

## “NOC Approach to CMSP: Vision and Stewardship Responsibilities”

Under Secretary of Commerce for the Oceans and Atmosphere  
and NOAA Administrator  
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### Opening remarks to National Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Workshop

As delivered

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Thank you, Laura for that introduction. It is a great pleasure to be here.

I appreciate everyone’s dedication to the National Ocean Policy and moving strongly forward with Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning in your regions.

After discussions with a wide variety of ocean and coastal users around the country, I have concluded that most Americans share a common vision for oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes. They want: healthy seafood, stable fisheries, clean beaches, safe and secure coastlines, good jobs, clean energy, meaningful cultural and recreational opportunities, abundant wildlife, and vibrant coastal communities and resilient coastal economies.

People want these valuable services now, but equally importantly, sustained into the future – to share with their children and grandchildren.

Achieving this vision requires doing things differently from past and current practices. Achieving this vision requires a more integrated and proactive approach to planning and managing our uses. Achieving this vision requires smart ocean planning – smart ocean planning that enables us to define what we want from our waters, and make informed decisions to help realize this vision.

Very often the question is asked, “How will Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning help me in what I want and need from the oceans and coasts?”

If done well, smart planning can provide five tangible benefits:

1. Increased predictability and certainty for users planning investments ocean and coastal areas;
2. Improved decision-making across multiple levels of government;
3. Maximized regulatory efficiencies;
4. Access to data for transparent, science-based decision making; and,
5. Improved ecosystem health and services by planning human uses in concert with the conservation of important ecological areas.

In plain English, this translates to smarter, more timely, and efficient decisions that balance uses and benefit coastal communities and economies.

NOAA fully embraces the National Ocean Policy, and is strongly committed to the Policy’s CMSP Framework. Your being here today reflects your own commitment, for which I am grateful.

CMSP will not be accomplished by any single agency or entity. This emerging approach will take the

collaborative leadership of key federal agencies, states, and tribes, and, most importantly, it will take the active engagement of the public to make it work.

Those of you here today are the heart, the soul, and the brains of CMSP: state, tribal, and local representatives plus stakeholders from across the country. You will determine the path of regionally based, bottom up collaborative leadership in each of the nine planning regions. The process we envisioned, based on your helpful input, places the burden squarely on your shoulders. We will collaborate, and support one another. But make no mistake, you are the centerpiece of the action.

NOAA is committed to bringing its scientific capabilities and resource management expertise to the CMSP process. We understand the importance of healthy and resilient ocean and coastal ecosystems. For years, NOAA has been laying the groundwork for the cross-sectoral, ecosystem- and regionally-based approaches that are encapsulated in CMSP. As a result, we are well prepared to mobilize information and people to lead and support the CMSP process. And we are doing just that.

We have learned from our extensive experience in marine planning in programs, like our national marine sanctuaries, such as Stellwagen Bank, which is highlighted in the CMSP Framework.

We know from this experience that smart planning takes effective stakeholder engagement, access to scientific information and data, and partnerships. In addition to the high-level, science-based framing of CMSP, I want to highlight three areas where NOAA has focused its energy related to these essential planning elements.

First, given that NOAA is a science agency, we have a significant role to play in data collection and management. We are one of several agencies playing a lead role in development of the National Information Management System as called for in the Framework. We have an internal team that is fuelling our contributions to the design of this system and developing a plan for identifying and integrating NOAA's data that will be accessible through this system. I see this effort as an emerging success story of CMSP implementation where we are working together internally and externally, to streamline access to data that will benefit users, stakeholders, and decision-makers alike.

Second, NOAA is developing decision support tools that will be useful to you. For example, the Multipurpose Marine Cadastre, a joint effort with the Department of the Interior, will allow accurate visualization of legal, physical, ecological, and cultural information in a common GIS framework. Other tools like Marine InVest and Marine Map are powerful approaches to enable better analysis and understanding of tradeoffs across different benefits and uses of the ocean.

Third, we are organizing our staff and NOAA resources to help leverage efforts at the regional level. If it isn't clear by now, let me be explicit: The regions are 'where it's at', when it comes to CMSP. While we are already assisting with regional ocean partnership efforts, we are also looking at additional contributions that NOAA can make to contribute even more powerfully to partnership development and capacity building.

Everyone appreciates that these are tight fiscal times. So we look for opportunities to be efficient across government. NOAA is committed to working with states, tribes and regions to provide the maps, data, and science that ocean users and managers need most.

We are here because we share the vision I articulated at the beginning of my remarks. NOAA's is strongly committed to healthy oceans and coasts, healthy people, economies and communities – and

they are one and the same.

I am confident that the National Ocean Policy, specifically the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Framework, has defined a path to get us there, but we must travel this path – or should I say ‘navigate these waters’ – together, with purpose, with vision, with science, and with passion. So, I invite you to ‘Seas the Day’ and help make this vision a reality.

Thank you!