

MERIDIAN INSTITUTE

Moderator: Laura Cantral
May 22, 2015
11:30 a.m. ET

Operator: This is Conference # 44574928.

Good day and welcome to today's webcast. My name is (Caroline) and I will be your event specialist today.

All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. Please note that today's webcast is being recorded.

During today's presentation, we will have a question-and-answer session. You can ask text questions at any time. To do so, click the green Q&A icon on the lower left-hand corner of your screen. Type your question in the open area and click Ask to submit.

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And finally, should you need technical assistance, as a best practice, we suggest that you first refresh your browser. If that does not resolve the issue, please click on the support option in the upper right-hand corner of your screen for online troubleshooting.

And it is now my pleasure to turn today's program over to your first speaker, Laura Cantral with Meridian Institute. Laura, the floor is yours.

Laura Cantral: Thank you, (Caroline). And thanks to all of you who are joining us today.

We want to take this opportunity to welcome you to this public webinar hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. We appreciate you joining us here at the beginning of the Memorial Day weekend. What a great way to kick off the weekend and summer beach season, right? We're hearing about the work the Mid-Atlantic RPB since its last public meeting in January.

I'm going to quickly run through the objectives and agenda for this webinar, and then turn it over to several members of the RPB to provide some information and context about not only the RPB's work to date but also expectations for into the future.

So you can see we have three objectives for this webinar. We want to provide an update on regional ocean planning activities in the Mid-Atlantic region. We're going to review the RPB workplan, and specifically the activities of three RPB workgroups that are engaged in activities and work that focused on Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination, Data Synthesis, and Regional Ocean Assessment. And then our third objective is to get input from you and answer questions that you may have and that you can post through a Q&A chat feature that is available to you as part of this webinar.

I'd also like to point out that there are two recent documents that have been developed by the RPB that will be topics of the discussion today. Both of them have been posted on the RPB website and you'll be hearing about those of them.

First, the RPB's workplan. This document is intended to guide the group and keep the work on track. And also a white paper that's entitled A Brief Overview of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean: Characteristics, Trends, and Challenges. And you'll be hearing some more about that document as well.

So here you can see our agenda. Let me just say a brief word about it and then I will turn it over to RPB State Co-Lead, Gwynne Schultz of Maryland. Gwynne is going to share a brief overview of the RPB's work since the January meeting and introduce the RPB workplan.

Next we'll hear from RPB Federal Co-Lead, Bob LaBelle with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, who is also a Co-Chair of the Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination workgroup. Bob will describe recent and planned activities for that workgroup.

After Bob, we'll hear from Laura McKay, RPB member representing Virginia and Co-Chair of the Data Synthesis workgroup. And Laura will provide an update on the Data Synthesis workgroup activity.

Next, Sarah Cooksey is going to – who is a member representing Delaware and Co-Chair of the Regional Ocean Assessment workgroup is going to describe this recently published white paper that I was just referring to and also next steps for that workgroup.

Finally, we'll hear from Tony Macdonald of Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute. Tony serves as the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal Team Lead. And he will provide a brief update about the progress of a Data Portal redesign and some new enhancements.

After we go through brief presentations from all of those folks, we'll have approximately 25 minutes for Q&A before we wrap up and adjourn at 12:30.

We'll just make a couple more points and reminders before we get the show on the road.

There are several opportunities for members of the public to provide feedback to the Mid-Atlantic RPB. And these opportunities include submitting a question using the Q&A function on the webinar.

As the questions come in, and we encourage you to post your questions throughout the presentations, we'll be tracking them. And when we get to the Q&A portion of the webinar, I will post questions as they come in to our presenters. And we have other members of the RPB on the line as well who can help fill questions.

And please note that the webinar is being recorded. All of the input and the questions from the public will be captured for the public record. And it will all be made available via the website.

And then finally, as a reminder, you are always welcome and encouraged to offer written input via the BOEM email address that you can see here on the slide.

And finally, for me for now, I just want to emphasize that several materials will be made available on the RPB website in the days following this webinar. An audio and video recording of the webinar will be posted, as well as transcript and a record of all the chat questions and comments that we received during the Q&A portion. We will also post a list of webinar participants.

So at this point, I would like to turn it to RPB Co-Lead Gwynne Schultz, who will share some context about the RPB and an overview of RPB activity to date, and will also let you know who else from the RPB is on the line with us today in addition to the presenters that I've already mentioned.

Gwynne?

Gwynne Schultz: Yes. Thank you, Laura. And thank you to everyone for joining today's webinar.

The Mid-Atlantic RPB was established in 2013 to develop and employ a planning process to the ocean coastal waters off of the state of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. And ocean planning really provides a collaborative, data-base approach to ensure sound management and protection of ocean resources and the many uses that depend on it.

