

**FINAL MINUTES**  
Recreational Fishing Advisory Board (RFAB) Meeting  
May 9, 2011

Members Present

Edward Rhodes - Vice-chairman  
Carlisle Bannister  
John Barr  
Carolyn Brown

H. "Jim" Deibler  
J. "Jimmie" Duell  
Charles Randolph  
Charles Southall

Members Not Present

George Hudgins - Chairman

At 7:00 p.m., Vice-chairman Rhodes called the meeting to order.

Ms. Jane McCroskey provided a brief status report of the budget through March 2011. She explained that the report shows a balance of \$703,079. This report includes the expenses for the on-going projects, the VMRC obligations for July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012, and a small portion set aside for the new Fisherman Identification Program (FIP). The amount available is slightly more than expected, because of the one-time license sales reconciliation that the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries completed a few years ago. She mentioned that historically April through June license sales generate revenue of slightly over \$1 million. This year's license sales seem to be on par with 2010 sales. Also, with the FIP in place, Virginia is fully exempt from the National Angler Registry.

Mr. Rhodes asked for a review of the draft September 13, 2010 RFAB meeting minutes. Mr. Bannister made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Brown seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous to accept the draft minutes as final.

**Multi-Year Projects for 2011 Renewal.**

- A) 2011 Sunshine Children's Fishing Program. Denny Dobbins, Portsmouth Anglers Club. **\$7,194.** Mr. Dobbins provided a review of the 2010 program, and explained that the 2011 program would be similar to previous years. The five head boat trips and one pier fishing day will occur in July through early August. This program educates and introduces approximately 300 children to the Chesapeake Bay and the joys of recreational fishing. Also, provided are meals at the end of the trips, and fishing poles and gear to take home.
  
- B) 2011 Saxis and Morley's Wharf Fishing Piers Youth Fishing Tournaments (Year 10). Allen Evans, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. **\$2,000.** Mr. Bill Creager, ESAC member, provided a review the program format, which is similar to previous tournaments. The two tournaments introduce angling to approximately 70-100 children on the Eastern Shore. The first tournament in Saxis is currently scheduled for June 12. The Morley's Wharf tournament date has not been set, yet. Also, provided are meals at the end of the tournaments, and fishing poles and gear to take home.

- C) 2011 Youth Developmental "Hooked on Fishing" Adventure (Year 4). Bob Hewlett, Virginia Charter Boat Association. **\$9,700**. Mr. Hewlett provided a review of the 2010 program, and explained that the 2011 program would be doubled in size from previous years. This year the main location is Hampton. The fishing trip is planned for Saturday, August 27. This program plans to educate and introduce approximately 160-170 local boy and girl scouts and chaperones to the Chesapeake Bay, the joys of recreational fishing, types of fish, regulations and conservation, and safe boating. Also, included in this program are a Chesapeake Bay essay contest and the potential for qualifying for scout merit badges. Also, provided are a meal at the end of the trip, and fishing poles and tackle to take home. Ms. Robin Smith, Girl Scout, explained some of the things she learned from the 2010 program and the enjoyment that she had participating in this program. Mr. Bannister also described his participation in the 2010 program and spoke in support of its continuation.
- D) 2011 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and Clinics. J. Stephenson, P. Anderson, Great Bridge Fisherman's Association. **\$4,200**. Mr. Joe Stephenson provided some pictures of previous trips and explained that this was the only program that provided fishing excursions for the mentally and physically challenged adults from Hope House and residents from the Oak Grove Nursing Home. They have decide to combine the groups for both the Ocean View Fishing Pier day on May 11, 2011 (10 am - 2 pm), and the head boat trip out of Lynnhaven (date to be determined). Club members provide the food, gear, shirts and hats, and assistance to make sure all participants have enjoyable and productive fishing experiences.

