



Proceedings from the Mid-Plan Review Workshop

for the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan

October 2023

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Several actions contained herein reference potential legislative changes. These actions will be carried out by interested partner organizations and are not affiliated with NOAA or the Marine Debris Program.

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Introduction

The Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan (Action Plan) was first published in 2021 with an implementation period of 2021-2026. As a first of its kind for the region, the Action Plan established a comprehensive framework for strategic action to ensure the Mid-Atlantic and its coasts, people, and wildlife are free from the impacts of marine debris. The Action Plan is centered on the development and maintenance of collaborative and diverse partnerships to address marine debris in the Mid-Atlantic region, including Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program (NOAA MDP) undertook multiple steps to coordinate the development of the Action Plan, a process which began in 2019. The NOAA MDP has coordinated implementation of the Action Plan since it was published in 2021, collecting voluntary biannual progress reports and hosting collaborative meetings for Action Plan participants and organizations. Since the creation of the Action Plan, participants have worked to implement actions throughout the region, and in many cases displayed significant progress towards the outlined goals laid out in the Action Plan.

History of Action Plan Implementation

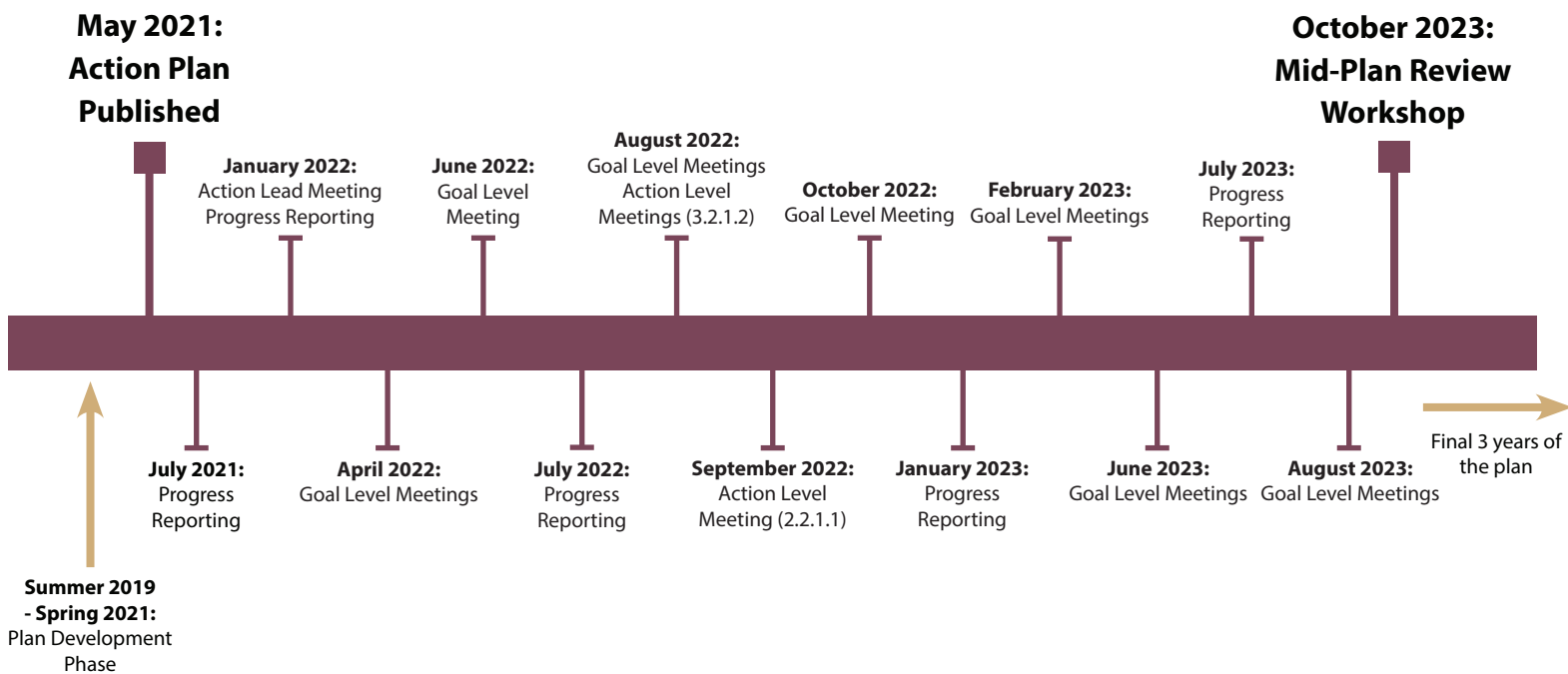


Figure 1: A timeline depicting major moments of engagement by Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan participants.

The Action Plan’s monitoring and evaluation strategy called for a mid-point assessment to be conducted. The Action Plan states a “review and evaluation of the Plan will be performed to better understand which objectives, strategies, and actions are well-supported and achievable and which may require further assistance and course correction.” To fulfill this requirement, the NOAA MDP coordinated an in-person meeting to conduct this assessment and provide feedback on areas where realignment may be necessary.

This document provides a summary of that workshop, and a status update on the implementation of the Action Plan as a whole.

