

# MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL ON THE OCEAN

2011-2012  
MARCO Workplan

June 15, 2011



New York - New Jersey - Delaware - Maryland - Virginia

# ABOUT MARCO...

On June 4, 2009, the Governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia agreed to address regional ocean management challenges by signing the Mid-Atlantic Governors' Agreement on Ocean Conservation. They committed to regional collaboration to advance goals to protect our ocean and coast. The Governors' MARCO Agreement outlines the significance and changing nature of the Mid-Atlantic region, the guiding foundations of the agreement, and the four priority issue areas. Subsequently a fifth priority issue (coastal and marine spatial planning) was added as a tool to help accomplish the other four priority issue areas. Thus the five issues and goals are:

- Coordinate protection of important habitats and sensitive unique offshore areas on a regional scale
- Collaborate on a regional approach to support the sustainable development of renewable energy in offshore areas
- Prepare the region's coastal communities for the impacts of climate change on ocean and coastal resources
- Promote improvement in the region's coastal water quality
- Build capacity for coastal and marine spatial planning including enhancement of the MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal

The following 2011-2012 Workplan describes the actions that will be completed by MARCO's five issue Action Teams.



## MARCO Offshore Habitat Team 2011-2012 Action Work Plan

<b>MARCO Vision</b>	Ensure key ocean habitats of the Mid-Atlantic are protected from activities that threaten their sensitive and unique features, biological populations, and ecological processes.
<b>MARCO Desired Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify critical Mid-Atlantic habitats and migratory pathways based on existing information</li> <li>• Contribute information to a regional internet mapping system (MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal) to identify and depict critical offshore habitats for use by government decision-makers and stakeholders</li> <li>• Create Mid-Atlantic marine habitat protection and restoration measures to guide decision-making and management of critical offshore habitats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action No. 1</b></p> <p>Identify critical offshore habitat areas using existing data.</p> <p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Criteria that characterize critical offshore habitat determined</li> <li>2. NCCOS Mid-Atlantic data and other appropriate and available data obtained &amp; posted to MARCO Portal</li> <li>3. Mid-Atlantic critical offshore habitat areas identified &amp; characterized based on available data</li> <li>4. Resulting dataset of geographic extent of identified critical offshore habitat areas posted to MARCO Portal</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Action No. 2</b></p> <p>Identify and prioritize data needed to identify additional critical offshore habitats.</p> <p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Missing data for offshore areas identified &amp; prioritized in order to locate and characterize additional offshore habitats across the region</li> <li>2. Partners (federal, state, scientific, NGO) who are interested in, planning for, or currently researching Mid-Atlantic areas of interest and understand fiscal constraints and timelines for completion identified</li> <li>3. Strategy for gathering additional data, including partners, funding, and timeline drafted</li> <li>4. Commitments and timelines for new data creation from appropriate survey/research agencies and partners sought</li> </ol>	

### **Action No. 3**

Develop guidelines for MARCO states to apply federal consistency authority to actions that may impact critical offshore habitat; and for other federal agencies to use in decision-making.

#### **Deliverables**

1. Preliminary analysis that identifies commonalities or potential commonalities across the MARCO States with regard to consistency decisions conducted by MARCO states
2. Analysis of federal statutes to determine how they protect offshore habitats from impacts and share with states
3. Areas or issues for uniform application of federal consistency by the states identified  
Activities for which there may be limited ability to conduct consistency review under CZMA identified by principals
4. Regulated and unregulated activities that may negatively impact identified areas determined
5. Guidelines document for applying consistency to proposed offshore activities that may affect coastal resources drafted
6. Unregulated offshore activities that may be addressed and considered in any new or revised statute(s) compiled

#### **Action Team Participants:**

- Mid-Atlantic States: New York (Chair) , Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware
- U.S Department of Interior: BOEMRE, F&WS, USGS
- Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
- Others as appropriate

