

MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC) MEETING

February 1st, 2018

Members Present

Wayne France
Tommy Kellum
Richard Harding
Charles B. Johnson
John DeMaria
J. C. Hudgins

Members Present

Ernest George
Richard Green
Jim Wesson
Jackie Shannon
Don Porter Sr.
Dan Dise

VMRC/VIMS Staff

Andrew Button
Ben Stagg
Vernon Rowe
Vas Dunston
Andy Dutton
Missy Southworth
Roger Mann
Jamie Hogge

and others.

Wayne France, Chairman, opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.. Dr. Jim Wesson was sitting in for Lake Cowart.

Andrew Button, Head Conservation and Replenishment, reviewed the possible extension of the 2017 – 2018 Public Oyster Harvest Season, discussed a rotational harvest and seed planting strategy in the Potomac tributaries and reviewed the 2018 Oyster Replenishment Plan.

The first item that was discussed was the possible extension of the 2017 – 2018 Public Oyster Harvest Season. There was also a request by Committee member Don Porter Sr. to open Area's 9 & 10 in the Upper Pocomoke Sound. Mr. Button stated that he was hesitant of opening Area's 9 & 10 given that the areas have not be replenished.

Staff's recommendation was to not extend the February harvest season. Chairman France made a recommendation to extend Deep Rock's Patent Tong season for 7 days, which would extend the season into March.

A motion was made to extend the Deep Rock Harvest Season to March 9th. The motion was seconded. The motion carried 11-1.

Pocomoke/Tangier, Pultz Bar & James River Areas 1 and 3 were also discussed for a harvest season extension due to the weather in which prevented boats to leave the dock. Staff recommended that the season close on schedule. If ice prevented harvest before the season closure date, the issue could be readdressed. After discussion, Dan Dise made a motion to except

Staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Tommy Kellum. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Button presented a plan to establish a rotational harvest area in the Yeocomico, Nomini and Coan River.

After much discussion, the Committee concluded that it was not cost effective to plant a large amount of seed in those areas. The committee agreed to use the Yeocomico, Nomini and Coan Rivers as experimental plant areas but identify other areas that may have more potential from the assistance of locals that know the area. The planting time would potentially be in late March / early April timeframe. The amount to be planted would range from 5,000 – 10,000 bushels, dependent on cost. It was also recommended by the Committee to check the area after 18 months to assess the growth in the plant area, identify a plan, delay harvest in area if needed due to rate of growth and form a local work group consisting of local waterman for knowledge and input.

A motion was made to split amount of seed to plant in half and plant 5,000 bushels in Nomini. Motion was seconded by Dan Dise. The motion carried 11 – 1. Chairman France abstained from voting.

The next item addressed was the shell planting portion of the replenishment plan. There was considerable discussion on the cost and type of shell that would be planted as part of the 2018 Oyster Replenishment Plan. Alternative substrate such as stone and concrete, were addressed at length as well. Past efforts were reviewed and potential new areas for alternative substrate planting were presented.

Public Comments were heard and are part of the verbatim record.

Richard Green made a motion to approve the Oyster Replenishment Plan as presented. Don Porter Sr. seconded the motion. The motion carried 11 – 1. Tommy Kellum abstained from voting.

When asked about any other business, Ben Stagg, Director, Shellfish Aquaculture Leasing & Mapping addressed SMAC on legislative Bills that are before the General Assembly that could impact the oyster industry. The Bills are in regards to Municipalities applying for Private Oyster Ground Leases, Riparian footage and boats with dredge gear aboard while crossing an oyster sanctuary.

The date of a future SMAC meeting was discussed and may be scheduled in late spring, around March/April timeframe.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p. m..

