

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION
(Proceedings of Meeting)
Colonial Beach, Virginia
September 13, 1974 =

PRESENT - MEMBERS: Commissioners James E. Douglas, Jr., John T. Parran, Jr., William P. Hunt, Milton T. Hickman. (Absent: Roy E. Julie, Jr., Richard E. Lankford)

OFFICERS: K. Thomas Everngam, Legal Officer; Robert M. Norris, Jr., Executive Secretary; Kirby A. Carpenter, Assistant Executive Secretary.

VISITORS: Secretary James B. Coulter, Deputy Secretary Louis N. Phipps, Jr. and Robert J. Rubelmann, of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Edward S. Digges; Elgin A. Dunnington, of the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory; Dr. Jackson Davis, of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science; Major Paul C. Wentzell and Captain Harvey C. Cook, of the Maryland Marine Police; S. M. Rogers, of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission; James W. Dutton, President of the Charles County Watermen's Association, John R. Scott, Sr., Willard W. Elliott, William Bowie, Sr. and James Richardson.

PRESS: Isobel Gough, Richmond News Leader; Charles Henderson and Jackie Shinn, of the Westmoreland News; Jerry Lazarus, of the Richmond Times Dispatch and Jack Kershaw, of the Times-Crescent.

At 9:30 a.m. the meeting was called to order by Mr. James E. Douglas, Jr., Chairman, who explained that since two members from Maryland were absent that no quorum existed. However, he said the members present would go through the agenda, discuss the issues and take action on items on which the Chairman has the authority to rule.

The Minutes of the last meeting were examined. No corrections were noted.

Mr. Norris gave the final report on the repletion program for 1974, as follows:

SEED - Between 12/24/73 and 3/23/74, there were 36,366 bu. of James River seed planted on four (4) upriver bars (Gum Bar, Swan Point, Cedar Point and Bluff Point) at a total cost of \$102,586.09, of which \$100,000 was EDA Grant Funds.

SHELL - Between 4/19/74 and 7/1/74 there were 473,977 bu. of fresh shells planted on Jones Shore, Thicket Point and Great Neck at a cost of \$115,984.38; between 5/1/74 and 5/8/74 there were 804,190 bu. of reef shells planted on Jones Shore and Great Neck at a cost of \$150,243.91 (\$150,000 of which was paid with Federal PL 88-309-4b money). Thus total shell plantings were 1,278,167 bu. costing \$266,288.29. The total Repletion Program for 1974 cost \$368,814.38 (\$250,000 Federal money supplied by Maryland and Virginia - \$125,000 each).

A report on the status of application for grant-in-aid funds was presented by Mr. Norris. He noted the federal money as previously referred to in the repletion program report, explaining that money had been borrowed to finance this operation since the federal money had been assured, and that all but \$75,000 had been repaid to the banks (Maryland portion being \$75,000 of the PL 88-309-4b money has not yet been received). He then reported that of the original application of September 1973 for \$381,897 to the Virginia Office of Emergency Service for replacement of capital funds invested in 1969, 1970, 1971 in seed oysters subsequently lost because of AGNES, that \$86,900 had been approved but we are still awaiting notice of the effective date of reimbursement. A remainder of \$281,100 will be re-applied for, and we are optimistic about its final approval.

A written report of salary ranges for comparable positions in Maryland, Virginia and PRFC was presented. Mr. Douglas appointed Mr. Parran, as Chairman, and Mr. Hickman as a committee of two to study and report at the next meeting any action which should be taken.

Mr. Douglas gave a short outline of events, which preceded the appointment of a committee to study handscraping regulations. He then called for a report of committee activities. Mr. K. Thomas Everngam reported that the committee had held its first meeting. The committee is as follows: K. Thomas Everngam, Paul C. Wentzell, Harvey C. Cook, E. Ralph Dameron, Elgin A. Dunnington, Jackson Davis, John W. Allen, Jr., Richard E. Chatham, John F. (Tucker) Brown, James W. Dutton, Harry T. Stine, Robert M. Norris, Jr., A. C. Carpenter. At said meeting, no

affirmative action had been taken, because no real sense of unanimity had yet developed. He felt that this committee should meet again after the scientific report, presently being prepared by CBL & VIMS, has been submitted. Mr. Douglas concurred in this and instructed the committee to meet after the said scientific report was completed. Mr. Dutton, President of Charles County Watermen's Association, and member of this committee, said his Association felt that handscraping should not be begun this season because of the shortage of oysters.

A report on the building dedication plaque was omitted, since the plaque committee had been given the authority to proceed to completion.

It was reported that work is proceeding to set up an effective 2-way radio communication system between this office and the patrol boats in the river.

Disbursements for the months of June, July and August 1974 were reviewed and will be submitted for approval at the next meeting.

The purchase and installation of blinds or shades for the windows and door panels was approved. It was decided that landscaping the office lot has a low priority, and action was tabled. In reference to essential modifications of the year around air-conditioning system and repairs to the roof, the Executive Secretary was authorized to proceed with work and forward an itemized statement of the costs to the Legal Officer for his recommendations and any action.

Mr. Douglas noted that a written report on the Summer 1974 Survey of Potomac River Oyster Bars had been submitted and would be filed with other Commission records. He then asked for a short oral report by a representative of CBL and/or VIMS. Mr. Dunnington spoke to the report and noted some highlights as follows:

1. There are far fewer oysters in the river than at any time in the recent past.
2. Siltation in the upper river areas has not been a major problem.
3. Salinity is just now returning to pre-AGNES normality.
4. Some set is showing up on Jones Shore (320 spat/bu. on fresh shell and 220 spat/bu. on reef shell) but these numbers should be higher when the spring survey is taken.
5. No set was observed up river, but the oysters that were examined ranged from fair to good condition for this time of year.
6. In several places the oysters could be "stripped", thus indicating that they could yet spawn this year.

The Executive Secretary was requested to prepare a resolution of appreciation for former Commissioners Hutt and Sisson and to extend to them an invitation to attend the next meeting.


Due to the uncertainty about the status of EDT vs EST, the present policy allowing tonging from sunrise to 4:00 p.m. (EDT) would remain in effect, unless EST was re-instated, in which case the cutoff time would be moved to 3:00 p.m. (EST) after a telephone poll of each Commissioner. The clearing of the cull boards 15 minutes after cutoff time would be in effect in either case.

Mr. John T. Parran, Jr. was requested to represent this Commission at the Annual Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting to be held the first week in October. Mr. Parran accepted and was authorized to attend.

After a considerable amount of discussion and exchange of ideas concerning "policy" and a crab violation, and upon the advice of the Legal Officer, Mr. Douglas said that the matter of the violation was a matter properly dealt with through the court system and the "policy" matters would be taken under consideration.

The annual law enforcement meeting was set for September 27, 1974.

The next meeting of the Commission was set for November 1, 1974 at 9:30 a.m. in Colonial Beach, Virginia. (Date subsequently changed to December 6, 1974). The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.


James E. Douglas, Jr., Chairman


Milton T. Hickman, Secretary