

**Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board
Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Monday, March 14, 2005 - 7:00 PM
Minutes**

Members Present

John Barr
Carlisle Bannister
Jim Deibler
Edward Rhodes
George Hudgins
Carolyn Brown
Jesse Duell
Charles Southall
Charles Randolph

I. Introduction, announcements, comments.

Chairman George Hudgins called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Jane McCroskey announced that, neither Jack Travelstead nor Rob O'Reilly was able to attend this meeting. She then informed the Board that it was Mr. Travelstead's wish to personally present an update on Wallop-Breaux projects at the next meeting. Ms. McCroskey then mentioned that it was her understanding that Item J on the agenda was withdrawn. Although, no written documentation to withdraw had yet been received, Ms. McCroskey assured the Board that as soon as this was handed in, they would be informed.

II. Status of Fund; Review of Wallop-Breaux Fund

Ms. McCroskey gave a brief overview of the status of the fund, along with materials sent to Board members earlier. Ms. McCroskey projected \$1.5 million would be available for projects as of September 2005.

Chairman Hudgins pointed out an apparent discrepancy in the amount of funding, citing an increase of over \$300,000 from the last projection.

Ms. McCroskey concurred with the Chairman and asserted that she would look into the matter further.

Ms. Brown asked if there was an update on the Project Manager position.

Ms. McCroskey stated that the position was re-advertised recently and that the closing date to apply had not yet been reached. She also pointed out that until the position was filled, other members of VMRC staff would be filling in on an as needed basis.

III. Review of Minutes from the January 10, 2005 RFAB meeting

The minutes from the January 10, 2005 meeting were approved as written.

IV. Multi-Year Projects for Renewal

A. 2005 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic. Wesley Brown. \$6000

Rob Cowling spoke in support of the project, saying that he would very much like to go on the record to state what a good job Kiwanis does.

Jim Hayden wished to make a general statement regarding a letter sent to the RFAB and asked if there were any questions from the Board. There were none.

B. Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-year American eel, in the Virginia Tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Marcel Montane, VIMS; \$29,929.00

Larry Snider spoke on behalf of the CCA VA, and informed all at the Public Hearing that all those speaking for the CCA at this meeting, speak on behalf of all the members. Mr. Snider expressed that this project is not supported, nor has it been in the past. Addressing a question from the Board, Mr. Snider replied that a 50-50 funding split (with the commercial segment) was still not favorable. According to Mr. Snider this is not a project that has a proportionate recreational value, compared to the commercial one.

C. Establishment of a Chesapeake Bay Trophic Interaction Laboratory Services Program. Chris Bonzek, VIMS; \$95,000

No comments.

D. Enhancing SAV Habitat: Research and Education for Restoration. Dr. Bob Orth, VIMS; \$93,966.00

No comments.

V. New Projects

E. Investigation of Mycobacteriosis in Chesapeake Bay Striped Bass: Large Scale Field Survey and Molecular Diagnostics, David T. Gauthier, VIMS; \$78,448.00

Mr. Snider responded that the CCA supported this project. However, this project had mutual benefits for both the recreational and commercial sector. He therefore recommended that the commercial sector contribute fifty percent of the funding. Mr. Snider also mentioned that a similar project was funded last year. He then suggested that the RFAB may wish to find out the status of that project prior to funding this project, if the Board is so inclined.

F. Visual Function in Chesapeake Bay sportfishes: striped bass, weakfish, spotted seatrout, Atlantic croaker, spot and red drum. Andrij Harodysky, VIMS; \$42,838.00

Mr. Snider stated that although this project did include popular sport fish, and that in the long run some good scientific data may be produced, the petitioner failed to demonstrate how this research will directly affect the conservation or management of the particular finfish. The CCA members were unanimous in not supporting.

G. What is the cause of menhaden recruitment failure? Quantifying the role of striped bass predation. Drs. Cynthia Jones and Nathan Smith, ODU; \$76,186.00

Mr. Snider addressed the item, saying there is conditional support based on the fact some other initiatives may also provide funding towards this project. Mr. Snider mentioned an ASMFC directed menhaden study as an example, as well as, monies earmarked in Maryland for a study. He then announced that if the time required to resolve where the various funding and projects would come together, happened to delay this project into the next funding cycle, he found that acceptable.

H. Virginia Saltwater Angler's Guide – 3rd Edition, Claude Bain, VMRC; \$208,500.00

Mr. Hayden attested that CCA has supported this program in the past and that the manual is very useful.

Mr. Cowling pointed out that the manual is helpful as an educational tool, and that it is very popular with adults and kids alike.

I. Estimating Relative Juvenile Abundance of Recreationally Important Finfish and Crustaceans in the Virginia Portion of Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Herbert Austin, VIMS; \$386,030.00

Mr. Snider observed that this project too, is beneficial to the recreational and commercial sectors, and so the CCA supports a 50-50 funding. He then put forward that funding for this project seek support directly from the General Assembly, instead of petitioning the RFAB on an annual basis.

Marcel Montane informed the Board that in the past VIMS had put in a request to the General Assembly, as well as coming before RFAB and trying to get additional funding. He noted that VIMS also requested some funding from Federal sources, and reminded the Board that this was a competitive process. Mr. Montane expressed that the Dean Director at VIMS has made funding for this project with the General Assembly his priority, hopefully for long term funding. Mr. Marcel mentioned that this data goes into multispecies monitoring, that the data is used by VMRC for ASMFC compliance reports, and that this is an important data set.

J. Fixed Dock Reconstruction and Floating Access Dock, John Hanna, The Watermen's Museum; \$333,975.00

Chairman Hudgins reminded all that The Watermen's Museum was most likely removing this item. He then allowed a time for anyone who wished to comment, on the chance this item was not withdrawn.

David Agee asked if the gentleman submitting the request had a letter of intent stating that vessels that previously used the dock intended to return. He also asked if the recreational anglers would be allowed to fish off the pier. He closed by stating PSWSFA does not support the project at this point.

Chairman Hudgins mentioned that the Board asked similar questions at the presentation meeting.

Chairman Hudgins addressed the audience, asking if there were any additional comments or questions.

David Gauthier addressed comments about Mycobacteriosis projects at VIMS, especially in regards to the previous study funded by the board. He then updated the audience on the project. Dr. Gauthier provided the Board with a hand out, and stated that the project team appreciated the comments of the peer reviewer. He spoke to several of the comments specifically. Dr. Gauthier avowed that CHESMAP has almost certain funding through March of next year, which allows for about a full year of data.

VI. Tentative dates for the 2005 RFAB Meetings

The Board voted to meet at 5:30 on May 9, 2005 to hold a work session, previous to the 7pm meeting.