If you're joining us for the first time today, I encourage you to check out our website where you'll find more information about the RPB and the ocean planning process. For example, our website contains our charter, roster of members, the approved framework that includes vision, goals, and objectives. We also have posted public comments that we've received to date and meeting summaries.

So the RPB is composed of representatives from the above states, as well as federal agencies, tribes, and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. So I want to take this opportunity to introduce the RPB members and alternates that are on today's call.

So as Laura said, we do have our Federal Co-Lead, Bob LaBelle from Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

And we also have Kelsey Leonard, who is our Tribal Co-Lead from Shinnecock Indian Nation. And Kelsey has really been at the forefront of our tribal engagement efforts and is working with partners to plan for upcoming tribal listening sessions.

So additional members that we have onboard are Joe Atangan, US Navy, Chairman Joint Chief of Staffs; Kevin Chu of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In addition to Bob LaBelle from BOEM, we have Leann Bullin and Mary Boatman. Buddy LoBue from Environmental Protection Agency and Kristie Bailey from the Coast Guard.

For the State representatives, we've got Sarah Cooksey from the State of Delaware, Laura McKay from the State of Virginia, Michael Snyder from New York, and Andrew Zemba from Pennsylvania.

And then we also have with us today Tony Macdonald from the Urban Coast Institute and (Darren Debrock) from the (Sea Plan).

So going to the next slide, OK, the RPB held an in-person meeting this past January in New York City.

Want to go back one? Oh, no. Sorry on the right slide. OK.

So during this meeting that the RPB agreed to the approach that it would use to develop the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan. And this approach enables the RPB to address opportunities for inter-jurisdictional coordination and to

conduct analysis of ocean resources in the Mid-Atlantic to inform planning and management.

Going forward, to carry forward with this approach, the RPB established a two new workgroups that you'll be hearing more about today, the Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination and Data Synthesis workgroup. And we'll also be learning more about the continuing work of the Regional Ocean Assessment workgroup.

The RPB since January has also developed a workplan. And this workplan is intended to serve as a planning tool that will guide RPB activities during 2015 and 2016 as it develops the ocean action plan.

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So in addition to describing the workgroup responsibilities and the process that each workgroup will follow, the workplan includes a timeline identifying key milestones, the stakeholder engagement opportunities. And a copy of the workplan has been posted on the website.

Important to note that as the work evolves, we anticipate that this workplan will be updated periodically to ensure that it accurately reflects our progress and thinking. This may include defining and updating our workgroup responsibilities, milestones, and stakeholder engagement opportunities. We need to ensure that the RPB is positioned to develop a high quality ocean action plan.

The workplan indicates a target date for release that address ocean action plan from June 2016. And this allows for public comment period, subsequent revision, and completion of the final plan by November 2016.

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Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of the ocean planning process. And the RPB will facilitate engagement opportunities at key junctures in the ocean action plan development process in concert with partner

organizations working to develop are working to support regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic.

On the slide you'll see examples of some of the near-term activities and near-term opportunities that will delve into data synthesis and methodology, emerging ideas for draft actions and tribal engagement. And then we plan to hold our next in-person meeting in early fall during which there will also be opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

Each of the workgroup chair -- folks that you'll hear from today are going to delve into a little bit more detail about these opportunities.

So at this time, I'd like to turn to Bob LaBelle who will talk about the efforts of the Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination workgroup.

Bob LaBelle: Thank you, Gwynne.

This is Bob LaBelle from BOEM. I'm the Federal Co-Lead for the Mid-Atlantic RPB. And I'm one of the three Co-Chairs for the so-called IJC workgroup, Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination.

The other two Co-Chairs are Mike Luisi from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and Greg Capobianco from the New York Department State.

I'm going to present overview of the responsibilities of the IJC workgroup and our timeline of activities today. I'll review the status of entity by entity discussion, (health) to date, and touch on several emerging ideas from those conversations. And I'll talk about plan sequence of activities leading up to the in-person RPB meeting this fall.

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So as background, a key objective of the ocean planning process in the Mid-Atlantic region is to help RPB member entities better work together to achieve a healthy ocean ecosystem and sustainable ocean use of goals and objectives identified in the Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning framework document.

Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination addresses specific processes and mechanisms that will allow member institutions of the RPB to coordinate, leverage resources, and make better decisions that benefit ocean uses and ecosystem health. And this is all through the implementation of the agency's mandates and authorities.

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The IJC workgroup responsibilities include facilitate identification of member-entity priorities, opportunities, and specific actions to improve their ability to execute their missions under existing authorities. This is through the use of data and/or IJC collaboration both region-wide and in specific geographic areas.

Also to recommend the series of draft IJC opportunities and actions for the full RPB, to consider ways to ensure linkages between IJC action and Data Synthesis products where appropriate, and closely coordinate with the Data Synthesis and ROA, Regional Ocean Assessment workgroups throughout our efforts.

