

# **Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium 2025 Annual Report**

Submitted to the Maine Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Energy,  
Utilities and Technology

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## Acronyms

BRI	Biodiversity Research Institute
BOEM	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Consortium	Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium
DMR	Maine Department of Marine Resources
DOER	Maine Department of Energy Resources
ERM	Environmental Resources Management
FOW	Floating Offshore Wind
FY	Fiscal Year
GMRI	Gulf of Maine Research Institute
GoM	Gulf of Maine
GW	Gigawatt
LMA1	Lobster Management Area 1
MCMI	Maine Coastal Mapping Initiative
MDIFW	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NERACOOS	Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems
NM	Nautical miles
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOWRDC	National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium
OCS	Outer Continental Shelf
OSW	Offshore Wind
PL	Public Law
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
PTOW	Pine Tree Offshore Wind
PUC	Public Utilities Commission
R&D	Research and Development
RFA	Request for Applications
RFP	Request for Proposals
RODA	Responsible Offshore Development Alliance
ROSA	Responsible Offshore Science Alliance
RWSC	Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative
UMaine	University of Maine
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WEA	Wind Energy Area

## Purpose

Pursuant to 35-A MRSA §3406, this report summarizes the activities of the Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium (Consortium) and the Research Consortium fund over the course of 2025. The law established the Consortium to coordinate, support, and arrange for the conduct of research on floating offshore wind (FOW) power projects and inform responsible development in the Gulf of Maine (GoM). The Consortium is guided by a 28-person Advisory Board with representation from commercial and recreational fisheries, marine wildlife and habitats expertise, commercial offshore wind development expertise, Tribes, and state agencies. This report includes updates to state and federal activities related to offshore wind (OSW), the Research Consortium's research projects, and the status of the Research Consortium fund.

## Executive Summary

In 2025, the Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium achieved significant milestones in fulfillment of [35-A MRSA §3406](#). The Consortium continues to inform responsible development of FOW in the GoM by engaging with key stakeholders, ocean users, and professional consultants and identifying and funding critical data gaps and research projects. The Consortium continues to expand FOW research and knowledge in the GoM, building on research conducted on regional, national, and global scales. The Consortium's research will inform the state's efforts to implement the [Maine Energy Plan](#) and efforts to provide clean, reliable, and affordable energy to Maine people and businesses.

Over the course of 2025, the Consortium (1) completed its second research project, (2) completed mapping 770 square nautical miles of seafloor in key areas of the Gulf of Maine, (3) kicked off the three new, Round 2 research projects, (4) underwent a comprehensive prioritization process to identify the third round of projects for funding, (5) funded a public-facing data portal to provide centralized access to Consortium and other OSW-related datasets, (6) supported a grant-funded study tour of Maine-based fishermen to Scotland to learn about FOW, and (7) updated its Research Strategy. The Consortium has engaged nearly 50 researchers in these efforts and leveraged over \$300,000 in cost share to increase the impact of its work. The Consortium has continued to garner significant interest as all Advisory Board meetings in 2025 had at least 70 people in attendance.

As illustrated in the table below, the Consortium's projects span all four research themes as identified by the [Research Strategy](#). The themes are (1) reduce co-use conflicts, (2) socio-economic impacts and community benefits, (3) impact on ecosystems, and (4) technology development. The Advisory Board identified the research themes, which are in alignment with the overall Consortium objectives and goals, through an iterative process in 2023. Evaluating environmental impacts and the impacts on Maine's fisheries from a

technical and socio-economic perspective has been a key focus of the broad-based Advisory Board.

Table 1: Consortium-funded projects by research topic area.

				Technology development			
				Impact on ecosystems			
				Socio-economic impacts and community benefits			
				Reduce co-use conflicts			
Round	Topic	Awardee	Award Period	Research Theme			
1	Exploring Approaches to Fisheries' Coexistence with Floating Offshore Wind	ERM and Gulf of Maine Research Institute	2024 -2025	✓			
	Inventoring Baseline Data on Socioeconomics of Maine Fishing Communities	Karp Strategies and Colby College	2024		✓		
	Seafloor Mapping in the Gulf of Maine	Maine Department of Marine Resources*	2024-2026			✓	
2	Assessing Social, Cultural, and Economic impacts of Floating Offshore Wind on Maine's Fishing Communities	Gulf of Maine Research Institute, University of Maine, University of Rhode Island	2025-2026		✓		
	Baseline offshore bat monitoring assessment in the Gulf of Maine	Biodiversity Research Institute, Bat Conservation International, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association	2025-2028			✓	
	Baseline secondary entanglement risk assessment and technology feasibility study	University of Maine	2025-2026			✓	✓
3	Bird tracking study in the Gulf of Maine	TBD via competitive solicitation	~2026-2028			✓	
	Understanding potential interactions between offshore wind electrical infrastructure and marine life in the Gulf of Maine	TBD via competitive solicitation	~2026	✓		✓	
	Review of potential interactions between moorings and anchors and the benthic environment in the Gulf of Maine	TBD via competitive solicitation	~2026			✓	✓
	Forecasting marine fish species distributions in the Gulf of Maine	TBD via competitive solicitation	~2026-2027	✓		✓	
	Improving the accuracy of Gulf of Maine Environmental Models	TBD via competitive solicitation	~2026-2027			✓	

The Consortium made substantial progress in 2025 towards achieving its goals thanks to multiple years of sustained investment and commitment. Over the last three years, the Advisory Board has developed nearly 80 topics for funding consideration, and each year the Consortium's requests for proposals have grown increasingly competitive, demonstrating the continued need for research to fill gaps in understanding floating offshore wind in the GoM. The Consortium has been thoughtfully developing and evaluating solicitations, making awards, and completing the first set of projects. The Consortium is successfully leveraging its own research and informing other funders' projects.

