

OCEAN ADVISORY COMMISSION & SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

JOINT MEETING



February 2, 2026

OCEAN ADVISORY COMMISSION

“...to assist the secretary in developing the ocean management plan.”

Legislators

- Sen. Julian Cyr
- Sen. Dylan Fernandes
- Sen. Bruce Tarr
- Rep. Patrick Kearney
- Rep. Joan Meschino
- Rep. Ken Sweezey

State Agency Representatives

- Alison Brizius CZM Director
- Dan McKiernan DMF Director
- Tay Evans MassDEP designee

Stakeholder Representatives

- Beth Casoni Commercial fishing organization
- Chris McGuire Environmental organization
- Liz Marsjanik Expert in offshore renewable energy

Regional Planning Agency Representatives

- Heather McElroy CCC
- Daniel Doyle MVC
- Jeffrey Carlson NP&EDC
- Jerrard Whitten MVPC
- Dominick Pangallo MAPC
- Janice Robbins SRPEDD

SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

“... to assist the secretary in creating a baseline assessment and obtaining any other scientific information...”

Academic Institutions

- Kevin Stokesbury UMass Dartmouth, SMAST*
- John Duff UMass Boston, School for the Environment*
- Kristin Uiterwyk UMass Boston, Urban Harbors Institute

Private, Nonprofit Organizations

- Jon Grabowski MA Fishermen's Partnership*
- Priscilla Brooks Conservation Law Foundation
- Jessica Redfern New England Aquarium

Agency Representatives

- Mark Rousseau MA DMF*
- Todd Callaghan MA CZM
- Laura Brothers USGS

*organization named in statute

OCEAN PLAN SPANS MASSACHUSETTS SECTORS AND PRIORITIES



**Protected
species**



Energy



**Coastal
resilience**



**(Sea)food
security**



**Recreation and
public water
access**



**Cultural
resources**



**Responding to
Climate change**

ResilientCoasts

FINAL PLAN



November 2025



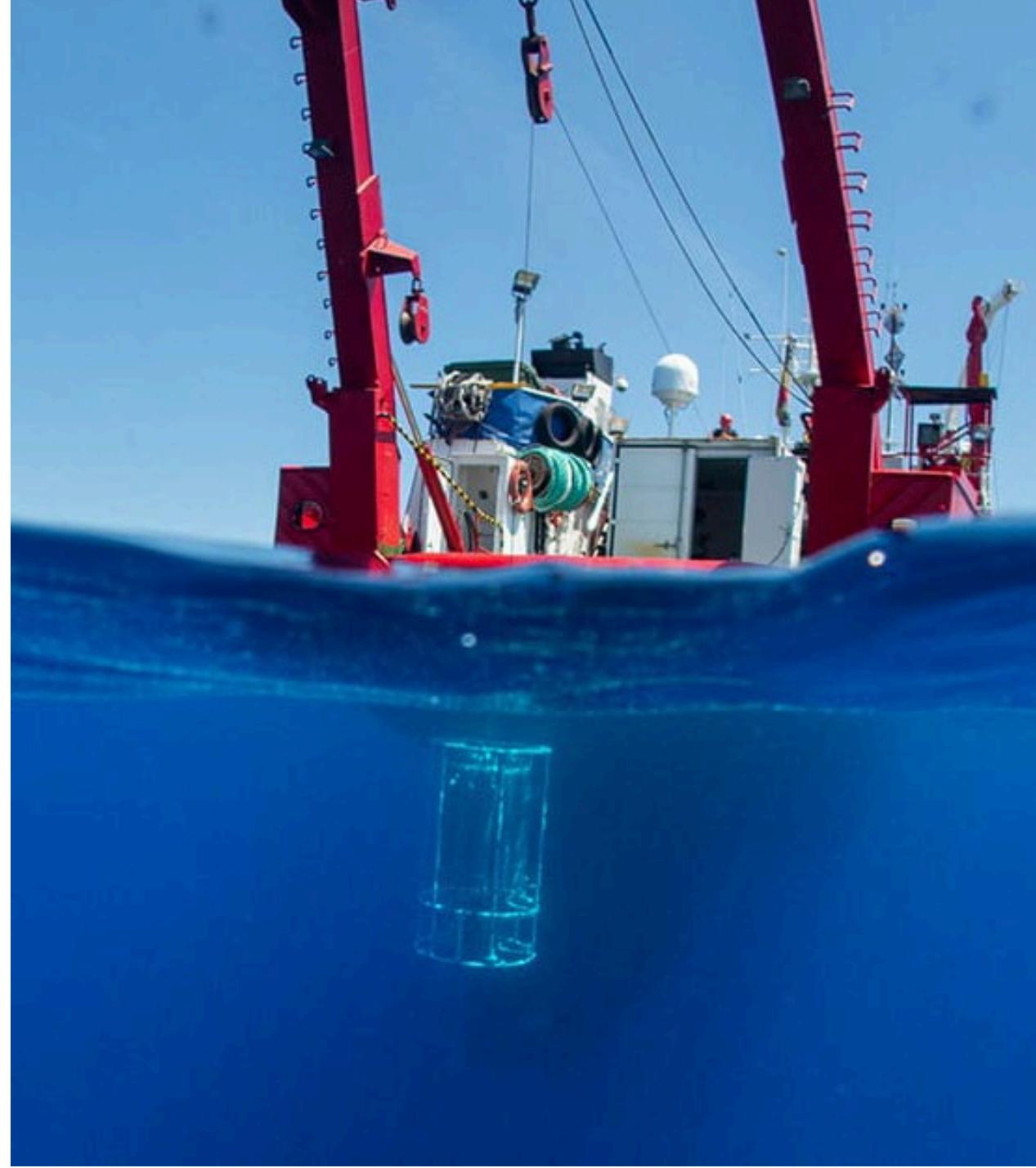


BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION GOALS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

A whole-of-government approach to conserve biodiversity in Massachusetts for 2030, 2040, and 2050







Todd Callaghan,
CZM Coastal and
Marine Scientist

OCEAN MANAGEMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS

OCEAN MANAGEMENT BEFORE THE OCEAN PLAN



“Use of the state's public ocean resources have historically been determined on a **‘first come, first served’** basis...

...we think that **more careful planning** for the use and protection of our ocean resources is critical to our long term interests.”

- *Massachusetts Ocean Management Task Force, 2004*



MASSACHUSETTS OCEANS ACT (2008)

- Directed Secretary of EEA to develop integrated **ocean management plan**
 - Siting priorities, locations, and standards for allowed uses, facilities, activities
 - Identify and protect special, sensitive, or unique estuarine and marine life and habitats
 - Foster sustainable uses and support infrastructure necessary for economy and quality of life
- All state approvals must be consistent with Plan
- Plan is reviewed at least once every 5 years



MASSACHUSETTS OCEANS ACT (2008)



Created two advisory bodies

- **Ocean Advisory Commission:** “...to assist the secretary in developing the ocean management plan.”
 - Legislators, agency leads, regional planning agencies, stakeholders
- **Science Advisory Council:** “... to assist the secretary in creating a baseline assessment and obtaining any other scientific information...”
 - Academic, non-profit, and agency scientists

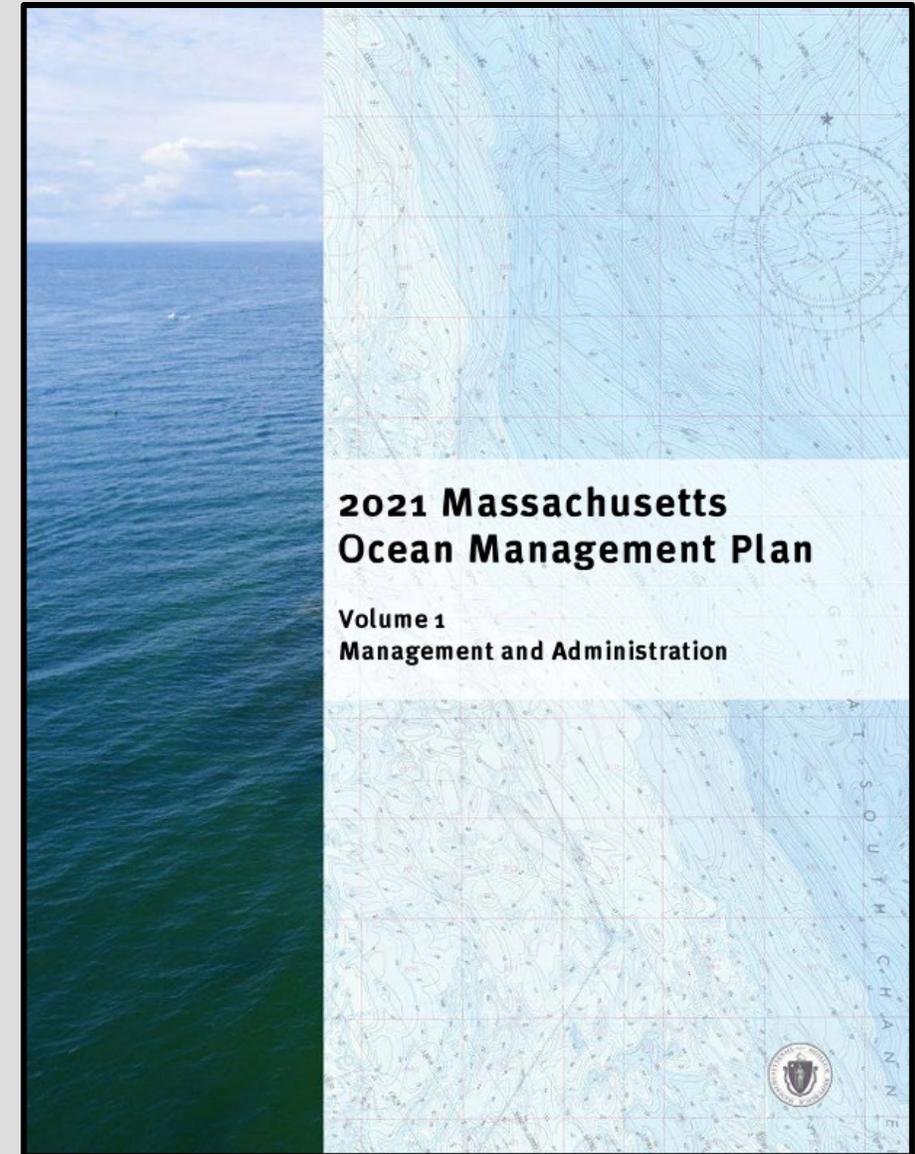


MASSACHUSETTS OCEAN PLANNING AREA

- Defined in Oceans Act of 2008
- 0.3 nautical mile from shore to state/federal boundary
- Does not include harbors, rivers, inlets

THE OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: VOLUME I

- Volume I – Management Framework:
 - **Special, Sensitive, or Unique** resources (habitat)
 - **Water Dependent Uses** (e.g., traffic, fishing)
 - **Siting and performance standards** for projects (cables, pipelines, renewable energy, sand mining, others) to protect those areas
 - Consistency with Ocean Plan Standards determined through MEPA



THE OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: PROTECTED AREAS

Protected Area	Community Scale Wind	Commercial Tidal Energy	Sand for nourishment	Cables	Pipelines
North Atlantic Right Whale	X	X	X	X	X
Humpback Whale	X		X	X	X
Fin Whale	X		X	X	X
Roseate Terns	X		X		
Special Concern Terns	X				
Sea Ducks	X				
Leach's Storm Petrel	X				
Colonial Waterbirds	X				
Hard/Complex Seafloor			X	X	X
Eelgrass	X	X	X	X	X
Intertidal Flats	X	X	X	X	X
Important Fish Resource Areas		X	X		X
High Comm. Fishing Effort & Value	X	X	X		X
Recreational Fishing	X	X	X		X
Traffic	X	X			
Fishing Traffic	X	X			
Recreational Boating	X	X			
Fixed Fishing Facilities	X	X	X	X	X