We also want to engage potentially affected stakeholder communities and review the draft opportunities and actions that sit there and (quote) of how potential changes in governmental business practices could affect them, and how those actions could be carried out to meet their interest.

And to incorporate RPB and stakeholder feedback into a proposed set of final IJC opportunities and actions for full RPB concurrence and inclusion in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan.

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So the process of developing an application of IJC action, for the first – for the past several months, as the IJC facilitation team and Meridian staff, and they're (inaudible) have been conducting a round of one-on-one discussion with individual RPB member entities. And this is to gather ideas about potential IJC opportunities and action space on each entities, equities and authorities.

The IJC workgroup has been periodically reviewing and discussing this preliminary list of ideas. These actions will be designed to enhance several aspects of inter-agency coordination including management programs. For example, energy infrastructure and sand and gravel mining, planning and leasing, environmental and regulatory review such as NEPA review, Army Corps of Engineers permitting, US Coast Guard Navigation Risk Assessments, and to research such as coordinating federal research opportunities to address regional ocean management priorities.

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So some samples of potential IJC actions, I'd like to outline some of the ideas we've heard through our discussions to date as a sample of some of the major themes of potential IJC opportunities and actions that are emerging.

As a reminder, these ideas come from a working list of potential action that is being assembled throughout this information gathering phase. And these items have not been agreed to or in any way prioritized by the IJC workgroup or the RPB at this point.

So several of the ideas collected to date focused on the development and the use of data to support regional ocean management priorities. Examples of specific ideas in this category include understanding and addressing the use-inspired science questions related to specific matters in the regulatory authority, identifying opportunities to state input to be factored into the development and implementation of federal research agenda, developing new data and information related to several topics, including habitat, energy, navigation and commerce, oceanography and social economics.

Another theme around which several ideas (from PLS) is that of enhanced management use and integration of data, which could include, for example, use of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal as a primary tool to integrate existing and develop new layers useful in federal agency planning and decision making.

Also to build the development of data layers that RPB member entities agreed to provide the best current representation of given environmental features and human activities; all RPB integration of data for federal habitat protection decision, for example, for offshore canyon; and these decisions that would make use of the best available information including analysis of data already available in-house.

Finally, a third example of an emerging theme is that of enhanced management and regulatory coordination. Several ideas have been advanced in this category, including the development of consensus-based authoritative guidance that addresses the conflicting offshore uses; for example, agreement on (inaudible) navigation around (wind) or other offshore development projects.

Another idea is identification of specific opportunities to employ pretty planning mechanism such as programmatic or so-called batched consultations for Essential Fish Habitat, Endangered Species Act, and National Historical Preservation Act, or Coastal Zone Management Review.

And finally, development of decision support tools such as compatibility assessment, cumulative and secondary impact assessment, or risk analysis.

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So what are the next steps for the workgroup?

In terms of the next steps, we're going to continue developing the work. The facilitation team will continue to gather these ideas in the coming weeks. Once this round of entity by entity discussion is complete, the IJC workgroup will organize and strain the potential actions the RPB may wish to pursue. For example, the workgroup will sort the list into immediate, near-term, and future actions.

IJC review and development of recommendations will be guided by decision criteria discussed and approved by the RPB at the January in-person meeting.

Some of these criteria will include related to or issues related to core authorities or practices regarding management, regulation or education, meaningful to multiple RPB mission in the content of the ocean action plan; issues that are regional in nature consistent with the framework principles, goals, and objectives, and achievable within the capacity limitation of the RPB in collaborating IJC; or issues that improved upon existing practices or pertinent to areas of issues of significant ecological values, socioeconomic value, high current or potential news conduit, and/or high cultural traditional value.

Now the whole list of these criteria is available on the RPB's website. And I would encourage you to go there if you want to see more on this.

As some potential priority actions begin to emerge, the workgroup and full RPB will engage potentially affected stakeholder communities. And in order to seek their feedback on this action, and that feedback will – that stakeholder feedback will be folded into the recommendation, the workgroup puts forward to the RPB.

Additionally, the IJC workgroup will remain closely linked with the activities of the Data Synthesis workgroup and the Regional Ocean Assessment workgroup to ensure that each aspect of the RPB activities will contribute to the development of a cohesive Mid-Atlantic Ocean action plan.

So we've got a lot of work to do and we're really looking forward to your comments today and input in the future.

And I will now turn it over to Laura McKay to talk about the Data Synthesis workgroup.

Laura McKay: Thank you, Bob. Good morning everyone.

The Data Synthesis workgroup has been very busy since our meeting at the end of January. And I'd like to thank my Co-Chair Mary Boatman from BOEM and Jay Odell, our Technical Advisor. The group also has members in Navy, NOAA and the Coast Guard.

