

*Project Title:*

**Exploring the Mid-Atlantic Continental Shelf and its Implications for Ocean Planning:  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) Focus Area 1 Proposal  
under the NOAA Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program – FY2012 Funding Competition**

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**\$187,800**

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## **Project Summary**

Deep submarine canyons, corals, vast migration corridors – these are some of the diverse offshore ocean habitats that characterize the Mid-Atlantic region. They support a rich diversity of marine life, including sea turtles, whales, dolphins, seabirds, and an array of fish and crustaceans. This ecological wealth supports valuable commercial and recreational fisheries, and provides humans with food, recreation, energy, and health. The vast ocean areas of the Mid-Atlantic host a range of economic activities, including shipping, dredged material disposal, and sand and gravel mining. Offshore renewable energy development has joined the list of activities needing space in the Mid-Atlantic ocean. As ocean uses intensify, so does the need to understand potential impacts to marine habitats and wildlife, and how best to manage the human activities that affect complex ocean ecosystems.

MARCO proposes to host a symposium titled *On the Edge: Exploring the Mid-Atlantic Continental Shelf and its Implications for Ocean Planning*, which will focus on the state of scientific understanding of the Mid-Atlantic ocean, continental shelf, and submarine canyons, highlighting canyons, corals, and corridors (the three “C”s) to tell the story of ecosystem productivity and diversity, and the opportunities and challenges of regional ocean planning. The proposed project will raise public awareness, interest in, and visibility of MARCO and ocean planning, by showcasing the significance of these little known but important continental shelf habitats.

The symposium will showcase the latest work and ongoing studies on canyons, corals, and corridors. The fundamental information compiled as a result of the symposium will demonstrate the value of these offshore ecosystems, and highlight the opportunities for pursuing regional ocean planning. The project will directly benefit regional ocean management by fulfilling science needs, building partnerships, and generating broad stakeholder engagement through knowledge and data sharing.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's (MARCO) success in ocean planning depends on building lasting and innovative partnerships that share an understanding of the importance of ocean ecosystems to the quality of life and economic well-being. The proposed symposium will provide an important and timely opportunity to highlight the significant progress that is being made in the region, and nurture an expanded group of "champions" in the private and public sector to support ocean planning. The symposium will address and dynamically link two national areas of special emphasis from the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*, "Regional Ocean Ecosystem Protection and Restoration" and "Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Observations Mapping and Infrastructure." MARCO will advance these priorities and will also focus on its own regional ocean priorities identified in *Actions, Timelines and Leadership to Advance the Mid-Atlantic Governors' Agreement on Ocean Conservation and MARCO Workplan*.

The primary beneficiaries of the outcomes of the cooperative agreement include state, tribal, and federal ocean resource managers, decision makers, stakeholders, industry leaders, academic scientists, and non-governmental organizations with responsibilities relating to conservation and management of ocean resources and uses within the Mid-Atlantic.

Partners: Initial list includes NOAA, CSSF, MARACOOS, and the MARCO Ocean Planning Action Team and the Mapping and Planning Portal Sub-Team. Other partners will be engaged as described below.

Proposed Project Funding Schedule: October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013: \$187,800

## Cooperative Agreement Proposal

### Exploring the Mid-Atlantic Continental Shelf and its Implications for Ocean Planning

#### Project Description

Deep submarine canyons, corals, vast migration corridors – these are some of the diverse offshore ocean habitats that characterize the Mid-Atlantic region. They support a rich diversity of marine life, including sea turtles, whales, dolphins, seabirds, and an array of fish and crustaceans. This ecological wealth supports valuable commercial and recreational fisheries and provides humans with food, recreation, energy, and health. The vast ocean areas of the Mid-Atlantic host a range of economic activities, including shipping, dredged material disposal, and sand and gravel mining. Offshore renewable energy development has joined this list of activities needing space in the Mid-Atlantic ocean. As ocean uses intensify, so too does the need to understand potential impacts to marine habitats and wildlife, and how best to manage the human activities that affect complex ocean ecosystems.

