

**Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from 1:00pm-3:00pm

Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/22469/>

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***Call Participants:*** Peyton Robertson, Marty Gary, Bryan King, Bob Beal, Joe Grist, Lynn Fegley, Susan Conner, Jack Frye, Eric Brittle, Karl Blankenship, Bruce Vogt, Andrew Turner, Emilie Franke

**Decisional**

➤ **Snow, Cold, and Ice Discussion – All (1:00-1:20pm)**

- Ex Comm members discussed how the cold temperatures and extensive ice cover this winter has affected fisheries, survey work, etc.
- Discussion:
  - Peyton for NCBO: Some CBIBS buoys were unable to collect data due to instrument damage from the ice. The CBIBS team has been working hard to recover the buoys and reinstate data collection.
  - Marty for PRFC: the winter gill net fishery, which has the biggest commercial quota within the commercial striped bass fishery, was unable to operate for several weeks due to ice; the season has been extended because of the decreased effort during the past few months.
  - Joe for VMRC: Tangier Island was iced in for a few weeks; the oyster season has been extended by 2 week in 5 areas; Tangier Island oyster cages were left on the surface this winter and were unmoored and carried away by the ice; VMRC is delaying implementation of a maximum 28-inch size limit for the late winter Bay striped bass fishery.
  - Bryan for DC: Anacostia had up to one foot of ice in some places; in-river construction contractors were in a rush applying for waivers to continue construction during fish spawning season due to winter delays; also impacted placement of hydrophones.
  - Lynn for MD: MD DNR extended both the oyster and striped bass gill net seasons

➤ **American Shad Indicator 2014 Update – Eric Brittle (VDGIF) (1:20-1:35pm)**

- Handout: *American Shad Indicator Data\_March 2015*
- The American Shad Indicator Action Team (ASIAT) coordinated through CBP had a call on March 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss the most recent shad numbers. Eric is one of the team's co-chairs.
- Eric gave a brief update on the 2014 shad numbers for the indicator tributaries.
  - In general, 2014 was a good year for shad returns except for the fishways. Numbers were up for the Potomac, York, Lower James, and Rappahannock.
  - The team confirmed anecdotally that there seem to be more shad in the rivers matching the survey numbers, and that although there seemed to be shad at the base of major dams, they are not passing through the fishways. The counts at the York Haven and Boshers Dams were very low for American shad.
- Discussion:
  - Peyton asked if ASIAT is considering adding data for existing indicator tributaries and/or add new tributaries to the indicator. Eric described the team's plan to add data for the Potomac and to evaluate options to add data for some Maryland tributaries in order to represent the Upper Bay in the indicator.

- Eric discussed a possible issue with comparing historical data in the Potomac due to an order of magnitude decrease in effort which could affect the shad index used in the Potomac. Marty and Ellen from PRFC will work to consider this issue.
- Peyton and Bruce suggested looking at the Choptank for the indicator and contacting Matt Ogburn (SERC) about his research using sonars to track fish in that area.
- Bryan pointed out that discussing shad recovery and a simultaneous increase in invasive catfish that may prey on shad could be seen as contradictory, and the teams should consider this.
- Bruce asked ASIAT to review the draft forage and fish habitat management strategies to ensure that the strategies address threats to shad recovery.

**Actions: Eric will update the Ex Comm if ASIAT decides to add data to the indicator. Eric and Emilie will distribute the forage and fish habitat management strategies to ASIAT for review.**

➤ **CBSAC: Stock Assessment TORs – All (1:35-2:10pm)**

- Handout: *TORs CBSAC Review*
- Andrew and Joe reviewed the outcomes from the March 9<sup>th</sup> CBSAC call. CBSAC separated the TORs into two groups: those that are typical of any stock assessment and those that would be “extra”.
- CBSAC raised some questions on the TORs that require clarification from the Ex Comm regarding spatial management and male reference points. CBSAC needs more guidance on what the managers specifically want from the stock assessment regarding these topics.
- CBSAC plans to have the TORs finalized and discuss a cost estimate by mid-May when they meet to discuss the 2015 Advisory Report.
- Discussion:
  - Lynn discussed the need to look at projections of the future fishery in order to evaluate potential tradeoffs for different management scenarios.
  - Andrew communicated CBSAC’s concern that managing using 2 control rules (female and male) could be very limiting and difficult for managers. Joe pointed out that male reference points would be useful for evaluating jurisdictional allocation, and that other needs for the allocation evaluation should be considered.
  - Lynn discussed that management could be more stable if, similar to ASMFC, there could be a stock assessment update each year that would allow the managers to manage over a longer time period instead of having to react each year to the WDS. The annual WDS could be more closely tied to the stock assessment.
  - Peyton suggested having a joint meeting with CBSAC and the state managers to discuss the stock assessment and potential vision for the future of the fishery. This meeting could potentially coincide with a discussion of the WDS results when they are final. The jurisdictions agreed that a discussion between CBSAC and management would be helpful.