The Advisory Board participates in an iterative, collaborative approach to prioritizing and selecting projects to fund. The process entails reviewing existing research priorities, soliciting new ideas through mini-workshops, developing high-level project scopes, Advisory Board members ranking the projects, and ending with the Steering Committee making a formal recommendation to the state on which projects to fund. This thorough process ensures funded projects are a top priority across the broad interests of the Advisory Board, are specific to the GoM and FOW, and are cost effective.

Through the prioritization process, the Advisory Board identified 11 funded topics that touch on a wide variety of stakeholder interests, highlighting the Consortium's uniquely

broad niche. Projects range from seafloor mapping to assessing the socioeconomic and sociocultural impacts of FOW development on Maine’s fishing communities. Many of the projects and data collected have broad applicability outside of FOW, whether for marine navigation or increasing the resiliency of Maine’s fishing communities.

With six Advisory Board-prioritized projects completed or underway and another five in the pipeline, the projects’ statuses are as follows:

**Completed:**

1. Inventorying socioeconomic data of Maine fishing communities
2. Exploring approaches to fisheries and floating offshore wind coexistence

**Ongoing:**

1. Seafloor mapping in key areas of the GoM
2. Assessing social, cultural, and economic impacts of floating offshore wind on Maine fishing communities
3. Baseline secondary entanglement risk assessment and monitoring and retrieval technology feasibility study
4. Baseline offshore bat monitoring

**Upcoming:**

1. Bird tracking study in the GoM
2. Understanding potential interactions between OSW electrical infrastructure and marine life in the GoM
3. Review of potential interactions between mooring and anchors in the benthic environment in the GoM
4. Expert workshop on forecasting marine fish species distribution in the GoM. The Advisory Board will review the results of the workshop and determine which follow-on projects to fund.
5. Expert workshop on improving accuracy of GoM environmental models. The Advisory Board will review the results of the workshop and determine which follow-on projects to fund.

Please visit the [Consortium website](#) for more information on the completed and ongoing projects.

The Research Consortium has received \$1 million each fiscal year (FY) beginning in FY 2021-2022 and an additional \$250,000 in the most recent budget. To date, \$5,208,177 has been allocated or obligated to advance the objectives of the Consortium, primarily through the funding of the research projects. The Consortium has \$41,823 in remaining funds for FY 2025-2026, which are planned for public engagement and communication efforts.

Metrics of Success to Date:

- An active Advisory Board with 28 representatives from commercial and recreational fisheries, public and private research institutions, the OSW industry, Maine-based environmental groups, Tribes, state agencies, and others who continue to build relationships, learn from one another, and guide the Consortium
- Supporting 11 key stakeholder-informed research projects to fill information gaps on floating offshore wind and the GoM ahead of commercial development
- Informing complementary OSW research projects funded by other states, regional entities, federal agencies, and international research institutions
- Leveraging \$300,000 in non-state match toward Maine Consortium objectives
- Engaging 50 researchers from the GoM region and beyond
- Attracting more than 70 stakeholders in each Consortium meeting
- Receiving many invitations to participate on regional, national, and international panels as a recognized leader in cross-sector collaboration on OSW research

Continued long-term investment in the Consortium will expand cross-sector relationships and answer key Maine stakeholder-driven questions. Maine has the opportunity over the next few years to continue work on essential research topics to inform a responsible offshore wind future in the GoM. Developing knowledge to effectively implement state laws, policies, and address stakeholder concerns takes time and resources - particularly offshore in the GoM. Continued investment in the Consortium will position Maine stakeholders well for a responsible offshore wind industry that meets the needs of Maine people.

## 1. Background and Introduction

Since 2019, Governor Mills and the Legislature have advanced numerous policies to advance affordable, reliable, and increasingly cleaner energy for Maine's people and economy. The state has established statutory greenhouse gas reduction requirements of 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% by 2050, as well as a requirement for carbon neutrality by 2045. In 2025, Governor Mills signed legislation that increased the Renewable Portfolio Standard to 90% and established a Clean Energy Standard to achieve 100% clean energy by 2040.

In January 2025, the Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER) released the [Maine Energy Plan](#), a strategic plan for the state to reduce energy costs, ensure reliability and resilience, and increase the diversity of energy resources. The plan was informed by an 18-month stakeholder engagement process and an expert [technical report](#), that demonstrated 100% clean energy is achievable, beneficial, results in lower overall energy costs across the economy, and highlights the key role OSW will play in meeting the state's long-term energy needs.

## 1.1. Federal Context and Activity

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, has authority to lease areas of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in federal waters beyond three nautical miles from shore for offshore energy development. In 2019, BOEM created the GoM Regional Renewable Energy Task Force to advise BOEM on commercial leasing and development of OSW in the GoM. DOER, along with other state agencies and officials, represented the State on the Task Force and submitted comments informed by the priorities laid out in the [Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap](#).