MARCO proposes to host a symposium titled *On the Edge: Exploring the Mid-Atlantic Continental Shelf and its Implications for Ocean Planning*, which will focus on the state of scientific understanding of the Mid-Atlantic ocean, continental shelf, and submarine canyons, highlighting three fascinating features – canyons, corals, and corridors (the three “C”s) – to tell the story of the ecosystem productivity and diversity, and opportunities and challenges of regional ocean planning. The proposed project will raise public awareness, interest in, and visibility of MARCO and ocean planning by showcasing the significance of these little known but important continental shelf habitats.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean’s (MARCO) success in ocean planning depends on building lasting and innovative partnerships that share an understanding of the importance of ocean ecosystems to the quality of life and economic well-being. The proposed symposium will provide an important and timely opportunity to highlight the significant progress that is being made in the region, and nurture an expanded group of “champions” in the private and public sector to support ocean planning. The symposium will address and dynamically link two national areas of special emphasis from the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*, “Regional Ocean Ecosystem Protection and Restoration” and “Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Observations Mapping and Infrastructure.” MARCO will advance these priorities and will also focus on its own regional ocean priority to coordinate protection of important habitats and sensitive and unique offshore areas on a regional scale (for more information, see *Actions, Timelines and Leadership to Advance the Mid-Atlantic Governors’ Agreement on Ocean Conservation*<sup>1</sup> and *MARCO Workplan*<sup>2</sup>.)

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<sup>1</sup> Actions, Timelines and Leadership to Advance the Mid-Atlantic Governors’ Agreement on Ocean Conservation; <http://www.midatlanticocean.org/summary-actions.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> 2011-2012 MARCO Workplan; [http://www.midatlanticocean.org/2011\\_2012\\_MARCOworkplan.pdf](http://www.midatlanticocean.org/2011_2012_MARCOworkplan.pdf)

## Symposium Goal and Objectives

**Goal: Raise public awareness, interest in, and visibility of MARCO and ocean planning by showcasing the significance of the important shelf canyons, corals, and migration corridors of the Mid-Atlantic**

**Objective 1: Showcase the significance of the Mid-Atlantic ocean as the context for ocean governance and management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The symposium, *On the Edge: Exploring the Mid-Atlantic Continental Shelf and its Implications for Ocean Planning*, will create the venue for state, federal and tribal coastal and ocean managers, private and industrial users, and policymakers, to share information about the current state of ocean planning and management in the Mid-Atlantic. The symposium will highlight: the achievements and goals of current regional marine and coastal programs; existing and anticipated regional pressures (e.g., interest in renewable energy development, potential expansion of shipping transportation, etc.); updates on the MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal; and recent developments prompted by the National Ocean Policy (NOP). It will also provide a venue to highlight MARCO's priorities: promoting renewable energy, protecting important ocean habitats, ocean planning and mapping, protecting water quality and adapting to climate change. The symposium will provide an opportunity to determine the key challenges of managing an increasingly busy ocean for compatibility and sustainability, including getting a better understanding of science needed to determine how to cost-effectively protect the ocean resources.

**Objective 2: Demonstrate the ecosystem value of continental shelf canyons, corals, and migration corridors in the Mid-Atlantic ocean and opportunities for sustaining that value through regional ocean planning**

The symposium will improve the collective understanding of ocean scientists, researchers, and managers about the continental shelf canyons, corals, and migration corridors in the Mid-Atlantic ocean, and current ocean research. It will also help define what needs to be understood to move forward with managing these valuable habitats. This will help guide scientific investments and determine what is required to inform decisions, behaviors, and management. It will also identify critical research and exploration needs for the Mid-Atlantic to impart a sense of shared responsibility for its future. The symposium will act as a venue to exchange knowledge and seek innovative collaborations and partnerships by creating a regional network of scientists, decision-makers, and others, in the resources and features of the Mid-Atlantic ocean. The symposium provides an excellent opportunity for facilitating the exchange of information and data, and fostering continued coordinated scientific and planning efforts.

