

Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Stakeholder Engagement Report

November 2016

This report describes the stakeholder engagement efforts of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body and its partners over the course of developing the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan from April 2013 to November 2016.

Introduction

Stakeholder engagement has been a priority of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB) since its inception in April 2013. According to the RPB's Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework ([Framework](#)):

"The RPB will seek meaningful stakeholder and public input in the regional planning process using multi-faceted tools to encourage public participation and understand expressed needs."

The RPB works to implement regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic by coordinating with stakeholders; scientific, business, technical, and policy experts; Tribes; local governments; and members of the public to identify and address ocean-related issues of importance to the region through the planning process. Partnerships with and input from stakeholders are critical to the success of this planning effort. This document summarizes the stakeholder engagement and outreach efforts undertaken by the RPB and key partners during the early phases when it was developing an approach to ocean planning and then later during the development of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (Plan) itself, a period of time that spans from April 2013 to September 2016.

Opportunities for engagement during Plan development included formal public RPB decision making meetings, all of which were open to the public and included public comment sessions. These meetings allowed RPB members to discuss, deliberate, and make decisions transparently while also interacting with and collecting input from the public.

In addition to these formal meetings, many separate stakeholder outreach events and engagement opportunities were hosted by the RPB itself and by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO)¹ and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal Team (Portal Team), close partners to the RPB. These events included stakeholder workshops and meetings, public webinars, Tribal listening sessions, and several rounds of public listening sessions in Mid-Atlantic States at key junctures in the process. The webinars, workshops, meetings, and listening sessions allowed the RPB to share updates with a wider audience and solicit feedback from stakeholders. The RPB also established a website, posted information and meeting materials, and provided ongoing opportunities for additional public comments throughout the

process. MARCO also frequently posted information to its website, which helped further disseminate information about the work of the RPB and opportunities for public engagement.

MARCO has been instrumental in supporting ocean planning-related stakeholder engagement. With support from MARCO member States, Federal agencies, private funds and stakeholders, they have: (1) supported the formation of the RPB by convening preliminary meetings and public listening sessions, (2) convened a Stakeholder Liaison Committee (SLC) designed to foster meaningful and ongoing stakeholder involvement in the regional ocean planning process, (3) held Atlantic Ocean Recreational Use Mapping Workshops in conjunction with the MARCO State agencies and the Portal Team and NOAA staff, and (4) hosted/participated in or presented at a number of workshops and meetings to share information about the regional ocean planning process.

As part of the RPB's early efforts to identify opportunities for stakeholder engagement, the RPB created the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Draft Outline](#)² released for public comment on May 12, 2014 and [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Interim Plan for Stakeholder Engagement](#)³ released for public comment on October 24, 2014. The RPB also convened an internal stakeholder engagement working group in 2014, which helped the RPB consider the opportunities and challenges of fostering effective stakeholder engagement within available time and existing resources. Objectives discussed included identifying, assessing, and engaging key stakeholders in regional ocean planning; strengthening mutual and shared understanding about relevant problems and opportunities for the ocean waters off of the Mid-Atlantic; building knowledge, skills, and understanding of regional ocean planning; and capitalizing on previous related efforts. The RPB has utilized many of the tools identified in these documents to provide opportunities for meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Stakeholder Engagement Events

This section summarizes key events in the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning process through various phases of the RPB's work: from setting the foundation of the RPB in April 2013 to events surrounding the release of the draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Plan in summer 2016. These events were hosted by either the RPB itself, MARCO, or a collaboration between them. The hyperlinks included below link either directly to written summaries of these events or to landing pages with more information and materials, where applicable. This section is subdivided into major phases of the RPB's work.

Setting the Foundation for the RPB

Prior to the formation of the RPB, MARCO convened the Federal, State, Tribal, and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) entities engaged in regional ocean planning to discuss their existing regional priorities and objectives. These included a mix of in-person

meetings and conference calls, concluding with the formation of the RPB in April 2013 at a MARCO-sponsored regional stakeholder workshop described below.