PROTECTED AREA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

SSU: SPECIAL SENSITIVE OR UNIQUE RESOURCES (HABITATS AND PHYSICAL FEATURES)

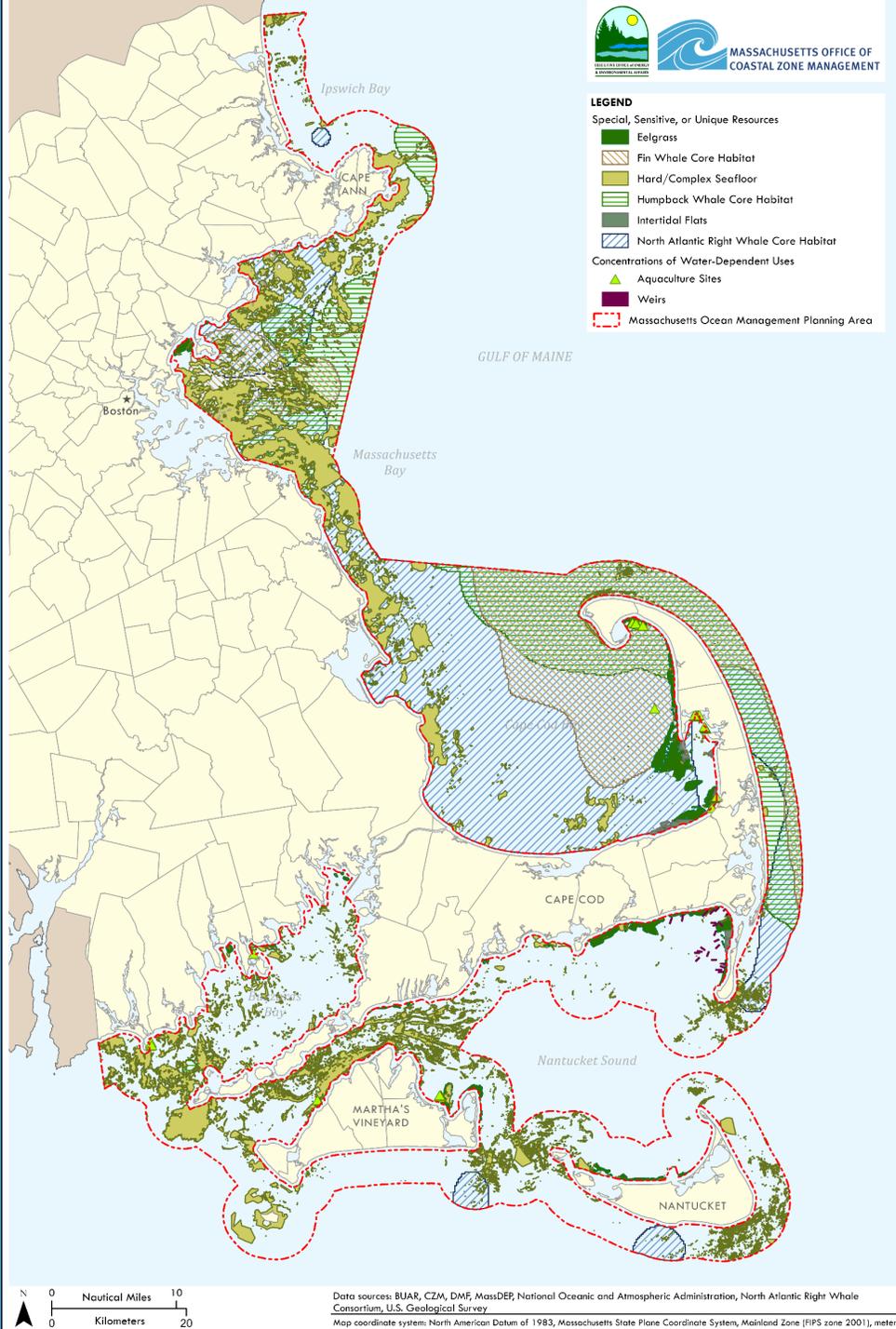
- Projects presumptively excluded
 - Rebuttable by:
 - 1) demonstrating there is no less environmentally damaging practicable alternative, and
 - 2) there will be no significant alteration of resources, and
 - 3) public benefits outweigh public detriments
 - OR show maps mischaracterized the area

WDU: CONCENTRATED WATER- DEPENDENT USE AREAS (HUMAN USES)

- Projects must demonstrate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation through permitting

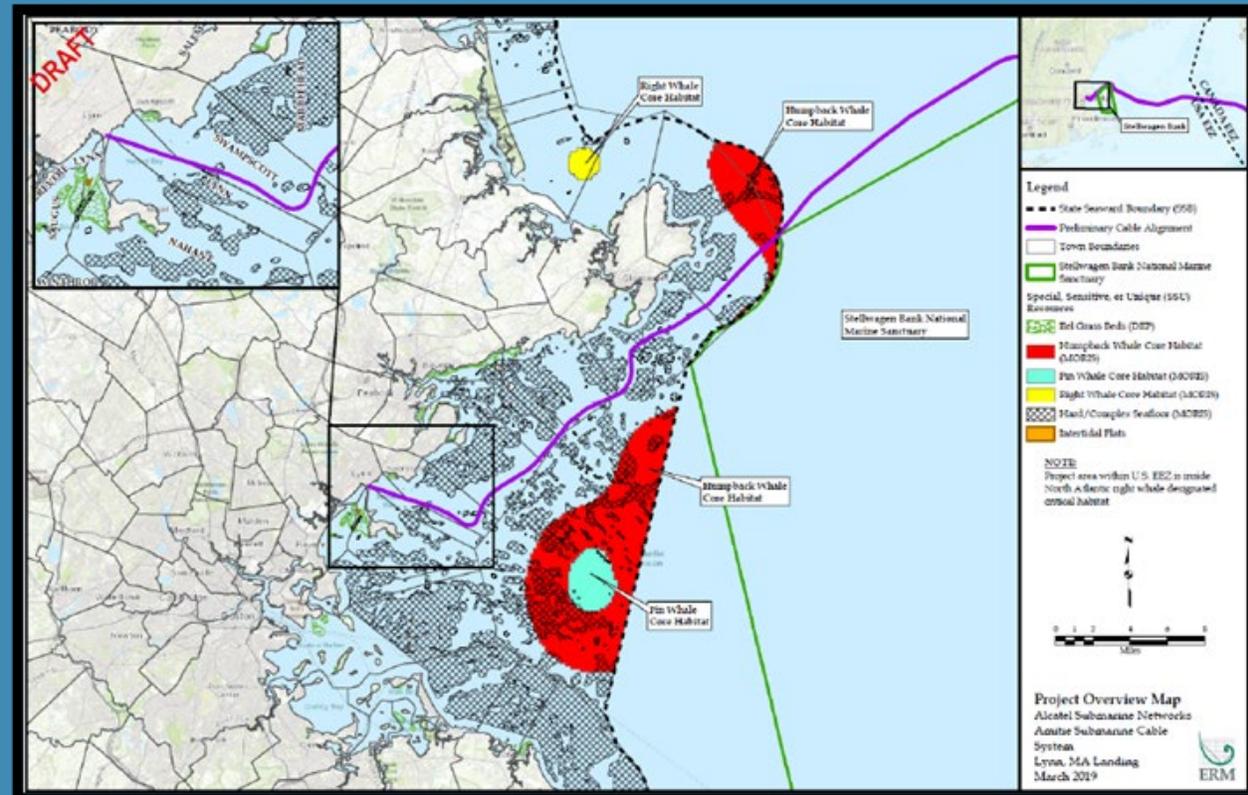
EXAMPLE USE OF PLAN: PROJECT REVIEW OF CABLE PROJECT

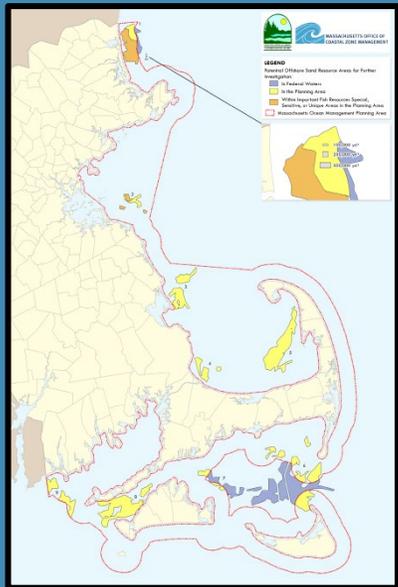
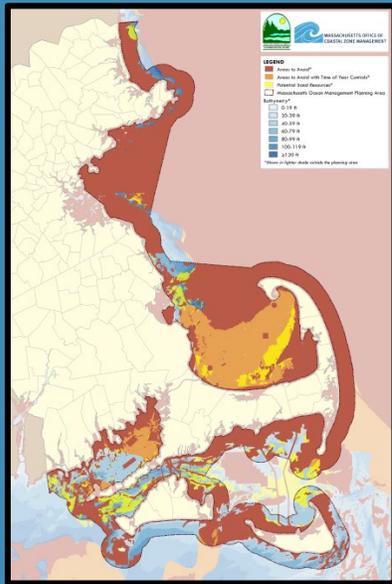
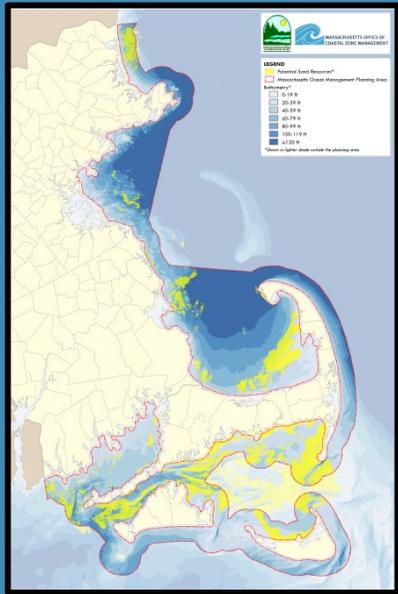
- SSUs/WDUs Addressed for Cable projects
 - Eelgrass
 - Fin, Humpback, Right Whale Core Habitats
 - Hard/Complex Seafloor
 - Intertidal Flats
 - Fixed Fishing Facilities



EXAMPLE USE OF PLAN: AMITIE TELECOMS CABLE

- 4,200 km cable from Europe to Lynn, MA
- 1.3" cable
- 500 m construction corridor
- Crosses N. Shore and S. Essex ocean sanctuaries
- Avoided hard/complex seafloor, whale SSUs



