

December 2009

In the Headlines

The Joint Initiative Responds to Ocean Task Force Framework for Marine Spatial Planning.

On December 14 the White House Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force released its [Interim Framework for Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning](#) in response to President Obama's charge to propose a strategy for implementation of the national ocean policy. Coastal and marine spatial planning is a planning tool to help create a coordinated, integrated approach to ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes management that emphasizes the importance of a regional focus and stakeholder input. The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative expressed its support for the Interim Framework and the Task Force's continued leadership in advancing healthy oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes in a [press statement](#).

The Interim Framework is open for public commentary through February 12. Submit your comments [here](#).

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Activities

The Joint Initiative Thanks Appropriations Committees for FY 2010 NOAA Budget Increase.

The Senate and House Appropriations Committees allocated an almost \$4.7 billion budget to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the Fiscal Year 2010. This budget marks the largest allocation ever received by NOAA and represents a positive development in policy, science, and management areas that have been chronically underfunded. The Joint Initiative sent a letter to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and the Subcommittees on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, thanking them for their commitment to increasing funding for ocean and coastal management. Read the letters from the Joint Initiative [here](#).

Commissioner Packard Authors Huffington Post Op-ed on Protecting the Sea. On December 16 Commissioner Julie Packard authored an Op-ed for the Huffington Post entitled "Gifts for the Sea" that discusses the importance of developing and maintaining a connection with nature. The article offers advice for strengthening personal commitments to protecting the environment, and particularly the oceans. Read the Huffington Post Op-ed [here](#).

Joint Initiative Staff Attend Ocean Day at the Copenhagen Climate Conference. Joint Initiative staff members attended Ocean Day at the Copenhagen Climate Conference on December 14. Ocean Day, organized by the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, consisted of speeches and panels by international ocean policy experts and high level elected officials.

Items of Note

First Comprehensive Ocean Plan Released in Massachusetts. On December 31 Massachusetts released the final blueprint of its ocean management plan. The plan provides new protections for important environmental resources in almost two-thirds of the Commonwealth's coastal waters and sets standards for the development of community-scale and commercial-scale wind farms and other infrastructure. The plan was drafted in July and was made available for public comment before it was finalized. With the development of the ocean management plan, Massachusetts has created the first comprehensive, long-term, and spatially explicit ocean planning and management system in the United States, and has paved the way for regions looking to develop marine spatial plans in the future. Read the Massachusetts Ocean Plan [here](#).

Council on Foreign Relations Says Time is Right for Law of the Sea. Foreign policy and ocean governance experts at the Council on Foreign Relations published a brief on December 23 outlining the reasons why the time is right for the United States to sign the Law of the Sea Treaty. The authors argue that as the only developed nation in the world without membership at the Law of the Sea Convention, the United States is at a significant disadvantage, lacking a seat at the discussion table as other world powers determine the fate of key Arctic areas, the boundaries of exclusive economic zones and the Outer Continental Shelf, and other marine issues that affect U.S. national security and economic interests. They argue that accession to the Convention would be a timely victory for the United States after the disappointing Copenhagen climate conference discussions. Read the Council on Foreign Relations Brief [here](#).