

FINAL MINUTES
Recreational Fishing Advisory Board Meeting
January 14, 2008

Members Present

George Hudgins - Chairman
Carlisle Bannister
John Barr
Carolyn Brown

Jesse "Jimmie" Duell
Charles Randolph
Charles Southall

Members Not Present

Edward Rhodes - Vice-chairman

Jim Deibler

At 7:12 p.m., Chairman Hudgins called the meeting to order. Chairman Hudgins acknowledged the receipt of a letter submitted by the Coastal Conservation Association of Virginia (CCA) that outlined some suggestions for changes in the administration of the Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund (VSRFDF). The RFAB plans to hold a Work Session, possibly in March or May, and invite members of the CCA to discuss the suggested items.

Ms. Jane McCroskey informed everyone that the revenue available for projects is estimated as \$737,111 as of December 31, 2007. A projection through September 2008 will be provided at the March meeting.

Mr. Hudgins asked for a review of the draft November 5, 2007 RFAB meeting minutes. Mr. Randolph made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Barr seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous to accept the draft minutes as final.

Multi-Year Projects for Renewal.

- A) 2008 Sunshine Children's Fishing Program. Denny Dobbins, Portsmouth Anglers Club. **\$7,194.** Mr. Dobbins gave a review of the program for 2007. The 2008 program will continue as in previous years with 1 pier and 4 headboat fishing programs servicing approximately 400 children. One additional headboat trip is planned for 2008 to be funded by donations and not the VSRFDF.
- B) 2008 Saxis & Morley's Wharf Fishing Pier Youth Fishing Tournaments (Year 7). Allen Evans, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. **\$2,500.** Mr. Frank Joyce, Vice-President of the Club, gave a review of the program for 2007. The 2008 program will continue as in previous years. One change will be to move the Morley's Wharf Tournament from May to June for the potential of better weather and better fishing opportunities. The Saxis Tournament will continue to be in July.
- C) 2008 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and Clinics. D. Hurst, C. Macin, Great Bridge Fisherman's Association. **\$4,000.** Ms. Hurst gave a

review of the program for 2007. The 2007 program introduced mentally and physically challenged adults from Hope House to joys of recreational fishing from a headboat. The headboat can accommodate wheelchairs, so one change to the program in 2008 is to add a trip for some of the residents of the Oak Grove Nursing Home. This is an increase of \$1,500 from the 2007 request.

- D) Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection (Year 2). J. Grist, J. Cimino, VMRC. **\$12,000.** Mr. Cimino gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the 2007/2008 program and the data collected so far. A large number of fish carcasses have been collected from the 3 locations, Wallace's, Long Bay Point Marina, and Chris' Bait and Tackle in first 6 months of the project. With this new program and only 3 field Technicians, they started with 3 freezers. The plan for the rest of Year 1 is to add more collection locations, thus increasing the opportunity to collect more carcasses. Anglers have been very receptive to participating in this new program. Staff has spent a lot of time and some funds advertising the new program. Changes for Year 2 are to purchase 6 additional freezers. The RFAB did not understand why the purchase of 6 additional freezers was necessary. After some discussion, it was decided that Mr. Grist would provide the RFAB with the planned expenditures for the rest of Year 1 and a more detailed explanation of the need for 6 additional freezers in Year 2. Also, it is the hope of the program that when the owner of Wallace's Bait and Tackle sells the business, the new owner would want to continue with participation in the program. Otherwise, a replacement location will need to be found.
- E) Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-Year American Eel, *Anguilla rostrata*, in the Virginia Tributaries of Chesapeake Bay (Year 8). Marcel Montane, VIMS. **\$45,348.** Mr. Montane gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the 2007/2008 project and the data collected. The plan is to continue the same as in previous years. This project will also be submitted to the Commercial Fishing Advisory Board (CFAB) for their funding review.
- F) Estimating Relative Juvenile Abundance of Recreationally Important Finfish in the Virginia Portion of Chesapeake Bay. M. Fabrizio, M. Montane, VIMS. **\$450,000.** Dr. Fabrizio gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the 2007/2008 project and the data collected. The plan is to continue the same as in previous years. Last year this project was withdrawn from the RFAB review cycle because Federal Aid (Wallop-Breaux) and NOAA funding was secured. Additional funding opportunities will continue to be investigated for the 2008/2009 project.
- G) Estimate and Assess Social and Economic Importance and Value of Menhaden to Chesapeake Bay Stakeholders and Region (3 Year Study) - Year 2. James Kirkley, VIMS. **\$236,479.** Dr. Kirkley gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the first 6 months of the project. Thus far, they have determined that 42 counties in Virginia (26) and Maryland (16) have some affiliation with menhaden. Currently, they are developing very detailed socio-economic profiles and diversification indices for each county. Diversification indices indicate a dependency on an industry or a group of industries and the risk to each county or community, if the industry or group of industries should fall apart. These diversification indices being developed are specifically related to menhaden. Dr. Kirkley went on to describe some of the information being collected in