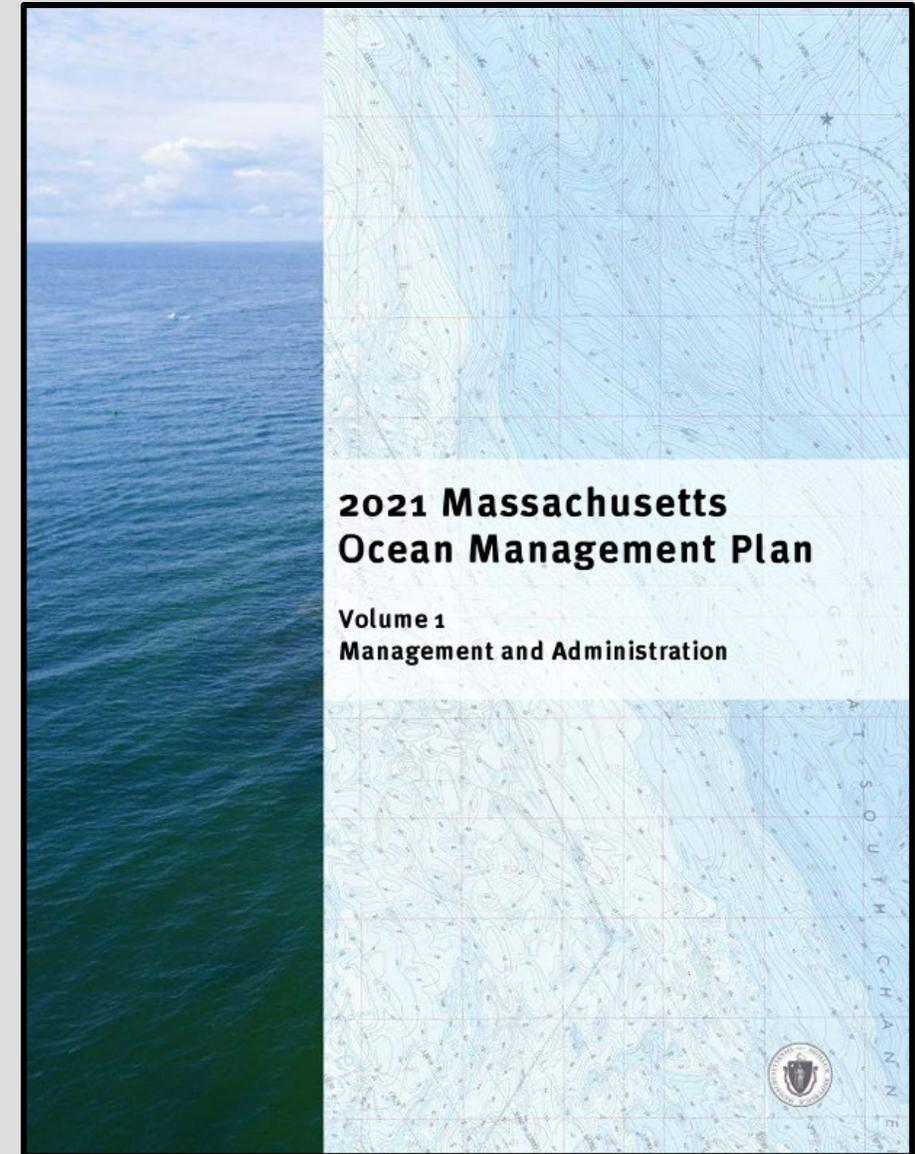


EXAMPLE USE OF PLAN: SPATIAL PLANNING FOR POTENTIAL OFFSHORE SAND RESOURCES

- Started with all known published sand areas
- Used exclusionary criteria to filter out areas not appropriate
- 5 Preliminary offshore sand areas became a focus for study
- 52 cores + 174 nm geophysical survey = potential 165 M cy of sand at least 1.5-3.0 m thick

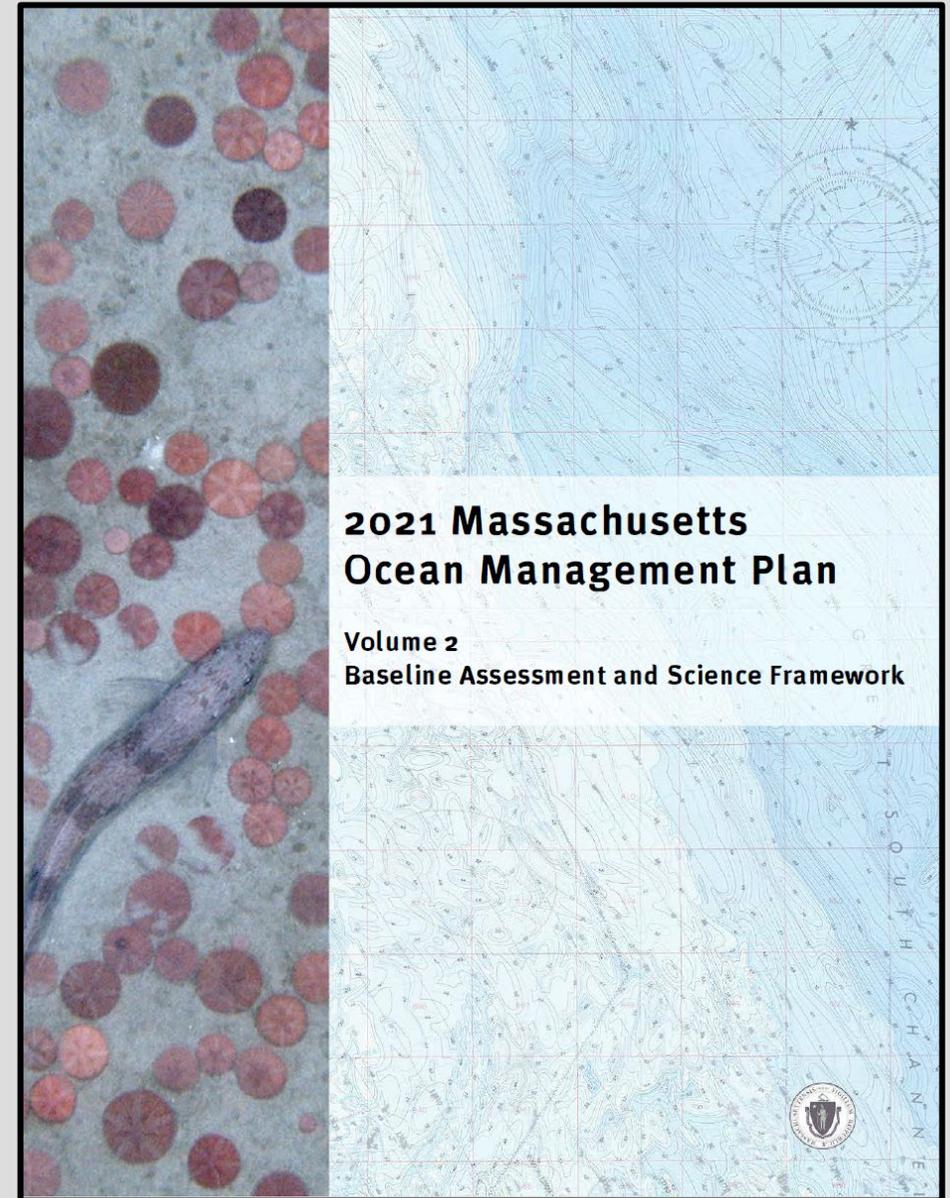
THE OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: VOLUME I, CONT'D

- Volume I – Management Framework:
 - Ocean Development Mitigation Fee**
 - Fee schedule based on scope, scale, and effects of project
 - Ocean Resources and Waterways Trust Fund**
 - Funds are to be used for the restoration, enhancement, or management of marine habitat



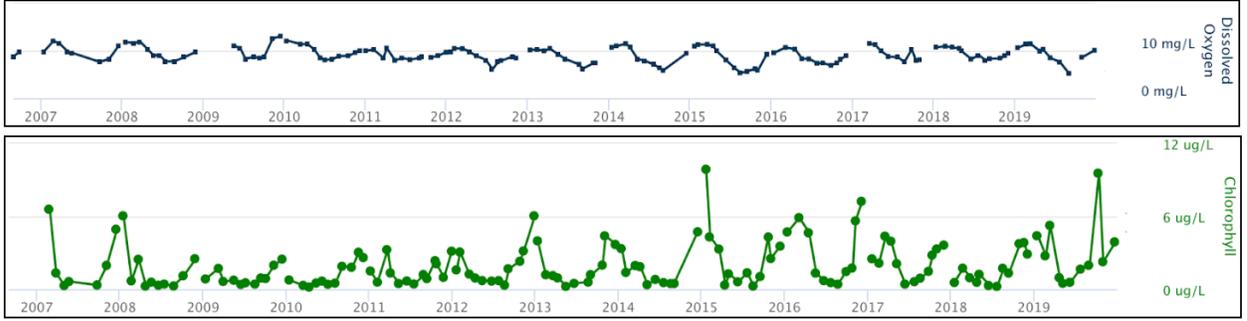
THE OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: VOLUME 2

- Volume 2:
 - **Baseline Assessment**
 - Characterizes the Ocean Planning Area, including tracking trends
 - **Science and Data Priorities**
 - Lays out Science/Management priority areas and data needs for next 5 years

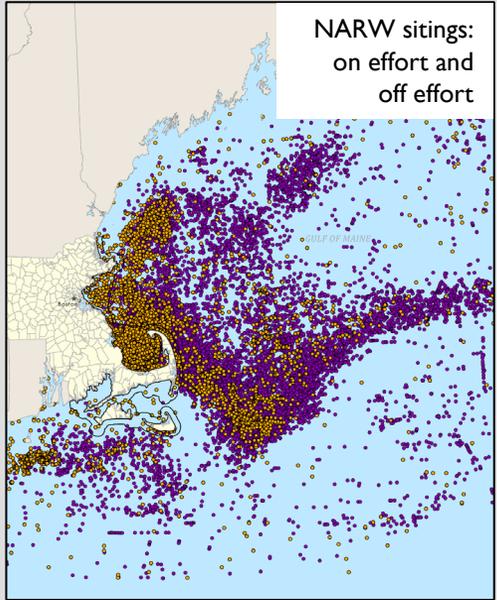


BASELINE ASSESSMENT

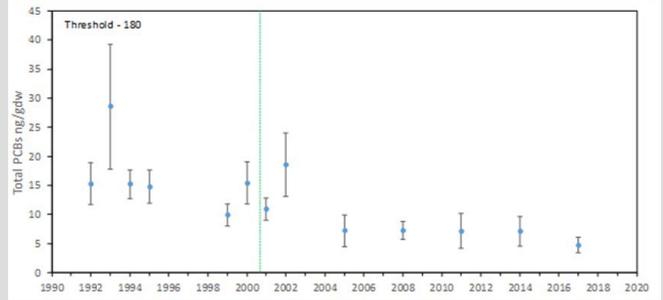
Water Column Features



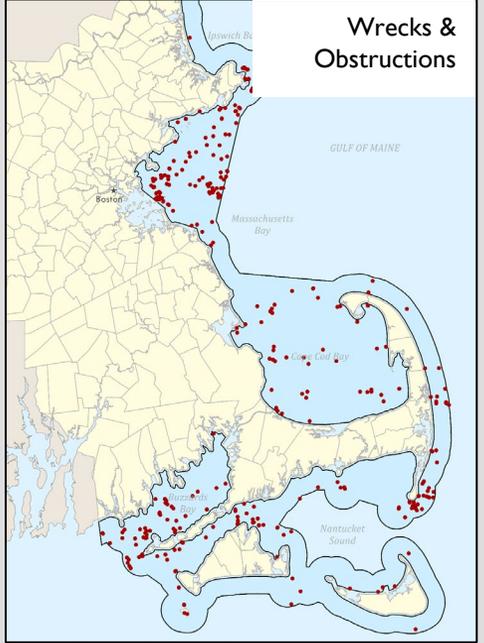
Habitat



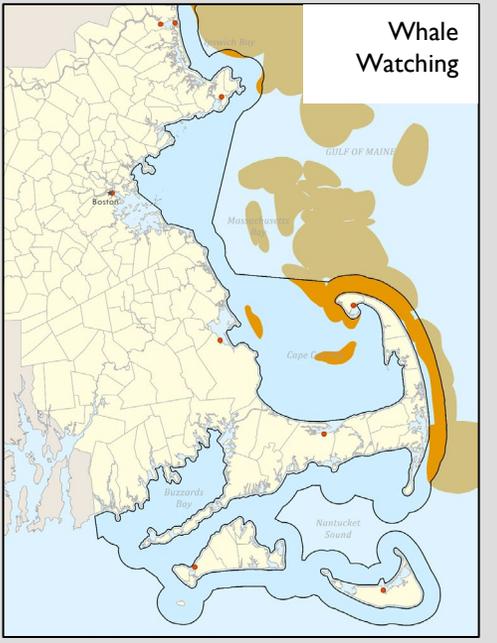
Seabed Features



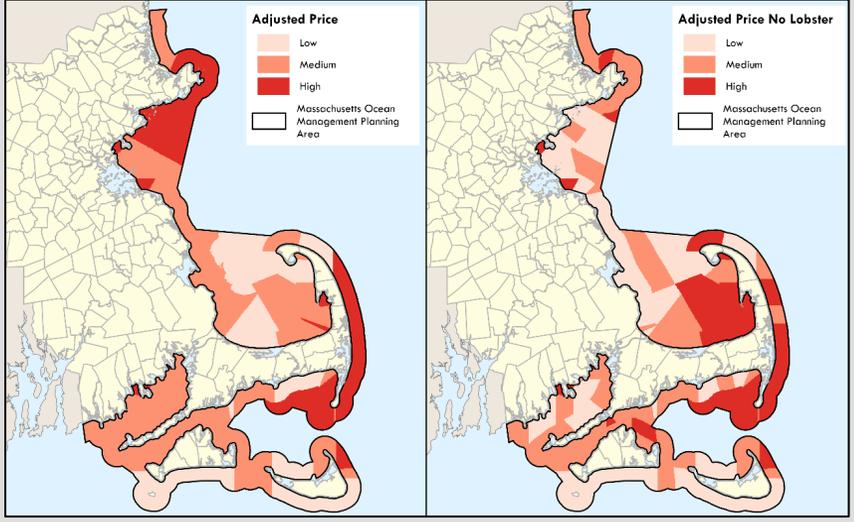
Archaeological Landscape and Cultural Heritage



