



## Meeting Materials • January 11, 2012 • EPA - Boston, MA in Courtroom 6

Directions to meeting location: <http://www.epa.gov/region1/directions/index.html>

9:00 AM	<p><b>Arrive</b> <i>Coffee, muffins, and networking</i></p>
9:15 AM	<p><b>Welcome</b> <i>Bruce Carlisle, MA and Bob LaBelle, DOI-BOEM</i></p>
9:30 AM	<p><b>Consent Agenda &amp; Updates</b> <i>Bruce Carlisle, MA – State Chair</i></p> <p>Consent agenda items are divided into three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Approval:</b> Council members provide review, comment, and approval</li> <li>▪ <b>Updates:</b> Partners and members provide brief updates on items related to NROC activities</li> <li>▪ <b>Interest:</b> Partners and members provide written updates as information only</li> </ul> <p>The Chair will facilitate the review of consent agenda items. <i>Please review items before the meeting.</i></p> <p><u>Content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Executive Committee Update:</b> Results of EC discussions since September 2011</li> <li>▪ <b>Partner Update:</b> NERACOOS</li> <li>▪ <b>Partner Update:</b> Sea Grant Consortium</li> <li>▪ <b>Interest:</b> Gulf of Maine Council</li> <li>▪ <b>Interest:</b> North Atlantic LCC</li> <li>▪ <b>Interest:</b> Ocean and Ecosystem Health Committee Related Legislative Updates</li> </ul> <p>Meeting Materials on page 3.</p>
10:15 AM	<p><b>Preparing for 2013-2015: Developing a Strategic Planning Process</b> <i>Bruce Carlisle, MA – State Chair</i></p> <p>Plan a NROC strategic prioritization / planning process, define a new two year agenda, and develop necessary organizational structure and processes for implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council discussion and adoption of approach and timeline</li> <li>▪ Review 2010-2012 work plans</li> <li>▪ Discuss 2013-2015 planning process including work plans, committee structure, and the NROC coordinator position.</li> </ul> <p>Meeting Materials on page 6.</p>
11:30 AM	<p><b>Partner Feedback</b></p>
12:00 PM	<p><b>Lunch</b> (<i>EPA Cafeteria</i>)</p>
1:00 PM	<p><b>Presentation: New England–Maritime Collaboration Report</b> <i>Evan Richert, Richert Planning</i></p> <p>Presentation will be followed by discussion of implications for NROC and preparing for a joint meeting of NROC, GOMC, and NERACOOS.</p> <p>Meeting Materials: <b>The New England-Canadian Maritime Collaboration and Planning Initiative Draft Report</b> is available on the <a href="#">Gulf of Maine Council website</a> under “Meetings” and December 2011 presentations.</p>

2:00 PM	<p><b>NROC Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ocean Planning Committee Updates:</b> Progress on Ocean Planning Work Plan</li> <li>▪ <b>Coastal Hazards Committee Updates:</b> Municipal Coastal Hazards Resilience Grants and Sea Level Rise Mapping/Climate Change Adaptation Applications Workshop (Julia Knisel, MA and Adrienne Harrison, NOAA)</li> <li>▪ <b>Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health Committee Updates:</b> Discussions with NERACOOS and Indicator Workshop follow up (Mel Côté, EPA and Brian Thompson, CT)</li> </ul> <p>Meeting Materials on page 13.</p>
3:00 PM	<p><b>Website: Focus group session for NROC members and partners</b> <i>Adrienne Harrison, NOAA</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learn about current use of NROC website</li> <li>▪ Identify needs that are not met by current NROC website</li> </ul> <p>Meeting Materials on page 14.</p>
3:30 PM	<p><b>Closing Business</b> <i>Bruce Carlisle, MA – State Chair</i></p> <p><u>Content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Next meeting date: May 31</li> </ul>
4:00 PM	<p><b>Adjourn</b></p>

**Consent Agenda:**

**1. Executive Committee Update:**

**Internal Procedures for Procurement:** The contracting procedures are available on the [NROC website](#), under “Publications” and “NROC Policies”.