## MARCO Offshore Renewable Energy Team 2011-2012 Action Work Plan

<b>MARCO Vision</b>	Promote the sustainable development of offshore renewable energy resources and provide a predictable regulatory framework that is based on an enhanced scientific understanding of the impacts of energy development on coastal and ocean resources.
<b>MARCO Desired Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and/or clarify state policies and regulations and the permitting processes that influence offshore wind energy facility siting and operation within the regional context</li> <li>• Contribute information to the MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal to facilitate responsible siting of offshore renewable wind energy projects</li> <li>• Develop shared research and monitoring protocols for assessing the construction and operations impacts of energy development on ocean and coastal resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action No. 1</b></p> <p>Develop guidelines for MARCO states to apply federal consistency authority to actions that influence offshore wind energy facility siting, construction, and operation; and for federal agencies and developers to use in decision-making.</p> <p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List of state statutory authorities and regulatory standards that can be used to regulate and/or mitigate impacts from offshore wind energy development</li> <li>2. List of ecologically, economically, and socially important Mid-Atlantic ocean resources and uses</li> <li>3. Uniform guidelines document to provide a regional approach to applying the MARCO states' federal consistency provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act to proposed federal actions that may affect the siting, construction, and operation of offshore wind energy facilities</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Action No. 2*</b></p> <p>Develop Consistent Survey and Monitoring Protocols for Individual Offshore Wind Projects.</p> <p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Guidance identifying protocols for collection of environmental data related to the siting, construction and monitoring of offshore wind energy projects</li> </ol> <p>* Project activities will start after funding is obtained</p>	

**Action Team Participants:**

- Mid-Atlantic States: Maryland (Chair) , New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware
- U.S Department of Interior: BOEMRE and F&WS
- Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Energy

## MARCO Climate Change/Sea Level Rise Team 2011-2012 Action Work Plan

<b>MARCO Vision</b>	Prepare the Mid-Atlantic region for the impacts of climate change, primarily sea level rise impacts on regional infrastructure, coastal habitat, and shoreline management.
<b>MARCO Desired Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and acquire the data needed to conduct a regional vulnerability assessment for the impacts of sea level rise and increased coastal flooding on critical infrastructure and coastal habitats</li> <li>• Institute a means of storing and delivering the data needed for sea level rise and increased coastal flooding planning and decision-making</li> <li>• Facilitate the exchange of information on coastal vulnerability, community resiliency, and shoreline management of sea level rise and increased coastal flooding</li> <li>• Initiate adaptation measures to collectively reduce the region's vulnerability to the impacts of sea level rise and increased coastal flooding</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action No. 1</b></p> <p>Collect accurate, high resolution topography (LiDAR) and associated metadata for each coastal county of the five Mid-Atlantic States. Incorporate elevation data into a SLR viewer.</p> <p><b>Deliverables:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A detailed Map and description of current status of high resolution topography (LiDAR) for the five Mid-Atlantic States, county coverage map, and data descriptors. (Metadata)</li> <li>2. A gap analysis of geographic areas where data still needs to be collected and description of any data anomalies that would prohibit their use in a regional coverage of area for inundation scenario mapping</li> <li>3. Provide information through a web based sea level rise and coastal flood impact viewer</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Action No. 2*</b></p> <p>Inventory existing GIS data for critical infrastructure and coastal habitats in the Mid-Atlantic region and address any data gaps.</p> <p><b>Deliverables:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A GIS gap analysis of critical infrastructure identified as priorities for the region</li> </ol> <p>* Project activities will start after funding is obtained</p>	

**Action No. 3\***

Explore options for storage and delivery of data sets including distributed as well as a centralized portal.

**Deliverables**

1. A summary of the recommended alternatives for regional data storage, management, distribution, and use for decision support activities

\* Project activities will start after funding is obtained

**Action No. 4**

Develop information sharing processes for sea level rise information and efforts in the Mid-Atlantic States including outreach, education, and public awareness.

**Deliverables**

1. A consistent set of scenarios across the Mid-Atlantic for communicating the impacts of sea level rise and increased coastal flooding
2. A communications and messaging strategy to convey information to the public on the impacts of sea level rise and increased coastal flooding

**ACTION No. 5\***

Conduct a regional assessment and vertical control survey benchmark correction throughout the Mid-Atlantic to enable accurate higher resolution monitoring of sea level rise and subsidence.

