TO: Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS) User Community

FROM: Mark Finkbeiner, on behalf of the CMECS Implementation Group

DATE: November 9, 2023

RE: CMECS Substrate Component Update

I am writing to inform you of a significant accomplishment that advances the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS) Substrate Component. On April 17, 2022, the CMECS Substrate Component Workgroup, an interagency team, convened to review implementation issues with the component that had been identified by the CMECS user community since its publication in 2012, and to develop a set of change proposals to address them. The workgroup held a series of virtual meetings and convened targeted discussions with smaller groups of subject matter experts to tackle specific topics. After many discussions and iterations, the workgroup recommended several substantive improvements that make the Substrate Component easier to use and apply more consistently. The CMECS Implementation Group approved those changes for publication on October 20, 2023.

The following interim materials for the Substrate Component are being made available to users who want to begin applying the changes immediately. The CMECS team will write and publish a workgroup report, as a citable NOAA Technical Memo with Digital Object Identifier, that documents the update process, provides rationale for the changes, and contains the final version of the Substrate Component units and framework.

CMECS, endorsed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee in 2012, provides a national framework for organizing information about coasts and oceans and their living systems. Over the past decade-plus, a vibrant CMECS community of practice has grown. Users have gathered at special interest sessions at conferences, published numerous peer-reviewed articles, and documented use cases. The CMECS Implementation Group will continue to support the community of practice, update the Biotic and Geoform Components, and release a CMECS vocabulary search tool. The vocabulary tool will be the digital access point for interacting with the original and new versions.

We anticipate this community to continue to grow, and we invite you to become a part of it. Please email *ocm.cmecs-ig@noaa.gov* to be added to our mailing list, share your projects, or ask any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Mark Finkbeiner, on behalf of the of CMECS Implementation Group