

REGIONAL OCEAN GOVERNANCE: FACING THE CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL COLLABORATION

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In response to the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan, regional alliances have developed across the country to promote and improve ocean and coastal resource management at a regional or ecosystem scale. These regional alliances have developed unique processes and partnerships for working at a regional scale. As these regional alliances continue to mature and refine their process for working across traditional political jurisdictions, it is the right time to evaluate their lessons learned and future challenges.

The purpose of this two and a half hour café conversation is to bring together representatives from the full spectrum of regional ocean governance initiatives: from the more mature efforts in the Great Lakes and Gulf of Maine to the active efforts in the Gulf of Mexico, West Coast, Northeast, Puget Sound and the Chesapeake, and finally, the newer alliances in the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic, as well as others. We invite representatives of these efforts and their partners to discuss the specific challenges with working across geographic, cultural, political and agency jurisdictions, as well as to develop strategies for moving forward with regional or ecosystem scale alliances.

The Café will consist of two facilitated sessions. The first session will confirm and build upon those major challenges facing regional governance groups as identified in the Meridian-sponsored panel session on regional ocean governance. Participants will be asked to comment on how these challenges impact the progress of their alliance as well as any differences in challenges among state, federal or other partners engaged. At the end of the first session, participants will select three to five challenges for further discussion.

The goal of the second session is to develop national or multi-regional strategies that address each selected challenge. Participants will be asked to break into smaller groups focused on one or two challenges. Strategies for moving forward will be developed using the collective experience of the participants. Each group will report back on strategies they developed, and ideas on how they can be implemented and tracked for progress.

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