

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION
HEATHSVILLE, VIRGINIA
NOVEMBER 2, 1990**

COMMISSIONERS: John W. Freeman, Sr., Chairman; James W. Peck, Vice-Chairman; John Thomas Parran, William A. Pruitt and William A. Hudnall. Commissioner Russell was unable to attend.

OFFICERS: Kirby A. Carpenter, Executive Secretary and J. Clifford Hutt, Legal Officer.

PRESS: Isobel Gough - The Richmond News Leader; Ann Marie Maloney - The Enterprise; Lisa Hinton - Rappahannock Record; and Lawrence Latane - Richmond Times Dispatch.

GUESTS: Dr. Herb Austin - Virginia Institute of Marine Science; Richard Daiger - Virginia Extension Service; Woody Willing and Edward M. Frere - Maryland Department of Natural Resources Police; William L. Rice - Charles County Watermans Association and Eddie Gaskins.

Chairman Freeman called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. He then recognized Commissioner Hudnall who welcomed everyone to historic Heathsville, Virginia stating that what they lacked in convenience they would make up with southern hospitality.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The following motion was made by Mr. Parran and seconded by Mr. Pruitt:

"THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 17, 1990 AND SEPTEMBER 27, 1990 BE APPROVED AS WRITTEN AND DISTRIBUTED". The motion passed unanimously.

LICENSE FEE REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

At the August 1990 meeting the Chairman appointed a License Fee Review Committee charging it with reviewing the PRFC license fee schedule in light of Maryland and Virginia fees and to evaluate limited, delayed or controlled entry into various fisheries. The Committee members were: Pete Jensen - Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Jack Travelstead - Virginia Marine Resources Commission, A. C. Carpenter and J. Clifford Hutt (Mr. Hutt was not present at committee meeting).

Mr. Carpenter stated that the committee had met and he presented the following report of their findings and recommendations:

General Findings:

- Potomac River Fisheries Commission license fees have not been increased since 1978.
- The Maryland, Virginia and Potomac River licensing systems are not directly comparable on a state-to-state, gear-to-gear or dollar-to-dollar basis.
- Both Maryland and Virginia have provisions for licensing non-residents on a reciprocal basis at a cost of \$350.

Maryland

- Commercial licenses are on a 2 year waiting period. Any new person wishing to commercially harvest seafood must apply for and pay the appropriate fees, 2 years in advance of the license being issued, thereafter annual renewals are possible.
- License fees range from \$20 to catch conchs and terrapins to \$250 for oyster dredge boats. In addition to individual licenses for various gears and/or activities, combination licenses for several gears/activities are also available. For example: 1) Soft shell clam dredge license - \$100; 2) Oyster tonger, diver or hand scrape license - \$50; 3) Surf clam license - \$50; 4) Hard shell clam rake license - \$30; -or- \$200 to license all equipment in 1 through 4 above.

Virginia

- The Virginia system more generally parallels the Potomac system. Fees are generally lower in Virginia and range from \$5 for a crab trap to \$100 per lobster boat.
- Currently a legislative subcommittee is holding public hearings around the state on the idea of a single \$250 sellers license being required in addition to each harvest type license. They are also receiving comments on the subject of delayed entry (Maryland type system) and mandatory catch reporting.

Recommendations:

- Do not change the existing Potomac River license structure or the fees. Rather, enact a new annual personal commercial seafood harvester's license which would be a prerequisite for obtaining any existing gear, boat or personal harvesting license. This new single license would apply to all persons licensed to harvest fish, crabs, oysters or clams in addition to their need for the individual gear/activity license as presently required. For example: 1) If John Doe currently has 4 gill net licenses (\$100), 1 eel pot license (\$50), 1 crab pot license (\$50) and an oyster tonger's license (\$50), he spends \$250 per year in license fees. Under this proposal, his license cost would be \$500. 2) If Sam Jones currently has only a commercial hook & line license (\$25), he spends \$25 per year in license fees. Under this proposal, his license cost would be \$275.

Mr. Pruitt stated that he would like to have the reference to bills in Virginia removed from the report due to misinformation about those two bills. In addition, he felt this proposal unnecessarily provided an additional tax on full time watermen. He recommended that the committee go back to work with the goal of presenting alternatives to the proposal given today which, in his opinion, was inadequate.

After further discussion, the Chairman stated that he felt the Committee needed more members. He then appointed Mr. Peck and Mr. Hudnall as co-chairmen and requested that Mr. Billy Rice and Mr. Edward Gaskins also serve, in addition to the current 4 committee members. Mr. Freeman requested that they present their proposal at the February meeting.

STATUS REPORT ON 1990 STRIPED BASS SEASONS

The Executive Secretary reported that the Commercial Hook and Line fishermen's 10,000 pound quota was very quickly exceeded with the final catch being 26,000 pounds in 10 days of fishing. The Pound Net fisherman had quotas of 500 pounds per net and in their first seven day season harvested a total of 9,000 pounds. The Gill Net fishery was delayed and will not begin until November the 8th and the Haul Seine quota of 800 pounds was exceeded with a total harvest of 1207 pounds the first day of that season.

The recreational fishery had a far greater response than originally anticipated. A total of 29,000 recreational fishing permits were issued and the scheduled 45 day season closed after only 13 days of fishing. Although the data analysis was not complete at this time, the Executive Secretary was quite certain that the recreational quota was reached and more likely exceeded. The Charter boat season was closed in conjunction with the recreational season and it is believed their quota was also filled.