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So the purpose of the Data Synthesis workgroup is to help the RPB identify and meet new and emerging data synthesis and analysis needs, and to oversee the development of data products that are going to help the RPB identify areas of ecological and human importance in the Mid-Atlantic. And we've used that term human to incorporate social, economic, and cultural uses. And then finally to work with the IJC workgroup as they're figuring out potential uses of data product.

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So why do we need a data synthesis? As you may recall, MARCO, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean, which is a governor's agreement among the five states from New York through Virginia, created an ocean data portal back in 2010. And we now have 94 data layers on the portal and a whole lot more coming very soon.

And they're in a variety of different format. And so synthesizing some of these data layers into related groups will help us take an ecosystem-based approach rather than a species by species approach to management.

And because we can't really see patterns when we turn on all the layers at once, it's important to synthesize them into fewer layers that will help us summarize where important resources and uses are taking place. And doing that will help guide where and what types of inter-jurisdictional coordination could be beneficial to the ocean health and sustainability of human uses.

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So here's an example of what it looks like. If you go into the portal and tried to turn on everything about ecology even with using transparency features and so forth, which are terrific, there's still so much data in there that you really can't see everything that's going on at once.

We have 38 ecological resource layers now for (even) marine mammals, six other layers. But we're going to have hundreds more this summer as the

(Duke) team finishes up its current contract with the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

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And the same thing happens when you turn on human use layers. We actually have 45 human use layers on the portal now, four for commercial fishing, and three other fishing recreational, eight shipping layers, four ports, and 10 other maritime layers, 8 recreation layers, five renewable energy and security layers, and again, many more coming this summer especially for commercial fishing and recreation.

So as I mentioned, when we're talking – initially, we were going to talk about economic resource mapping. But it's really hard to put dollar values on things. And some of those things are not very mappable. And knowing that we would need to take into account culture and social values, we decided to use the terminology of human use as a proxy for all economic, social and cultural use areas.

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We have a kind of dual workflow going on, basically two kinds of things we want to create. The first being a region-wide data synthesis on each of these topics of ecological resources and human use. And these, again, are region-wide and we envision these as being included in the regional ocean assessment, and we feel those can be complete by 2016 for inclusion in ocean action plan.

The other workflow, which I hope you're seeing up there, I'm not seeing the slide on my computer. But the workflow under that is looking at specific issue or specific geographic area data synthesis on either topic –ecological resources or human uses. And those could be used for specific inter-jurisdictional coordination actions as we identify them.

I think – yes, those will be identified hopefully by September. And so simultaneous with developing the region-wide maps, we will hope to do sort of sub-synthesis that are going to be useful for the specific action.

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OK. So the regional human uses, special data synthesis would depict levels of intensity of human use and the resulting map, which has helped signal to the RPB areas from which economic, social, and cultural values are derived; not to address compatibility of ocean uses at this point but really served where multiple uses co-occur and where improved inter-jurisdictional coordination could benefit both the ocean health and sustainability of the uses. But it could be considered a precursor to possible future compatibility assessment.

So basically, new ideas to collate the best available data for the Mid-Atlantic convert each data layer into a simple yet meaningful informative scale that classifies the use, known as scale of 1 to 3, or high, medium, or low, or whatever the data underlie and then synthesize them into a single layer. And any data used in this synthesis would be as current as possible and preferably gathered within the last 10 years.

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So work is already underway on ecological data synthesis. As I mentioned, through the contract with the (Duke) team, and that's going to be a continuous layer on marine mammals, sea turtles, fish and birds from Maine to Virginia. And that work should be ready, it's almost ready now. And so what we'd like to do is add information to that to get a more comprehensive ecological data synthesis.

And again, we want to be able to have some sub-synthesis too where we have customized maps that are by species and species groups and season to inform to specific agency decisions. But again, important to get the overall comprehensive ecological map and we struggled with a name to call it. For now, I'm going to say ecological focus areas, but call them hot spots, or focal areas, concentration areas, where you have a lot of resources on just one super important resource.

And again, the idea is that we identify those focal areas that's where the IJC could focus actions to improve ocean health or ensure sustainability.

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So here's our schedule for getting all of these done. We have proposals due for a human use data synthesis out there now. They're due next Friday. And we hope by June to have contracts in place for both the human use and the ecological synthesis.

And we hope to have some workshops or meetings this summer at which we would have input opportunities for the IJC, the ROA, the scientists and stakeholders, to really look at the methodology of how we're creating these syntheses.

And then by September, when we have the next in-person RPB meeting, have draft, comprehensive maps available for both ecological and human use. And then all the products would be finalized by December.

And next slide is just to point out that if you're interested, the (RSPs) are posted on the MARCO website. And we just can't wait to get started on all these work and we hope that's going to be a tremendous step forward in our ability to better manage the ocean.