Workshop Summary

As directed by the monitoring and evaluation strategy, the Action Plan underwent a comprehensive mid-point evaluation. A one-day, in-person workshop was held on October 24, 2023 at Stockton University's campus in Atlantic City, New Jersey. There were nearly 40 attendees representing local, state, and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions. Workshop participants represented all five Mid-Atlantic states, the District of Columbia, and regional entities. A full list of attendees is included in [Appendix 1](#).

The stated objectives of the Mid-Plan Review Workshop were as follows:

- Review the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan and highlight successes, challenges, and identify gaps in action implementation.
- Develop or propose solutions to identified gaps, challenges, and barriers to action implementation.
- Provide opportunities for networking and collaboration.
- Discuss ways to strengthen collaboration opportunities on a regional and a national scale.

Opening remarks were provided by Stockton University President, Joe Bertolino, and NOAA MDP Director, Nancy Wallace. Following opening remarks, attendees listened to a series of lightning presentations and remarks by Action Plan participants ([Table 1](#)).






Table 1: List of presentation titles from Mid-Plan Review Workshop lightning presentations session.

Presenter and Affiliation	Title of Presentation
Lisa Swanger, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays	Inland Bays Litter Prevention and Removal: 2023-2024 Project Overview
Jason Davison, Catholic University of America	Anacostia Watershed Plastic Waste
Jon Cohen, University of Delaware	Ongoing Marine Debris Research at University of Delaware
Steve Evert, Stockton University	Overview of WeCrabNJ.org and derelict crab pot removal efforts in coastal New Jersey
John Wnek, Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Sciences	Recovering Derelict Crab Pots from Barnegat Bay - Assessing Bycatch and Evidence of Diamondback Terrapins and BRDs
Rosana Pedra Nobre, Hudson River Foundation of the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Estuary Program	Weehawken Cove & Hudson River Marine Debris Removal Project

After lightning presentations, participants joined breakout sessions for facilitated dialogue. The three breakout sessions were as follows: 1) Consumer Debris; 2) Microplastics and Microfibers; and 3) Derelict Fishing Gear and Abandoned and Derelict Vessels. Prior to the workshop, participants were provided with a snapshot assessment of the action progress for each breakout session topic area. The snapshots were compiled by the NOAA MDP based on biannual progress reporting from July 2021 - August 2023. During the breakout sessions, participants engaged in discussion guided by a series of questions related to specific actions in the Action Plan; reviewed the initial status assessment of the actions and provided any relevant

feedback or modifications; discussed challenges in implementation of the actions; and identified needs and opportunities for continued implementation throughout the second-half of the Action Plan's timeframe. Workshop participants were provided with a list of definitions to help them review and assess the status of each action ([Table 2](#)).

Table 2: List of definitions used to assess the status of each action.

Status	Description
Complete 	Metric target has been achieved and agree to archive this action.
Exceeding Expectations 	Progress has been made towards metric target, and is likely metrics will be achieved prior to 2026, as long as capacity and funding remain steady.
On Track 	Progress has been made towards the metric target, and it is reasonably assumed that by the end of 2026, metrics will be fully achieved, as long as capacity and funding remain steady.
Falling Behind 	Some progress has been made towards metric targets, but there is danger of not achieving metric targets by the end of 2026 due to a number of underlying challenges.
Not Started 	There has been no measurable progress towards the metrics set out at the beginning of the plan.

Participants also discussed the need to modify or adjust the metrics used to measure progress for each action. In some cases, participants determined that minor adjustments to the metrics being measured were necessary. A summary of relevant changes is provided later in this proceedings document ([Appendix 2](#)).

After the breakout sessions, participants returned to the plenary room where they engaged in dialogue around strengthening collaboration with the Action Plan community. To guide this dialogue, participants were provided with three overarching questions to reflect upon:

- Are there opportunities for learning or collaborating with others in the Mid-Atlantic region that you would like to have? If so, what do you envision, or what are your needs? Be as specific as possible.
- Are there opportunities for learning or collaborating with others outside of the Mid-Atlantic region that you would like to have? If so, what do you envision? Be as specific as possible.
- In what ways could the regional community strengthen collaborations to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and accessibility in our collective work? Be as specific as possible.

The group spent 45 minutes discussing the ideas and responses to the guiding questions. Several themes emerged from this discussion, which are reflected in the next section.

Workshop Outcomes

The workshop centered on breakout sessions that involved a review of actions in the Action Plan to assess progress status, and determine which actions may be falling behind and/or need additional support. During the course of conversation, participants also suggested minor revisions to the language of a small number of actions, adjustments to a few of the metrics and/or targets, and the need for a more up-to-date list of participating organizations. A summary of these changes is provided below.

A) Action Level Status Assessment






The Action Plan originally contained 54 actions spread across four distinct goals. At the workshop, participants reviewed an initial progress assessment for each action (as determined by progress reporting from July 2021 through August 2023), and provided feedback to help inform the snapshot provided below. A detailed progress status summary of each action is contained in [Appendix 2](#) of this report.

Two notes:

- Workshop participants indicated that, even if actions were deemed “on track” or “exceeding expectations,” that does not necessarily mean no additional support (time, capacity, funding, etc.) is needed to implement those actions. Rather, this snapshot provides a “moment in time” progress summary.
- This snapshot includes 55 actions, rather than 54, to include one additional action that was added to the Action Plan, as discussed in the next section.

