# Habitat and Ecosystem Services Division
# Greater Atlantic Region Updates

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
June 2021

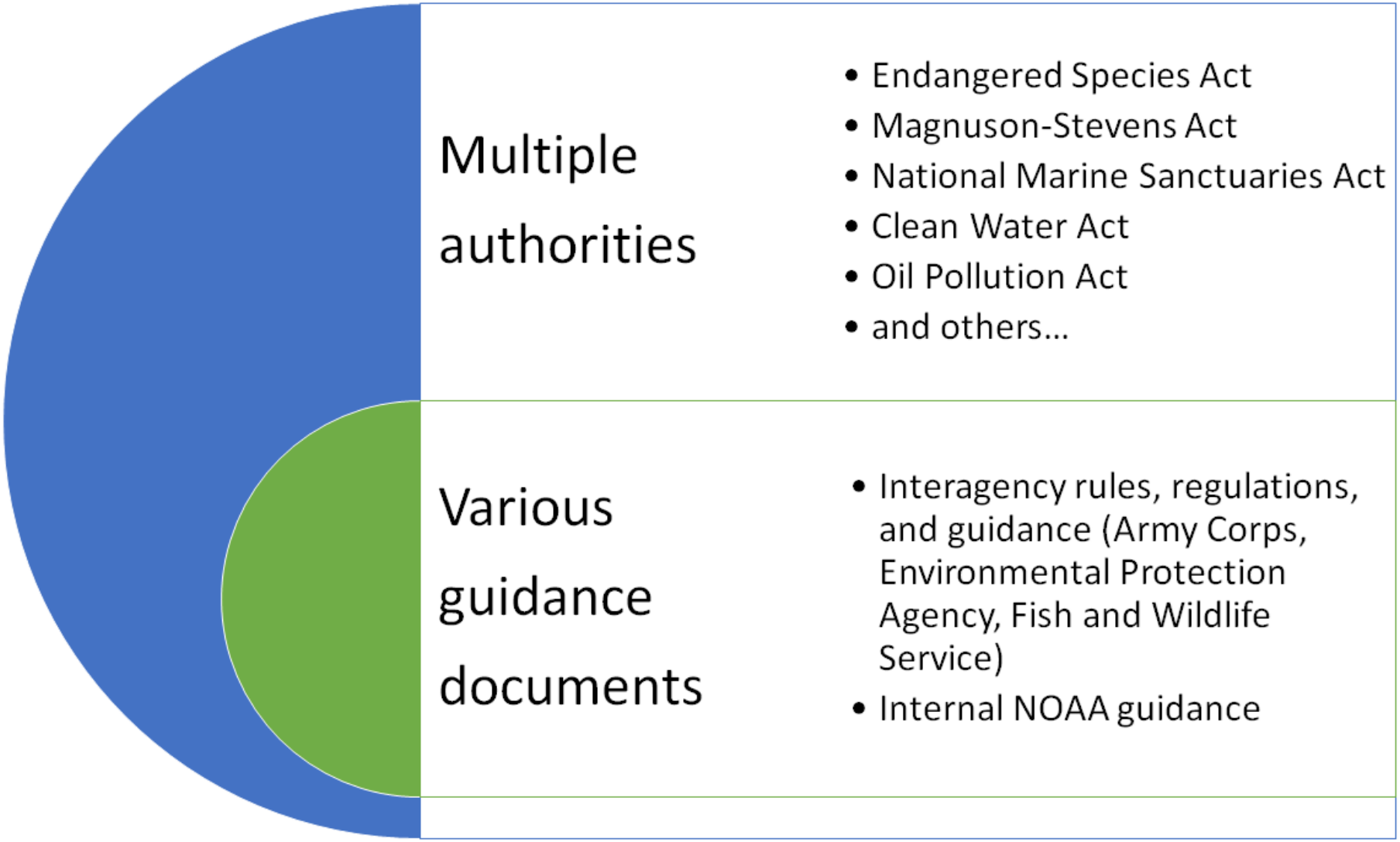
https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/habitat-conservation/habitat-conservation-and-stewardship-greater-atlantic

# Habitat and Ecosystem Services Division (HESD) Updates

- NOAA Mitigation Policy
- Climate
  - Coastal Storm Risk Management projects
  - Coastal Resilience/Beneficial Use of Dredged Material
- Infrastructure/Ports
- Aquaculture

No new activity on offshore oil and gas leasing or cables.