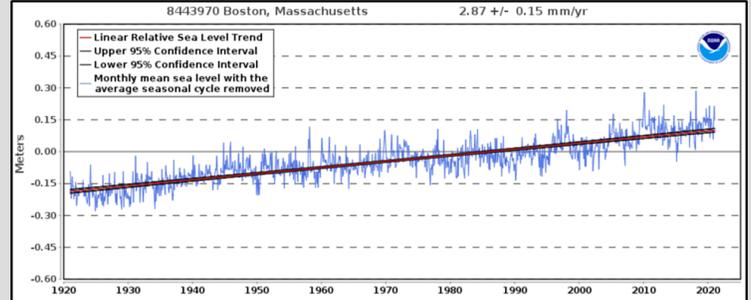
Human Uses



Economic Impact of the Marine Sector



Climate Change



OCEAN PLAN: 2021 SCIENCE PRIORITIES

1. Continue to support the development of offshore wind projects
2. Further characterize offshore sand resources
3. Further characterize cultural resources and identify recreational hotspots
4. Continue seafloor and habitat mapping initiatives
5. Adapt the management framework in response to the most recent science and geospatial data

QUESTIONS?

Hollie Emery, CZM
Offshore Project
Review Specialist

OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: ADAPTIVE BY DESIGN

- Oceans Act (2008) directs EEA to review the plan and baseline assessment at least once every 5 years
 - Newest science and information characterizing uses and resources
 - Emerging management needs and spatial planning priorities
- Process has 2 phases, each taking 12+ months:
 1. Develop a formal review
 2. Amend or Update the plan

PHASE I: THE REVIEW

Informing the Review:

- Lessons learned from implementing the management framework
- Progress towards science and data priorities
- New understanding of/change in protected resources and managed uses
- Evolving priorities and needs of the Commonwealth

Key Finding: is a plan update/amendment needed?

Law requires: "...provisions for the review of the ocean management plan, its baseline assessment and the enforceable provisions of relevant statutes and regulations at least once every 5 years."
(M.G.L. c. 21A, § 4C)

Scope of review determined by secretary (CMR 28.07(3))

PHASE 2: UPDATE OR AMENDMENT

Update

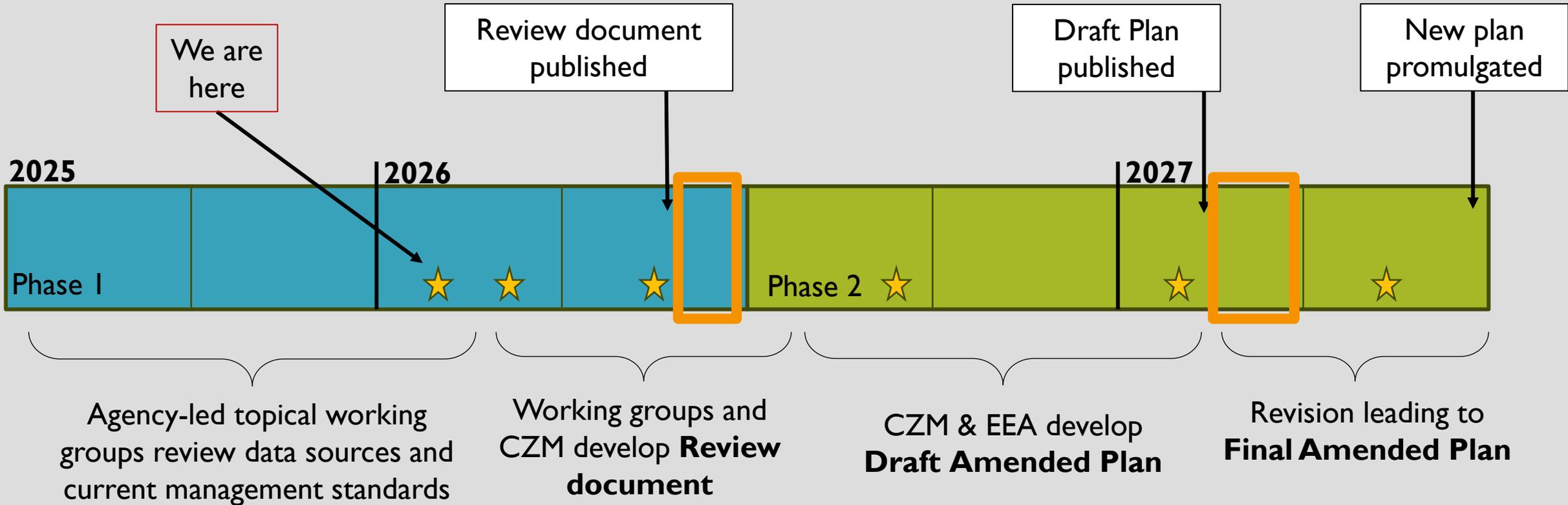
- Scope:
 - Corrections, clarifications
 - Minor boundary shifts to management areas
 - Updates to extent of SSU or WDU areas based on new data
- Process:
 - Request made to Secretary
 - Agencies, OAC and SAC review
 - 30-day public comment period, hearings optional

Amendment

- Scope:
 - New or substantially revised management standards
 - New or substantially revised management areas
 - Add or subtract SSU or WDU areas
- Process:
 - OAC and SAC consulted
 - Draft amendment released, 4+ public hearings
 - 60-day public comment period after last hearing

OCEAN PLAN REVIEW TIMELINE

- ★ OAC and SAC meetings
- Public Comment Periods



Note: this is a tentative timeline subject to revision

OCEAN PLAN ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Governor – appoint OAC
- EEA – promulgate Ocean Plan, appoint SAC
- CZM – implement Plan, support reviews and revision
- OAC – advise EEA/CZM on Plan management framework
- SAC – advise EEA/CZM on Baseline Assessment and Plan data
- Working groups – provide subject matter expertise on relevant topics
- Stakeholders – provide feedback during public hearings and comment periods

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS



Sediment
& Geology



Culture &
Recreation



Energy &
Infrastructure



Habitat



Fisheries



Transportation &
Navigation



Ocean Tech &
Innovation

BREAK

Meeting will resume

Hollie Emery, CZM
Offshore Project
Review Specialist

2021 OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: SCOPE AND FOCUS OF REVIEW

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS



Sediment
& Geology



Culture &
Recreation



Energy &
Infrastructure

- Working groups composed of experts and led by EEA agencies began meeting in 2025
- Each group was assigned a list of tasks based on current and past Ocean Plans and on current management needs



Habitat



Fisheries



Transportation &
Navigation



Ocean Tech &
Innovation

WORKING GROUP TASKS

- Identify any changes to the **spatial extent** of protected areas identified and mapped in the last Plan: SSUs and WDUs.
- Review **siting and performance standards** intended to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to SSUs and WDUs from ocean development.
- Identify and characterize **trends** in the status or condition of resources and uses, including
 - SSUs and WDUs mapped in the last plan and
 - items in the Baseline Assessment (Volume II).
- Identify and summarize any new information that advances the characterization of the planning area and its uses and resources, especially applied science with spatial data.
- **Review the science and data priorities** in the last ocean plan (Volume II, Science Framework) and any work done to date to address those priorities, and make recommendations for the priority science and data actions for the next five years

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS: KEY OPPORTUNITY AREAS



Sediment & Geology

Offshore Sand for Coastal Resilience



Culture & Recreation

New shipwreck or diving SSUs



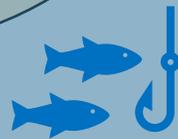
Energy & Infrastructure

- POTW standards
- Cable routing



Habitat

Biodiversity Initiative: New/ revised SSUs



Fisheries

- Add nuance to SSU & WDU
- Aquaculture standards
- Apply lessons from OSW: cables, scientific surveys



Transportation & Navigation

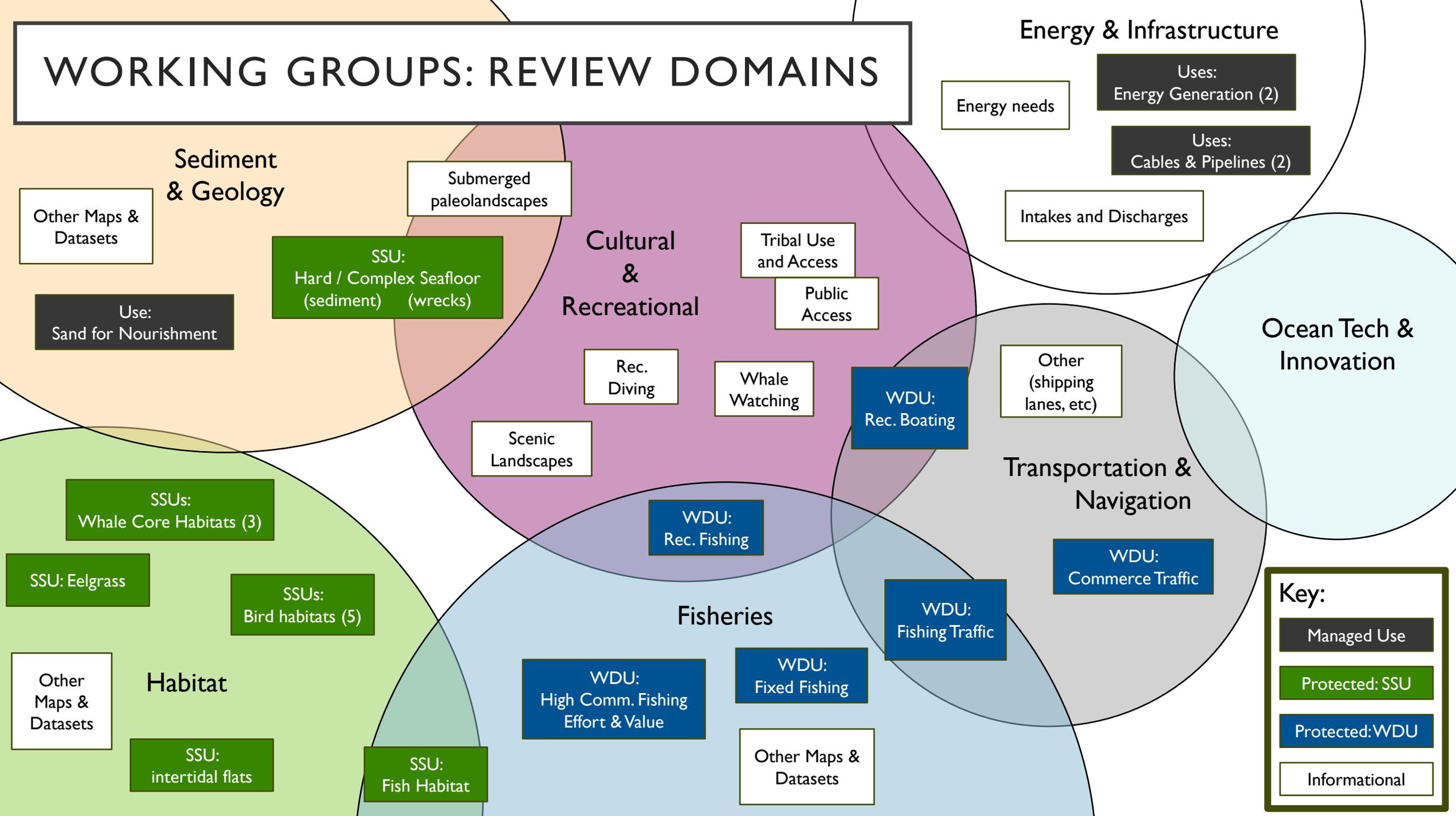
- New Tech:
- Electrification
 - Autonomous vehicles



Ocean Tech & Innovation

How can the plan support innovation?

