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# Urban Harbors Institute: Engaging Communities, Applying Research

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# Urban Harbors Institute: Engaging Communities, Applying Research

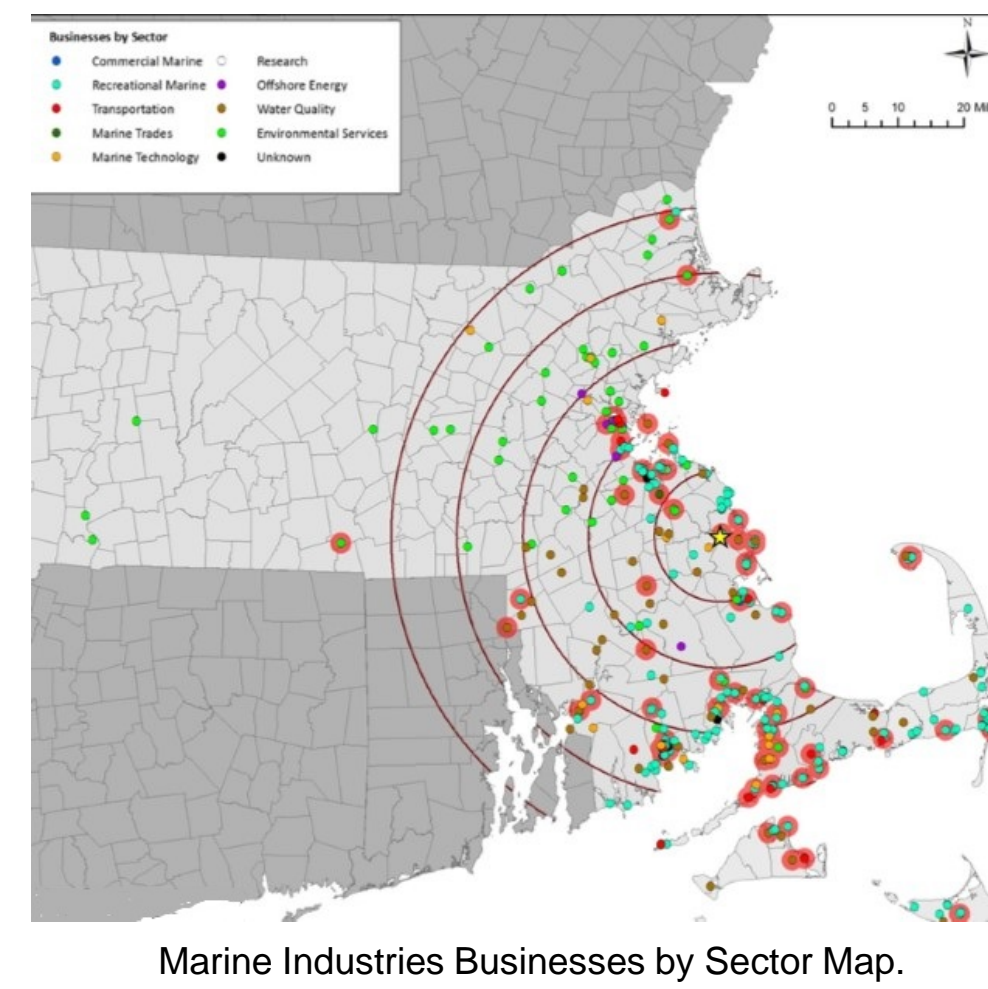
University of Massachusetts Boston

## Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a major component of nearly all of the Institute's work. Community members, those working in ocean and coastal-based industries, and advocates for environmental quality, bring knowledge and perspectives to complement the Institute's science, policy, and technical analyses. Broad stakeholder participation enriches the process, improves the outcomes, and strengthens the likelihood that management recommendations will be implemented.

Examples of projects designed to engage communities include:

**Ocean Campus Center** – Educators, students, and industry professionals participated in this feasibility study for a new post-secondary school with a curriculum designed to provide technical training in the marine industries. In addition, students would be educated about the unique marine environments in which they'll be working.



Marine Industries Businesses by Sector Map.

**Conservation Mooring Study** – Harbormasters, boaters, local officials, and manufacturers participated in this study which focused on the impacts of boat moorings in eelgrass beds, looking at (1) the impacts of conventional moorings (shown to create denuded areas, depressions in the seafloor, and impair



Typical mooring field, Marshfield, MA

water quality); and (2) the potential of conservation moorings to help prevent loss of eel grass and to restore benthic habitats.

**Gloucester Dockage Study** – Fishermen, city officials, property owners, and community members

shared information and expertise to help generate this "snapshot in time" report on Gloucester dockage. Determining the current demand and future needs is difficult to capture because of the fluid nature of the fishing crisis. The study offers a baseline for helping develop strategies to accommodate future dockage needs.



Gloucester DPA Dockage Map

## Applied Research

The focus of many UHI projects is on improving conditions of both the natural and human environments, which requires conducting research to understand and address ocean and coastal issues.

Examples of applied research topics include:

### Ocean and Coastal Planning

UHI conducts research in support of state, regional, and federal efforts to improve management of ocean resources for (1) the ecosystem services provided, and (2) to promote coexistence and growth of traditional and emerging ocean uses, such as offshore renewable energy.



**Natural Resource Management**– UHI collaborates with communities, watershed associations, and state agencies to prepare watershed plans, natural resource inventories, and management plans. UHI is actively engaged in work to protect and preserve natural resources through its planning efforts, participation in the Boston Harbor Habitat Coalition and the Massachusetts Bays Program, and its research on conservation technology topics such as boat moorings that minimize impacts to the seafloor. UHI helped lead the effort to identify habitat restoration opportunities in the Boston Harbor area.



**Harbor and Waterfront Planning** – UHI works with ports and coastal communities to maintain water-dependent uses; protect living resources; grow coastal economies; and increase public access to coastal waters. As one of the founding members of the Working Waterfront Coalition, UHI is engaged in understanding the value of working waterfronts and developing strategies and providing communities with the tools they need to help preserve these shoreline uses where appropriate.



## About UHI

The Urban Harbors Institute (UHI) advances ocean and coastal management through collaborative research and planning projects. Working closely with governments, marine industry representatives, non-governmental organizations and members of the public, UHI can uniquely draw on the expertise of faculty in marine science, policy, economics, and law. As a public policy and applied-science research center, UHI focuses on issues affecting urban waterfronts and coastal and ocean resources.



Our mission is to increase understanding of the marine environment, improve management practices, and promote informed decision making at the local, state, national, and international levels. UHI employs a multidisciplinary approach in all its research and education projects, blending science, policy, and management. Through each successive project, UHI endeavors not only to deliver superior quality products but also to advance the art of marine and coastal management and problem-solving, distinguishing itself by its demonstrated dedication to marine and coastal issues.



Diverse group of stakeholders gather to discuss the complex issues surrounding the Port of Gloucester.

## Results

- Developed **internship program** with School for the Environment and National Park Service (NPS) aimed at attracting under-represented populations to science careers in NPS: two student interns completed, to date.
- Published Conservation Mooring Study Report with recommendations.
- Created **Working Waterfront Toolkit** together with a national coalition, for communities and government to achieve economic and cultural benefits.

## Contact Information

For more information about the Urban Harbors Institute, our projects, publications, and staff, please contact us at [urban.harbors@umb.edu](mailto:urban.harbors@umb.edu) or call 617.287.5570