

MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

August 19, 2025
4:00 to 6:00 pm

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Members Present

Jackie Shannon
Richard Harding
Tommy Kellum
Lee Deihl
Beverly Ludford
Don Porter via Teams

Members Present

J. C. Hudgins
Cody Metcalf via Teams
Ben Johnson
Emory Rice
Dan Dise via Teams

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, Chairwoman, opened the meeting at 4:01 p.m. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

After Chairwoman Shannon opened the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Grist made a friendly reminder of the level of professionalism that the SMAC members are expected to uphold while serving on the committee. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Introductions:

Jackie Shannon, Chairwoman began with introductions of the Committee Members present via Microsoft Teams as well as those present in person. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Approval of Agenda:

Committee Member Ludford made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. A Committee Member seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

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MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Approval of July 23, 2025, Meeting Minutes:

A Committee Member made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. A Committee Member seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

Discussion on 2025-2026 Public Oyster Harvest Season:

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management, reviewed the 2025 – 2026 Public Oyster Harvest recommendations provided by the SMAC members from the previous meeting. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

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

Patent Tong Area:

The committee discussed concurrent seasons for the new Chesapeake Bay Patent Tong area and Deep Rock, from November 1 through the end of March 2026.

J. C. Hudgins made a motion for a concurrent season to open the Chesapeake Bay PT area and Deep Rock area from November 1 until the end of March. Member Deihl seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

Member Ben Johnson recommended looking into opening Wreck Shoals in the James River for HT harvest for the month of May 2026. Mr. Button stated that there would be a separate regulatory change area which would require proper notification of the change prior to being presented before the Commission Members.

Member Johnson provided an explanation for the reasons for opening Wreck Shoals area for harvest. His comments are part of the verbatim record.

Member Johnson made a motion to revisit the possibility of opening Wreck Shoals in James River for HT for the month of May 2026. A Committee Member seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

Member Harding recommended opening White Shoal area for HT clean cull harvest. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Member Kellum recommended opening White Shoal area for HT clean cull harvest from October 1 through October 31 then opening to HS beginning November 1. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

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MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

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. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Member Harding recommended leaving the season as is. Status quo for Areas 7 & 8. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Member Kellum recommended the ability to close areas that may need replenishment efforts if it is warranted. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Member Rice recommended opening Area 7 in December and Area 8 in January, one month open for each. Member Harding seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

York:

Mobjack Bay with the Piankatank River in rotation.

Great Wicomico:

Member Rice recommended opening Great Wicomico Area 1(HS) for the month of December and open Great Wicomico Area 2 (HS) open for the month of January. Member Harding seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

Blackberry Hangs will be open for harvest for the month of February and the first half of March 2026.

Member Rice recommended the closure of the Coan River and the Yeocomico due to recent seed plants. A member seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

Member Deihl made a motion to close Coan and Yeocomico River. Member ?? seconded. Motion passed 8-0.

Pocomoke/Tangier Sound:

Member Dise made a motion to accept the recommendation for the last half of Tangier Thoroughfare for the month of November, 3 month regular season for Pocomoke Area 1 and Tangier Area 1, the last half of February for Pocomoke Area 10 for HS with a follow-up discussion for potential extension for the month of March in a January SMAC meeting. Member Porter seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

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MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

James River:

There were no recommended changes to current management.

Public Comment:

James Greene recommended raising the vessel limit for HT from 2 limits on a vessel to 3 limits per vessel. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Member Deihl made a motion to revisit the vessel limit for HT harvest in a January 2026 SMAC meeting. Committee Member Hudgins seconded the motion. Motion passed 8-0.

Member Kellum made a motion to mirror 2024-2025 James River Areas 1, 2, & 3 seasons to extend the HS season through the month of March and White Shoal open for HT the month of October and March. A Committee Member seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

Member Ludford made a motion to submit the 2025-2026 Public Oyster Harvest seasons to the Commission Meeting. A Committee Member seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

Mr. James Greene also asked if the 2024-2025 Public Oyster Seed harvest quota was met. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Other Business:

Committee Member Porter brought up the Oyster User Fee All Gear transferability. Mr. Button stated that the Oyster User Fee All Gear will be discussed at the upcoming October Commission meeting to allow the Commissioner or a designee to make special circumstances to transferability.

Member J. C. Hudgins asked if the optional use of mechanically assisted Hand Tongs for public ground oyster harvesting for clean cull areas only will be presented to the Commission. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Chief Kenyon stated that the optional use of mechanically assisted Hand Tongs for public ground oyster harvesting for clean cull areas only will be presented during an upcoming Commission Meeting. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Member Kellum asked if there is a radical change from the outcome of the BROP for the seasons approved by SMAC, will it be presented to SMAC prior to the Commission meeting. Chief Kenyon stated that the recommendations from BROP will be posted on the MRC website as public record and both recommendations will be presented during the September 23, 2025, Commission Meeting. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

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SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

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

The meeting was adjourned.

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