**Conflict of Interest Policy:** It is the policy of the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) to ensure that its business and operations are free from the existence or appearance of any conflict of interest. Conflict of interest refers to actions by or intent of a member or staff NROC to exploit their position in NROC for their own personal or corporate benefit. This policy is intended to supplement but not to replace any applicable state and federal laws and funding source requirements govern conflict of interest applicable to NROC and its members or staff. The full conflict of interest policy and guidelines is available on the [NROC website](#), under “Publications” and “NROC Policies”.

**2. Partner Update:** Northeast Sea Grant Consortium

### 3. Partner Update: NERACOOS

#### Funding

NERACOOS received a \$1.77M award from the U.S. IOOS office. This is the first year of funding of a five-year award. The NERACOOS Strategic Planning and Implementation (SPI) team developed the scope of work for this FY11 award. The funding will support the following activities during the funding period:

- Coordinated regional management, outreach, education and communications by the NERACOOS office
- Operations and maintenance of 11 oceanographic buoys and 1 coastal monitoring station in the region including 8 buoys in the Gulf of Maine and 3 in Long Island Sound
- Operations and maintenance of 3 High Frequency Radar (HF Radar) stations along the Northeast Coast
- Operations and maintenance of the Northeast Coastal Ocean Forecast System the regional wave forecast system
- Operations and maintenance of the NERACOOS data management and communications system including the NERACOOS website ([www.neracoos.org](http://www.neracoos.org))
- Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) monitoring and satellite detection effort in the Bay of Fundy
- Real-time telemetry for Narragansett Bay Fixed-Site Water Quality Monitoring Network
- Monitoring of nutrients through the Atlantic Zonal Monitoring Program

More details can be found at [www.neracoos.org](http://www.neracoos.org)

#### Regional Buildout Plan

NERACOOS completed the initial draft of its regional build out plan, which describes the 10 year vision for the products and services that NERACOOS will deliver along with the observing system elements required to deliver the services. Regional Build out plans were completed by all 11 Ocean Observing Regional Associations around the U.S. and the plans are being merged into a national synthesis.

These plans will help support the national IOOS Act requirements, including an Independent Cost Estimate and gaps analysis, but will also inform the Strategic Action Plan #9 of the National Ocean Policy, *“Strengthen and integrate Federal and non-Federal ocean observing systems, sensors, data collection platforms, data management, and mapping capabilities into a national system and integrate that system into international observation efforts.”*

The NERACOOS build out plan is available on the NERACOOS documents page.

#### Annual Meeting

NERACOOS held its third annual meeting on November 29th at the Seacoast Science Center in Rye, NH with over 50 stakeholders in attendance. In the morning, Dr. Ru Morrison, NERACOOS Executive Director, highlighted many of NERACOOS' accomplishments and US Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) Program Director, Zdenka Willis, provided an overview of the IOOS. The morning was capped off with a successful press event to announce our \$1.77M award. In the afternoon a panel of stakeholders discussed how NERACOOS data and tools were used by their sector and the new NERACOOS website was introduced.

#### New NERACOOS Website

NERACOOS redesigned its website to help highlight NERACOOS activities and partners and to improve access to its data and tools. NERACOOS worked closely with its web development partner, the Ocean Data Products group at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute to also migrate data and tools from the GoMOOS website, which will be going offline in the upcoming months. Please take a look at the new [NERACOOS.org](http://NERACOOS.org) and let us know what you think.

#### 4. Partner Update: Gulf of Maine Council

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment released the *2012–2017 Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment Action Plan*, which presents the goals, outcomes and activities that the Council will pursue in its ongoing efforts to maintain and enhance environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy and its watersheds to allow for sustainable resource use.

Every five years, the Gulf of Maine Council renews its engagement and commitment to working together in addressing the Gulf's most pressing issues that require a unified, regional response. This new Action Plan will allow the Council to focus on the issues that are most in need of intervention to protect the Gulf's fragile ecosystems for future generations so that they too can understand and appreciate our natural environment. Among those issues considered a priority of the Council, over the next five years: are climate change adaptation; water quality protection, and habitat restoration and conservation.

