Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar Summary

May 22, 2015 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Summary of Participant Input

On May 22, 2015, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB or RPB) convened its third public webinar, entitled *Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Webinar: Update on MidA RPB Activities.* The webinar featured a series of brief presentations focused on providing updates on regional ocean planning activities in the Mid-Atlantic region, including reviewing the RPB's work plan and the activities of three workgroups: Interjurisdictional Coordination (IJC), Data Synthesis (DS), and Regional Ocean Assessment (ROA). During the latter half of the webinar, members of the public were offered the opportunity to comment and pose questions through an online question and answer (Q&A) function. This document summarizes the most common themes of comments and questions offered by participants, as well as responses offered by members of the MidA RPB. Additional information, including a full recording and transcript, a participant list, the slide presentation, and a listing of all questions posed over Q&A can be found at the MidA RPB website.[1]

Webinar participants

Approximately 60 participants logged into the webinar.[2] Based on webinar registration, the following sectors appear to have been represented, among others:

- Commercial fishing
- Conventional energy
- Philanthropy
- Science/Academia
- Environmental advocacy organizations
- Policy advocacy organizations
- Native corporations
- Communication industry
- Defense
- Federal agencies
- State governments

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[1] http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/index.aspx

[2] An exact participant count is not possible. Webinar organizers are aware that some participants gathered in groups around shared computers.

Summary of comments and questions

During the webinar, participants asked questions and offered comments about the following topics.

General Comments and Questions about the MidA RPB

- A question was posed about whether the MidA RPB has discussed a submittal date for the draft Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan (OAP) with the National Ocean Council (NOC) and whether the RPB's existing deadline gives sufficient time for plan review and approval prior to the end of 2016. The response was that the RPB Co-Leads have had preliminary discussions with the NOC about its timeline for review. The timeline outlined in the RPB work plan will be updated if necessary to accommodate any potential adjustments review processes required to finalize a plan by the end of 2016.
- Further clarity was sought about when the individual RPB member entities will have the opportunity to review the draft OAP. RPB members clarified that they are expected to keep their entities informed of the process at all times, so that the plan can be readily approved by the end of 2016.
- A question was posed asking if the webinar slides will be posted online after the webinar. It was clarified that the slides will be posted on the MidA RPB website as soon as possible after the webinar.[3]
- Additional clarity was requested about the location and timing of the next in-person MidA RPB public meeting. The RPB is targeting the week of September 20, 2015 and the location will be either Virginia Beach, VA or Wilmington, DE. The RPB is working to finalize these details as soon as possible and will communicate with the public when final logistical information is available.

Interjurisdictional Coordination

- Further clarity was sought about whether the decision criteria being used to develop potential IJC opportunities and actions have changed since the January public meeting, and whether the RPB would publish a list of these criteria for public review. The RPB will consider this request.
- Additional information was requested about IJC workgroup discussions regarding the potential use of data to create buffer zones and inform decisions on offshore canyons. The response was that this is an example of an issue the RPB could address in its OAP, but the RPB has not yet decided what IJC opportunities and actions to pursue.

Data Synthesis

- A question was posed asking whether the RPB is presuming that areas with multiple uses inherently have conflicts. The response was that the RPB is not operating under this

[3] http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/index.aspx

assumption. The data synthesis work is meant to signal where there are areas of high activity that may benefit from closer examination to help identify whether any conflicts exist.

- A comment was made expressing support for the RPB's data synthesis work.
- Further clarity was requested about whether the RPB is working to develop an ocean health index. The response was that the RPB is not currently working on developing such an index but may consider it in the future. The contractor for the Regional Ocean Assessment may have some suggestions for how the RPB should develop an ocean health index.

Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal

- A question was posed about why potential oil and gas resources are not represented on the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. The response was that this data may be incorporated in the future, and is currently available on the Marine Cadastre.[4]
- Clarification was sought about how the Portal team collects stakeholder feedback and incorporates that feedback into improving the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. Two specific inaccuracies were pointed out: an incorrect definition of 'fisher day' and flawed commercial fishing data associated with the State of New York. The response was that stakeholder feedback is passed onto the team, and the team identifies the best way to solve the issue. The Portal team is currently working on the two inaccuracies identified.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Further clarity was sought about the process for public comment on a draft OAP. The answer was that the RPB will determine this as it gets further along in the process of developing a draft.
- A question was posed about when the RPB intends to issue a final stakeholder engagement strategy. The response was that this will be part of the OAP, and can be periodically updated to summarize strategies employed to engage stakeholders to date in addition to those that will be employed during the OAP implementation process.

[4] http://marinecadastre.gov/