

Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee

Meeting Summary

July 27th, 2015 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/22864/>

Call Participants: Peyton Robertson, Rob O'Reilly, Marty Gary, Lynn Fegley, Bryan King, Susan Conner, Jim Price, Karl Blankenship, Bruce Vogt, Olivia Newport, Emilie Franke

Decisional

➤ Vice Chair of Fisheries GIT

- Handout: *Fisheries GIT Charter*
- Peyton discussed the recent vacancy of the Vice Chair position for the Fisheries GIT which was previously held by MD DNR. In the spirit of rotating the position among the jurisdictions, Peyton asked Rob O'Reilly (VMRC) if he would be willing to serve as Vice Chair and Rob agreed, pending Ex Comm consensus.
- Ex Comm members agreed on the call to have Rob O'Reilly as the new Vice Chair.
- **Decision: Rob O'Reilly (VMRC) is the new Fisheries GIT Vice Chair.**

➤ Cownose Rays – Sonja Fordham (Shark Advocates International)

- Handout: *Cownose ray Workshop proposal*
- Sonja Fordham (Shark Advocates International) presented a draft workshop proposal that she compiled in consultation with Bruce Vogt.
 - This proposal is in response to discussion at the June full Fisheries GIT meeting. The GIT agreed to consider a workshop proposal after the discussion on cownose rays during the public comment period.
 - There has been extensive media attention and constituent interest, especially in Maryland, on recent bow hunting tournaments targeting cownose rays.
- The proposed workshop would bring together cownose ray and elasmobranch experts to discuss what is known about cownose rays in the Chesapeake and what type of information would be needed to inform potential future management action.
- Peyton discussed how this workshop would be similar to the involvement of the Fisheries GIT on invasive catfish. The focus would be bringing the best available science to the table in a neutral setting and **not** advocacy for one side or the other.
 - There may be time for verbal/written public comments at the workshop, but the bulk of the workshop will be focused on science discussion.
- Discussion:
 - Ex Comm members support the idea of hosting a workshop and agree with the urgency to hold such a workshop before the end of 2015.
 - This would ensure that the best available science is compiled and discussed to inform any future management actions.
 - Lynn stressed the importance of nailing down a workshop date ASAP.
 - Ex Comm agreed that the workshop should be hosted by the Fisheries GIT to bring the best available science to the table for discussion.
 - Constraints for coordinating the workshop include lack of staff time and funding. MD DNR offered staff time to help coordinate the workshop.
 - Rob emphasized the need for stock assessment information in the future.

- Jim P. stressed the ecological importance of cownose rays and recommended that this be discussed at the workshop.
- Marty recommended that the workshop include discussion related to the suitability/feasibility of cownose rays for human consumption.
- Peyton suggested getting the Chesapeake Bay Commission involved as this issue may be a future legislative consideration.

Actions:

- **Sonja will contact experts and potential venues (National Aquarium and Virginia Aquarium) to narrow down workshop dates.**
- **Emilie will serve as POC on the workshop for now and work with Peyton/Bruce to develop a workshop steering committee. The workshop will be hosted by the Fisheries GIT.**
- **Emilie will send out a revised proposal for Ex Comm member comments.**

➤ **CBP Funding for GITs and Management Strategies**

- Handout: *GIT Funding Timeline & Process FY15 ; Management approaches and gaps*
- Approximately \$840,000 is available to divide among all CBP GITs this year to fund projects supporting the management strategies. That is about 2-3 projects per GIT.
 - 2014 GIT funding supported three fisheries projects:
 - blue crab summer survey/brood data analyses, striped bass health indicator and forage species reference points. Total funding received for fish projects was ~\$170,000.
- Ex Comm members discussed 2015 project priorities to support the four fisheries management strategies: blue crab, oyster restoration, forage fish and fish habitat.
- Discussion:
 - Marty, Rob and Lynn identified the forage fish management strategy as a priority for GIT funding. But the GIT needs to figure out how to focus future work and consider the need for long-term monitoring of forage, not just short-term projects.
 - Marty also identified fish habitat as a priority to better understand what habitat is available to fish species and how has it changed.
 - Lynn also identified the future blue crab stock assessment as a priority.

