

National Sea Grant Law Center

What Is Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning?

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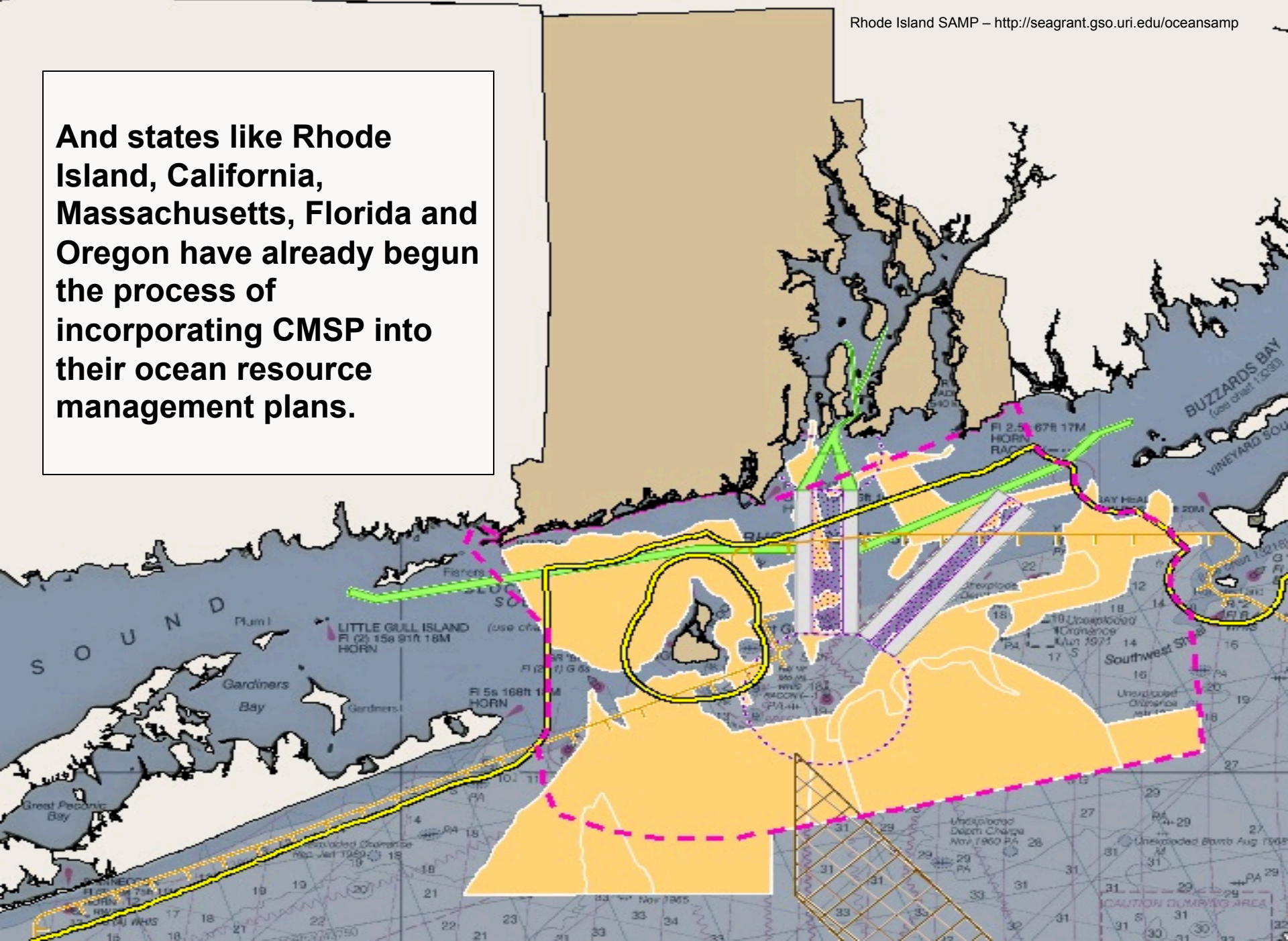
There's a lot of talk among politicians and scientists about the use of COASTAL AND MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING (CMSP) as a new way for Americans to manage the different uses of our oceans and coasts...