Through the Action Plan, the Council will work toward three long-range goals:

##### **Goal 1: Restored and Conserved Habitats**

Habitats in the ocean and along the coast, including the rivers that flow to the ocean, are healthy, productive, and resilient. They support rich aquatic life, vibrant coastal communities, and ocean economies.

##### **Goals 2: Environmental and Human Health**

Environmental conditions support the health of people and the ecosystems of the Gulf of Maine.

##### **Goal 3: Sustainable Communities**

People who live and work in communities around the Gulf of Maine have information needed to adapt to the changing environment.

The Action Plan contains a list of initiatives that the Council intends to pursue during the next five years. Some of the initiatives include:

- Providing ***Gulf of Maine Habitat Restoration Grants*** and technical assistance that result in restored coastal ecosystems;
- Supporting the region-wide exchange of information on observed and predicted effects of climate change on the people living in the region and its coastal and marine habitats;
- Identifying and assessing new and emerging environmental issues in the Gulf of Maine via the publication of the ***State of the Gulf Report*** series of theme papers;
- Providing municipal adaptation grants and technical assistance that result in more resilient coastal communities.
- Publishing the ***Gulf of Maine Times***, an unbiased news source about research and management activities happening in the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy.
- Continuing to improve the Council's long-standing ***Gulfwatch*** contaminants monitoring program and integrating it with other monitoring initiatives;
- Creating the ***Ecosystem Indicator Partnership Program*** which provides an online Ecosystem Indicator Reporting Tool and Ecosystem Monitoring Map, and theme-oriented indicator fact sheets, as well as delivering training workshops and disseminating information about the health of the ecosystem.
- Advancing the bi-national acquisition and use of seafloor mapping products and services for resource and management decisions;

The *2012–2017 Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment Action Plan* is available on the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment website [www.gulfofmaine.org](http://www.gulfofmaine.org)

**5. Interest:** North Atlantic LCC

**6. Interest:** Ocean and Ecosystem Health Committee Related Legislative Updates

From the "MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012" conference report, also known as HR 255:

Eastern Long Island Sound Supplemental Environmental Impact Study.—The conferees are concerned by the lack of progress at the Agency in completing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for eastern Long Island Sound, which has been slated since 2002 and is necessary to ensure that significant military installations do not lose access to dredged disposal sites. The conferees direct the Agency to submit a report no later than 90 days after enactment of this Act outlining its plan to carry out the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the eastern Long Island Sound, including the possible use of existing appropriated funds to begin the study. The conferees also urge the Agency to work collaboratively with appropriate stakeholders, including the Army Corps of Engineers and State partners, to expeditiously determine a dredging solution for eastern Long Island Sound. (p. 1076)

Southern New England Estuaries.—The conferees recommend that the Agency convene and lead a comprehensive regional policy coordination and outreach effort to protect, enhance, and restore the coastal watersheds of southern New England. No entity or consortium exists to meet these challenges, and there is an urgent and immediate need for such an effort. For example, in Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay, there are documented extensive areas of pollution severely degrading fish and wildlife habitat and water quality; problems that are compounded by the effects of warmer water temperatures and milder winters. The conferees recommend that EPA establish goals for the regional effort, emphasizing water quality and habitat restoration as well as the development and implementation of innovative technologies to meet these challenges and create jobs. The effort should provide for streamlined interagency communication, and involve an inclusive stakeholder process. Specifically, EPA should collaborate with State agencies as well as other Federal partners such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Small Business Administration. The Agency should also include stakeholders from local governments and agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions. The conferees also recommend that the Agency, through this regional effort, facilitate the development of strategies to restore and protect the southern New England Estuaries. (p. 1077)

From the Army Corps of Engineers appropriations bill conference report: Section 116. The New London Disposal Site and the Cornfield Shoals Disposal Site in Long Island Sound selected by the Department of the Army as alternative dredged material disposal sites under section 103(b) of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, as amended, shall remain open for 5 years after enactment of this Act to allow for completion of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to support final designation of an Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site in eastern Long Island Sound under section 102(c) of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972.

