

FINAL MINUTES
Recreational Fishing Advisory Board Meeting
March 10, 2008

Members Present

Edward Rhodes - Vice-chairman
Carlisle Bannister
Carolyn Brown

Jim Deibler
Charles Randolph

Members Not Present

George Hudgins - Chairman
John Barr

Jesse "Jimmie" Duell
Charles Southall

At 7:10 p.m., Vice-Chairman Rhodes called the meeting to order.

Ms. Jane McCroskey informed everyone that the revenue available for projects is estimated as \$2.4 million, as of September 30, 2008. This estimate includes Governor Kaine's budget reductions planned for fiscal years 2008 and 2009. Mr. Rhodes asked if the budget reductions would have any impact on Wallop-Breaux (Federal Aid) funding for Virginia. Ms. McCroskey explained that it will not affect the amount of federal money we will receive. She continued to explain that recreational fishing license money may not be deposited directly into the State Treasury. However, the license money may be used to make up for general funds lost by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC). Some recreational saltwater license funds will be used to replace lost general funds for a small portion of the VMRC Fisheries Management and Law Enforcement Divisions' budgets. Also, a matching amount of the commercial license fund will be used for the Fisheries Management Division budget reduction.

Mr. Rhodes asked for a review of the draft, January 14, 2008 RFAB meeting minutes. Mr. Deibler made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Brown seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous to accept the draft minutes as final.

Multi-Year Projects for Renewal.

- A) 2008 Sunshine Children's Fishing Program. Denny Dobbins, Portsmouth Anglers Club. **\$7,194.** No public comment was provided at the meeting.
- B) 2008 Saxis & Morley's Wharf Fishing Pier Youth Fishing Tournaments (Year 7). Allen Evans, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. **\$2,500.** No public comment was provided at the meeting.
- C) 2008 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and Clinics. D. Hurst, C. Macin, Great Bridge Fisherman's Association. **\$4,000.** No public comment was provided at the meeting.

- D) Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection (Year 2). J. Grist, J. Cimino, VMRC. **\$12,000**. Mr. Larry Snider, Coastal Conservation Association of Virginia (CCA) explained that the CCA decided to provide written comments in a slightly different format than they have in the past. They have ranked the projects in order of their importance to the recreational fishing community. The CCA suggests that any projects listed in the top-5 should receive the highest priority, provided that funding is available. This particular project is listed 4th in the ranking order. The CCA supports the funding of this project because it is a small amount of funding and the recreational anglers have already seen some return on their investment for some species in the first year.
- E) Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-Year American Eel, *Anguilla rostrata*, in the Virginia Tributaries of Chesapeake Bay (Year 8). Mary Fabrizio, VIMS. **\$45,348**. Mr. Larry Snider (CCA) pointed out that in the written comments provided by the CCA, this project was not supported and was at the bottom of the ranking order. They feel the money to support this project should come entirely from the commercial fund.
- F) Estimating Relative Juvenile Abundance of Recreationally Important Finfish in the Virginia Portion of Chesapeake Bay. Mary Fabrizio, VIMS. ~~\$450,000~~ **Amended to \$74,242**. Mr. Jack Travelstead informed everyone that the amount of Wallop-Breaux (Federal Aid) funds available to VMRC has increased substantially from previous years. It has been determined that the increase is sufficient to cover $\frac{3}{4}$ of the funds necessary for this project, as well as Item M, ChesMMAP. However, we will still need to request the VMRC state match portion for both this project and Item M. The match amount VMRC needs for this project is \$74,242 and \$94,221 for Item M. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) also provides a portion of the state match for both of these projects.
- Mr. Larry Snider (CCA) mentioned that Item M was ranked higher than Item F on the written comments, because some CCA members felt more information was gained from Item M. He thought the reductions in the amounts needed for both projects was good news for the recreational fund, and also he did not want to see the federal funding lost.
- G) Estimate and Assess Social and Economic Importance and Value of Menhaden to Chesapeake Bay Stakeholders and Region (3 Year Study) - Year 2. James Kirkley, VIMS. **\$236,479**. Mr. Larry Snider (CCA) said that the CCA has support this project since its inception. Also, it was made clear in the first year that once the study was started it needed to be completed (3 years) to obtain any results. The CCA believes this study will show the value of this species to the whole ecosystem, and be an important tool for fisheries managers in the future. For these reasons, the CCA put this project at the top of their project ranking list.

Towards the end of the meeting, Mr. Bob Allen requested an update on the communication problem between Dr. Kirkley and Omega Protein that was mentioned in January. Mr. Rhodes mentioned the letter that Dr. Kirkley sent after the January RFAB meeting. Mr. Travelstead summarized the letter by saying that Omega Protein is in full cooperation with the study, and the communication difficulties were resolved. Also, Ms. Susan Gaston was appointed as the liaison for the study to make sure that Dr. Kirkley was receiving the information he needed. Ms. Gaston confirmed that she was Omega

Protein's liaison for the study and had met with Dr. Kirkley and Winnie Ryan on February 29, 2008. During the meeting, problems were discussed, and a long list of information needed from Omega Protein was provided. Since the meeting, Ms. Gaston and Omega Protein have been working diligently to get the information to Dr. Kirkley.

