



## Virginia Oyster Restoration Workgroup Meeting Notes

September 11, 2024 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Meeting Link: [meet.google.com/vdm-krru-trt](https://meet.google.com/vdm-krru-trt)

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### Agenda

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- Welcome, and note that this is a public meeting.
- Updates on reef construction, etc., under 10 Tributaries initiative.
- Corps of Engineers: Lynnhaven; getting shell ready; could start reef construction as early as fall- March 2025. Rom. L - Current USACE 8-acre reef ball project is being monitored using different methods with interesting results - one site in Lynnhaven Ball (reef ball project) appears to be a nursery ground for black sea bass. We're seeing that secondary production on the reef structures far exceeds what is already there on the un-restored bottom.
- VMRC has voted to open several 'premet' reefs in Piankatank and Great Wicomico to harvest. Discussion of how this will impact restoration totals and 10 Tribs goal achievement.
  - Adam/VMRC - decision was based partly on recommendation from Shellfish Management Advisory Committee - large densities of adult oysters in the recommended areas. Previous seedwork had been done in the Piankatank.
  - What does protect mean? Never harvest or allow for harvest with a management plan to maintain densities. Totally closing certain areas may impact industry support.

- 3 areas open in the Great Wicomico to hand tong gear (not any of the USACE reefs there) for 3 months - October, November, December (although may not involve that many watermen working the area)
  - 2 areas open in Piankatank - one to hand tong, the other to hand scrape (2 week opening)
- Reframing of 'next gen' oyster goal under Bay Program (now more like 'updating current goal').
  - Discussion of ecosystem benefits for these interim projects - Pocomoke/Tangier Sound, Mobjack Bay, Hampton River
- Discussion of Corps Tangier/ Pocomoke project.
  - USACE formal plan/study is underway, including NEPA process. Have sent out letters requesting scoping comments and support from cooperating agencies. Have been examining modeling work for the area. Planning Workshops in the fall to discuss further. Considering nearshore tidal reefs, including rotational harvest and sanctuary reefs. Considering how to estimate ecosystem benefit and socio-economic benefit.
    - Timeline/Schedule - next 2 years for planning/studying; then design/feasibility studies phase; then construction to conclude in 2032
    - There is a shoreline protection element to the project being planned
  - Rom - Tangier and Saxis meetings were well attended and well received when members of the public understood that USACE wasn't proposing taking existing harvest grounds and turning them into protected sanctuaries.
- As always, reminder that all Blueprints, Annual Updates, etc, created by this workgroup are [here](#).
- It is almost time to start compiling 2024 year-end info for updating the GIS geodatabases, and to inform the 2024 Annual Update. If you already have year-end construction shapefiles or info, please send along. Same if you know you would like info about upcoming 2025 reef construction included in the 2024 Annual Update.
- RAE: C bay oysters panel
- Other business
  - CBF received NFWF grant for Hampton River oyster restoration project - some delays possible relating to HRBT construction as well as potential archaeological sites. No definite start date yet. Project include community education (living shorelines, rain gardens); up to 10 acres of reef restoration could occur; partnership with Hampton U - pre- and post construction monitoring; Rod & Reef slam site in Virginia, partnering with Hampton U.
  - Elizabeth River/Lambert's Point - VMRC project - should start late 2024. Crushed stone. Acreage?