#### **MINUTES**

## **COMMISSION MEETING**

February 28, 2023

The meeting of the Marine Resources Commission was held at the Marine Resources Commission main office at 380 Fenwick Road, Bldg. 96, Fort Monroe, Virginia with the following present:

Jamie L. Green Commissioner

Lynn Kellum William Bransom Wayne France

John Tankard III Associate Members

James Minor Jeremy Headley A.J. Erskine

Kelci Block Assistant Attorney General

Jamie Hogge Recording Secretary

Pat Geer Chief, Fisheries Mgmt.

Shanna Madsen

Alexa Galvan

Fisheries Mgmt. Specialist

Jill Ramsey

Fisheries Mgmt. Specialist

Lewis Gillingham Director, SWFT

Alicia Nelson Coordinator, RFAB/CFAB

Matthew Rogers Chief, Law Enforcement

Herbert Bell Deputy Chief, Law Enforcement
Chris Miller Captain, Law Enforcement
Ron Cagle Captain, Law Enforcement
Jeff Copperthite 1st. Sgt., Law Enforcement
Thomas Straughan 1st. Sgt., Law Enforcement

Wayne Freeman Marine Police Officer

Justin Worrell Deputy Chief, Habitat Management

Jeff Madden Environmental Engineer, Sr.

## **Commission Meeting**

Jay Woodward Environmental Engineer, Sr. Environmental Engineer, Sr. Lauren Chartrand Mark Eversole Environmental Engineer, Sr. Mike Johnson Environmental Engineer, Sr. Environmental Engineer, Sr. Tiffany Birge Claire Gorman Environmental Engineer, Sr. Environmental Engineer, Sr. Ben Nettleton Adam Kenyon Chief, Shellfish Management Andrew Button Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management

Andy Dong

Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS):

Lyle Varnell Emily Hein

Others present:

Mike Wooden Matt Romero Paul Reynolds Stephanie Peart Neville Reynolds Bruce Bundley Pete Owen Tom Willer Tom Dunlop Jen Rogers Katie Freeman Paul Peterson Craig Reynolds Wendy Austin David O'Brien **Bob Simon** Jon Simon Rebecca Francese

Mike Anderson Chris Moore Jim Beck Jerome Bonniville Kelly Mills Roger Arnold

Ellen Grimes and others.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** – Commissioner Jamie Green asked if there were any changes from the Board members or staff.

Associate Member Minor moved to approve the agenda as presented. Associate Member France seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Green asked if there were any changes or corrections to be made to the January 24, 2023, Commission Meeting minutes.

Associate Member Tankard moved to approve the minutes as presented. Associate Member Minor seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

Commissioner Green swore in the VMRC staff and VIMS staff that would be speaking or presenting testimony during the meeting.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

By the request of Commissioner Green, Col. Rogers recognized the following Marine Police Officers on recent promotions:

Herbie Bell was promoted to Deputy Chief on August 25, 2022.

Ron Cagle was promoted to Captain of the Northern Area on November 10, 2022. Thomas Straughan was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup>. Sgt. of the Northern Area on February 10, 2023.

Col. Rogers also recognized MPO Kenneth Freeman on his promotion to pilot and read a letter of recommendation from 1<sup>st</sup>. Sgt. Hill.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**PERMITS** (Projects over \$500,000.00 with no objections and with staff recommendation for approval).

Randy Owen, Chief, Habitat Management, reviewed the Page 2 items 2A and 2B for the Associate Members. Mr. Owen's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

2A. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, #22-2107, requests authorization to install shoreline stabilization structures and clean sand fill and plantings adjacent to the Colonial Parkway near Indian Field Creek Bridge situated along the York River in York County. Components include: one (1) riprap revetment, six (6) stone sills, and five (5) stone spurs, with clean sand fill and plantings. The project will also install temporary barge ports for construction access. A temporary turbidity curtain will be installed, as necessary.

