

**Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes**

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

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/21835/>

Call Participants: *Peyton Robertson, Tom O'Connell, Rob O'Reilly, Marty Gary, Eric Schott, Joe Grist, Nancy Butowski, Lynn Fegley, Chris Dungan, Steve Early, Susan Conner, Bruce Vogt, Andrew Turner, Sara Molinsky, Karl Blankenship, Emilie Franke*

Decisional

➤ **Soft-Shell Crab Disease Mortality – Eric Schott (UMCES) (1:00-1:30pm)**

- *Presentation 15 min; Discussion 15 min*
- Handout: *ESchott Sustainable Fisheries GIT Ex Comm*
- Eric presented a study looking at soft shell crab mortality from reovirus (RLV) in blue crabs. This topic is very relevant to discussion at the recent [June 2014 full GIT meeting](#) on causes of natural mortality.
- He touched on some aspects of blue crab disease transmission including transmission via predation, cohabitation, and the effects of environmental/fishing stressors. Shedding tanks are often associated with these stressors and high mortality rates.
- RLV is present at multiple sites along the Atlantic coast at varying levels. The study showed that the virus is always lethal to the crab once infected.
- There is concern that the flow-through systems and dumping infected crabs back in the water could contribute to higher RLV prevalence. A MD Sea Grant funded project showed both temporal (early vs. late summer) and spatial (near vs. far from shedding facilities) differences in disease prevalence.
- Recommendations from study: minimize time spent in shedding tank; determine how many dead peelers are returned to the water → consider land-based disposal; convene a workshop to discuss best practices/questions about shedding
- Discussion:
 - This data on disease mortality can inform natural mortality discussions. Additional information on actual soft shell mortality rates and how many infected crabs are returned to the Bay would better inform this discussion.
 - Rob indicated that VA doesn't have the data on total peeler harvest so not sure what the mortality rates are. Getting a better idea of total harvest would be helpful. He mentioned that North Carolina has started data collection to get a better idea of peeler mortality.
 - Ex Comm members like the idea of a workshop but commented that concern for husbandry is not very prevalent in the industry.
 - Eric: RLV is only harmful to blue crabs so land-based disposal should not be a health issue. The virus does withstand freezing temps.

Action: Ex Comm members will discuss this information with their fish health/technical staff and then follow up with Eric.

➤ **Blue Crab Allocation White Paper (1:30-2:00pm)**

- Handout: *BC allocation presentation*
- Sara Molinsky, summer policy intern at NCBO, has been working with Andrew T. to draft the white paper on a potential blue crab baywide allocation management system as part of our effort to address the new Agreement [blue crab management outcome](#). This white paper was discussed on the [April Ex Comm call](#) and the NCBO office committed to completing a draft by the end of August.
- Sara and Andrew presented the background, content outline, and status of the white paper in order to get Ex Comm feedback on their approach and determine if the paper is addressing the right issues.
 - The current draft defines and explains the types of allocation frameworks and the economic, ecological, and social impacts of each.
 - The paper also discusses enforcement/administrative needs as well as specific case studies to highlight examples of allocation framework implementation in other fisheries.
- Discussion:
 - Ex Comm members acknowledged the significant amount of work done by Sara and Andrew to compile this information.
 - Ex Comm members emphasized that the paper should primarily focus on a potential total allowable catch (TAC) among the jurisdictions and how to make it successful. Catch shares/ITQ frameworks should not be considered at this point because a jurisdictional TAC is the logical first step. Tom stated that MD DNR does not support using ITQs for the blue crab fishery.
 - Rob indicated that the paper should address the challenges that the jurisdictions would face in implementing a TAC including latent effort, high # of landing sites, reporting, etc. Ex Comm members agreed and also pointed out that the paper should address how to set up the allocation between males vs. females and commercial vs. recreational.
 - Rob indicated that case studies chosen for the paper should focus on species that have a similar life history (short lifespan, recruitment, etc.) to blue crabs. He pointed to the ASMFC menhaden TAC case study as potentially relevant to include as a good example of a jurisdictional TAC.

Action: Andrew and Sara will incorporate the Ex Comm's thoughts and comments into the white paper and complete the draft for distribution to the Ex Comm and other reviewers by the end of August.

