



Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful



Claire Fackler/NOAA

America the Beautiful Initiative: Status, Progress, and Looking Ahead

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Executive Order 14008 (1/27/21)



Sec. 216. Conserving Our Nation's Lands and Waters - Subsection (a)

- Directs DOI, USDA, DOC, and CEQ to **submit a report** to the National Climate Task Force recommending steps to achieve the goal of conserving **at least 30 percent of the nation's lands and waters by 2030**
 - Directs agencies to work with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders to **encourage broad participation**
 - Directs agencies to propose guidelines for determining whether lands and waters **qualify for conservation**
 - Directs agencies to establish mechanisms to **measure progress** toward the 30-percent goal, and to **submit annual progress reports**
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Preliminary Engagements

DOI, NOAA, USDA, and CEQ conducted preliminary outreach, engaged in listening sessions, and received feedback from a wide range of stakeholders to help inform report

- Tribal leaders
- Ranching and farming coalitions
- Private landowners
- State and local officials
- Equity leaders
- Commercial and recreational fishing representatives
- Environmental NGOs
- Outdoor recreation and industry representatives
- Sportsmen/sportswomen organizations
- Forest owners
- Congressional staff
- Governors offices/associations



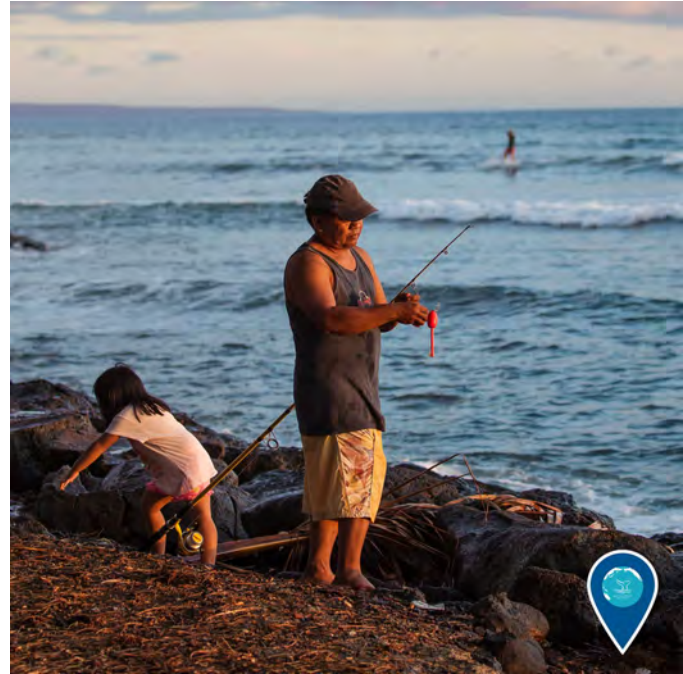
Vision for America the Beautiful

- Interagency ***Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful*** report released May 6, 2021
- Affirmed need to pursue the first-ever national conservation goal to ***address three threats***:
 - Loss of natural areas and biodiversity
 - Climate change
 - Inequitable access to the outdoors
- Launched a 10-year, ***locally led***, nationally scaled campaign
- Recognized need for ***continuum of approaches*** to conserve, connect, and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife upon which we all depend



Eight Core Principles

1. Pursue collaborative and inclusive approaches
2. Conserve for the benefit of all people
3. Support locally led efforts
4. Honor tribal sovereignty
5. Pursue approaches that create jobs
6. Honor private property rights & voluntary stewardship efforts
7. Use science as a guide
8. Build on existing tools and strategies



Six Areas of Early Focus

1. Create more parks and safe outdoor opportunities in nature-deprived communities.
2. Support tribally led conservation and restoration priorities
3. Expand collaborative conservation of fish and wildlife habitat and corridors
4. Increase access for outdoor recreation
5. Incentivize and reward the voluntary conservation efforts of fishermen, ranchers, farmers, and forest owners
6. Create jobs by investing in restoration and resilience





Baseline and Progress



American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas

- Provide baseline of how much U.S. lands/waters currently conserved and restored



Agency-specific Conservation Action Plans

- Highest priorities, short-term actions, and longer-term initiatives for the six focus areas



