

FINAL MINUTES
Recreational Fishing Advisory Board (RFAB) Meeting
July 11, 2011

Members Present

George Hudgins - Chairman	Carolyn Brown
Edward Rhodes - Vice-chairman	H. "Jim" Deibler
Carlisle Bannister	J. "Jimmie" Duell
John Barr	Charles Randolph

Members Not Present

Charles Southall

At 7:03 p.m., Chairman Hudgins called the meeting to order.

Ms. Sonya Davis announced that Item K, Phase 1 Dredge - Jackson Creek, project has been withdrawn by the applicant. Also, comments from Jon Lucy and the peer review for Item Q, 2012 CCA Northern VA "Save a Kid, Catch a Fish", were received shortly before the meeting and paper copies were available on the table outside the meeting room.

Ms. Jane McCroskey introduced Sharon Wilson, the new Grants Manager for the Agency. Ms. McCroskey provided a brief status report of the budget through June 2011. She explained that the report shows a balance of \$1,589,072. This report includes the expenses for the on-going projects, the VMRC obligations for July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012, and a portion set aside for the new Fisherman Identification Program (FIP). The amount available is still 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. Ms. McCroskey explained that the commercial fund had about \$100,000 available for projects this year. Some unexpended monies were returned to the commercial fund at the end of the State fiscal year, but she did not expect this to occur again next year.

Mr. Hudgins asked for a review of the draft May 9, 2011 RFAB meeting minutes. Mr. Deibler made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Bannister seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous to accept the draft minutes as final.

Multi-Year Projects for 2011 Renewal.

Mr. Hudgins reminded everyone that Items A, B, C, and D were recommended for funding by the RFAB on May 9, and the Commission approved the expenditures on June 28.

- E) 2011 Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection (Year 5). J. Grist, J. Cimino, VMRC. **\$11,500.** Mr. Larry Snider, Coastal Conservation Association of Virginia (CCA), reiterated comments that were mentioned in the written comments. The CCA has supported this project in the past, but would like some species returned to the collection program, such as spadefish. They believe the expanding recreational spadefish fishery necessitates the monitoring of this species. Mr. Joe Cimino explained that spadefish were taken out of the program, because of financial reasons. Anglers were providing bagfuls of small spadefish (4"-5") that cost the program about \$15.00 per donation for a reward,

such as a T-shirt, and mailing cost. The Biological Sampling Program can obtain small spadefish from the commercial fishery for pennies. However, they are willing to consider adding spadefish back into this program with a minimum size, as currently done with bluefish. Mr. Randolph mentioned that there was a marked increase in spear fishing for spadefish and that might be something that also needed to be looked at through the program. Mr. Cimino said that they do receive some fish samples from spear fishermen.

- F) Federal Assistance (Wallop-Breaux) Matching Funds, Federal FY 2012. Jack Travelstead, VMRC. **\$321,856**. Mr. Larry Snider, CCA, mentioned that every year they complain about the recreational fund providing all or most of the State match funds. They feel the anglers have already contributed through the purchase of their fishing gear. Because the commercial sector also benefits from these monitoring projects, the commercial fund should be providing 100% or at least a large portion of the match funds. Mr. Rhodes asked Mr. Snider where the CCA proposed that the commercial revenue stream come from. Mr. Snider did not know, but asked that some effort be made to obtain some of the match from the commercial fund.

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 invited the RFAB members to attend the 2011 program, which is scheduled for Saturday, July 16th on the James River Fishing Pier. The mist tent should be up for this clinic and the Kiwanis clinic.
- H) 2012 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 11). Wesley Brown, Capital District Kiwanis Club. **\$6,500**. Mr. Brown invited the RFAB members to attend the 2011 program, which is scheduled for Tuesday, July 19th 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**. Mr. Larry Snider, CCA, commented that this is primarily a commercial project and funding should be provided by the commercial license fund.
- J) 2012 Virginia Game Fish Tagging (Year 18). S. Musick, VIMS and L. Gillingham, VMRC. **\$70,213**. Mr. Sheldon Arey, Tidewater Anglers Club (TAC) and VGFT tagger, spoke in support for the continuation of this program. He explained that this is a wonderful program that utilizes anglers to tag the fish, which assists fisheries managers to track the movements, site fidelity, and some biological information for some of the recreationally important species. He also mentioned that Mr. Jon Lucy provided written comments supporting the continuation of the program.