After extensive public engagement and public comment periods, BOEM held an auction for eight lease areas in the GoM in October 2024, which critically excluded all of Lobster Management Area 1, which [Governor Mills](#) and the Congressional delegation had urged BOEM to avoid. The auction resulted in two winners of four lease areas and over \$21.9 million in winning bids. Invenergy NE Offshore Wind, LLC won one northern lease area (Lease OCS-0562) and one southern lease area (Lease OCS-0567). Avangrid Renewables, LLC won two southern lease areas - Lease OCS-0564 and Lease OCS-0568.

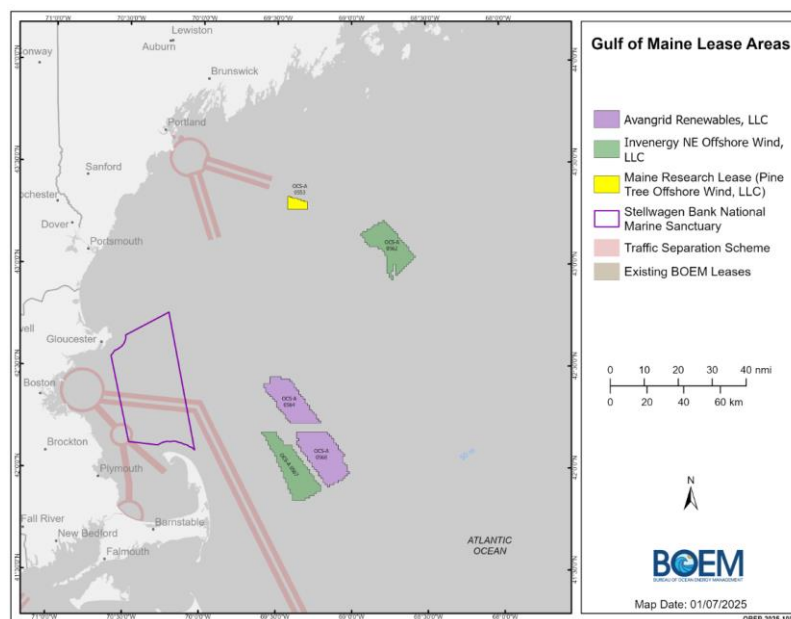


Figure 1: Map of the Gulf of Maine lease areas

The leases awarded do not authorize the construction or operation of any OSW facilities, and the developers must submit project plans to BOEM, which will then complete an environmental impact assessment. To date, the developers have submitted communication plans for engagement with Tribes, state and federal agencies, and fisheries, which will be updated periodically and are available on the developers' websites.

## 1.2. State Context and Activity

In 2019, Governor Mills launched the [Maine Offshore Wind Initiative](#), which focuses on how to best responsibly advance OSW to bring clean, reliable, and affordable energy to the state in a manner that minimizes impacts to the GoM and existing users while strategically taking advantage of the significant economic opportunity that OSW presents. A key part of advancing OSW responsibly in the state is recognizing the importance of Maine's fishing industry in terms of economic output, community benefits, and cultural heritage, all of which must be thoughtfully considered with input from the fishing industry and the public.

Under the Initiative, the State has pursued a multi-pronged approach to support planning, stakeholder engagement, and research to improve understanding of the impacts and opportunities that the growing OSW industry can provide. Through the BOEM Task Force and other stakeholder engagement opportunities, the State identified a number of research and data gaps which the Consortium is now pursuing.

To realize the energy reliability, affordability, and climate benefits from OSW while protecting the environment and existing ocean users, an 18-month stakeholder engagement process kicked off in 2021 that resulted in the [Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap](#). The robust public process was led by a 24-person advisory committee with members from State agencies and energy, economic, fisheries, wildlife, science, and environmental leaders in Maine. The advisory committee was supported by four expert working groups on energy, economy, fisheries, and wildlife. Together, nearly 80 public sessions were held to develop the Roadmap, which was published in February 2023. In the Consortium's three active years, it has advanced numerous objectives and strategies laid out in the Roadmap, notably: Objective C- Advance Maine-Based Innovation to Compete in the Emerging National and Global Offshore Wind Industry; Objective D- Support Maine's Vital and Thriving Seafood Industries and Coastal Communities; and Objective E- Protect the Environment, Wildlife, & Fisheries Ecosystem in the GoM.

Consistent with the Maine Energy Plan, Climate Action Plan, Economic Development Strategy, the Blue Economy Task Force Report, and the Consortium's goals, DOER issued a Request for Applications (RFA) in August 2025 to leverage the unique opportunity of a deployed floating offshore wind turbine in state waters to test and advance innovative BlueTech and monitoring approaches. The resulting awards will inform responsible deployment of BlueTech, reduce the costs of floating offshore wind development, and attract additional investment to Maine. The awards are expected to be made in early 2026.

In addition to the Consortium and the Roadmap, the research array is another pillar of the state's OSW Initiative. In August 2024, BOEM and the State executed a research lease. The State submitted the application for the lease to BOEM in 2021 after undergoing an extensive stakeholder engagement process to guide the siting and research strategy. The research array will be sited within an area up to 9,700 acres in size. The lease area is

located 28 nm off the Maine coast and could support the deployment of up to 12 FOW turbines capable of generating up to 144 megawatts of renewable energy. Similar to the goals of the Consortium, the array will inform how FOW operates and can co-exist with fishermen, ocean users, and ecosystems in the GoM. The research array will also provide important information about how to minimize impacts and increase benefits to the State. For more information about the ongoing research efforts at and around the research lease following the Roadmap, see Appendix A.

