

**Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes**

April 21, 2014 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/21533/>

Call Participants: *Peyton Robertson, Tom O'Connell, Bryan King, Rob O'Reilly, Bob Beal, Marty Gary, Bruce Vogt, Andrew Turner, Joe Grist, Nancy Butowski, Lynn Fegley, Jack Frye, Matt Mullin, Bill Goldsborough, Susan Conner, Karl Blankenship, Emilie Franke*

Decisional

➤ **Blue Crab Allocation Proposal – Matt Mullin (EDF) (1:00-1:25pm)**

- *Presentation 10 min; Discussion 15 min*
- Handout: *EDF_Fish GIT TAC Workgroup Concept Paper*
- Fisheries GIT member Matt Mullin presented EDF's proposed framework for how to move forward with blue crab allocation discussions:
 - The framework proposed a workgroup under the Fisheries GIT focused on developing a TAC for the blue crab fishery. The TAC would either be female-specific or be for the whole fishery if male reference points were developed.
 - Matt M. expressed emphasized the need to begin these discussions ASAP and pointed out that the Fisheries GIT agreed at their June 2012 meeting to make allocation discussions a priority. Matt M. acknowledged the other important blue crab issues that have come up since then, but would like the allocation discussions to begin this year.
- Ex Comm members agreed that they are interested in evaluating a Baywide allocation, but there are several issues that need to be addressed besides just data needs when developing a TAC:
 - Rob O. cited multiple issues for consideration including the difficulty of creating a TAC based only on annual survey results; law enforcement capacity needed to enforce a TAC (high number of landing sites); difference and variability in sex-specific composition among the jurisdictions; existing latent effort in the fishery
- Ex Comm members discussed the proposed workgroup members and when/who would begin working on TAC development:
 - Matt M. and the Ex Comm members acknowledged that CBSAC has a very full schedule for the next few months, but that CBSAC's expertise is important in TAC discussions.
 - Lynn F. discussed that if the TAC discussions included organizations like EDF, CBF, and CBC, then watermen and the industry must be included as well.
 - Ex Comm members stressed that the next benchmark stock assessment (most likely 2016) is critical and will influence the TAC discussions because it may lead to revised biological reference points that are the foundation for a TAC. Matt M. agreed that the stock assessment will be important, but emphasized the need to begin TAC discussions ASAP.
- Peyton suggested that the first step in this process could be the development of a TAC white paper to outline: 1) the vision and value of a TAC for the blue crab fishery; 2) challenges and necessary considerations; 3) what would it take to address these challenges.
 - Ex Comm members and Matt M. agreed to this proposal.

Action: Peyton and Bruce will coordinate the development of a draft white paper that explains the vision of a TAC and jurisdictional allocation framework and associated challenges and considerations. This white paper will then be presented to CBSAC for their review and input. The draft white paper will be complete by the end of August 2014.

➤ **New Agreement Fisheries Outcomes (1:25-1:50pm)**

- Handout: *PSC Decisions_4-15-14_Ex Comm; FisheriesGIT possible Agreement changes 4-3-14*
- The CBP Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) met on April 13-14th to discuss the public comments and suggested changes to the Agreement outcomes.
- The Ex Comm reviewed the PSC's comments and discussed refinements to the fisheries outcome language:
 - Blue Crab Abundance and Oyster Outcomes:
 - The Ex Comm agreed with PSC comments not to add additional explanatory language to these two outcome statements. Explanatory language will go in the management strategies.
 - Blue Crab Management
 - The Ex Comm considered language changes to this outcome to better reflect what the outcome would achieve. Ex Comm members were concerned with the original language because as fisheries managers, they cannot guarantee "stability of crabbing businesses".
 - Rob O. explained that industry economics are complex and that the success of crabbing businesses does not always coincide with the success of harvesters. He suggested language for the purpose of accounting for and adjusting harvest by each jurisdiction as appropriate.
 - Ex Comm members agreed.
 - Bill G. and Matt M. weighed in and acknowledged the Ex Comm's concerns but wanted to ensure that the intent of the outcome included a stable fishery. Peyton suggested making the beginning of the outcome a more direct statement of that. "Improve the ability to manage for..." was changed to "Manage for..."
 - Ex Comm members agreed.