April 2013: Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Workshop

On April 4-5, 2013, MARCO, in close collaboration with Federal agencies and the Shinnecock Indian Nation, hosted the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Workshop](#)⁴ in Arlington, Virginia. The event was an initial step in the launch of regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic and was designed to engage stakeholders in early thinking about the design of the planning process. The workshop provided stakeholders an opportunity to explore specific regional objectives for Mid-Atlantic ocean planning. During this event, the RPB officially formed.

Approximately 160 individuals participated in the workshop. They represented stakeholder interests and governmental entities from across the region. Stakeholder participants represented a number of important interests including ocean-based industries, ocean recreation, environmental and conservation groups, educational and research institutions, coastal communities, national security interests, and the general public. Objectives of the workshop were to:

- Develop a common understanding about regional ocean planning and how it can help the Mid-Atlantic region establish and achieve shared goals for the use and conservation of its ocean resources.
- Involve stakeholders in developing recommendations for the RPB, including strategies and mechanisms for robust stakeholder engagement throughout the planning process.
- Foster dialogue and commitment among stakeholders and governmental entities in the Mid-Atlantic to advance collaboration on ocean planning.

Key themes of discussion throughout the workshop included: stakeholder engagement, data and information, improving governance, the role of the RPB, building on existing efforts, maximizing compatibility, and funding. Next steps included convening an initial RPB meeting, determining ways for stakeholders to become engaged in meaningful ways throughout the process, and developing both a work plan and communications plan to guide the regional ocean planning process. Participants in the workshop were urged to stay involved and share information about ocean planning with their constituencies so that a full range of input could be taken into account.

The Launch of the RPB

After its launch, the RPB set up its administrative and operational procedures and worked to clarify its mission, roles, and responsibilities. This included developing a charter and a framework with goals and objectives to guide its activities, as well as a timeline for future activities and identification of mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. Major events during this time period include:

August 2013: First RPB Public Webinar

On August 1, 2013, the RPB convened its first public webinar, entitled [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar: Updates and Opportunity for Input](#).⁵ The webinar featured a series of presentations focused on RPB progress-to-date and next steps regarding RPB formation, stakeholder engagement, development of regional ocean planning goals and geographic focus, data and information, and operational considerations, such as a charter. The webinar included four sessions for public comment and questions. Approximately 140 participants logged into the webinar representing a wide range of sectors.

September 24-25, 2013: First RPB Public Meeting in West Long Branch, NJ

The inaugural [in-person meeting](#)⁶ of the RPB took place on September 24-25, 2013 at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

The objectives for the inaugural RPB meeting were to:

- Determine a general timeline for regional ocean planning and associated products.
- Determine an approach, process, and timeline for public engagement and RPB decision making on goals, objectives, and geographic focus.
- Identify mechanisms for regularly engaging stakeholders in the short- and long- term, through every step of Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning, and provide opportunities for public input at this inaugural meeting.
- Review a draft RPB charter and determine next steps regarding administrative and operational considerations.
- Discuss use of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal to support data and information needs for ocean planning and next steps regarding a regional ocean assessment.

In order to advance these objectives, stakeholders were encouraged to provide public comment during four public comment sessions, intentionally placed before the continuation and conclusion of RPB deliberations so that RPB discussion could be informed by public input. Approximately 75 members of the public attended the meeting as observers, and 13 provided input during the public comment sessions. In addition, MARCO hosted an informal round-table discussion with stakeholders on the evening of September 24, 2013.

December 2013 – April 2014: Public Comment Period for the Draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework

The RPB released its draft Framework for public comment on December 16, 2013. The purpose of the Framework was to inform the RPB's regional ocean planning process by articulating a vision, principles, goals, objectives, example actions, and geographic focus. The public comment period closed on April 15, 2014.

After April 15, 2014 the draft Framework was refined by the RPB based on public feedback and the revised draft was offered for another round of public input during public comment sessions at a RPB meeting convened on May 20-21, 2014. Edits resulting from that public input were made and the [final Framework](#)⁷ was approved by the RPB on May 21, 2014. As a foundational

document, the Framework also guided development of an RPB work plan and other RPB products.