In 2010, President Obama said that Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning will play a central role in our nation's new ocean policy...



And states like Rhode Island, California, Massachusetts, Florida and Oregon have already begun the process of incorporating CMSP into their ocean resource management plans.



But what *is* Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning?

What can it *do*?

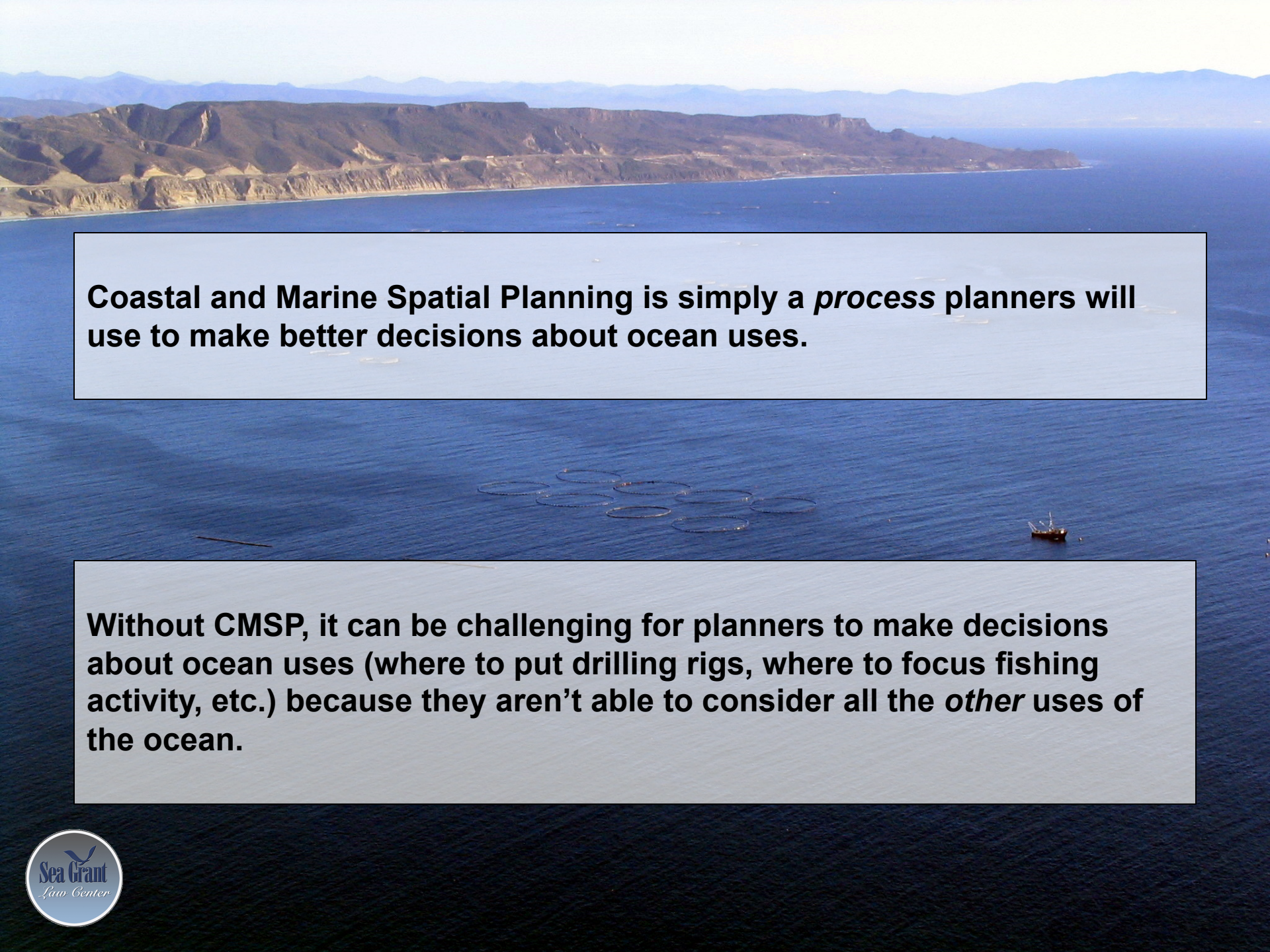
Will it just be more rules and regulations to follow?

