



MID-ATLANTIC COMMITTEE ON THE OCEAN (MACO)

4.26.19

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;
- 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 work plans, including 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 work plans and objectives will be reviewed, 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, and those with significant responsibilities related to management and use of the ocean. The members of each governmental entity will identify a representative who has professional responsibilities related to use and management of coastal and ocean resources to serve as a primary point of contact. Current MACO members may reach out to other governmental and quasi-governmental representatives and invite them to be a member of MACO and/or to participate in collaborative work groups. MACO will periodically review its membership and may consider changes to the membership based on its objectives and collaborative opportunities.

Leadership:

MACO will be chaired by a state representative designated by the MARCO Management Board. MACO will be guided by an eight member Steering Committee of individuals derived from the membership. The Steering Committee will include the chair, two additional state representatives, three federal agency representatives, and one federally-recognized tribal representative, and one MAFMC representative.

The Steering Committee will be responsible for MACO's overall direction to further its goals to advance regional ocean planning, oversee development of work plans and plan for the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum, approve Work Groups to be established under the auspices of MACO, and ensure that stakeholder engagement principles are followed. The Steering Committee will also support the administrative aspects of keeping MACO organized and moving forward, including communicating regularly, and organizing and convening quarterly MACO conference calls. The Steering Committee 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 its goals and objectives primarily through work groups or other collaborative processes ("Work Groups") These can include, but not be limited to, ongoing collaborative efforts to address actions identified in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan.¹ Work Groups shall be led by MACO members and may include non-governmental entities as appropriate. MARCO will provide administrative support for the Work Groups that are priorities for the states. Federal agencies, the MAFMC, and tribal representatives may also establish or continue Work Groups 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:

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

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. The MACO Steering Committee will be responsible for identifying collaboration opportunities, reviewing the ongoing process for collaboration, identifying and reviewing goals and objectives, and compiling and sharing information regarding Work Groups.

The Steering Committee shall use a consensus-based model for making decisions. The Steering Committee will make decisions through discussion and agreement among its 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. The MACO Steering Committee 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.