

**COMMISSIONERS:**

A.J. ERSKINE (VA)  
Chairman

LYNN H. KELLUM (VA)  
Vice Chairman

PHIL L. LANGLEY (MD)  
Secretary

WILLIAM L. RICE, SR. (MD)

IDA C. HALL (VA)

DENNIS C. FLEMING (MD)

JOHN M.R. BULL (VA)

DAVE BLAZER (MD)



MARYLAND - VIRGINIA  
"Potomac River Compact of 1958"

**Potomac River Fisheries Commission**

P.O. Box 9  
Colonial Beach, Virginia 22443  
[www.prfc.us](http://www.prfc.us)



**OFFICERS:**

MARTIN L. GARY  
Executive Secretary

MICHAEL C. MAYO, ESQ.  
Legal Officer

**TELEPHONE:**  
(804) 224-7148  
(800) 266-3904

**FAX:**  
(804) 224-2712

**E-MAIL:**  
[contactprfc@gmail.com](mailto:contactprfc@gmail.com)

**Meeting of the PRFC Oyster Strategic Planning Panel**  
**September 29, 2016**  
**10 AM**  
**Carpenter Building**  
**Colonial Beach, VA**

**\*Agenda**

10-10:20 AM – Welcome, Review of the August 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting Summary and Approval for the Record  
(Co Chairs AJ Erskine and Dave Blazer)

10:20-11 AM - Discussion and Adoption of the Mission Statement for the PRFC Oyster Strategic Planning Panel (Co Chairs AJ Erskine and Dave Blazer and Panel)

11 AM – Noon – Discussion and Adoption of the Frame Work of the OSPP Plan (Title & Components),  
Timeline for discussion by the panel at future meetings

12 Noon - Lunch Served/Continue Working

12 Noon till 12:45 PM - Discussion and Guidance related to current OMR and NRG Energy Funding Opportunity (Marty Gary, Co Chairs AJ Erskine and Dave Blazer and Panel)

12:45 – 12:55 – Presentation on Wicomico Rotational Harvest Program – Bill Killinski, Charles County Watermen's Association President

12:55 - 1 PM - Delineation of future meetings (Dates, times and topics) (Co Chairs AJ Erskine and Dave Blazer)

1 PM – Adjourn

Voting Members (14): AJ Erskine (Co Chair VA), David Blazer (Co Chair MD), Lynn Kellum (VA), Phil Langley (MD), John F. "Tucker" Brown (MD), Wayne France (VA), Nick Kuttner (VA), J.D. Blackwell (MD), Dr. Thomas Miller (UMCES-CBL), Dr. Roger Mann (VIMS), Dr. Mitch Tarnowski (MD), Dr. Jim Wesson (VA), John "Willie" Dean (MD), Tommy Lewis (VA)

\*Public Comment will be allowed at the discretion of the Co Chairs

PRFC OYSTER STRATEGIC PLANNING PANEL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2016  
10 AM  
COLONIAL BEACH, VA

Attendance: OSSP - AJ Erskine, Dave Blazer, Phil Langley, John F. "Tucker" Brown, Wayne France, Nick Kuttner, J.D. Blackwell, Dr. Tom Miller, Dr. Mitch Tarnowski, and John Dean.  
Unable to attend: Lynn Haynie, Dr. Roger Mann, Tommy Lewis, Dr. Jim Wesson.  
Public – Richard Riche, Robert T. Brown, Bill Kilinski, and Carl Kirk

### Meeting Synopsis

Co Chairman AJ Erskine and Dave Blazer welcomed the attending members of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission's Oyster Strategic Planning Panel (OSSP) and several members of the public to the meeting. Co Chair AJ Erskine asked Mr. Gary about those not in attendance. Mr. Gary verified that Dr. Mann and Lynn Haynie were unable to attend due to conflicts in their schedules, and that David Rowe, a VA industry representative, would not be able to attend this meeting and is very unlikely for future meetings due to complexities in his schedule. His proxy, Mr. Tommy Lewis is in a similar situation. Mr. Gary asked for guidance and specifically if either were available, would the Panel prefer to continue to allow their participation. Co Chairman Erskine suggested that the constituency of the Panel be kept as is. There was no objection. The meeting summary for the August meeting was brought up for approval. The meeting summary was approved as presented. A discussion of the Mission Statement occurred, and was updated to amend to include Nick Kuttner's suggestion of adding the term "economic opportunities". The updated version then became ***"Increase oyster biomass & suitable substrates to help the ecology of the Potomac River and associated economic opportunities by setting various goals in phases using various tools and activities to achieve those stated goals."*** The Panel supported this update.

