

December 5, 1975

La Plata, Maryland

PRESENT - MEMBERS: John T. Parran, Jr., Chairman, Robert J. Rubelmann, Richard E. Lankford, James E. Douglas, Jr., Milton T. Hickman, William P. Hunt.

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

VISITORS: Mike Shepherd, Department of State Planning (for Southern Maryland); Gus Berlitz, Maryland Representative of ASMF; Capt. Harvey C. Cook, Maryland Natural Resources Police; Oren Mears, VMRC; William J. Chandler, House-District of Columbia Committee, Legislative Staff; Bruce Wood, Representing Congressman Gilbert Gude; W. L. Bowie, Waterman; James W. Dutton, Waterman; Dr. Jackson Davis and Dexter Haven, VIMS; Elgin A. Dunnington, CBL; and William Mason, ICPRB.

PRESS: Jack Kershaw, Enterprise; Cyndi Young, Free Lance-Star; Bill Fletcher, Maryland Independent.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman John T. Parran, Jr. He asked for consideration of the Minutes of the August 15, 1975 meeting, saying that mimeographed copies had been previously submitted to each Commissioner. The following motion was made and seconded:

"That the Minutes of the August 15, 1975 meeting, as submitted, be approved." The motion was approved.

Mr. Parran asked for old business. Mr. Norris said that the Economic Development Grant of \$281,100 had been received recently through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and that the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) had immediately paid C. J. Langenfelder & Son for the reef shells planted in the Potomac River in July.

Dr. Jackson Davis presented a report titled "Options for Leasing Oyster Bottoms in the Potomac River" in draft form. This report represents one portion of the Short and Long Range Management Program for the Potomac River Fishery. Mr. Parran received the report thanking Dr. Davis and Mr. Haven, of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and Mr. Dunnington, of the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, and asked that they continue preparing a final complete report. Mr. Parran then asked if there was any discussion or questions on the proposals. Mr. Dutton related recent articles in local newspapers saying that 'watermen' should obtain first option on leases. Dr. Davis said that concept was listed among four options for issuing leases. Mr. Parran reminded everyone that the concept of leasing was only one option for management of the Potomac oyster fishery which the advisors had developed in detail.

There being no other old business, new business was declared in order.

Itemized disbursements for the months of August, September, October and November 1975, which had been circulated to the Commissioners several days prior to the meeting, were considered. August totaled \$8,283.02; September \$6,187.51; October \$9,048.31; and November \$286,233.76 including \$281,133.76 for reef shells. The following motion was made and seconded:

"That the disbursements as listed and itemized totaling \$309,752.60 for the months of August, September, October and November 1975 be approved." The motion was approved.

A statement of funds, as of December 4, 1975, was presented, which showed \$7,620.59 in checking account in the Bank of Westmoreland, Inc. plus a \$17,000 C/D in the Bank of Southern Maryland and a \$14,000 O/D each in the Maryland Bank and Trust Co. and The Peoples Bank of Montross, for a total of \$52,620.59 cash on hand and in the banks.

Mr. Norris presented a report on oyster production for the '75-76 season. This report covered the season from Oct. 1 thru Nov. 8, 1975. It showed an increase from 6,712 bushels for the same period last season to 9,039 bushels this season, with the corresponding increase in oyster inspection tax. The number of tongers also increased this season over last, from 175 to 205.

Mr. Dexter Haven reported on a recent survey of the '75 shell planting areas. He said there was a light to moderate set in the lower river. The number of spat per bushel ranged from 40 on Jones Shore to 280 on Cornfield. He also reported that spat counts of 28 per bu. were observed on Sheepshead; and Capt. W. A. Wicker, VMRC, reported a set on Ragged Point estimated at 300 spat per bushel.

Mr. Elgin Dunnington remarked that although the intensity of this year's set is lower than 1974, the much larger areas covered may possibly be better for the river in terms of numbers of live oysters on the bottom. He then reported that the brood stock reserves in the upper river are in good condition. He also reported that since the last Commission meeting the annual summer survey was conducted. The most striking feature was the general scarcity of oysters and the absence of small oysters, except near the mouth of the river.

Mr. Dutton expressed concern for the general welfare of the oyster bars, questioning if the river, or portions of it, should be closed before the end of the season. A general discussion followed. Chairman Parran requested that he be kept informed of the conditions of the river and if conditions warrant any action, a special meeting will be called to determine the proper action.

Mr. Lankford and Mr. Hunt were appointed by the Chairman to present, at the next meeting, a slate of candidates for officers of the Commission for 1976.

The following motion was made and seconded:

"That the Speed-O-Print Model 900 Electrostatic Copier purchased in 1969 be declared surplus." The motion was approved.

At Mr. Norris' request, a Repletion Committee for 1976 was named by the Chairman. A representative from each of the following organizations was asked to serve: Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, (the foregoing members to act in an advisory capacity), Fisheries Administration of Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Repletion Department of Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Maryland Marine Police, Virginia Marine Police, two watermen from Virginia, chairman from the Charles and St. Mary's Counties Oyster Tongs Committee, Robert M. Norris, Jr. and A. C. Carpenter.

Mr. Dutton requested that the Commission consider modifying its license-tag system and suggested a system similar to Maryland, where only one tag number is used for all fishing devices. He then repeated his request for clarification of the status of the Maryland laws relating to the Potomac, in light of Maryland's recent repeal and re-enactment of all fisheries laws. Mr. Parran asked Mr. Everngam to report on this inquiry at the next meeting.

Mr. Parran introduced Messrs. Gus Berlitz, of the Maryland Fisheries Administration; Mike Shepherd, of the Maryland Department of State Planning; William Chandler, House District of Columbia Committee Legislative Staff; Bruce Wood, from Congressman Gude's staff; Bill Mason, of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin; and Oren Mears, Supervisor of the Virginia Marine Resources Law Enforcement.

Mr. Norris announced that the Second Annual Del-Mar-Va Commercial Fishermen's Trade Exposition would be held January 30, 31 and February 1, 1976 at Ocean City, Maryland.

The date of the next meeting was set for March 5, 1976 at Colonial Beach, Virginia at 9:30 a.m.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved at 10:30 a.m.



John T. Parran, Jr.  
Chairman



Robert J. Rubelmann  
Secretary