Annual Progress Reports

- Update on progress, collaboration, and open space changes
- Review condition of fish/wildlife habitats and populations



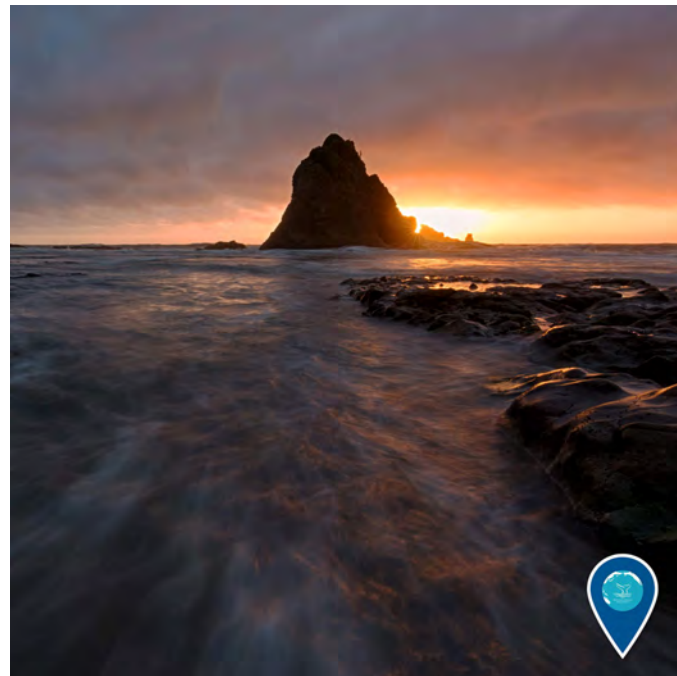
Interagency Coordination

Principal-level Interagency Working Group

- Four co-chairs: CEQ Chair and Secretaries of DOI, DOC, and USDA

Subcommittees

- Measurement (Atlas)
 - Three co-chairs: USGS, NOAA, USDA
 - Multiple workstreams
- Engagement and Collaborative Conservation
 - Multiple subgroups
- Steering
 - Linking policy and data decisions





Setting the Baseline: Atlas



Atlas Overview

- The American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas will be a tool to help provide a ***more accessible and comprehensive picture*** of conservation and restoration work in America.
- Intended to reflect ***conservation as a continuum*** and the goals and guiding principles of the initiative.
- Will be informed by:
 - Written comments via *Federal Register* (closed 3/7/22) and three public listening sessions
 - Conversations with States, Tribes, scientists, youth, EJ leaders, and other stakeholders
 - Interagency collaboration (co-led by USGS, USDA, NOAA, CEQ)
 - Best available science





Atlas Guiding Questions



Science and Data

- What data sources, standards, and technical approaches should be applied to data included in the Atlas to ensure that it is an authoritative and useful tool for the public?



Conservation as a Continuum

- How can the Atlas reflect the meaningful conservation work already underway in America?
- What stewardship actions should be considered, in addition to permanent protections, to capture a more complete picture of conservation and restoration in America?
- What are the attributes of lands and waters that should be included in the Atlas?
- How can the Atlas best reflect the contributions of State, local, Tribal, territorial, and private lands?



Outcomes

- How can the Atlas best reflect land and water contributions to biodiversity, climate change mitigation and resilience, and equitable access to nature and its benefits?

Summary of Input

- More than **34,500 comments** from more than **12,300 individuals**
- Across three themes
 - Feedback on the atlas development process
 - The definition of conservation for the purposes of 30x30
 - The Atlas as a tool
- Posted comments available here:
 - <https://www.regulations.gov/document/DOI-2021-0016-0001>



Atlas Development

Goal to release beta version of Atlas by December 2022



Bringing together readily available authoritative data



Assembling data in a map viewer



Drafting narrative context about contributions toward the goals and principles of America the Beautiful



Building foundation for generating statistics and metrics



Identifying additional key data sources and ways to systematically gather community feedback



