

Dear Regatta Organizer,

You have been invited to participate in the Northeast Coastal and Marine Recreational Use Characterization Study to help identify where, when, and how people recreate along the coast and in the ocean from Maine to New York. Information gathered will help ensure recreational uses are considered in the broader context of [ocean planning](#). See attachment for information on the Northeast ocean planning effort. The attachment also contains frequently asked questions about this project.

One key component of this study is mapping recurring marine events, such as sailing races and regattas, in the region. You have been identified by your colleagues as an expert with extensive experience with sailing races and regattas. This study is specifically targeting race organizers, leaders of sailing associations, and managers of local community boating and yacht clubs who can map areas where races and regattas take place in the Northeast. Using a custom mapping application developed with input from recreational boating industry leaders, you will be asked to map and answer questions about areas used for sailing races and regattas in the northeast with that you are familiar with. The survey should take approximately 15 – 20 minutes to complete, depending on how many events are mapped.

We are asking you and other contacts to participate in the study by taking an online survey during the spring of 2015.

While the survey will be released in late March, we are asking participants to **register in advance** so that a custom survey invitation can be sent to your email address. Please contact Kate Longley-Wood at klongley@seaplan.org, or 617-721-2582 to register or with questions. After March 27th, you will be able to register for the survey at <https://vp.point97.io/register/seaplan/marine-events-survey/> but you are encouraged to email Kate to register for the survey prior to that date.

Please forward this information on to other contacts who may be interested in taking the survey or provide Kate with these contacts so that we can include them in future project communications.

Thank you in advance for lending your voice to help make this project a success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Longley-Wood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Longley-Wood – Project Manager

email: klongley@seaplan.org

phone: 617.721.2582

WWW.SEAPLAN.ORG

89 South Street, Suite 202, Boston, MA 02111

Sailing Races and Regattas Characterization FAQs

What is ocean planning?

The ocean and the livelihoods it supports are vital to New England. People in our region greatly value our ocean heritage and are seeking to use resources from the ocean in new and increasingly complex ways. At the same time, environmental changes are affecting the health of ocean life and habitats. Balancing these needs is a challenging process that requires careful thought and decision-making. By collecting existing information to describe human activities and natural resources in the ocean, **ocean planning** is a way to address these challenges. Government agencies and stakeholders are working together to anticipate needs, set priorities, and make decisions from a regional perspective. **The result?** More effective decisions informed by public input to ensure protection and sustainable use of ocean resources. For more information on ocean planning, see neoplan.org.

What is the purpose of the recreational characterization study?

As part of the ocean planning effort, this study will characterize coastal and marine recreational uses in the Northeast (NY to ME), gathering data about where, when, and how people recreate along New England's coast and in the ocean to help ensure recreational uses be considered in the broader context of ocean planning. More specifically, the study will collect information on the following activities: whale watching, SCUBA diving, sailing regattas and saltwater sportfishing tournaments/derbies as well as day beach use, surfing, kayaking, swimming, and wildlife viewing. The project will not collect data on fishing or recreational boating from individual users as those activities are being addressed through other studies. For more information on how other recreational uses have been/are being addressed, see <http://neoplan.org/projects/recreation/>

Who is conducting the study?

This study is being conducted by the [Northeast Regional Planning Body \(RPB\)](http://neoplan.org) and has contracted with a project team consisting of [SeaPlan](http://seaplan.org), the [Surfrider Foundation](http://surfrider.org), and [Point97](http://point97.org). The project team has been working with representatives from the recreational boating industry to develop a survey methodology that will best characterize areas that are important to the industry.

Who has been involved so far?

The project team has sought input from regional industry experts, including individuals from the Gulf of Maine Ocean Racing Association, the Connecticut Marine Trades Association, the US Coast Guard, the Massachusetts Environmental Police, Sailors for the Sea, and Morris Yacht Clubs to scope this survey. We are also receiving guidance from a project steering committee consisting of representatives from state and federal agencies, including the Maine Coastal Program, the New Hampshire Coastal Program, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Office of Long Island

Sound Programs, the New York State Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the United States Coast Guard. These industry and agency experts have identified the online survey format as the best way to gather high quality data from a wide variety of individuals most familiar with this activity.

What information are we looking for?

Survey participants will be asked to draw an outline of the area in which the majority of race or regatta activity takes place. We recognize that races and regattas often lack precise boundaries, and that race activities are dependent on a number of factors, especially wind direction, but ask that participants think about defining areas most likely to be used by race participants. Survey participants will then be asked questions about the races they have mapped.

How will this information be used?

The data collected during this survey will not be used for regulatory purposes. Rather, data from the study will be used by the RPB to develop a draft Northeast Ocean Plan, and will be integrated into the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#), a decision support and information system for managers, planners, scientists, and project proponents. The information will be combined with data being collected from other industries to help ensure recreational uses are considered in future ocean planning. The data will also be available to industry members for use in business planning or to demonstrate the importance of your industry. We will continue to work with industry experts to determine how best to represent the data from a regional standpoint.