

FINAL MINUTES

Recreational Fishing Advisory Board Meeting July 11, 2005

Members Present

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

Jim Deibler
Jesse "Jimmie" Duell
Charles Randolph
Charles Southall

At 7:05 p.m., Mr. George Hudgins called the meeting to order.

Mr. Jack Travelstead made the formal introduction of Sonya Davis, as the new Recreational Advisory Board coordinator.

Mr. Travelstead also informed everyone in attendance that the public notice on the increase of commercial and recreational license fees sent out a few weeks ago had a couple of typos in the proposed increase tables and corrected versions were available on the table outside. He encouraged everyone to take corrected copies and pass them out to others. He also announced that the Commission would hold a public hearing on the fees increase at the July Commission Meeting as well as hold public hearings at various locations around the state. Mr. Travelstead hopes that the Commission will consider the increases proposed by the Ad Hoc Panel to increase funds available for recreational projects as well as increase commercial funds so they may be used to assist with costs of some of the required monitoring projects.

Mrs. Sonya Davis announced the application for the 2006 CCA Tidewater Youth Fishing Day was received after the packets had been mailed to the Board members and had not been added to the agenda. A copy was in the RFAB notebooks for review and discussion later in the meeting. Representatives were in attendance, if the Board had any questions on this project proposal.

Mrs. Jane McCroskey indicated behind the BUDGET tab, Board members would find a copy of the most recent financial report through the end of May. It is projected that by the end of September \$415,000 would be available and before the end of the year another \$300,000 - \$400,000 would be collected. Mr. Hudgins asked about the status of funds for contracts that had expired. Mrs. McCroskey explained that some contracts were extended or final billing was being processed and the report had not been updated to reflect those changes. She also explained that as contracts approach the ending period, the contact person was called to find out the status of the project. The next report would show the payments made in June.

Mr. Hudgins asked for a review of the draft May 9, 2005 RFAB meeting minutes. Mr. Rhodes made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Deibler seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to accept the draft minutes as final.

Multi-Year Projects for Renewal

- A. 2005 Saxis Fishing Pier Youth Fishing Tournament (Year 4) \$1,500.** Matt Abell, president of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Angler's Club, informed the Board that approximately 164 youths attended the Saxis and Morley's Wharf tournaments last year. They provided equipment, a day of fishing, lunch and a T-shirt. It is a nice way to introduce a lot of youths to fishing on the Shore. Mr. Abell believed the count was 68 for the June 2005 Saxis tournament. The Angler's club is requesting to be reimbursed because the events will have taken place before the review cycle is complete. The recipient funding is a cash match of club money. Attendance of the youths would not overlap between tournaments. Based on last year's attendance they expect about 82 youths for the Morley's Wharf tournament.
- B. 2005 Morley's Wharf Youth Fishing Tournament (Year 4) \$1,500.** Matt Abell answered questions for both tournaments under Agenda Item A. No additional questions were asked.
- C. 2006 Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 9) \$6,000.** Rob Cowling announced the 2005 event on Saturday, July 16 and invited Board members to attend and see how the money is being spent. Each year they invite 250 children to keep the level at a controllable level on the pier. They provide rod and reel, bait, T-shirt, food, tackle and care (almost have a 1/1 ratio of volunteers to kids). Provide 6 educational booths under a large tent for all the kids and chaperones to learn about the species, fishing, tagging, boating and water safety, etc. Chum pots usually attract lots of fish for the kids to catch. The match is a cash match and they try to spend less than they budget, but some years cost more than others. They rent tables, chairs, tents, Port-A-Johns and golf carts. They have some tents for the pier, cutting boards and knives that they reuse and require repair or replacement as they wear out. The fishing equipment is bought new for the children each year.
- D. 2006 Virginia Game Fish Tagging (Year 12) \$60,823.** Jon Lucy gave a Power Point summary report on 2003-2004 data. Just a few points about the program. This program targets species not already targeted by other tagging programs. They educate and train anglers to document and tag fish 4 times a year. He went on to explain some of the uses of the data collected for management strategies. For larger fish, they have switched to a stainless steel dart tag and have seen better recapture rates. They honor outstanding taggers and reward them at the end of the year. Program also looks at tagging and handling stress and ways to improve. More details may be found in the written 2004 final report. Claude Bain gave an update on the status of the 2005 program. His computer crashed, so he did not have exact numbers. Due to the spring weather the recaptures were down about 15% and tagging was down between 10 and 15%, but catching up rapidly. They have the max number of taggers at 200. Experienced tagger, Scott Vincent, had already tagged 1100 fish by July 1 of this year.

