

MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**March 24, 2026
4:00 to 6:00 pm**

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Members Present

Jackie Shannon
Lee Deihl
Don Portor via Teams
Tommy Kellum

Members Present

J. C. Hudgins
Cory Rice
Ben Johnson
Michael Shackelford

VMRC/VIMS/VDH Staff

Andrew Button
Adam Kenyon
Jamie Hogge
Vernon Rowe
Andy Shinn
Ellen Rowe, VIMS

Prior to the start of the meeting, all members that attended in person received a packet which included the agenda items that were up for discussion. The information that was provided to the members was also available on VMRC website for the public and committee members that could not attend to view.

Jackie Shannon, Chairwoman, opened the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Introductions:

The meeting began with introductions of those SMAC members present in person as well as those attending via Teams.

Approval of Agenda:

Andrew Button requested add a discussion during other business for possible season extensions. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Committee Member Deihl made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Committee Member Hudgins seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. Committee Member Shackelford was not present during the vote.

Approval of January 29, 2026, Meeting Minutes:

Committee Member Hudgins made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Committee Member Deihl seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. Committee Member Shackelford was not present during the vote.

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Discussion of Revision to the 2026 Oyster Restoration and Replenishment Plan (ORP):

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management, began by providing some background on the status of the shell dredge not being operational for the 2026 Replenishment season. The filter dredge has been used for several years to dredge shell for reef shell deposits in the Lower James, producing around 800,000 bushels of shell a year. The dredged shell was planted on harvest areas and used to maintain the quality of those harvest areas. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Mr. Button explained proposed revisions to the 2026 Oyster Restoration and Replenishment Plan. His comments are a part of the verbatim record

The Committee discussed proposed revisions to the 2026 Oyster Restoration and Replenishment Plan. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record

Committee Member Kellum recommended disease testing in the Rappahannock River before planting seed. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Of the new General Funding, available July 1, 2026, Committee Member Johnson made a motion to spend \$300,000 for seed projects, \$700,000 for house shell projects, \$500,000 for alternative substrate and set aside the remaining budget for future fossil shell projects. This would provide an incentive for a contractor to pursue a fossil shell dredging contract. Committee Member Deihl seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-1-1. Committee Member Shackelford voted no. Committee Member Kellum abstained.

Other Business:

There was discussion about consideration for extensions to the current oyster season for Rappahannock Area 9 and the James River. The Committee requests an extension of Rappahannock Area 9 through the month of April. No other request for extensions was made. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record.

John Newsome, a current waterman who hand tongs, spoke to request an extension for Rappahannock Area 9 through the month of April. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Committee Member Hudgins made a motion to request an Emergency Hearing for the upcoming March Commission Meeting for a extension for Rappahannock Area 9 through the month of April. A Committee Member seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Public Comments:

No one spoke during public comments.

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Committee Member Deihl made to adjourn the meeting. Committee Member Hudgins seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:36 p.m.

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