## 2. Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium

As part of Maine’s commitment to responsible OSW, Governor Mills, with bipartisan support of the Legislature, [established the Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium](#) in 2021 to better understand the impacts and opportunities of FOW projects in the GoM. Through the Consortium, Maine has established itself as a national and international leader in responsible FOW research as the Consortium brings a diverse group of ocean users and stakeholders together to build a collective understanding to then collaboratively pursue high-priority research.

The Consortium’s founding legislation, and 2023 amendment ([LD 1895](#)) to that legislation, directs DOER to serve as the Consortium’s coordinating agency and outlines an advisory board with representation from fisheries interests, state agencies, federally recognized Tribes, and other stakeholders.

In February 2022, DOER published a competitive RFP to help plan and engage stakeholders with the design of the Consortium and its governance structure. The awarded bidders (Carbon Trust Advisory and Maine-based SAMBAS Consulting LLC), were contracted to provide these services, serve as advisors and meeting facilitators, and act as interim program manager through 2023. In December 2023, DOER executed a Cooperative Agreement with Maine Sea Grant to serve as the Consortium’s program manager and provide research expertise. The Cooperative Agreement with Maine Sea Grant has been extended through June 30, 2026. Carbon Trust Advisory and SAMBAS Consulting have continued to provide expert support and advisory capacity through 2025.

All of the research funded by the Consortium is publicly available. DOER maintains the Consortium’s website, and all the completed reports are posted on the website as well as summaries of funded projects. DOER is actively working to improve data accessibility by creating the Maine OSW Data Portal, which will be available in early 2026. See Section 2.8 for more information on the Data Portal.

### 2.1. Research Consortium Advisory Board

The Consortium’s Advisory Board is responsible for establishing a [research strategy](#) that at a minimum includes the following themes:

- Opportunities and challenges caused by the deployment of FOW projects to the existing uses of the GoM;
- Methods to avoid and minimize the impact of FOW projects on ecosystems and existing uses of the GoM; and
- Ways to realize cost efficiencies in the commercialization of FOW projects.

All of these themes are consistent with the aforementioned objectives established by the Roadmap. After holding open nominations, DOER identified the initial Advisory Board members for the Consortium in 2022, pursuant to PL 2021, Chapter 407, Section 2 (LD 1619). The Advisory Board has since been updated to comply with all the statutorily directed parties, including representation from at least one federally recognized Tribe.

The Advisory Board includes representatives from the commercial and recreational fishing industries, research scientists with relevant expertise, coastal community leaders, Maine-based environmental groups, marine wildlife researchers, commercial OSW industry experts, Tribes, and state agencies. The Advisory Board solicits input from state and federal agencies, stakeholders, and other ocean experts to inform research priorities and to align with related regional and national efforts. A Steering Committee comprised of DOER, DMR, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), and two Advisory Board Co-Chairs elected by their peers (one for fisheries, one for non-fisheries) provide oversight to the Consortium. Terry Alexander, F/V Jocka, and Alison Bates, Colby College were reelected in 2025 to serve as the Co-Chairs.

The following are Advisory Board members that served in 2025:

### **Commercial and recreational harvesting interests**

- Patrice McCarron, Maine Lobstermen’s Association
- Jack Cunningham, Maine Lobstering Union Local 207
- Ben Martens, Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association
- Terry Alexander\*, F/V Jocka 22
- Mary Beth Tooley, O’Hara Corporation
- Bob Humphrey, Sport-Ventures

\*Advisory Board Co-Chair

### **Scientists from private and public research institutions, including multiple scientists with marine wildlife and habitat expertise**

- Alison Bates\*, Colby College
- Damian Brady, University of Maine
- Wing Goodale, Biodiversity Research Institute
- Graham Sherwood, Gulf of Maine Research Institute

- Kanae Tokunaga, Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- Anthony Viselli, University of Maine
- Ann Zoidis, Tetra Tech
- Gayle Zydlewski, Maine Sea Grant
- Walt Musial, National Renewable Energy Laboratory

\*Advisory Board Co-Chair

### **Offshore wind industry experience**

- Dave Cowan, Diamond Offshore Wind
- Julian Fraize, National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium
- EJ Marohn, Invenergy
- Laura Morse, JASCO Applied Sciences

### **Coastal community representatives**

- Bill Needelman, Portland Waterfront Coordinator

### **Maine-based environmental groups**

- Jocelyn Runnebaum, The Nature Conservancy Maine
- Sarah Haggerty, Maine Audubon

### **State agencies**

- Becca Peters, Maine Department of Marine Resources
- John Perry, Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife
- Stephanie Watson, Maine Department of Energy Resources

### **At-large**

- Daniel Salerno, Fisheries Scientist, Limington, Maine

### **Tribes**

- Fred Moore, Pleasant Point Passamaquoddy Reservation
- Trevor White, Indian Township Passamaquoddy Reservation

DOER has sent formal invitations to all five tribal communities in Maine to join the Advisory Board, and there is an open invitation for any Tribe to join.