A key element of the symposium will be to showcase the latest research (completed and ongoing) on Mid-Atlantic canyons, corals, and corridors being undertaken by federal and state agencies, leading researchers, academia, industry, and other organizations. This may include information on the biological and biophysical features, human uses of the ocean, and ocean ecosystems and climate change. Additionally, the symposium will draw attention to the most up-to-date technologies in ocean exploration.

The symposium will highlight and build on recent studies on the canyons, corals, and corridors. Examples include those completed or underway:

- Mid-Atlantic Regional Association for Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (MARACOOS);
- NOAA's Ships Okeanos Explorer and Nancy Foster research vessels;
- academic research including Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University, Cornell University, Rutgers University Institute of Marine and Coastal Science, Stevens Institute of Technology, Princeton Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory, University of Maryland, University of Delaware, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant Programs; and,
- other federal and regional initiatives such as the NOAA Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program; the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fisheries Management Council Habitat Committee and Habitat Development Plans; International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Working Group on the Northwest Atlantic Regional Sea (WGNARS); Framework for Quantitative Seascape Ecology; Department of Energy (DOE) funded studies by the Biodiversity Research Institute and others; and a host of studies recently funded by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and NOAA.

The compilation of recent and ongoing research will: inform ocean planning and management efforts in the Mid-Atlantic, including implications for state interests in federally-managed waters and Regional Planning Bodies<sup>3</sup> (RPB); fill critical science and ocean use information gaps; answer questions about sustainably managing the canyons, corals, and corridors in the Mid-Atlantic; and determining how these habitats may inform other biological/biophysical and human use issues for ocean planning.

### **Objective 3: Where This All Fits: Ocean Planning in the Mid-Atlantic**

The timing of the proposed symposium is opportune. As a result of FY 2011 ROPFP funding, the MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal is being substantially enhanced in collaboration with key stakeholder groups across the region. The Mid-Atlantic region is looking forward to the establishment of an RPB that will develop regional goals and objectives, leading to the ultimate creation of regional coastal and marine spatial plans. Bringing together the state-based programs, MARCO, federal agencies, and the soon-to-be-formed Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body will improve collective understanding of the current status of science and planning activities and identify where there are some immediate opportunities to move forward.

The symposium will provide a focal point for addressing Steps 2 through 5 of the nine "Essential Elements of the CMSP Process" as listed on page 55 of the July 2010 *Final Recommendations of Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*<sup>4</sup>:

- Identify existing efforts that should help shape the plan throughout the process,
- Engage stakeholders and the public at key points throughout the process, and
- Consult scientists and technical and other experts.

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<sup>3</sup> Under the *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*, an intergovernmental regional planning body will be created in the Mid-Atlantic region to lead the development of a coastal and marine spatial plan.

<sup>4</sup> Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force. July 19, 2012. Page 55. [http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF\\_FinalRecs.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/OPTF_FinalRecs.pdf)

### *Assumptions & Relationship Objectives*

1. The symposium participants will represent a broad cross section of public and private sector leaders, decision-makers, and experts with a diverse range of knowledge, interest, and familiarity with MARCO, Mid-Atlantic regional ecosystem planning and mapping, and ocean management and science.
2. Media attendance and coverage will be solicited, including coverage of the actual symposium, as well as more in-depth feature articles on the importance of Mid-Atlantic ocean ecosystems, and challenges associated with protection of Mid-Atlantic ocean resources.
3. The symposium will highlight current scientific work funded by NOAA, BOEM, DOE, and the “state-of-art” Mid-Atlantic ocean research, ocean observations, ocean mapping activities (including the MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal), and provide opportunities for scientists and researchers to facilitate actionable outcomes.
4. The participants and MARCO will benefit from a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive forum from which MARCO, federal and state agencies, fisheries management entities, and research institutions receive recognition and understanding of how important their work is to managing the resources of the Mid-Atlantic ocean.
5. The symposium will provide an opportunity for MARCO to demonstrate the MARCO Mapping and Planning Portal as an important tool for increasing understanding of ocean ecosystems and human uses, and advancing regional ocean planning.
6. The symposium will build excitement; the content will provide a publicly appealing “hook” to increase the interest of media, elected officials, schools, stakeholders, and the public.
7. This symposium will not be “one-shot,” instead, its content will provide a keystone archive of baseline presentations to refer to and link to other aspects of ocean planning in subsequent events, documents, and briefings, e.g., other biophysical features, wind energy attributes, among others.
8. Additionally, the intent is to increase appreciation of the diverse value of ocean resources, and to develop a new, dynamic, and engaged constituency in the Mid-Atlantic for MARCO and regional ocean planning.