**Preparing for 2013-2015:**

1. **NROC 2010-2012 Work Plans:** Available on [NROC Website](#) under “Publications”
2. **2010-2012 Work Plan Progress Report:**

<b>Ocean and Ecosystem Health Work Plan Progress Report</b>	<b>Status</b>
Action 1.1 (and Ocean Planning Action 3): Develop regional data portal and network to serve as a single portal and distributed network for regional coastal and marine spatial data.	Complete
Action 1.2: Work with the Northeast Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS), the New England-Canadian Maritime Collaboration and Planning Initiative, and other organizations to develop key data/mapping products.	Resources
Action 2.1: Report on current indicator programs (e.g., Gulf of Maine Council Ecosystem Indicators Partnership (GOMC ESIP), National Estuary Programs (NEPs), National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs)).	Resources
Action 2.2: Workshop convening policymakers, managers and scientists to develop a consensus statement on definition of ecosystem health and to strengthen coordination and integration of regional indicator initiatives in New England.	Complete
Action 2.3: Report with workshop results and “next steps” to NROC and other New England decision-makers.	Complete
Action 2.4: Compile annotated bibliography of existing (and current) research on the effects of climate change effects on ocean and coastal ecosystem health as well as cumulative and secondary impacts from existing and future uses of the ocean.	Resources
Action 2.5: Support ESIP as regional portal for ecosystem status and trends data for the Gulf of Maine sub-region, and explore expansion to rest of the New England region.	Ongoing
Action 2.6: Support expansion of Long Island Sound Study (LISS) “Sentinel Monitoring for Climate Change” throughout the region; identify opportunities for workshop.	Ongoing
Action 2.7 (and Coastal Hazards Action 2): Regional symposium on seafloor and marine habitat mapping status and technologies, marine habitat classification frameworks, and related info exchange.	Resources
Action 3.1: Collaborative, pilot demonstration project to integrate state Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) plans, Wildlife Action Plans, climate plans and others.	Ongoing
Action 3.2: Regional conservation priorities to incorporate climate change adaptation and wildlife habitat protection strategies into active land conservation programs.	Ongoing
Action 3.3: Inventory and analysis (maps, data, text) of priority ecosystems, natural resources, and coastal environments vulnerable to sea level rise and the impacts of climate change.	Ongoing/ Planned
Action 3.4: Regional assessment criteria for identifying the highest priority conservation areas to achieve protection of regionally significant resources.	Complete
Action 3.5: Coordination and collaboration with complementary conservation programs and efforts such as US Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) North Atlantic LCC, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and GOMC.	Ongoing
Action 3.6: Stakeholder connection, input and dialogue.	Resources
Action 4.1: NROC will support and promote the numerous existing state-federal partnerships in New England that are working to restore and protect ocean and coastal ecosystem health.	Ongoing
Action 5.1: Enhanced coordination with NERACOOS through implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding; promotion of shared representation between organizations on respective work groups; and collaboration of annual work plans through a series of workshops.	Complete/ Ongoing
Action 5.2: Work jointly with regional partners and the New England-Canadian Maritime Collaboration and Planning Initiative to identify needs and priorities for enhanced data management and applications to improve decision making on environmental issues.	Complete
Action 5.3: Work with NERACOOS and Northeast Coastal and Ocean Data Partnership (NeCODP) to help identify the data and product needs of NROC and its partners, develop the common schema and application to environmental management.	Unknown