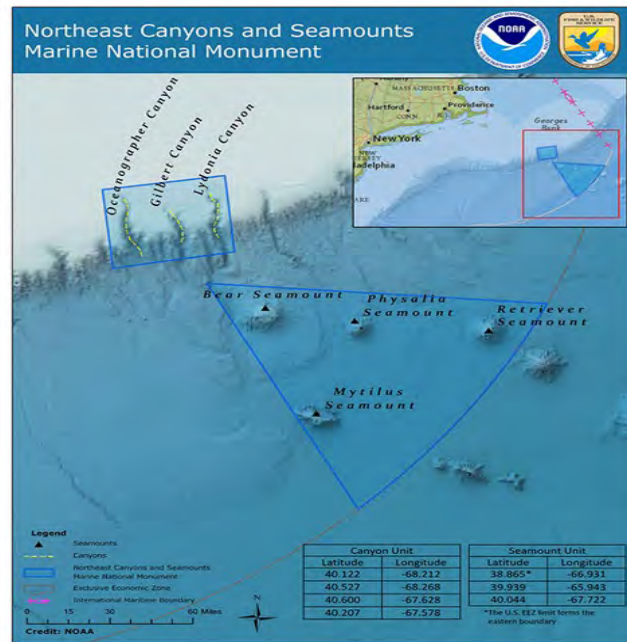


Making Progress

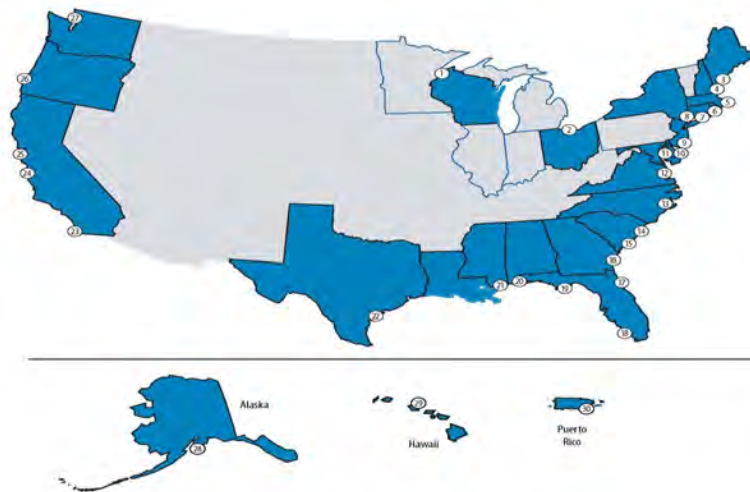
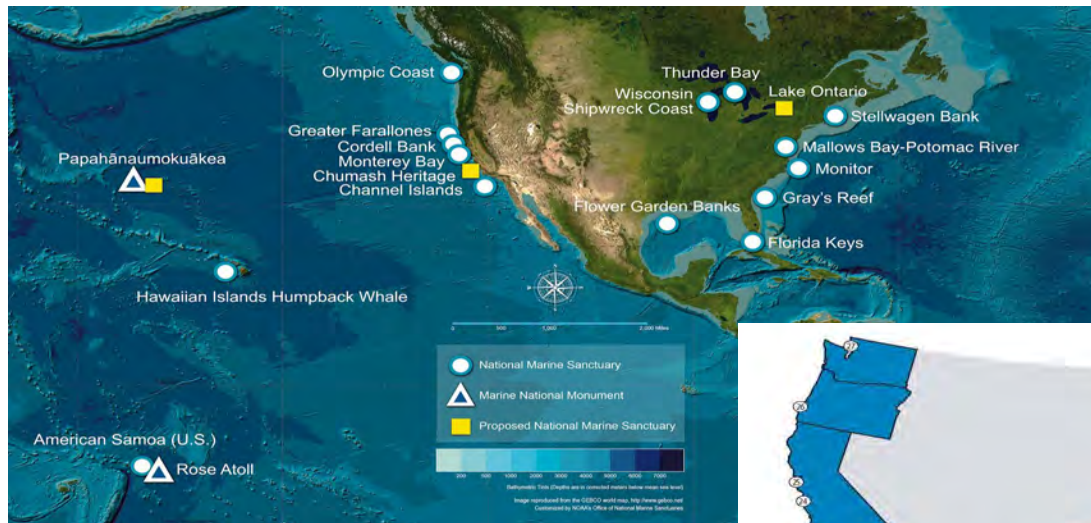