Overall, participants determined that a majority of the actions (42 of 55) are either “on track”, “exceeding expectations”, or “complete” ([Table 3](#)). However, 10 actions were determined to be “falling behind”, and 3 actions have not reported any meaningful progress.

Table 3: Number and status of actions in the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan.

Action Status	Number of Actions
Complete 	4
Exceeding Expectations 	6
On Track 	32
Falling Behind 	10
Not Started 	3

The status assessment for each action based on the four goals in the Action Plan is available in [Table 4](#). Here, Goals are assessed based on which have been well supported and which have potentially faced challenges in implementation.






For example, five actions in Goal 2: Derelict Fishing Gear (or nearly 30% of the actions in that goal) are categorized as "falling behind", and four actions in Goal 3: Microplastics and Microfibers (36% of total actions in that Goal) are "falling behind" or "not started". Alternatively, only two actions are "falling behind" in Goal 1: Consumer Debris (11%) compared to 16 actions (89%) that are either "on track", "exceeding expectations", or "complete". While no actions are "complete" or "exceeding expectations" in Goal 4: Abandoned and Derelict Vessels and Other Related Debris, six of the eight actions (75%) are "on track", one is "falling behind", and one is "not started".

Table 4: Number and status of actions in the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan.

Action Status	Goal 1: Consumer Debris	Goal 2: Derelict Fishing Gear	Goal 3: Microplastics and Microfibers	Goal 4: Abandoned and Derelict Vessels
Complete 	1	2	1	0
Exceeding Expectations 	4	0	2	0
On Track 	11	11	4	6
Falling Behind 	2	5	2	1
Not Started 	0	0	2	1

Finally, the status assessment can also be reviewed by looking at each of the five common strategies of the Action Plan (Table 5), which span all four Goals. Here, strategies are assessed to determine which have been well supported and which have potentially faced challenges in implementation. For example, all actions related to the Removal strategy are "on track", "exceeding expectations", or "complete". Conversely, the Proper Disposal and Infrastructure strategy has six actions that are either "falling behind" or "not started", and the Prevention, Education, and Outreach strategy has four actions that are "falling behind".

Table 5: Number and status of actions across five shared strategies within each goal of the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan.

Action Status	Prevention, Education, and Outreach	Research and Monitoring	Proper Disposal and Infrastructure	Removal	Policy and Management
Complete 	1	2	0	1	0
Exceeding Expectations 	3	1	0	1	1
On Track 	10	10	4	4	4
Falling Behind 	4	1	4	0	1
Not Started 	0	1	2	0	0

B) Updates to Language in the Action Plan

During the workshop, participants discussed potential modifications to the language of certain actions, the metrics and targets used to track progress, and the list of organizations engaged in implementing each action. The following sections reflect outcomes from that dialogue. The changes below are now incorporated in the [Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan](#), which was updated in early 2024.

Updates to Action Language

The language of 13 actions in the Action Plan was modified slightly to reflect updated priorities and/or understandings of work ongoing in the Mid-Atlantic region. One action was added to the Action Plan to better capture a specific output from a regional organization, which was not well reflected in the original version of the Action Plan. A summary of the changes is provided in [Table 6](#). Many of the changes were made to help clarify the intent of the action language and/or better reflect the realities of implementation in the region.

Table 6: Summary of updates made to actions in the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan.

Goal	Updated Action Language	Description of Change
Consumer Debris	1.4.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, support and coordinate at least 125 cleanup events (large-scale, small-scale, or virtual campaigns) around land-based litter and collect data on debris weight removed, including the International Coastal Cleanup.	The phrase "volunteer-led" was removed from the original action language to reflect that there are some regional cleanup programs that are not purely volunteer events (e.g., job training programs).
Derelict Fishing Gear	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 conduct outreach to organizations and businesses in order to build partnerships on recycling monofilament line and soft bait.	The action language was adjusted to reflect participant feedback noting that building 10 new partnerships may not be realistic. Participants suggested a more realistic action would be to conduct outreach to businesses to explore what partnerships may be possible in the future.
	2.2.2.3. Publish a report that examines various state policy approaches to bycatch reduction devices to minimize the impact of derelict fishing gear on diamondback terrapins.	This action was added to the Action Plan. It reflects work that was completed during the first half of the Action Plan's implementation but was not captured fully in any other actions in the Plan. This Action is "complete".
	2.4.1.2. By the end of 2026, support at least five removal projects working alongside commercial fishing and aquaculture communities, and employ alternative disposal options (e.g., recycling, return to owner, repurposing) when possible.	Language was added to the end of this action to incorporate the same "alternative disposal" language that is included for Action 2.4.1.1. This update simply adds clarity and intention for the disposal of derelict fishing gear.
	2.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, attend regional fishery meetings to bring awareness to issues, impacts, prevention approaches, and proper disposal of derelict fishing gear.	The language for this action was modified in order to enable flexibility in outreach to a broader community of fishing-related organizations, and to ensure outreach leads to meaningful outcomes. Participants felt the initial action language was too narrow, and restricted their ability to meaningfully engage fishers and fishery managers.