So with that, I'd like to turn it over to Sarah Cooksey for the ROA workgroup.

Sarah Cooksey: Thank you, Laura. And I also like, would also like to give a shoutout to everybody who took their time in this beautiful day to listen to our progress.

I am one of two Co-Chairs of the Regional Ocean Assessment; Kevin Chu from NOAA is the other Co-Chair.

Our workgroup is made up of representatives from six federal agencies, the Shinnecock Indian Nation, five states, and we have technical support from MARCO which is the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean, and our data portal team. Our workgroup has been very active since April 2014.

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I'm going to briefly touch on three topics – the white paper that Gwynne mentioned at the beginning, which was developed for the RPB's use. We also have an – we had a request for proposal out for contractual assistance to help us with further development of the ROA, and go over our timeline.

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At the January RPB meeting in New York City, we got a new charge from the regional planning body. And it was to develop a white paper that highlighted what makes the Mid-Atlantic special and the value of ocean planning. They gave us a very tight timeline, end of April to complete it, which I'm happy to say the workgroup met. And we believe that we hit the mark.

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I hope that you guys have the time to go and look at the white paper. To our knowledge, it's the first time something like this has been put together. The white paper is organized to provide a brief summary of information and issues that relate to the overarching goals that also have been mentioned a couple of times that are outlined in our framework document.

The ocean waters of the Mid-Atlantic, from New York to Virginia, are very well-used and well-loved. We have sandy beaches, rich cultural and historic sites, vibrant coastal communities, and large metropolitan cities that help define our region. Our ocean shapes the economy and the culture. It provides stand for our beaches, transportation for goods, food, place for rest, recreation, and refreshment.

As you know, the ocean is changing, the human population is growing. Planning for these changes will help assist us in facing them more effectively.

We have over 34 million people in our region, and that is just the coastal counties. It is expected to grow another 8 percent by 2020.

It is an economic engine for our nation. It contributes \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion to the US GDP and it is – and that is over 14 percent of the entire GDP.

We have the world's largest naval base in Norfolk. We have the nation's largest city and East Coast largest fleet port by tonnage in New York City. And we have the fifth largest commercial fishing port in Reedville, Virginia.

The nation currently uses the Mid-Atlantic's dynamic ocean environment for many things, including fishing, transportation, sand and gravel mining, national security activities, telecommunications, scientific research, tourism, recreation, and more. Some of these uses are expanding and new uses are emerging. This only stays in the Mid-Atlantic.

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So what are our next steps?

We have solicited and now have received several proposals to help develop a more detailed baseline characterization of our region. It will also talk more about the assessment of uses and resources.

We're looking for an interactive digital format to update and interface with the existing technology we have such as our portal which Tony Macdonald is going to talk about in a second.

We – our schedule is to have the draft of this contractual work completed in November and finalized by January 2016.

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Finally, eventhough the white paper is done, we still hope our stakeholders read it and see if there are any significant topics or uses that we missed and should be considered. And you can provide comments to the RPB via this email that's on this last slide.

And with that, I would like to turn it over to Tony Macdonald from Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute to provide us an update on portal activity.

Tony Macdonald: Great. Thank you very much, Sarah.

I appreciate you all joining me today, I have my own ocean planning challenge for this weekend with 30 guests coming into the Jersey shore for (cookout), so hopefully I can get through that as well as this.

But I just want to say a couple of quick things about the portal. Again, I think you've heard quite a bit about it already and how it fits into the overall ocean planning process. But a couple of key points that I want to make this afternoon is that, again, it's really exciting and can be a complicated process.

But I think the portal is a place where we're really trying to really provide access in a way that makes this all manageable and reflects the priorities of the stakeholder groups and allows you some, and the stakeholder group, some access to this data and information in ways that I think will make a sense.

So I want to highlight upfront a couple of things.

First of all, again, this is done in partnership with other groups who provide both the technical and some of the strategic support for the portal, including the Nature Conservancy at 0.97, and Rutgers University. Again, I'm going to encourage everybody who's on the phone to sign up, comment, and participate because there is a website already within the existing portal where you can sign up to actually get access and training and really participate in the portal development and the ocean planning process. So please do that.

And finally, I'll just mention before we go into the details, that again, this has been built as you've heard, not only with input from our MARCO and RPB partners and the federal partners who help support much of the data that goes into this portal, but also by stakeholders and stakeholder outreach that I will talk about.

So I'm going to highlight in the next slide some of the new developments and things, the highlights.

We are calling it Portal 2.0. We are enhancing and redesigning the portal. Again, we're going to build on the existing feedback that we have gotten from stakeholder groups to reflect things that we have heard about how to improve

this and make it more user-friendly and more directly aligned with some of the priorities that we've heard from various stakeholder groups.

