

In brief

Protecting the **Marine** Environment in North America

In the fall of 1996, the CEC organized workshops in two pilot project regions to review existing initiatives, determine the scope for cooperation, and identify and assess problems at the two sites—the first step in the six-step GPA methodology.

The workshops were attended by the key stakeholders from the pilot regions, including representatives of all levels of government, as well as academic, business and nongovernmental organizations.

Post-workshop plans for each project include establishing ad hoc binational committees composed of representatives of the partner institutions. The committees will develop plans for implementing the GPA in their regions. Once the implementation plans are approved, the committees will create task groups to tackle the priorities identified. An important part of the overall task is developing regional outreach and communication efforts to facilitate the exchange of information, enhance understanding of the GPA and its implementation, and broaden the involvement and participation of regional groups in the pilot project activities.

CEC Helps Implement the Global Programme of Action

Two pilot projects initiated by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) are helping the North American countries implement an international program to protect its marine and coastal areas from land-based activities.

Canada, Mexico and the United States were among the more than 100 nations that agreed in 1995 to the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), which was developed under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to assist national and regional authorities in reaching the goal of promoting the sustainable use of marine resources.

As part of its initial efforts, the CEC is focusing on two binational coastal regions: the **Bight of the Californias**, which extends southward from Point Conception, west of Santa Barbara in Southern California (USA), to Cabo Colonett and Bahía de San Quintin in Baja California (Mexico); and the **Gulf of Maine**, which stretches from Cape Sable, Nova Scotia (Canada), to Cape Cod, Massachusetts (USA). The pilot projects will help the three countries establish cooperative partnerships and promote ongoing regional cooperation and joint actions in marine and coastal areas.



The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was established by Canada, Mexico and the United States in 1994 to address transboundary environmental concerns in North America. The CEC facilitates cooperation and public participation to foster conservation, protection and enhancement of the North American environment for the benefit of present and future generations, in the context of increasing economic, trade and social links between Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Bight of the Californias



The rich natural marine resources of the Bight of the Californias are at risk. Home to approximately 20 million people, this region is feeling the pressures of population growth and industrial, commercial, and recreational development. The coastal space has been subjected to construction, mineral extraction and other forms of resource utilization, which together have led to extensive habitat change and large and varied inputs of contaminants to the Bight. Despite long-standing federal, state and local efforts on both sides of the border to address binational and local environmental problems, a more integrated approach to the coastal and marine environments remains elusive, hampered by lack of financial support, resources and information.

News

An international conference, "California and the World Ocean '97," was held 24–27 March in San Diego, California, USA. Building on the landmark draft report "California's Ocean Resources: An Agenda for the Future," the sponsors of the conference solicited views of the most pressing needs and issues in ocean and coastal resource management. Complete details on the conference appear on the World Wide Web at <http://ceres.ca.gov/cra/ocean>, or can be obtained by contacting Brian Baird, California Ocean Resources Management Program, Resources Agency of California, USA, at (916) 653-5656 or brian@resources.ca.gov.

The Daedalus Alliance for Environmental Education (DAEE), a US nonprofit organization based in San Diego, California, USA, and several US and Mexican organizations have initiated an education and water quality monitoring program in the Tijuana River Watershed, which covers 4,400 square kilometers on the United States–Mexico border. In high schools twenty-five Mexican teachers and ten US teachers will be trained to perform water quality tests with their classes. This initiative is being funded by the CEC's North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation—see CEC's Web page at <http://www.cec.org> for a description of the fund. For more information on the initiative and DAEE, contact Merle Okino O'Neill at (619) 232-3821 ext. 248.

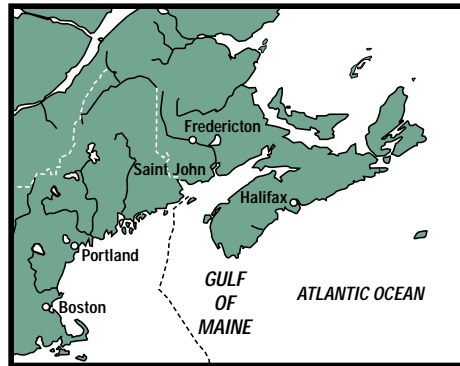
In April 1997, the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Ysidro, California, USA, began operations. Construction of the plant was spearheaded by the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) to address urgent wastewater treatment problems in the Tijuana River Valley. Capable of providing secondary treatment for 95 million liters of raw sewage a day, the plant is an example of the increasing cooperation between Mexico and the United States to prevent land-based sources of marine pollution and to safeguard the quality of life along the international border. For more information, contact Manuel Roberto Ybarra, IBWC secretary, US Section, at (915) 534-6698.

GPA News

During the January 1997 meeting of the United Nations Environment Programme's Governing Council in Nairobi, Kenya, the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States presented "Lessons Learned," a document summarizing the experiences gained in North America while applying the GPA to the CEC's pilot projects. The document is available from the CEC in French, Spanish, and English. At the meeting, the UNEP Secretariat was praised for its work on land-based sources of pollution. In one important decision, the Governing Council gave priority to applying the GPA throughout UNEP's regional seas programs. UNEP has established a home page on the World Wide Web for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities: <http://www.unep.org> (click on GPA).