- H) Enhancement and Sentinel Reefs for the Virginia Artificial Reef Network. Rom Lipcius, VIMS. **\$153,946**. Mr. Larry Snider (CCA) again pointed out the ranking order within the written comments for both this project and Item I. The CCA is an advocate for Virginia's Artificial Reef Program, and it has supported the purchase of various apparatus to monitor the sites. Although this project and Item I will augment the basic monitoring of the reef sites and the CCA is in support of these projects, they ranked lower in priority than some of the other projects currently being reviewed.

Dr. Lipcius said he felt like there was some misunderstanding of the intent of this project and Item I that needed some clarification. The current Reef Program has so many different types of reefs in so many different locations that it would be hard to compare performance. This project and Item I propose to use the sentinel reef to assess in a standardized way, how an area is performing. It is meant to be complimentary to what Mr. Meier is monitoring, but in a more standardized way. This project is involved with the placement of the sentinel reefs, whereas Item I is more involved with evaluating the habitat. Mr. Deibler asked whether the underwater video equipment purchased for the Artificial Reef Program could be used for this project, also. Dr. Lipcius explained that most likely both groups would want to be using the equipment at the same time in different locations so it would be difficult to share. Leasing the equipment costs about \$1,000 a day so it would be more cost effective to purchase a small unit. Dr. Lipcius reminded everyone that the request in the proposal is to cover about 20% of the cost of the video equipment and other funding sources will supply the rest.

- I) Habitat Suitability for Artificial Recreational Fish and Oyster Reefs. Rochelle Seitz, VIMS. **\$61,076**. This project was discussed with Item H.
- J) Enhancing Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Habitat: Research and Education for Restoration (Year 14). Robert Orth, VIMS. **\$90,000**. Mr. Larry Snider (CCA) said that SAV restoration is a top habitat priority for the CCA, and was ranked high on the written comments provided. The CCA has supported the funding of the SAV restoration efforts in the past and will continue to support this effort. They believe the restoration of the SAV beds is vital to the general health of the Bay and to the various species, such as crabs and speckled trout that rely on the SAV beds for nursery areas.
- K) 2008 Deployment of Artificial Reef Structure. Mike Meier, VMRC. **\$500,000**. Mr. Larry Snider (CCA) said that this is the CCA's top reef project priority and should be funded. This type of project has consistently been the most beneficial to the anglers from year to year.

New Projects.

- L) Buckroe Beach Saltwater Fishing Pier. Fred Whitley, City of Hampton. ~~\$500,000~~
Amended to \$750,000. Mr. Whitley highlighted the items which increased the funding

request by \$250,000. The City recently obtained the property for the parking lot and pier at an increased cost of \$50,000 from the original projection. To mitigate some environmental impacts with the parking area, the City would like to use open web pavers instead of asphalt. Also, the City would like to increase the density of the vegetative buffer between the pier site and the adjacent Chesapeake Landing community. The estimate to accomplish these two items was \$100,000. And lastly, the City realized that the original projected cost to build the facilities on the pier was underestimated by \$100,000. The City is now asking that the recreational fund supply approximately 25% of the cost of the entire project. He mentioned that the Commission approved the permit for this project in February, so they were ready to begin construction. Mr. Whitley invited the RFAB members to the groundbreaking ceremony on March 14, 2008.

Mr. Larry Snider (CCA) said that the CCA was glad that the City of Hampton has come forward with this proposal to replace the pier. This pier will be a great benefit to many anglers who want to fish in the lower Bay area. They support the funding of the project, including the amended increase. The CCA ranked this project as second on their written comments. One suggestion on the project would be to maximize or enlarge the "T" on the T-head, which is where most anglers want to fish from. The CCA wants to encourage the City of Hampton to submit more public access project applications. One possible project is the public boat ramp and stabilization of the shoreline at Gosnold's Hope Park.

Mr. Darrell Parker, Virginia Coastal Access Now (VCAN), spoke in support of the City's effort to replace the fishing pier. They support the funding request, including the amended increase. This pier will provide many land-based anglers the opportunity to fish in an area where there is not a lot of beach or pier access currently available.

- M) Data collection and analysis in support of single and multispecies stock assessments in Chesapeake Bay: the Chesapeake Bay Multispecies Monitoring and Assessment Program (ChesMMAP). R. Latour, C. Bonzek, VIMS. ~~\$494,928~~ **Amended to \$94,221**. This project was discussed with Item F.

Mr. Bob Allen brought up an item not on the agenda, but of interest to saltwater anglers. He asked for information on the National Fisheries Registry and how that may affect the saltwater licenses and the recreational fund. Mr. Jack Travelstead explained that it is too early in the process to make any decisions. We are still waiting on the release of the Federal Rule to know what Virginia must do to comply. Once the Federal Rule is released, Mr. Travelstead wants to meet with all the various groups to discuss how Virginia should respond. The Federal Rule will require some legislative changes. It is possible that the blanket licenses may need to change to individual licenses, and other license exemptions may need to be modified. Mr. Travelstead thought that sometime this year those meetings would take place, but the Federal Rule needed to be released first.

The next RFAB meetings for this review cycle are May 12, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. (Work Session) and 7:00 p.m. (Final Recommendations).

Vice-Chairman Rhodes adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Note: Audio files of the meeting are available at <http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/vsrfdf/index.shtm> (Choose, Current Proposals, on the left-hand menu)