So I'll talk today a little bit about how we are within the portal really looking to go beyond data to build the platform which reflects, as we'd like to say, your ocean and your stories really reflect information that is relevant to specific issues in the region. So I'll talk about that in a minute.

The other function that we really tried to highlight in this enhancement and redesign of the portal is simple ways for folks to work around very specific subsets of issues. So I'll talk about how you can create profiles and groups and sharing capacity in the portal to look at the information.

And lastly, I'll conclude to look back to our commitment to stakeholder engagement and support for some of the efforts that you've been hearing about this morning.

So again, as I said, we're really focusing on what people care about. So we really are trying to push the maps and the stories and the information to the front of the portal. The data supports that. It really is state-of-the art while that is (meta-data) and federal compliance, so all information. And that data is all searchable. But we are actually trying to push the information how that might serve the ocean planning process so we're really looking at the story.

So if you look at the next slide, which I want to say we really are looking at, again, what is the best information to support a stakeholder decision into this case? These are just examples. By the way, you'll see, when we go public with the portal in June with this portal update, you'll see more specific stories. But we really would be looking at priorities like ocean infrastructure sighting and looking at issues.

And I think you've heard from Laura's presentation on the data synthesis group, we are looking to actually reflect sort of data and ways that is kind of synthesized and reflects the specific stories and questions that come up during the ocean planning process.

So the next slide, any other kind of utility, we think that the stories and the mapping functions will provide us for the federal agencies to really engage with each other and engage with stakeholder groups were directly through these data and information.

So again, you heard Bob LaBelle talked about some of the IJC, inter-jurisdictional committees group, further looking at ways that we can actually specifically used as data to facilitate a more transparent and more collaborative dialog around the information and just some great ideas that are coming up through this process that we will use the portal to help, hopefully, facilitate those discussions and those decisions.

We also, going to the next slide, what really very specifically keep your price to that. We actually will have training available. We'll keep you posted on issues. We do have Tuesday webinars that we set up to actually keep people posted on specific issues as they develop.

So there will be, I think, a very current opportunity for you to keep current on issues not only to get up-to-speed on accessing and using the portal, but also upcoming activities and upcoming discussions that you might have.

So if you look at the next slide, what we really sort of most excited about, as I said, the new functions and the past functions that will be on the portal for collaboration among other stakeholders. So we will be acting and asking folks to really set up a profile where you can actually describe what your interests are and we can help align you with other groups interested in some of the same questions. We can identify folks. You can identify folks with expertise for general view or other discussion.

So we will have these profiles and these groups set up and work with you when you can set up your own groups to stakeholders with regards to issues with common interests. You can share maps and ideas with group members. And you can collaborate with colleagues and stakeholders, not only to directly support some of the ocean planning priorities that have been discussed earlier this morning but also any specific issues that you may have within your group or among your collaborators.

The thing that I think is really transformative about the enhancements are really be looking at what we can do with customizing maps and also importing and exporting files and data. So we're going to have some really unique features, not only to have base data layers and support on ocean planning, but also to bring in, in separate groups, some additional specific data that you might have or that might be available to inform a discussion and decision around the issue. So I'm very excited about this capacity that will be – that is being added to the portal will be available soon.

So in the next, I just want to conclude quickly with a couple of thoughts. One is just to reiterate the fact that this is really been building in the data that Laura was suggesting, the current data layers, and the ones we are planning to add are based on interaction with stakeholders. We're developing the very specific coastal recreation data and recreational fishing data based on inputs we've gotten from fishermen which will be added soon.

We're currently in the process of working with commercial fishermen to identify what we're going to be in the sea maps, which really reflects now the fishing activity but the level of effort of the fisheries when it relates to fishing activity. Again, this is also ongoing outreach for the maritime industry summary tables and this was suggested by -- some of the previous presenters will be supporting efforts by the RPB moving forward to engage multi-stakeholder dialog.

So again there are other opportunities that will be forthcoming throughout the planning process for you all to not only inform the portal development but also to inform the ocean planning process.

So I'll just conclude by saying that please do go in and sign up for the portal. You'll be notified of all of these changes. We are expecting that we're going through kind of a beta testing with some experts over the next several weeks. But we expect to go live.

Again, the current portal is active and useful and supports many of these functions. But the enhancement will go live sometime in mid to late June. So please sign up and please participate.

Thank you.

Laura Cantral: All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Tony and thanks to all of the presenters.

At this point, we would like to post some of the questions that several of you have been submitting through the Q&A function. And please, you know, as we're in this last few minutes of the webinar session, continue submitting your questions and we'll do our best to get to as many of them as we can.

We can flip back to certain slides if that's helpful as questions are being post. And presenters, I'm going to post a question to you individually. And if you want to call upon your colleagues to help you answer a question; or RPB members who are on the phone line, if you want to add something to a particular question, then you're welcome to do so.