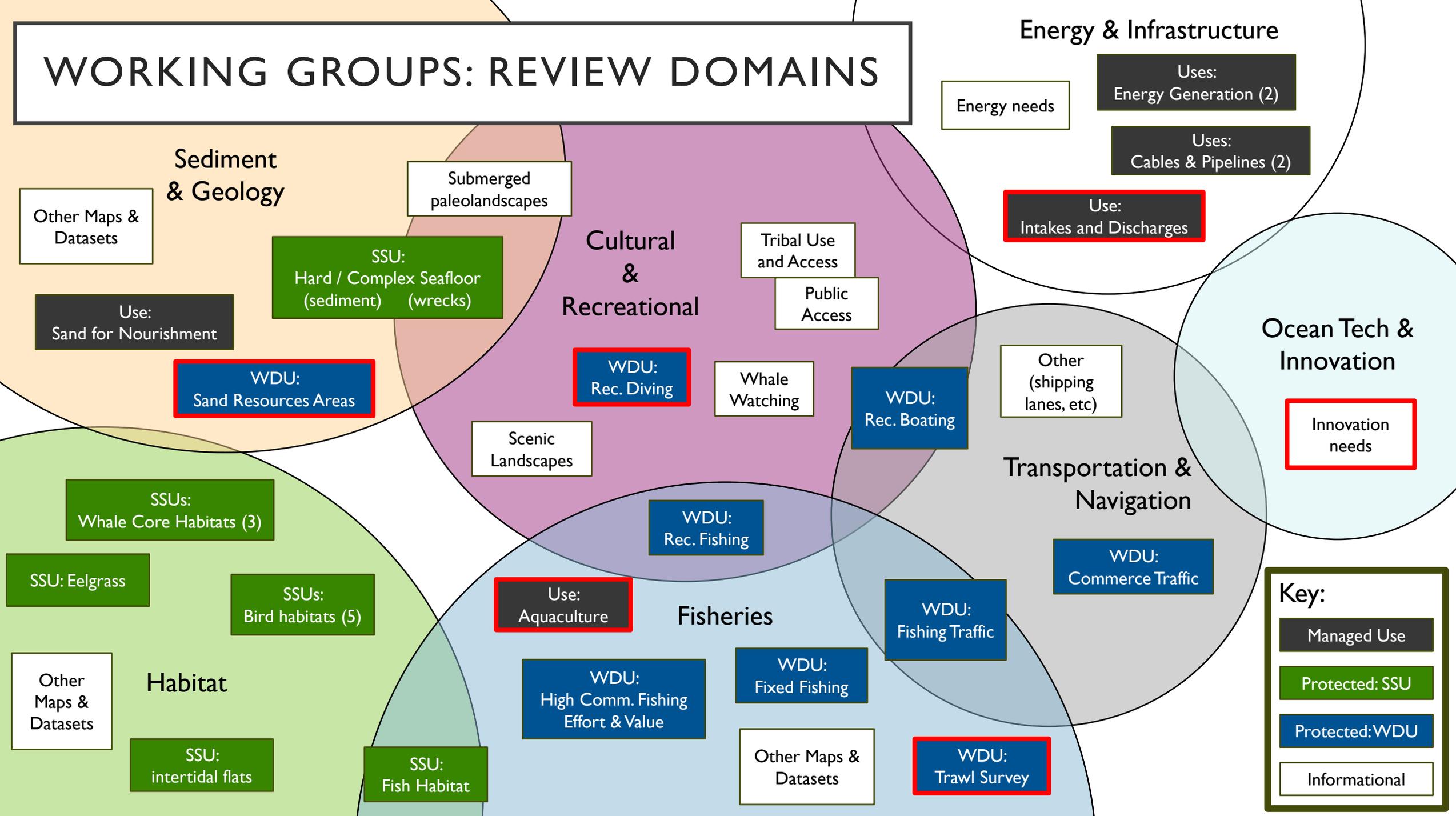
WORKING GROUPS: REVIEW DOMAINS



Key:

- Managed Use
- Protected: SSU
- Protected: WDU
- Informational

WORKING GROUPS: REVIEW DOMAINS



HABITAT



Assigned Scope:

- 10 SSUs - review data and maps:
 - 3 whale core habitats
 - 3 bird core habitats + 2 important bird nesting areas
 - Eelgrass, intertidal flats
- Consider additional SSUs if sufficient data exist (whales, sea turtles, kelp, biogenic reefs...)
- Assess merits of SSUs shifting to a seasonal schedule
- Check Progress on Science Priority #4: Continue seafloor and habitat mapping
- Baseline Assessment Chapters (45+ variables)

Name

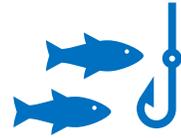
Hollie Emery, group lead
Brooke Hodge, GIS lead
Erin Burke
Danielle Cholewiak
Phil Colarusso
Leah Crow
Tay Evans
Carolyn Mostello
Daniel Palacios
Jessica Redfern
Forest Schenck

Affiliation

CZM
CZM
DMF
NOAA
EPA
DMF
MassDEP
NHESP
Center for Coastal Studies
New England Aquarium
DMF



FISHERIES



Assigned Scope:

- 4 Protected Areas – review data sources and maps:
 - Important Fish Resource Areas (IFRA) SSU
 - High Commercial Fishing Effort and Value (HCFEV) WDU
 - Recreational Fishing WDU
 - Fixed Fishing Facilities WDU
- Consider:
 - Refining IFRA to reflect variability by species, over space and time
 - Refining HCFEV into multiple areas by gear type
 - Creating a new Trawl Survey WDU
 - Potential new standards such as defining aquaculture as managed use
- Baseline Assessment: Fisheries chapter (~20 variables)

Member

Micah Dean, group lead

Alex Boeri

Nick Buchan

Tara Dolan

Ben Gahagan

John Logan

Mark Rousseau

Brad Schondelmeier

Steve Wilcox

Affiliation

DMF (Fisheries Biology)

DMF (Shellfish)

DMF (Statistics)

DMF (Groundfish)

DMF (Recreational Fisheries)

DMF (Habitat)

DMF (Habitat)

DMF (Offshore Wind)

DMF (Surveys)



Photo: stock

SEDIMENT & GEOLOGY



Assigned Scope:

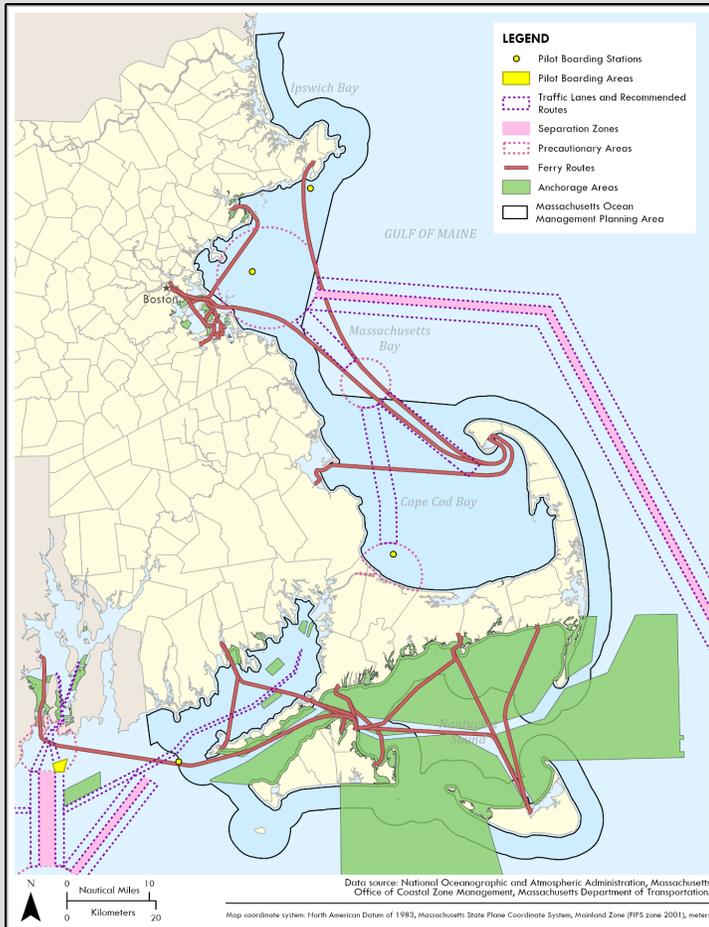
- Hard/Complex SSU – review data sources and maps
- Identify opportunities to refine management of sand resources. Evaluate possibilities for:
 - New WDU for Potential Sand Resource Areas
 - Guidelines / management framework for nourishment projects
- Progress on **Science Priority #2**: Further Characterize Potential Offshore Sand Resources
- Baseline Assessment: ~10 variables

Name	Affiliation
Todd Callaghan, group lead	CZM
Sean Duffey	CZM
Rebecca Haney	CZM
Julia Knisel	CZM
Margot Mansfield	CZM
Deanna Moran	CZM
Dan Sampson, GIS lead	CZM
Laura Brothers	USGS
Patrick Bryce	APTIM
Max Cantrell	Offshore Construction Assts
Lealdon Langley	MassDEP
Mark Reid	Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co
Beau Suthard	APTIM



Photo: Courtesy of Prassede Vella

TRANSPORTATION & NAVIGATION



Name

Sean Duffey, group lead
Hollie Emery, GIS lead
Sylvie Agudelo
Gordon Carr
Mark Cutter
Kate Korotky
Tyler Miller
Tess Paganelli
David Perry
Greg Robbins
Collen Roche
Richard Stover
Jen Thalhauser
Joanna Yelen
Chris Zuffante

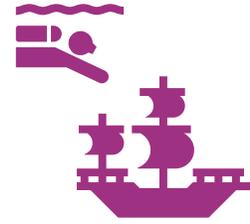
Affiliation

CZM
CZM
MassDEP, Waterways
NBPA
USCG
USCG
Massachusetts Marine Trades Association
MBTA
MBTA
DCR
NOAA
Boston Harbor Pilot Association
USACE
CZM
MassPort

Assigned Scope:

- 3 WDU – review data sources and maps:
 - Commerce Traffic, Commercial Fishing Traffic, Recreational boating
- Consider a new WDU for traffic lanes and ferry routes
- Baseline Assessment: ~7 variables