COMMERCIAL HOOK AND LINE LICENSE MORATORIUM

In light of the data presented regarding the striped bass catch in the Potomac, the Commission could see no justification to removed the current moratorium on the issuance of new commercial hook and line licenses. They took no action which thereby left the moratorium in effect.

FIRST QUARTER DISBURSEMENTS AND STATEMENT OF CASH ON HAND

A report of the first quarter (July - September 1990) disbursements was presented by budget item which totaled \$89,724.54 of which \$28,868.95 were development and repletion expenses. The Executive Secretary noted no unusual expenditures. A statement of cash on hand as of October 31, 1990 was presented as follows:

<u>FIRST VIRGINIA BANK - NORTHERN NECK:</u> (Checking - includes \$200.00 petty cash)	\$12,160.07
<u>FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF MARYLAND:</u> (Savings: Maryland Office)	21,688.19
<u>MARYLAND NATIONAL BANK:</u> (Certificate of Deposit)	100,000.00
<u>PEOPLES BANK OF MONTROSS:</u> (Certificate of Deposit)	100,000.00
<u>VIRGINIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT POOL:</u>	64,639.75
<u>MARYLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT POOL:</u>	62,941.00
Grand Total in Banks:	\$361,429.01

The following motion was made by Mr. Pruitt and seconded by Mr. Peck:

"THAT THE FIRST QUARTER DISBURSEMENTS OF \$89,724.54 BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED". The motion passed unanimously.

CRAB HARVEST REPORT

A preliminary (April through September) report on the 1990 crab landings showed a total of 109,533 bushels of hard crabs and 48,743 pounds of peelers had been harvested from the Potomac. This compares with the April through September 1989 harvest of 107,650 bushels of hard crabs and 42,704 pounds of peelers. Mr. Carpenter noted that the report generally shows the number of crabbers decreased while the average number of pots being fished per crabber has increased over the last five years.

CLAM HARVEST REPORT

A 1990 Soft Shell Clam harvest report was presented. It showed a total harvest of 2,795 bushels with an average catch of 1.40 bushels per hour. In addition, a report on the Razor Clam harvest was also presented, it showed a total harvest of 2,431 bushels of razor clams with an average catch of 6.66 bushels per hour. Mr. Carpenter noted that this was the first year in several years that clams have been harvested in the Potomac during each month of the year.

OYSTER HARVEST REPORT

An oyster harvest report was presented which showed the amount of tax collected, licenses sold and oyster harvest by bar and gear, for the period October 1 through November 1, 1990. The total harvest thus far was 17,265 bushels and the average catch per tonger was 5 bushels per day. Mr. Carpenter noted that the average catch dropped a little from last year and that no oysters have been harvested from any of the lower river bars. However, all of the 1,167 bushels harvested on Yates Bar are from natural set as no seed has ever been planted there.

APPOINTMENT OF 1991 OYSTER REPLETION COMMITTEE

Chairman Freeman reappointed the members of the 1990 Oyster Repletion Committee to serve as the 1991 Oyster Repletion Committee as follows: **Industry Committee Members** - William L. Rice, James L. Jones, William Graves, William T. Feldman, Craig Kelley, Richard Holbrook, Roger Hill, Charles Squires, David Rowe, Eugene Booth, James G. Thompson and John Allen. **Staff Committee Members** - Rodger Mann, George Krantz, John Mattingly, Donald O'Bier, Bill Outten, Ben Daniels and A. C. Carpenter. The Chairman noted that there were vacancies on the Industry Committee from St. Mary's and Northumberland Counties and requested that the PRFC Commissioners from those respective counties make a recommendation to the Chairman to fill those vacancies. Mr. Pruitt requested that Mr. Richard Daiger be appointed to the Staff Committee to represent the Virginia Extension Service. The Chairman appointed Mr. Daiger as requested.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Chairman appointed Commissioner Pruitt and Commissioner Parran as the nominating Committee asking them to present, at the February meeting, a slate of officers to serve for 1991.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was moved by Mr. Parran and seconded by Mr. Pruitt that the Commission go into executive session at 10:55 a.m. to discuss personnel matters. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission reconvened to regular session at 11:10 a.m. The Legal Officer reported that personnel matters were discussed but no action was taken.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

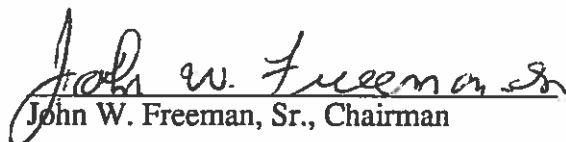
Colonel Willing reported that the working relationship between Maryland and Virginia Law Enforcement Personnel is currently the best it's ever been. He expressed his pleasure and his hope that the cooperative spirit will continue to develop. Mr. Pruitt, speaking on behalf of Virginia, concurred with Colonel Willing's assessment. Mr. Carpenter reported that both agencies were extremely helpful during the striped bass fishing seasons. Their cooperation and mutual planning allowed a division of duties which resulted in very efficient enforcement of both fishing and oystering activities.

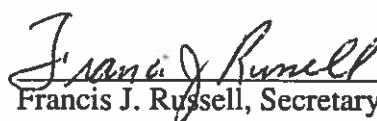
DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission was scheduled for Friday, February 1, 1990 at 9:30 a.m. in Colonial Beach at the Commission Office.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Mr. Pruitt and seconded by Mr. Parran to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m.


John W. Freeman, Sr., Chairman


Francis J. Russell, Secretary