Will it change how I use the ocean?

Will it make certain areas off-limits?

Will I have to do anything?

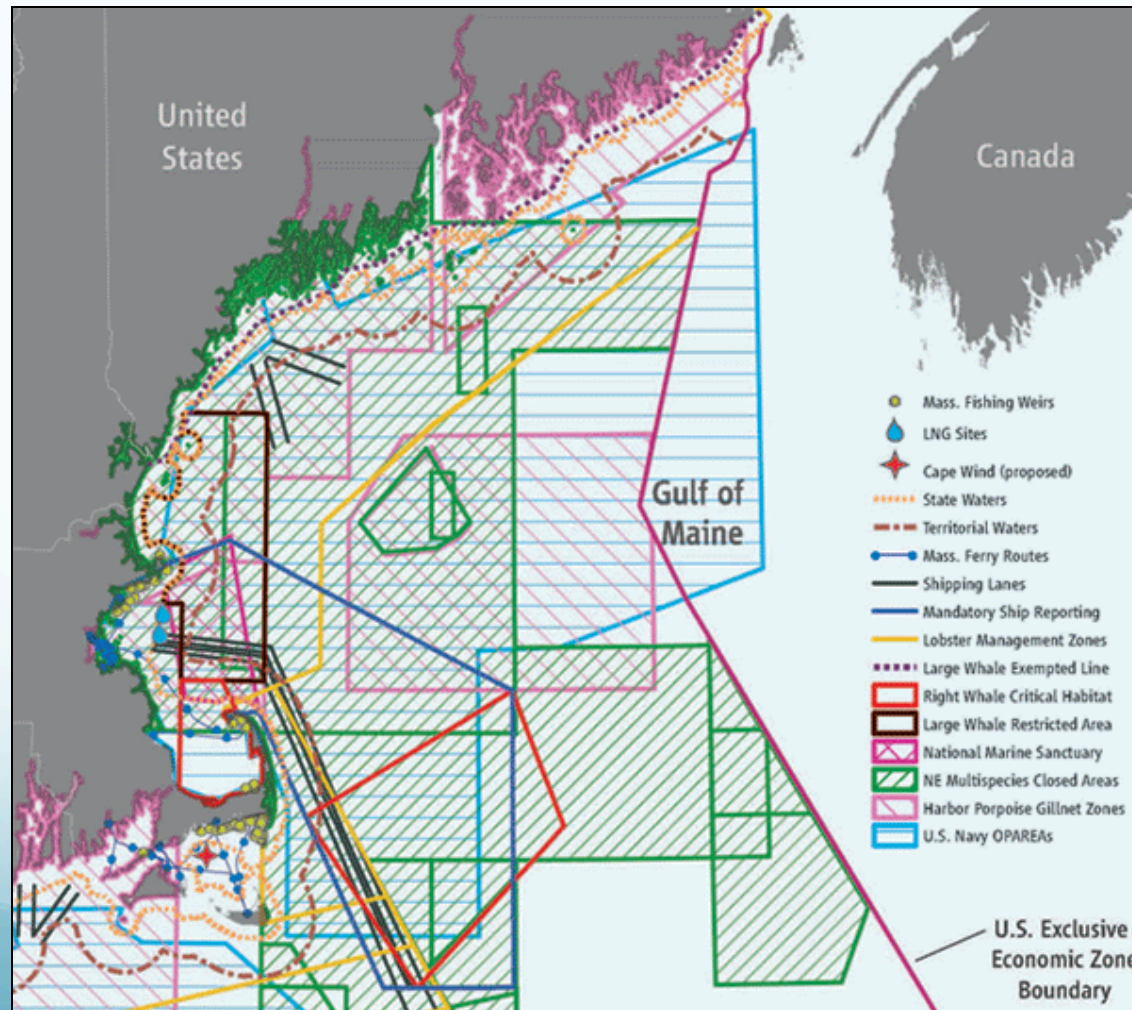




Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning is simply a *process* planners will use to make better decisions about ocean uses.

