

MEETING MINUTES

Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board

Monday, June 8, 2026

2:00 pm

Members Present

Stan Gold
Wayne Jessie Jr.
Meriwether Payne
Charles Randolph
Ed Rhodes
Charles Southall
Wally Veale
Maggie Whittemore

Staff Present

Gloria Hatcher
Alicia Nelson
Ethan Simpson
Hunter Smith

Board Members Absent

J.T. Holland

Others Present

Mary Bradley
Wesley Brown
Bernadette La Casse
Susanna Musick
Todd Winstead

Meeting minutes were recorded by Alicia Nelson. A recording of the meetings and presentations are available.

Agenda:

I. Introduction, Announcements, Comments.

Ms. Nelson thanked everyone for attending the meeting and updated the board on projects that were withdrawn or delayed until the next meeting.

II. Status of Fund.

Gloria Hatcher reviewed the status of the fund and noted that there was just over \$3.9 million available for projects.

III. Review of Minutes from the September 2025 RFAB Meeting.

Mr. Randolph made a motion to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Gold. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Fishing event applications:

- A) 0426-01 2027 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursion. T.B. Butch Pierce; Great Bridge Fisherman's Association. **\$5,200.**

Because the applicant was not available to speak on this item, it will be heard at the next RFAB meeting.

- B) 0426-02 2027 ESVAC Children's Fishing and Conservation Educational Outings (4 events). Robert Mucha, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. **\$4,000.**

Todd Winstead presented the ESVAC request for 2027. He described the previous success of the event and the plans for 2027. Ms. Payne asked about the geographic distribution of events, and Mr. Mucha described the locations of the scheduled events. Mr. Randolph asked about the cost per child, and Mr. Winstead noted that it was about \$41 per child.

- C) 0426-03 2027 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic and Kiwanis Fishing Clinic. Wesley Brown, Capital District Kiwanis Club. **\$11,000.**

Wes Brown described the 2027 plans to the board members and invited everyone to attend the 2026 event in July. The annual schedule now includes two events, one at Clontz Park in Smithfield and the larger event at Buckroe Fishing Pier in Hampton.

- D) 0426-04 2027 Sunshine Program. Steve York, Norfolk Angler's Club. **\$13,375.**

Because the applicant was not available to speak on this item, it will be heard at the next RFAB meeting.

- E) 0426-05 2027 Virginia Beach Anglers Club/Seton Youth Shelter Children's Fishing Trip. Rich Califf, Virginia Beach Anglers Club. **\$3,000.**

Mary Bradley spoke on behalf of the Virginia Beach Anglers Club. Ms. Bradley described the annual project benefitting children participating in the Seton Youth Program. She noted that they could not provide pictures due to the Seton Shelter rules, but described the fishing trip to the board.

- F) 0426-06 Hooked on the Future. Chris Schramm, Chasing Freedom. **\$12,743.**

Because the applicant was not available to speak on this item, it will be heard at the next RFAB meeting.

- G) 0426-07 2026 Event Schedule. Micheal Lyons, Fishing for the Mission 22. **\$6,486.**

Because the applicant was not available to speak on this item, it will be heard at the next RFAB meeting.

Stan Gold motioned to recommend approval of items B, C, and E as a block. The motion was seconded by Wayne Jessie. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Other Projects:

- H) 0426-08 MLC Public Access Waterfront Enhancement and Community Saltwater Learn to Fish Program (SL2F). Bernadette La Casse, Mathews Land Conservancy. **\$30,600.**

Ms. La Casse presented her combined request for the Saltwater Learn to Fish Program and bulkhead repair at William's Wharf Landing. Mr. Rhodes asked her to provide schematics for the bulkhead repair for the next meeting.

- I) 0426-09 Virginia Game Fish Tagging 2027. S. Musick (VIMS), M. Hargis (VMRC). **\$103,105**

Susanna Music presented the 2027 request for the Virginia Gamefish Tagging Program. She noted the popularity and success of the program over many years and plans on continuing for the next grant year. Mr. Rhodes noted that this program was a clear benefit to recreational anglers.

