

# Coastal Observation Technology System Project Summary – 2004

**Project Name/Title:** Mid Atlantic Research Association (MARA)

**Date Project Initiated:** June 2004

**Recipient Institution:** University of Delaware

**Primary Contact:**

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**Project Web Site:** To be established

**Brief Project Summary:** As a Regional Association, MARA will be responsible for the design and coordinated development of Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (RCOOSs) in the Mid-Atlantic that are responsive to the needs of multiple user groups and improve as new knowledge and technologies become available. Although MARA has its roots extending back to the NorthEast Observing System (NEOS), MARA is a new entity, with its purview extending from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras. MARA will build an integrated observing system covering the watersheds, bays, estuaries, and open shelf waters of the Middle Atlantic Bight. Achieving success at this endeavor requires engagement between information producers and information users at the outset. For this reason, MARA has chosen to begin the process by assembling a team of key representatives from science, commerce, navigation, state coastal environmental management and protection, and homeland security communities whose charge it is to develop an organizational and governance structure. MARA is designed to focus on Integrated Ocean Observing System goals that directly support end user needs. It is a new structure, designed from the ground up with the users at the table.

**Accomplishments to Date:**

- Provisional Steering Committee established
- Workshop organized for late August to plan organization and governance structure
- Plan for five subregional workshops (based on 5 major ecosystems in the MARA footprint) in November 2004.
- Plan for comprehensive MARA organizational workshop in February 2005 addressing steps and timetable leading to MARA certification by Ocean.US.

**Current Year Objectives:**

- Establish the MARA organizational and governance structure
- Produce a MARA charter and strategic plan
- Seek funding for a MARA chief executive officer
- Develop a MARA business plan
- Plan regional pilot and demonstration projects

**Partners:**

- Co-Principals:
  - Dr. William Boicourt, University of Maryland
  - Dr. Scott Glenn, Rutgers University
- MARA membership will be officially determined following the workshop process outlined above.