February-April 2014: First State-based Public Listening Sessions

From February to April, 2014, the RPB invited the public to participate in a series of [in-person listening sessions](#)⁸ held across the region, during which the RPB provided an overview of the draft RPB Framework and offered the public opportunities to pose questions and provide comments.

The public listening sessions were held as follows:

- February 24, 2014 in Annapolis, Maryland
- February 27, 2014 in Lewes, Delaware
- March 3, 2014 in Norfolk, Virginia
- March 27, 2014 in West Long Branch, New Jersey
- April 7, 2014 in Riverhead, New York

A total of 169 members of the general public attended the public listening sessions.

May 20-21, 2014: RPB Public Meeting in Baltimore, MD

The [second in-person meeting](#)⁹ of the RPB took place on May 20-21, 2014 at Charles Commons in Baltimore, Maryland.

The objectives for the second RPB meeting were to:

- Approve the Framework and a timeline for developing a RPB work plan based on that Framework.
- Identify next steps and a timeline for regional ocean planning products and processes.
- Discuss a strategy to further engage Mid-Atlantic stakeholders in regional ocean planning, and provide opportunities for public input at this meeting.
- Share information about activities underway by RPB member institutions that are relevant for regional ocean planning.

In order to advance these objectives, stakeholders were encouraged to provide public comment during three public comment sessions, intentionally placed before the continuation and conclusion of RPB deliberations so that RPB discussion could be informed by public input. Approximately 70 members of the public were in attendance, and approximately 23 comments were offered during the public comment sessions.

Development of Draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Content

After approval of the Charter and the Framework, the RPB turned its attention to developing content of the draft Plan. This included developing and approving an overall approach to this document, creating a Regional Ocean Assessment, generating a work plan, working with

MARCO contractors on new data products related to marine life and human uses, and developing draft interjurisdictional coordination actions to include in the draft Plan. Major events during this time period include:

October 2014 – November 2014: Public Comment Period for RPB Draft Documents

Following the May 2014 RPB public meeting, the RPB drafted three interim documents in order to gain public input on early ideas for Plan development and other RPB activities. On October 24, 2014 the RPB released the following documents for public review:

- [Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Options](#)¹⁰
- [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Interim Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#)¹¹
- [Status of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment](#)¹²

The comment period closed on November 20, 2014.

October 2014: Second RPB Public Webinar

On October 29, 2014, the RPB convened its second public webinar, entitled [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar: Review of Draft RPB Documents](#).¹³ The webinar featured a series of presentations focused on RPB documents recently released to the public, including Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Options, Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Interim Plan for Stakeholder Engagement, and Status of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment. During the latter half of the webinar, members of the public were offered the opportunity to comment and pose questions. Approximately 59 participants logged into the webinar representing a range of sectors.

November 2014: Second Round of State-based Public Listening Sessions

In November 2014, the public was invited to participate in a [second series of in-person listening sessions](#),¹⁴ this time hosted by MARCO. During these sessions, the RPB provided an overview of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Options, Status of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment, and the RPB Interim Plan for Stakeholder Engagement. It offered the public opportunities to pose questions and provide comments at each session.

Public listening sessions were held as follows:

- November 5, 2014 in Lewes, Delaware
- November 6, 2014 in Virginia Beach, Virginia
- November 10, 2014 in Ocean City, Maryland
- November 17, 2014 in Stony Brook, New York
- November 18, 2014 in Long Branch, New Jersey

Approximately 142 individuals in total attended the public listening sessions including members of the public, State and Federal agencies, representatives of the MAFMC, MARCO staff, and members of the Portal Team. Of these, 100 were members of the public not affiliated with the RPB.

January 21-22, 2015: RPB Public Meeting in New York, NY

The [third in-person meeting of the RPB](#)¹⁵ took place on January 21-22, 2015 at the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building in New York, New York.