- E. Artificial Fishing Reef Structure Acquisition and Deployment \$200,000.** Jack Travelstead made the presentation for Mike Meier. Currently, in his budget he has \$200,000 available for September / October 2005 for the creation of 3 reefs off Poquoson, Mobjack Bay and Bluefish Rock. The money requested in this cycle is for 2006 and the creation of 2 new reefs. We are sort of on a schedule to create 2 new reefs every year in Chesapeake Bay. Just today, we received the federal permits required to build the 3 reefs for this year and will now work on bid proposals.
- F. 2006 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 5) \$6,000.** Wesley Brown, chairman of the clinic, informed the Board that this was the 6th year of the clinic and approximately 250 children ages 8-12 would be fishing on the James River Fishing Pier. He sort of copied what Rob Cowling does with his tournament. Some things included are a mist tent, various educational booths, lifeguards, etc. The kids come from 8 Kiwanis clubs around the area, YMCA and Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs. Volunteers help supervise the children. He also announced that next Tuesday, July 19 was the 2005 event and everyone was invited. The match is donations of money.

New Projects

- G. Sheepshead Population Dynamics in Chesapeake Bay, Virginia (Year 1) \$64,545.** Hongsheng Liao "Hank", lab manager for CQFE, made the presentation. He gave credit to the CCA for raising the concern for the increase of catch of sheepshead in the last few years. No information was really available in Virginia or Florida to North Carolina. The four objectives are to determine growth rates, age composition, mortality and reproduction status. Method of sample collection would be from recreational fisherman, charter (for independent sampling) and maybe some commercial (by-catch fishery), if necessary. This would be a three year project to get some averages and trends, but the amount requested is only for the first year. Ms. Brown and Mr. Randolph asked some questions on size of sample and how this relates to stock assessment and what the CCA wanted. Dr. Liao explained that you needed the parameters of this study to do stock assessment. The more fish sampled of all ages the better. They would work with CCA members to get the fish samples.
- H. Wallop-Breaux Matching Funds \$291,583.** Jack Travelstead briefly explained that Wallop-Breaux funds are federal funds that are divided between the freshwater agency and marine agency based on a formula. We receive about 35% of Virginia's share. The funds are collected from an excise tax on fishing gear that the manufacturers pay and the cost is passed on to fishermen. Each state is required to match the federal money on a 1 to 3 basis. Which means, for every \$3 of federal money, we are required to put up \$1. Under federal law the projects that are funded by Wallop-Breaux must be used to benefit recreational fishing in the state. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has over-site of these monies and the projects are forwarded to them for their review. The historical use of Wallop-Breaux monies in Virginia has been for monitoring projects that we are required to do to stay in compliance with ASMFC Fisheries Management Plans. Some of the projects include

striped bass tagging, juvenile striped bass, American shad and ageing of some recreationally important species. Since both commercial and recreational groups benefit from these projects, Mr. Travelstead hopes that in the future commercial license fees will be available to provide the match. We will continue to ask the General Assembly for general funds to provide the match, however in recent years we have not been successful. The question was raised as to whether or not the Commission will raise the license fees. Mr. Travelstead felt that attendance and support of the increase will determine if the Commission increases the fees or not. The question was asked as to how our fees stacked up to other states' fees and Mr. Travelstead indicated that we were fairly low.

