

Important note: This material was produced by an informal, ad hoc RPB workgroup. The full RPB will be discussing these ideas in detail for the first time during the September 24-25 meeting. Public input is welcome before the meeting (by sending an email to Mid-AtlanticRPB@boem.gov) and during the meeting.

Draft Regional Ocean Planning Goals and Geographic Focus Ideas for the Mid-Atlantic

Since the formal establishment of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB) in April of 2013, members have been laying the groundwork to articulate the needs and opportunities for the Mid-Atlantic region that can be addressed through regional ocean planning. Building upon previous efforts to identify regional ocean priorities, the MidA RPB is discussing how best to:

- Understand and incorporate current and future ocean uses into RPB planning work.
- Prepare for new and expanded uses to ensure more hazard resilient coastal communities and economies as well as healthier ocean and coastal ecosystems.
- Be equipped to make better and more informed decisions about the use and management of the Mid-Atlantic ocean space.
- Efficiently use constrained public resources.
- Provide effective mechanisms for active participation from ocean stakeholders and the public.

Through informal, ad hoc RPB work groups, the following ideas about initial draft goals have been developed. This document captures those ideas and is intended to serve as material for RPB consideration at its inaugural meeting on September 24-25, 2013.

Developing Regional Ocean Planning Goals

Background: The *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force July 19, 2010* articulates national goals and guiding principles that would be followed in marine spatial planning efforts and the development and implementation of regional ocean plans. It also defines marine spatial planning (MSP) as:

“a comprehensive, adaptive, integrated, ecosystem-based, and transparent spatial planning process, based on sound science, for analyzing current and anticipated uses of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes areas. [MSP] identifies areas most suitable for various types or classes of activities in order to reduce conflicts among uses, reduce

environmental impacts, facilitate compatible uses, and preserve critical ecosystem services to meet economic, environmental, security, and social objectives.”

The national goals of marine spatial planning can help shape our thinking about goals for the Mid-Atlantic region. The *Final Recommendations* include the following national goals:

1. Support sustainable, safe, secure, efficient, and productive uses of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes, including those that contribute to the economy, commerce, recreation, conservation, homeland and national security, human health, safety, and welfare;
2. Protect, maintain, and restore the Nation’s ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources and ensure resilient ecosystems and their ability to provide sustained delivery of ecosystem services;
3. Provide for and maintain public access to the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes;
4. Promote compatibility among uses and reduce user conflicts and environmental impacts;
5. Improve the rigor, coherence, and consistency of decision-making and regulatory processes;
6. Increase certainty and predictability in planning for and implementing new investments for ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes uses; and
7. Enhance interagency, intergovernmental, and international communication and collaboration.

The *Final Recommendations* also includes the following national guiding principles to inform our regional ocean planning efforts:

1. [MSP] “would use an ecosystem-based management approach that addresses cumulative effects to ensure the protection, integrity, maintenance, resilience, and restoration of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems, while promoting multiple sustainable uses.
2. Multiple existing uses (e.g., commercial fishing, recreational fishing and boating, subsistence uses, marine transportation, sand and gravel mining, and oil and gas operations) and emerging uses (e.g., off-shore renewable energy and aquaculture) would be managed in a manner that reduces conflict, enhances compatibility among uses and with sustained ecosystem functions and services, provides for public access, and increases certainty and predictability for economic investments.

3. [MSP] development and implementation would ensure frequent and transparent broad-based, inclusive engagement of partners, the public, and stakeholders, including with those most impacted (or potentially impacted) by the planning process and with underserved communities.
4. [MSP] would take into account and build upon the existing marine spatial planning efforts at the regional, State, tribal, and local level.
5. Marine Spatial Plans and the standards and methods used to evaluate alternatives, tradeoffs, cumulative effects, and sustainable uses in the planning process would be based on clearly stated objectives.
6. Development, implementation, and evaluation of Marine Spatial Plans would be informed by sound science and the best available information, including the natural and social sciences, and relevant local and traditional knowledge.
7. [MSP] would be guided by the precautionary approach as reflected in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration, "Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation."
8. [MSP] would be adaptive and flexible to accommodate changing environmental conditions and impacts, including those associated with global climate change, sealevel rise, and ocean acidification; and new and emerging uses, advances in science and technology, and policy changes.
9. [MSP] objectives and progress toward those objectives would be evaluated in a regular and systematic manner, with public input, and adapted to ensure that the desired environmental, economic, and societal outcomes are achieved.
10. The development of Marine Spatial Plans would be coordinated and compatible with homeland and national security interests, energy needs, foreign policy interests, emergency response and preparedness plans and frameworks, and other national strategies, including the flexibility to meet current and future needs.
11. Marine Spatial Plans would be implemented in accordance with customary international law, including as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention, and with treaties and other international agreements to which the U.S. is a party.
12. Marine Spatial Plans would be implemented in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, and Executive Orders.

Our overall plan is for the Mid-Atlantic RPB to develop:

- A **vision** for the Mid-Atlantic region's relationship with the ocean into the future;
- Regional ocean planning **goals** that are high-level, substantive and clear;
- A set of **principles** for achieving the goals (e.g., enhance government coordination and efficiency; use the best available data and information); and
- Specific **objectives and actions** for achieving goals and principles.

