



## **An Ecosystem-Based Management Anniversary Report**

March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006

On March 21<sup>st</sup> 2005, COMPASS released the Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Ecosystem-Based Management signed by over 200 scientists from U.S. academic institutions. At the time, recently released reports from the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission highlighted ecosystem-based management (EBM) as the cornerstone of a new vision for comprehensive and integrated management of ocean resources. The Consensus Statement outlined the scientific underpinnings for implementation of EBM. It also listed key elements of EBM as articulated by the two Commission reports, and a series of actions consistent with an ecosystem approach to management. Now, on this first anniversary of the release of the statement, we pause to highlight recent international, national and regional developments and discussions that provide a progress report and flag remaining challenges as the U.S. moves towards implementation of ecosystem-based management.

### International: The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) provides essential scientific information and a framework for ongoing national discussions about ecosystem-based management. A 5-year effort involving over 1300 scientists from 95 countries, the MA characterizes the state of the world's ecosystems and the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being. It frames the discussion of ecosystem approaches to management in terms of protecting and maintaining the delivery of vital ecosystem services. In 2005, the MA launched a series of six synthesis reports highlighting key findings (an overall synthesis and ones tailored to different key issues and audiences: Biodiversity, Desertification, Business and Industry, Wetlands and Water, and Health). In 2006, the full technical reports from the MA were published. They provide, among other things, an inventory of the state of marine and coastal ecosystems throughout the world, the resulting loss of important ecosystem services, a series of scenarios of future human well-being that elucidate the tradeoffs involved, and options for protecting and restoring ecosystem services for human benefit. In addition, a synthesis based on the MA and specifically related to marine and coastal ecosystems will be released this coming June 2006. ([www.MAweb.org](http://www.MAweb.org))

### National: Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative (JOCI) was formed in late 2004 as a collaborative effort among commissioners from the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission. The goal of JOCI, led by a ten-member task force representing the two commissions, is to increase the pace of change to achieve ocean policy reform in the U.S. The JOCI recently released its U.S. Ocean Policy Report Card (February 2006). U.S. ocean policy reform received an overall letter grade of D+. Individual grades ranged from high marks for the initial federal response to Commission

reports and more recent regional and state governance responses, to failing grades for international leadership and new funding for ocean policy programs.

([www.jointoceancommission.org](http://www.jointoceancommission.org))

### National efforts: Administration and Congress

Efforts to implement some of the recommendations of the two Oceans Commission reports have been undertaken by the Administration and Congress. A few of these include:

- Under the Ocean Action Plan, a cabinet-level **Committee on Ocean Policy** was created in late 2004. In 2005, the Committee named two subcommittees: the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (**SIMOR**), tasked with identifying and promoting collaboration among federal agencies, and the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (**JSOST**), tasked with coordinating and developing ocean science and technology information and research. Of particular note, the JSOST is currently developing the Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy and will be hosting an upcoming workshop in April in Denver, CO.  
[http://ocean.ceq.gov/about/jsost\\_workshop/welcome.html](http://ocean.ceq.gov/about/jsost_workshop/welcome.html)
- **Oceans 21** is a comprehensive legislative package that draws heavily from the EBM recommendations of the Ocean Commissions. It was introduced in the House in June 2005.
- The **Magnuson-Stevens Act**, which governs fishery management in the U.S., is in the reauthorization process this spring; proposals to better incorporate ecosystem approaches to fisheries management are under consideration.

### State and regional efforts: Working towards an ecosystem approach to management

As was highlighted in the JOCI report card, there have been improvements in some approaches towards managing coastal and ocean resources. Regional initiatives, intended to work towards an ecosystem approach, have started or made substantial progress over the past year. We highlight a few examples here:

- The **Great Lakes Regional Collaboration** is a multi-sector initiative to restore and protect the Great Lakes ecosystem. They released a revised Strategy in December 2005.  
<http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/index.html>
- The **Gulf of Maine Council** Ocean Task Force developed recommendations for consideration in the Council's 2006-2011 Action Plan, including roles for the council in enabling EBM within the Gulf of Maine.  
[www.gulfofmaine.org](http://www.gulfofmaine.org)
- The **Gulf of Mexico Alliance**, comprised of representatives of the Federal government and the five Gulf States, was established in the spring of 2005. Its aim is to protect and conserve the complex ecosystem of the Gulf of Mexico. The Alliance are set to release their Action plan on Mar 28<sup>th</sup> 2006.  
[www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org](http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org)
- The **New Jersey Coast 2005 Initiative** launched in April 2005, seeks to protect the integrity and economic viability of New Jersey's valuable coastal resources.

