

2022 MARCO Communications Work Group Work Plan and Progress Report

Reporting Period: January 2022 – December 2022

Work Group Lead(s): Christie Mazzeo-Pfoertner (NY)

Work Group Members:

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Avalon	Bristow	MARCO
Christie*	Mazzeo-Pfoertner	NY
Judy	Tucker	MARCO
Karl	Vilacoba	Monmouth University
Maggie	Pletta	DE
Megan	Rutkowski	NJ

* Lead

Work Group Goals, Objectives and Actions:

The MARCO Communications Work Group was established in June 2019 to increase stakeholder engagement around regional ocean issues. The work group is tasked with identifying channels, platforms, and opportunities for stakeholder input to achieve this goal. The work group also works on the creation and dissemination of interesting, timely content that seeks to elevate the issues and ocean resources of the Mid-Atlantic. Through the work group’s effort, stakeholders have been engaged, retained, and educated on ocean resource conservation topics. An additional outcome from the work group’s efforts is to increase the accessibility of MARCO’s content.

ACTIVITY 1 - Increase and maintain contact with MARCO stakeholders through quarterly newsletters.

Expected Completion Date: ongoing

Activity Description

Newsletters will contain a standard format to be consistent with MARCO branding. Topics to be included are webinar announcements and report releases, Mid-Atlantic state news, a rotating State Spotlight article, MARCO Data Portal, MACO initiatives and updates, website updates, a MARCO or MACO member spotlight and a social media activity update. Additional timely topics and MARCO efforts should be included in newsletters where appropriate.

<https://www.midatlanticocean.org/newsletter-archives/>

A1 Progress Period: January 2022 - June 2022

A1 Progress Period: July 2022 - December 2022

ACTIVITY 2 - Explore options to make the MARCO website, and its content, more inclusive and to incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion and justice throughout all communication efforts.

<https://www.midatlanticocean.org/>

Expected Completion Date: ongoing

Activity Description

MARCO’s website has undergone major changes over the last two years to update content in an easy-to-navigate format compatible with use on mobile devices. MARCO’s website is the major tool for communication where stakeholders are kept up to date on current efforts and initiatives. This information should be accessible to as many stakeholders as possible including people with disabilities. During 2022, in an effort to continue ease of access and increase inclusivity to MARCO content, the communications committee will explore website accessibility options. Options that

include accessibility to persons with auditory, cognitive, neurological, physical, speech and visual impairments or disabilities and transform the website to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant will be prioritized. The communications committee will also explore tools to make online presentations and other forms of communication materials more accessible to diverse stakeholders.

<https://www.midatlanticocean.org/>

A2 Progress Period: January 2022 - June 2022

A2 Progress Period: July 2022 – December 2022

ACTIVITY 3 - Publish outreach materials

Expected Completion Date: ongoing

Activity Description

Continue to create and publish outreach materials related to MARCO's priority topics and related campaigns, as needed, for diverse audiences. This includes the creation and publication of an Annual Report about MARCO's activities.

A3 Progress Period: January 2022 - June 2022

A3 Progress Period: July 2022 - December 2022

ACTIVITY 4 - Maintain the MARCO website with documents, news, and all MARCO-related efforts in a timely manner.

Expected Completion Date: ongoing

Activity Description

Updates to the website will be carried out within a week of content completion. This includes content from all MARCO/MACO efforts and associated work groups. Outdated content on the homepage from webinar announcements etc. will be replaced with upcoming news, events or announcements within one week after the event has taken place. Partner agencies events will be added to the Event Calendar.

A4 Progress Period: January 2022 - June 2022

A4 Progress Period: July 2022 - December 2022

ACTIVITY 5 - Increase the visibility of MARCO's efforts through regular use of social media.

Expected Completion Date: Ongoing

Activity Description

Facebook will continue to be used throughout 2022 with slight changes in strategy. Posts will focus on news releases, targeted campaigns, sharing partner posts and webinar announcements. More focus will be placed on Twitter use since this has shown higher viewer visibility than Facebook. The weekly content will continue to be created including event announcements, data portal activity, report releases and general MARCO activity/initiatives. Planned posts will be developed on a quarterly basis.

With a wide range of high-resolution professional photographs obtained for all MARCO use in 2021, the Communications Committee will utilize Instagram as a new way to reach stakeholders with engaging content. Posts will be planned quarterly, however, the content will vary from other social media platforms. Since Instagram is highly visual and requires aesthetically interesting photographs and videos, posts will connect the new reel of photographs to MARCO activity.

To continue to grow MARCO's social media presence and networking capacity with other ocean resource management practitioners, the committee will review and consider the pros and cons of creating a LinkedIn account. A final decision on whether to pursue an account will be based on the resources needed to manage a new platform and Management Board approval.

A5 Progress Period: January 2022 - June 2022

A5 Progress Period: July 2022 - December 2022

ACTIVITY 6 - Continue to host webinars.

Expected Completion Date: Ongoing

Activity Description

The communications committee will continue to hold webinars, forums and workshops through GoToWebinar. Hosting webinars for/with partners may occur on an event-by-event basis.

Additional conferencing software will be explored before the GoToMeeting contract ends in August 2022. Conferencing software will be compared with GoTo capabilities and pricing to ensure MARCO is equipped with the most optimal conferencing system.

A6 Progress Period: January 2022 - June 2022

A6 Progress Period: July 2022 - December 2022

ACTIVITY 7 - Create a branding/style guide for MARCO communications.

Expected Completion Date: December 2022

Activity Description

The communications committee will create a unified branding and style guide for use across all MARCO communications to ensure consistency across all outreach products. The guide will include a new color palette that combines the previous MARCO palette with the colors used by the MARCO Portal, presentation templates, fonts and other resources needed as determined by the committee and the Management Board. By creating and using this guide it will build stronger brand awareness around MARCO and serve to help advance all MARCO priorities.

A7 Progress Period: January 2022 - June 2022

A7 Progress Period: July 2022 - December 2022