Ms. Brown made a motion to recommend the funding of all four of the educational programs (Items A, B, C, D) and was seconded by Mr. Barr. Vice-chairman Rhodes asked if anyone from the public would like to speak on any of the four programs. Mr. John Wager, VCBA member, provided some additional details on the Youth Developmental "Hooked on Fishing" Adventure (Item C) out of Mill Point Park in Hampton, and supported the continuation of the program. Mr. Wager mentioned that Kate Tillman developed a brochure about some basic first aid, such as a hook extraction, for the scouts. They must have a ratio of one chaperone per five scouts. Dr. Bob Allen, PSWSFA member, asked if somehow the RFAB could approve the 2011 requests for these four programs (Items A, B, C, D), and then change the rest of the review cycle to a review of funding for 2012. The RFAB did not take any action on Dr. Allen's suggestion. Mr. Paul Anderson, GBFA president, spoke in support of the Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and Clinics (Item D). The vote to recommend the funding of Items A, B, C, and D passed, 8-0. Ms. Davis will present the funding recommendations to the Commission at the June 28, 2011 meeting.

- E) 2011 Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection (Year 5). J. Grist, J. Cimino, VMRC. **\$11,500**. Mr. Joe Grist provided brief review of the past four years of the program. About 1,000 donations of finfish carcasses have been made to the program, with over 900 anglers participating. The ageing data with 2010 added in were provided to the RFAB members. The information on donations will be posted on the web in a day or two and sent to the participants in the next couple of weeks. The request has increased slightly over the previous years, because some freezers will need to be replaced. Otherwise, the program will continue as it has in the past.
- F) Federal Assistance (Wallop-Breaux) Matching Funds, Federal FY 2012. Jack Travelstead, VMRC. **\$321,856**. Mr. Travelstead stated that this was the annual request

to secure state matching funds for the large mandated monitoring projects. The VMRC receives approximately \$1.9 million of the Sport Fish Restoration apportionment. In the last few years, the available apportionment has declined, reflecting the state of the economy. The ratio of federal to state funds is still 3:1. This year, Mr. Travelstead does not anticipate that any funds will be available from the commercial license fund to assist with the match.

### **Multi-Year Projects for 2012 Renewal.**

- G) 2012 Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 15). Rob Cowling, Newport News Rotary Club and Coastal Conservation Association-Peninsula. **\$6,500**. Mr. Cowling provided a review of the anticipated 2011 program, which is scheduled for Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup> on the James River Fishing Pier. This will be the 16<sup>th</sup> year of the program and the 15<sup>th</sup> year of an RFAB funding request. He explained that the 2012 program would be similar to previous years. This program educates and introduces approximately 250 at-risk children from 18 to 20 different groups all screened by the Newport News Parks and Recreation, to the Chesapeake Bay, water safety, and recreational fishing. A few groups are from outside of the Newport News area. They use a ratio of one chaperone per five children. This year's program will be dedicated to Irv Fenton and Joe Tolly, who were both avid anglers and assisted with this program. Along with the half day of fishing, the program includes a meal, T-shirt, hat, and rod-and-reel for each participant.
- H) 2012 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 11). Wesley Brown, Capital District Kiwanis Club. **\$6,500**. Mr. Brown indicated that this program is intended to continue as in previous years. The 2012 Clinic will be the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the program and the 11<sup>th</sup> year of an RFAB funding request. This program works closely with the Newport News Clinic to reduce costs and increase the number of children that can participate. They have children from as far away as Petersburg, as well as local children from Hampton and Newport News. The 2011 program is scheduled for Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> on the James River Fishing Pier.
- I) 2012 Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-Year American Eel in the Virginia Tributaries of Chesapeake Bay. M. Fabrizio, T. Tuckey, VIMS. **\$46,658**. No one was in attendance to make a presentation on this project, so the RFAB moved to the next item.
- J) 2012 Virginia Game Fish Tagging (Year 18). S. Musick, VIMS and L. Gillingham, VMRC. **\$70,213**. Ms. Susanna Musick provided a copy of the 2010 report for each RFAB member and a review of the program. The plan for 2012 is to continue providing tagging equipment and collecting quality data from this program. As in previous years, the program will continue to monitor the same 10 species; cobia, tautog, summer flounder, spadefish, black sea bass, speckled trout, sheepshead, red drum, gray triggerfish, and black drum, utilizing anglers trained as taggers. They will continue to use the T-bar tags for most species (8"- 24" range), and the larger steel dart tags for fish 24 inches or greater, such as cobia, red drum, and black drum. In 2010, about 16,000 fish were tagged. Since the start of the program in 1995, about 171,000 fish have been tagged. The recapture rate has held at about 10% for the last few years of the program. More than 900 locations have been logged as tagging and/or recapture sites, providing important data on site fidelity and movement patterns. Some of the tagging data have been incorporated into the management of some species, such a spotted seatrout, and

