



NEW YORK OCEAN ACTION PLAN Q AND A

What is the New York Ocean Action Plan?

The New York Ocean Action Plan (OAP) will be a coordinated and inclusive effort focused on improving the health of our ocean ecosystems and their capacity to provide sustainable benefits to New Yorkers. Together, scientists, resource managers, and a wide range of stakeholders will take stock of New York's ocean-related activities and programs. Through a five-year action plan, the goal of the OAP is to achieve better-managed and healthier ocean ecosystems that will benefit people, communities, and the natural world. Grounded in short-term actions to reach long-term goals, the OAP will guide State government funding, research, management, outreach, and education choices.

Why is New York creating the Ocean Action Plan?

New York's ocean resources face growing challenges. Changing ocean temperatures affect the health and distribution of valuable fish stocks, making efforts to sustainably manage our fisheries more difficult. In response to fishery and other management challenges, the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council (Council) called for development of an OAP in its April 2009 report to the Governor and legislature. The Council recognized that current management can be improved by implementing a more comprehensive and integrated approach to ocean management.

What is the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council?

The 2006 Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Act created the Council with the goal of promoting healthier ecosystems in New York through the use of ecosystem-based management (EBM) and greater coordination of government activities. The Council has representatives from eight State agencies plus the State University of New York (SUNY): Departments of Agriculture and Markets, Environmental Conservation, State, and Transportation; Empire State Development; New York State Energy Research and Development Authority; Office of General Services; and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. For more information on the Council and its final report visit the website: <http://www.oglecc.ny.gov/>

What is ecosystem-based management?

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is a comprehensive, place-based approach to resource management—distinctive from traditional approaches that manage resources individually. EBM recognizes that people are an integral part of any ecosystem and that ecosystems are vital in supporting human life. EBM also emphasizes the necessity of sound scientific understanding and strong partnerships to address complex and often contentious issues. Using EBM, New York can take a comprehensive look at its ocean and coastal resources, leading to better management decisions and healthier communities and ecosystems.



How can the public be involved in shaping the Ocean Action Plan?

As a starting point, the OAP goals will be derived from the Council’s 2009 report, *Our Waters, Our Communities, Our Future*, which was developed with intensive public participation. After internal input from State agencies, DEC will present an OAP discussion draft at stakeholder meetings. Lastly, DEC will present a final draft for public comment.

When will the Ocean Action Plan be finished?

After considering feedback received through public participation and outreach, a draft of the plan is expected to be released in late summer, 2012. After an additional comment period, the final OAP will be released by the end of 2012.

What areas of the ocean will the Ocean Action Plan address?

The geographic area encompasses the State’s ocean waters stretching from New York City to the end of Long Island, including ecological connections to offshore waters out to the edge of the continental shelf. Additionally, given the interconnectedness of ocean waters with nearshore waters, the ecological relationship with several estuaries and their habitats will also be examined: the Peconic, Hudson River, and NY-NJ Harbor Estuaries, Long Island Sound, and the lagoonal bays of the south shore of Long Island—Great South Bay, Jamaica Bay, Moriches Bay, Hempstead Bay, and Shinnecock Bay.

How does the Ocean Action Plan relate to the New York Coastal Management Program’s Atlantic Ocean Amendment?

The New York Department of State, working with stakeholders and State and federal partners, is mapping offshore uses and compiling resource data to identify offshore habitat areas and locations that may be best suited for offshore wind energy development. The Atlantic Ocean Amendment to the State’s federally approved Coastal Management Program will provide information for a stronger New York voice in decisions on proposed federal actions in the ocean, including projects proposed well beyond State waters. The OAP will help to inform future Amendments to the State’s Coastal Program.

Who is leading the Ocean Action Plan process?

The New York Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and State (DOS) are coordinating the development of the OAP. For more information please contact Matt Gove at mtgove@gw.dec.state.ny.us or 631-444-0468 or Gregory Capobianco at gregory.capobianco@dos.ny.gov or 518-474-8811.