The objectives for the third RPB meeting were to:

- Refine and approve a proposed approach for a Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.
- Identify next steps to develop the draft Plan, including a work plan, a stakeholder engagement plan, and interjurisdictional coordination opportunities and actions.
- Develop clear and detailed guidance for further development of the Regional Ocean Assessment.
- Share information about activities underway that are relevant for Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning.
- Receive public input on topics under consideration by the RPB.

In order to advance these objectives, stakeholders were encouraged to provide public comment during three public comment sessions, intentionally placed before the continuation and conclusion of RPB deliberations so that RPB discussion could be informed by public input. Approximately 63 members of the public were in attendance, and approximately 19 comments were offered during the public comment sessions.

April 2015: RPB Work Plan Released

On April 24, 2015 the RPB released the first iteration of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Work Plan. This was an iterative document that represented a snapshot of RPB activities; the work plan was updated periodically ([latest version August 2015](#)).¹⁶ The RPB also formed working groups that were focused on Interjurisdictional Coordination, Data Synthesis, and the Regional Ocean Assessment, and each working group identified opportunities for stakeholder engagement at key junctures in the draft Plan development process. The work plan described the process and content that these working groups followed. The work plan served as a flexible planning tool to help guide RPB activities through finalization of the Plan.

May 2015: RPB Public Webinar

On May 22, 2015, the RPB convened its third public webinar, entitled [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar: Update on RPB Activities](#).¹⁷ The webinar featured a series of presentations with updates on Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning activities, including reviewing the RPB's work plan and the activities of three working groups: Interjurisdictional Coordination (IJC), Data Synthesis, and Regional Ocean Assessment. During the latter half of the webinar, members of the public were offered the opportunity to comment and pose questions. Approximately 60 participants logged into the webinar representing a wide range of sectors.

July 2015: MARCO Public Webinar

On July 13, 2015, MARCO convened a public webinar entitled [Scopes and Methods for Information Synthesis to Support Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning](#).¹⁸ Updates were provided on new MARCO projects for data and information to support RPB efforts including marine life data and analysis products, human use data synthesis products, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment. Approximately 70 people logged into the webinar and members of the public had the opportunity to pose questions.

The Marine-life Data and Analysis Team (MDAT) delivered similar products for both the Mid-Atlantic RPB and the Northeast RPB (NE RPB). In developing marine life data and analysis products, in association with the NE RPB, MDAT assembled three groups of experts (for marine mammals and sea turtles, avian species, and fish species) from various sectors. Each of these three working groups met three separate times over the course of seven months between August 2014 and March 2015 to review potential data sources, share expertise on specific species, including life history and spatial and temporal knowledge, and discuss potential products and product spatial extent. Experts from the Mid-Atlantic region were represented on these working groups.

August 2015: Tribal Outreach Listening Sessions

In August 2015, MARCO convened [two listening sessions](#)¹⁹ (August 19- New York and August 25, 2015- Virginia) for Tribal leaders in the Mid-Atlantic to share information about the planning process and explore interest in participation from Tribes. Invited participants included members of federally-recognized Tribes, state-recognized Tribes, and Tribes that have a relationship with a state government in the Mid-Atlantic region. MARCO also introduced Tribal leaders to three participatory Geographic Information System (pGIS) efforts where they can share spatial data and other Traditional Ecological Knowledge with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body.

Insights and information gained through these engagement efforts (1) improved MARCO's understanding of the issues and needs of Tribes located in the region and (2) informed the Mid-Atlantic ocean planning process.

September 2015: MARCO Mid-Atlantic Ocean Planning Stakeholder Workshop

On September 22, 2015, MARCO hosted a [workshop](#)²⁰ designed to provide an opportunity to engage stakeholders on data, information, and draft interjurisdictional coordination actions to support Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning and inform the RPB meeting on September 23-24. Participants included 32 members of the public representing a variety of sectors (including conservation, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, shipping, academia, realty, and aquaria), 15 members and alternates of the RPB, the five members of the MARCO Management Board, and several other representatives of Federal, State, and Tribal entities.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Learn about and provide input on MARCO draft data and information products to inform Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning.
- Learn about and provide input on RPB draft interjurisdictional coordination actions to include in the Plan.
- Engage in thoughtful dialogue among stakeholders, MARCO, and RPB members.

