

Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2019 1:00 – 2:00pm

Participants

Bob Beal	Dave Blazer	Lynn Fegley	Marty Gary
Glenn Davis	Bruce Vogt	Sean Corson	Morgan Corey

➤ Blue crab winter dredge survey results

- Winter dredge survey for this year is complete and initial results will soon be discussed by state jurisdictions. A coordinated press release is planned for the upcoming weeks.
 - State jurisdictions will plan meeting to discuss results

➤ Update on regional fish habitat assessments

- Bruce provided an update on current efforts in the Chesapeake Bay regional fish habitat assessment, concurrent with other ongoing assessment efforts, for awareness because many Ex Comm members also sit on ASMFC and MAFMC
 - Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment
 - Quantity and quality of inshore and offshore habitats from Maine to NC/SC border
 - Led by Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council
 - Workplans developed, data collection and analysis expected July 2019-2022
 - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, fisheries management
 - Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership Northeast Assessment
 - Prioritization of diadromous and estuarine dependent fish from Maine to Virginia
 - Led by ACFHP through ASMFC
 - Kick off meeting May 2019, final product expected by December 2019
 - Identify project priority areas
 - Chesapeake Bay Regional Fish Habitat Assessment
 - Meta data inventory of biological, stressor and habitat information at best available spatial resolution
 - Led by Sustainable Fisheries GIT
 - Contractor expected to begin April 2019
 - Guide conservation and restoration including land use planning and BMPs
 - Habitat Climate Vulnerability Assessment
 - Scoring of vulnerability (exposure and sensitivity) of key habitats to climate stressors from Maine to North Carolina
 - Led by NOAA Fisheries
 - Expert opinion process and scoring rubric
 - Pilot scoring began April 2019

- Discussion:
- Has habitat been discussed as a concern for fisheries at council meetings?
 - Should be a concern; at this point, unsure exactly how to use habitat in managing fisheries, but recognizing generally the importance of healthy habitat to fish population productivity
- Is it better to shape assessments with a priority species focus? Ex. striped bass
 - Need for better information linking species to habitats, and showing how much conserved habitat contributes to fish output
 - Some work ongoing to link fish to habitat through Eyes on the Bay and “Click Before You Cast” by Tom Parham at DNR
 - Concern with hypoxic dead zones and habitat limitation especially for striped bass habitat use, DNR also looking at yellow perch habitat in tributaries
- **Oysters as BMPs**
 - Background: Final Phase III watershed implementation plans (WIP) are due in August, and drafts are available now for [public comment](#) through June 7. Based on results from the 2nd report by best management practices (BMP) expert panel, we should consider how to credit oyster aquaculture and restoration for nutrient and sediment reduction and incorporate BMP recommendations into WIPs.
 - Sean gave an overview of outcomes from a recent meeting with the Water Quality GIT on how to implement oysters as BMPs
 - Discussion:
 - What information is needed to begin crediting oyster restoration sites as BMPs for denitrification?
 - Determined that the timing is tight to include by this summer, but it is possible to include placeholders in draft with estimates
 - Uncertain of how great the total impact of crediting would be
 - Including oysters as BMPs has larger implications for how we view the value of restoration in the future
 - Next steps include extrapolating estimates from tributaries with measured denitrification values, with a need for more site-specific monitoring later
- **Member Updates**
 - Marty suggested contacts for Invasive Catfish Workgroup, including harvesters, processor, and USDA representative
 - Rob WDS abundance estimates are up; VMRC will call an emergency request to consider closing the striped bass spring trophy season as ASMFC stock assessment results are an urgent concern
 - Stakeholders urging ASMFC action, requesting states to quickly reduce F
 - Possible to use a combination of short-term addendum response with an amendment to follow for longer-term shifts in management

Informational

- May 20 next Ex Comm call
- June 26-27 (Wednesday-Thursday) GIT meeting in Cambridge, MD at Horn Point Lab