Restore: Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument

- President Biden restored conditions on October 8, 2021
- Co-managed by USFWS and NOAA
- By September 15, 2023
 - Phaseout of red crab and American lobster fishing
 - Management plan and implementing regulations



Expand: NMS System and NERR System



- Great Lakes**
- 1. Lake Superior, Wisconsin
- 2. Old Woman Creek, Ohio
- Northwest**
- 3. Wells, Maine
- 4. Great Bay, New Hampshire
- 5. Wicquissett Bay, Massachusetts
- 6. Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island
- 7. Connecticut
- Mid-Atlantic**
- 8. Hudson River, New York
- 9. Jacques Cousteau, New Jersey
- 10. Delaware
- 11. Chesapeake Bay, Maryland
- 12. Chesapeake Bay, Virginia
- Southeast**
- 13. North Carolina
- 14. North Inlet-Winyah Bay, South Carolina
- 15. ACE Basin, South Carolina
- 16. Sapelo Island, Georgia
- 17. Guana Toiyomato Matanzas, Florida
- Gulf of Mexico**
- 18. Biscayne Bay, Florida
- 19. Apalachicola, Florida
- 20. Weeks Bay, Alabama
- 21. Grand Bay, Mississippi
- 22. Mission-Aransas, Texas
- West**
- 23. Tijuana River, California
- 24. Elkhorn Slough, California
- 25. San Francisco Bay, California
- 26. South Slough, Oregon
- 27. Padilla Bay, Washington
- 28. Kaliforniak Bay, Alaska
- Pacific**
- 29. Heʻeia, Hawaii
- Caribbean**
- 30. Jobos Bay, Puerto Rico
- PROPOSED**
- Bay of Green Bay, Wisconsin, Louisiana

Examples of Other NOAA Progress

National Fish Habitat Partnership

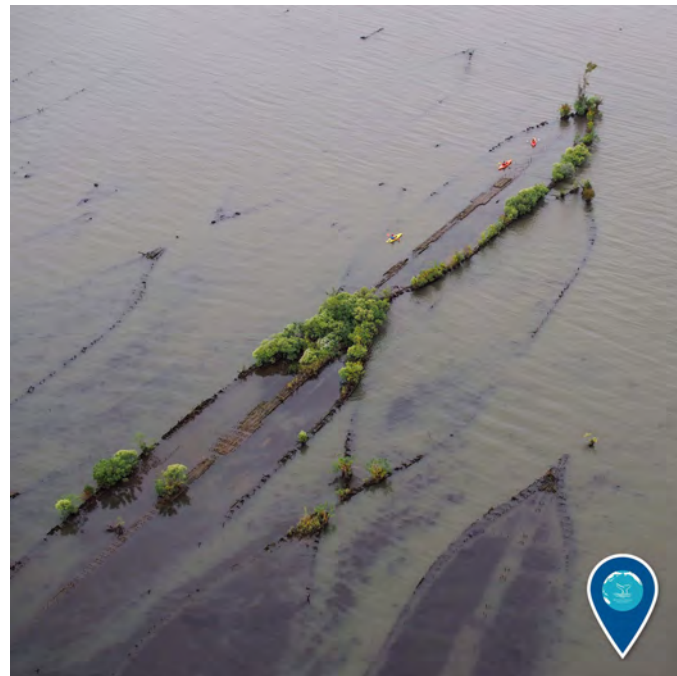
- NOAA supported 4 habitat conservation projects with nearly \$250,000 across 4 states in 2021

Gulf Corps

- \$11.9 million for four more years; 250 jobs for young adults
- 6,400 acres of restored habitat across the Gulf of Mexico

Species in the Spotlight

- Targeted actions to halt the decline of 9 marine species most at risk of extinction





Looking Ahead



Marine and Coastal Area-based Management Federal Advisory Committee

- To advise NOAA Administrator on science-based approaches to area-based protection, conservation, restoration, and management in coastal and marine areas, including Great Lakes
- To be established by spring 2022, under Federal Advisory Committee Act
 - Chartered and managed by NOAA
 - Up to 20 non-federal voting members with diverse perspectives and expertise
 - Pertinent ex-officio, non-voting federal agency members