Without CMSP, it can be challenging for planners to make decisions about ocean uses (where to put drilling rigs, where to focus fishing activity, etc.) because they aren't able to consider all the *other* uses of the ocean.

Marine Spatial Planning provides decisionmakers with accurate information and maps about the geography, environmental characteristics and current uses of the ocean. This information will help these decisionmakers better plan for increased existing uses and new uses.



Under the current “sector-by-sector” or “use-by-use” approach, each use of the ocean is planned for under different laws and through different government agencies. Because of the lack of coordination between these laws and agencies, decisions made for one ocean use can end up conflicting with another use.



If nothing is done, these conflicts are set to increase as the need for ocean space grows.

However, Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning allows planners to consider many different uses of the ocean at once, allowing for better decisions about ocean uses and reducing potential conflicts.



THE GOAL IS AVOIDING CONFLICTS

What is a conflict?

Any use of the ocean which potentially disrupts any other use of the ocean is a conflict.

- Siting wind turbines in areas heavily used by fishermen creates a conflict
- Siting marine protected zones in important fishing areas creates a conflict
- Running shipping lanes through areas with offshore oil rigs creates a conflict

By reducing conflicts, the number of uses and users of the ocean will be able to grow while still:

- **Protecting the sensitive and valuable environmental characteristics of the ocean;**
- **Allowing compatible uses to share ocean space;**
- **Streamlining permits and paperwork.**



What WILL Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Do?

How does CMSP reduce conflicts?



Seven goals for CMSP are included in our new National Ocean Plan. It's hoped that CMSP will:

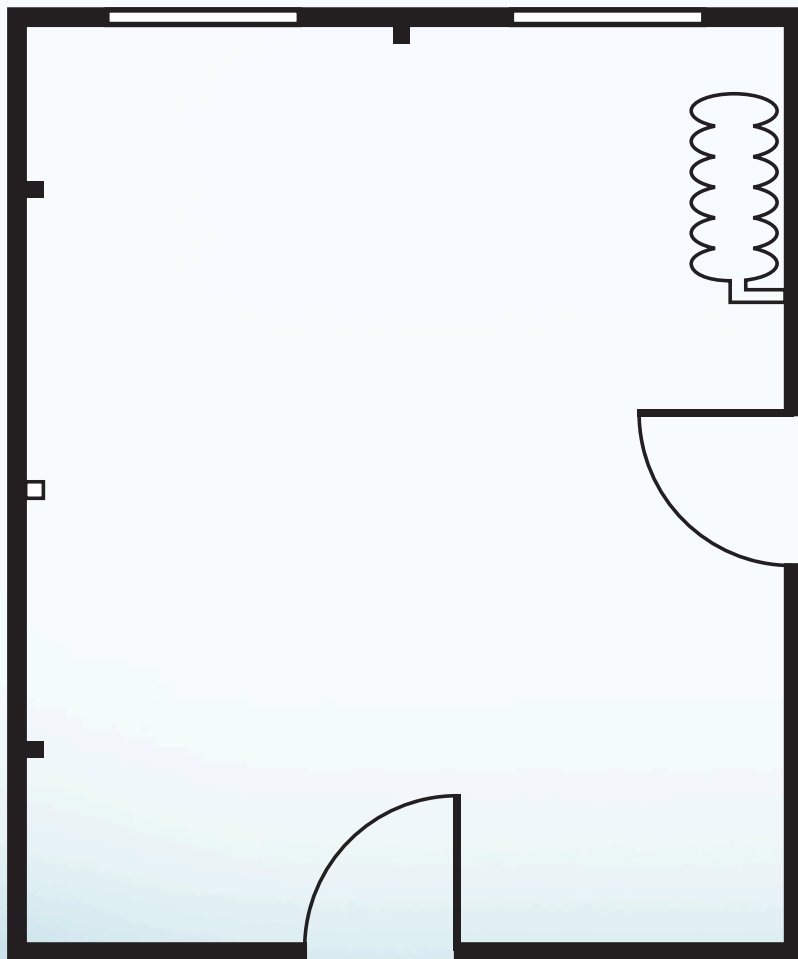
- 1. Support sustainable, safe, secure, efficient and productive uses of the ocean;**
- 2. Protect, maintain and restore ocean resources and ensure resilient ecosystems;**
- 3. Provide for and maintain public access to the ocean and coasts;**
- 4. Promote compatibility among ocean uses and reduce conflicts;**
- 5. Improve regulatory decisionmaking;**
- 6. Increase certainty and predictability in planning for and investing in ocean uses; and,**
- 7. Enhance interagency, intergovernmental and intercontinental communication and collaboration.**



