



2022 Marine Debris Work Group Plan

Reporting Period: January 2022 – December 2022

Work Group Webpage: <https://www.midatlanticocean.org/ocean-planning/work-groups-collaborative-efforts/marine-debris-work-group/>

Work Group Leads: Laura McKay (VA); Maureen Krudner (EPA)

Work Group Members: Work Group membership is open to government and non-governmental entities operating in the 5 Mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia that are willing to participate in the activities of the work group. Members are expected to contribute on monthly work group calls and assist with implementation of projects. Current members include:

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Last Name	First Name	Organization
Bristow	Avalon	Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO)
Carr	Emmalee	NJ
Chesnin	Noah	Wildlife Conservation Society
Fleming	Kate	Delaware Sea Grant
Ford	Mary	MARACOOS
Gemenden	JoAnn	NJ Clean Communities
Gove	Matt	Surfrider
Gronostajski	Kyle	Alliance for a Living Ocean
Johnson	Cathy	National Park Service
Keane	Ellen	NOAA/NMFS/Protected Resources
*Krudner	Maureen	EPA Region 2, Permitting Section (through April 2022)
Kuriawa	John	NOAA/NOS/OCM

Lieske	Kristi	DE Coastal Management Program
Mazzeo-Pfoertner	Christie	NY DOS
*McKay	Laura	VA - CZM Program
Morgan	Katie	NOAA - Marine Debris Program
Morrow	Donna	MD DNR Chesapeake & Coastal Service
Muthukrishnan	Swarna	Clean Ocean Action - NJ
Neusner	Gabriella	EPA HQ Trash Free Waters
Personius	Casey	NY DEC
Raabe	Steve	OpinionWorks
Register	Katie	Clean VA Waterways
Robinson	Matt	D.C. DOEE
Rutkowski	Megan	NJ
Sanders	Hannah	EPA Region 3 Trash Free Waters
Shifren	Sheri	NJ
St. Laurent	Kari	DE NERR
Trapani	Christina	Contractor/EcoManiacs
Weis	Judith	Rutgers
Witmer	Virginia	Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program

* Co-Leads

Work Group Goals, Objectives and Actions: This work builds on Action 4 of the 2016 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan: "Develop a regionally appropriate strategy for marine debris reduction." For calendar year 2022, the Work Group is focusing on four activities: implementing a Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) campaign to change behavior resulting in marine debris reduction at the Mid-Atlantic regional scale, with an initial focus on reducing balloon releases; conducting shoreline marine debris surveys and documenting the quantities and types of debris found; implementing a Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Reduction Plan; and maintaining a marine debris projects inventory website. The MDP may also begin a NOAA Marine Debris Prevention Grant aimed to reduce single-use plastic water bottles and cap litter, if the application is accepted.

ACTIVITY 1 - Continue the community-based social marketing campaign to reduce balloon releases.

Expected Completion Date: July 2022

Continue the balloon release reduction campaign based on community-based social marketing principles. This activity is funded by a 2018 NOAA Marine Debris Program grant to MARCO and builds off of the work conducted via Virginia CZM's MDP FY14 funded Joyful Send-Off Balloon Release Reduction Campaign. Doug McKenzie-Mohr, author of "Community-based Social Marketing" will review final messages for the campaign and overall dissemination strategy. In 2022, once results of the fall 2021 campaign launch have been gathered and reviewed, the campaign strategy will be adjusted as needed, and a second and spring 2022 pilot will be launched. Data collected will help measure and evaluate overall campaign success.

ACTIVITY 2 - Conduct bi-annual assessments of balloon and other debris.

Expected Completion Date: July 2022

Monitoring will be conducted on 1 mile stretches of beaches in each of the five Mid-Atlantic states. Staff and volunteers will collect data on the number and type of balloons identified as well as other types of debris. Data will be shared on the MACO Work Group pages of the MARCO website. These surveys are being conducted with funding from the 2018 NOAA Marine Debris Grant mentioned above. The results from the surveys may inform other elements of this project, including campaign strategy and success measures.

ACTIVITY 3 - Support the Implementation of the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan.

Expected Completion Date: Implementation to continue through 2026

The Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan brings together the Mid-Atlantic marine debris communities to document entities working on marine debris with the purpose of increasing coordination, adding value to existing efforts, and identifying future actions. The action plan strengthens Mid-Atlantic regional effectiveness by bringing our marine debris community together to develop a regional marine debris action plan that addresses current marine debris issues in the region and creates a road map for the future. In collaboration with NOAA Marine Debris Program, this work group will support the implementation of the action plan and coordinate semi-annual monitoring for actions with leads and partners and share summary updates through 2026.

ACTIVITY 4 - Update Projects Database in the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaborative Portal.

Expected Completion Date: Continual

In order to determine on which type of marine debris and what type of projects the work group should focus, the group created an Excel file of previously conducted projects in all five states. Meanwhile, NOAA had been working with the Great Lakes states to create a collaborative website which served the same function, but also included a mapping feature for the projects. Subsequently, NOAA offered to create a similar collaborative website for the Mid-Atlantic into which the data from the Excel file could be uploaded. This “Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaborative” website allows identified staff in each state to upload information about marine debris reduction efforts. This website can also be viewed by all stakeholders and the general public [here](#).

ACTIVITY 5 - Reduce single-use plastic water bottles on Mid-Atlantic waterfront recreation zone

Expected Completion Date: TBD

The work group has identified single-use plastic water bottle reduction on beaches and other waterfront recreation areas as a priority and is compiling a proposal to the Marine Debris Prevention Program to utilize Community- Based Social Marketing (CBSM) techniques to increase the use of reusable water bottles and decrease the use of single-use water bottles and cap litter in the marine environment. The project will focus on access to clean water through water bottle refilling stations, an identified barrier to the behavior of single use water bottle use. This campaign will provide sustainable improvement to coastal and ocean habitats identified as critical for federally and state listed marine species including sea turtles, marine mammals, and shorebirds. Additionally, the use of reusable water bottles reduces known human health hazards posed by plastic water bottles, and contactless water bottle refill stations are especially important in an ongoing COVID era. If funded, this project would also enable continued beach monitoring (Task 2) for the duration of the project.

