

Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee

Meeting Summary

February 1st, 2015 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/23444/>

Call Participants:

Ann Swanson

Dave Blazer

Ken Hastings

Nancy Butowski

Ann Jennings

Elizabeth North

Larry Jennings

Peter Himchak

Angie Sowers

Emilie Franke

Lauren Taneyhill

Peyton Robertson

Bob Beal

Joanna Ogburn

Lynn Fegley

Rob O'Reilly

Bruce Vogt

Kara Skipper

Marty Gary

Shannon Sprague

Bryan King

Karl Blankenship

Mike Wilberg

Tom Ihde

Presentation

➤ **The Oyster Futures Project**

- Elizabeth North (UMCES) introduced the Oyster Futures project, which is a collaborative project designed to integrate stakeholder objectives with natural system models to promote sustainable natural resource policy, in this case focused on oyster management in the Choptank and Little Choptank Rivers in Maryland.
- The Oyster Futures team will apply the FishSmart process in their methodology; obtaining objectives, options and performance measures from stakeholders, utilizing model development from scientists, reviewing and revising the options based on the model results, and making recommendations to managers based on this process.
- The Oyster Futures stakeholder workgroup will consist of industry (60%), scientists, environmental organizations, federal and state representatives. The workgroup must have 75% of the members in agreement when making science-based decisions and will meet several times from 2016-2018 to develop models and recommendations.
- **Discussion:**
 - The project was described as a collaborative effort with ecological testing. Members were interested to know if economic implications would be factored into decisions made by the Oyster Futures workgroup.
 - Elizabeth explained the process of selecting watermen for the workgroup. The selection process took into consideration views of many watermen for a representative member, location (representing multiple counties), and harvesting methods (hand tong, patent tong, skipjack).

➤ **Action: Fisheries GIT offered to provide assistance as needed and follow the project progress.**

Decisional

➤ **Dominion Plan to Drain Coal Ash Ponds**

- Marty Gary (PRFC) provided an overview of the recent permit granted to Dominion Virginia to drain water from coal ash ponds into the James and Potomac Rivers.
- There is approximately 150,000 gallons to be discharged.
- Marty expressed concern about this permit, citing several examples. The proposed discharge location is:
 - In a dominant striped bass spawning area
 - Near Mallows Bay sanctuary
 - In an American shad spawning area

- Near a blue catfish harvest area
 - In an area occupied by sturgeon
 - Suggested action included working with the applicants to reduce the effect on the ecosystem
 - Time of year restrictions, additional safeguards
 - Monitoring of site
 - Maryland Department of Natural Resources submitted comments in the hearing. Marty discussed the matter with Maryland Department of the Environment.
 - **Decision:** Ex Comm will continue to follow up with this issue and explore options for working with the applicant of the permit to reduce the negative effects of the discharge.
- **CBSAC Chair Nomination**
- Decision: Ex Comm approved the nomination of Glenn Davis (MD DNR) as the new CBSAC Chair.
 - **Discussion:** Rob suggested that committee members will share the burden for the CBSAC Chair, as there are numerous responsibilities and a large workload associated with the Chair position.
- **December 2015 Full GIT Meeting Review**
- Handout: *December Full GIT Meeting Summary and Survey, Takeaways and Potential Actions*
 - Bruce reviewed the December Full GIT Meeting Summary and introduced the new format. The survey results suggest that the meeting was very successful and that members find a great deal of value in the presentations and discussion. The SFGIT will address the takeaways from the meeting in future Ex Comm calls and determine how to pursue the takeaway actions.
 - **Discussion:** Marty emphasized PRFC's interest in oyster restoration efforts and stated that the process for gathering data on cownose rays has already begun.
 - **Action:** Kara will send the Ex Comm a survey of the takeaways from the Full GIT meeting for members to prioritize the items which are of value for their jurisdictions.
- **Workplan Progress and GIT Funding Updates**
- Handout: *Compiled Workplan Responses from the Management Board, Workplan timeline, Feedback from Full GIT*
 - Kara explained that the workplans have been released to the public and are available for comment. The SFGIT will review all public input, make final edits with the workgroups and finalize the workplans by April 2016.
 - **Action:** Kara will send out a notification to the full GIT and interested parties requesting input on the draft workplans.
- **Oyster Summit**
- Handout: *Oyster Summit Agenda*
 - Bruce reviewed the Oyster Summit Agenda with a focus on the five sessions which address shell availability and alternative substrate, hatchery production, community efforts, policy analyses, and a discussion on the next steps for moving forward.
 - **Discussion:** Members are interested in discussing the dichotomy of beliefs between the oyster industry and environmentalists.
 - The SFGIT anticipates positive results from the MD DNR report on oyster restoration in June/July.
 - Nancy Butowski suggested that the SFGIT use the Oyster Summit as an opportunity to connect the Summit to the workplans. The facilitator can draw these connections during the summit.

➤ **Cownose Ray Workshop Final Report**

- Emilie discussed the status of the final Cownose Ray Workshop Report. The report is now complete and available online [here](#). The scientists will continue to compile available data on cownose ray populations.
- **Discussion:** Members were interested if there was a resolution or consensus statement from the workshop. Recommendations were made from the scientists to the managers. Members suggested developing a resolution similar to the blue catfish resolution.
- Members are interested in what northern and southern states are observing in terms of the Cownose Ray populations.
- **Action: MD, VA and PRFC will ask other ASMFC members about cownose rays in their jurisdictions and explore the potential of these discussions at future ASMFC meetings.**

➤ **STAC Workshop Proposal**

- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee initiated their annual workshop selection process for scientific workshop funds. The SFGIT considered submitting a fish habitat workshop proposal that would focus on brackish areas in the Chesapeake Bay. However, after closely analyzing the products and goals for the workshop, it was determined that the scope was too large and that more input was needed to guide the workshop proposal.
- The Climate Change Workgroup submitted a workshop proposal to address how the Chesapeake Bay Program can better understand and address potential climate change impacts on Watershed Agreement outcomes, specifically oysters, blue crabs, and SAV.
- **Decision:** The Ex Comm will provide direction on what data or actions will be most valuable to support the Fish Habitat Outcome.
- **Decision:** The Ex Comm would like to provide direction on the climate workshop should it be funded.

➤ **February and March Ex Comm Calls**

- **Handout:** *2016 Calendar*
- February Ex Comm Call – Monday, February 22nd
- March Ex Comm Call – Monday, March 28th

➤ **Ex Comm Updates**

- Members expressed concern over new rules and regulations pertaining to the harvest and processing of wild-caught catfish from the Food Safety and Inspection Service(FSIS).
- All fish of the order Siluriformes are subject to FSIS jurisdiction and inspection as of March 1, 2016.
- Rules suggest that wild harvested catfish will have to be processed live. It was indicated that this rule could alter the wild harvest sector and may impede the ability of processors to continue processing wild catfish.

Informational

➤ **Confirm upcoming meeting dates**

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

February 22nd, 2016

March 28th, 2016