### *Measures of Success*

The initiation of several recent ocean studies makes the proposed symposium well-timed. A number of major research expeditions and data collection efforts will be occurring in 2012 and 2013, providing a wealth of information on Mid-Atlantic ocean resources and features. Even as these various activities are underway, there remains a substantial deficit in collaborative efforts to convene and synthesize these studies to paint an accurate picture of the current resources, features, conditions, and threats to Mid-Atlantic offshore habitats.



Concurrently, the timing is right for moving forward with ocean planning. Offshore wind energy development is moving at a rapid rate: it is critical to understand where the most important ocean habitats are located and how they may be affected by new and increasing human activities. Expansion of the Panama Canal is also expected to change the nature of shipping in the Mid-Atlantic as key ports aim to expand their capacity for receiving huge volumes of cargo.

Allowing for these new and expanded human activities without damaging the ecological services provided by key ocean habitats will be the ultimate measure of our success. But the key measure of success for this symposium will be the increased understanding of participants on where key habitats are located, the services they provide, and ways to minimize negative impacts on those habitats.

MARCO is uniquely qualified to implement this project. MARCO's Management Board consists of respected ocean leaders within each of the Mid-Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia). MARCO has the distinctive ability to bring the best minds together to talk about their work, and set the stage for the National Ocean Council (NOC) by delivering a message that says "good science supports good planning which supports good decisions."

MARCO is well-positioned to host this forum and has the internal capacity to run and organize the symposium Steering Committee, identify potential speakers, and facilitate symposium discussions. MARCO is also heavily engaged in various collaborations with partners that can bring a variety of skills, knowledge, and capacity to contribute to the development of the symposium. MARCO's long standing connections with stakeholders, industry (wind/energy), academia and managers/decision-makers will ensure broad participation and attendance from these groups and others.

The ultimate performance indicator will be the level of information exchanged during the symposium, the quality of the information gathered that can be used by ocean managers in multi-objective ocean planning, and the inspiration garnered by the general public as to the intrinsic and economic value of ocean resources.

### Background

The ocean floor off of the Mid-Atlantic consists of a broad sandy continental shelf with ten deep submarine canyons that support complex ocean habitats and a rich diversity of marine life. The Mid-Atlantic submarine canyons (Hudson, Toms, Carteret, Lindenkohl, Spencer, Wilmington, Baltimore, Poor Mans, Washington, and Norfolk) lay about 50 to 70 miles offshore along the outer edge of the continental shelf. These canyons are physically complex with outcrops, steep slopes, and diverse sediments. They provide a high flux of fine-particle nutrients and often have areas of upwelling associated with high biological productivity. The rocks and boulders exposed at the heads of the canyons and along their steep walls provide habitat for sponges, corals, and anemones that require hard surfaces for attachment – a rare commodity in the mostly sandy Mid-Atlantic Ocean. The canyon habitats provide a refuge for juveniles and adults of many commercially important fish and crabs. All of the canyons are located along the shelf slope break which is known for high concentrations of tuna, swordfish, marine mammals, sea turtles, and seabirds in addition to diverse bottom dwelling fauna. While research and exploration of the canyons has increased, much remains to be discovered.

The outer continental shelf also hosts a wide migration corridor considered critical for safe passage of marine mammals, sea turtles, and fish as they travel their seasonal migration routes. This corridor is also important for a wide diversity of birds (such as scoters, gannets, petrels and shearwaters) that migrate through and forage here. Sandy shoals, the swales between them, and sensitive hard bottom patches within this wide corridor may also be priority areas during migration, spawning, and rearing times. Given that this area is likely to experience the greatest development pressures, more research is needed to identify the most critical habitats within the corridor, including priority areas for migration, nurseries, and spawning.

