

The MOP Blast – Updates, Developments and Other Interesting Stuff February 14, 2011

Faster, searchable, more user-friendly MA Ocean Resource Information System (MORIS) launched thanks to public-private collaboration

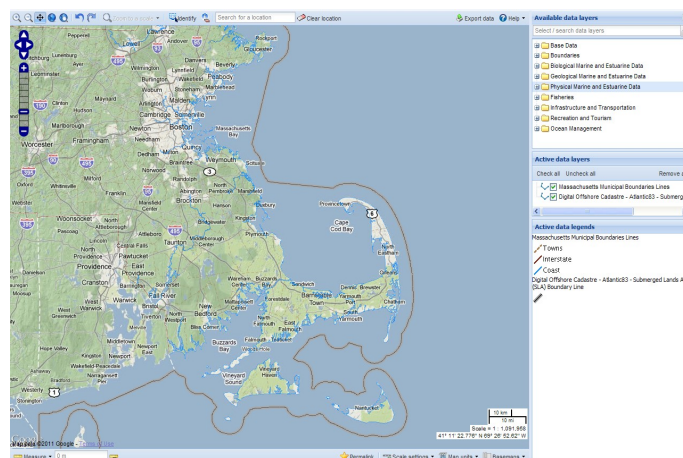
Continuing to serve as a laboratory for advancements in coastal and marine spatial planning, Massachusetts is set to go live today with [the new MORIS](#), an online mapping tool hosting an impressive warehouse of biological, oceanographic, human use and other data about Massachusetts' coastal ocean. The new ocean data system is the product of a working collaboration among MOP, the Commonwealth ([MA CZM](#) and [MassGIS](#)) and [Applied Science Associates](#) (ASA) and was made possible by investments from MOP and the state. Initially driven by the need for improved data accessibility to develop the [Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan](#), the new release offers major upgrades including a search function, greater speed, user-friendly look and feel, and common base maps. Users can now quickly search for the information they want, create and share maps to display the data, and download data for use in a Geographic Information System (GIS).

MORIS will support state agencies in carrying out their regulatory and management responsibilities including implementing and updating the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan and conducting environmental review and permitting. But beyond that, the new tool is available to serve the needs of other audiences including marine-dependent industry, local and federal agencies, conservation organizations, regional planning associations, researchers, educators and others. Users can combine data about habitats and species, economic development, recreation and tourism, commercial fishing and many other factors into custom maps to analyze patterns and relationships.

MORIS was developed using open source technology; while MOP holds the copyright, the code is free for use and modification under the applicable license, subject to certain terms and conditions. The value of the product beyond its original target use is already evident - the Commonwealth has leveraged the effort to support three other state-based map viewers and a number of other governmental and nongovernmental entities have expressed interest in the application.

The new MORIS is an example of effective public-private collaboration driven by a clear policy need resulting in technological advances that surpass the original need to offer collateral benefits for a broad range of ocean stakeholders.

For more about the significance of the new MORIS, check out Stephanie's recent [piece in the Huffington Post](#).



To access and begin using the new MORIS on the Commonwealth's website, click on the image above.

Other Project Developments

Cumulative Impacts Analysis MOP, in collaboration with NCEAS and others, recently completed the cumulative impacts/vulnerability assessment study for Massachusetts and adjacent federal waters. The team is now reviewing results and exploring applications for Massachusetts with state resource managers and considering options for scaling up the work to inform CMSP in the broader Northeast region. The full report with results will be available on our website soon and the team expects to publish a paper focusing on potential policy and management applications.

Northeast Ocean Data Portal MOP is a lead participant in a collaborative working group developing the Northeast Ocean Data Portal. Components of the Portal will be similar in function to MORIS, but it will be specifically designed to serve CMSP efforts on a regional scale. The Working Group was recently invited to brief the National Ocean Council's Interagency Information Management System and CMSP Data Portal Working Group about CMSP data management efforts in the northeast.

Recreational Boating Study We want to thank our collaborators, survey respondents and everyone who participated in MOP's recreational boating survey. Data collection is complete, the team is now conducting the spatial and socioeconomic analyses and results will be available this spring.

Workshops, Conferences, Presentations and Publications

Top priorities for science, policy, and practice of Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Workshop, December 14-15, 2010. MOP Science Program Manager, Nick Napoli, served on the steering committee to convene an NCEAS-led workshop where leading CMSP practitioners identified top priorities for advancing CMSP over the next 1-5 years. Participants focused on the need and opportunity to inform the U.S. National Ocean Council process in its implementation of CMSP in the U.S. The science, policy and practice from ocean planning efforts in Massachusetts and the broader Northeast region figured significantly into the discussions. In addition to MOP, several participants brought experience from the Northeast including Andrew Rosenberg (Conservation International and MOP Board member), Deerin Babb-Brott (Epsilon Associates and MOP Board member), Kathleen Leyden (ME), Larry Crowder (Duke) and Ben Halpern (NCEAS). [Preliminary findings](#) are available now, a journal article is currently out for review and a whitepaper is forthcoming.

National Council for Science and the Environment Annual Conference - Our Changing Oceans, January 19-21, 2011. Stephanie Moura, MOP Executive Director, attended the recent conference in D.C. and will assist NCSE with follow-up on key CMSP related action items.

Multi-Purpose Marine Cadastre Workshop, February 1-2, 2011. Nick Napoli was an invited participant in a workshop convened by NOAA and BOEMRE to assess the development status of the MMC and its compatibility with other data management efforts (such as the National Information Management System called for in the National Ocean Policy), and to provide recommendations on potential future enhancements.

Sustainable Environmentalism in the 21st Century, March 17, 2011. Stephanie Moura will speak about "Improving Regulatory Approaches through Marine Spatial Planning" at an upcoming forum sponsored by the Southeastern Massachusetts Council on Sustainability.

Coastal GeoTools 2011, March 20-24. Nick Napoli will present at and participate in a Special Interest Meeting about Building Regional Portals and Coastal Web Atlases to Support CMSP. Nick will also present about MOP's Recreational Boating Survey in a panel about human use mapping in the coastal zone.

American Planning Association's National Conference, Boston, April 2011. Stephanie Moura and Deerin Babb-Brott will present reflections from the Massachusetts marine spatial planning experience.



Stay tuned...for updates from MOP's ecosystem services tradeoff pilot study, more information about the ecosystem health indicators conference this March and notice of additional CMSP presentations at upcoming conferences.