

Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee
Meeting Summary

March 28th, 2016 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/23676/>

Call Participants:

Bruce Vogt

Dave Blazer

David Bushek

Emilie Franke

Eric Weissberger

Kara Skipper

Kathy Ashton-Alcox

Lisa Calvo

Lynn Fegley

Marty Gary

Nancy Butowski

Peyton Robertson

Rob O'Reilly

Ward Slacum

Presentation

➤ **Q&A Follow-Up on New Jersey Oyster Management Model**

- Lisa Calvo, Kathy Ashton-Alcox and David Bushek (Rutgers University) provided a review of wild oyster harvest management in New Jersey from their Oyster Summit presentation. They fielded questions from the Ex Comm on the methods and development of their management model. Highlights include:
 - The primary driver of Delaware Bay oyster abundance in recent years is disease.
 - Oyster resource decisions are a coordinated effort among fishery managers, industry and the academic community.
 - The management model maintains a fishing mortality at ~2% of the estimated abundance, which is estimated from an annual stock assessment led by this Rutgers Team of the Haskin Shellfish Research Lab (Delaware Bay survey cost is approximately 1/3 of the \$100,000 management budget for the lab).
 - Oystermen to pay a fee of \$2 per bushel harvested (US standard bushel) that is then used to plant a bushel of shell (oyster, clam, other bivalve shell).
- **Discussion:**
 - NJ - Total quota is divided evenly- by the licenses held by oystermen. There are a total of 80 licenses consolidated onto ~20 power dredge boats. These licenses do not include tong areas which are managed separately.
 - The oyster fishery in Chesapeake Bay operates on a much larger scale. There are 919 licenses in Virginia, 400 of which were issued in the last 2 years. There are over 1,000 licenses in Maryland.
 - There are some available data from annual MD and VA oyster surveys that could contribute to future development of biological reference points for the Chesapeake Bay.
 - Shell dissolution is monitored in Delaware Bay, and a shell budget program helps identify specific areas that need increased shell. When planting shell, NJ will identify specific areas based on the population structure throughout the system to target areas in need of shell.

Decisional

➤ **Oyster Summit Next Steps**

- Peyton reviewed the information summarized in the Oyster Summit report. The team appreciates the opportunity to learn about the New Jersey model and hopes to continue sharing information. Peyton offered the support of NOAA and the Sustainable Fisheries GIT to compile materials or deliver content to jurisdictional managers as needed. He noted that the Sustainable Oyster Harvest Act was approved in the Senate on March 23rd.
- **Discussion:**

- Marty commented on the Popes Creek oyster bar harvest that was opened up for 10 days for 55 boats, biomass wasn't showing any size of declining based on harvests.
 - MD DNR has been interested in exploring biological reference points. Lynn expressed the challenge of applying and enforcing reference points on such a large scale with their fleet (over 1,000). An Oyster Work Session was suggested for the Ex Comm. This session would focus exclusively on jurisdictional oyster management. Jurisdictions would share how they manage the oyster resource. The Oyster Summit report and materials could be used to help guide the discussion.
 - Marty shared that PRFC is starting the planning process to develop a 3-5 year roadmap for oysters in the Potomac. This work session would be helpful soon to help inform that planning.
 - All jurisdictions were open to the oyster work session. MD DNR is expending a great deal of energy towards completing their comprehensive report on Oyster Management due in July, so would prefer this work session occur after that.
 - **Action: The SFGIT set this as a future action to revisit in the late summer and more clearly define the objectives for an Oyster Work Session at that time.**
- **Workplan Progress and GIT Funding Updates**
- The 45-day public input period that started in late January ended earlier this month. We have reviewed and addressed the public comments with the individual GIT Workgroups and Action Teams. The revised workplans were sent to the Management Board for review on March 25th.
 - The FY2015 GIT-funded project was awarded to the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science to investigate the potential environmental drivers of in forage populations and consumption patterns. Work will begin this year.
- **Blue Crab Activity Update**
- Emilie compiled data into a timeline to clarify activities for 2016-2017. This document notes the processes for each of three main projects for the managers: the evaluation of allocation framework, stock assessment planning, and CBSAC advisory report process.
 - **Discussion:**
 - All three jurisdictions discussed the importance of having ongoing discussions with the advisory groups and continuing the conversation on determining the feasibility of an allocation-based framework to achieve the goals outlined in the outcome and if feasible, developing an allocation-based framework.
 - Peyton suggests using the April 25th Ex Comm conference call date to focus on the crab issue. We can use this date to discuss the updated fishery management matrices, talk about the results of the Winter Dredge Survey, and allocation framework discussion.
 - **Action: Ex Comm members will update their blue crab fishery management matrix and send to Emilie. Ex Comm members will respond with their availability to do a blue crab focused meeting on the date of the next scheduled Ex Comm conference call.**
- **Sustainable Fisheries GIT Newsletter**
- Kara presented the draft Sustainable Fisheries GIT newsletter to the Ex Comm for review and feedback. The newsletter draft includes information on the recent activities of the Sustainable Fisheries GIT and links to relevant papers and studies on the Sustainable Fisheries GIT outcomes.
 - **Action: Ex Comm members will provide feedback on the March 2016 SFGIT newsletter before March 31st.**

- **June Full Sustainable Fisheries GIT Meeting**
 - Bruce discussed the proposed topics and presentations for the June 2016 Full GIT Meeting. Proposed topics include a blue crab session, ecosystem-focused session, invasive catfish and sturgeon updates, and research on the effect of land use on aquatic health in the Chesapeake Bay.
 - **Decision:**
 - The meeting will take place on Thursday, June 2nd through Friday, June 3rd. The first day will occur at the Life Sciences Building on the VCU campus in Richmond, Virginia. The second day will be held at the VCU Rice Rivers Center in Charles City, Virginia.
 - **Action: Kara will send out a poll to the Ex Comm to assess which topics are most important and relevant for the Sustainable Fisheries biannual meeting June 2-3rd, 2016 in Richmond, VA.**
 - **April and May Ex Comm Calls**
 - April Ex Comm Call – Monday, April 25th
 - May Ex Comm Call – Monday, May 23rd
 - **Ex Comm Updates**
 - Marty stated that he is investigating whether Dominion Power properly consulted and performed due diligence about discharging legacy waste in areas with Shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. He is looking for guidance in assessing whether this permit addressed all necessary concerns under the Endangered Species Act.
 - Lynn was contacted regarding reef balls with human remains, known as eternal reef balls. These eternal reefs cannot be placed in inland Maryland waters.
 - The Oyster Summit in Baltimore hosted by the Building Conservation Trust is April 27-28th, information is available [here](#).
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Informational

- **Confirm upcoming meeting dates**
 - Ex Comm Call (Mondays from 1:00-3:00pm)*
 - April 25th, 2016
 - May 23rd, 2016