Coastal Hazards Work Plan Progress Report	Status
Action 1.1 Bimonthly webinar series to share information on hazards resilience and climate adaptation tools and resources available to the region as well as specific case studies or pilot projects from New England.	Ongoing
Action 1.2: Climate Adaptation workshop, delivered in collaboration with the Gulf of Maine Council Climate Change Network, NOAA Coastal Services Center, and other partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2010 Climate Adaptation Training, Narragansett, RI</li> </ul>	Complete
Action 1.3: Storm Smart Coasts Network website for New England, with state and region specific information and strategies for improving hazards resilience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island complete</li> <li>• Maine and Connecticut in progress</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Action 1.4: StormSmart Coasts Network Communication and Outreach with media.	Ongoing/ Planned
Action 1.5: Northeast Climate Adaptation Framework, in collaboration with NESCAUM and other partners, focused on interstate and interagency coordination of adaptation policies.	Unknown
Action 1.6: Regional proposals for climate adaptation and hazards resilience related projects.	Complete
Action 2.1: Digital Elevation Meeting to coordinate 2011-2012 LiDAR data collection plans.	Complete
Action 2.2: Mapping Product Recommendations for priority regional tools such as flood elevation maps and sea level inundation visualizations.	Ongoing/ Planned
Action 2.3 (and Ocean and Ecosystem Health Action 2.7): Regional symposium on seafloor and marine habitat mapping status and technologies, marine habitat classification frameworks, and related info exchange.	Resources
Action 2.4: Southern New England Mapping Initiative created to extend the work of GOMMI to Long Island Sound. (See also Ecosystem Health activity #2)	Resources
Action 2.5: Inundation Visualization Tools for storm surge, sea level rise, and economic impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012 Sea Level Rise Mapping Workshop (planned)</li> </ul>	Ongoing/ Planned
Action 3.1: Recommendations for further aligning NROC and NERACOOS Hazards Resilience Committees.	Complete
Action 3.2: Development of hazards resilience requirements for ocean observations (in partnership with NERACOOS)	Complete
Action 4.1: Methodology for developing a unified coastline data layer.	Complete
Action 4.2: Highlight results of pilot work on NROC website and New England StormSmart Coasts Network.	Ongoing/ Planned



<b>Ocean Energy Planning and Management Work Plan Progress Report</b>	<b>Status</b>
Action 1.1 Coordinate with CMSP Strategy Team to develop recommendations and an acquisition strategy for priority ocean energy planning data needs.	Ongoing
Action 1.2: Work with ocean energy stakeholders to identify the types and sources of contextual and baseline data and knowledge essential for ocean energy facility development, impact mitigation, and operations.	Ocean Planning Committee
Action 1.3: Facilitate discussion among relevant resource agencies (e.g., FWS, NMFS, state agencies) and the state- and Federal-authorizers (e.g., BOEMRE, Army Corps, RI CRMC) to identify New England's regional biological survey needs.	Ocean Planning Committee
Action 1.4: Coordinate with the Northeast Data Portal to develop a regional data viewer.	Ongoing
Action 1.5: Continue to update the US Coast Guard inventory and GIS database of NE ocean energy projects	Ongoing
Action 2.1: Assess regional ocean energy planning needs that complement CMSP and Task Force processes.	Unknown
Action 2.2: Routine exchange of information among the New England states (and other states around the country) through a combination of webinars and committee conference calls.	Ocean Planning Committee
Action 2.3: Use MMS Task Force meetings in RI, MA and ME to identify additional communication needs.	Unknown
Action 2.4: Maintain communication with the Atlantic Governors Consortium on Wind Energy.	Unknown
Action 2.5: Identify state, regional, and national conferences that NROC can organize and facilitate sessions or panels focused on sharing information and perspectives on ocean energy planning initiatives.	Unknown
Action 2.6: A robust sub-page on the NROC web site devoted to status updates on New England's ocean energy planning initiatives (e.g., RI SAMP and MA Ocean Plan websites) as well as basic descriptions and contact information for each.	Ongoing