## **2.2. Research Consortium Collaborators**

The Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium collaborates with other states and regional and national science and research partners to maximize its impact and to stay informed of other efforts to advance FOW research. Current collaborators include:

## **State and Federal Entities**

- California Energy Commission
- MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and MA Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- New England Fisheries Management Council
- NH Department of Environmental Services
- NH Fish and Game Department
- NY State Energy Research and Development Authority
- US Fish & Wildlife Service

## **Regional Organizations**

- National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium (NOWRDC)
- Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS)
- Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative (RWSC)
- Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA)
- Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA)

## **2.3. Process to Identify Research Questions**

Each year the Research Consortium develops research priorities through an iterative prioritization process that includes meetings, informational webinars, and mini-workshops. The process is designed to take into account progress on funded projects and updated research priorities based on new findings and emerging needs.

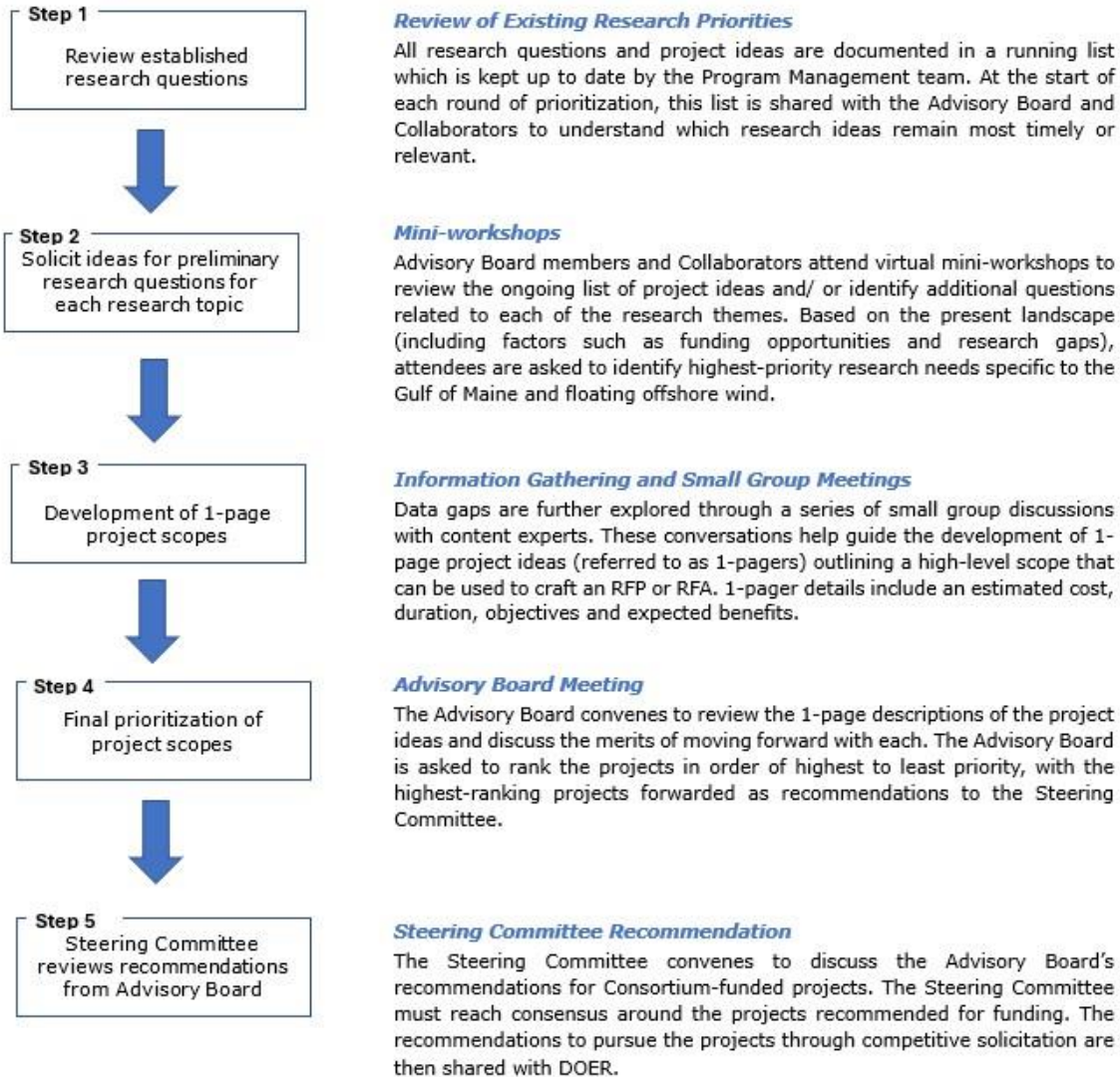


Figure 2: Summary of research prioritization process

## 2.4. 2025 Consortium Meetings

In 2025, the Advisory Board met in February, May, August, and October. These meetings consisted of a presentation summarizing the findings from the fisheries and FOW coexistence project conducted by Environmental Resources Management (ERM) and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), a tour of the UMaine ¼ scale floating turbine platform in Castine, and kickoff presentations for the Round 2 research projects. Four mini-workshops were hosted between January-February 2025 to solicit priority areas across the four overarching research areas. All Advisory Board meetings are open to the public and provide a virtual attendance option. Advisory Board meetings were well attended with over 70 people participating in each meeting. Meeting materials and summaries are publicly available on [DOER's public meetings archive](#), a high level summary of the meetings are as follows:

- The agenda for the February meeting included: a presentation from ERM and GMRI summarizing the findings from their fisheries and FOW coexistence research and a Q&A.
- In May, the Advisory Board met in Augusta to receive updates on Consortium-funded research and other relevant Maine research efforts and to discuss high priority research projects for Round 3 funding that arose from the small group discussions held in February.
- For the August meeting, the Advisory Board met at Maine Maritime Academy in Castine to tour UMaine’s ¼ scale floating offshore wind platform, received updates on Consortium activities and other relevant Maine research, and had a project scoping discussion that led to Advisory Board members ranking the projects.
- The October webinar consisted of kickoff presentations from the GMRI, the University of Maine, and Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) on their three respective Consortium-funded research projects.

