

**Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board
Virginia Marine Resources Commission
2013 Cycle 1 Presentation Meeting
Monday, January 14, 2013**

Board Members Present

George Hudgins (Chair)
Carlisle Bannister
Jimmie Duell
Charles Randolph
Ken Schultz

Board Members Absent

Carolyn Brown
Jim Deibler
Ed Rhodes
Charles Southall

Staff Present

Rob O'Reilly
Lewis Gillingham
Joe Grist
Samantha Hoover
Jane McCroskey
Mike Meier
Alicia Nelson
Terri Short
Laurie Williams
Sharon Wilson

Others Present

Charlie Koski
Richard Paradeso
Joseph Stephenson
Bill Creager
Robert Orth

Minutes prepared by Samantha Hoover and Alicia Nelson

I. Introduction, Announcements, Comments

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. Mr. O'Reilly introduced Alicia Nelson as the new RFAB coordinator. He also described the change back to a 2-cycle funding system that will eliminate the need for expedited funding of projects.

II. Status of Fund.

Ms. McCroskey described the status of the fund. She said that there were currently have 2.2 million dollars that is unobligated in the fund, but we also know that we will have approximately 1.5 million dollars in VMRC projects that are to be allocated as of July 1st of this year. At your March meeting, you will see those reflected in your report. What we don't have at this time is information on the revenue. In June, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) overpaid us by half a million dollars. They have not sent us payment during the 6 months since. We know that in September, they recouped the money from the overpayment, so they owe us now for October, November, and December. We do not have any more concrete information at this time.

Mr. Randolph asked if we had any information on what to expect, and Ms. McCroskey said that we don't even have license sales for that time period. We can try to estimate based on the last few years' license sales, and we can guess that it will be several hundred thousand dollars. She said that based on the money we have now (2.2 million dollars), subtracting the VMRC obligations that will come out July 1st, it leaves you with just over \$700,000. The majority of that is available due to the VDGIF reconciling their records and returning about \$600,000 that they owed the VMRC.

Mr. Hudgins verified that the total would be around 1 million dollars based on the current total and the license sales we are expecting. Ms. McCroskey said that that was a good estimate, and that they are trying to be cautious at this time.

III. Review of Minutes from September 2012 RFAB Meeting

Mr. Bannister motioned to approve the minutes from the September, 2012 RFAB meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Schultz, and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Multi-Year Projects for 2013 Renewal

A. 2013 Chincoteague Island Charter Boat Association "TAKE A KID FISHING DAY." Charlie Koski, Chincoteague Island Charter Boat Association: \$2,088.65

Charles Koski (Chincoteague Island Charter Boat Association) read the project summary for the fishing event. He said that the charter boat captains take children out for ½ day charters, and that they plan on expanding the event from 30 to 25 children in 2013.

Mr. Bannister asked how many children and chaperones, and Mr. Koski replied that they hope to have 35 children, with at least 1 chaperone on each boat. With 8 boats, they are expecting 43-45 individuals total.

B. 2013 Knights of Columbus Annual Kids Fishing Day (Year 26th). Greg Brown, \$7,437.80.

Rich Paradeseo (Representative of the Knights of Columbus Annual Kids Fishing Day) described the fishing event. He said they were asking for support to help with the 26th annual Kids Fishing Day. They give approximately 200 children four hours of fishing including gear, lunch, and a t-shirt. The co-leads also go around to several local boys and girls clubs to generate interest every year. He mentioned that the RFAB helped out last year, and that they were asking for help this year as well.

Mr. Schultz asked how many children participated last year, and Mr. Paradeseo said that 182 kids came, in addition to 81 chaperones and 26 adults from the Boys and Girls Club.

C. 2013 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and clinics. Joseph Stephenson; Paul Anderson, Great Bridge Fisherman's Association. \$5,925

Joe Stephenson from the Great Bridge Fisherman's Association spoke on the topic. Mr. Stephenson said that he is asking for \$5,350 instead of \$5,925 after revising the budget. He said that the difference is due to a change from two small boats to one larger boat that will better accommodate wheel chairs. This makes the entire project a little less expensive due to the decrease in number of trips. He showed a slideshow of pictures from previous fishing events. Approximately 81 people participated in the boat trip and 89 people at the pier event last year.

Mr. Schultz if there was a revised application, Mr. Stephenson and Ms. Nelson responded that they had.

D. 2013 Youth Developmental "Hooked on Fishing" Adventure (year 6). Bob Hewlett, Bob Pride, Virginia Charter Boat Association. \$12,960.