September 2015: RPB Public Meeting in Norfolk, VA

Immediately following the September 22 MARCO workshop, the [fourth in-person meeting of the RPB](#)²¹ took place on September 23-24, 2015 at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott in Norfolk, Virginia.

The objectives for the fourth RPB meeting were to:

- Review draft data synthesis and information products, discuss public input gained during September 22 MARCO public workshop, and discuss next steps.
- Determine how RPB goals and objectives will be addressed through specific IJC actions, consider public input, and identify next steps.
- Agree on components of the Plan as described in a draft outline.
- Receive public input on topics under consideration by the RPB.

In order to advance these objectives, stakeholders were encouraged to provide public comment during two public comment sessions, intentionally placed before the continuation and conclusion of RPB deliberations so that RPB discussion could be informed by public input. Approximately 40 members of the public were in attendance, and approximately 15 comments were offered during the public comment sessions.

December 2015: RPB Public Webinar

On December 8, 2015, the RPB convened its fourth public webinar, entitled [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar: Update on RPB Activities](#).²² The webinar featured a series of brief presentations focused on providing updates on regional ocean planning activities in the Mid-Atlantic region, including reviewing the RPB's draft IJC actions, plans for implementation, and future stakeholder engagement. During this webinar, members of the public were offered the opportunity to comment and pose questions. Approximately 86 participants logged into the webinar representing a wide range of sectors.

January 2016: MARCO Forum on Ocean Assessment and Data Synthesis Products

On January 29, 2016 MARCO hosted its [Forum on Ocean Assessment and Data Synthesis Products](#)²³ where it presented several products developed to support the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning process. These products included the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Assessment](#),²⁴ the [Human Use Data Synthesis \(HUDS\) Team products](#),²⁵ and [MDAT products](#).²⁶ Over 100 individuals representing the local fishing sector, municipalities, universities, industry and environmental groups, and the public attended a forum to learn about the data and how it will be immediately used. The forum included a question and answer session.

The RPB Drafts and Releases First Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan

During 2016, the RPB turned its attention to drafting Plan content, releasing a draft Plan for public review, addressing stakeholder feedback, and delivering the final Plan to the National Ocean Council for concurrence. Major events during this time period included:

March 2016: RPB Public Meeting in Baltimore, MD (including interactive workshop-style sessions)

The [fifth in-person meeting of the RPB](#)²⁷ took place on March 22-24, 2016 at the Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor at Camden Yards in Baltimore, Maryland.

The objectives for the fifth RPB meeting were to:

- Consider and reach general RPB agreement on initial content for the draft Plan, prior to internal review by RPB member entities.
- Discuss and clarify next steps, including release of draft Plan in summer 2016.
- Receive public input on topics under consideration by the RPB during a workshop-style public engagement session and formal public comment periods.

In order to advance these objectives, stakeholders were encouraged to provide public comment during two public comment sessions, intentionally placed before the continuation and conclusion of RPB deliberations so that RPB discussion could be informed by public input. Approximately 67 members of the public were in attendance, and approximately 17 comments were offered during the public comment sessions. Additionally, the afternoon of March 22, 2016 was dedicated to a workshop-style public engagement opportunity focused on gathering input and answering public questions about draft Plan content.

July 6, 2016: Public release of draft Plan for 60 day public comment period

On July 6, 2016, the RPB released for public input the draft Plan. While the RPB originally planned to offer a 45 day public comment period, in direct response to public requests, the RPB decided to extend the comment period to 60 days. The following events took place during that public comment period to provide numerous avenues for stakeholder input. The public comment period closed on September 6, 2016.