The definitions we will use for these planning terms are:

- Vision – A desired future state.
- Goal – A goal is a statement of general direction or intent. They are high-level statements of the desired outcome that you hope to achieve.
- Principle -- A principle is a basic or essential quality or element determining the intrinsic nature of characteristic behavior of regional ocean planning.
- Objective -- An objective is a statement of desired outcomes or observable behavioral change that represent the achievement of a goal.

Topic for future discussion: *What should be the vision for regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic? What is the future state that the RPB should be striving for in our planning efforts?*

An initial step for the MidA RPB is to develop goals for our regional ocean planning efforts.

We wish to identify goals that:

- Benefit the entire region (not just specific geographic areas or sectors).
- Consider the values of both existing and proposed uses of the ocean.
- Are potentially achievable through this process.
- Maximize compatibility and minimize conflicts.

Stakeholders at an April 2013 MARCO meeting providing the following input to our thinking about goals:

- Improve government efficiency and function
- Improve stakeholder engagement/involvement
- Maintain access for fishermen and recreational users
- Protect ecosystem health
- Resolve ocean space use/conflicts
- Improve shipping efficiency and navigation
- Facilitate responsible offshore energy development
- Military readiness
- Adapting to changing conditions
- Scientific basis for ocean planning
- Establish metrics of success

Initial Draft Goals: Draft Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning goals that are being offered for public and RPB consideration include:

- Facilitate responsible renewable energy development.
- Protect habitats and ecosystem functionality.
- Ensure access for existing and traditional uses (e.g., fishing, recreation).
- Ensure sufficient access to ports.
- Retain areas for military testing, training and operations.

Questions for public and RPB consideration:

- *Do any of these draft goals for ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic need to be modified? If yes, what modifications would you propose?*

- *Are there additional goals for the Mid-Atlantic that should be added to this list?*

The Mid-Atlantic RPB will also develop principles that will guide how we achieve our goals. Here are some initial ideas for principles, which are “. . . a basic or essential quality or element determining the intrinsic nature of characteristic behavior of regional ocean planning:”

- Increase government coordination and efficiency
 - Includes: enhancing efficiencies in renewable energy siting; promote adaptive management; and leverage resources
- Improve stakeholder engagement
 - Includes: take full range of interest into account, identify and reach out to existing and new users.
- Adapt to a changing climate
- Provide for past, current and future ocean uses
- Use best existing and new ocean data to provide shared scientific foundation for ocean planning and improve decision-making.

Objectives and Actions will be developed after we reach consensus on goals and principles.

Questions for public and RPB consideration:

- *Do any of these draft principles for ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic need to be modified? If yes, what modifications would you propose?*

- *Are there additional principles for the Mid-Atlantic that should be added to this list?*

Developing a Geographic Focus

Background: The *Final Recommendations for the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*, released by the White House Council on Environmental Quality on July 19, 2010, identifies regional marine planning areas across the nation.¹ The Framework states: “The geographic scope of the planning area . . . includes the territorial sea, the EEZ [Exclusive Economic Zone], and the Continental Shelf. The geographic scope of the planning area would extend landward to the mean high-water line. . . The geographic scope would include inland bays and estuaries in both coastal and Great Lakes settings. . . Additional inland areas may be included in the planning area . . . consideration of inland activities would be necessary to account for the significant interaction between upstream activities and ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes uses and ecosystem health. Likewise, consideration would also be given to activities occurring beyond the EEZ and continental shelf that may influence resources or activities within the planning area.” In summary, the Mid-Atlantic region includes:

- From North to South: At a minimum, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.
- From West to East: The ocean waters from the edge of land (mean high-water line) to the edge of the Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nautical miles), where the United States’ jurisdiction ends. (*See attached map*)

Within those boundaries, the MidA RPB can choose the area and scope of planning efforts. Given resource constraints (e.g., staff, funding, time), the MidA RPB is considering focusing on a more limited geography that would benefit the most from new inter-governmental ocean planning efforts. Other considerations include the need to:

- Recognize ecological integrity
 - Be consistent with current jurisdictional boundaries
 - Leverage and build on existing planning efforts
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- Identify a manageable size and level of complexity

Areas of Special Concern (from April MARCO stakeholder meeting)

- Offshore canyons
- Cold water corals
- Areas where energy facilities are or may be located in the future
- Areas where artificial reefs are or may be located in the future
- Migratory pathways
- Navigation areas
- Military areas
- Cultural and historic areas
- Habitats for trust resources (e.g., fish, birds)

Question for public and RPB consideration: *How do we ensure that areas of special concern are considered in our discussion of a geographic focus?*

Initial Ideas:

- **Include State and Federal waters** out to the Exclusive Economic Zone (which extends 200 nautical miles from the shore).
- Do **not include nearshore estuarine areas** (e.g., large bays.)
- Extend from the **Virginia/North Carolina border** in the south to the **New York/Connecticut/Rhode Island border** in the north.
- Do **not include terrestrial (land) areas**, even though we recognize that activities there influence the coastal and ocean environment.

Questions for public and RPB consideration:

- *Are there additional considerations we should use in developing geographic focus?*
- *Do you agree with the initial geographic focus described above? If not, please explain how you would modify the geographic focus and why?*