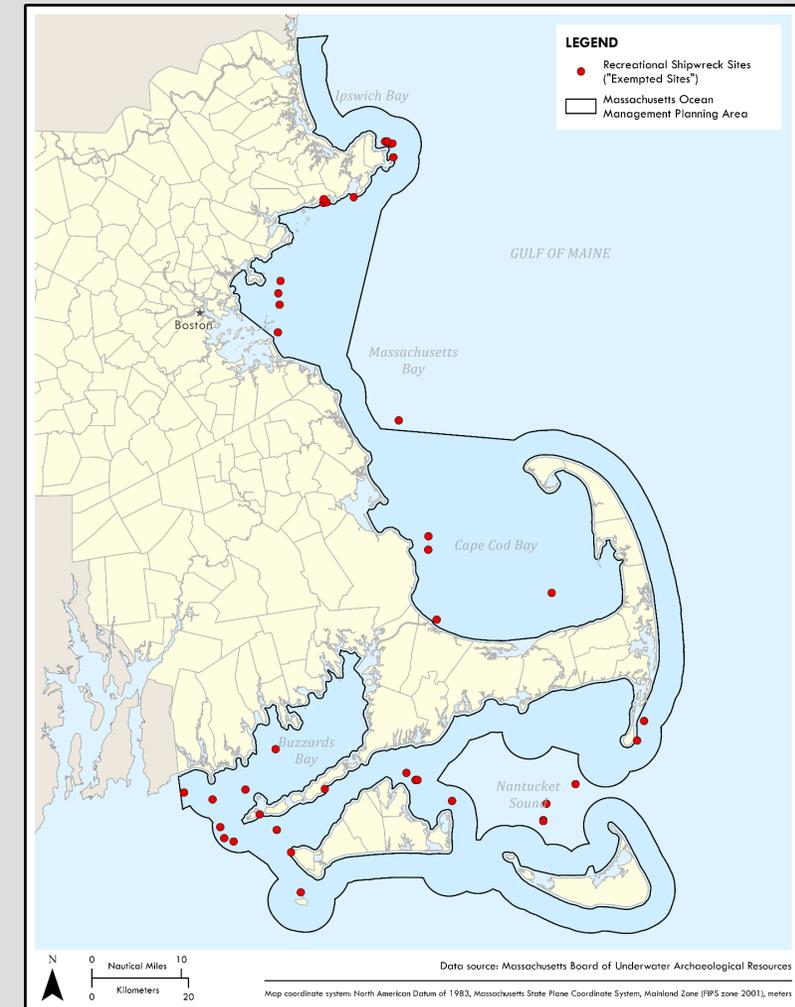
CULTURAL HERITAGE & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES



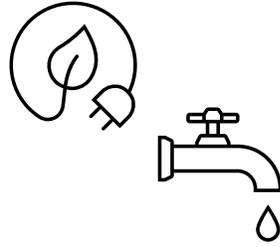
Assigned Scope:

- WDUs – review data sources and maps:
 - Co-review Rec Boating WDU
 - Co-review Rec Fishing WDU
 - Co-review Hard/Complex SSU (shipwreck data)
- Consider a new WDU for dive sites if data support it
- Evaluate progress on Science Priority #3: mapping cultural resources and recreational hotspots
- Baseline Assessment: ~6 variables

Name	Affiliation
Todd Callaghan	CZM
Hollie Emery	CZM
Paul Jahnige	MOOR
David Robinson	BUAR



ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE



Assigned Scope:

- Evaluate management framework: first experiences with offshore wind
- Ensure management framework can remain nimble as technology updates
- Consider:
 - Addition of standards for intakes and discharges
 - New WUDs for infrastructure
- Evaluate progress on Science Priority #1: Continue to Support the Development of Offshore Wind Projects
- Baseline Assessment: ~5 variables

Name

Chris Connolly, group lead
Hollie Emery, GIS lead
Nicole Benoit
Todd Callaghan
Marissa Ribeiro Dahan
Shannon Dennehy
Lisa Engler
Whitney Fenwick
Kirsten Holland Nantz
Lealdon Langley
Liz Marsjanik
John Miller
Weezie Nuara
Katherine O'Malley
Lauren Peloquin Shea
Vandana Rao
Matthew Waldrip

Affiliation

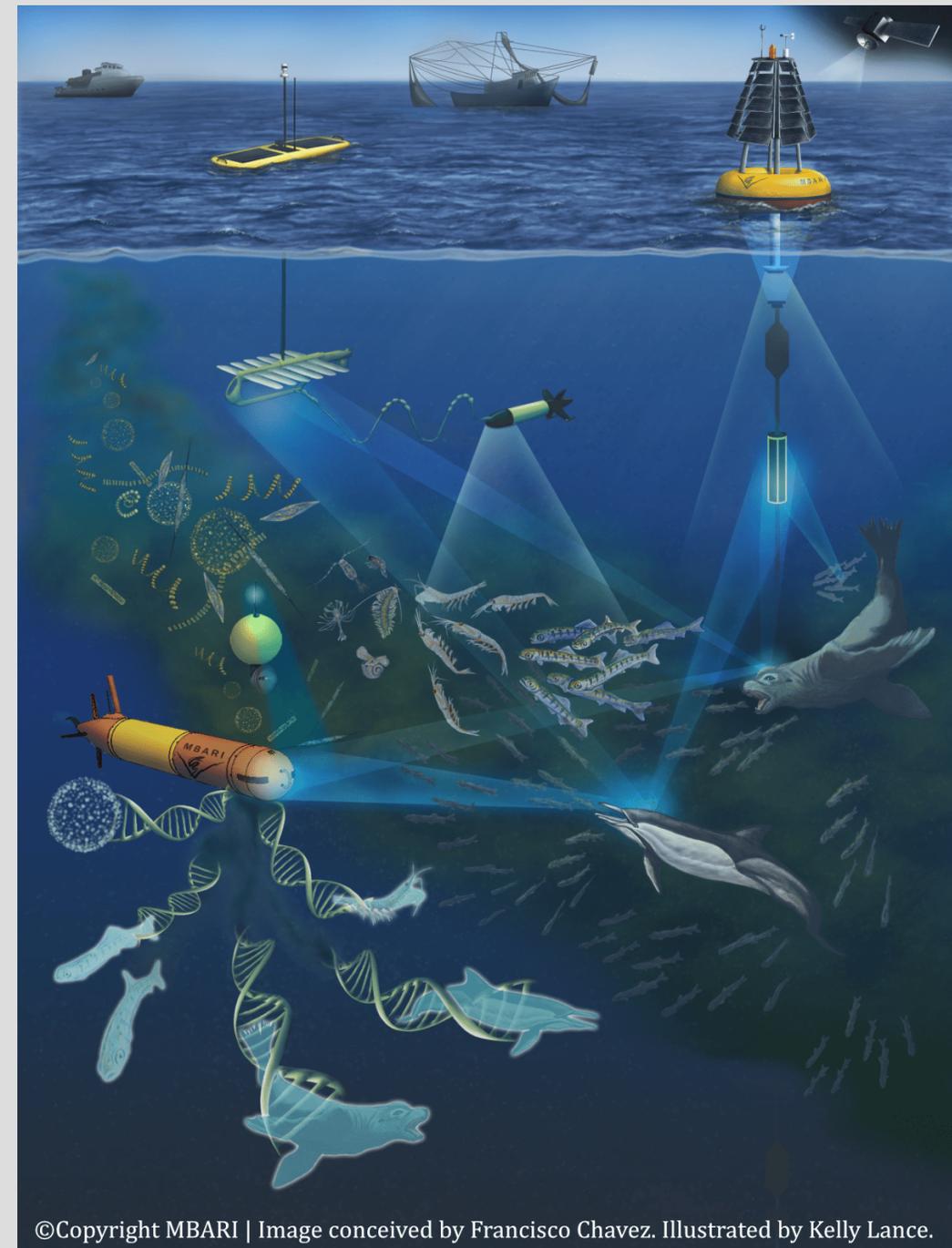
DOER
CZM
MWRA
CZM
ISO-NE
DPU
MassCEC
MassDEP
Orsted
MassDEP
Vineyard Wind
MREC
FREA
OET
National Grid
EEA Water Policy
Eversource

OCEAN TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION



Name	Affiliation
Todd Callaghan, group lead	CZM
Hobie Boeschstein	SeaTrac
Ed Cesare	SeaAhead
Jennifer Downing	New Bedford Ocean Cluster
Lisa Engler	MassCEC
Chris Ilsley	InnoVenture Labs
Katie Kahl	UMass Amherst Gloucester Marine Station
Anthony Kirincich	WHOI
John Miller	MRECo
Tim O'Donnell	GMGI
Alissa Petersen	SeaAhead
Rob Vincent	MIT Sea Grant
Lena Weiss	New England Aquarium Balance Blue lab
Scott White	Montserrat Strategies

- New Working Group for this review cycle
- Looking for ways to support this emerging use



OTHER TOPICS



Administration of the Ocean Plan:

- Oceans Act requires review of “relevant statute and regulations” with this process
 - Clean Energy Siting and Permitting reforms
- Biodiversity Initiative Implementation Goal: assess alignment of nearshore boundary with Ocean Sanctuaries
- Science Priority #5: Update Management Framework

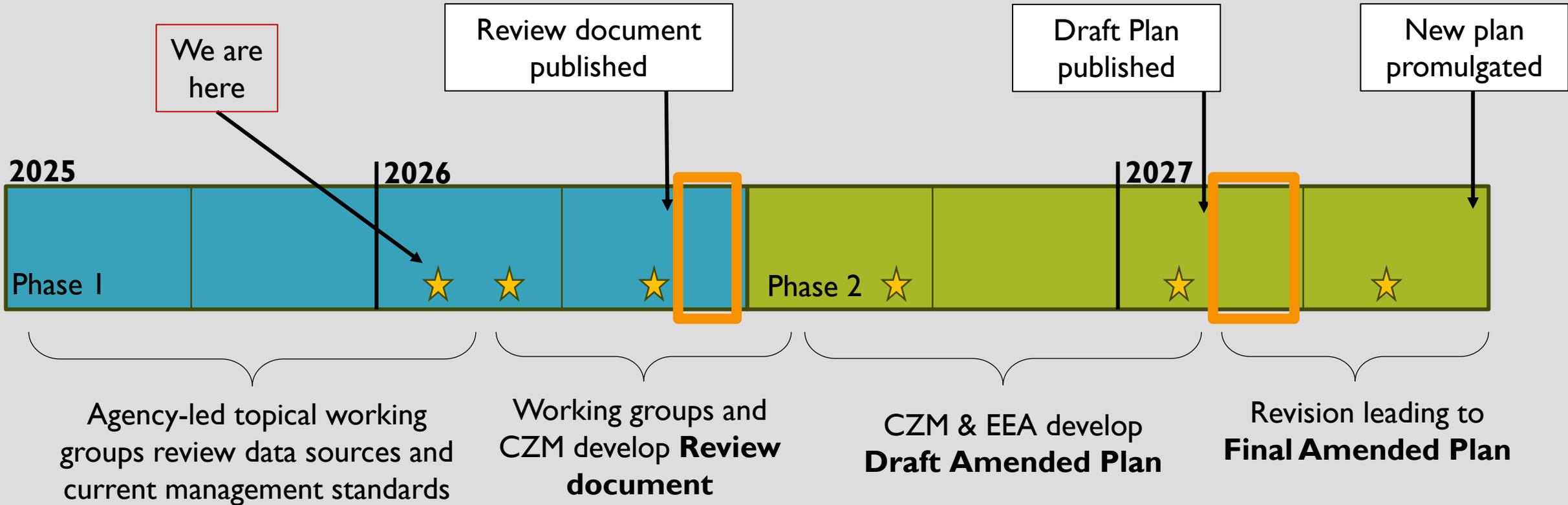
NEXT STEPS

Follow-up meetings:

- SAC meetings to review working group findings and recommendations for SSUs & WDUs updates, science priority progress
 - Fisheries
 - Habitat
 - Sediment & Geology, Cultural & Recreational
 - Ocean Tech & Innovation, Energy & Infrastructure, Transportation & Navigation
- OAC to review and discuss administration and management framework

OCEAN PLAN REVIEW TIMELINE

- ★ OAC and SAC meetings
- Public Comment Periods



Note: this is a tentative timeline subject to revision

QUESTIONS?