4/21 Ex Comm Revised Blue Crab Management Outcome:

Manage for a stable and productive crab fishery, including working with the industry, recreational crabbers, and other stakeholders to improve commercial and recreational harvest accountability. By 2018, evaluate the establishment of a Bay-wide, allocation-based management framework with annual levels set by the jurisdictions for the purpose of accounting for and adjusting harvest by each jurisdiction.

Decision: Ex Comm agreed with PSC comments to remove extra explanatory language from the blue crab abundance and oyster outcome statements. Ex Comm, CBF, EDF, and CBC agreed on revised language to the Blue Crab Management outcome. These revisions will be presented to CBP leadership for PSC consideration.

➤ **CBSAC Charter and 2014 Timeline (1:50-2:20 pm)**

- Handout: *CBSAC Final Charter*
- Andrew T. presented the final draft charter to the Ex Comm.
- Updates:

- CBSAC had a call on April 16th to discuss VMRC’s proposed management triggers. CBSAC member were generally supportive but further discussion and development of CBSAC response will continue over the next few weeks.
 - Rob O. indicated that VMRC will need CBSAC’s response for VMRC discussions this August.
- CBSAC is finalizing their in-person meeting date for May to work on the Advisory Report.
- A subcommittee of CBSAC met earlier today (April 21st) to discuss their preliminary analysis of the WDS data.

Action: CBSAC will send their preliminary statement on this year’s WDS results to the jurisdictions by noon Wednesday, April 23rd.

➤ **June Meeting (2:20-2:50pm)**

- Handout: *June meeting draft agenda*
- Staff presented the draft agenda developed with input from the Steering Committee.
- June 4-5th at VIMS.
- Rob O. suggested looking into MAFMC’s recent workshops on both forage fish and on climate change to determine what discussions took place there and how we can incorporate those discussions into the related full GIT meeting agenda items.

Action: Staff will keep Ex Comm informed of meeting logistics and major updates to the agenda. Staff will present a final agenda to the Ex Comm on their May 19th conference call.

➤ **Future Meeting Dates (2:50-2:55pm)**

- Typically, full GIT meetings occur in June and December each year.
- Because June seems to consistently be a busy month, the Ex Comm considered shifting meeting dates (i.e. May and November; April and October)

Decision: For now, meetings will remain June and December. The Ex Comm will reconsider later this year when planning for the next biannual meeting.

➤ **Ex Comm Updates**

- Executive Committee members’ updates and discussion of management issues.
- Marty Gary of PRFC:
 - Whole Foods and the parent company of Giant Food have expressed interest in carrying Chesapeake Bay blue catfish.
 - PRFC is setting up a meeting to engage local catfish harvesters to discuss market expansion; this meeting will take place in early May as part of a PRFC Finfish Advisory Committee meeting.
 - Registration for PRFC’s managed oyster reserve program at Ragged Point just ended for the next season. PRFC reached its target of 35 participants who bought into the program. This is up from 22 participants last year and 15 the year before.

Informational

➤ **MD DNR Invasive Catfish Event/CBP Management Board Meeting**

- MD DNR hosted an invasive catfish outreach event at Smallwood State Park on April 10th.

- Speakers included Tom O'Connell, Peyton Robertson, and Steve Vilnit. Attendees included watermen and Chesapeake Bay Program leadership.
- Two catfish tasting dishes were prepared by chefs from the Westin and Hellas local restaurants which carry catfish on their menu.
- CBP Management Board met earlier that morning at Smallwood Park facilities where Bruce presented the Invasive Catfish Task Force's recommendations. MB members were very receptive to the report and endorsed the Fisheries GIT's and jurisdictions efforts to explore implementing the recommendations.

➤ **New Agreement Updates**

- The PSC met on April 13-14th to discuss changes to the Agreement based on public and partner comments.
- The TENTATIVE date for the Executive Council meeting and Agreement signing is Monday, June 16th in Annapolis.

➤ **Confirm upcoming meeting dates**

(Mondays 1:00-3:00 pm)

May 19, 2014

Full GIT Meeting

Wed-Thurs, June 4-5th at VIMS