

*Options for Managing Maine's
Near Shore Ecosystems*

A Series of Four Reports:

**Ecosystem Management
Alternative Dispute Resolution
Marine Protected Areas
Marine Zoning**

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Introduction

This series of reports provide a blueprint for effective stewardship of Maine's marine waters. The proposed recommendations build on ecosystem management to achieve the following goals: protection of the structure and function of our near shore ecosystems; increased opportunities for economic development; sustainable use of marine resources; and prevention of costly use conflicts. The tools envisioned to address these goals include a system of regional management plans, education, research, and monitoring, as well as regulation. The recommendations are intended as starting point; their adoption does not guarantee that Maine's marine waters will be as productive in the next century as the last. However, failure to initiate comprehensive management, failure to accept our responsibility for stewardship of the State's marine waters, can only jeopardize the future of our greatest natural resource.

Maine's marine waters are the State's most significant public resource, greater in acreage and economic importance than our public lands ashore. These marine resources have been used for food, energy, transportation, recreation and as a repository for a variety of wastes. These uses have evolved and diversified over the years. The ferries, schooners, and fishing boats of 100 years ago now share the bays with sailboats, cruise ships, tour boats, freighters, kayakers and jet skis. Despite the importance of these marine resources for a variety of purposes, the State lacks a coordinated approach for ensuring the future of these resources as we approach the next millennium. These reports offers a first step towards effective stewardship of our resources.

This series includes reports on Ecosystem Management, Marine Protected Area, Marine Zoning and Alternative Dispute Resolution. The report on ecosystem management explores a new approach to managing our near shore ecosystems that aims to improve management efforts by considering the interrelatedness of resources, the use of sound science and considers humans as part of the system. The other reports, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Marine Protected Area and Marine Zoning, explore tools for implementing an ecosystem management approach. These tools are not the only ones available or that should be used, but are ones that are relatively new to Maine. The reports are stand alone documents but together explore methods for improving management of one of Maine's greatest asset, the marine environment.

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