<b>Ocean Planning Work Plan Progress Report</b>	<b>Status</b>
Action 1.1: Create document that inventories state, federal and partner progress (in product form) on CMSP in New England.	Complete
Action 1.2: Serve as the forum for regional and sub-regional discussions.	Ongoing
Action 2.1: Framework reflecting input from states and federal agencies on NROC and partners.	Complete
Action 2.2: Identification of partner contributions to framework (expertise, resources that can be applied to various parts of framework)	Ongoing
Action 2.3: Facilitated discussion of Governance Structure to advance CMSP in New England.	Complete
Action 2.4: Schematic and narrative that describe the relationship between NROC and the New England CMSP Regional Planning Body.	Unknown
Action 2.5: Develop a proposal for a regional Coastal and Marine Spatial Plan based on NROC's draft framework.	Complete
Action 3.1: Maintain communication between NROC and Northeast Data Portal project, including periodic briefings with NROC members to align management needs with plan for regional data portal	Ongoing
Action 3.2: Provide demonstration of Northeast Data Portal to NROC at key milestones.	Complete
Action 3.3: Data inventory focused on key data themes that support CMSP applications and products.	Complete
Action 3.4: Develop a proposal for full regional data portal project.	Complete

### 3. Focus Area 2 Proposal (Section 5 – Approach):

The development of NROC as a regional ocean partnership entity and the progress NROC and its partners have made since its inception are noteworthy (e.g., see Committee Accomplishments in NROC 2010-2012 Priority Issue Area Work Plans). With the exception of some modest—but highly valued—seed money, the growth and advancement of the Northeast’s regional ocean partnership has been sustained to date by significant commitments of State and Federal in-kind resources. The ability of NROC to advance beyond its current scope and capacities is not without bounds however, and the partnership is very much bumping up against a ceiling. Without additional organizational and operational support, the Council’s growth and advancement is unfortunately limited. The primary intent of this project is to allow the NROC participants who are not currently directed under the authority of President Obama’s July 2010 Executive Order on the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes to participate more fully in the implementation of the National Ocean Policy. The Executive Order has made participation of the Federal agencies mandatory: “All executive departments, agencies, and offices...shall...take such action as necessary to implement the [National Ocean] policy and the stewardship principles and national priority objectives as set forth in the Final Recommendations [of the IOPTF] and subsequent guidance...”. States have neither the same mandate nor executive obligation for resources beyond the time that can be squeezed out of their existing (and already full) programs and agendas. This grant request will help to solve that problem for the States, and it will—at the same time—enable the Federal agencies to provide significantly more value-added time towards the implementation of NROC’s work plans. The tasks outlined below will greatly enhance NROC’s readiness and ability to achieve its mission by improving its organizational and governance capacity, strengthening and growing its partnerships and collaborative relationships, and increasing its participatory processes and communication.

#### **Objective 1. Advance NROC administrative, organizational, and governance capacity.**

*Task 1.1. Establish and fill a NROC coordinator position A full-time equivalent coordinator will be hired to staff the Executive Committee and NROC’s work committees. [Note: the CSMP committee will be staffed through other resources – see the NROC Focus Area 1 proposal].*

The aim of this Task is to free up time of current Committee chairs and staff (both Federal and State) to focus less on administrative matters and more on value-added policy and management issues consistent with their professional capacities. It will also facilitate better participation of the non-governmental entities which also serve on some NROC committees. Specific work elements for the NROC Coordinator position include:

- Assisting with development of recommendations to Council on projects and partnerships;
- Developing and distributing annual progress reports;
- Drafting and finalizing quarterly NROC meeting agendas, meeting materials, and notes;
- Maintaining content on NROC website, with priority given to updating work plans, Committee membership, NROC membership, and announcements;
- Administrative support to organize face-to-face Committee meetings per year (two meetings per Committee); and
- Assist Committee chairs with work plan development, project management, and oversee follow up on action items.

