

Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee

Meeting Summary

September 21st, 2015 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/22872/>

Call Participants: Peyton Robertson, Rob O'Reilly, Marty Gary, Lynn Fegley, Bob Beal, Matt Ogburn, Karl Blankenship, Eric Johnson, Brenda Davis, Nancy Butowski, Emilie Franke, Kara Skipper

Presentation

- **Evaluating the Relative Impacts of the Recreational and Commercial Sectors of the Blue Crab Fishery in Maryland – Matt Ogburn (SERC)**
 - The goal of the study is to update the recreational exploitation rate of blue crabs in Maryland for use in the blue crab stock assessment. SERC utilized tagging methods with a reward system for harvesters to report the tagged crabs. They will combine seasonal and spatial data after the fishery closes in the fall to evaluate the full data set. Data analyses are expected to be final by the summer of 2016 or later.
 - SERC is working on another project in which they are using the chemical signature of where female crabs molt to distinguish the locations of nursery areas for blue crabs. This will provide more insight into the female recreational exploitation rate estimate.
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Decisional

- **Cownose Rays**
 - Handout: *Cownose Ray Workshop Scope*
 - Emilie described the cownose ray workshop scope. Shark Advocates International may not be able to procure travel funding after determining that the workshop will not produce the outcomes they were expecting. *(UPDATE as of 9/30 Shark Advocates International has determined that they support the workshop's goal of bringing together the best available science and will try to procure travel support).*
 - Discussion: Lynn, Rob, Peyton and Marty expressed interest in continuing to develop a cownose ray workshop.
 - Lynn wants to address the cownose ray issue in some capacity before the Maryland General Assembly meets next year and before tournaments begin in the spring. She expressed the need to better understand the cownose ray before proceeding towards the possibility of management steps.
 - Rob stated that the Commission was interested in knowing more about the life history of the cownose ray and that the Finfish Advisory Committee has begun discussing the issue. He confirmed that Dean Grubbs, Bob Fisher and Jan McDowell could contribute valuable information at the workshop.
 - Peyton commented that it's our due diligence to understand this species and to determine what the nature of the stock is. He suggested that requiring tournament registration in the future could possibly help gain more information on the fishing effort at the tournaments.
 - Marty also supports hosting a workshop to learn more about the cownose ray. Future registration of tournaments would help us understand the #of participants in tournaments and the number of animals caught.
 - Bob commented that the need for biological information is the first step and should be the priority. He defers to the jurisdictions since cownose rays are not managed by ASMFC.

- Possible workshop outcomes: Produce a workshop with a focus on the life history and scientific information on the cownose ray, develop a stock assessment, and discuss the possibility of requiring registration at tournaments.
- **Action: Emilie will continue to plan for the cownose ray workshop.**
- **Action: Ex Comm Members will determine if they can offer funding assistance for the workshop.**

➤ **Workplan Progress and GIT Funding Updates**

- Handout: *GIT Funding Timeline*
- Drafts of the workplans have been developed by Emilie and Kara to start discussion by the workplan teams. The Fish Habitat and Forage Action teams had conference calls which further developed these workplans. The oyster restoration strategy team will discuss their workplan this week. The draft workplans will be completed by November 2nd and a public input period will occur in early 2016.
- Proposals were prioritized and provided to the GIT Chairs. The GIT funding is limited; therefore not all proposals will be funded by the GIT funds. The top priority based on Ex Comm comments was forage indicator development, followed by the assessment of habitat/predation on blue crabs.
- Discussion: Peyton stated that we need to try and identify other funding means to sponsor the remaining projects, which may include a workshop proposal for the oyster hatchery issue with STAC funding.

Action: GIT Staff will update the Ex Comm with the final funding decision and Ex Comm members will identify additional funding sources for remaining projects if possible.

➤ **Oyster Summit and December Full GIT Meeting**

- Handout: *Chesapeake Bay Oyster Summit Scope*
- Emilie detailed the preliminary plans for the oyster summit. The oyster summit will address common challenges shared among all oyster stakeholders and identify a shared vision of more oysters moving forward.
- Discussion: Members discussed the need for the oyster summit.
 - Members agreed that the week of December 14th through 17th is an available option.
 - Peyton stated that aquaculture permitting could be part of the workshop as an issue.
 - Marty expressed support for the Summit as PRFC will be embarking on new considerations for spatial management in the Potomac. He has an upcoming meeting with the oyster and clam committee.

Decision: The third week of December is the target timeframe for the Oyster Summit and/or Fisheries GIT meeting.

➤ **Membership Change**

- Ron Lukens of Omega Protein is retiring and has proposed that Peter Himchak take his place. Peter has been involved with menhaden and other species issues at ASMFC for a number of years.
- Decision: All agreed that Peter Himchak will be Ron Lukens' replacement.

➤ **October and November Ex Comm Calls**

- Handout: 2015 Calendar
- Kara discussed possible dates for the October and November Ex Comm calls.
- Decision: It was agreed that October 19th and November 16th will be the dates for the future Ex Comm calls.

➤ **Fisheries GIT Quarterly Newsletter**

- Kara reviewed the components of the September 2015 newsletter.
- **ACTION: Ex Comm members will submit their comments by Monday, September 28th**

➤ **Ex Comm Updates**

- Executive Committee members' updates and discussion of management issues.
- Rob discussed that Virginia is nearing their menhaden quota.
- Marty indicated that harvest for PRFC's triploid oyster program that watermen buy-in to is looking good this year.
- Lynn stated that MD DNR has a new director of fisheries, David Blazer.

Informational

➤ **STAC Forage Workshop Report**

- A complete report from the forage workshop has been finalized by STAC and is available [here](#).

➤ **Confirm upcoming meeting dates**

Ex Comm (Mondays from 1:00-3:00pm)

October 19th, 2015

November 16th, 2015