#1

Here's an illustration to show how Marine Spatial Planning works:

Bedroom



Imagine you're moving furniture into a new bedroom. The room is empty except for a radiator in one corner, two doors and some wall jacks.

All this empty space! You could put your furniture anywhere!

KEY:

■ = electrical outlet

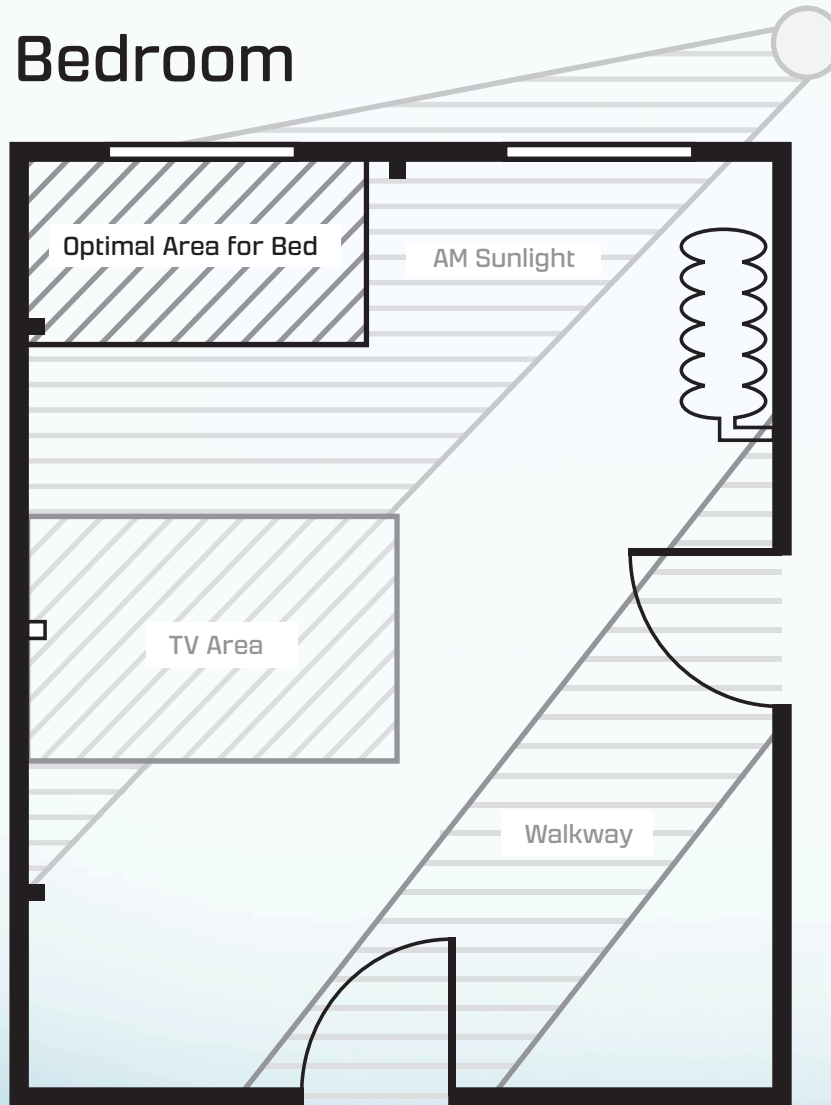
□ = cable jack

▬ = window

🌀 = radiator



Bedroom



However, when you stop and think about how you will use your room, you realize you don't have as many options as you first thought.

