

Stephanie Watson

Offshore Wind Program Manager

Contact Information

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SUMMARY

- Portfolio and program manager with extensive experience delivering economic/social/ocean science scopes for offshore wind and blue economy ventures along the U.S. East Coast, West Coast, and Gulf of Mexico regions.
- Leadership and team management in offshore wind development, government affairs, environmental, and stakeholder engagement functions.
- Coalition-builder across complex organizations and with diverse public and private sector partners and stakeholders.
- Successful fundraiser (public and private sources).
- Deep expertise in ocean and coastal topics, including offshore wind.
- Strong technical credibility with advanced degrees in Ecology, Ocean Science, and Spatial Information Science and Engineering.
- Entrepreneurship certification and nimble approach to coastal and ocean opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

OFFSHORE WIND PROGRAM MANAGER

(2020 – Present)

State of Maine – Governor’s Energy Office

Leading the State of Maine’s comprehensive offshore wind program, including the many facets of floating and fixed offshore wind.

Key results include:

- Delivering Maine’s Offshore Wind Roadmap – a shared vision created over 2 years with four expert working groups during 78 public meetings engaging 1300 people to maximize Maine’s socioeconomic participation in the offshore wind industry. The \$2.2M program incorporated strategic stakeholder engagement and communications, management of four consortia of globally experienced technical consultants, coordination of four expert working groups with >100 members, and implementation with broad public support.
- Managing portfolio of enabling research (Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium, planning and permitting a Maine floating offshore wind research array in federal waters), engagement with fisheries and environmental interests, and coordination with BOEM, NOAA, USFWS, USCG, and other federal agencies on planning, leasing, permitting, research, and monitoring.
- Delivering Governor Mills’ renewable energy policy through evaluating offshore wind energy needs assessments, evaluating other states’ offshore wind procurement legislation and solicitations, advising approaches for Maine, engaging with the state

legislature, and providing input to regional and federal processes, such as the BOEM Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force for the Gulf of Maine.

- Port, supply chain, and workforce development.
- Managing offshore wind program budget and team.

STRATEGIC CONSULTANT – BLUE ECONOMY

(2005 - 2020)

Served the blue economy via strategic leadership and program management for different organizations including:

Program Manager, CETACEAN Program, NOAA and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS)

- Coordinated delivery of \$5.8M project and team to meet federal, state, and research permit and stakeholder requirements related to marine mammal protection and restoration. Funded via *Deepwater Horizon Settlement*.

Project Director, Gulf Data Synthesis Center, Baton Rouge Area Foundation

- Led regionally-coordinated planning of the Gulf of Mexico Data Synthesis Center, co-developed with the 5 Gulf Coast states.

Strategic Planner, Gulf Offshore Research Institute

- Developed Gulf of Mexico-wide strategy with public-private funding sources for an effort to re-purpose existing offshore energy infrastructure for research, monitoring, technology testing, and workforce training;

Strategic Program and Communications Manager, GCOOS

- Managed a Gulfwide communications team and projects, developed membership, provided technical expertise, and crafted guidance documents for efficient and effective coordination between multiple entities.
- Developed strategic planning documents, including a lead authorship in the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System Build-out Plan (a 10-year requirements-based plan for a Gulfwide coastal and ocean observing system involving input from 631 individuals from 297 different organizations); and
- Identified and secured multi-agency partnerships on oceans and economic development in \$M with entities such as NOAA, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Gulf of Mexico Alliance, State of Louisiana, National Fish and Wildlife Federation, and The Nature Conservancy;

Critical Coastal Infrastructure Communications Principal, U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System Association

- Developed communications approach for national public-private partnership organization articulating the benefits of investing in critical coastal infrastructure in the U.S. for Congressional members.

Associate Director, University of Southern Mississippi, Center for Gulf Studies (MS RESTORE Center of Excellence)

- Established the new Center with *Deepwater Horizon Settlement* funding by cultivating partnerships throughout the State of Mississippi, with seven federal agencies, and with large corporate partners;
- Led communications activities, managed partnerships, developed governance documents, and coordinated data policy.

Coastal Ocean Observing Systems Data Program Manager, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Southeastern Universities Research Association

- Provided project management, training, and technical expertise on ocean data management;
- Facilitated a community of ocean scientists, managers around data management; and

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MBARI) (2004-2005)

Supported by the Packard Foundation, the mission of MBARI is to achieve and maintain a position as a world center for advanced research and education in ocean science and technology.

Program Manager, Central and Northern California Ocean Observing System (CeNCOOS)

CeNCOOS is one of the 11 regional coastal Ocean Observing Systems in the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS).

- Provided coalition-building and leadership of nearly 40 corporations, academic and research institutions, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations on the California coast around coastal ocean observing.
- Awarded more than \$12M in grants as a co-PI, helped develop a business plan, led the development of a data management system, and led the development of a database-driven system for program management that was later adopted by NOAA to provide public transparency and effective management of all coastal ocean observing and monitoring.
- Coordinated the regional ocean observing system, managed federal grants, appointed to several regional and national committees, managed budgets, led workshops, gave presentations, drafted testimony to U.S. Congress, and facilitated discussions on priorities for coastal and ocean observing.

EDUCATION

University of Maine, Orono, Maine

M.S., Spatial Information Science and Engineering

M.S., Ecology and Environmental Sciences (coastal and marine)

B.S., Psychology

Louisiana State University

Certificate in Entrepreneurship