

FINAL MINUTES

Recreational Fishing Advisory Board Meeting

November 14, 2005

Members Present

George Hudgins - Chairman
Edward Rhodes - Vice-chair
Carlisle Bannister
John Barr
Carolyn Brown

Jim Deibler
Jimmie Duell
Charles Randolph
Charles Southall

RFAB Work Session – 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. The minutes are from the Final Meeting.

At 7:15 p.m., Chairman Hudgins called the meeting to order. Mr. Hudgins asked if staff had any additional announcements or comments.

Jane McCroskey said the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) transferred \$1.4 million to the fund, a week or so ago. On the financial report, that would increase the amount available for projects to almost \$900,000. We hope to receive another \$200,000 before the January meeting.

Mr. Hudgins asked for a review of the draft September 12, 2005 RFAB meeting minutes. Mr. Rhodes made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Brown seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous to accept the draft minutes as final.

Mr. Bannister made a motion to review Renewal Items A through F all at one time. Mr. Randolph seconded the motion.

Multi-Year Projects for Renewal

- A. 2005 Saxis Fishing Pier Youth Fishing Tournament (Year 4) \$1,500.**
- B. 2005 Morley's Wharf Youth Fishing Tournament (Year 4) \$1,500.**
- C. 2006 Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 9) \$6,000.**
- D. 2006 Virginia Game Fish Tagging (Year 12) \$60,823.**
- E. Artificial Fishing Reef Structure Acquisition and Deployment \$200,000.**
- F. 2006 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 5) \$6,000.**

A motion was made to approve Items A through F and was seconded. The vote was unanimous to fully fund items A through F.

New Projects

- G. Sheepshead Population Dynamics in Chesapeake Bay, Virginia (Year 1) \$64,545.**
Eric Robillard (Head of Plans & Statistics, VMRC – previously with ODURF) was available to answer any questions on this project. Mr. Barr asked if this project was to be used for the regulatory process or to be used in the future for the

status of the stocks. Eric answered that the intent of this study was to help to determine what regulations may be necessary for sheephead. Mr. Barr then asked, if a regulation was set before the study was completed, would a different study or modified study be better to monitor the effects of the regulation. Eric cautioned that regulations should not be put in place until we had some science to support it. Eric continued to say that if a regulation is put in place before the study, the study could show that it is not enough or too much. Mr. Bannister asked if Eric could comment on the availability of sheephead to the entire Bay. Mr. Bannister indicated that in his area (upper Chesapeake Bay & rivers) they do not catch sheephead, and it is mainly a lower Bay fishery. Eric indicated that we really do not know a lot about this species and the distribution around the Bay, and the first year of the study would help to answer that question. Mr. Deibler asked if they have picked up any samples thus far in 2005. Eric reminded him that he was now with VMRC, and he did not really know the exact number of samples collected for this year. Mr. Deibler then asked if the samples only came from the lower Bay would that give a picture of what was going on in the entire Bay. Eric indicated that it was a fair assumption that we have one stock of sheephead, and that samples taken from one area could be used to show the status of the entire Bay. Mr. Randolph asked if we knew whether or not the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel was mainly the northern range of the stock. Eric indicated that we really do not know at this point. Ms. Brown asked if the study was valid, if the samples came from the same area and are in the same size range. Eric mentioned that they had spoken to commercial fishermen, who have seen the little ones in pound nets, and they plan to use those samples to get a broader size range. Also, if they can get samples from a few areas in all the size ranges and make the assumption that it is one stock of fish, the study would be valid for the Chesapeake Bay only. Mr. Deibler asked if they could save some money on research that may have already been done around North Carolina. Eric was not aware of any research that has been done. Mr. Duell asked if we would gain any information for regulation in 1 year or would they need to wait the entire 3 years. Eric said that statistically they needed the 3 years, but 1 year would give us an approximation. A very good year or a very bad year next year could skew the results and that is another reason they would want the 3 year study. The researchers would bring this situation to the Board's attention. Mr. Southall asked if 3 years had statistical importance or was it just a good average number. Eric said that more years is always better, but in three years you could get an average of good and bad years. The scientific community feels that 3 years is probable for funding and statistically sound. Mr. Randolph asked if he had inquired as to whether or not any studies are going on in surrounding states. Eric indicated that as far as they knew no one was collecting these fish. Ms. Brown pointed out that the project said the results would be compared to studies done in the South Atlantic Bight, and asked if that information was available already. Eric said that it was being done in the South Atlantic Bight, specifically Florida, and that stock assessment information was very important for comparison with this study. Ms. Brown also asked if 50 pound boxes were available from the commercial sector from several locations. Eric had heard they were available, from the VMRC Stock Assessment Technicians, mainly from pound netters. The first year would be very important, and if they cannot sample the fish, they would not continue

with the following years of the study. Right now they are set up with the contacts and the people in place to get the samples from the commercial and recreational fishermen. Mr. Rhodes asked about the project time-line, which indicated that some of the work would begin in 2005. Eric indicated that a master's student has been hired and contacts with commercial and recreational fishermen have been completed. Eric knew they had a few sheepshead, but he did not have exact numbers. Eric also indicated that if this project was not approved that the master's student would move to another project. A motioned was made prior to discussion and seconded to table the project for futures meetings and passed with a vote of 8-1.

H. Wallop-Breaux Matching Funds \$261,583.

Mr. Barr commented that this needed to be funded, to obtain the federal funds, even though the recreational side feels they are doing more than their fair share. There is no more money from the commercial side for this year, so the recreational fund must be used. He hopes, with the increase in fees, the commercial side will come up with an equitable share next year. He also made a motion to fund this project and was seconded. The vote passed 8-1.

I. Administration of the Recreational Saltwater Boat Decals \$10,000.

Mr. Southall wanted to go on record with commending Jane for all her hard work with the Game Department. Mr. Barr explained to those in attendance. The amount is only to cover the funds expended until the Game Department takes it back over. The vote was unanimous to fund this project for the amended amount of \$10,000.

J. Withdrawn

K. 2005 Artificial Fishing Reef Pocket Location Guides \$50,000.

The vote was unanimous to not fund this project. (In the Work Session, RFAB was informed that this information would remain in the Anglers Guide and on the Internet. The budget is limited, and RFAB did not want to duplicate effort.)

L. Undercover Law Enforcement Funds for Covert Fisheries Operations \$25,000.

The vote was unanimous to fund this project. (In the Work Session, Mr. Barr mentioned that he hoped commercial funds would be used in the future to help support this effort. Also, RFAB commended the accomplishments of this team.)

One additional item was added to the Agenda. York County has requested to amend their budget of the original grant request (\$701,000). The County is asking for items not included in the original budget. However, the County still approximates a \$66,000 return to the fund even with the new items. A motioned was made to approve the amendments and was seconded. The vote was unanimous to approve the budget amendments.

The Board reviewed the tentative dates for the 2006 meetings. They are as follows:

Tentative Dates for 2006	First Cycle	Second Cycle
Applicants (7 p.m.)	January 9	July 10
Public Hearing (7 p.m.)	March 13	September 11
Review (5:30 p.m.) & Final (7 p.m.)	May 8	November 13

Mr. Deibler indicated that he would not be able to attend the January meeting.

Mr. Rhodes asked about the maintenance of saltwater sites, such as a grant request from the RFAB. Some members indicated they wanted the Game Department to come before the Board like any other project. Normally, a contract is setup with someone to be responsible for the work, like the Game Department. It would not be appropriate for the RFAB to submit a proposal that they would vote on. Jack Travelstead indicated that he expected to receive a Game Department proposal in December.

Mr. Hudgins adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.