You don't want to put furniture in the walkway between the two doors. You can't put anything right next to the radiator. You'll need to put your TV near the cable jack, so you can't put your bed there. You want to position your bed to take advantage of morning sunlight.

Pretty soon you've got a map showing how your room will be used. Arranging your furniture based on this map will ensure that your room will be comfortable from the start.

KEY:

■ = electrical outlet

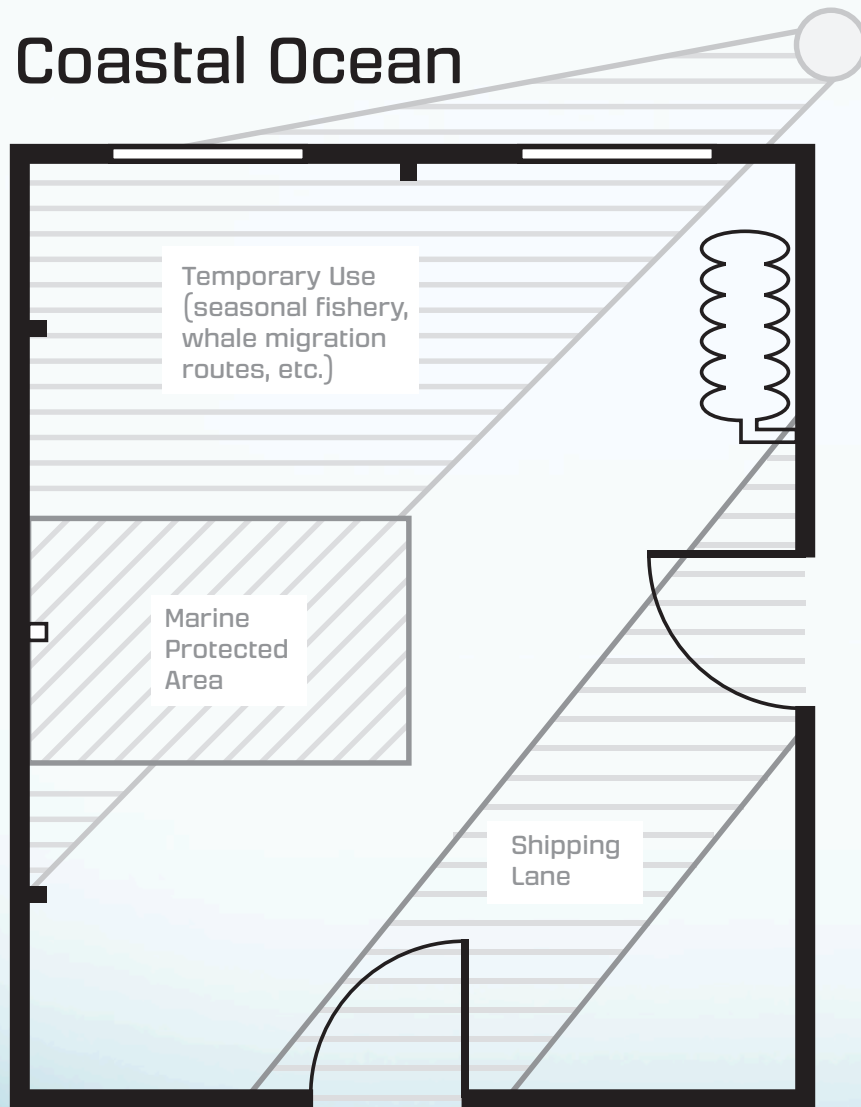
□ = cable jack

— = window

⌚ = radiator



Coastal Ocean



This is exactly how Marine Spatial Planning works. The more you know about how the ocean is used and the more planning you can do in advance, the fewer conflicts there will be between uses.

By taking into account physical features of the sea (environmental characteristics, oil rigs, ports, MPAs, breeding grounds) as well as temporary uses (migration routes, shipping channels), decisionmakers can work to avoid conflicts.