➤ **CBP GIT Funding Update (2:00-2:20pm)**

- Handout: *GIT Funding_ Ex Comm_Final Rankings*
- Peyton updated the Ex Comm on the status of CBP funding being allocated to all GITs. The GIT chairs and CBP leadership met on Tuesday, July 22nd to discuss the funding and are in the process of finalizing the project decisions and funding mechanisms.
- Staff provided the results of the Ex Comm's rankings and comments on the proposed Fisheries GIT projects. There was some difference of opinion across the Ex Comm on highest priorities but the amount of funding should allow multiple projects and priorities to be addressed.
- Discussion:

- Funding mechanisms may include Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grants (CBIG) so funding may have to go through each jurisdiction before being allocated directly to DNR, VMRC, etc.

Action: Peyton and CBP staff will keep Ex Comm members updated on funding decisions. Once funding has been allocated, staff will work with the Ex Comm to flesh out project details and costs.

➤ **New Agreement Management Strategies (2:20-2:35)**

- Handout: *Key elements for management strategies*
- Peyton and staff updated Ex Comm members on management strategy discussions that have occurred at CBP leadership meetings.
- CBP leadership is in the process of developing guidance for GITs on what elements all management strategies should include. More information should be forthcoming.
- Discussion:
 - Peyton discussed the potential need to reorganize the Fisheries GIT structure to better align with the new Agreement [fisheries outcomes](#) while still addressing the GIT's other priorities such as catfish.
 - Peyton discussed the types of information needed to develop each management strategy and the existing documents that will contribute. For example, the oyster restoration management strategy will rely largely on the specific tributary plans developed by the MD and VA Oyster Interagency Teams.
 - The need for stakeholder input throughout the management strategy process was discussed and how stakeholders can be involved.

Action: Staff will discuss possible approaches and reorganization ideas to address the management strategy needs. Staff will present these ideas on the August Ex Comm call.

➤ **Fisheries GIT Work Plan (2:35-2:55)**

- Handout: *SFGIT 2014 workplan_7-14-14; June 2014 FishGIT summary*
- Staff presented an updated work plan based on outcomes from the June 2014 full GIT meeting and our responsibility for management strategies.

Action: Ex Comm members will send Emilie any comments or edits to the work plan before the August 18th Ex Comm call. Staff will add more specific details regarding management strategy development to the work plan as needed.

➤ **Fall Ex Comm Call Dates (2:55-3:00pm)**

- Handout: *2014 Calendar*
- Ex Comm decided on dates for the September Ex Comm call.
- **Decision: Scheduled Monday, September 22nd, 2014 from 1-3pm.**

➤ **Ex Comm Updates**

- Executive Committee members' updates and discussion of management issues.
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Informational

➤ New Agreement

- On June 16th, the CBP Executive Council signed the [new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#).
- CBP leadership is currently developing guidelines for the GITs to use in developing their management strategies. Management strategies must be complete by June 2015.

➤ Forage Workshop

- The Steering Committee of the STAC Forage Workshop has continued to have monthly conference calls to plan for the workshop. They are currently finalizing the participant list and working to ensure that necessary scientific and management expertise is represented at the workshop.
- The workshop is scheduled for November 12-13th, 2014 at the Chesapeake Biological Lab in Solomons, MD.

➤ Invasive Catfish Updates

- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) is currently reviewing the Catfish Task Force's final report. A few STAC members as well as experts from outside the region are conducting the review. They anticipate the review will complete by October.

➤ CBP Indicators

- All fisheries-related CBP indicators have been updated for this year.
 - [Bay Health](#) (blue crabs, oysters, striped bass, shad, menhaden)
 - [Restoration and Management](#) (oyster restoration, menhaden, blue crab, striped bass)
- Oyster Indicators:
 - The *oyster health* indicator page currently states general information about oysters and indicates that a new health indicator may be developed in the future.
 - The *oyster restoration* indicator states information on the tributary-scale restoration approach and features a map highlighting the selected tributaries in MD and VA.

➤ Confirm upcoming meeting dates

Ex Comm Calls

Monday, August 18th from 1-3pm

Monday, September 22nd from 1-3pm