2B. CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, #22-1091, requests authorization to maintenance dredge 119,300 cubic yards of state-owned submerged lands within the Eastern Branch Lynnhaven River in Virginia Beach. Dredging will occur mechanically on an as-needed basis to achieve a maximum depth of -7 feet mean low water. Dredged spoils will be offloaded at the Cripple Creek Dredge Material Transfer Facility and will be truck-hauled to the Whitehurst Dredge Material Management Area in Virginia Beach. Staff recommends approval with the standard dredge conditions and a time-of-year restriction between June 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>, for all work situated north of Trants Point.

No one spoke in support or opposition of the projects.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor moved to approve the Page 2 items 2A and 2B as presented. Associate Member Headley seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

#### 3. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Randy Owen, Chief, Habitat Management, reviewed the Page 3 Consent Agenda Items 3A through 3C for the Associate Members. Mr. Owen's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

**3A. VIRGINIA ELECTRIC AND POWER COMPANY, #22-1392**, requests authorization to retain four (4) oil booms and two (2) metal debris guards and absorbent socks located at the Chesterfield Power Station (500 Coxendale Road) situated along the James River in Chesterfield County. This project requires both tidal wetlands permit and a subaqueous permit.

Applicant or representative declined to comment.

No one spoke in support or opposition of the projects.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member France moved to approve 3A as presented. Associate Member seconded Bransom the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

**3B. CAROL ASHINOFF**, #22-2109, requests after-the-fact authorization to retain 225 linear feet of riprap revetment placed channelward of the existing bulkhead at 1233 North Bay Shore Drive along Linkhorn Bay in the City of Virginia Beach. Staff recommends approval with triple permit fees of \$900.00, which the applicant has agreed to pay, and a civil charge of \$3,000.00, which the contractor has agreed to pay.

Applicant or representative declined to comment.

No one spoke in support or opposition of the projects.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor moved to approve 3B as presented. Associate Member Headley seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

3C. THOMAS WALLER, Jr., #22-0680, requests after-the-fact authorization to retain 12 timber piles and complete construction of two (2) parallel 60-linear foot sheet pile groins, as a channelward extension of existing groins, at the mouth of a tidal drainage ditch at property (4124 Battle Point Road) adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay in the County of Northampton. Piles for the groin extensions were installed without prior authorization before a Stop Work Order was issued. Staff recommends approval with triple permit fees of \$900.00, triple royalties of \$180.00, which the applicant has agreed to pay, and a civil charge of \$1,000.00, which the contractor, Kestral Marine, has agreed to pay.

Helen Grimes, representative for the applicant, was sworn in and stated that her clients agree to pay the triple permit fees, triple royalty fee and the civil charges. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

No one spoke in support or opposition of the projects.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor moved to approve 3C as presented. Associate Member seconded Headley the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

4. CLOSED MEETING FOR CONSULTATION WITH, OR BRIEFING BY, COUNSEL. – No meeting needed

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY, #19-0544**, requests authorization to install an 8.35 MGD raw water intake in the Appomattox River, at N37.31374, W-77.34510 extending channelward from the southern bank of the river approximately 0.57 miles upstream of the Interstate 295 Bridge in Prince George County. The project is protested.

Mike Johnson, Environmental Engineer, Sr., gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Johnson's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Scott Earnardt, representative for the applicant, spoke on behalf of the proposed project. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Craig Reynolds, spoke in opposition of the proposed project. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Tom Dunlop, Elizabeth River Project, spoke in opposition of the proposed project. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Chris Moore, Chesapeake Bay Foundation was sworn in and spoke. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Paul Reynolds was sworn in and spoke in opposition of the proposed projects. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Wendy Austin, representing Friends of the Appomattox, was sworn in and spoke in opposition of the proposed project. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Lyle Varnell, Virginia Institute of Marine Science was previously sworn in and spoke to further explain the project. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Tankard made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Erskine seconded the motion. The motion carried, 5-0-2. Associate Members France and Minor opposed.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

6. CHESTERFIELD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES, #20-0085, requests authorization to install a 29.8 MGD raw water intake structure in the Appomattox River, at N37.31541, W-77.33619 extending channelward from the northern bank of the river immediately upstream of the Interstate 295 bridge crossing in Chesterfield County. The project is protested.