[http://www.state.nj.us/dep/cmp/czm\\_zone.html](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/cmp/czm_zone.html)

- The **Shared Strategy for Puget Sound** (WA) released its revised Salmon Recovery Plan in December 2005. The Plan was developed through a collaborative, bottom-up process that involved significant stakeholder and inter-agency participation.  
<http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org>
- **Puget Sound Partnership**, formed in December 2005 by Washington's Gov. Gregoire, is a new public/private partnership charged with an aggressive 15-year plan to clean up, restore and protect Puget Sound. Initial recommendations are expected in June 2006.  
<http://www.pugetsoundpartnership.org>

### State efforts: Ocean governance

A number of coastal states have made significant advances toward implementing some of the recommendations of the two Oceans Commission reports, specifically by developing ocean councils charged with addressing critical coastal and ocean governance issues needed for EBM. A number of these state efforts are highlighted below:

- The **California** Ocean Protection Council (COPC)—established pursuant to the California Ocean Protection Act (2004)—first met in March 2005. The council is mandated to help coordinate and improve the protection and management of California's ocean and coastal resources.  
<http://resources.ca.gov/copc/>
- The **Florida** legislature created a new Ocean and Coastal Resources Council (OCRC) in May 2005, charged with developing priorities for ocean and coastal research, establishing a statewide ocean research plan, and coordinating public and private ocean research for more effective coastal management.  
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/oceanscouncil/>
- The **Washington** Ocean Policy Work Group (OPWG) was established by the 2005 legislature to provide a forum for discussing ocean governance issues in Washington.  
<http://courses.washington.edu/oceangov/>
- The **Hawaii** Ocean and Coastal Council (HOCC) was created by an executive order and met frequently throughout 2005, acting as a forum to discuss overlapping ocean and coastal concerns between different state entities. A bill to formalize the HOCC and to allow it to continue is currently before the legislature.  
<http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/>
- In **Massachusetts**, the Ocean Governance Task Force released their recommendations for improving ocean management in the state in March 2004. Gov. Romney responded by proposing the Ocean Resources and Conservation Act in March 2005; the Act is currently pending before the legislature.  
[http://www.mass.gov/czm/oceanmanagement/waves\\_of\\_change/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/czm/oceanmanagement/waves_of_change/index.htm)

### Meetings convene scientists and practitioners to discuss implementation of EBM

A number of workshops and meetings brought together scientists, practitioners, policy-makers and/or other stakeholders to discuss opportunities, challenges, and the next steps needed to implement an EBM approach.

- **Ocean Ecosystem Management: Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Ocean Governance** was hosted by Duke University School of Law & Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions in October 2005 in NC. The 1-day symposium, open to the public, investigated challenges and opportunities for establishing a regional ocean governance system in the U.S.
- **Implementing Marine Ecosystem-Based Management: Integrating Perspectives from Science and Policy** was hosted by COMPASS in CA in December 2005. The meeting involved 130 participants, including scientists and managers from state, and federal agencies; academic scientists; policy-makers; NGOs; and other stakeholders.
- **Ecosystem-Based Management in New England: An Assessment of Regional Ocean Governance** was hosted by the Roger Williams University Papitto School of Law and the University of Rhode Island in January 2006. The meeting brought together 80 participants from a variety of sectors to discuss what regional ocean governance might look like in New England.
- **Coastal Conference on Ecosystem-Based Approaches to Management in the Southeast Region**, held in March 2006, was co-sponsored by the NOAA Ecosystem Goal Team, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, The College of Charleston, The Clean Water Management Trust Fund, and The Nature Conservancy. The conference addressed scientific and technical needs to implement EBM within the Southeast Shelf Regional Ecosystem.

### **Moving Forward: What's working, what's still needed**

State and regional efforts are well represented in the list of emerging developments. Other initiatives and pilot projects are also working at smaller scales to implement EBM principles in a comprehensive manner. These local- to regional-scale approaches will provide successes, lessons learned and greater momentum for national-scale reform. They are insufficient, however, to accomplish the vision articulated by both Commissions. For that vision to be realized, national policy reform is required. Priority needs include mandates and mechanisms to (1) integrate policy and management across sectors and agencies, and (2) shift away from a primary focus on managing only those goods with market value to one that recognizes the value of a broader range of ecosystem services. These challenges will require the engagement of scientists, policy makers, managers, resource users and a broad array of stakeholders.

The attached summary from COMPASS' recent EBM meeting provides additional information about current EBM dialogue and the next steps identified by the participants.

*If you would like to learn more about existing efforts, what's needed, and what you can do, please contact:*

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