There were no comments on this item.

E. 2013 Saxis and Morley's Wharf Fishing Piers Youth Fishing Tournaments (Year 12). Allen Evans, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. \$2,000

Bob Preger (Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club) spoke about the Fishing Tournament and provided pictures of past events. He said that two events have been held for the past several years (one at Saxis and one at Morley's Wharf). He said that many of the kids are very young. Most, if not all, of the fish are released, so they are trying to promote conservation. The club's goal is to pair one adult with each child (parents or club members). They also provide prizes for the three largest fish, and fishing rod and reels, a cookout, and t-shirts for participants. He mentioned that for 2013, there is a bigger challenge because the Saxis Pier was recently damaged. If the pier is not repaired in a timely manner, the club will host two events at Morley's Wharf.

F. 2013 Sunshine Children's Fishing Program (Year 11). Denny Dobbins, Portsmouth Angler Club/ Sunshine Program. \$7,725.

There were no comments on this item.

G. *Item G was withdrawn by the applicant

V. Research Projects for 2013.

h. Restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Habitat in Chesapeake Bay and the Virginia Coastal Bays. Robert Orth, VIMS. \$148,286

Dr. Robert Orth from VIMS gave a detailed presentation about the success with restoration of SAV and the importance of continuing the project. He described the accomplishments of the restoration on the seaside of the Eastern Shore. He clarified that the entire effort is seed-based, and that a number of volunteers from the Nature Conservancy (up to 100) help to harvest the seeds for the program. Through 2012, a little over 50 million grass seeds were placed in over 80 acres. Over 4,600 acres in the coastal bays now have eelgrass as a result. The seeds are naturally spread by nature.

Dr. Orth described the bay scallop work as well. He described the original fishery (1.8 million pounds landed in the area in 1930), and how the current project hopes to stimulate a new bay scallop population and resulting potential fishery. Bay scallops are placed in cages, and the adjacent areas are sampled for new scallop populations. He estimated 2 million bay scallops were present in the coastal bays (where they were not present two years ago). He also mentioned that the grass beds could allow substantial populations of fish to come into those areas as well.

Dr. Orth said that the project has been funded by the VSRFDF for several years. If other grant money is obtained, they try to make the VSRFDF funding last for a longer period (and apply for grant extensions). He thanked the board for the many years of support.

Mr. Bannister commented that propagating SAV seems to be beneficial to both commercial and recreational fisheries and asked the commercial fund provided additional funding, and Dr. Orth said that they do get additional funds from the MFIF (Marine Fishing Improvement Funds) for other portions of the project (the boat scarring project). He said that they have received over \$60,000 of support from that fund.

Mr. Bannister asks about the timeframe for the return of the bay scallops and how quickly a commercial fishery could fish them out. Dr. Orth said that we are in uncharted territory, if a scallop population is established in the grass beds, a very careful and sustainable plan would have to be established. He noted that they work very closely with the fishermen and the VMRC.

Hudgins asks how quickly bay scallops mature, and Dr. Orth answered that they mature in less than 1 year, potentially spawning twice a year. The scallops only live two years. If we were to establish a fishery, it would have to happen in the fall, after they were able to spawn. Mr. Hudgins asked what the biggest natural predator is, and Dr. Orth said that it depends on the size. Conchs and cownose rays predate on them.

Mr. Randolph asked if the caged scallops are ever released. Dr. Orth said that they are released. They cannot allow them to sit in the cages for more than two years because they get covered in oysters after a period of time (due to the high level of oyster larvae) and become less productive. Dr. Orth said that they are trying to time the caging of the scallops until after the oyster spat have set. Mr. Randolph also asked if they are testing the water quality in the areas. Dr. Orth responded that monitor several of the bays 24 hours per day. They monitor temperature, telemetry, and other parameters. The biggest water quality change has been the clarity of the water after the grass beds have established. He said that the water has cleared significantly in the last 5 years due to the grass beds. While the bivalves also clarify the water, it's nothing compared to the beds.

Mr. Randolph said that if there are problems with volunteers, there are lists of clubs who could potentially help with volunteering. Dr. Orth said that their problem last year was the warm spring. The grasses flowered much earlier than expected (and earlier than the volunteers had been scheduled).

VI. Tentative Dates for Future 2013 RFAB Meetings (First Cycle)
Public Hearing (7pm), March 11, 2013
Work Session (5:30pm)&Final Recommendations (7pm), May 13, 2013
Second Cycle Project Applications due: June 15, 2013

Mr. Bannister motioned to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Mr. Schultz, and the meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.