Mark Eversole, Environmental Engineer, Sr., gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Eversole's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

George Hayes, Director of Chesterfield County Utilities, was sworn in and spoke on behalf of the proposed project. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Craig Reynolds was previously sworn and spoke in opposition of the proposed project. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Wendy Austin, representing Friends of the Appomattox, previously sworn in, spoke in opposition of the proposed project. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Paul Reynolds, previously sworn in, spoke in opposition of the proposed project. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Tom Dunlop, Elizabeth River Project, previously sworn in, spoke in opposition of the proposed project. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Chris Moore, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, previously sworn in, spoke in opposition of the proposed project. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Paul Peterson, representative for Arcadis, spoke on behalf of the proposed project to address concerns from the protesters. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor made a motion to approve staff recommendation which included the amended area. Associate Member Headley seconded the motion. The motion carried, 6-0-1. Associate Member France opposed.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

# ITEMS #7 THROUGH #12 WERE PRESENTED AND VOTED TOGETHER

7. MARSHALL FEASTER, #22-1371, requests authorization to construct an 85 linear foot offshore stone breakwater with sand nourishment adjacent to property (1988 Sand Hill Drive) as part of a system of breakwaters in the Sand Hill subdivision, adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay in the County of Northampton. The project is protested by a nearby property owner.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

8. MITCHELL and WENDY HUBBARD, #22-1940, request authorization to construct a 180 linear foot offshore stone breakwater with sand nourishment adjacent to property (Tax Map #104D-1-10A1 and #104D-1-12A) as part of a system of breakwaters in the Sand Hill subdivision, adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay in the County of Northampton. The project is protested by a nearby property owner.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

9. BAYFRONT DLB LLC, #22-2078, requests authorization to construct an 85 linear foot offshore stone breakwater with sand nourishment adjacent to property (1944 Sand Hill Drive) as part of a system of breakwaters in the Sand Hill subdivision, adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay in the County of Northampton. The project is protested by an adjacent property owner.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

10. BRUCE BRADLEY, #22-2190, requests authorization to construct a 150 linear foot offshore stone breakwater with sand nourishment adjacent to property (1426 Elliot's Creek Lane) as part of a system of breakwaters in the Sand Hill subdivision, adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay in the County of Northampton. The project is protested by a nearby property owner.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

11. DUNE BRIDGE LLC, #22-2249, requests authorization to construct an 85 linear foot offshore stone breakwater with sand nourishment from mean low water to the landward side of the breakwater adjacent to property (1428 Elliot's Creek Lane) as part of a system of breakwaters in the Sand Hill subdivision, adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay in the County of Northampton. The project is protested by a nearby property owner.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

12. MICHAEL ANDERSON, #23-0013, requests authorization to construct an 85 linear foot offshore stone breakwater with sand nourishment adjacent to property (Tax Map #104D-1-7) as part of a system of breakwaters in the Sand Hill subdivision, adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay in the County of Northampton. The project is protested by an adjacent property owner.

Ben Nettleton, Environmental Engineer, Sr., presented agenda items #7 through #12 for the Associate Members, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Nettleton's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Ellen Grimes, representative for all the applicants, was sworn in. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

No one was present to speak in opposition of the proposed projects.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Tankard seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

13. BRAD and SARAH HUDSON, #22-0621, request authorization to construct a 532 square foot open-sided boathouse adjacent to a statutorily authorized private pier in Dogue Creek serving riparian property situated at 4517 Carlby Lane in Fairfax County. The project is protested by both adjacent property owners.