Co Chairs Erskine and Blazer led a discussion related to the development of the framework of the how the panel would move forward. A variety of potential topics were discussed, including shell, hydrodynamics, water chemistry/quality, substrates, historical survey data, need for additional surveys (including areas that have not been looked at in recent years), funding, potential spatial prioritization. Wayne France, Tucker Brown and Rich Riche all mentioned the need for additional surveys for shell and suitable substrates. They indicated industry would be willing to help. JD Blackwell suggested having existing science presented as a "data dump" would be a logical next step. Several panel members discussed the complexities of developing a vision of what the Panel would like to see, including defining the objectives for ecological services, the future of the public fishery, taking disease and other forms of natural mortality into account, and striving for biological and economic sustainability. Co Chairman Dave Blazer talked about identifying "data gaps". Dr. Jim Wesson talked about the wealth of information that PRFC and MD DNR has, and that we need to look at that. Dr. Wesson indicated that one entire meeting needs to be dedicated to looking at the old data and that future efforts should be focused on the lower river, where the opportunity for consistent reproduction exists. Dr. Wesson indicated that initiating new surveys would not be helpful. Mitch Tarnowski agreed with Dr. Wesson and noted we need to define what is meant by certain management terms such as rotation. Bill Kilinski noted that there is a lack of knowledge

of the current status of upper river bars. Dr. Miller asked about how impacts from land on water quality might be integrated into the panel's discussions. Several members of the Panel and public commented on the importance of this topic. Robert T. Brown talked about how important it is to not forget about certain parts of the river and that funding is limited and we need to be very careful how we spend the funds we have. Co Chair AJ Erskine mentioned that funding is limited and that we will likely need to reach out to external sources such as NRG and others. Additional discussion occurred related to alternative funding sources such as MD's flush tax, and whether it might be possible to acquire some of that funding. The Panel agreed that additional funds from new taxes would not be likely. Dr. Wesson mentioned it might be worth talking to our legislators. Mr. Gary mentioned the possible cross collaboration of assets from the three jurisdictional partners, and a variety of issues were raised, including a discussion on larvae production capacity in the Chesapeake occurred. Additional discussion occurred related to substrates and in particular alternative substrates.

A discussion occurred regarding the time of future meetings. Willie Dean mentioned meeting later in the day. 10-3 PM was agreed to by consensus.

Potential topics and associated speakers were discussed. After much discussion, the following list was compiled and approved:

#### TOPICS FOR PANEL DISCUSSION

1. HISTORICAL DISCUSSION OF WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE RIVER AND OYSTER RESOURCE
2. SCIENCE DISCUSSION INCLUDING: WATER QUALITY, SUBSTRATES (SURFACE SHELL AND SHELL DEPOSITS) AND OYSTER HABITAT AND HYDRODYNAMIC IMPACTS TO SPAWNING SUCCESS
3. PUBLIC FISHERY SUSTAINABILITY AND ASSOCIATED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
  - a. ENVIRONMENTAL, LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES
  - b. SHELL
  - c. DEVELOPMENTAL TIME FRAME
4. AQUACULTURE AND ASSOCIATED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
  - a. ENVIRONMENTAL, LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES
  - b. DEVELOPMENTAL TIME FRAME
5. ECOLOGICAL SERVICES AND ASSOCIATED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
  - a. ENVIRONMENTAL, LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES
  - b. DEVELOPMENTAL TIME FRAME
6. STATUS OF EXISTING PROGRAMS (ROTATIONAL & OMR)
  - a. ROTATIONAL PROGRAM...Q: WHAT IS ROTATIONAL?
  - b. OMR
  - c. JONES SHORE HAND SCRAPE ROTATION
7. FUTURE ABILITY TO SURVEY TO TRACK PROGRESS, FILL DATA GAPS AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES
8. REVENUE & ECONOMICS DISCUSSION....COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH MANAGEMENT OF THE OYSTER RESOURCE
  - a. OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES?
    - i. PRIVATE SECTOR
    - ii. GRANTS (SK OR OTHER)

- iii. TAXES/FEES FROM EXISTING TAXES (FLUSH TAX?)
- iv. CONGRESSIONAL OUTREACH FOR BLOCK GRANTS, OTHER GRANTS
- 9. MARYLAND & VIRGINIA MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES (WHAT IS WORKING AND WHAT IS NOT)
- 10. ROLE OF THE OSPP & PRFC RELATED TO LAND USE IMPACTS ON AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

NEXT MEETING: #1 & #2 WITH GIS OVERLAY, INCLUDING NOAA DATA

Executive Secretary Marty Gary provided an update on the current status of the OMR program. He explained the current harvest appears to be very low in relation to the expected yield (~800 bushels harvested from a 3,250 bushel planting). A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the possible reasons, and a number of questions were asked related to larvae, culture, planting protocols and other components of the program's process. The Panel was informed that additional discussions will occur with OMR leadership and scientists, and ultimately with all participants. This is a significant program that was developed by a Blue Ribbon Panel back in 2011, and received \$200,000 in subsidized funding from the Commission (this in addition to fees collected from the participants). Mr. Gary gave a brief update on the status of the NRG Energy mitigation proposal from PRFC. PRFC received assistance from Dr. Miller to provide narrative for the proposal's initial version to address questions from NRG/MDE/Intervenors related to nutrient removal by oysters. Mr. Gary informed the Panel that the evaluation time frame has been extended to November 3, 2016 and that additional questions may be asked, and a third iteration of the proposal may come forward.

Bil Kilinski, Charles County Watermen's Association President provided a short presentation on experimental rotational harvest in the Wicomico River, Maryland. Mr. Kilinski indicated that the rotational experiment they have been conducting has been working very successfully. He also spoke about the importance of surveys and urged the Panel to support surveys going forward.

The Co Chairs discussed with the panel the next meeting date, and an agreement was reached to hold the next meeting of the OSPP on November 15, 2016 starting at 4 PM at PRFC.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 PM