reviewed by other scientists at the state, regional, and federal levels. About 200 anglers participate as taggers for the program. In early April, new taggers for 2011 attended a one evening workshop at the Hampton Bass Pro shop. Mr. Lewis Gillingham added that he maintained the waiting list of people interested in becoming a tagger. If people drop out of the program, they contact individuals on the waiting list the next year and add them into the program. He assisted with the tagger training back in April, and will continue to promote the program through presentations to various angler clubs.

### **New Projects for 2011.**

- K) Phase 1 Dredge - Jackson Creek. Charles M. Culley, Jr., County Administrator of Middlesex. **\$78,750.** Mr. Culley introduced himself and then turned the presentation over to Mr. Carlton Revere, Middlesex Board of Supervisors. Mr. Revere stated that an estimate of about 300 recreational vessels and 14 charter vessels use Jackson Creek. Also, Deltaville is home to three annual fishing tournaments. The plan is to dredge 2300 cubic yards of fine sand from the dog-leg turn near the entrance to Jackson Creek. Mr. Revere said that the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is no longer funding dredging projects. The Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (CBPAA) and the ACOE have been doing a study of the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula dredging needs. The design and sounding work has already been done for this area, and the Commission has approved the permit to move forward with this project. The last time dredging was done in this area was 1970. There is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that a piece of machinery or a boat may have caused the cave-in of sand rather than by natural causes. The area is now too narrow for two boats to pass each other. This dredging project has recently gone out for bid, so the exact final cost to dredge this small area is unknown. The County will provided additional information at the next meeting. This is a one-time request for funding. At this time, no additional sources of funding have been researched. The yacht club and marinas have agreed to some participation in the project, but Mr. Revere did not know what level of funding would be provided. Currently, there are no public boat ramps that can accommodate trailer-sized boats, aside from the privately owned yacht club and marinas. For the next RFAB meeting, members requested that the applicants research some additional sources of funding and provide a comparison of the number of commercial fishing boats and the number of recreational fishing boats that travel through the area. Also, the applicants were asked to discuss with the privately owned yacht club and marina owners of the potential for some discounts to be given to saltwater license holders that use those facilities.
- L) Bennett's Creek Park Fishing Pier Replacement. Michael Kelly, City of Suffolk. **\$75,000.** Mr. Kelly, on behalf of Lakita Frazier, Director of Parks and Recreation, supplied a review of the project. Bennett's Creek is a tributary of the Nansemond River. The Bennett's Creek Park Pier is one of two fishing piers in the City. Phase 1 of the project, to be funded by the City of Suffolk includes: the demolition of the existing decrepit fishing pier; the installation of a new ADA compliant pier 75 feet long by 6 feet wide, with a fishing platform 10 feet by 30 feet; and the installation of 70 linear feet of sidewalk to the pier. The RFAB funding request is for Phase 2 of the project. The plan for Phase 2 is to extend the fishing platform to 10 feet by 95 feet, and add five benches. The water depth at the front edge of the pier is approximately 8 feet. To avoid very high tides and storm flooding, the plan is to build this new pier 12 feet above the normal water line. The fishing pier is available for use 24 hours a day, but does not have any lighting.

The City Police patrol the entire park area. Spot checks estimate about 4,000 people visit the park, annually, but an exact number of anglers using the pier is not available. The City does not charge to use the fishing pier or the adjacent boat ramps. The Park provides the fishing pier for 8 children's programs and 1 senior's program. There is no commercial use of the pier. The City will need to submit a Joint Permit Application for the replacement and expansion of this pier. The City is self-insured. For the next RFAB meeting, the members have asked to be provided with the number of licensed recreational saltwater anglers in the City; and whether the City plans to purchase the optional blanket fishing pier license (currently \$632), or if each angler (16-64) will need to purchase their own saltwater fishing license.

