

**Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee
Meeting Summary**

September 26th, 2016 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/24302/>

Call Participants:

Bob Beal	Greg Allen	Peyton Robertson
Bruce Vogt	Kara Skipper	Reggie Parish
Emilie Franke	Marty Gary	Rob O'Reilly
Emily Freeman	Nancy Butowski	

Presentation

➤ **Toxic Contaminants Workgroup**

- Greg Allen, Coordinator for the Toxic Contaminants Workgroup, provided a [presentation](#) in which he described intersections among fisheries and toxic contaminants topics, including endocrine disrupting chemicals which result in [intersex](#), lesions/infections and mortality in fish after exposure, mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).
- Discussion:
 - The Sustainable Fisheries GIT should consider how to include resource quality into fisheries management.
 - Past examples include the 1984 striped bass act which reviewed contaminants before closing the fishery, and the 1998 PCBs analysis of striped bass to permit entry into the New York market.
 - Members noted that there is potential to better incorporate fish health into fisheries management.

Decisional

➤ **FY16 GIT Funding Results**

- EPA funding for FY16 was awarded to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) to advance progress toward Outcomes under the [2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement](#).
- The previous two years of funding supported two forage studies, a blue crab survey analysis and a study on striped bass and mycobacteriosis prevalence.
- This year, funding was approved for three Fisheries Goal Team projects: 1) a project to develop a tool or application to explore oyster shell/habitat dynamics in Bay tributaries, 2) an evaluation of ecosystem factors affecting blue crab populations, and 3) a pilot study to test forage sampling gear during a citizen monitoring project (joint project with SAV monitoring for Habitat Goal Team).
- Discussion:
 - **Blue Crab**
 - Rob noted in regards to the blue crab study, multiple years of data should be considered to account for variability between seasons and include both adults and juveniles in the study. Suggests a multiple regression model.
 - Nancy indicated that this study should aim to develop a predictive value that could be incorporated into the stock assessment.
 - Emilie stated that the results of this study could be discussed when planning for a future stock assessment.
 - **Shell/Habitat Dynamics**

- Members suggested that options for alternative substrates and ocean acidification should be included when developing future shell resources estimates.

➤ **Oyster Indicator**

- An [Oyster Dashboard](#) has been developed to communicate progress toward the [Oyster Restoration Outcome](#) of restoring 10 tributaries by the year 2025. This dashboard names all selected tributaries, quantifies the amount of completed in-water restoration acreage (construction/seeding) and target acreage and reports the progress of each tributary.
- These metrics and communication tools will be available online at [Chesapeake Progress](#).
- **Discussion:**
 - Members are cautious about how we present the oyster indicator to the public, and emphasized adding clarifying language and providing links to the restoration plans.
 - Language will be added to clarify that in-water restoration does not indicate that a tributary is restored; however it does indicate progress toward completion. 3-year and 6-year monitoring and evaluation after construction will provide additional information on the state of the tributaries and the success of the restoration practices.
 - Suggested indicator and dashboard has been presented to the [Status and Trends Workgroup and to the Oyster Restoration Interagency Teams](#), and will be presented to the full Sustainable Fisheries GIT in December for additional feedback.
 - Shapefiles will become available in the near future and can be added as an additional resource to the Chesapeake Progress website.

➤ **Topics for the December Full Fisheries GIT Meeting**

- The December full Fisheries GIT Meeting will be held on **December 6th and 7th in Annapolis, MD**. The first day will be held at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and will include a celebratory happy hour for Bill Goldsborough who is retiring after years of service to the Chesapeake Bay.
 - Second day venue TBD (likely Chesapeake Bay Program offices)
- Preliminary topics will include oyster restoration status update, presentation of the oyster indicator and dashboard, Oyster Reef Ecosystem Services research, and a discussion on the selection of the next tributaries for oyster restoration efforts.
- Additional suggested topics include final results of the blue crab recreational harvest estimate study by SERC, the final results of the forage population trends study, and a workplan status update.
- **Discussion:**
 - Marty suggested following up on the USDA catfish regulations and the implications for the fishery.
 - Members recommended having an ASMFC representative brief the team on striped bass, menhaden, and the results of ASMFC's October meeting.
 - Rob suggested reviewing the 2016 blue crab harvest numbers.

➤ **Fall Jurisdiction Oyster Discussion**

- Ex Comm members had previously supported holding a meeting among the management jurisdictions to review oyster management and to identify common efforts/challenges. Amy Freitag (NCBO/VASG) has contacted each jurisdiction.
- **Decision:**
 - Ex Comm members agreed that they could meet on Thursday, November 3rd to conduct this discussion.

➤ **Updates, Membership and Logistical Items**

- **Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC)**
 - CBSAC recently met to discuss the proposed bay-wide 5.25 inches male hard crab minimum harvest size limit and latent effort in the blue crab fishery. The meeting summary has been reviewed by CBSAC and will be sent to the Executive Committee (sent on 9/30 and found [here](#)).
 - **Potential Joint Meeting with Habitat GIT**
 - Peyton Robertson met with the Habitat GIT Co-Chairs Christine Conn (MDDNR) and David Whitehurst (VDGIF) to discuss potential collaboration and research needs shared by the teams. Staff members are currently looking into the feasibility of hosting a joint meeting in late May, where members can draw connections between the outcomes and move forward on advancing the work of both teams.
 - **September 2016 Newsletter**
 - The [September 2016 newsletter](#) was reviewed by Ex Comm members and the final newsletter was distributed to the full team.
 - **Sustainable Fisheries Membership Change Request**
 - Ex Comm members approved the membership change request for Adam Wright (DoD) to replace Jeffrey Laitila (DoD) as DoD's Fisheries Goal Team member.
 - **October Ex Comm Call**
 - The October Ex Comm conference call, originally scheduled for October 31st has been cancelled. The next scheduled Ex Comm conference call is on Monday, November 28th at 1:00 pm. Ex Comm members will receive updates on the planning for the December full GIT meeting prior to the next conference call.
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Informational

➤ **Upcoming Ex Comm meeting dates**

Monday, November 28th 1:00-3:00pm

Tuesday-Wednesday, December 6-7th (FULL GIT)

➤ **National Fish Habitat Partnership Data System**

The National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) Data System is online as of September 1, 2016. The data system supports coordinated efforts of scientific assessment and data exchange among the partners and stakeholders of the aquatic habitat community. This tool provides data access and visualization tools at this link: <http://ecosystems.usgs.gov/fishhabitat/>

➤ **Update on Catfish USDA Regulations**

Background

- A rule published in December 2015 requires the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) to apply inspection standards to catfish. Catfish were previously subject to FDA inspection. This regulation requires inspectors to be present at facilities in which catfish are processed and labeled.

- The new inspection program is expected to cost the federal government and industry \$14 million to develop and \$2.5 million to administer annually. The FDA currently spends about \$700,000 per year inspecting catfish.

Status

- The rule went into effect in March 2016 and is currently in an 18-month transitional period before full enforcement of the rule begins in September 2017.
- In May 2016, the U.S. Senate voted to return catfish inspection duties to the FDA. This action moved the regulation to the U.S. House for a vote.
- It is suspected that the House will wait until after the November 8th election to vote on the regulation. [Congressional Battle Continues Over Federal Catfish Regulation – Food Safety News, September 16, 2016](#)