July 2016: RPB Public Webinar

On July 11, 2016, the RPB convened its fifth public webinar, entitled [Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar: Briefing on the Draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan](#).²⁸ During the webinar, members of the RPB provided an overview of the content of draft Plan and conveyed how, when, and where members of the public could find more information and submit comments. During the latter half of the webinar, members of the public were provided an opportunity to ask questions and provide input on the draft Plan. Approximately 141 participants logged into the webinar representing a wide range of sectors.

July 2016: Third Round of State-based Open House Public Listening Sessions

The public was invited to participate in a third series of in-person [open house listening sessions](#) hosted by MARCO across the region during July 2016. During these sessions, the RPB briefed the public on the draft Plan, participated in a question and answer session with stakeholders, and provided time for a poster session to allow members of the public to discuss their particular interests with RPB members in an informal setting.

Public listening sessions were held as follows:

- July 12, 2016 in Virginia Beach, Virginia
- July 14, 2016 in West Long Branch, New Jersey
- July 19, 2016 in Berlin, Maryland
- July 20, 2016 in Lewes, Delaware
- July 27, 2016 in Selden, New York

Approximately 175 members of the general public attended the public listening sessions.

August 2016: Mid-Atlantic Marine Life Data and Analysis Workshop and Webinar

On August 17, 2016, MARCO hosted a workshop in Baltimore, Maryland to engage scientists, key stakeholders, and the public in the development of marine life and habitat data to inform the Plan. More information can be found on [MARCO's website](#). The objectives included:

- Review the draft framework for identifying ecologically rich areas (ERAs).
- Review and discuss a potential range of criteria for cataloging ERA components.
- Identify short- and longer-term opportunities for data development to fill gaps.

Additional Outreach and Engagement Activities Around Ocean Planning

In addition to the major events listed above, MARCO and the Portal Team offered many additional stakeholder outreach opportunities. In particular, MARCO established the Stakeholder Liaison Committee (SLC) and worked with the Portal Team and MARCO State agencies to hold participatory Geographic Information System (GIS) workshops, detailed below.

MARCO Stakeholder Liaison Committee

Beginning in March 2014, MARCO convened the SLC, designed to strengthen its communication network and foster meaningful and ongoing stakeholder involvement in the Mid-Atlantic's regional ocean planning process. The SLC served as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among SLC participants. The SLC also created opportunities for participants to reach out to their industry, interest group, or sector to ensure that all interested

constituents were informed and could become engaged in the regional ocean planning process. Insights and information gained through this multi-sector engagement effort (1) improved the Mid-Atlantic States' increased understanding of the issues and needs of the region's marine industries, commercial and recreational fishers, other recreational interests, the offshore wind industry, and conservation interests and (2) were shared with Federal, State, Tribal, and MAFMC members of the RPB to inform their work in ocean planning. The objectives of the SLC were to tap into the leadership role and communication networks of SLC members to:

- Provide direct input and feedback to MARCO about design and implementation of regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic.
- Act as a conduit for information between stakeholders in the region and MARCO about regional ocean planning.
- Serve as a venue for increasing dialogue, understanding, and communication among stakeholders.

Sectors represented on the SLC included:

- Offshore wind energy
- Marine science
- Marine tourism
- Environmental conservation
- Ports
- Shipping
- Commercial fishing
- Recreational fishing
- Submarine cable
- Marine navigation
- Ocean recreation
- Marine trades

The SLC roster can be found [here](#).²⁹

The SLC [inaugural scoping meeting](#)³⁰ was convened by MARCO in Washington, DC on March 10, 2014. The meeting topics included briefing the SLC on Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning and the envisioned role of the SLC; obtaining feedback on the proposed structure and function of the SLC; reviewing the draft vision, principles, goals, objectives, and initial geographic focus found in the Draft Framework; and discussing the functions, features, and data on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. Objectives of the meeting were to:

- Introduce SLC members to Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning and to the committee's proposed roles in informing the planning process.

- Provide founding members of the SLC an opportunity to help shape the committee process so that it most effectively meets the needs of stakeholders and provides meaningful input for regional ocean planning.
- Facilitate in-depth discussion and feedback about the initial draft products of the RPB, including the Draft Framework.

