Sustainable development of maritime cultural heritage in the Gulf of Maine

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Abstract
In this study the principles of sustainable development and ecosystem-based management are applied to develop a conservation policy for maritime cultural heritage in the Gulf of Maine. This dissertation first examines the effectiveness of existing laws, policies and preservation programs available for the protection and conservation of maritime historical and archaeological resources in the region, and provides an assessment of the diversity and abundance of these resources. Then the principles of sustainability and ecosystem-based management, including inter- and intra-generational equity, precaution, system interconnectedness, and diversity, are applied to form a theoretical framework upon which policies and cultural resource management techniques are developed. To this end, the study identifies the cultural and economic values associated with maritime cultural heritage and the costs and benefits of conservation projects. Finally, policy recommendations are made regarding the governments’ role and responsibility in protecting and managing the public interest in this cultural heritage: government should enact law that asserts public property ownership and protection of all maritime cultural resources in waters under U.S. federal jurisdiction, implement a regional governance structure based on the tenets of ecosystem-based management to manage and develop these resources effectively, and integrate valuation techniques in environmental and historic preservation regulatory procedures. Given these policy developments, governments can make informed decisions about the use of cultural resources, support coastal communities’ development efforts, and identify the social and economic benefits of conservation projects.

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