So the first, there's a cluster of questions that have come in regarding the Data Synthesis and the portal. So Laura and Tony, I think be listening, you know, as I post this question and you may want to add others for some assistance.

So our first question is from Andy Radford. And it – the question is, are you presuming that areas where there are multiple uses of the ocean currently co-existing that there are inherent conflicts?

Laura McKay: Hi, this is Laura.

No, we're not. We're just going to do the synthesis and see where multiple uses are occurring. But no, we're definitely not assuming there's a problem there. It's just a way to signal some places where we should look.

Laura Cantral: OK. And another question from Andy, I don't think potential oil and gas resources on the data portal. Why is the BOEM's data on potential geological plays and estimated resources not included?

Laura McKay: Hi. This is Laura.

I know some data has recently gone up on the Multi-Purpose Marine Cadastre. And one possibility is with the new function on Portal 2.0 that data could now be imported into the MARCO portal so you could view it. We haven't – we just haven't progressed that far as yet. There are still a lot of – a lot of work to do.

Laura Cantral: OK. Another data synthesis comment and a question from Ali Chase. The Data Synthesis work is very exciting. Is there also work underway to develop something like ocean health index?

Laura McKay: Hi, this is Laura again.

Not currently to do an ocean health index. We have looked at some of the work that's been going on globally. But I think we really want to focus first on our data synthesis and the ocean action plan. That's something to think about in the future so that we – you know, would have some sort of baseline from which to monitor our ocean health in the future. But it's kind of a first things first situation here with the resources that we have.

Sarah Cooksey: This is Sarah Cooksey. I'd like to add to that, if that's all right Laura.

Laura Cantral: Yes. Yes, please go ahead.

Sarah Cooksey: And Laura, and we have discussed that from time to time in the regional ocean assessment. And I'm currently, when -- as we evaluate the proposals that have come in, it might be that our contractor for the ROA presents a case for how to go about doing that. So that's still something we're thinking about doing.

Laura Cantral: OK. So the next set of questions that I'm going to go to are more process and timeline/deadline-related kinds of questions. And Bob, I'm going to direct the next couple of questions to you.

First one from – two questions sent out together and then you can answer them all together. So one from Ali Chase. Has the RPB discussed to submittal date for the draft plan with the National Ocean Council? And does

the RPB's existing deadline give sufficient time for plan review and approval prior to the end of 2016?

And then just to add to that question from Matt Gove is, when did RPB member agency gets to review the draft? Is that in November as well?

Bob LaBelle: OK. Thanks, Laura.

Well, we've had some preliminary discussions with National Ocean Council. And they've made some draft of how – you know, their schedule in terms of the time they think they would need to review the ocean action plan.

So the workplan that we've currently got posted that's the first iteration. And we're currently looking at, you know, how and if and when we could update that workplan to better reflect some of the needs for review. And those needs extend certainly into all the agencies that are in the RPB not just the federal agencies.

So we're undertaking discussions now in our co-lead meetings and potentially with the full RPB to discuss review times and how we're going to try to get really good product together by the middle or next year.

Sorry, am I still..?

Laura Cantral: Yes, Bob. Are you there?

Bob LaBelle: Yes. What is the second part of the question?

Laura Cantral: The second part of the question, well, a second question that's related, if when did the member agency get to review the draft? Is that in November as well?

Bob LaBelle: Right. Well, hopefully the member agencies are going to be kept informed by the respective RPB members. That's part of the duty of an RPB member to keep their agency informed and engaged in the discussions of the items that will be in the plan.

So the hope is that that is a non-billing effort and it put beyond. So there were few times that (inaudible) in order to get, you know, final agency approval.

So we're looking at starting writing the plan, I think, roughly by the end of the year or early next year. And so we'll have – we have sometime now the plan how and what each agency need in terms of building and review time.

Laura Cantral: OK. And Bob, you were starting to go out a little bit. So we're looking into (inaudible). But if you can, you know, (inaudible) speaker, that right now, that sounds really good.

Bob LaBelle: Right.

Laura Cantral: OK. So another question, this is also from Ali Chase. Gwynne, I think you're the right person to fill this one, maybe others. Can you also discuss what (decision) for the public comment on the OAC draft?

Gwynne Schultz: I think that a lot of that is still to be determined. There are a lot of the existing tools and techniques that we've used in the past whether it's webinar, public listening sessions. So I think we would want to do kind of a deeper dive and kind of explore traditional kinds of opportunities to further engage effective stakeholders and the public in that process.

So as we move forward understanding of the timeline, I think we will provide kind of additional clarity about this opportunity.

Laura Cantral: And Gwynne, here's another question from Brent Greenfield. When does the RPB intend to issue a final stakeholder engagement strategy?