Goal	Updated Action Language	Description of Change
Microplastics and Microfibers	3.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, share educational materials through online platforms, in-person events, educator workshops, school programs and visits, summer camps, and field trips with 10,000 preschool through twelfth grade (P-12) Mid-Atlantic students and 500 educators, and make resources available online for diverse audiences on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal.	The text of this action was updated to mirror the same text captured in Consumer Debris Action 1.1.1.2. This revision was made for consistency in language, and as a reflection that in many cases engagement on this action related to microplastics likely also contributes to progress on the consumer debris action.
	3.1.1.3. By the end of 2026, complete at least three microplastic and microfiber education, prevention, and outreach projects and/or courses for undergraduate and graduate university students to build the capacity of next-generation leaders.	Added minor text to this action to clarify that courses on microplastics and microfibers taught in a university setting also count towards progress on this action.
	3.1.2.1. By the end of 2026, engage at least five community groups or the private sector in pilot projects for education and/or prevention of microfibers from clothing and textiles in wastewater.	The text of this action was modified to clarify that community groups and the private sector can be involved in partnership on this action. The text was also revised to incorporate education on microfibers as a component of engagement, in addition to working with groups on the prevention of microfibers.
	3.2.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, share microplastic research, best practices, literature, resources, and funding sources on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal.	Removed the word "data" from the original action text, as workshop participants noted that data and datasets specifically would not always be a category of information shared in webinars.
	3.2.1.2. By the end of 2026, conduct at least one microplastic and microfiber research webinar to share research and discuss future needs in the region.	The text was revised to expand the scope of this action in order to allow for more meaningful outcomes.

Goal	Updated Action Language	Description of Change
Abandoned and Derelict Vessels and Related Debris	4.2.1.1. By the end of 2026, identify opportunities to create state inventory programs, identify derelict vessel hot spots with state and local authorities, and share resources with the Mid-Atlantic community.	The timeframe for implementing this action was adjusted from "the end of 2023" to "the end of 2026". This brings the action more inline with the rest of the Action Plan, and recognizes that additional work is required.
	4.3.1.2. By the end of 2026, engage with at least three recycling centers to understand issues and opportunities to increase sustainable disposal alternatives for shrink wrap.	Replaced the word "partner" with "engage". Action Plan participants may be more readily able to engage with recycling centers, rather than form formal partnerships.
	4.3.1.3. By the end of 2026, explore the development of at least three new partnerships to increase fiberglass recycling and other sustainable vessel disposal alternatives across the Mid-Atlantic region.	Replaced the phrase "develop at least three new partnerships" with the phrase "explore the development of at least three new partnerships". The current state of technology may not lend itself to fully implementable partnerships by 2026, thus the process for setting up potential partnerships is more realistic. This language also better aligns with language in other action plans such Action 4.3.1.1 of the Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan.

Revisions to Targets and Metrics

In reviewing progress on the actions contained within the Action Plan, workshop participants highlighted the need to adjust or modify a few of the metrics and targets for a select number of actions (Table 7). For example, in some cases, targets were increased due to significant progress made on those actions in the first half of the Action Plan implementation period. In other cases, targets were reduced to reflect a more realistic understanding of implementation. These changes are now reflected in the Action Plan.

Table 7: Summary of updates made to metrics and targets of the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan.

Action	Metric and Target Revision Summary
1.1.1.2.	The target for “number of residents reached” was increased to 500,000 from the initial target of 50,000 to reflect the significant progress regional groups have made on this action. The “social media metrics” target contained within the initial Action Plan was removed.
1.1.1.4.	A new metric, “number of zero waste events held”, was added to capture the implementation of zero waste practices by Action Plan participating organizations. A new metric, “number of zero waste guidance documents produced”, was added to capture materials developed to support zero waste event implementation.
1.1.2.2.	A new metric, “number of forums where opportunities were shared”, was added to account for the fact that some organizations don’t directly reach individual schools, but instead work with broader education consortiums who then share out information.
1.2.2.1.	The target for “number of campaigns” was increased from three to six to reflect additional projects groups are planning to pursue on this action during the second half of Action Plan implementation.
2.1.1.3.	The metric and target of 10 private partnerships established was removed, and replaced with a metric, “number of organizations/businesses engaged”. This new metric does not have a stated target.
2.2.2.3.	A metric “number of reports produced” was added for this new action, with a target of one.
2.4.1.2.	Originally, the metrics for this action was “number of projects” and “pounds removed”. However, given the similarity between Action 2.4.1.2 and Action 2.4.1.1, metrics for this action were adjusted to mirror the metrics collected under action 2.4.1.1. The metrics are now: “pounds removed”; “number of traps/pots removed”; and “percentage of alternatively disposed debris”.
2.5.1.1.	The target for this action was removed, reflecting priority given towards the quality of presentations over quantity.
3.1.1.3.	Adjusted metric from “number of university students reached” to “number of university students supported/advised” with a target of 100.
3.2.1.3.	Added metric “number of research projects completed” to reflect the original intent of the action.