the socio-economic profiles. Dr. Kirkley mentioned some communication difficulties with Omega Protein in getting some detailed information on the reduction fishery. The project would continue with or without Omega Protein's participation, but the profiles of the reduction fishery would not be as strong as it would be with their participation. An international workshop was held in Washington D.C on economic valuation and ecosystem based management. The workshop was a listed task of the project, but no recreational or commercial funds were used to hold the workshop. They have also begun developing some impact models for various other species. Dr. Kirkley also explained and demonstrated the use of the preferred methodology for determining economic value. A lot of work was done to promote the study and contact stakeholders. A Wiki website was established for the exchange of information about menhaden. Unfortunately, some individuals decided to use the Wiki site to link to other websites of a crude nature and the website was disbanded. They have now established a more traditional website for the exchange of menhaden information. Dr. Kirkley will also request funds from the Commercial Fishing Advisory Board (CFAB) for Year 2 of this study. The RFAB asked if Maryland was contributing any funding for this study. At this point, Maryland is not contributing to this study. At the end of the meeting, Mr. Travelstead said that this was the first he had heard about the communication problems with Omega Protein, and that this issue will be researched and resolved. Also, Mr. Travelstead let the RFAB know that Maryland will be contacted about funding, and he will provide more information at the March meeting.

- H) Enhancement and Sentinel Reefs for the Virginia Artificial Reef Network. Rom Lipcius, VIMS. **\$153,946**. Dr. Lipcius explained that the goal of this 2008/2009 project was to establish sentinel reefs on the current Virginia artificial reef sites. A sentinel reef is a standardized reef design that may be placed on a site. The sentinel reef could be used to monitor the performance of a site and determine whether other areas of the site would benefit from deployed reef material. This project would be done in conjunction with the Habitat Suitability project (Item I). Formalizing the monitoring of the reef sites would assist Mike Meier to answer questions or solve problems with the various existing Virginia sites. Dr. Lipcius gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the 2007/2008 project and the data collected for the Northern Neck and Poquoson Reefs. The modular design of the sentinel reef allows for the flexibility to create nursery only reefs, taller reefs, or shorter reefs depending on the need and water depth of each site. Also, they want to compare a round modular design to the rectangular design to see if performance differs.
- I) Habitat Suitability for Artificial Recreational Fish and Oyster Reefs. Rochelle Seitz, VIMS. **\$61,076**. Dr. Seitz gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the 2007/2008 project and the data collected for the Northern Neck and Poquoson Reefs. The data collected may be used to create Habitat Suitability Models. The Habitat Suitability Models may be used to determine efficient and effective locations to create artificial reefs. Some examples of information collected to develop the models are dissolved oxygen, temperature, salinity, total organic carbon, predator abundance, and the established benthic communities. Because the sentinel reefs were only put on the Northern Neck and Poquoson sites a few months ago, the benthic communities have not had enough time to really develop. Part of the second year of funding would be to continue to monitor the reefs at the Northern Neck and Poquoson sites. Also, the plan for

the second year of this project is to establish sentinel reefs (Item H) on other Virginia artificial reef sites and monitor the development of benthic communities and prey species important for recreational fish. Also, assist the Artificial Reef Program with the selection of habitat material and location on the sites that would be of the most benefit to the recreational fish and anglers.

- J) Enhancing Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Habitat: Research and Education for Restoration (Year 14). Robert Orth, VIMS. **\$90,000.** Dr. Orth gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the 2007/2008 project and the data collected. He showed and explained the phenomenal seeding successes of some of the bays on the Seaside of the Eastern Shore. They are now starting to see some natural recruitment in other areas on the Seaside because of their efforts. Dr. Orth explained that they plan to shift seeding effort to some areas in the James and Rappahannock Rivers. They are trying to determine which beds may need to have regular reseeding to maintain them and those that do not. Additional funding opportunities will continue to be investigated for the project.
- K) 2008 Deployment of Artificial Reef Structure. Mike Meier, VMRC. **\$500,000.** Mr. Meier said that the plan for Program is to put 210 Reef Balls on the Poquoson site and 210 on the Northern Neck site. Also, Virginia will receive 250 New York City stainless steel subway cars for three offshore reef sites: Blackfish Bank, Parramore, and the Tower. The Transit Authority will proceed with the EPA developed cleaning protocol for the subway cars and the cars should be available in 2008. Mr. Meier gave some estimates of deployment costs. However, deployment costs vary with each project depending what the material is, where the material is going, and what equipment may be necessary. Also, some funding is requested to assist in the cost of environmental testing of potential reef material.

New Projects.

