

MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 19, 2024
4:00 to 6:00 pm

Meeting held via WebEx due to winter snowstorm.

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Members Present

Jackie Shannon
Richard Harding
Cody Metcalf
Tommy Kellum
Lee Deihl
Don Porter

Members Present

J. C. Hudgins
Beverly Ludford
Ben Johnson
Dan Dize
Cory Rice

VMRC/VIMS/VDH Staff

Andrew Button
Adam Kenyon
Jamie Hogge
Commissioner Green
Deputy Commissioner Grist
Melissa Southworth, VIMS
Roger Mann, VIMS
Alex Marquardt, VIMS

Background information was available on VMRC website for the public and committee members to view.

Jackie Shannon, Chairman, opened the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Introductions:

The meeting began with introductions of those SMAC members present, via WebEx due to the winter snowstorm.

Approval of Agenda:

A Committee Member made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded. Motion passed 10-0.

Approval of August 14, 2024, Meeting Minutes:

Committee Member Hudgins made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Committee Member Ludford seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.

Presentation by VIMS (Alexandria Marquardt)

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Alex Marquardt, VIMS, provided a PowerPoint presentation explaining the impacts of rotational harvest areas and replenishment project in the Rappahannock River. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Discussion and Approval of 2025 Oyster Restoration and Replenishment Plan:

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management, explained the oyster restoration overview and the proposed 2025 Oyster Restoration and Replenishment Plan. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Seed summary:

Up to 20,000 Bushels from James River to the following areas:

- HT Seed to Coan River (@ 4,000 BU) and Yeocomico (@ 4,000 BU)
- Jail Island Seed to Rappahannock
 - Area 6 (@ 6,000 BU)
- Nansemond Ridge seed to Pocomoke Sound tributaries
 - –Area 9 (@ 4,000 BU), & Shell Rock (@ 2,000 BU) = 6,000 BU total
- Shell Bar seed to Blackberry Hangs (@ 2,000 BU)

Committee Member Dise made a motion to approve the seed planting summary as presented. The motion was seconded. Motion passed 10-0. Committee Member Kellum was not present.

Shell summary:

Recommended replenishment on the following areas

James River

- Jail Island
- Nansemond Ridge
- Cruisers

Upper Blackberry Hangs

Mobjack:

The committee recommended not to replenish Mobjack Bay due to low harvest. The committee agreed with utilizing the resources in the York River in place of Mobjack Bay.

York River:

- Timberneck Creek

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Piankatank River:

- Burtons Point

Rappahannock River:

- Area 3
- Area 5
- Area 1

Pocomoke Sound:

- Shell Rock
- Additional new Areas (Dogfish rock)

The committee recommended not to replenish Parkers but to extend the replenishment effort to the Pocomoke Sound.

Seaside Eastern Shore:

- One Seaside Project
- One Bayside Project

Alternative Substrate summary:

- Sanctuary area in the Rappahannock River.
- Harvest areas as and if needed

A Committee Member made a motion to approve the shell planting as presented with a contingency that any extra funding would go towards expanding Nansemond Ridge and Jail Island. The motion was seconded. Motion passed 10-0. Committee Member Kellum was not present.

Discussion on Oyster User Fee Transferability and Procedures:

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management, explained the current Oyster User Fee All Gear transferability and procedures. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Mr. Button requested committee input on a regulatory change granting the Commissioner the authority to make exceptions to the transferability requirements based on hardships on a case-by-case basis.

A Committee Member made a motion to approve the Oyster User Fee All Gear transferability as presented. The motion was seconded. Motion passed 10-0. Committee Member Kellum was not present.

Open Discussion

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J. C. Hudgins requested permitting the use of mechanically assisted HT's. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Many of the members agreed to add it to the agenda at the next meeting for further discussion. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Public comment summary:

Monica Shenemann spoke in favor of the use of mechanically assisted HT's. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Russ Burke proposed the ability to hire contractors to dredge fossil shell to fabricate concrete reefs from the harvested shells to benefit the stakeholders. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Jackie Shannon, Committee chair, recommended the discussion further continue at the next SMAC meeting. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Monica Shenemann spoke on behalf of Mike Brookover. Mr. Brookover will provide video and pictures to further explain mechanically assisted Hand Tongs.

Collin Huber asked about future effort in Little Wicomico. His comments are a part of the verbatim record. A committee member recommended the discussion further continue at the next SMAC meeting.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. A Committee Member seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0. Committee Member Kellum was not present.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

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