



MID-ATLANTIC COMMITTEE ON THE OCEAN (MACO)

3.11.19

PURPOSE:

The purpose of MACO is to facilitate coordination and collaboration among governmental entities and stakeholders, advance regional ocean planning, and enhance the vitality of the region's ocean ecosystem and economy through increased communication. MACO is a committee established by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO), the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean partnership (ROP), to foster collaboration among states, federal agencies, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), and federally recognized tribes and with stakeholders. In recognition of the intersecting responsibilities for managing and using the ocean waters off the Mid-Atlantic, MACO has been established as a collaborative effort to build on the responsibilities and authorities of the participants to advance regional ocean planning.

GOALS:

- Provide a venue for ongoing regional information sharing and coordination about the Mid-Atlantic's ocean ecosystem and economy;
- Generate a deeper understanding and awareness of state, federal, tribal and regional fisheries management entities' programs and other activities affecting ocean waters off the Mid-Atlantic;
- Identify and pursue, where appropriate, opportunities for collaboration on regional ocean issues;
- Generate and maintain a list of contacts engaged in ocean planning to facilitate communication across the region;
- Identify ways to enhance federal data sharing and support for the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal to inform ocean planning and management; and
- Engage stakeholders in learning about, identifying and responding to regional ocean issues.

OBJECTIVES:

MACO will identify collaborative opportunities and develop a set of objectives that advance its goals and improve ocean planning and management in the region. MACO will periodically review and report on progress in advancing objectives and relevant implementation activities. The objectives will be reviewed with stakeholders, as needed, at a Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum event that will be organized annually as resources allow.

STRUCTURE:

Membership:

MACO membership includes representatives of the MARCO states, federal agencies, federally recognized tribes, and the MAFMC. The initial membership of MACO includes all entities that were formally represented on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, which are those with significant responsibilities related to management and use of the ocean. The members of each governmental entity will identify a representative that has professional responsibilities related to use and management of coastal and ocean resources to serve as a primary point of contact. Government or quasi-government representatives with interest and relevant expertise may participate as members of MACO and/or participate in collaborative work groups. MACO will review its initial membership and may consider additions and changes to the membership based on its objectives and collaborative opportunities.

Leadership:

Overall direction for MACO will be guided by a Steering Committee of individuals derived from the membership. The Steering Committee will include at least one state, one federal agency, one tribal and one MAFMC representative. The initial chair of MACO will be a state representative designated by MARCO. The Steering Committee will be responsible for the administrative aspects of keeping MACO organized and moving forward, including communicating regularly, and organizing and convening quarterly MACO conference calls. MACO will review and develop additional guidelines and processes, as needed, to further delineate member and Steering Committee composition, terms of service, roles and responsibilities.

Collaborative Work Groups:

MACO will seek to advance goals and objectives primarily through a collaborative work group process. These can include, but not be limited to, ongoing collaborative efforts to address actions identified in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.¹ MARCO will provide administrative support for the work groups or other collaborative efforts that are priorities for the states. Federal agencies, the MAFMC, and tribal representatives may also establish or continue work groups or other collaborative efforts that are priorities for their entities. Individuals from state agencies, federal agencies, federally recognized tribes and the MAFMC are invited to participate on work groups.

Authority and Decision-making:

MACO is not intended to establish any new authorities, and MACO activities will be consistent with existing laws and regulations. MACO provides a venue to facilitate and support Federal participation and collaboration with the regional ocean partnership. MACO will be responsible for reviewing the ongoing process for collaboration, identifying and reviewing goals and objectives, and compiling and

¹ Current collaborative work groups include Marine Debris; Recreational and Non-consumptive Use; Ocean Acidification; Ocean Indicators; Shifting Species; and, Maritime Commerce and Navigation.

sharing information regarding work groups and other collaborative efforts. MACO will make decisions regarding its collaboration efforts, as needed, based on discussion and general consensus among the members.

MID-ATLANTIC OCEAN FORUM:

MACO will plan and organize an in-person annual meeting to be known as the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum, as resources are available. The purpose of the Forum is to revisit and update MACO goals and objectives, review and discuss work group achievements and plans, and identify potential collaborative efforts based on emerging issues. MACO will establish a planning committee to plan the Forum.

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS:

Governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, industry partners, fishing communities, and other ocean partners will be invited to participate in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum, periodic conference calls, webinars, and on work groups and other collaborative efforts where appropriate. Engagement of stakeholders and regional partners will ensure that broad perspectives are considered and, where possible, opportunities identified to leverage collective efforts for the advancement of ocean planning and stewardship.

General principles for stakeholder engagement include the following:

- provide regular updates and varied engagement opportunities;
- identify opportunities for stakeholder participation in MACO activities;
- be transparent in decision-making; and
- consider additional options for engagement as needs and issues evolve.