Additional SLC meetings were convened in August 2015 and [November 2015](#),³¹ and sector-specific meetings held to leverage SLC relationships were convened in 2014 (additional details below). The SLC follows [Open Meeting Guidelines](#)³² that were developed in November 2014.

Participatory GIS Workshops

MARCO states, in collaboration with Federal agencies, have been using a form of pGIS to gather recreational use data for the Atlantic Coast. Throughout 2012 and 2013, MARCO, in conjunction with the MARCO State agencies and the Portal Team, held Atlantic Ocean Recreational Use Mapping Workshops in the Mid-Atlantic.

- July 11 and 12, 2012 in Melfa, Virginia
- January 9 and 10, 2013 in Salisbury, MD
- January 24, 2013 in Lewes, Delaware
- November 14 and 15, 2013 in Mays Landing, New Jersey
- November 20 and 21, 2013 in West Long Branch, New Jersey

These workshops used GIS-based participatory tools to capture how State waters and the Atlantic Ocean adjacent to the Mid-Atlantic are used for recreation. Between 15 and 40 recreational experts from a variety of backgrounds (e.g., recreational practitioners, law enforcement, coast guard, nonprofits, academics) participated in each of the workshops, providing valuable spatial information about where recreational activities take place in these waters. The workshops were staffed by State, Federal, and non-profit partners in the Mid-Atlantic region.

In addition to these efforts, in 2011 the New York Department of State worked with NOAA's Coastal Services Center to design and carry out a participatory mapping process on recreational uses. Five offshore use workshops were held during the summer of 2011 to train leaders from over 30 partner organizations to collect ocean use information. These individuals then collected over 130 records of new ocean use information that was then digitized, ground-truthed, and updated based on participant feedback.

Timeline of Additional Outreach and Engagement Activities for Regional Ocean Planning

MARCO, the Portal Team, and RPB members have hosted, participated in, and/or presented at a number of additional workshops and meetings to share information about the regional ocean planning process, and specific RPB efforts where appropriate, including:

- May 2012: International Marine Spatial Planning Symposium panel in RI
- May 2012: Pre-RPB/Mid-Atlantic Ocean Planning Meeting in Norfolk, VA (MARCO-hosted)
- June 2012: Capitol Hill Oceans Week (CHOW) events in Washington, DC
- August 2012: Portal Team webinar for conservation organizations
- February 2013: Coastal States Organization Capitol Hill Regional Ocean Planning (ROP) Briefing
- June 2013: Panel on Regional Ocean Partnerships at the Gulf of Mexico Alliance All-Hands Meeting in Tampa, FL
- October 2013: MARCO/Portal Team workshops in Baltimore, MD, and Norfolk, VA, to engage maritime commerce stakeholders
- November 2013: MARCO/Portal Team workshops in New York, NY, and Wilmington, DE, to engage maritime commerce stakeholders
- December 2013: Panel on regional ocean planning at the North Atlantic Ports Association (NAPA) meeting
- February 2014: Regional recreational data integration workshop with the Portal Team and the Surfrider Foundation
- February 2014: Ocean Health Index team meeting to discuss the index's applicability in the Mid-Atlantic
- February 2014: Panel presentation at the Ocean Frontiers II Premiere and Panel Discussion in Baltimore, MD
- March 2014: Portal Team Communities at Sea webinar to New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council
- March 2014: Panel presentation at the Ocean Frontiers Film event at Virginia Aquarium IMAX Theater in Virginia Beach, VA
- May 2014: Portal Team Communities at Sea mapping workshops with commercial fishing stakeholders in Montauk, NY, and Southampton, NY
- July 2014: [Sector-specific roundtable meeting with submarine cables industry](#)³³ (both telecommunications cables and energy transmission cables) in Bedminster, NJ (MARCO-hosted)
- September 2014: [Sector-specific roundtable meeting with Tug & Barge industry](#),³⁴ assembled under the American Waterways Operators in Portsmouth, VA (MARCO-hosted)
- October 2014: Regional Ocean Partnership panel presentation at the annual Coastal States Organization meeting in Astoria, OR
- October 2014: MARCO presentation at MAFMC meeting in Philadelphia, PA
- October 2014: Stakeholder Liaison Committee webinar (MARCO-hosted)
- October 2014: AIS and Regional Ocean Data Workshop at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC
- January 2015: Panel presentation at the Ocean Frontiers II Premiere and Panel Discussion in New York, NY
- March 2015: Regional Ocean Assessment work group workshop in Annapolis, MD (MARCO-hosted)

