

MINUTES
SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

July 23, 2025
4:00 to 6:00 pm

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Members Present

Jackie Shannon
Richard Harding
Tommy Kellum
Lee Deihl
Mike Shackelford

Members Present

J. C. Hudgins
Cody Metcalf
Ben Johnson
Emory Rice

VMRC/VIMS/VDH Staff

Andrew Button
Adam Kenyon
Jamie Hogge
Deputy Commissioner Grist
Melissa Southworth, VIMS
Roger Mann, VIMS
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 were not able to attend to view.

Jackie Shannon, Chairman, opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Approval of Agenda:

Committee Member Hudgins made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Committee Member Deihl seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of February 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes:

Committee Member Deihl made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Committee Member Metcalf seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0-1. Committee Member Shackelford was not present during the last meeting.

Introductions:

Adam Kenyon, Chief, Shellfish Management, introduced to the committee and the public the newest member of SMAC, Michael Shackelford. The meeting began with a moment of silence for

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SMAC Member Peyton Mason, who recently passed away. The meeting continued with introductions of those SMAC members present. Due to technical difficulties with WebEx, Committee Members Dise, Ludford and Porter were unable to participate virtually during the meeting.

Adam Kenyon also reintroduced a recommendation by SMAC during a previous meeting for an exception to transfer Oyster User Fee All Gear. Chief Kenyon provided brief details that explained changing the regulation to allow the Commissioner the ability to review and grant approval on transfers with unique situations. He asked for further feedback from the committee members. The committee members are in agreeance with the proposed change. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Update on 2025 Replenishment and Restoration Projects:

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management, provided an update on the 2025 Replenishment and Restoration Projects. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Discussion on 2025 Public Oyster Harvest Season:

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management, provided background information about the Blue Ribbon Oyster Panel (BROP) Subgroup on the rotational harvest strategies. His comments are a part of the verbatim record. He presented the Subgroup recommendation to the Committee for discussion. (Attachment 1).

The advisory committee made the following recommendations for 2025-2026 Public Harvest Areas:

Rappahannock:

Committee Members agreed with a 2-year rotation, keeping Area's 7 & 8 as is, with no more than a 2-month harvest. The committee did not approve of creating a new area 10 or a 3 year rotation as suggested by the BROP subgroup.

Area 4: Oct. 14 (Half of the month)

Area 7: 2-month harvest (December & January) or leaving status quo.

Area 2: February and half of the month in March

York:

Mobjack –with the Piankatank River in rotation.

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Great Wicomico:

No rotation

Blackberry – February ½ of March 2026

James River:

No recommended changes to current management.

Recommend opening October 15 for HS

Concerns with opening October 1 for the potential of more boats working in one area

Pocomoke/Tangier Sound:

Deferred until the next meeting when Committee Members Dan Dise and Don P. can provide input.

Patent Tong Area:

Expanding the current PT area, both north and south of the Deep Rock area.

Expanding the current PT area will give additional areas to work due to not opening Area 1 in the Rappahannock.

Other Business:

J. C. Hudgins recommended the optional use of mechanically assisted Hand Tongs for public ground oyster harvesting.

A video demonstrating the operation of mechanically assisted Hand Tongs was presented.

Committee Member J. C. Hudgins made a motion to accept mechanically assisted Hand Tongs as an additional option of harvesting clean cull oysters. Committee Member Deihl seconded the motion. The motion carried, 9 - 0

Committee Member Deihl made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Committee Member J. C. Hudgins seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

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