Action Plan Participation Updates

Workshop participants identified the need to update the list of organizations participating within the Action Plan, as reflected in [Appendix 2](#) of the Action Plan. Participants suggested inviting new groups to the Action Plan community, as well as ensuring organizational contacts are updated to reflect staff turnover. In addition, participants identified the need to update the individual actions to which each group is assigned. While many of these suggestions will require an iterative process for updates and engagement, where updates could be made immediately, they are now reflected in the updated Action Plan.

C) Collaboration Needs Assessment

Throughout the course of the workshop, discussion focused on needs and opportunities for collaboration among Action Plan participants. Below is a brief summary of the major needs that emerged during these discussions.

1. Increase access to information about ongoing work across the Mid-Atlantic region for groups participating in the Action Plan community.
2. Increase information sharing from the Action Plan to the public.
3. Bring marine debris topics and Action Plan information to other regional forums to expand awareness to groups not directly engaged on marine debris.
4. Engage more deeply in action-level conversations.
5. Participate in training and learning opportunities to enhance the skill set of regional practitioners.
6. Engage in conversation with groups in other regions of the United States to enhance awareness of ongoing work and identify opportunities for expanded partnerships.
7. Enhance support to underrepresented and underserved communities and individuals.






Each of the above themes contain numerous potential collaboration opportunities that may be leveraged throughout the rest of the Action Plan's implementation period. Some of these collaboration needs can be supported by existing methods of engagement. However, others may require additional investment (e.g., capacity, funding, etc.) to carry out.

Appendix 1: Workshop Participant List







Name	Organization
Barbara Balestra	American University
Diana Burich	New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium
Jonathan Cohen	University of Delaware
Jessica Conway	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program/ Genwest Systems, Inc.
Scott Curatolo-Wagemann	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
Haley Dalian	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program/ Lynker
Jason Davison	Catholic University of America
Gina Digiantonio	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program/ Genwest Systems, Inc.
Steve Evert	Stockton University
Karen Fahy	New Jersey State Police Marine Services Bureau
Kaitlin Gannon	Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve
Devon Haines	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
JP Herring	New Jersey State Police
Alexandria Horan	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Will Isenberg	Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Brittany McLaughlan	Save Barnegat Bay
Marina Jackson	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Francis McParland	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Jesse Meiller	Georgetown University
Katie Morgan	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program/ Lynker
Caterina Panzeca	State University of New York Maritime College
Rosana Pedra	Hudson River Foundation, New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program
Samantha Pfeffer	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Nate Robinson	Stockton University
Yoni Ronn	Columbia University
Hannah Sanders	Environmental Protection Agency Region 3
Sheri Shifren	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Liz Silvernail	Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey
Kelly Somers	Environmental Protection Agency Region 3
Peter Straub	Stockton University
Mark Sullivan	Stockton University
Lisa Swanger	Delaware Center for the Inland Bays
Veronica Tangiri	Prince William (Virginia) Soil and Water Conservation District
Karina Calizaya Torre	Columbia University
Allie Tilson	National Aquarium
Jes Watts	Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean

Name	Organization
John Wnek	Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science
Ben Wurst	Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey








Appendix 2: Mid-Plan Status Assessment Summary

Goal 1: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Consumer Debris	
Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
1.1.1.1. By the end of 2026, create or adapt and disseminate at least 25 outreach products on consumer debris that are relevant to or could be replicated across the region, including fact sheets, infographics, one-pagers, and manuals of best practices, and make them available online for diverse audiences on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other sources.	<p>On Track</p>  <p>While outreach products continue to be developed regionally, additional support is needed to make materials available for diverse audiences.</p>
1.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, engage at least 500,000 Mid-Atlantic residents in meaningful interactions that promote source reduction of common consumer debris items, including single-use plastics, and encourage increased use of sustainable alternatives, such as reusable items.	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Outreach across the region related to source reduction and sustainable alternatives continues, with significant engagement from organizations in all five states and the District of Columbia.</p>
1.1.1.3. 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 .	<p>Complete</p>  <p>A campaign has been fully developed and has entered the passive implementation phase.</p>
1.1.1.4. By the end of 2026, Action Plan leads and partners will promote sustainable and waste-reducing initiatives in their respective office operations and events to reduce consumer debris and single-use plastic.	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Additional support or engagement on this action may be needed to expand the implementation of zero waste events.</p>
1.1.2.1. By the end of 2026, share educational materials that have been successfully demonstrated through online platforms, in-person events, educator workshops, school programs and visits, summer camps, and field trips with at least 500 educators and 10,000 preschool through twelfth grade (P-12) Mid-Atlantic students, and make them available online for diverse audiences on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.	<p>Exceeding Expectations</p>  <p>Significant progress has been made in reaching students, however, efforts to reach a large number of educators continues to pose a challenge.</p>