## 2.5. Funding Round 1 Projects

Through the research question prioritization process in 2023, the Advisory Board identified three high-priority projects to fund for the first round of research projects. The process was designed to build upon recent work to identify questions and priorities through the research array application and siting process and the Roadmap working group recommendations. The Advisory Board placed a strong emphasis on scoping research initiatives that deliver cost-effective benefits by building on existing efforts, with a focus on the unique ecological and operational niche of FOW within the GoM. Two of the projects were awarded through a competitive solicitation process. DOER published the [first Request for Proposals](#)<sup>1</sup> on behalf of the Consortium in November 2023. The two high-priority topics were:

1. Inventorying baseline data on socioeconomics of Maine fishing communities to help assess potential positive and negative impacts of FOW in the GoM (max \$150,000 budget); and
2. Exploring approaches to fisheries coexistence and floating offshore wind (max \$250,000 budget).

The first project’s goal was to create a foundation to better understand potential positive and negative impacts of OSW development on Maine's fishing communities and produce recommendations on additional socioeconomic data needed to help assess potential impacts. The findings of this project are applicable to coastal projects beyond OSW,

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<sup>1</sup> Search for RFP #202310220, Research to Inform Responsible Floating Offshore Wind Development in the Gulf of Maine

including the work of the [Infrastructure Rebuilding and Resilience Commission](#) founded in 2024 after a series of damaging storms. Based on the recommendations from this project, the Advisory Board funded a follow-on study as one of the Round 2 projects (see Section 2.6). Karp Strategies, in partnership with Dr. Alison Bates' lab at Colby College, conducted this research. The project concluded in August 2024. Final deliverables include:

- Comprehensive inventory of existing socioeconomic data and metrics.
- Project summary slides presented to the Consortium Advisory Board ([PDF link](#))
- Final report summarizing the project ([PDF link](#))

The second project investigated the extent to which fishing and FOW can coexist in the GoM. The project team engaged with ocean users and other stakeholders to explore understandings, considerations, and definitions for marine coexistence, which includes co-use and interoperability. The project included researching the compatibility of FOW technologies with fishing gear used in the GoM and the regulatory and legal frameworks that may impact potential coexistence. ERM, in partnership with GMRI, were awarded the contract to conduct this research. GMRI is building off the findings of this project through two other ongoing projects funded by Consortium Collaborators, MassCEC and ROSA. The project concluded in March 2025 and project deliverables include:

- Project summary slides presented to the Consortium Advisory Board ([PDF link](#))
- Final report summarizing the findings ([PDF link](#))

The third research priority identified by the Advisory Board – collecting baseline data on benthic habitats in key areas of the GoM– is being conducted via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DMR. The Steering Committee decided the most cost-effective approach to collecting this high priority data is to leverage DMR's existing resources and provide collaborative research opportunities with Maine fishermen through the Maine Coastal Mapping Initiative (MCCI). The State published a competitive RFP for commercial fishing vessel support in March 2024 and began benthic mapping work in spring 2024. By partnering with a commercial fishing boat, the State achieved a rapid pace of mapping at a fraction of the cost of other survey options. . The mapping effort was enhanced by the installation of a passive acoustic bat sensor, owned by BRI, on the vessel as well as collection of daylight wildlife observations (seabird and marine mammal) by the MCCI survey crew.

MCCI mapped a total of 777 square nm with the Consortium's funding (337 square nm in the 2024 season and 440 square nm in the 2025 season). The project is scheduled to finish in early 2026 once the data analysis and processing are complete. Preliminary data are published on [DMR's open data portal](#), noting that this site includes all MCCI data and not just the Consortium-funded maps. DMR is in the process of adding the 2025 data to other databases, including the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#) and [RWSC's research database](#). The

seafloor mapping data is important for other public needs as well, including but not limited to safe and efficient fisheries operations, fisheries and natural resource management.