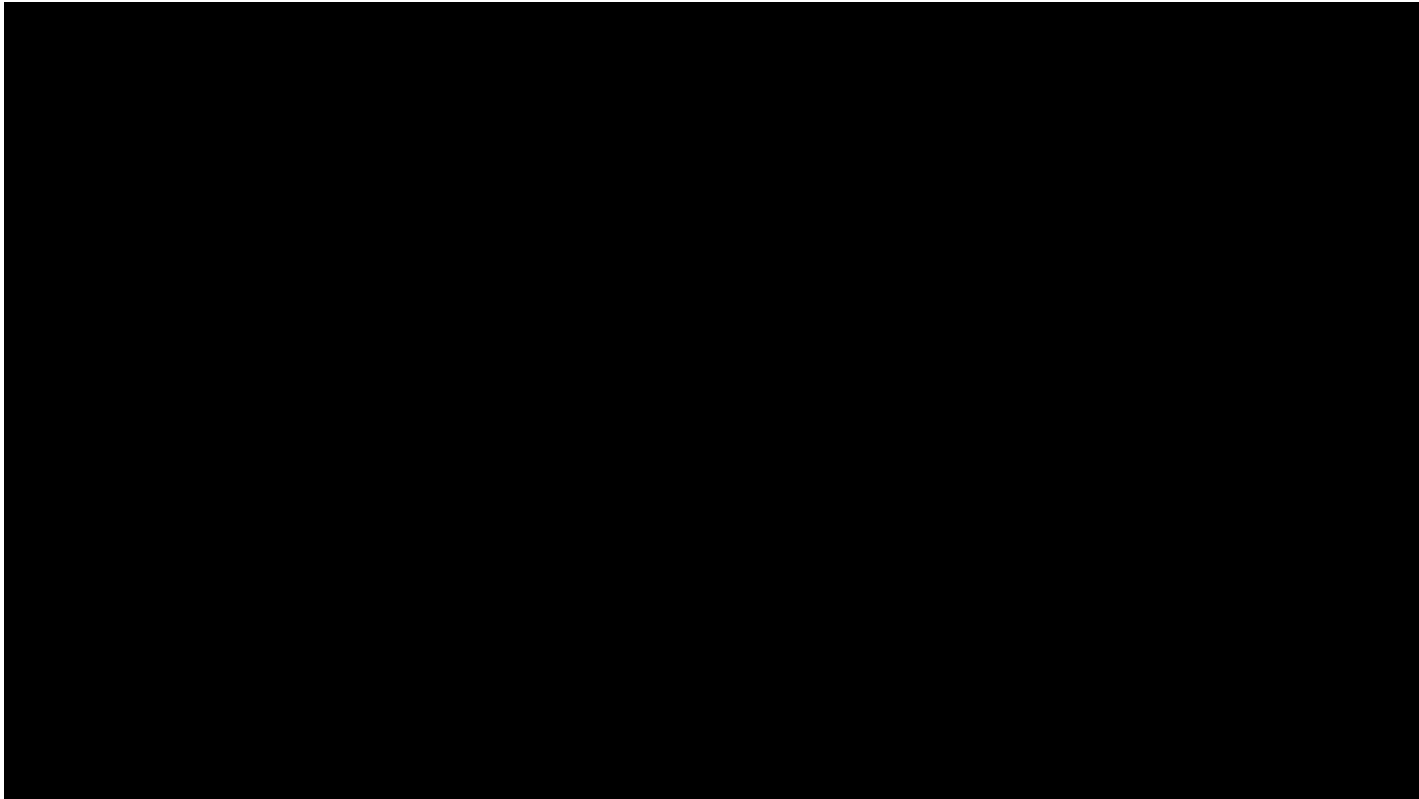
Major Milestones

- **January 27, 2021:** E.O. 14008
- **May 6, 2021:** Preliminary report on *Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful*
- **May 2021-present:** Ongoing stakeholder engagement on the initiative
- **October-December 2021:** NOAA formal public comment period
- **December 20, 2021:** First annual progress report
- **January-March 2022:** Listening sessions and public comment period on Atlas development
- **December 2022 (pending):** Second progress report and beta version of Atlas





NOAA – America the Beautiful Video





Thank You

For more information, visit:

<https://www.noaa.gov/america-the-beautiful>