part, to engage and collaborate with stakeholders, including Regional Ocean Partnerships, under existing laws and regulations to address ocean-related matters that may require interagency or intergovernmental solutions.