

Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

March 23, 2020 from 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Decisional

- **Approve Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River as 11th tributary for oyster restoration**
 - **Background:** At the January 2020 GIT winter meeting, Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) announced that \$1.5 million would be used for oyster restoration in Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River. The funding allows for full construction of 19.5 acres at the level of 100% Currently Restorable Oyster Habitat (CROH). The methodology for setting restoration targets based on CROH is consistent with the previous 10 tributaries selected.
 - The VA Interagency Oyster Team was supportive of restoration in the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River, as the project has dedicated resources and will be accomplished without slowing down progress to restore the other 5 tributaries selected in VA. The group received no negative feedback, and remains focused on achieving the outcome by 2025 while celebrating progress in going beyond the 10 tributaries.
 - **Recommendation:** endorse the selection of Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River for oyster restoration as the 11th tributary in support of the 2014 Agreement oyster outcome, by recommendation of VMRC and workgroup partners.
 - **Vote Outcome:** approved
 - **Actions:** selection included in the updated 2020-2021 Oyster Logic & Action Plan and Management Strategy, approved by Management Board in March 2020

Informational

- **Approved 2020-21 logic & action plans and management strategy**
 - We received few comments during the public and signatory review period. Based on comments, we made minor revisions to forage and to oyster documents including the Elizabeth River tributary selection (above).
 - The blue crab action plan focuses on science needs identified by CBSAC and the Executive Committee, the forage plan focuses on developing indicators and communicating the importance of forage, and the oyster plan focuses on continued restoration and monitoring in all selected tributaries.
 - As a reminder, the fish habitat outcome plan was approved in November 2019, and largely focuses on conducting a regional fish habitat assessment.

- The Chesapeake Bay Program Management Board voted to approve updated plans for forage, blue crab, and oyster outcomes, completing the Fisheries GITs adaptive management review. See all [approved documents](#) for detailed actions planned over the next 2 years.

➤ **Finance and Investment Forum update**

- The Chesapeake Bay Program hosted a Finance and Investment Forum, which aimed to connect GIT leadership with finance professionals as a shared learning opportunity. Participants learned conservation finance basics and gathered in breakout groups to brainstorm ideas for how to attract private capital in support of conservation and restoration. The Forum focused on oysters as a case study for how private sector finance might open doors to achieve shared goals, e.g. nutrient credit trading for oyster restoration and aquaculture. Finance coaches are also available for 10 hours of follow-up consultations after.
 - Oyster breakout group participants included representatives: Mark Bryer, The Nature Conservancy; Jason Ruth, Harris Seafood; Gabe Cohee, MD DNR Center for Restoration Finance; Tim Male, Environmental Policy Innovation Center; Erik Michelsen, Anne Arundel County Watershed Protection and Restoration Center; Stephan Abel, oyster hatchery (ORP); and Dan Nees, University of Maryland Center for Global Sustainability
 - Reach out to Sean, Bruce or Morgan if you have interest in participating on follow-up discussions with any of these finance coaches.
- See [resources and materials from the Forum](#) on the Chesapeake Bay Program calendar.

➤ **Member Updates**

- Updates all around on agencies responses to COVID-19 and work status
 - Seafood sales are dropping and impacts to crabbing season
- USACE oyster restoration budget approved for \$5M, focus in Tred Avon this year
- Marty attended a meeting on behalf of PRFC constituents to learn about PFAS “forever chemicals” concerns in the St. Mary’s from watermen, MDE assured a rapid response in testing/monitoring
- Connections for Fishery Resources Grant Program run by VIMS – interest in studying aquaculture impacts to SAV
- Telemetry array update
 - Still working to determine what can be done with existing resources, scaling back to 3 gates – Bay Mouth, Cedar Point, Bay Bridge
 - Options for UMCES sharing receivers to DNR for Bay Bridge
 - Working out budgets for Bay Mouth maintenance with VIMS and Chesapeake Scientific

- Invasive Catfish management strategy will be sent to Ex Comm for review by late March to early April
- Following SRS requests, R training will be offered May 4-5 (online) by EPA for GIT and workgroup members, also anticipate offering ModelBuilder training