- March 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- April 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- May 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- June 2015: MAFMC meeting in Virginia Beach
- June 2015: Capitol Hill Oceans Week (CHOW) events in Washington, DC
- June 2015: Briefing to National Ocean Partnership Program (NOPP) in Arlington, VA
- June 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- July 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- August 2015: Exhibit at White Marlin Open in Ocean City, MD
- August 2015: MARCO website posting of open letter to recreational fishing community by SLC member
- August 2015: SLC Executive Session conference call (MARCO-hosted)
- August 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- September 2015: Exhibit and Portal demonstration kiosk at AWEA Offshore Wind Conference in Baltimore, MD
- September 2015: Breakfast update meeting at AWEA Offshore Wind Conference in Baltimore, MD (MARCO-hosted)
- September 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- October 2015: AWEA Offshore Wind Committee update (conference call)
- October 2015: Webinar on AIS/marine traffic data for new SLC members (Chamber of Shipping of America and Cruise Line International Association) (MARCO-hosted)
- October 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- November 2015: SLC Meeting to discuss draft RPB materials in Annapolis, MD (MARCO-hosted)
- November 2015: Panel presentation at the Ocean Frontiers Film event at the Charlottesville Film Festival, VA
- November 2015: "How Tuesday" Portal tutorial webinar
- November 2015: Portal Team demonstration kiosk at the New Jersey League of Municipalities Convention in Atlantic City
- December 2015: Update presentation to North Atlantic Ports Association (NAPA) in Alexandria, VA
- December 2015: Meeting with fishing industry representatives to provide overview of marine life and habitat data and Communities at Sea mapping efforts and to document caveats for data sets in Annapolis, MD (during MAFMC meeting) (MARCO-hosted)
- February 2016: MAFMC meeting in New Bern, NC
- February 2016: Panel presentation at the Ocean Frontiers Film event at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA
- March 2016: Scientific Experts Forum on Marine Life Data and Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning in Baltimore, MD (MARCO-hosted with Portal Team)
- March 2016: MARCO Stakeholder Liaison Committee Executive Session in Baltimore, MD (MARCO-hosted)
- March 2016: Portal "How Tuesday" webinar focused on the Regional Ocean Assessment
- April 2016: Portal webinar focused on the Marine Life and Data Analysis Team (MDAT)

project

- April 2016: MARCO exhibit at Beneath the Sea SCUBA and dive convention in Secaucus, NJ
- May 2016: Portal “How Tuesday” webinar focused on the Human Use Data Synthesis (HUDS) project
- June 2016: North Atlantic Ports Association in Burlington, VT
- June 2016: Capitol Hill Oceans Week (CHOW) events in Washington, DC
- June 2016: Participation in Capitol Hill staff briefings on Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan
- June 2016: Panel presentation at the Ocean Frontiers Film event at the Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond, VA
- June 2016: MAFMC meeting in Newark, DE
- June 2016: AWEA Offshore Wind Committee update (conference call)

Looking Ahead

The RPB is committed to continuing stakeholder outreach and public engagement in regional ocean planning. As the RPB transitions to implementation in 2017 and beyond, the RPB will update the public on ongoing activities and efforts to engage stakeholders in the process will continue.

Endnotes:

¹ In 2009 the Governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia signed the Mid-Atlantic Governors' Agreement on Ocean Conservation: <http://midatlanticocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/MidAtlantic-Governors-Agreement.pdf>. The Agreement established the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) as a partnership to address shared regional priorities and provide a collective voice.

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