The hard bottom patches of the continental shelf and canyons support an abundance of corals. These slow-growing and sensitive coral-dominated communities are likely over 1,000 years old, and are among the oldest animals on the planet. Much remains to be discovered about these beautiful structures that provide habitat for other species, including tautog and black sea bass.

Management of these habitats is currently addressed only with respect to their value as fishery habitat. However, their sensitive and ecologically important nature highlights the need for comprehensive regional management of all current and potential uses that will affect these diverse communities. Existing data on the Mid-Atlantic continental shelf and canyons is presently scattered amongst a plethora of academic institutions, government agencies, offshore industry leaders, and other organizations. Collecting and consolidating the existing data is critical to decision-making about human uses of the Mid-Atlantic ocean.

The proposed symposium will build on MARCO's Stakeholder Summit (held in December 2009)<sup>5</sup>, where participants identified several ways in which MARCO could make progress on the Governors' goals of identifying and protecting key habitats, and incorporate these in marine spatial planning efforts. Stakeholders specifically suggested that MARCO support more research to characterize key habitats, address improved information sharing capabilities, and push to explore new educational opportunities. Stakeholders also noted that regional ocean management must be built on broad-based partnerships and strong collaborations that take advantage of local knowledge and incorporates of multiple perspectives.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are critical to the success and development of MARCO and ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic. This proposal will build, reaffirm, and strengthen partnerships by fostering coordination and cooperation across a wide range of partners and interested stakeholders, especially with the federal agencies and the science community to address Mid-Atlantic regional priorities for coastal and ocean management. More specifically, we plan to use our relationships with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (co-lead of the Regional Planning Body) and the other seven federal agencies represented on the Regional Planning Body; consulting services from firms such as Meridian Institute (who MARCO originally contracted with to develop ROP governance options and current contractor to the NOC) and the Udall Foundation (for their public engagement expertise) – pending state contractual requirements; and the Sea

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<sup>5</sup> Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean: A Partnership in Ocean Conservation. December 9-10, 2009; Final Report. <http://www.midatlanticocean.org/final-report-1209.pdf>

Grant programs from the five MARCO states. MARCO will work with existing partners in federal and state agencies, academia, research organizations, NGOs, fisheries management entities, and others who are well-connected in all realms of current ocean science to:

- solicit the involvement of leading scientists in Mid-Atlantic habitat science,
- identifying a broad sampling of participants, and
- determine the best methods to assimilate the resulting information.

MARCO's Principal Investigator, Sarah W. Cooksey, was recently appointed to the National Academy of Sciences' Ocean Studies Board. The Board explores "the science, policies, and infrastructure needed to understand, manage, and conserve coastal and marine environments and resources". Direct access to this group of leaders within the ocean community will ensure that both a broad spectrum of expert ocean representatives will be engaged in the development and implementation of this symposium.

The symposium will build off existing relationships of the MARCO states with the scientific community, state, local and federal decision-makers, the NGO community, the fisheries communities and other recreational ocean users, and industrial users of the ocean. Dialogue with these key partners will occur at the onset of symposium planning and consistently throughout the planning process. Development of white papers and media strategy will also be done in tandem with these partners to highlight the critical integrated nature of ocean resource management and the complexity of diverse ocean uses.

MARCO is collaborating with the Coast States Stewardship Foundation (CSSF) on implementation of this project. MARCO and CSSF share similar ocean priorities for the region and both were formed to advance coastal and ocean management. MARCO and the CSSF have agreed to work together based on the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed February 21, 2012 (see Appendix E). The MOU describes specific roles and responsibilities where CSSF has expertise to support MARCO. CSSF is responsible for all activities articulated in the grant, and will work closely with MARCO to ensure that all activities are completed within the requisite timeframe.

### Audience

The presenters at the symposium will be leading researchers (scientists, academic institutions, etc.) who will reflect on how recent science has advanced our knowledge of the Mid-Atlantic and identify areas of consensus by the scientific community. The proposed symposium will provide information, data, management tools and processes that the MARCO Management Board, a broad network of federal agencies, regional fisheries management organizations, ocean resource management agencies, ocean research institutions, marine industries, and other groups can use to enhance their decision-making for critical ocean habitat resources and uses in the Mid-Atlantic.