*Task 1.2. Provide for greater participation of state policy and technical staff. Nominal funding will be provided to each State to cover a partial portion of a policy and/or technical staff and leverage greater in-kind support and institutional “buy-in”. This Task will have the dual benefit of creating specific contract obligations for the States as well as demonstrating the value of State efforts for/with NROC. With such funding, States would be asked to ensure the following outcomes are met:*

- State’s Council delegate (and/or alternate) attend three Council meetings per year.
- State’s provide significant professional staff participation in, and support for, at least one NROC
- Committee or working group. Significant participation would mean contributions along the lines of co-chairing a Committee or regular involvement in developing and implementing work plan actions.
- States commit to timely and substantive review of draft work plans and NROC documents, providing comments back to the NROC coordinator in writing.

#### **Objective 2. Strengthen and grow NROC’s strategic planning, partnerships, collaborative relationships, and participatory processes.**

*Task 2.1. Enable more efficient and coordinated processes for NROC strategic planning and Work Plan development between NROC agencies and organizations.* Operational support to plan, organize, and deliver a NROC strategic prioritization / planning process, define a new two year agenda, and develop necessary organizational structure and processes for implementation. Elements of this task include technical, operational, and administrative support for NROC to:

- Review current workload and commitments;
- Assess current Committees, including existing Work Plans, structure, function, and utility;
- Outreach and engagement with partners to define possible collaborative partnerships on specific actions or projects;
- Convene retreat or similar forum for Council to define new/updated two year strategic priorities and general agenda;
- Reorganize Committees as needed to align with updated priorities;
- Update NROC Terms of Reference;
- Draft new two-year Work Plans for Committees;
- Obtain stakeholder input and feedback on the updated NROC priorities and Work Plans; and
- Finalize and begin implementation on strategic priorities and Work Plans.

*Task 2.2. Support focused dialogue and information exchange through a high-profile regional workshop.* As described above, NROC seeks to build on its current partnerships through collaborative work on project or initiative specific efforts as well as improve its outreach to and participation of new partners. NROC, working through its Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee, proposes to host a spring/summer 2012 workshop on sea level rise mapping and climate change adaptation applications for the region. As the Northeast LiDAR project data are being released and agencies and organizations in the region are considering how they can best utilize this new high-resolution information on topographical elevation (and related data), the primary objective of the workshop would be to educate attendees on (1) the data and DTM model developed through project, (2) LiDAR mapping techniques and methodologies, and (3) applications of the models, information for sea level rise and other adaptation management strategies and projects. Building off the 2009 NROC New England Lidar Workshop (USGS Woods Hole, MA) and the 2010 Northeast Region Coastal Hazards Workshop (New London, CT), the proposed 2012 workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss current and potential future collaborations focused on the assessment of coastal community risk and habitat vulnerability and change. NROC will invite 50-70 participants from governmental agencies (including regional representatives from the US Geological Survey, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Weather Service, National Park Service, state coastal programs, transportation departments), regional planning agencies, universities, municipal planner associations, and tribal nations. The first day of the workshop will focus on presentations by experienced LiDAR users to describe methodologies to assess tidal levels, storm surges, coastal change, shoreline positions, and wetlands migration as well as highlight a few successful case studies from both region and beyond (e.g., San Francisco Bay). The second day of the workshop will use a few panels and breakout working sessions to develop new collaborative projects as well as to further existing partnership projects. The outcome of the workshop will be projects that utilize the best data and tools and are targeted to local decision makers. The task involves organizational and logistical support, invitational travel expenses, workshop facilitation and proceedings. The facility will be provided in-kind by a regional partner.

**Objective 3. Increase capacity and effectiveness of NROC communications.**

*Task 3.1. Expand use of communication tools and channels to enhance NROC communication between partners and with the public.* Funding will support expansion of NROC communication media and tools. To date, NROC has relied primarily on traditional means of communication and collaboration through face-to-face Council and Committee meetings, frequent teleconferencing, email correspondence, and workshops where participation is through physical in-person attendance. NROC's ability to increase the capacity and effectiveness of its communications could be greatly enhanced by expanding its communication means and modes. NROC's strength in developing ocean-related publications, websites and other media is its many private, state and federal employees spread over the Northeast who can provide this information to the public at different levels. As the regional ocean partnerships gain a national and local profile, the look, readability and

feel of its website and publications becomes much more important. Through this task, NROC will:

- Seeking media coverage when/where appropriate through press events and/or releases;
- Engage in an overhaul of NROC website and migration to new URL (northeastoceancouncil.org) to enhance profile, accessibility, utility, and communication of NROC events and activities;
- Exploration of the pros and cons of NROC use of social media tools;
- Creation of short (one / two pager) summary document based on NROC issue areas, initiatives, and objectives conveying “talking points” of what the partnership hopes to accomplish; and
- Annual progress reports and other short documents describing various aspects of NROC activities.

