

OYSTER/CLAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
November 15, 2017
PRFC Office, Colonial Beach, VA

Members Present

Tucker Brown (MD) - Chairman
Paul Springer, Jr. (MD) – proxy for Paul Springer, III
Roger L. Hill (VA)
Elgin Nininger (VA) – proxy for William Rice, Jr.
Greg Walsh (VA) – proxy for Michael Lightfoot

Members Absent

Joseph W. Howeth, II – (VA)
Craig Kelly – (MD)

PRFC Commissioners

Wayne France

Support Staff Present

Ellen Cosby
Marty Gary

Technical Advisors

None

Others Present: Bill Kilinski, Matthew Fowler, Monica Schenemann and others who did not sign in.

Chairman Tucker Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and introductions were made.

2017-2018 Oyster Harvest Season Parameters

Ellen Cosby explained the season parameters for bushel limits, time limits, and the new daily call-in requirement. The Jones Shore and Lower Cedar Point restrictions were also reviewed.

Preliminary Fall Oyster Survey Results

Mrs. Cosby presented the preliminary Fall Survey results by reviewing what was observed on each bar. Mortality estimates were available for the lower river on the Maryland side. And they were compared to the mortality estimates from last year. Marty Gary presented results from the day he was on the survey, which included Ragged Point, Sheepshead, Huggins and Knotts Hollow.

Consideration of Opening Pascahanna Bar

A discussion was held regarding the opening of Pascahanna Bar at an earlier date than planned. The Fall Survey results showed approximately 80 percent market oysters and 20 percent small oysters on Pascahanna at this time. Chairman Brown noted that this is an acceptable amount of market oysters and that they should be taken up before anything happens to them, such as a freshet.

A motion was made by Roger Hill, seconded by Elgin Nininger, to recommend opening Pascahanna Bar to hand tonging from December 15 to January 15, Monday through Friday, from sunrise to 3:00 pm, with an 8 bushel limit per licensee, and 16 bushels per vessel. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Request to Open an Area Above the Rt. 301 Bridge to Hand Scraping

A lengthy discussion was held on the request by Bobby Boarman at the last meeting to consider opening an area above the Rt. 301 Bridge to Hand Scraping. It was noted by Chairman Brown that there was a recent planting of diploid spat on shell on Horseshoe Bar that would have to be

protected, and perhaps buoyed off. The discussion centered around the same bars that were open previously, Popes and Horseshoe, but there was interest in expanding the open area down to the Rt. 301 Bridge and including the Virginia side of the river as well. Beacon Bar was identified as a hand tonging site, and it was not included in this proposal.

A motion was made by Paul Springer, Jr., seconded by Mr. Nininger, to recommend opening an area above the Rt. 301 Bridge from the Maryland shoreline to and including Horseshoe Bar (excluding the 2017 planting site) and extending across the river to the Virginia shore at the northern boundary of Martis Lump, then all of the area downstream to the Rt. 301 Bridge to hand scraping during the month of March 2018, Monday through Friday, from sunrise to 3:00 pm, with an 8 bushel limit per licensee, and 16 bushels per vessel. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Consideration Sheepshead Bar as an OMR Designated Bar

Mr. Gary noted that this item had been tabled at the last meeting, so it was being brought up again. He reported that when they checked Sheepshead during the Fall Survey, there was a hard bottom, but not a lot of shell and no live oysters. He consulted with the Maryland scientists on board, and their consensus was that Sheepshead would be a good bar for the OMR program. Further discussion followed by committee members.

A motion was made by Paul Springer, Jr., seconded by Roger Hill, to recommend designating Sheepshead as an OMR bar, and plant it pending available funding; it should stay open as a public oyster bar until planted by the OMR. The motion passed (4-0-1), with Mr. Nininger abstaining.

Oyster Strategic Planning Panel (OSPP) Update

Mr. Gary stated that Commissioners Wayne France and Ida Hall were now appointed to the OSPP, and that Commissioner France would serve as co-chair with Commissioner Blazer. Their next meeting is scheduled for November 28, 2017 from 3:00 to 6:00 pm.

New Business

For discussion at the next meeting of the OCAC: 1) conduct a discussion regarding the opening of areas above the current hand scrape line to hand scraping; 2) discuss the status of Bluff Point Lumps sanctuary.

Adjourn

This meeting of the Oyster/Clam Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John F. Tucker Brown, Chairman