



2023 Marine Debris Work Group Work Plan and Progress Report

Reporting Period: January 2023 – June 2023

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

Work Group Lead: Laura McKay (VA)

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:

| Last Name | First Name | Organization |
|------------|------------|--|
| Blair | Devon | NJ |
| Bristow | Avalon | Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) |
| Chesnin | Noah | Wildlife Conservation Society |
| Ford | Mary | MARACOOS |
| Gemenden | JoAnn | NJ Clean Communities |
| Gove | Matt | Surfrider |
| Huntington | Zach | Clean VA Waterways |
| Isenberg | Will | VA - CZM Program |
| Johnson | Cathy | National Park Service |
| Keane | Ellen | NOAA/NMFS/Protected Resources |
| Kuriawa | John | NOAA/NOS/OCM |
| Lieske | Kristi | DE Coastal Management Program |

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|------------------|----------|--|
| 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 |
| Personius | Casey | NY DEC |
| Raabe | Steve | OpinionWorks |
| Register | Katie | Clean VA Waterways |
| Sanders | Hannah | EPA Region 3 Trash Free Waters |
| Shifren | Sheri | NJ |
| Silber | Lydia | EPA HQ - Trash Free Waters |
| Smith | Sandi | MD Coastal Bays |
| Witmer | Virginia | Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program |

* Co-Lead

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 2023, the Work Group is focusing on four activities: completing a Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) campaign to change behavior resulting in marine debris reduction at the Mid-Atlantic regional scale, to reduce balloon releases; initiating a behavior research to identify barriers to reducing use of water bottles at waterfront recreational areas; installing water refill stations; 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.

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

Expected Completion Date: April 30 2023

Continued 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. The final months of the

campaign focused on evaluation of campaign success. The results of the campaign will be compiled into a final report and also presented to a regional cross-sector audience in mid-2023, potentially during the 2023 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum.

A1 Progress Description: January - June 2023

The FY2018 NOAA Marine Debris Program grant to MARCO for the Prevent Balloon Litter CBSM campaign ended on April 30, 2023. The work group is compiling a final report which will be posted on the NOAA website. Additionally, a summary of the project was included in MARCO's April 2023 newsletter, you can read it [here](#).

A1 Progress Description: July - December 2023

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

Expected Completion Date: Ongoing

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. The work group may consider enhancing data presentation on the [Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal](#) to include the proportion of different types of debris on each one mile stretch of beach. This could inform priorities for future marine debris efforts. Data will be shared on the MACO Work Group pages of the MARCO website. The results from the surveys may inform other elements of this project, including campaign strategies and success measures.

A2 Progress Description: January - June 2023

| State | Total Balloon Debris Pieces collected in Winter/Spring 2023 | Total non-balloon debris ¹ pieces collected in Winter/Spring 2023 |
|----------|---|--|
| Virginia | 53 | 804 |
| Maryland | 9 | 677 |
| Delaware | 2 | 136 |

¹ Non-balloon related debris include but are not limited to: bags (paper, plastic, and other materials), bottles (glass, plastic, other), bottle caps, cans, cigarette butts, lighters, clothing, fishing materials, k-cups, foam fragments, hard or film plastic pieces, rope, shotgun shells, straws, construction material.

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| New Jersey | 3 | 482 |
| New York | 41 | 296 |

A1 Progress Description: July - December 2023

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.

A3 Progress Description: January - June 2023

| Action | Status Update (as of January 2023) | Status Updated (as of July 2023) |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| 1.1.1.3 (Lead) - By the end of 2026, support outreach, advocacy, and education campaigns based on community-based social marketing techniques to prevent the intentional release of balloons using strategies developed with regional partners and promoted through preventballoonlitter.org | In progress | The NOAA grant ended on April 30 2023, however the work group is committed to |

| | | |
|--|-------------|---|
| | | continuing the beach monitoring and maintaining the Preventballo onlitter.org website, collecting pledges, and exhibiting and publishing information. |
| 1.2.1.1 - Each year of the Action Plan, compile existing consumer debris research on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal to enable analysis of information gaps, best practices, and available resources. | In progress | In progress |
| 1.2.1.2 - By the end of 2026, promote consumer debris research by conducting stream, river, and shoreline monitoring surveys, monitoring study sites, promoting citizen science, and collecting stormwater data to better inform decision-makers and raise public awareness. | In progress | In progress |
| 1.2.2.1 - By the end of 2026, analyze the effectiveness of community-based social marketing techniques and behavior change campaigns to target, inform, transfer, and influence at least three consumer debris campaigns that are inclusive of the Mid-Atlantic regional community | In progress | In progress |
| 2.1.1.1 - By the end of 2026, promote at least 10 new outreach products to be shared at targeted outreach events to engage the public and recreational fishing and boating communities in derelict gear prevention. Make them available online for diverse audiences through the | In progress | In progress |

| | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms. | | |
| 2.1.1.3 - By the end of 2026, develop and share at least five new outreach products on proper disposal and recycling of monofilament line to fishers, boaters, and the general public, and build at least 10 new private partnerships on recycling monofilament line and soft bait | In progress | In progress |
| 3.1.1.1 - By the end of 2026, create and implement at least 15 outreach products and/or education campaigns that are relevant to or could be replicated across the region that raise awareness of microplastic and microfiber issues among Mid-Atlantic residents as an initial step to lead to long-term changes in behavior, and make them available on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms | In progress | In progress |
| 3.2.1.1 - Each year of the Action Plan, share microplastic data, research, best practices, literature, resources, and funding sources on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal. | Not started | Not started |
| 4.2.1.1 - By the end of 2023, identify opportunities to create state inventory programs and identify derelict vessel hotspots with state and local authorities and share resources with the Mid-Atlantic community | Not started | Not started |
| 4.5.1.1 - By the end of 2026, document the successful techniques and legislative approaches of at least five federal, state, and local agencies to share lessons learned on ADV removal, disposal options, and prevention approaches, and explore opportunities for new legislation. | Not started | Not started |