# NOAA's Current Mitigation Landscape



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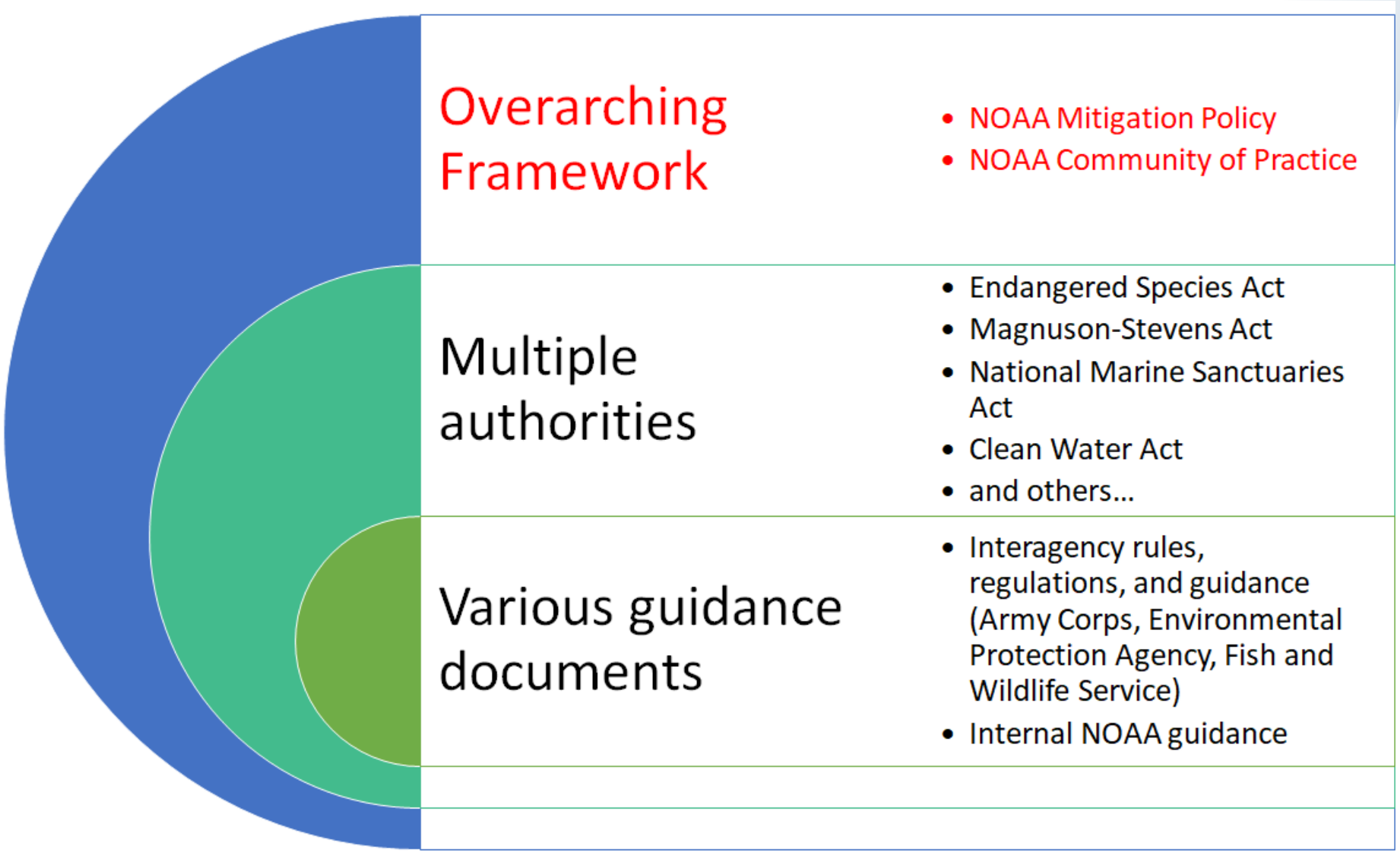
# Role of NOAA Mitigation Policy



# Why do we need a Mitigation Policy?

## Support appropriate mitigation for impacts to NOAA Trust Resources

- Mitigation that fully offsets impacts
- Address issues specific to coastal environments

## Standardize mitigation practices as appropriate

- Across regions
- Across programs

## Create a broad overarching framework

- Step-down guidance, as needed
- Additional mitigation tools

## Improve communication practices

- Create a common language around mitigation across regions and programs
- Share mitigation best practices