- I. Administration of the Recreational Saltwater Boat Decals \$30,976.** Jane McCroskey explained that in the past the Game Department agents issued the boat decal when the handwritten license was sold. As they move to on-line sales, the agents are no longer able to hand the decal out at point-of-sale. Since January, we get a data dump a couple times a week and we mail the decal out. As of this week, over 10,000 have been sold. Our current staff cannot keep up with the additional workload. We need a temporary part-time employee to help with issuing the boat decal in a timely fashion. Mr. Southall asked if the decal was required or if there was any move to do away with the decal. Previously, Mrs. McCroskey had discussed the matter with Col. Bowman of our Law Enforcement Division and it is our belief that the decal is required and must be issued. Mrs. McCroskey also indicated that with on-line sales the Game Department was having difficulty issuing other things, such as hunting stamps, and they hope that in a year or so they would have those problems worked out. Various questions were raised as to how difficult it was to send the decal and why the Game Department was no longer doing it. Mrs. McCroskey also mentioned the mailing address problems with the on-line license sales and that required research and re-mailing. Some Board members felt the recreational anglers were being double charged for an inefficient process between DGIF and VMRC. Mr. Randolph wanted to know why the Game Department could not just supply a stack of decals to their agents to be handed out when they print the on-line license. Then VMRC would only need to send decals to those who purchase on-line from home. Mr. Travelstead indicated the Game Department was not willing to do that at this time. The Board members were encouraged to talk to recreational boat license holders and find out if the decal was needed and if not, the Commission could go to the General Assembly and have the Code Section changed.
- J. City of Norfolk 13th View Street Boat Ramp Facilities Repair \$100,000.** This item was skipped because no one was in attendance to present to proposal.
- K. 2005 Artificial Fishing Reef Pocket Location Guides \$50,000.** Jack Travelstead made the presentation for Mike Meier. The proposal is to produce a pocket version of the Artificial Reef Program information included as an insert in the Angler's Guide. Anglers could easily pull out the insert and carry it with them while fishing. This would be used to replace the information currently in the Angler's Guide. Only a brief description of the program would remain in the Angler's Guide. Sonya Davis

let Board members know that a draft copy of the pocket guide would be mailed to them, so they could talk with others to see if it would be a useful tool.

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

Lieutenant John Croft gave a brief history and overview of the types of undercover operations this small Special Investigations Unit (S.I.U) participates in. They target anyone who participates in illegal activities related to marine resources. Through a cooperative effort with uniformed patrol officers, other state and federal agencies, task forces, etc., they have about a 97% conviction rate. Documentation with audio and/or video helps the cases reach convictions in court. The project proposal request is for purchase of surveillance equipment, “buy money” for evidence and training expenses. Mr. Barr commended the group and their efforts, but did ask how this money will be used to specifically benefit the recreational fisherman. Lt. Croft indicated that all the natural resources would be given equal protection. The S.I.U. cannot only focus on recreational finfish. Poachers often switch from one type of resource to another. However, if they are investigating a commercial fisherman that is exploiting a resource, such as striped bass that could impact the recreational fishing community as well. Protection of the resource (shellfish or finfish) benefits everyone. Mr. Bannister asked about participation of the group to enforce activity outside the “3 mile line”. Lt. Croft indicated the S.I.U. may participate in activities that cross the “3 mile line” as well as other states’ lines when tracking violators.

Late Item: 2006 CCA Tidewater Youth Fishing Day \$6,000. Mr. Hudgins brought this item before the Board members. The proposal had not been received by the June 15 due date. Mr. Bannister moved to defer this item to the next review cycle (January – May 2006), so the Board would have the opportunity to review this project proposal. Mr. Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion carried 9-0. The CCA would not have to reapply in December. Automatically, the item would be added to the agenda. Mr. Jim Haydon of the CCA asked if the money would be available June or July of 2006. Mr. Rhodes explained that the Commission would have to approve the project at the May 2006 meeting before funds would be made available.

Mr. Rhodes moved to change the date of the RFAB Work Session from October 11 to November 14, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. (before the final meeting at 7:00 p.m.). Mr. Deibler seconded the motion. The motion carried 9-0.

Mr. Hudgins adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.