New Projects for 2011.

- K) Phase 1 Dredge - Jackson Creek. Charles M. Culley, Jr., County Administrator of Middlesex. **\$78,750**. Item was withdrawn by the applicant, shortly before the meeting.

- L) Bennett's Creek Park Fishing Pier Replacement. Michael Kelly, City of Suffolk. **\$75,000.** Mr. Kelly wanted to clarify that this project is the replacement of the existing fishing pier, located in this 50 acre park in Suffolk. The pier is only open from dawn to dusk, as there is no lighting on or near the pier, but the boat ramps are open for use 24 hours a day, every day of the week. They would be happy to post any signage required or that the Board suggests. He also pointed out that most people use the newer boat ramp, which is the farthest away from the fishing pier. They do not expect a lot of conflicts between ramp and fishing pier users. Mr. Larry Snider, CCA, pointed out that the written comments provided by the CCA did not support this project, mainly because they preferred that the limited amount of recreational funds should support a greater number of anglers with the development of artificial reefs. Ms. McCroskey mentioned that Mike has recently been working on securing materials-of-opportunity and that has been difficult because the contractors are recycling the materials. Mr. Hudgins said the contractors were getting about \$12 per ton for concrete recycling. Mr. Bob Allen, Hampton, VA, pointed out that even if the RFAB recommended all of the projects listed, they would only total around \$700,000, leaving a large amount of funds available for artificial reef development. He believes that the City of Suffolk has presented a worthwhile project and it should be supported with recreational license funds.
- M) Survey Design for Adult Atlantic Menhaden along the U.S. East Coast. Robert Latour, VIMS. **\$55,373.** Mr. Larry Snider, CCA, said that the CCA believes this is a good project, but some of the funding should be provided by the commercial license fund.
- N) Examining Stock Composition of Migratory Striped Bass. David Gauthier, ODURF. **\$82,351.** Mr. Larry Snider, CCA, agreed that new and good information was needed on the striped bass population and supported the funding of this project. Mr. Randolph asked that the researchers of both this project and Item M also seek funds from the commercial license fund.
- O) Population Dynamics of Overwintering Speckled Trout on the Elizabeth River in Chesapeake Bay. C. Jones, S. Beharry, ODURF. **\$64,871.** Mr. Sheldon Arey explained that he was the angler who approached the ODURF about looking into this issue. He has personally captured 3 to 4 inch speckled trout in the warm water outfall area, called the "hot ditch", in the winter, and has spoken to other anglers who have captured 1 to 2 inch fish and also some fish with row. He has also tagged fish in the "hot ditch" area and those fish have traveled to various areas around the Maryland and Virginia portions of the Chesapeake Bay, the Potomac River, and North Carolina waters, with some moving to other areas very quickly. This project has the potential of determining what recruitment might be occurring in this area and what portion of the migrating population stay behind to overwinter in this area. Ms. Brown asked him what the data would be used for. Mr. Arey would personally like to see the fishery in the "hot ditch" become a catch-and-release only fishery. However, the researchers would provide the data to fisheries managers and the Commission to see if anything additional needs to be done for the fish overwintering in this area. Mr. Arey was also involved with the coordination of support from the angling community to request that the Commission reduce the angling bag limit to 5 speckled trout, December through March, and allow only 1 of the 5 fish to be over 24 inches. Mr. Larry Snider, CCA, supports this project, and commented that it was nice to see other angler's groups pulling together in support of the management of this species, besides the CCA members. Mr. Snider added that if they were looking into the status of

this “hot ditch” fishery, the CCA would like the researchers to also look at the health, or toxicity levels, of the fish overwintering in the area.

New Projects for 2012.

- P) 2012 Norfolk Youth Head Boat Fishing Trip. Ned Smith, Norfolk Anglers Club. **\$1,010.**
No verbal comments were provided at the meeting.

- Q) 2012 CCA Northern VA "Save a Kid, Catch a Fish". J. Bello, G. Lenard, Coastal Conservation Association – Northern VA. **\$2,700.** Mr. Larry Snider, CCA, commented that this was a good program.

The date for the next two RFAB meetings of this review cycle is September 12.

Chairman Hudgins adjourned the meeting at 7:57 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)]