# Goals of the Policy

- Offset loss to achieve the purposes and objectives of our authorities and programs
- Sustain vibrant coastal communities and economies by aligning mitigation with landscape or seascape conservation objectives
- Help action agencies and project proponents develop appropriate mitigation measures
- Provide a consistent, effective, and transparent mitigation process



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# Policy Statements - Universal

- ►Apply the mitigation sequence (avoid first, then minimize, before reaching compensation) appropriately
- ►Employ the best scientific information available
- ►Promote mitigation strategies with high probability of success
- ►Consider climate change and climate resilience when evaluating and developing mitigation measures
- ►Collaborate with partner agencies and stakeholders



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# Policy Statements - Universal but with a Coastal Focus

►Apply a landscape and/or seascape approach

►Implement mitigation that is proportional to impacts to NOAA trust resources and fully offsets those impacts

►Use preservation of intact habitat as compensation appropriately, taking into account the high risk of habitat loss in many rapidly developing coastal and marine landscapes and seascapes



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# Coastal Resilience

## US Army Corps Coastal Storm Risk Management Studies

- Rhode Island Coastline
- Nassau County Back Bays
- New York and New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study
  - on Hold; expected to reactivate late spring/summer 2021
- New Jersey Back Bays
- Delaware Inland Bays and Delaware Bay Coast Feasibility Study
- City of Baltimore
  - on HOLD; expected to reactivate late spring/summer 2021
- Washington DC
- City of Norfolk
  - Chief's Report  Complete



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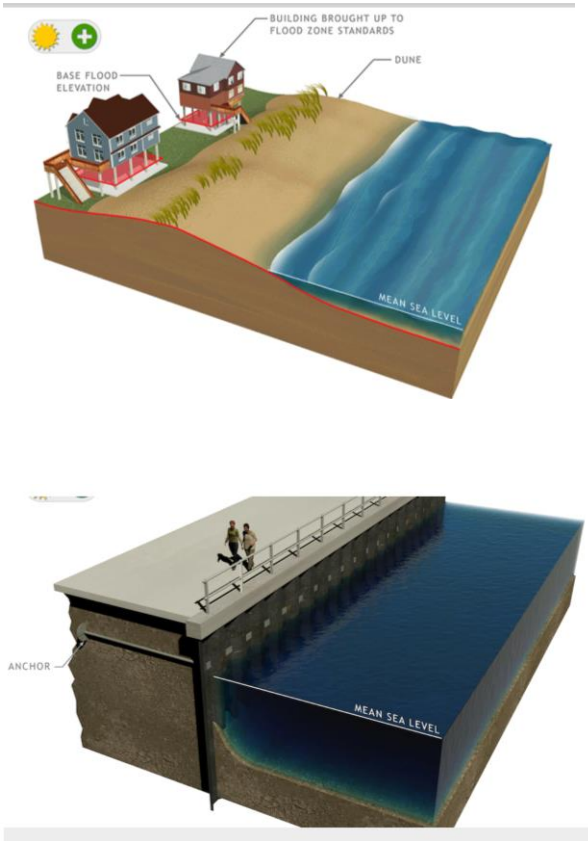
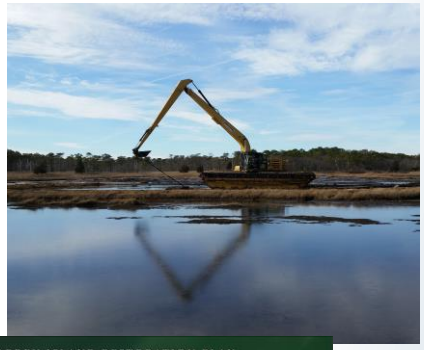
# Potential Measures




Source: US Army Corps of Engineers
https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/New-Jersey-Back-Bays-Study
https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Nassau-County-Back-Bays-Study/

# Coastal Resiliency Using Dredged Material

- Marsh Restoration
  - Thin layer placement
  - Living Shorelines/edge
- Island Restoration/Creation
- Beach Nourishment




Images: K Greene, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA

## Considerations

- What is a degraded marsh?
- What are the habitat trade offs?
- What is success? -goals, objectives, monitoring



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# Infrastructure/Port Development

- North Carolina Highway 12
- Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel
- Baltimore Harbor Channels
- Bay Crossing Bridge
- Delaware River Ports
- New York and New Jersey Harbor Deepening Channel Improvements (NYNJHDCI)