- J) 0426-10 Virginia Saltwater Tournament – Program Sustainability Request. Matt Hargis, VMRC. **\$133,552.**

Alicia Nelson presented the project noting that Matt Hargis was not available. She described the extensive work that Mr. Hargis had done with the project over the last year and the budget shortfall that had developed based on the fact that the budget has been level since 2017. In the last 5 years, both materials and shipping costs have increased significantly. This proposal includes funding for materials, shipping, and program and staff support for continuing the program in addition to funding to update the Saltwater Anglers Guide.

Ms. Nelson requested that this project as well as the following staff requests be considered at this meeting to better align with the Commission and state budget schedule. Mr. Randolph motioned to recommend the funding at \$140,000 (rather than the requested 133,552). The motion was seconded by Ms. Payne. The motion passed unanimously.

- K) 0426-11 Youth Angler Citation Program. Matt Hargis, VMRC. **\$13,500.**

Alicia Nelson presented the request. She noted that last year, the program received funding to initiate a youth angler citation program, and that it was very successful, with over 50 youth citations to date. Funding is requested to move forward with the program for a second year.

Mr. Randolph noted that this project and the one preceding it were both tangible benefits to the recreational angler from the program. He motioned to approve the project at a rounded amount of \$15,500. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jessie. The motion passed unanimously.

- L) 0426-12 Artificial Reef Upcoming Program and Outreach Requests. Alicia Nelson, VMRC. **\$424,287.**

Alicia Nelson and Hunter Smith proposed their project. Requested funds would be used for deployment of material that has been recently offered for donation from Harrison Grear. If funded, that material would likely go to the York Spit Reef, depending on RFP results. In addition, the reef program asked for funding for staff support, funding for a future similarly sized deployment, and an outreach program modeled after the trail quest program recently launched by DWR.

Mr. Randolph praised the reef program and noted that it was another clear benefit to recreational anglers. Ms. Payne asked about material off of the eastern shore reefs, and Ms. Nelson and Mr. Smith described the difficulties and expense surrounding getting material to those sites.

Mr. Randolph motioned to recommend funding the project at an increased rate of \$600,000; the motion was seconded by Ms. Payne. The motion passed unanimously.

- M) 0426-13 Federal Assistance (Sportfish Restoration) Matching Funds, Federal FY 2027 E. Simpson. **\$10,043.**

Ethan Simpson introduced himself as the newly appointed Deputy Chief of Fisheries Management and described the FFY27 funding request. He noted that due to previously unspent funds, the total request was a typical year. He noted that the requested funds, combined with the unused funds, will be used to match the federal sportfish restoration funds for a suite of research programs, many of which meet the requirements of fisheries management plans developed by the ASMFC.

- N) 0426-14 Planning the Renovation of Coles Point Boater Access, Westmoreland County. John Kirk, DWR. **\$100,000.**

Becky Gywnn presented the proposal to plan the renovation of Coles Point. She explained that the board had previously recommended funding for the purchase of the Cole's Point property, and that had been completed in late 2025. She noted the need for planning for a large scale renovation due to deterioration of the existing ramps and associated piers.

In addition, Ms. Gywnn went over a brief history of license fee increases with the DWR and funding sources for grants.

- O) ~~0426-15 New Saltwater Fishing Access, Gardy's Millpond, Westmoreland County. John Kirk, DWR. **\$130,875.** *withdrawn*~~

- P) 0426-16 Planning the Renovation of Gloucester Point Boater Access, Gloucester County. John Kirk, DWR. **\$41,019.**

Ms. Gwynn also presented the renovation plans for the Gloucester Point location. She described the proposal to develop plans and secure permits to renovate the DWR courtesy access piers, dual lane ramp, and parking area of the Gloucester Point Boating Access Site.

VI. Adjourn.

Mr. Randolph motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Gold seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 3:42 p.m.