KEY:

■ = Shore-Based Infrastructure (ports, energy grid, etc.)
□ =

— = window
⌋ = Existing Structure (oil rig, etc.)



Illustration by Andy Gattis – <http://www.andygattis.com>

Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning will be ECOSYSTEM-BASED, meaning planners will be able to manage human uses more efficiently while improving ecosystem health and services by recognizing the connections between the ocean environment and ocean uses.



How will Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning work?

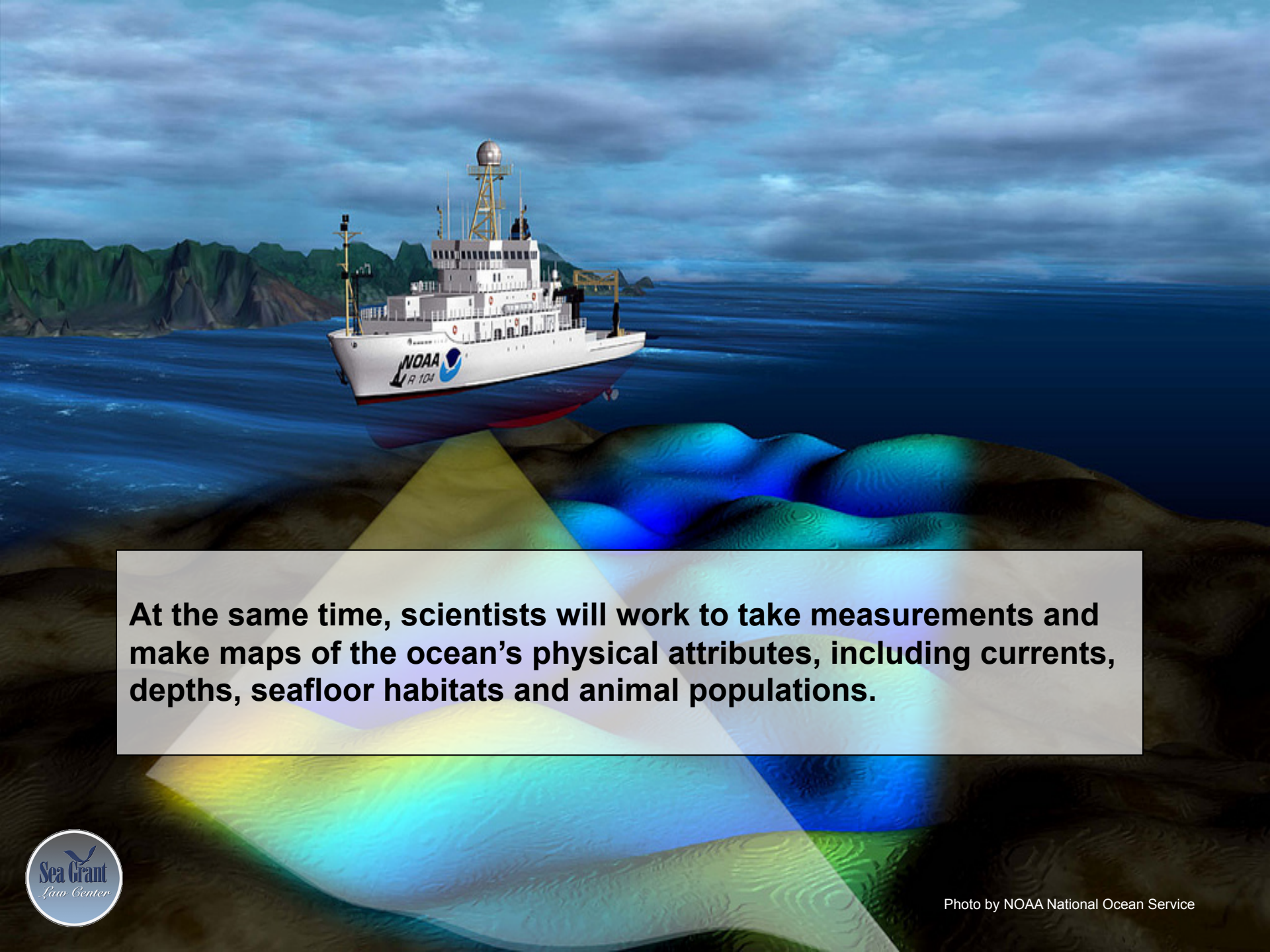
What will have to be done for it to be implemented?