Potential for port development due to offshore wind development



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# Regional Aquaculture Update



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# Aquaculture Projects Update

## Pre-Application Phase

Manna Fish Farms- Off Long Island, NY

- Steelhead Trout/Black Sea Bass
- Pre-Application meeting held 9/21/2020
- Comments on site alternatives/BES were provided on 5/5/2021

## Permit Application/Review Phase

Blue Water Fisheries LLC.- Off NH/MA

- Steelhead Trout
- EPA/ACOE applications submitted 1/28/2021
- ACOE public notice expected to be published mid-June

Salem State University - MA

- Blue Mussels
- ACOE application submitted on 12/7/2019 to expand from 3 to 20 longlines on site originally permitted
- ACOE is working with applicant to obtain additional information from proponent to inform ESA consultation



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# Aquaculture Opportunity Areas

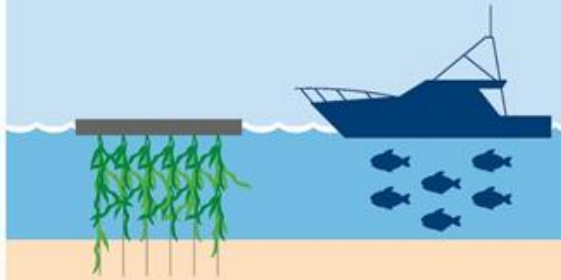
## What is an Aquaculture Opportunity Area?

**Aquaculture Opportunity Areas** show high potential for commercial aquaculture. A science and community-based approach to identifying these areas helps minimize interference with other enterprises, account for current fishing patterns, and protect the ecosystem.

AOAs will expand economic opportunities in coastal and rural areas, and increase our nation's seafood security.

AOAs use the best available science to find appropriate spaces for sustainable aquaculture.

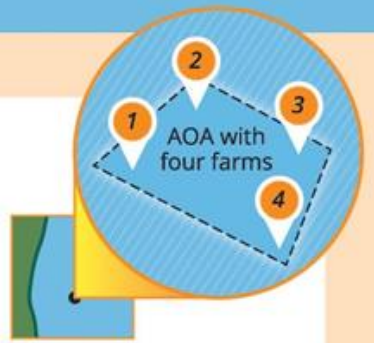
AOAs minimize interactions with other users, such as shipping, fishing, and the military.



### Assessment and Use of AOAs

Stakeholder input is essential in the design and location of AOAs and NOAA expects these areas will be shaped through a public process that allows constituents to share their community and stewardship goals, as well as critical insights.

AOA size, exact location, and farm types will be determined through spatial analysis and public input to expand sustainable domestic seafood production while minimizing potential user conflicts. Farms will still need to go through the permitting process and environmental reviews.



# AOA's Timeline

May 2020 - EO published

August 2020 - NMFS used existing spatial analysis and public input to identify first two regions: *Gulf of Mexico and S. CA*

October 2020 - NMFS published RFI to inform the locations of first two AOAs within those regions and inform decisions on future regions for AOAs

- Mix of support and opposition/received input on locations for AOAs
- General opposition for AOAs in NE, OR, WA
- Support in AK, FL, USVI, PR, W. Pac.



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# Next Steps: AOA's 1 and 2

Summer/Fall 2021 - Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare PEIS for first two AOAs

Southeast and West Coast regions will complete PEISs for their respective regions

Specific areas considered in the PEISs for AOAs in the Southeast and West Coast regions will be based on NCCOS Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas, coordination with Protected Resources, Sustainable Fisheries, and Habitat Conservation, public comment



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# Next Steps: Future AOAs

Continue to review comments from RFI

- No comments from Mid-Atlantic
- Primarily opposition for AOA in Northeast at this time
- Potential conflicts with wind planning, lobster industry, right whales
- One comment in support of AOA in Northeast

Work with Regional Offices to define opportunities and challenges of AOAs in their region

NMFS Leadership consideration of opportunities and challenges, including resource limitations

# Regional Coordination with Fishery Management Council Partners

NMFS region & NCCOS coordination with Councils:

- When NCCOS is gathering data for spatial analysis
- During public comment for Request for Information (RFI)
- When NCCOS Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas is published
- ***When Notice of Intent to prepare PEIS publishes with preliminary alternatives***
- When draft PEIS publishes for public comment
- When final PEIS publishes to present selected alternative(s)

# Questions?