M) Survey Design for Adult Atlantic Menhaden along the U.S. East Coast. Robert Latour, VIMS. **\$55,373**. Dr. Latour mentioned that he was the Virginia representative on the ASMFC Technical Committee for menhaden. Menhaden, although not targeted by anglers, are important for ecosystems as a primary prey species for recreational species such as striped bass, weakfish, and bluefish, as well as some marine mammals and sea birds. The most recent assessment estimates that menhaden are not overfished, sufficient biomass is in the water; but a slight overfishing is occurring, and if left unchecked could lead to a depleted stock. However, peer reviewers question the accuracy of available data. The peer reviews led to other questions, such as localized stock depletion within the Bay and low recruitment. Dr. Latour gave an overview of how an assessment is done. PRFC pound net data from about 100 nets, which is commercially dependent, are the only data available for adult menhaden and are applied to the whole coast (North Carolina to Cape Cod). Because menhaden are surface oriented and schooling, there is a lot of sampling difficulty with traditional survey gears, such as bottom trawls. This project to estimate adult abundance will use aerial and satellite imagery, using a peer reviewed procedure, utilizing the expertise of a contractor that has done this type of work for the abundance of the west coast sardine fishery. This would only be a pilot program to design a full menhaden survey, because the actual implementation of a full scale survey will cost well over \$1 million. The funding requested is for the one year pilot. The costs are mainly for time of the contractor and Dr. Latour to develop the survey and the statistical models. Once a survey is designed, alternate funding sources, such as through the state, federal, and/or nongovernment organizations, will be researched for the full costs. In recent years, annually, zero dollars are spent on the monitoring of menhaden in Virginia, yet they are one of the most crucial species to the bay and coastal ecosystems. Dr. Latour was asked how the conclusions of this study would differ from just monitoring Omega Protein's success year after year. He explained the situation with Omega Protein cooperating with the monitoring of the schools from their spotter planes, but only in the normal course of their business. Every Sunday, during the fishing season, the spotter planes fly where they fly. They provide such information as numbers of schools seen in the Bay and along the coast, approximate size, and their best guess at abundances, which is useful information. Where they draw the line with cooperation is that the researchers need them to fly a certain amount of time, over a certain transect, following a certain GPS route, and a few other things to make it more scientifically defensible, and they do not have the time, interest, or the man-power to do these additional things. A few funding sources have been researched for this one year pilot project, but no one has committed any funds, only some cooperation. Dr. Latour was not involved in the selection of the west coast contractor and no RFP was done to attempt to locate a local contractor. The contractor was identified through some of the ASMFC

workshops that were done prior to Dr. Latour's involvement. He said that he would do some research to see if there are any qualified individuals in Virginia. If this funding was approved in September, Dr. Latour would expect to have a completed product within 4 to 5 months of funding approval, which would be available to shop for candidates for funding of the full survey.