Action: GIT Staff will work with drafting teams to refine funding priorities and develop specific project ideas. These ideas will be discussed on the August 17th Ex Comm call.

➤ **Workplans Moving Forward**

- Handout: *Workplan Timeline; Workplan template*
- Staff presented the workplan timeline and the process for engaging the management strategy drafting teams and jurisdictions in completing the workplans. Draft workplans are due in November 2015, a public comment period will take place in early 2016 and the final workplans are due in April 2016.
- Staff reviewed the workplan template and the type of information needed for each management strategy workplan.
- Discussion:
 - Ex Comm members agreed to work with GIT staff to identify stakeholder meetings for workplan discussion.

- Peyton reminded Ex Comm members to identify any policy challenges and/or success stories to share with the drafting teams during this process to take advantage of the collaborative, Baywide nature of the workplans.

➤ **Oyster Summit**

- Handout: *Chesapeake Bay Oyster Summit scope_060415*
- Bruce Vogt (NOAA) presented a proposal for an Oyster Summit for December 2015 that would bring together industry, managers, scientists, government, local partners and more to discuss how to increase oyster populations in the Chesapeake.
- The Summit would cover the following topics: oyster economics, the status of Chesapeake Bay oyster populations, sustainable aquaculture, harvest fisheries, restoration, and conservation. Participants would discuss common challenges, interests, and linkages among aquaculture, harvest, and conservation.
- Discussion:
 - Rob suggested focusing the Summit on factors limiting the success of oyster populations across multiple sectors (i.e. shell budget).
 - Marty expressed support for the timing of the Summit, as there is growing interest in new oyster projects in the Potomac.
 - Lynn pointed out that oysters function very differently between Maryland and Virginia and need to be cautious with the Summit to make sure you acknowledge that. Agree with Rob, would be best to discuss limiting factors that are shared challenges across jurisdictions and discuss management practices.
 - Bruce emphasized the Summit as an opportunity to share best practices among groups/jurisdictions. What's working? What isn't? What is limiting? How do we move forward?

Actions: Bruce will work with the Summit steering committee to refine the proposal based on Ex Comm comments and circulate a revised proposal to the group.

➤ **Ex Comm Updates**

- Executive Committee members' updates and discussion of management issues.
- Rob reviewed the menhaden and striped bass agenda items on the upcoming August ASMFC meeting agenda.
- Marty discussed updates to PRFC's striped bass tagging program, PRFC's Crab Advisory Committee meeting and invasive northern snakeheads.
- General discussion on the status of the blue crab fishery to date.

Informational

➤ **Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council Meeting**

- CBP's Executive Council met on Thursday, July 23rd at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. for their annual meeting to discuss the newly released management strategies and provide guidance for the partnership. The Executive Council is currently chaired by Gov. McAuliffe of Virginia. More information on the meeting and Executive Committee attendees can be found [here](#).

➤ **CBSAC's 2015 Blue Crab Advisory Report**

- CBSAC published this year's Advisory Report on June 30th after Ex Comm comment and endorsement. Thanks to all CBSAC and Ex Comm members for an efficient publication process!
- The report is published on the Chesapeake Bay Program website on the Fisheries GIT web page under "Publications". Direct link [here](#).

➤ **Fish GIT Science Fact Sheet**

- Olivia Newport (NOAA Intern) has drafted a Fisheries GIT science fact sheet from the June 2015 full GIT Meeting. The fact sheet presents the science in a more public-friendly way and will be posted on CBP, NCBO and other websites.
- **Fact Sheet will be sent to Ex Comm members for any comments prior to posting.**

➤ **STAC Forage Workshop Report**

- A complete report is currently under review by STAC. A final report should be posted on the STAC website this summer.

➤ **Confirm upcoming meeting dates**

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

August 17th, 2015

September 28th, 2015