Gulf of Maine

While the Gulf of Maine, with its highly dynamic marine ecosystem and diverse habitats, appears relatively pristine compared to more polluted bodies of water, increasing pollution from all source categories threatens the area. Contaminants enter the gulf from a number of point sources, especially municipal and industrial effluents and sewer overflows, and a wide variety of non-point sources such as riverine input, atmospheric deposition, agricultural runoff, and septic system leakage. The destruction and physical alteration of habitats are a major concern.



The Gulf of Maine has a long history of binational collaboration led largely by the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, an outgrowth of the 1989 Gulf of Maine Agreement between two Canadian provinces and three US states. Many other organizations, such as the Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine (RARGOM), as well as provincial, state and federal organizations, also support marine protection activities at a regional level.

News

The Island Institute, in partnership with the Conservation Law Foundation and Conservation Council of New Brunswick, is sponsoring the conference **"Rim of the Gulf: Restoring Estuaries and Resources,"** 8–10 May, in Portland, Maine, USA. The goals of the conference are to deepen the collective understanding of an ecosystem-based approach to marine resource management and environmental protection and to galvanize efforts throughout the Gulf of Maine region to apply ecosystem-based principles to specific management challenges both locally and regionally. In keeping with these goals, the Conservation Law Foundation has surveyed groups and individuals active in Gulf of Maine issues about their interest in participating in a Gulf of Maine Alliance, designed to provide a united citizens' voice in the public arena on stewardship issues affecting the Gulf. At the conference, the foundation will present the results of the survey and will bring together conference participants wishing to participate in follow-up to the survey. For more information on the conference, contact Janice Harvey, Marine Conservation Programme Director, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, Canada, at (506) 466-4033 or ccnbcoon@nbnet.nb.ca.

Founded in 1991, the Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine (RARGOM) is an association of institutions that have active research interests in the Gulf of Maine and its watershed. RARGOM is presently housed at Dartmouth College. For more information, contact Eugenia F. Braasch, Associate Director, RARGOM, at Eugenia.F.Braasch@Dartmouth.edu or see RARGOM's Web page at <http://fundy.dartmouth.edu/rargom/rargom.html>.

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment organized an interactive workshop, 24–25 April, at Freeport, Maine, USA to examine the potential of existing and future marine protected area (MPA) designations in the Gulf of Maine. For more information, contact Sam Brody, Maine State Planning Office, Maine, USA, at (207) 287-1486 or Sam.Brody@state.me.us.

The Gulf of Maine Coastal Monitoring Network, which links more than a hundred citizen monitoring groups within the Gulf of Maine watershed, seeks to heighten public awareness of the role citizens can play in environmental monitoring and resource management. The Wells Reserve serves as the host institution for the network. For more information, contact Henrietta List, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, Maine, USA, at (207) 646-2930 or wellsnerr1@cybertours.com.

WWW Pages

GPA Pilot Projects and the Internet

Gulf of Maine

Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment
<http://gulfofmaine.unh.edu/index.html>

Research Environmental Data and Information
Management System (REDIMS) for the Gulf of Maine
<http://oracle.er.usgs.gov/gomaine/index.htm>

Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine
(RARGOM)
<http://www-nml.dartmouth.edu/rargom/rargom.html>

Gulf of Maine Aquarium
<http://octopus.gma.org/katahdin/gulf.html>

Bight of the Californias

California Ocean Resources Management Program
<http://www.ceres.ca.gov/cra/ocean>

Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
(SCCWRP)
<http://www.sccwrp.org/index.htm>

Instituto de Investigaciones Oceanográficas,
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
<http://www.ens.uabc.mx/iio/iio.htm>

For more information...

on the CEC's project

for the Cooperation on the Protection of Marine and
Coastal Area Ecosystems, the implementation of the
GPA in North America, or for copies of two related work-
ing papers—Sustaining Resources in the Gulf of Maine:
Toward Regional Management Action and Conserving
the Marine Resources of the Southern California Bight—
please contact Martha Rosas at the CEC Secretariat at
Tel: (514) 350-4326 or by E-mail: mrosas@ccemtl.org

on each country's implementation of the GPA, contact:

John Karau, Marine Environment Division, Hazardous
Waste Branch, Environment Canada, at
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Thomas L. Laughlin, Office of International Affairs,
US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, at
(202) 482-6196 or tom.laughlin@noaa.gov

Oscar M. Ramírez-Flores, Instituto Nacional de Pesca,
Semarnap (Mexico), at (525) 688-1548
or oscarrmf@servidor.unam.mx

List Servers

GULFTALK

is a discussion list for
citizen environmental
monitoring and coastal
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groups in the Gulf of
Maine. To subscribe, send
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C M P A N

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