Goal 1: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Consumer Debris






Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>1.1.2.2. Each year of the Action Plan, share professional opportunities, such as internships and educational programs, with at least 50 high schools and universities across the region, especially serving schools in underserved and underrepresented communities.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>While some progress has been made, there may be a continued need to increase awareness of opportunities across the region.</p>
<p>1.1.3.1. By the end of 2026, engage at least 250 private sector partners in the food service, travel, and tourism industries in conversations to understand barriers, implement single-use plastic reduction practices, and share lessons learned with regional partners and the public.</p>	<p>Exceeding Expectations</p>  <p>While significant progress has been made, this action has not been implemented equally across the region, with a few locations driving a bulk of the outreach.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>As research is published, partners will continue to share it across the region.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Partners continue to monitor for consumer debris throughout the region, leveraging a variety of different methodologies and for a variety of different purposes (public outreach, policy development, regulatory requirements).</p>
<p>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 six three consumer debris campaigns that are inclusive of the Mid-Atlantic regional community.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Three campaigns have been completed regionally, and more are either in progress or planned (pending funding availability).</p>
<p>1.3.1.1. By the end of 2026, complete at least 25 projects that use available data to install interception technologies, tools, receptacle bins, and capture devices that support data collection and monitoring across the Mid-Atlantic, including through identifying funding sources, conducting surveys, and sharing lessons learned.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>Challenges including issues securing funding for installation and/or long-term maintenance, among others, have led to lower success than anticipated towards this action.</p>

Goal 1: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Consumer Debris








Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>1.3.1.2. Each year of the Action Plan, promote and share existing toolkits and mapping software to identify landfill and recycling facilities across the region.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Opportunities exist to enhance information sharing on this action, including from state and local entities</p>
<p>1.3.1.3. By the end of 2026, compile a list of extended producer responsibility or waste collection opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic region, and identify those suitable for inclusion in marine debris efforts.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>Engagement on this action has waned throughout the course of Action Plan implementation. Additional focus will be needed on this action to achieve results.</p>
<p>1.3.1.4. Each year of the Action Plan, examine existing data, such as total daily maximum loads, as well as the effectiveness of local, state, and regional policies and identify the need to create new or enhanced litter plans.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Progress continues to be made on this action, particularly at the local level and in Virginia.</p>
<p>1.4.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, support and coordinate at least 125 cleanup events (large-scale, small-scale, or virtual campaigns) around land-based litter and collect data on debris weight removed, including the International Coastal Cleanup.</p>	<p>Exceeding Expectations</p>  <p>A significant number of events are held annually throughout the region to remove shoreline debris by hand, far exceeding initial targets for this action.</p>
<p>1.4.1.2. Each year of the Action plan, coordinate with local and state groups to reach new audiences and host cleanup events in new locations to serve underserved areas and communities.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Action Plan participants have hosted targeted events in communities impacted by debris.</p>
<p>1.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, engage with at least 500 local, county, state, and/or federal elected officials and policy-makers to increase awareness of consumer debris policies and advocacy campaigns.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Engagement region-wide continues to be reported consistently by partners.</p>
<p>1.5.1.2. By the end of 2026, inform the development of at least 10 new local and state policies and management plans that are aimed at source reduction, prevention, and interception practices using available data and information.</p>	<p>Exceeding Expectations</p>  <p>Regional efforts to develop and/or enact policies have been significant.</p>

Goal 2: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear


Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>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 Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Several outreach products have been developed and continue to be leveraged for a variety of audiences. That includes outreach fliers to crabbers, virtual presentations, ArcGIS story maps, updates to web pages on bycatch reduction devices, workshops on how to properly rig crab pots, and more.</p>
<p>2.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, engage at least 500,000 Mid-Atlantic residents in meaningful interactions that promote source reduction of common consumer debris items, including single-use plastics, and encourage increased use of sustainable alternatives, such as reusable items.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>One “responsible crabbing” sign was translated into Spanish in coastal New Jersey. No other translations have been reported. Additional support may be needed to expand the translation of materials regionally.</p>
<p>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 conduct outreach to organizations and businesses in order to build partnerships on recycling monofilament line and soft bait.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>A few outreach products have been created, though challenges associated with outreach to organizations and businesses continue, stemming from pandemic-era impacts and funding levels to conduct this work.</p>
<p>2.1.1.4. By the end of 2026, establish at least 10 new partnerships between the commercial fishing industry, recreational fishers, local municipalities, metal recyclers, and waste-to-energy companies to recycle, install receptacles for, and properly dispose of fishing gear.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Recent funding awards to regional organizations may result in more consistent forward progress on this action.</p>
<p>2.1.1.5. By the end of 2026, engage with at least 10 aquaculture organizations across the region to better understand debris issues, storm preparedness, and information gaps.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>Limited reporting has been shared through the first half of Action Plan implementation, though there may be additional efforts ongoing that have either not been reported yet and/or will be starting in the second-half of Action Plan implementation.</p>