Gwynne Schultz: It will be part of our ocean action plan, kind of summary of what has been done to date, I think, and how we can plan to continue to engage stakeholders in the implementation.

I do see this also as a living document as we continue to identify opportunities for more engagement that that plan will be continually updated. I would like to open up any other members who have been actively working on that though if they want to, that's going to be – to add to my response.

Laura Cantral: Anyone else want to add to what Gwynne has provided?

OK. I'm keeping an eye on the time and want to get in a few more questions we've got at least for the moment. We've got an administrative question that's quick, and I can fill that one. And then we're going to take a question that's related to Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination and another question about Data Synthesis could be where we are.

So a question from Ali Chase is, with regards to the availability of the PowerPoint. Will that be online right after the webinar?

And Ali, we will post the PowerPoint as soon as possible. In reality, just given that it's Friday afternoon, it may be the first in next week when they're posted. But they'll be out as soon as we can get them there.

And Ali, the other materials like the transcript and webinar recording may take a little bit longer to be processed and posted. But we'll do our best to get everything up ASAP.

There is also a couple of question regarding dates for the September meeting. And we're looking at the weeks of September 20th for the next public meeting to be held perhaps in Virginia Beach or maybe in Delaware. So we will get that. As soon as that's finalized, we will make that information available to you all.

So now I'm going to go to a question. Bob, this is a question, an Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination question from Brent Greenfield. And the question is, is there more changes to the proposed IJC criteria that were brought to the RPB January meeting? Will the RPB commit to publishing a list of decision criteria being used to develop the potential IJC recommendation for public review and RPB consideration?

Bob LaBelle: You know, I can't speak for the full RPB. But as a member and as the Federal Co-Lead, I wouldn't have some problem doing that.

But you know, if that criteria it's not secret or anything and it's meant to be broad and inclusive, so you know, I would say that I would be happy to bring that up to the full RPB and see what they want to rule on it.

Laura Cantral: OK. Thanks.

So now I'm going to go to a question. Tony, this is portal question for you. It's from Bonnie Brady.

As a result of our stakeholder meeting, we had a lot issues with the information regarding the portal using Fisher Day specifically definition of Fisher Day. And also the data specific to the State of New York, there was a map that said there were only 87 commercial fishing boats in all of New York. How are these issues going to be addressed and preferably corrected so that they don't just become stakeholder feedback and are not corrected?

Tony Macdonald: Thank you Bonnie very much for the question and thank you very much for participating and helping us get some of your colleagues also participate in it.

The answer is, I have seen that. All the feedback has been passed on to the team. We are looking at it and we have discussed very specific ways to respond to that. So I would say very much stay tune.

Again, we've heard it. I have discussed with both of the folks in Rutgers, who are helping to process the maps, as well as some of our other collaborators on the (Committee of Sea Elements). So again, we will follow up directly with you to discuss these. And I am sure that we can address them satisfactorily.

So again, this is exactly the way we supposed to work, provide us input. And we will double-back to be sure that everybody – we will not be posting any of these maps on the portal until we have recirculated them with the groups that we've met with and get some consensus that it actually does reflect a common understanding and reflects the concerns of the participants.

So thanks again.

Laura Cantral: All right. We are almost at a time. I think we can take one more question.

This is another question from Brent Greenfield, Bob, to you. Can you provide a bit more information on discussions among the IJC workgroup about the

potential use of data to create buffer zones and informed decisions on offshore canyon?

Bob LaBelle: I think that was put forward as an example of something that the full RPB may well approve as an issue that we should address. And I think, you know, it's a broad-based type of ecosystems approach. There are many canyons out there. There are many similar issues and concerns. And so that's why we've been talking about that one.

And you know, it meets many of the criteria that we probably -- to recommend (inaudible). That activity, that recommendation will be underway in the next few months.

Laura Cantral: All right.

So I think that we need to wrap up now. And just as a reminder, all of the materials will be available on the RPB's website in the days following the webinar. And we will do our best to get them as quickly as possible.

Just a couple of highlights regarding Data Synthesis, there's not -- no ascension of conflict in looking at the work. The ocean health index is something that may happen as part of ROA but still remains to be seen. We will publish decision criteria for deciding on the actions the RPB will consider doing that.

The workplan will be updated soon. There are some considerations regarding the review process and the RPB is in discussions with the (NOP) about that. And we will keep you posted on stakeholder engagement opportunities including the workshop coming up that Laura McKay mentioned in July and other opportunities to speak your engagement and your input.

And your input today is very much appreciated. And we really are pleased that you chose to take some time to be with the RPB, hear about its work, and offer some questions and some input.

So with that, I think we are ready to sign off and wish you a Happy Memorial Day weekend.

Thanks everyone.

Operator: Thank you to all our participants for joining us today. We hope that you found this webcast presentation informative.

This does end the webcast. And you may now disconnect. Have a good day.

END