- L) Buckroe Beach Saltwater Fishing Pier. Fred Whitley, City of Hampton. **\$500,000.** Mr. Whitley gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the history of the old fishing pier and the plan for the new pier. The old pier was destroyed because of hurricane Isabel. Mr. Jim Wilson from the City of Hampton, Parks and Recreation Department was also in attendance to answer questions. The City decided to rebuild the new pier in the same location as the previous pier and at the same length. The planned pier is to be 709 feet long with a T-head, slightly larger than the old, at 29 by 70 feet. On the land end of the pier they plan to have a snack bar, restrooms, and bait shop facilities. The pier is to be about 16 feet above Mean Sea Level to stay above typical storm wave action. The pilings will be made of concrete, and the pier decking and rails will be made of wood. The pier will be handicapped accessible and meet all ADA requirements. They also are working on plans to have fish cleaning stations on the pier. The plan is to provide about 60 parking spaces to include handicapped parking spaces. There will be a landscape screen and a buffer space of about 20 feet between the parking lot and the Chesapeake Landing neighborhood. The project designed by the City will not have a restaurant. The plan is to do this project in four phases. They are schedule to come before the Commission in February to apply for the permit, and if awarded, plan to immediately begin work on the concrete pilings. The City is still meeting with citizens to discuss how to maximize the

benefits to anglers. The pier will be insured, it will be open 24/7 at least during the peak fishing season, fees to use the pier have not been discussed yet, and the decision to require individual fishing licenses or purchase the pier license is still being discussed. There has been some discussion on providing some type of cover, but the details are not set yet. There have been some suggestions to contract out the running of the pier rather than the City providing those services, but that has not been decided. The plan for monies generated from the snack bar and bait shop is to go back into the fund to provide long-term maintenance of the fishing pier and facilities.

- M) Data collection and analysis in support of single and multispecies stock assessments in Chesapeake Bay: the Chesapeake Bay Multispecies Monitoring and Assessment Program (ChesMMAP). R. Latour, C. Bonzek, VIMS. **\$494,928**. Mr. Chris Bonzek gave a Power Point presentation reviewing the project and the data collected. This is a bay-wide trawl survey designed to sample the late juvenile to adult stage of fish, whereas the VIMS Juvenile Trawl Survey (Item F) targets the young-of-the-year. The sample locations differ between these two surveys, as well as the mesh size, towing time, and speed of the vessel. They complete five cruises per year and sample about 80 randomly selected stations per cruise. They collect information such as length, weight, age, sex, and stomach content. These data are necessary to monitor the various species throughout the entire Bay. They would like to begin producing species documents for the general public, maybe on a website or however appropriate, that show where the fish are during the year, what they eat, the life history, the current management, etc. They would also like to explore possible alternate management measures for various species and the example shown was for summer flounder. Additional funding opportunities will continue to be investigated for the project. Mr. Travelstead informed everyone that though the exact dollar amount is not known at this time, we are expecting an increase in the amount available from Federal Wallop-Breaux funds. The only downside to the increase of federal funds is that more matching funds will be required.

Discussion of Participation in the Creation of a New Artificial Reef Site in the Lower Portion of the Potomac River. Mike Meier, VMRC. **\$20,000**. Mr. Meier requested the use of current allocated funds for the Virginia Artificial Reef Program to participate in the creation of a new artificial reef in the lower Potomac River. The amount requested is \$21,228.48 for the deployment of one barge load of rubble (1,010 tons) from the demolition of the old Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) will provide the funding for 3 barge loads. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources will provide the funding for 1 barge load. The cost is about \$21.00 per ton, which is a very reasonable cost for the deployment of the material. The artificial reef will be located 1 ½ miles North of Hogge Island, which is between the Coan and Yeocomico Rivers. The artificial reef is 50 acres and square in shape. The water depth is 20 to 30 feet. This reef is toward the Virginia side of the Potomac River. Some rubble of varying sizes has already been deployed in a line running NE to SW with a profile of 8 feet. Next spring, the PRFC will deploy a marker buoy in the NE corner and provide maintenance of the buoy for future years. Some public support to participate in this project was verbally provided to Mr. Meier by Mr. Joe Shelton of the Virginia Charter Boat Association. There was some discussion on the lack of reciprocal licenses for Charter Boats with Potomac River and Maryland, and Virginia's unsuccessful attempt a year ago to obtain some of the Wilson Bridge material. Mr. Southall moved to not approve the expenditure and was seconded by Mr. Bannister. One reason to not approve was because of the subversion with the previous handling of this bridge material, and the second reason is that this

location is not beneficial to the general fishing population of Virginia. Mr. Travelstead explained that we have the individual and private boat reciprocal licenses agreements with the Potomac River; this gives another reef site for the Northern Neck fishermen to use, and the project was supported by the fishermen in the area; and the cost to create the site is about 1/3 of the cost for the Virginia sites. Mr. Travelstead also pointed out that the Wilson Bridge was over Maryland waters and though it would have been wonderful for Virginia to get some of the rubble, he did not blame Maryland for keeping the material for their own reefs. The vote failed 3-3 with Mr. Duell abstaining. Mr. Barr made a motion to approve the request because the cost is so low, it is a benefit to the upper Bay anglers, and this is money already allocated to artificial reef deployment. Mr. Bannister seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-3 to approve the expenditure.

The next RFAB meetings for this review cycle are March 10, 2008 and May 12, 2008.

Chairman Hudgins adjourned the meeting at 10:20 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)