

MINUTES

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC) MEETING

August 15, 2018

Members Present

Wayne France
Tommy Kellum
Charles B. Johnson
John DeMaria
Jackie Shannon
Cody Metcalf

Members Present

Ernest George
S. Lake Cowart
Richard Harding
J. C. Hudgins
Kevin Wade
Don Porter

VMRC/VIMS Staff

Andrew Button
Ben Stagg
Pat Geer
Nancy McElligott
Missy Southworth
Jamie Hogge
Bryant Stevens

and others.

Wayne France, Chairman, opened the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

Andrew Button, Head Conservation and Replenishment, updated the members on the status of the recent fresh water mortality of oysters, discussed the current James River Seed Quota and welcomed discussion and input on potential changes for the 2018-2019 season, preliminary discussion on the establishment of the 2018-2019 areas of public harvest, public oyster harvest seasons and management measures. Mr. Button's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Mr. Button discussed in detail the 2017/2018 James River Seed Quota and the discrepancies in seed harvest totals between the call in totals and Mandatory Reporting totals. He also showed detailed graphs that captured several years of harvest data in areas of the James River.

The concerns about the amount of James River Seed that is being transported out of state and not staying in Virginia, which were expressed during the July meeting by Committee Members, was discussed in detail. Mr. Button proposed to amend 4 VAC 20-720-10 ET SEQ to allow the Commissioner to stop granting out of state seed transport permits described in §28.2-546 Code of Virginia, this would allow the Commission to limit the amount of 'Out of State' transport permit that are issued for James River seed. This would be a conservation measure to protect the James River Seed Areas. Mr. Button also proposed lowering the James River Seed Harvest limit from 120,000 to 100,000 bushels.

There were four (4) people present that spoke in opposition of lowering the James River Seed Quota to 100,000 bushels. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Committee Member Tommy Kellum made a motion in favor of the proposed amendment to VAC 20-720-10 ET SEQ. , but requested that the James River Seed Quota remain 120,000 bushels. Committee Member Porter seconded the motion. The vote carried 11-0. Chair voted yes.

Mr. Button explained in detail the proposed 2018/2019 areas of public harvest, public oyster harvest seasons and management measures, which included opening the Patent Tong Season in Areas 1 and 3 in the James River, Area 5 in the Rappahannock, and PG9 in the Pocomoke Sound the first two (2) weeks in October then opening the areas the last two (2) weeks for Hand Scrape harvest. There were many present that spoke in opposition to delaying the opening of the hand scrape season to anything other than an October 1st opening. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Mr. Button also proposed the following bushel limits: 8 bushel limit for HS/DR; 10 bushel limit for PT and 12 bushel limit for HT/By Hand.

The proposed 2018/2019 areas of public harvest and public oyster harvest seasons, that was presented during the July meeting as option # 2, was the most favored by the Committee Members present.

Committee Member Kellum was in favor of option #2 but recommended modifications to the harvest seasons for Great Wicomico and Blackberry Hangs, which would open Hand Scrape harvest for the months of December and February only. Harvest in those areas will be closed for the month of January. The other proposed modification was opening Pocomoke Sound (PG9) in the month of November instead of January and opening additional areas in the Yeocomico and the Coan River for Hand Tong harvest. The areas that may be opened for harvest in the Coan River will not include areas that were recently planted with shell.

Committee Member Hudgins made a motion to accept option #2 with the added proposed changes. Committee Member Ernest George seconded the motion. The vote carried 10-1. Committee Member Jackie Shannon abstained. Chair voted yes.

Mr. Button advised that he will still present the proposal that was denied by the Committee as well as option #2 as presented to the S.M.A.C members to allow the Commission make a decision. Committee Members made a vote. Johnson made motion to accept the proposal that Mr. Button presented. Committee Member DeMaria seconded the motion. The final vote 2-9. The vote did not pass. Chair voted no.

Wayne France, Chairman, requested Mr. Button discuss potentially opening the seed areas in the Yeocomico and the Coan River for harvest. The areas that will be open in the Coan River would not include the area recently planted this year. Chairman France requested that those areas are added to proposal #2. Committee Member Kellum made a motion to accept the proposed additions to proposal #2. The vote was seconded. The vote carried 11-0. Chair voted yes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p. m.