Goal 2: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear	
Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
2.2.1.1. By the end of 2026, conduct at least one study to analyze historical stranding records to investigate interactions between marine mammals, sea turtles, and marine debris, and make the results available on Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Groups have begun research and are compiling information, though progress has slowed in recent months. Re-prioritization of effort may be required to complete this action.</p>
2.2.1.2. By the end of 2026, develop or adapt existing methods to document wildlife interactions with derelict fishing gear and make them available on public-facing platforms.	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Several organizations have reported independent progress made towards this action, though at the mid-point assessment, no methods have been shared on public-facing platforms.</p>
2.2.1.3. By the end of 2026, publish at least one study to document the local knowledge of fishers, lobstermen, watermen, and crabbers regarding ghost fishing and species impacted by derelict fishing gear.	<p>Complete</p>  <p>The Virginia Institute of Marine Science published a gear mitigation strategies study and an outreach flyer based on dialogues with commercial watermen in the Virginia portion of Chesapeake Bay. Other organizations have reported ongoing efforts to publish studies.</p>
2.2.1.4. By the end of 2026, complete at least three studies on derelict fishing gear hot spots, share the results with the boating community to enhance navigational safety, and make them available to the public.	<p>On Track</p>  <p>The Virginia Institute of Marine Science has published a mapping tool that highlights gear removal locations from 2008-2021. Stockton University has reported efforts to identify gear hotspots and enhance awareness, including areas with overlapping high densities of terrapins and public recreational crabbing areas.</p>
2.2.2.1. By the end of 2026, implement two new projects to partner with fishers, lobstermen, watermen, and crabbers to use innovative technologies to prevent and remove derelict fishing gear in coastal and marine environments.	<p>On Track</p>  <p>With new funding available, partners to this action will at least meet, if not exceed, the target of implementing two new projects. Additional projects and funding will likely expand progress on this action beyond the initial target.</p>





Goal 2: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear

Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>2.2.2.2. By the end of 2026, distribute bycatch reduction devices proven to prevent ghost fishing to recreational and commercial fishers, and/or develop a pilot program to assess their effectiveness.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Over 2,000 bycatch reduction devices have been distributed across the region, and organizations plan to continue distributing as funding is made available.</p>
<p>2.2.2.3. Publish a report that examines various state policy approaches to bycatch reduction devices to minimize the impact of derelict fishing gear on diamondback terrapins.</p>	<p>Complete</p>  <p>The Virginia Coastal Policy Center published a review of terrapin excluder device policies in spring 2022.</p>
<p>2.3.1.1. By the end of 2026, install and monitor at least 75 monofilament collection bins at priority locations identified by partners, including signage in English and non-English languages.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>Groups have reported 27 new bins installed since 2021. Limited funding for installing bins and posting signs has delayed additional progress.</p>
<p>2.3.1.2. Each year of the Action Plan, coordinate with at least 10 state and local authorities, metal recyclers, waste-to-energy companies, or haulers to return recovered gear when possible, properly dispose of collected gear, and identify sustainable alternatives.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Several organizations continue to report progress on this action across the region, especially in New York and New Jersey.</p>
<p>2.4.1.1. By the end of 2026, support the removal of derelict fishing gear in collaboration with recreational fishing and boating communities, promote and implement volunteer collection events, and employ alternative disposal options (e.g., recycling, return to owner, repurposing) when possible.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Groups continue to make incremental progress on this action with some new projects expected to begin in the second-half of Action Plan implementation.</p>
<p>2.4.1.2. By the end of 2026, support at least five removal projects working alongside commercial fishing and aquaculture communities, and employ alternative disposal options (e.g., recycling, return to owner, repurposing) when possible.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Progress continues to be made on this action with projects in several states, including New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia.</p>
<p>2.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, attend at least 10 regional fishery management meetings to bring awareness to issues, impacts, prevention approaches, and proper disposal of derelict fishing gear.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>Attention to this action has been limited during the first half of Action Plan implementation.</p>






Goal 2: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Derelict Fishing Gear

Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>2.5.2.1. Each year of the Action Plan, research and promote funding mechanisms to support derelict fishing gear removal to 10 regional, state, and local entities.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Groups continue to share available funding opportunities and develop regional partnerships for gear removal.</p>



Goal 3: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Microplastics and Microfibers

Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>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 Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal and other platforms.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Progress continues to be made regionally. Outreach materials have included campaigns, field activities, presentations, infographics, fliers, news articles, education materials, and more.</p>
<p>3.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, share educational materials through online platforms, in-person events, educator workshops, school programs and visits, summer camps, and field trips with 10,000 preschool through twelfth grade (P-12) Mid-Atlantic students and 500 educators, and make resources available online for diverse audiences on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Progress has been made in reaching P-12 students and educators, and additional projects are slated for implementation from 2024-2026. Focus will be necessary to ensure targets are achieved on this action.</p>
<p>3.1.1.3. By the end of 2026, complete at least three microplastic and microfiber education, prevention, and outreach projects and/or courses for undergraduate and graduate university students to build the capacity of next-generation leaders.</p>	<p>Exceeding Expectations</p>  <p>Several organizations have engaged in projects and/or courses with undergraduate and graduate students related to education, prevention, and outreach, and more are planned for the upcoming years.</p>
<p>3.1.2.1. By the end of 2026, engage at least five community groups or the private sector in pilot projects for education and/or prevention of microfibers from clothing and textiles in wastewater.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>Groups have struggled to identify a path forward on this action. There are a few projects that may be starting in the region, but additional engagement and support will be necessary to achieve this action.</p>




Goal 3: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Microplastics and Microfibers

Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>3.2.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, share microplastic research, best practices, literature, resources, and funding sources on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Collaboration Portal.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>As resources are developed by Action Plan participants, materials are uploaded to the Collaboration Portal on the education, outreach, and publications pages.</p>
<p>3.2.1.2. By the end of 2026, conduct at least one microplastic and microfiber research webinar to share research in the region and to discuss future research needs.</p>	<p>Not Started</p>  <p>While there have been some early conversations among the few groups on this action, no meaningful progress has been made.</p>
<p>3.2.1.3. By the end of 2026, complete at least 15 research projects that address a regional informational gap, including but not limited to studies on pathways, measurement and sampling techniques, quantification, fate and transport, modeling, chemical and physical traits, impacts to wildlife and human health, and vectors for invasive species.</p>	<p>Exceeding Expectations</p>  <p>Groups have exceeded expectations on this action with roughly 16 research projects reported by Action Plan participants across the region. Groups will continue to pursue research efforts in the region through the rest of the Action Plan period.</p>
<p>3.2.1.4. By the end of 2026, create and/or expand citizen science projects and programs related to nurdles, or pre-production plastic pellets, to include at least one site in the Mid-Atlantic region.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p>  <p>Progress on this action has been faltering throughout the implementation period. Two efforts to monitor pre-production plastic pellets were initiated, though staff capacity has waned and those efforts have not been sustained.</p>
<p>3.3.1.1. By the end of 2026, conduct at least one study alongside academia, the private sector, and/or stormwater management agencies to collect observational data and analyze the cost-benefit for remediation, innovative technologies, and/or barriers to using intercept technologies to reduce microfibers and microplastics entering waterways.</p>	<p>Not Started</p>  <p>No meaningful progress has been reported on this action to date.</p>

Goal 3: Understand, Prevent, and Mitigate the Impacts of Microplastics and Microfibers

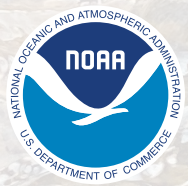
Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>3.4.1.1. By the end of 2026, identify and distribute innovative products and technology proven to be effective that can be used in consumer homes and in commercial laundry establishments, such as washing machine filters, to reduce microfiber entry into waterways.</p>	<p>Complete</p>  <p>Delaware Sea Grant previously received funding for a project that would achieve this action. In total, 60 products were distributed, alongside educational information on microfibers. Additional efforts across the region may continue if more funding is made available or other groups choose to take up this effort.</p>
<p>3.5.1.1. By the end of 2026, engage in meaningful interactions with at least 25 local and state decision-makers to better understand impacts and management considerations for microplastics and microfibers in waterways.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>While the metric has been met on this action, dialogue with local and state decision-makers has not been consistent across the region and has primarily been reported in New Jersey and New York City. Groups wish to continue reporting progress on this action.</p>

Goal 4: Prevent and Mitigate the Contributions of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels, Shrink Wrap, Fiberglass, and Other Related Debris

Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>4.1.1.1. By the end of 2026, create outreach products, such as fact sheets and educational materials, highlighting best practices for responsible boat ownership, including proper disposal, reusable alternatives to single-use boat covers, and storm preparedness. Share with marinas, boating shops, boat shows, yacht clubs, and other relevant private sector entities.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Several groups across the region have created materials, such as outreach fliers and pamphlets, with additional materials planned for the coming years.</p>
<p>4.1.1.2. By the end of 2026, identify relevant local and state jurisdictions that address ADVs and other vessel related debris, document gaps and challenges, and use new information to update the ADV InfoHub website.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Abandoned and Derelict Vessel InfoHub updates have been made for Virginia and Maryland to reflect new information at the state level.</p>
<p>4.2.1.1. By the end of 2026, identify opportunities to create state inventory programs and identify derelict vessel hot spots with state and local authorities and share resources with the Mid-Atlantic community.</p>	<p>On Track</p>  <p>Efforts are ongoing in several states to inventory abandoned and derelict vessels, identify hot spots, and share resources.</p>

Goal 4: Prevent and Mitigate the Contributions of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels, Shrink Wrap, Fiberglass, and Other Related Debris

Actions	Mid-Plan Status Assessment
<p>4.3.1.1. Each year of the Action Plan, identify local and state funding opportunities and contact information for disposal, hauling, and vessel recycling to be shared with the marine debris community.</p>	<p>Not Started</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No meaningful progress has been reported on this action.</p>
<p>4.3.1.2. By the end of 2026, engage with at least three recycling centers to understand issues and opportunities to increase sustainable disposal alternatives for shrink wrap.</p>	<p>On Track</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Progress on this action continues at varying levels across the region. Funding has been a barrier for some groups to implement this action.</p>
<p>4.3.1.3. By the end of 2026, explore the development of at least three new partnerships to increase fiberglass recycling and other sustainable vessel disposal alternatives across the Mid-Atlantic region.</p>	<p>Falling Behind</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Early conversations in several locations throughout the region with cement manufacturers have yet to develop into meaningful partnerships for fiberglass recycling.</p>
<p>4.4.1.1. By the end of 2026, remove ADVs that local, state, and federal agencies deem priorities from waterways by providing technical assistance and sharing information on funding opportunities.</p>	<p>On Track</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Vessels continue to be removed throughout the region by a variety of organizations, funded by various sources. Significant removal efforts are expected in the coming years with funding primarily from state and federal sources.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>On Track</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Efforts are ongoing, including the release of a report on state approaches to abandoned and derelict vessel removal and prevention programming.</p>



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