## **NROC Activities:**

### **1. Ocean Planning Committee Update:**

**Hiring Ocean Planning Project Manager:** announcement is on the TSNE web site and being broadly advertised. Deadline is January 25. Position is intended to assist with technical aspects of NROC work plan (data, science elements). One year duration with anticipation of extending.

**Other Capacity Enhancements:** US Coast Guard advertised for a public relations position with a component of their job duties being to assist with ocean planning outreach; position closed in December. This Spring, NOAA anticipates hiring a logistics/communications position to assist in standing up a NEW Regional Planning Body, as well as assist with NROC's ocean planning work.

**Scoping Recreational Use Study:** Have held conference call to begin scoping this work, with Seaplan and NROC members. . Outreach to state-level associations underway to determine their level of interest in helping to scope. Decision made to focus on regional aspects of general recreational use (boating/cruising, fishing, e.g.) as beginning point. Currently exploring feasibility of various methodologies, both practically and legally/politically. Key current need: determine methodology asap to enable required preparatory work to happen in the next two-three months (e.g., prior to this boating season).

**Data Portal:** two webinars for the Northeast Ocean data portal ([www.northeastoceandata.org](http://www.northeastoceandata.org)) held in late 2011 to provide updates to NROC leads and GIS staff, revisit priority data set list, and discuss existing and potential new functional additions. Planning for upcoming year underway.

**Scoping of work plan elements underway:** public engagement, commercial fishing-related, and habitat classification elements of work plan either underway or imminent. Pursuant to procurement procedures, will result in development of RFPs.

**Regional Workshop Planning:** NROC planning group has discussed draft agenda, timing (second or third week in March), and development of invitee list. Realizing need to move quickly on this, have also engaged NEFMC (Paul Howard) and Steve Crawford (as tribal representative for NOC Governance Coordinating Committee from Maine) with the support of Meridian. Hold-the-date notices will be coming out very soon (next couple of weeks).

**Federal Partners Retreat:** Federal agency reps associated with NROC, ocean planning efforts in the region, and designees to the NE Regional Planning Body will be meeting in February to advance the ball on 1) directly supporting NROC's ocean planning work, 2) preparing to stand up a RPB and 3) discussing individual and common agency information needs and objectives for improved resource management (planning and regulatory) through this initiative.

## **NROC Website Redesign:**

### **Summary of website feedback survey results:**

- The primary reason most state and federal NROC participants visit the website is to obtain meeting information.
- Most thought the website was easy to use and the information was clear.
- The most frequently accessed information on the NROC website include
  - Meeting information
  - Annual work plans
  - Ocean planning information
  - Calendar of events
  - Information about NROC (e.g. goals, vision)
  - Hazards resilience information
  - NROC contact information

### **Suggested improvements to the website:**

- Better document management and improved accessibility
- Results of past (and future) projects
- Links to member agencies
- Council and Committee member contact information
- New URL
- Improved visual appeal of website for public outreach and engagement
- Add visuals such as a regional map and pictures of meetings/events

### **Questions:**

Who is the primary audience of the website? (NROC members, public, or both)

Should NROC devote some of the web resources to “branding”? (e.g. updated logo, colors)

Are members in favor of having their agencies and contact information linked to the NROC website?

Should NROC invest in hosting its website to the “northeastoceans.org” URL?

### **Next Steps:**

Identify state and federal staff to participate in a website redesign ad hoc group.

Develop a budget and scope of work for a contractor to develop an updated NROC website.