

# Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Tangible Structure, Facility or Educational Program

**Project Number:** 0412-18

**Date:** 25 June 2012

**Title:** R) Chincoteague Historic Bridge Fishing Pier.

The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws and regulations related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, administering the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament program, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen.

Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

**NOTE: Please read the entire scoresheet before beginning, provide comments, and then circle ( ) the appropriate score. Thank You.**

## **A. Project Purpose**

### **1. Does the project meet statutory guidelines for funding?**

This project clearly meets statutory guidelines for funding by providing improved and expanded access for saltwater fishermen.

### **2. Does the project fulfill a real need and/or provide a substantial benefit to the saltwater recreational fishery?**

This project fulfills a very real need of the saltwater recreational fishery. Access for shorebound (boatless) anglers consistently has been recognized as a growing need in surveys of outdoor recreational facilities and needs. Providing a new pier with deepwater access for saltwater fishermen will certainly be a real benefit for saltwater anglers.

### **3. Does the project provides its main, or substantial, benefits to the saltwater recreational angler?**

This project provides benefits in the town of Chincoteague, which is totally surrounded by saltwater and an area where a saltwater license is required plus an estimated 1 million-plus out-of-town visitors.

## **B. Project Analysis**

### **1. What are the project's strengths?**

This project has many strengths that make it a good candidate for MRFAB funding. First, the project is a conversion of an existing facility, which provides a tremendous amount of financial leverage for licensing funds. The MRFAB is not being requested to provide funds for land purchase. A significant portion of the construction for the pier will be in the form of “recycled” concrete pilings of the old swing bridge. The pier will be part of the downtown Robert N. Reed downtown Waterfront Park. For this reason the pier will be supported by existing facilities in the park and several planned facilities included additional parking and picnic areas. The 160-foot pier will be ADA compliant.

This pier has the potential to provide both the local populace and the many out-of-town visitors with a good fishing experience.

### **2. What are the project's weaknesses?**

Very few but the lighting costs account for 60% of the total budget and the pier is just 160 feet in length. Part of the high cost for lighting is the meshing with the Downtown Waterfront Park and not is directly angler orientated.

Due to the somewhat narrow channel and the deepwater at the end of the pier there could be some angler/boater confrontation. Signs suggesting boats remain off a prescribed distance AND signs on the pier warning anglers of their responsibility for any injury/damage to boaters and boats may be warranted.

## **C. Project Budget**

### **1. Is the budget realistic and reasonable for 1) the size and type of project proposed; 2) the number of people likely to benefit; and, 3) the area benefiting from the project considering the area's number of saltwater fishermen and license sales?**

- 1) Overall, absolutely, since no waterfront needs to be purchased, the town has many amenities nearby and some of the existing bridge structure will be recycled as part of the new pier. The cost for lighting is high for a 160-foot fishing pier.
- 2) I think the number of people that will benefit will be very large, as piers are attractions to many non-anglers. The pier surely will be well received by the angling public.
- 3) If the town would choose not to buy a pier license this structure would likely significantly increase license sales.

**2. What is the local commitment to the project (cost sharing, future management and maintenance, in-kind commitments of personnel, etc.)?**

The local commitment to this project is very strong, as the pier appears to have been in the long range plan of the Downtown Waterfront Park for ten years. Overall, the pier meshes well with the town's idea of tourism and water oriented activities.

**D. Provide an overall evaluation of the project, including a numerical ranking of the project on the "SCORE" scale provided.**

This is a good facility project for funding by the MRFAB. The project leverages recreational license dollars by "recycling" existing concrete bridge pilings already in place and converting it to recreational fishing use. The pier will be open year round and the town will own, operate, maintain and provide security. The town has the necessary permits and plans to move ahead with the project once funding is received. The project's completion date is scheduled for June 2013.

<b>SCORE (Circle One)</b>	<b>Poor</b>					<b>Fair</b>				<b>Excellent</b>	
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>10</b>