**Deliverables:**

1. An evaluation and gap analysis to assess and quantify the vertical accuracy of NOAA's National Geodetic Survey (NGS) vertical control network (benchmarks) throughout the Mid-Atlantic
2. Implementation of the NGS Height Modernization initiative (HTMOD) to correct problems at key locations throughout the Mid-Atlantic identified as part of the gap analysis

\* Project activities will start after funding is obtained

**Action Team Participants:**

- Mid-Atlantic States: Delaware (Chair), Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Virginia
- U.S Department of Interior: USGS
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency



## MARCO Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Team 2011-2012 Action Work Plan

<b>MARCO Vision</b>	Build capacity for effective coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) in the region, including enhanced development of the MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal.
<b>MARCO Desired Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate and implement a Mid-Atlantic CMSP planning process with (or as) the National Ocean Council's Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body that engages all stakeholders (local, state and federal agencies; the regional fisheries management council, scientists, conservation organizations, all ocean users, etc.) in the development of a Mid-Atlantic CMSP</li> <li>• Identify regional objectives for a Mid-Atlantic Coastal and Marine Spatial Plan</li> <li>• Enhance MARCO's Mid-Atlantic Mapping and Planning Portal to make it a robust decision support system that incorporates ecosystem-based, scientifically informed and adaptive management tools that can serve as the foundation for CMSP in the region</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action No. 1</b></p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement: In concert with (or as) the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, establish mechanisms for engaging regional stakeholders, solicit input, develop management scenario options.</p> <p><b>Deliverables*</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roster of Mid-Atlantic Stakeholders participating in the CMSP process, state-by-state</li> <li>2. A stakeholder outreach plan</li> <li>3. MARCO website pages containing info on the Mid-Atlantic CMSP process and the outreach plan</li> <li>4. Stakeholder meeting summaries</li> <li>5. Summary report on spatial needs and goals by use sector as a GIS spatial layer (understand what each sector desires/wants/needs)</li> <li>6. Preliminary management scenario options</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Action No. 2</b></p> <p>Portal Enhancement: Add data, develop overlay analyses, create long-term housing and maintenance plan and coordinate with NOC prototype portal development and CSC Marine Cadastre.</p> <p><b>Deliverables*</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhanced online MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal</li> <li>2. Plan for long term housing and maintenance of the Portal</li> </ol>	

\*All deliverables are dependent upon receipt of additional funding and/or technical support

**Action Team Participants:**

- Mid-Atlantic States: Virginia (Chair), Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York
- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: NOS and NMFS
- U.S Department of Interior: BOEMRE and F&WS
- Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard
- Environmental Protection Agency
- The Nature Conservancy

## MARCO Water Quality Team 2011-2012 Action Work Plan

<b>MARCO Vision</b>	To evaluate, focus and accelerate the implementation of strategies, policies and programs that will improve the ability of the region's states to address the key threats to ocean water quality.
<b>MARCO Desired Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A forum for discussion, exchange of information, and evaluation among state and federal agencies on ocean water quality issues, data, modeling, authorities, and efforts</li> <li>• Evaluate and promote strategies to strengthen the region's efforts to improve water quality through reduction of atmospheric deposition, marine debris, and traditional sources (urban and agricultural runoff)</li> <li>• Provide technical expertise and coordination in communicating multi-state water quality initiatives and needs to the federal government</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action No. 1</b></p> <p>Evaluate current and future opportunities within the five MARCO State's federal consistency authority to address atmospheric contribution of Nitrogen to the region's marine waters as a result of federal agency activities, authorizations or rule-making.</p> <p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An examination of existing laws and policy framework that deal with potential activities and an analysis that will determine whether and to what extent each of the five state's capacity can be improved to address atmospheric contribution of Nitrogen to the region's marine waters as a result of Federal actions (e.g. rulemaking, authorization, activities)</li> <li>2. Recommendations for each state for applying consistency to address atmospheric contribution of Nitrogen affecting coastal resources</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Action No. 2*</b></p> <p>Develop effective tools and/or programs to control the most significant impacts from marine debris (plastics, derelict fishing gear and vessels, etc).</p> <p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A framework for cooperatively addressing land and ocean-generated debris and derelict fishing gear</li> <li>2. Identify and prioritize efforts to address different aspects of marine debris assessment, reduction, prevention, and outreach</li> <li>3. Recommendations for effective programs for addressing marine debris in the Mid Atlantic</li> </ol> <p>* Activities will be re-evaluated after completion of Action No. 1</p>	

**Action Team Participants:**

- Mid-Atlantic States: Maryland (Chair), New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency



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