

# Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning

Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning can assist Florida's residents and visitors with balancing the many uses and activities associated with our coastal and ocean resources.

## How Will We Benefit?

We manage our coastal and marine resources in a piecemeal approach, considering one use, or sector, at a time. This is not an ideal approach if we want the best mix of uses in an area, with minimal conflicts, maximum efficiencies and conservation of resources for future generations.

For example, a plan for offshore energy exploration may not effectively consider other uses that compete for the same space, such as fisheries. In a similar vein, popular boating routes may overlap with sensitive habitats, such as seagrass and coral reefs. While coastal and marine spatial planning cannot replace all sector-by-sector management, it is meant to ensure that our planning reflects Florida's broader goals and objectives. As a result, conflicting, incompatible and inappropriate uses will be identified and remedied.

A goal of marine spatial planning is enhanced collaboration and communication among citizens, businesses and the entities that manage Florida's ocean and coastal resources. Indeed, the success of marine spatial planning depends on this happening. Greater cooperation will bolster the rigor and thoroughness of decision-making, and it will streamline permitting and regulatory processes. These outcomes will provide greater predictability and more confidence for investment decisions.



One of Florida's coastal and marine spatial planning tools is the Manatee Awareness and Protection Resource, found online at <http://flmapr.org>. The unique mapping feature, pictured above, lets visitors see overlays of spatial data like manatee sightings and boating routes used to draw manatee protection zones. Source: Florida Sea Grant

## Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning is...

**Transparent.** Stakeholders and the public participate throughout the process.

**Integrated.** Clear, broad-based goals and objectives that serve to align federal, state, regional, and local entities are agreed upon at the start.

**Comprehensive.** The process evaluates the suite of current and emerging uses of our coasts and oceans, and determines where they should occur to maximize citizen use and regulatory goals.

**Ecosystem-based.** The process considers the ecosystem in its entirety when making use decisions, thus safeguarding the resiliency and sustainability of the environment.

**Place-based.** Use allocation decisions are designed for and implemented at specific locations.

**Adaptive.** Circumstances and societal goals change over time, as do knowledge and technology. To meet this challenge, spatial planning adapts as necessary.



Document prepared by  
Robert A. Swett, Florida Sea Grant  
Boating and Waterways  
Management Specialist  
rswett@ufl.edu (352) 392-6233

FLORIDA OCEANS AND COASTAL  
COUNCIL

[floridaoceanscouncil.org](http://floridaoceanscouncil.org)

# Marine Spatial Planning Successfully Applied To Florida's Coastal Resources

## *Regional Waterway Management System Balances Use and Protection*

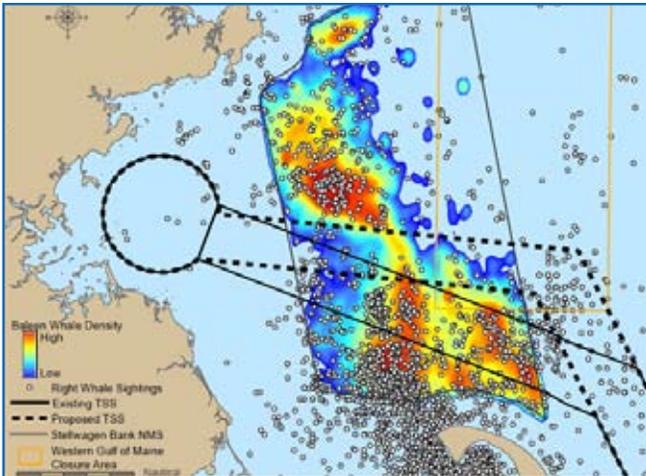
Marine spatial planning has proven to be an effective approach for preserving the recreational and ecological value of waterways. In Southwest Florida, the Regional Waterway Management System is a new approach to waterway planning and permitting based on mapped channel depths, boat populations and the spatial extent of natural resources. It was developed in partnership by Florida's Department of Environmental Protection, the four-county West Coast Inland Navigation District, and Florida Sea Grant.

The process provides a comprehensive overview of channel conditions, and the geographic distribution and severity of impediments to safe navigation and resource protection. It also supports more efficient permitting and saves tax dollars. Compared with traditional approaches to waterway management, the science-based regional waterway management system is unbiased, transparent, ecologically sound and fiscally prudent.



The popular anchorage near Longboat Pass is one of many busy boater destinations in southwest Florida. Source: Florida Sea Grant

## *Reconfigured Shipping Lanes Reduce Strikes on Migrating Whales*



Marine spatial planning not only reduces whale deaths, but provides an overall safer environment for navigation in the waterways near Boston, Mass., by decreasing overlap among cargo vessels, commercial fishing boats, and whale watch tours. This map depicts whale distribution in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and the reconfigured shipping lane shift. Source: NOAA

The North Atlantic right whale is the most endangered marine mammal in U.S. waters. Its only known calving grounds lie off the Florida and Georgia coasts. Today there are only about 300-350 right whales alive. Their main threat: strikes from ships and entanglement in derelict fishing gear.

Marine spatial planning is protecting these whales as they migrate north to feeding grounds and gather in high concentrations in the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, near the shipping lanes in and out of Boston Harbor.

From data on whale sightings collected over a 25-year period, researchers noticed that ships ran through a section of the sanctuary with high numbers of sightings.

To reduce collisions between the whales and cargo vessels, shipping lanes have now been shifted 12 degrees north through an area where fewer whales gather. The change increases ship travel time by 10 to 22 minutes, but reduces the risk of collisions with right whales by an estimated 58 percent, and other baleen whales by 81 percent.

## Sources

**Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force.** Interim framework for effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning. The White House Council on Environmental Quality, Washington, December 9, 2009.

**Ehler, Charles, and Fanny Douvère.** Marine Spatial Planning: a step-by-step approach toward ecosystem-based management. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Man and the Biosphere Programme. IOC Manuals and Guides No. 53, ICAM Dossier No. 6. Paris. UNESCO. 2009.