In order to best manage the different uses of our oceans and coasts, it's first important to gather precise information on the ocean itself and on how it's being used.

In order to do that, representatives of current ocean users such as commercial and recreational fishermen, shipping companies, oil drillers and recreational boaters will meet with government representatives to report on the ways they use the oceans.





At the same time, scientists will work to take measurements and make maps of the ocean's physical attributes, including currents, depths, seafloor habitats and animal populations.



The Federal Program

In July 2010, President Obama established a National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes. In it, the President directs agencies to begin creating a framework for the implementation of Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning.

The framework will create nine regional planning bodies to implement CMSP in different geographic regions of the country.



The Federal Program, cont'd

Membership in these regional bodies will include federal, state, local and tribal officials, nongovernment organizations, scientists, and ocean users themselves.

Together, those members will:

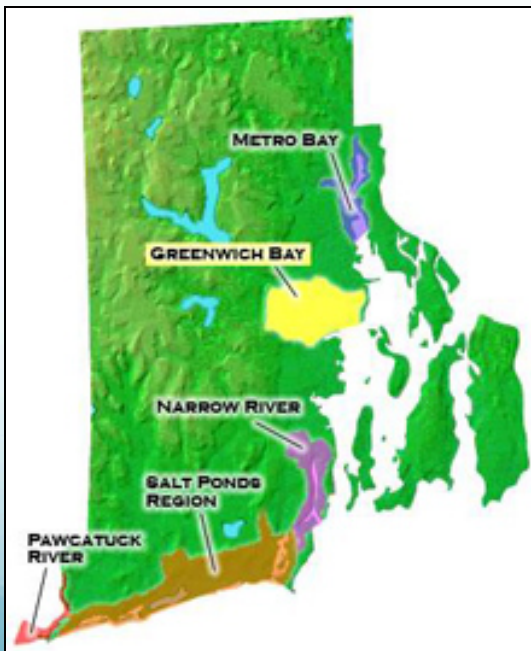
- **Identify and map out current patterns of ocean use;**
- **Gather information on physical ocean characteristics;**
- **Identify areas (like permitting or licensing) that can be streamlined by Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning.**



State Programs

Some states have already begun implementing Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning for the waters under their control (from the coastline to three miles out).

State programs will likely look similar to the federal program, just on a more local level. Indeed, states and federal officials will work very closely together to ensure that plans are compatible.



What *Won't* Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Do?

What are some common myths about CMSP?



CMSP *won't*: Cause much change to the day-to-day lives of ocean users

- CMSP will be used primarily by government officials and organizations to help make decisions and fix problems. Though there may be some new uses occurring on the ocean, those currently using the sea – fishermen, boaters, shippers, etc. – will not likely notice any changes to their existing permits or regulations. In fact, it's hoped that CMSP will eventually make the permitting and regulatory process less complicated than it is now.

CMSP *won't*: Make certain parts of the ocean “off-limits”

- CMSP is NOT “ocean zoning.”
- CMSP will itself not cause any parts of the ocean to become more restricted. If such new restricted areas are created under other laws or policies, marine spatial planning will simply ensure that these areas are sited so they will have the least amount of impact on other ocean uses.



If implemented correctly, Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning will help us manage the growing uses of the oceans as smoothly as possible.



To Learn More About Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning:

NOAA's Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Website: <http://cmsp.noaa.gov>

Rhode Island Sea Grant's website on the Rhode Island Special Areas Mapping Project (SAMP): <http://seagrants.gso.uri.edu/showcase/index.html>

UNESCO Marine Spatial Planning Initiative: <http://www.unesco-ioc-marinesp.be/>

White House website on Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans/cmsp>



To Contact a NOAA Regional CMSP Team Member:

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