- What revisions would you like to see explored?
- Are there any new data sources, trends, etc we should include?
- Are there any groups we should engage?

2021 OCEAN DEVELOPMENT MITIGATION FEE SCHEDULE

Activity Class	Project Scope, Scale, and Effects	Fee
Class I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited in scale, size, and footprint: <6 acres and generally confined to the seafloor • Effects are temporary, primarily during construction/installation • Negligible or minor effects on resources and uses 	\$12,000- \$50,000
Class II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate in scale, size, and footprint: 6-20 acres and may extend into a limited amount of water column, water surface, and/or area above the ocean • Effects extend beyond construction/installation, or are recurrent • Moderate effects on resources and uses 	\$100,000- \$350,000
Class III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and/or complex in scale, size, and footprint: >20 acres and may extent into a moderate/major amount of water column, water surface, and/or area above the ocean • Effects are frequent, recurring, and/or continuous in duration and permanent/lasting • Major effects on resources and uses 	\$600,000- \$6,000,000

THE FUND SINCE THE LAST PLAN

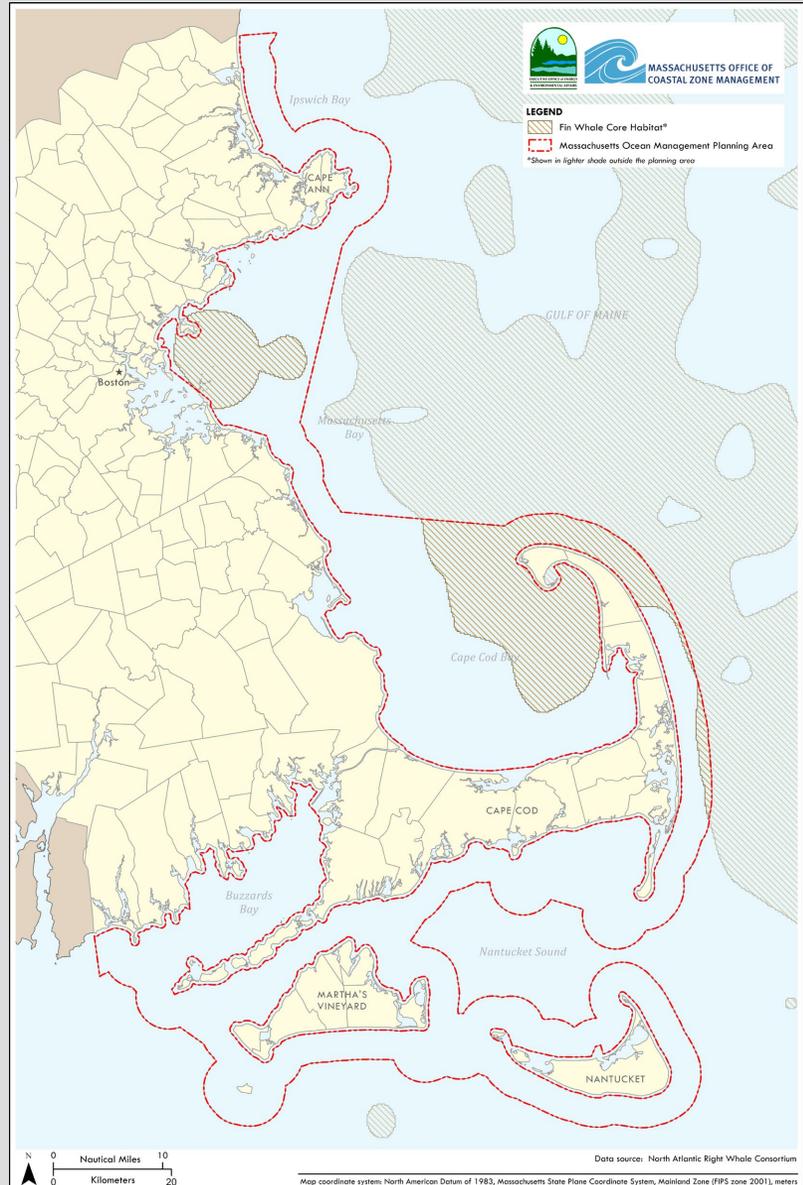
Year	Amount	Source	Deposits
2024			
	\$100,000	Ocean development mitigation fee for the Eversource electric cable through the Cape and Islands ocean sanctuary from Falmouth to Tisbury.	
	\$100,000	Ocean development mitigation fee for the Eversource electric cable through the Cape and Islands ocean sanctuary from Falmouth to Oak Bluffs.	
2021			
	\$240,000	Ocean development mitigation fee for the Vineyard Wind offshore export cable through Nantucket Sound.	
	\$25,000	Ocean development mitigation fee for the Amitie communications cable through the North Shore and South Essex ocean sanctuaries to Lynn.	

Complete list of deposit and expenditures:

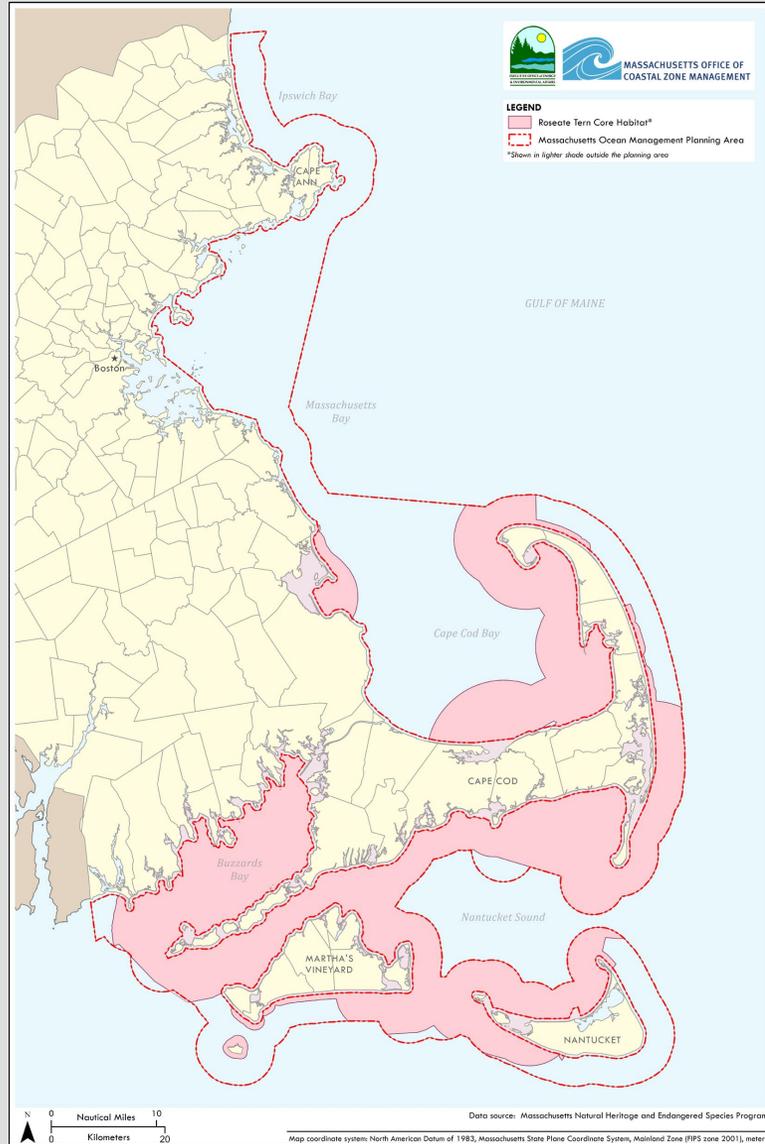
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/ocean-resources-and-waterways-trust-fund-deposits-and-expenditures>

Year	Amount	Project	Expenditures
2025			
	\$200,000	Additional geotechnical and geophysical characterization of five potential offshore sand resources areas.	
2022			
	\$33,450	Statewide benthic infauna sampling and analysis by the MassBays National Estuary Partnership to support the MassDEP Coastal Condition Assessment (2022 samples).	
	\$30,270	Statewide benthic infauna sampling and analysis by the MassBays National Estuary Partnership to support the MassDEP Coastal Condition Assessment (2021 samples).	
	\$972	Renewal of the TerrSet integrated geospatial software license for mapping and analyzing resources and uses in Massachusetts waters and the Gulf of Maine.	
	\$743	Acquisition and data processing of North Atlantic right, humpback, fin, sei, and minke whale densities in and around Massachusetts waters and the Gulf of Maine from 2015-2020 to convert observations to sightings per unit effort for each species in a five minute by five minute grid.	
	\$1,626	Providing public notice of the availability of the draft and final 2021 ocean plan for review and comment and printing of ocean plan for limited public distribution.	

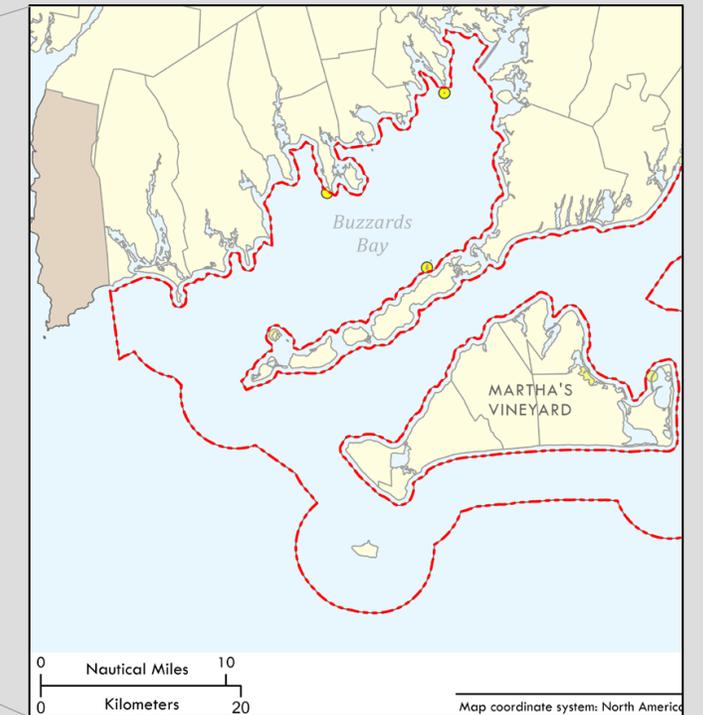
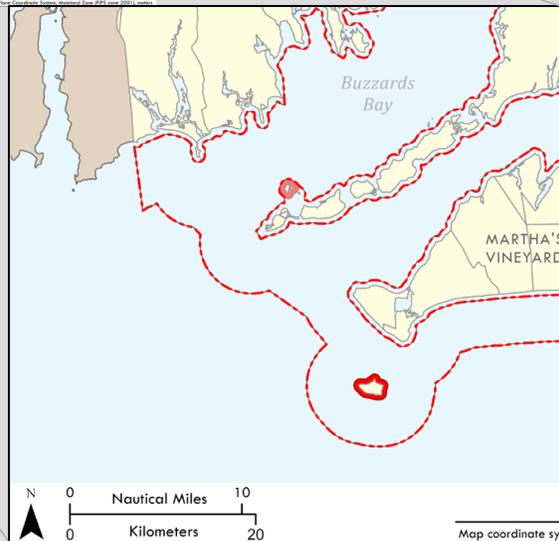
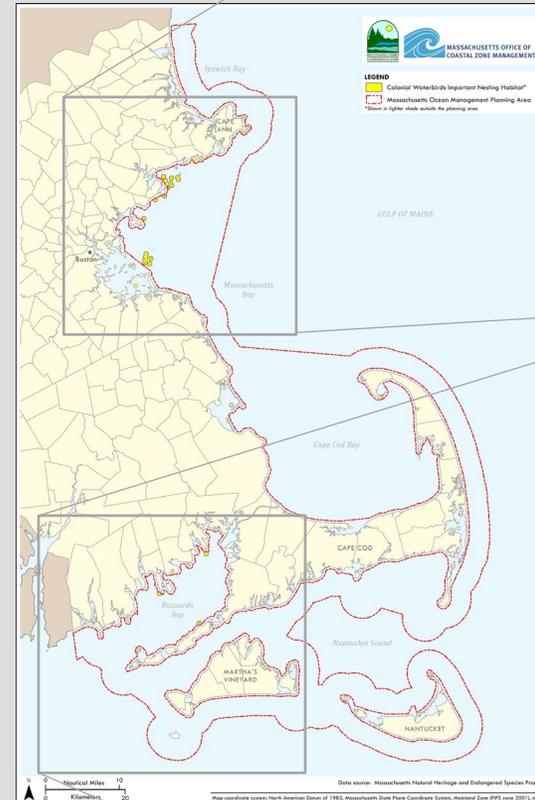
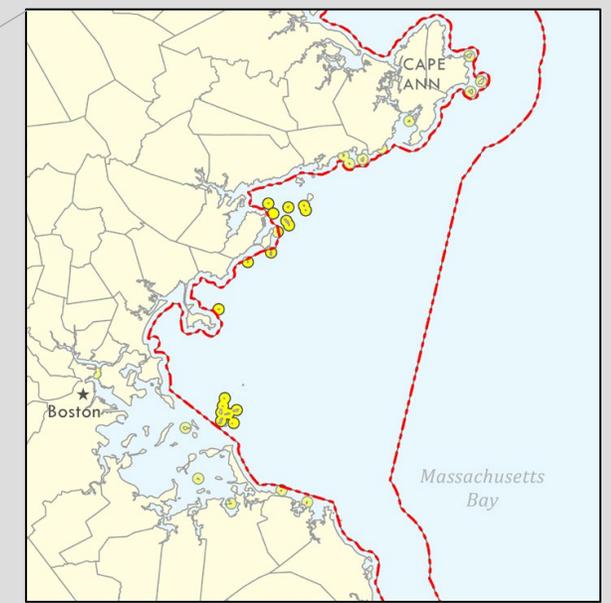
WHALE CORE HABITATS (2021 PLAN)