- N) Examining Stock Composition of Migratory Striped Bass. David Gauthier, ODURF. **\$82,351**. Dr. Gauthier provided an overview of the project, and acknowledged his collaborator, Dr. Jens Carlsson. He said that currently the striped bass is not considered to be overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. However, there is some evidence that natural mortality has been increasing in Chesapeake Bay, since 2004. Although distinct stocks are known to exist, coastal striped bass are managed as a single stock, which does not take into consideration the input from production areas, such as the Hudson River and Chesapeake Bay. This means that production failures in some areas may be masked by overproduction in others. There are good surveys on juvenile striped bass, but not on coastal adult stocks. Excellent juvenile striped bass recruitment can't gauge coastal adult availability, especially if natural mortality is increasing and the input from production areas is unknown. Older methods of determining stock composition are using data that are 20 to 30 years old or more, completely missing stock collapse and rebound. This study will help to determine the current composition of the coastal migratory stock. The plan is to use a panel of microsatellite DNA markers to determine the origin of adult striped bass in the coastal fishery. Baseline data from young-of-the-year fish have been validated, using 50 fish from the Hudson River down to South Carolina. The plan for this study is to do a Mixed Stock Analysis (MSA) on approximately 700 migratory and large (age 4+) spawning striped bass captured in the ChesMMAP and NEAMAP surveys, from recreational fishing tournaments in Virginia and Maryland, and a pilot group of recreational anglers trained to provide scale samples. This is expected to be a one year project. Some alternate funding sources were researched and will continue to be sought, thus far their efforts have not been successful. The RFAB questioned the budget expenses of student stipend and tuition, and asked if ODURF or other sources could help with some of these expenses.
- O) Population Dynamics of Overwintering Speckled Trout on the Elizabeth River in Chesapeake Bay. C. Jones, S. Beharry, ODURF. **\$64,871**. Ms. Stacy Beharry provided an overview of the planned research. The plan is to look at the population dynamics of the overwintering speckled trout in the Elizabeth River. Looking at the landings for Virginia, speckled trout are overwhelmingly a recreationally caught species. Typically, seatrout migrate out of the Bay, as water temperatures drop in the fall and winter. Because of the warm water effluent released by the Dominion Power Plant ("Hot Ditch") in the Elizabeth River, the fish are congregating and overwintering, rather than migrating. On any given weekend, approximately 30 recreational boats fish in the warm water area for speckled trout. ODURF was approached by an angler to take a look at this growing fishery and the speckled trout in this particular area. Speckled trout spawn from late April through July, and there is some anecdotal evidence that this warm water area may cause a winter spawn. This is planned as a one year study to look at the reproductive status, the length of the spawning season, age and size composition, and gut content analysis for this area. They plan to go to the anglers clubs for assistance in obtaining fish donations. Also, train some anglers, as "citizen scientists", to assist in the collection of fresh gonads, necessary for fecundity determinations. The RFAB questioned the budget

expenses for the boat, which Ms. Beharry explained was to cover by-weekly sampling throughout the entire overwintering period. The intent of the research is the collection of information, but findings could be used in the management process, if need be. Members also pointed out that the only match provided by ODURF is the unrecovered indirect costs. (ODURF has an approved IDC of 50%, but the RFAB has a guideline of only providing 25% of an approved IDC. However, the guidelines also do allow unrecovered IDC to be used as match.)

### **New Projects for 2012.**

- P) 2012 Norfolk Youth Head Boat Fishing Trip. Ned Smith, Norfolk Anglers Club. **\$1,010.** Mr. Smith provided a summary of the program for 2012. The club, working with the Norfolk Community Center's Summer Program, plans to take about 40 East Ocean View youths (ages 8-14), plus 10 to 14 chaperones, on a ½-day head boat fishing trip out of Little Creek. A ratio of 1 to 4 chaperones to youths, is planned. The head boat which can hold up to 150 people will provide the bait, fishing gear, and safety equipment. The club members and community center staff will provide the children with fishing assistance, as well as transportation, food, and drink.
- Q) 2012 CCA Northern VA "Save a Kid, Catch a Fish". J. Bello, G. Lenard, Coastal Conservation Association – Northern VA. **\$2,700.** Mr. John Bello explained that this fishing program, with the National Capital Area Big Brothers and Big Sisters, has been done for about 10 years. It has been self-funded in the past, but with the economic downfall, the funding sources for the program are getting more difficult to obtain. About 40 underprivileged children (ages 7-13) and their chaperones are taken on a head boat fishing trip out of Deale, MD. Deale is about 70 miles from Northern VA and the closest port, which is why they use it, instead of a VA port. Transportation, food, drink, shirts, hats, and fishing poles are also provided through this program. In recent years they have needed to cut back on some of the amenities, but if funding is located, they would like to return to the full program.

The dates for the next RFAB meetings of this review cycle are July 11 and September 12.

Vice-chairman Rhodes adjourned the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

[Note: Audio files of the meeting are available at <http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/vsrfd/index.shtm> (Choose, Current Proposals, on the left-hand menu)]