**Actions: Andrew and Joe will work to plan CBSAC’s meeting schedule for the next few months, including a meeting with the jurisdictions to discuss the TORs.**

➤ **June Meeting Dates, Venue, and Topics (2:10-2:30pm)**

- Handout: *June Meeting Planning doc*

- Staff presented options for meeting venues for the first week of June for the full Fisheries GIT meeting. Options include the CBF Brock Center in Virginia Beach, the Tides Inn in Irvington, and the Mariner's Museum in New port News. The Tides Inn may not be feasible due to financial constraints.
- Emilie reviewed initial ideas for major meeting topics, which include blue crab stock assessment and advisory report, CBP funding updates (forage, striped bass, blue crab), ASMFC update, climate change, and possibly telemetry.
- Discussion:
  - Peyton expressed support for meeting at the CBF Brock Center as a great opportunity to be at such a state-of-the-art environmentally friendly facility. Susan and Jack agreed that the building would be a great facility.
  - Ex Comm members did not have any concerns about the Brock Center. GIT staff will make sure the agenda allows for sufficient travel time before and after the meeting.
  - Peyton suggested holding a face-to-face Ex Comm session prior to the start of the full GIT meeting.

**Action: GIT staff will work to finalize the Brock Center for the Fisheries GIT meeting for June 1-2<sup>nd</sup>.**

➤ **NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office-ASMFC Funding (2:30-2:40pm)**

- Bruce discussed potential options for distributing funding that is available through an NCBO-ASMFC partnership. NCBO is considering distributing \$100k among three projects:
  - Telemetry to track sturgeon in the Upper Bay
  - Mid-Atlantic Acoustic Telemetry Observation System (MATOS)
  - Invasive Catfish web portal
- Discussion:
  - Marty expressed PRFC's support for both telemetry projects and discussed the high interest in Dave Secor's (UMCES-CBL) current telemetry study of striped bass on the Potomac, which is also supported by this funding. He also supports the catfish web portal which could be useful in communicating the current research results with stakeholders.
  - Andrew suggested possibly using the funds to support blue crab research related to natural mortality.
  - Bob pointed out that the selected project topics are at NCBO's discretion and do not necessarily have to be related to ASMFC-managed species.

**Action: Bruce will finalize the funding decisions and send proposals to ASMFC.**

➤ **Management Strategy Status and Updates (2:40-2:45pm)**

- Handout: MStrat Timeline
- The draft management strategies are now posted on the Chesapeake Bay Program website and open for public input from March 16<sup>th</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff reviewed the timeline for finalizing the management strategies, which will be sent to the Management Board for final review in mid-May.
- Thanks to all Ex Comm members, their staff, and GIT members for their participation in developing the draft strategies!
- Discussion:

- Peyton asked the Ex Comm to spread the word through the organizations about the opportunity for public input on the drafts.

➤ **Ex Comm Updates**

- Executive Committee members' updates and discussion of management issues.
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**Informational**

➤ **Invasive Catfish Task Force and STAC Suggestions Moving Forward**

- Bruce presented at the STAC meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup> the plans for moving forward to update the Task Force's final report. Bruce also discussed the possibility of an updated catfish portal web tool on the Chesapeake Bay Program website.
- STAC offered to assist with a research synthesis of current and past research results.

➤ **March full Fisheries GIT Newsletter**

- Emilie is compiling the March newsletter that will go out to all Fisheries GIT members and interested parties this month as a review and update on Fisheries GIT and workgroup activities.
- The newsletter will be sent around for Ex Comm review.

➤ **STAC Forage Workshop Report**

- A complete draft report is currently out for review by the workshop Steering Committee and participants and will be available for use in drafting the management strategy.
- Next steps will be review by STAC members.
- The final report should be complete by the spring.

➤ **Confirm upcoming meeting dates**

Ex Comm Mondays 1:00-3:00pm  
May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (*No April meeting*)

June 1-2, 2015 FULL GIT MEETING in Virginia Beach, VA