AVIFAUNA CORE HABITAT (2021 PLAN)



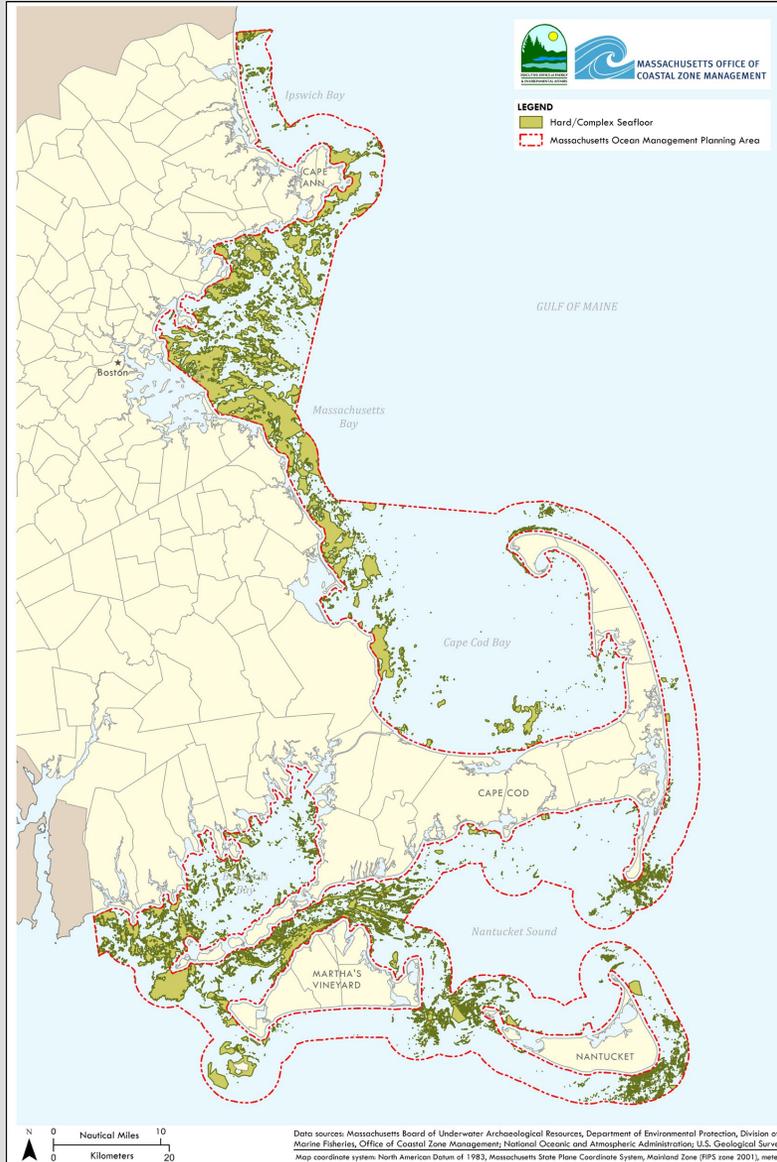
AVIFAUNA NESTING AREAS (2021 PLAN)



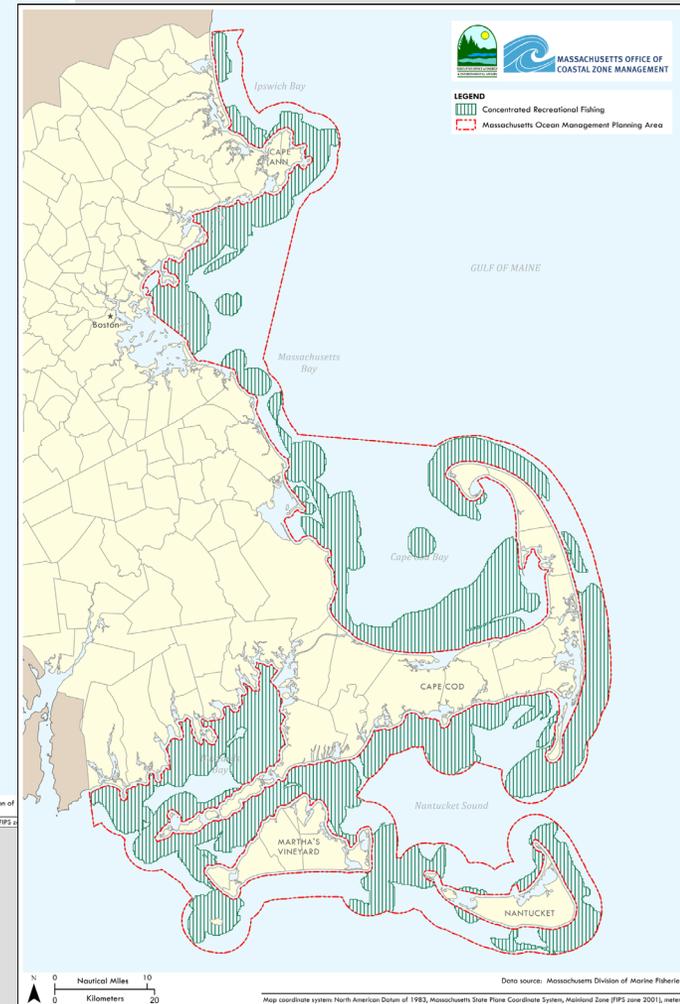
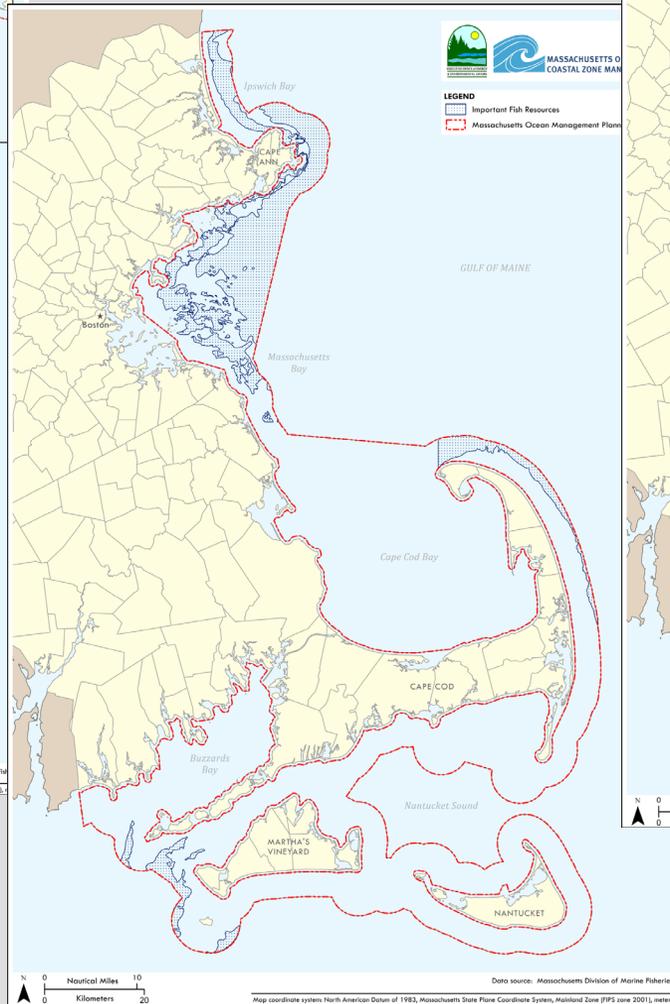
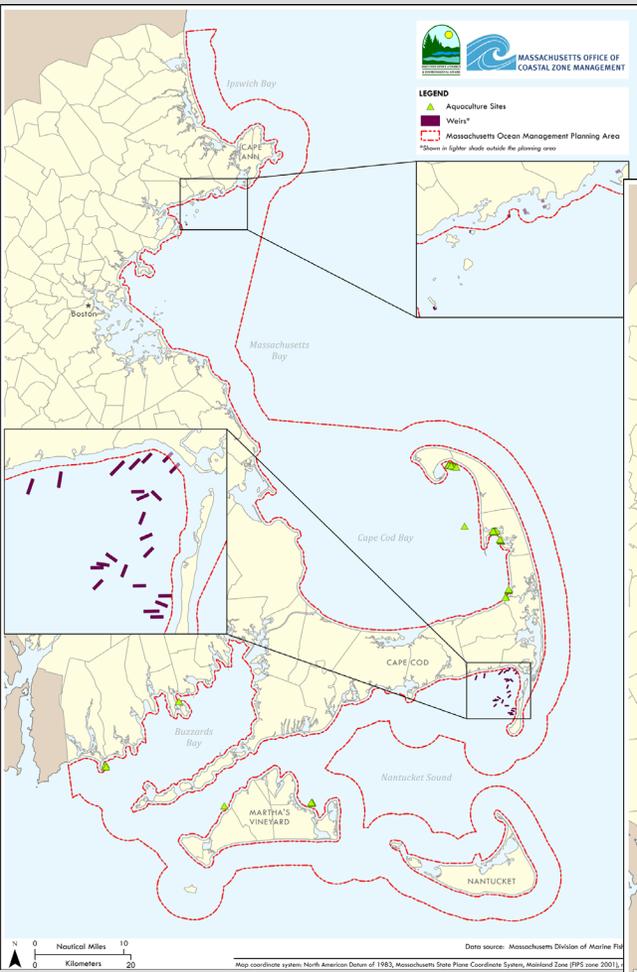
EELGRASS AND INTERTIDAL FLATS (2021 PLAN)



SEDIMENT RESOURCES (2021 PLAN)



FISHERIES PROTECTED AREAS (2021 PLAN)



TRANSPORTATION PROTECTED AREAS (2021 PLAN)