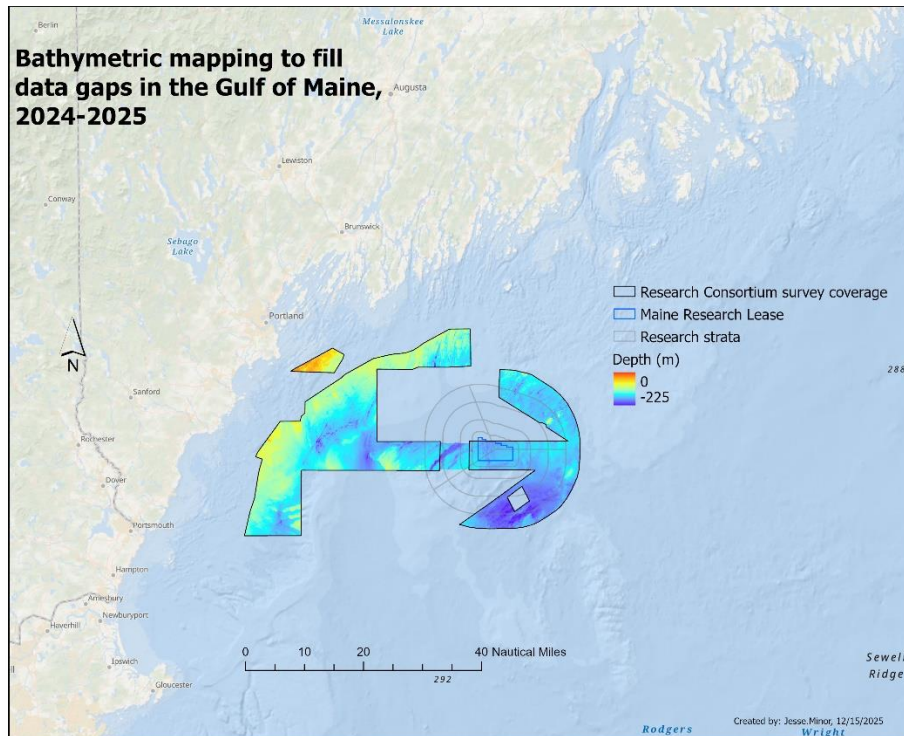


Figure 3: The 777 square nautical miles mapped by MCFI with funding from the Consortium

## 2.6. Funding Round 2 Projects

Through the 2024 prioritization process, the Advisory Board selected three projects to fund in the second round. The research projects are intended to build off the results of previous Consortium-funded projects, fill key data gaps, and advance best practices and technologies. DOER issued the competitive [Request for Applications](#)<sup>2</sup> in November 2024 with the following three projects included:

1. Baseline assessment of social, economic, and cultural impacts of FOW development on Maine’s fishing industry (max \$400,000 budget);
2. Baseline secondary entanglement risk assessment and technology feasibility study (max \$350,000 budget); and
3. Baseline offshore bat monitoring assessment (max \$400,000 budget).

GMRI was awarded the first project, and their project team includes support from the University of Rhode Island and the University of Maine. The second project was awarded to the University of Maine, and the third project was awarded to the BRI with support from Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association and Bat Conservation International. The projects kicked off in September 2025 and each of the research teams presented an overview of

<sup>2</sup>Search for RFA #202410193, Research to Inform Responsible Floating Offshore Wind Development in the Gulf of Maine 2

their project to the Advisory Board in October 2025. Project overview slides are available on the Consortium’s [website](#) under the “Ongoing Projects” dropdown menu.

## 2.7. Funding Round 3 Projects

The third prioritization process that occurred throughout 2025 resulted in the Advisory Board selecting three projects to fund, the need to host two expert workshops in early 2026 to further refine scopes of work related to modeling efforts, and a potential follow up project resulting from the workshops. The research projects are intended to fill key data gaps and complement, not duplicate, projects and surveys conducted and/or funded by other entities. DOER will issue a competitive solicitation in the coming months that will include the first three projects:

1. Bird tracking study in the GoM (max \$350,000 budget);
2. Understanding potential interactions between OSW electrical infrastructure and marine life in the GoM (max \$100,000 budget); and
3. Review of potential interactions between mooring and anchors in the benthic environment in the GoM (max \$100,000 budget).

The Advisory Board ranked two other project topics highly but acknowledged the need to host expert workshops first to ensure robust and efficient project outcomes. The two workshops will bring expert researchers together for robust conversation around current modeling efforts to identify the areas of greatest need for data and improvements related to offshore wind. An expert workshop will be hosted for each of the following two topics:

1. Forecasting marine fish species distributions in the GoM; and
2. Improving the accuracy of GoM environmental models.

DOER is actively planning the expert workshops for each of these topics, and if the workshops’ discussions identify well-defined, high-priority research needs, one or more follow-on projects may be considered by the Advisory Board for funding.

## 2.8. Other Consortium Activities

### **Maine Offshore Wind Data Portal**

As part of an effort to expand the Consortium’s impact and improve data accessibility, DOER contracted with RWSC to build a public data portal that lists and highlights the many environmental datasets collected by the Research Consortium and other funders. The portal provides centralized access to OSW research data and builds on existing efforts by RWSC to conduct and coordinate marine life and habitat research along the Atlantic Coast. The funding for the custom portal resulted in the cataloging of millions of existing marine mammal, sea turtle, seabird, and shark observations collected over many decades along the Atlantic Coast. The data portal will be public in 2026 and it will continue to be added to

as new data sets become available, including data collected as a result of the Consortium's projects.

### **Maine Fishermen's Study Tour to Scotland**

In 2025, the State worked with Carbon Trust and SAMBAS Consulting to organize a study tour of Scotland under the banner of the Consortium with the primary audience being Maine-based fishermen. The state, Carbon Trust, and SAMBAS Consulting applied for and received a grant from the Broad Reach Foundation to fund the trip. The study tour aligned with two of the strategies as defined in the Consortium's Research Strategy (to share knowledge and promote joint learning about FOW tech and to collaborate with others working on similar goals) and advanced the request from the Maine OSW Roadmap Fisheries Working Group to learn from and improve upon lessons from elsewhere.