Participants of the symposium could include:

- Ocean user groups and commercial stakeholder sectors, including offshore energy, commercial and recreational fishing, shipping and navigation interests, tourism interests and marine trades;

- Mid-Atlantic elected officials (including Governor’s offices), state agencies (including coastal zone management offices) and local governments representatives from coastal communities;
- Federal agencies with authorities and expertise in ocean management, science and governance;
- The regional science and research community, including MARACOOS, universities, and Sea Grant programs; and
- Diverse stakeholders concerned with habitat protection and ocean conservation.

## Approach

MARCO and its Habitat, Renewable Energy, Water Quality, and Ocean Planning Action Teams<sup>6</sup> will work closely with CSSF, and other partners, to create a stimulating symposium program, draw in expert speakers and presenters, and attract a broad audience.

Substantive planning will be needed to ensure that the symposium serves as a forum for building awareness of the importance of ocean resources to the Mid-Atlantic region. The expectation is that the symposium will involve the development of written and online materials that can be used to educate and inspire symposium attendees as well as the general public.

MARCO’s first step will be to develop a Steering Committee composed of MARCO Management Board members, Federal agency representatives (e.g., BOEM, NOAA), regional fisheries management entities, and key NGO, industry, and scientific leaders within the region. The Steering Committee will be responsible for all aspects of planning, including the development of the symposium program, establishment of a work plan, and coordination of invitations to key experts. The Steering Committee will direct identification of key early contacts with leaders in the region to consult on symposium objectives and content. The Steering Committee will also be responsible for garnering support from a variety of sectors for the goals of the symposium, ensuring the engagement of key leaders, stakeholder, and practitioners; and connecting with targeted media relations and marketing.

The symposium will focus on engaging the scientific community in a dialogue about how to translate scientific gains into actionable measures that will generate organizational structures that foster science-based ocean management. A key question for symposium participants will be “where do we want ocean management in the Mid-Atlantic to be 10 years from now and what do we need to get there?” To move beyond a simple two-day overview of the state of the science, the sessions at the symposium will be framed to engage the scientific community and other participants in a discussion about how existing science informs current and future decision making (e.g., over the forthcoming decade), as well as what key scientific gaps need to be filled. The symposium will have a number of different tracks to match MARCO’s priority areas, technical paper sessions and exhibits, complemented by poster sessions, panel discussions,

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<sup>6</sup> MARCO’s Action Teams are responsible for identifying and pursuing specific activities that address the shared regional priorities.

public awareness and media sessions, and other professional and social activities. Proceedings will be published following the symposium; all papers and materials submitted at the symposium will be included.

The basic elements of the symposium are listed below:

Goal: To develop a symposium that is, in and of itself, a forum for building awareness of the importance of ocean resources to the Mid-Atlantic.

Time period: Late Summer/Fall 2013; particular attention will be given to avoiding conflicts with related subject events. Development of proceedings will follow the event.

Location: Site location will be in the Mid-Atlantic U.S., with access to an airport or train station.

Duration: Two days

Size: Approximately 200 participants

Symposium Design: Partners will collaborate with MARCO in the design and development of the symposium content, mission, purpose and objectives, and translating that information into actual symposium agenda items and materials.

Communications and Marketing: MARCO and partners will develop an effective communications, marketing, and media strategy related to the symposium that may include social networking, YouTube, marketing, targeted mailings, emails, and potentially a webcast and/or podcast of the symposium.

Working with targeted strong general and scientific media outlets – for which the Mid-Atlantic is especially well placed – the symposium planning team could garner in-depth analysis of critical ocean issues that would be addressed at the symposium.

Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement: The symposium could serve as a focal point for development of educational materials on ocean resources for a variety of audiences, including the general public, the media, and symposium participants. The intent is that these materials become “lasting” educational materials on ocean resources in general, as well as on topics that are the focus of the symposium

## **Benefits**

MARCO was established to improve the management of the Mid-Atlantic’s ocean resources by refining our understanding of ocean and coastal ecosystems and addressing the fragmented planning and management of societal uses of our coastal and ocean resources. This proposal will directly benefit ocean and coastal resources and regional ocean management by clarifying what the most important habitats are, where they are located, and how they may be affected by human uses.

Additionally, this proposal will assist in advancing MARCO’s Action Teams – especially renewable energy, habitat protection, ocean planning and mapping, and water quality – by harnessing

much needed information and providing a forum for discussing how all that information could lead to better management. The proposed symposium will also provide MARCO with the opportunity to address some key concerns that were brought up in the 2009 Stakeholder Summit, namely that we lack data on ocean habitats.

Highlighting recent federal Mid-Atlantic ocean research through the symposium and the media attention will yield direct benefits to managers and users of the Mid-Atlantic ocean (e.g., NOAA, the NOC, the newly-formed Mid-Atlantic RPB, the MAFMC, and maritime industries) but providing timely information for ocean planning efforts. The symposium creates an opportunity to inform Mid-Atlantic ocean plan efforts.

In addition to meeting the priority objectives stated by the NOC, the proposed project will also help advance NOAA’s mission “to understand and predict changes in [...] oceans and coasts, share knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources”<sup>7</sup> and BOEM’s Environmental Stewardship program mission to “provide the information needed to predict, assess, and manage impacts from offshore energy and marine mineral exploration, development, and production activities on human, marine, and coastal environments.”<sup>8</sup>

Completion of these objectives will help MARCO to achieve the best outcomes for resilient coastal communities and healthy oceans.

**Milestone Schedule**

The following table describes the timelines and target milestones for the major tasks of this proposal. These tasks include the following key project outcomes and final products:

MILESTONE SCHEDULE		Timeline (by quarter, starting October 1, 2012)			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Major Tasks					
Establishment of, and engagement in, a symposium Steering Committee		X	X	X	X
Logistical Planning	Identification of location options, dates, and estimated number of attendees	X	X		
	Determine travel, lodging and meeting facilities		X	X	

<sup>7</sup> NOAA’s mission statement. <http://www.noaa.gov/about-noaa.html>

<sup>8</sup> BOEM’s mission statement. <http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Environmental-Studies/Our-Story.aspx>

	Develop a specification sheet (sleeping rooms, on-site food service, meeting rooms, exhibit facilities, a/v equipment and support services, etc.)	X	X		
<b>Symposium Planning</b>	Preparation of a meeting plan to include goals and objectives	X			
	Convene scientists ahead of time to develop white papers	X	X	X	
	Call for panel and session proposals		X	X	
	Evaluation of panel and session proposals			X	
	Scheduling (sessions, poster presentations, keynote addresses, etc.)			X	
	Preparation of agenda			X	
	Development of invitation list	X	X	X	
	Designation of keynote speakers and primary presenters and guests		X	X	
<b>Communications Planning</b>	Development and execution of a communications plan	X	X	X	X
	Creation of a symposium website and regular updating		X	X	X
	Letters of invitation		X	X	
	Graphics, signage, and printing requirements		X	X	X
<b>Host the Symposium</b>					X

<b>Symposium Follow-Up</b>	Assimilation of gathered information			X	X
	Development of proceedings document				X
	Maintenance of new network of scientists, government personnel, spatial analysts, etc.	X	X	X	X

### **Project Budget**

The attached budget information describes the proposed budget summary (see SF-424A form). Personnel costs include a percentage of the salary of a Program Manager and a Communications Specialist. Contractual expenses include the assistance of consultants and other contractors for accounting and administrative support; conference planning; and preliminary scientific paper (white paper) development. Travel costs include the travel for the Management Board, state staff, Program Manager and Communications Specialist to the symposium, as well as invitational travel expenses for keynote speakers and distinguished guests. Equipment, supply and other costs include conference space rental; audiovisual and IT equipment rental; catering; symposium speaker fees; symposium website development and hosting; marketing and media advertising; invitations; graphics, signage, and printing; and development of proceedings materials.