Action Plan coordination calls (January - June 2023):

| Meeting Date | Meeting Topic | MACO Engagement |
|------------------|-----------------|---|
| February 9, 2023 | Consumer Debris | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NYS DEC ● NJ DEP |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA CZM • EPA Region 3 • NOAA MDP • Clean Ocean Action |
| February 10, 2023 | Derelict Fishing Gear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NY DEC • VA CZM • NOAA MDP |
| February 23, 2023 | Microplastics and Microfibers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA Region 3 • Clean VA Waterways • NOAA MDP • VA CZM • NY DEC |
| February 28, 2023 | Abandoned and Derelict Vessels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean VA Waterways • Clean Ocean Action • NOAA MDP |
| June 1, 2023 | Consumer Debris | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNREC • MARCO • NJ DEP • NOAA MDP |
| June 23, 2023 | Microplastics and Microfibers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA Region 3 (presenter) • NYS DEC • MARCO • NJ DEP • Clean VA Waterways • NOAA MDP |

A3 Progress Description: July - December 2023

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](#).

A4 Progress Description: January 2023- June 2023

At the time of this report, the database was down. Numbers will be reported in the next report in January 2024..

A4 Progress Description: July - December 2023

ACTIVITY 5 - Research on public attitudes toward marine debris policies

Inform state or local marine debris policy-development by documenting lessons-learned and public perception of existing marine debris policies in the region to inform future marine debris-related policy development. The assessment will measure public support for new laws and policies that aim to reduce the sources of marine debris through a regional survey and synthesis.

To conduct the assessment, the work group will (with support from a contractor):

- Develop and disseminate surveys or other outreach tools to measure public support for new laws and policies that seek to reduce or prevent sources of marine debris.
- Synthesize results and provide a report to inform Mid-Atlantic states and other policy-makers about policies with the most and least public support.
- Provide a webinar to present results and provide an opportunity for agencies to share lessons-learned.

Expected Completion Date: December 2024

A5 Progress Description: January- June 2023

MARCO identified a contractor through a competitive process in May 2023 and are currently refining the scope and budget for this work. We anticipate work to begin in

early fall 2023. Funding for this work is from MARCO's BIL Regional Ocean Partnership grant.

A5 Progress Description: July - December 2023

ACTIVITY 6 - Community-Based Social Marketing Barriers Research on use of plastic water bottles and other consumer debris

Identify barriers to behavior changes related to marine debris by conducting Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) barriers research in all five Mid-Atlantic States. With support from a contractor, the work group will:

- Develop and disseminate CBSM-based surveys for at least two consumer debris-types, starting with plastic water bottles. These surveys will be distributed to the public in all five Mid-Atlantic states.
- Provide a report on the results to the Marine Debris Work Group to inform future CBSM campaign development. Having the barriers-research already conducted will create tremendous efficiency for future CBSM campaign products that the Marine Debris Work Group undertakes.

Expected Completion Date: December 2023

A6 Progress Description: January - June 2023

MARCO identified a contractor through a competitive process in May 2023 and are currently refining the scope and budget for this work. We anticipate work to begin in early fall 2023. Funding for this work is from MARCO's BIL Regional Ocean Partnership grant.

A6 Progress Description: July - December 2023

ACTIVITY 7 - Installation of Water Filling Stations

The work group has identified single-use plastic water bottle reduction on beaches and other waterfront recreation areas as a priority. This activity will focus on providing access to clean water through installation of water bottle refilling stations. Lack of water filling stations is one identified barrier to the behavior of single use water bottle use. 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.

Expected Completion Date: TBD

A7 Progress Description: January - June 2023

Ten locations (2 per state) have confirmed the intent to purchase refill station supplies with MARCO Bi-partisan Infrastructure Funds by September 2023.

A7 Progress Description: July - December 2023

ACTIVITY 8 - Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Summit

A biennial Regional Marine Debris Summit, will be held to bring together partners working on marine debris reduction and prevention, likely in Fall 2023. The previous two Summits have been supported with funds from Virginia. This summit will be funded with IJJA funds to MARCO. The Summit will be planned in close partnership with the NOAA Marine Debris Program to ensure consistency with the Mid-Atlantic Region Marine Debris Action Plan. A workshop agenda and speaker list will be developed, and a summary report will be published online and distributed to participants.

Expected Completion Date: December 2023

A8 Progress Description: January 2023- June 2023

A Summit Planning Team was convened in March 2023, and has been meeting monthly to create a planning plan. The dates of December 5-7 were chosen and the Summit location will be Ocean City MD Convention Center. The team also refined the goals and outcomes for the meeting, and relayed progress back to the full Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group to ensure the event is as collaborative and inclusive as possible.

The planning team includes:

- New York State Department of State
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
- Washington, DC Department of Energy & Environment
- NOAA Marine Debris Program
- Maryland Coastal Bays Program

- NJ Clean Communities Council

They met on: March 20, 2023 ; April 10, 2023; May 8, 2023 ; and June 26, 2023 and will continue meeting at least monthly until the Summit occurs. A [Save the Date](#) flyer has been distributed via Constant Contact, social media posts and the MARCO website.

A8 Progress Description: July - December 2023