The study tour occurred in May 2025, and participants included commercial fishermen, fishing industry representatives, and state officials from DMR and DOER. Three self-funded participants from Massachusetts joined the trip. The objective of the tour was to create a common understanding of FOW technology and allow participants to learn more about the development of demonstration and commercial-scale FOW in Scotland, bringing knowledge back to the state. Key findings from the tour include:

1. Participants expressed confidence in the offshore wind planning process underway in the Gulf of Maine. The Consortium is providing a platform for cross-sector engagement and prioritization of necessary research. The feedback from participants indicated that further research is needed on electric and magnetic fields (EMF), cables and the compatibility of fishing gear with FOW areas.
2. Participants emphasized that research should not be made to "catch up" after development begins, and instead, it must lead. The advantage for Maine is that the research gaps are known before offshore wind turbines are in the water, unlike in Scotland, where research may have to play catch-up.
3. Sharing fishing data and engaging early was viewed by participants as the most suitable way for the fishing industry to advocate for its interests.
4. The importance of bringing together stakeholders in the GoM, as opportunities and challenges associated with OSW development extend beyond state borders.
5. The opportunity to see windfarms up close and discuss FOW with experts and people who have had experience with it is key to building knowledge and understanding of both research needs and policy development. Future knowledge exchange opportunities, either through joint research between institutes in Scotland and the Gulf of Maine or a follow-up study tour, were discussed by the participants as next steps to explore.

## 2.9 Research Consortium Funding

DOER has received six funding allocations, five in the amount of \$1,000,000 and one in the amount of \$250,000, in General Funds for FYs 2021-2022 through 2025-2026, respectively, a total of \$5,250,000. DOER is efficiently and cost-effectively deploying these funds to advance the objectives of the Consortium. To date, \$5,208,177 of these funds have been allocated or obligated to establish the Consortium and Advisory Board with robust stakeholder input; to provide program management; for public education, engagement, and communications activities; to fund nine research projects as identified and prioritized by the Advisory Board; two expert workshops on high-priority research topics; and one or more follow up projects resulting from the expert workshops. The Consortium has \$41,823 in remaining funds for FY 2025-2026, which are planned for public education, engagement, and communications and additional or expanded research projects. By encouraging cost share, the Consortium has or will leverage an additional \$300,000 through the first two rounds of research projects.

As described in Section 2.7, DOER will publish a competitive RFP with a maximum budget of \$550,000 in 2026 for three high priority research topics on behalf of the Consortium. DOER is also hosting two expert workshops in early 2026 to advance one or more follow-on projects that will use a maximum of \$750,000. The RFP budget of \$550,000, \$40,000 to organize and host the two expert workshops, and \$750,000 to fund one or more follow-on projects that result from the workshops are planned for in the allocated funds described above.

Table 2: Tables summarizing revenue, expenses and obligations, and remaining Research Consortium funds.

Revenue	Fiscal Years 2021-2024	Fiscal Year 2025-2026	Total
General Fund	\$ 4,000,000.00	\$ 1,250,000.00	\$ 5,250,000.00

Expenses and Obligations through Sept 30, 2025	Expenses	Obligations	Total
Research and Programmatic Support	\$ 2,112,363.22	\$ 3,095,813.42	\$ 5,208,176.64

Remaining Funds	Total
Planned expenditures informed by the Advisory Board including: communication and public engagement related to the research projects	\$ 41,823.36

Under PL 2021 Chapter 407 (LD 1619), the Legislature established a non-lapsing Other Special Revenue account to support the Research Consortium. The purpose of this fund is to collect funds from external sources to advance the Research Strategy. DOER utilized this account after applying for and receiving a Broad Reach Foundation grant to fund the Maine

fishermen's study tour to Scotland. DOER paid the study tour organizers, Carbon Trust and SAMBAS Consulting, the full grant amount of \$86,000 in FY 25-26. DOER and the Consortium are continuing to pursue strategies that will continue to utilize this fund with leveraged monies in the future.

In summary, to date DOER has received \$5,250,000 in General Funds, has allocated or obligated \$5,208,177, and has \$41,823 remaining. DOER and the Consortium Advisory Board intend to spend the remaining FY 2025-2026 funds on advancing the Consortium's research strategy through public engagement and communication efforts.

The Consortium achieved significant milestones in 2025 and has strong momentum moving into 2026 with an upcoming RFP, two workshops that will bring national focus to the GoM, and three more projects scheduled to conclude. As demonstrated through the Round 3 prioritization process, which had the highest number of projects being considered, the Consortium has maintained a high level of interest in its activities and additional research questions are continuously being raised by the Advisory Board, resulting in more competitive prioritization and solicitations each year. In 2026, the Consortium will continue to prioritize, conduct, and publicly share the results of research that is answering key questions about the impacts of floating offshore wind to the GoM's ecosystem and ocean users in preparation for long-term commercial development.

## Appendix A: Research Implementing the Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap

**DMR is leading the following surveys to collect fisheries, wildlife, and environmental information, consistent with recommendations in the Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap:**

1. Seafloor mapping and benthic habitat characterization
2. Bottom trawl survey of commercially important fish species
3. Active acoustic survey of fish and invertebrates – in partnership with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute
4. Passive acoustic monitoring of marine mammals
5. Plankton and larval lobster survey – in partnership with the University of Maine, the University of Southern Maine, and Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
6. Highly migratory species monitoring – in partnership with the University of Maine
7. Oceanographic and sea surface wind monitoring – in partnership with the University of Maine and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute
8. Modeling of wind wake effects – in partnership with the University of Maine
9. Interviews of fishers on fishing locations and target species over time – in partnership with the University of Maine and the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association