Mark Eversole, Environmental Engineer, Sr., gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Eversole's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Jim Beck, engineer for the applicant, was present and sworn in. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Virginia Smith, Real Estate agent, was sworn in. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Erskine made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Minor seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

14. PUBLIC COMMENT. No one spoke during pubic comment.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**15. PUBLIC HEARING:** Proposal to amend Chapter 4 VAC 20-510-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Amberjack and Cobia," to terminate the Recreational Cobia Mandatory Reporting Program (RCMRP) and associated species permit.

Shanna Madsen, Deputy Chief, Fisheries Mgmt., gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Ms. Madsen's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Ms. Madsen explained that the Recreational Cobia Mandatory Reporting Program (RCMRP) and associated species permit was created in 2016 to collect additional data to help inform species management for the rapidly expanding fishery. After six years, the program was evaluated by VMRC staff and a modeling lead on the cobia stock

assessment. This evaluation determined that inaccuracies and biases in the data collected prevent them from being used to make solid inferences about the fishery and the stock itself. Because of these issues, the current program and therefore the data collected have little to offer for support of good science or management of the species. As such, staff proposes that the mandatory recreational cobia permit program be ceased in 2023 to remove burden on the recreational fishing community and VMRC staff. Future outreach will focus on creating a voluntary cobia age and length data collection program for anglers which focuses on data gaps in the stock assessment.

Staff recommends the Commission approve amendments to Chapter 4 VAC 20-510-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Amberjack and Cobia," to terminate the Recreational Cobia Mandatory Reporting Program (RCMRP) and associated species permit.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Bransom seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**16. PUBLIC HEARING:** Proposal to amend Chapter 4 VAC 20-1090-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Licensing Requirements and License Fees", to provide an option to purchase a multiyear resident recreational saltwater fishing license.

Pat Geer, Chief, Fisheries Mgmt., gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Geer's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Mr. Geer explained that during the 2022 General Assembly session, Delegate Cordoza introduced HB1112 to require the Commission to sell multiyear resident recreational saltwater fishing licenses. The bill went through several reiterations and was passed by the House on February 15, 2022 (98-Y, 2-N), and the Senate on February 25, 2022 (39-Y 0-N). The bill was approved by the Governor effective July 1, 2022. Given the bill's effective date was in the middle of the fishing year it was decided to amend the regulation with an effective date with the start of the new calendar year. Unfortunately, other more pressing regulatory changes needed to be addressed and this proposed amendment was delayed until February 2023.

At present, all recreational fishing license sales are conducted through the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) or its agents. The saltwater recreational fishing license is \$17.50 for one year from purchase. DWR offers resident multiyear freshwater fishing licenses for two, three, and four years, with a roughly 9% savings for each extra additional year purchased. The saltwater multiyear fishing license fees will follow a similar model and savings, for two-, three-, and four-year licenses.

Besides the cost savings, additional benefits of a multiyear license include the convenience of not having to renew each year, and it avoids any potential increase in user fees for the life of the license.

Staff recommends the Commission approve amendments to Chapter 4 VAC 20-1090-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Licensing Requirments and License Fees" to create multiyear resident saltwater fishing licenses of two, three, and four years with an associate fee of \$33.50, \$49.50, and \$65.50, respectively. Sales of these licenses will begin for the 2023 fishing year.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Bransom made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Tankard seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Proposal to amend Chapter 4 VAC 20-1270-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Atlantic Menhaden", to establish the percentage Virginia receives of the coastwide total allowable catch per Addendum I to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden.

Shanna Madsen, Deputy Chief, Fisheries Mgmt., gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Ms. Madsen's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Ms. Madsen explained that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved Addendum I to Amendment 3 of the Fishery Management plan for Atlantic menhaden at their annual meeting in November 2022. Addendum I addresses commercial allocations, the Episodic Event Set Aside (EESA) Program, and the Incidental Catch/Small-Scale Fishery (IC/SSF) Provision. Additionally, the ASMFC

Menhaden Board increased in the coastwide total allowable catch or landings (TAC) of menhaden at the November 2022 meeting. The 2023-2025 coastwide TAC is 233,550 metric tons.

For Virginia, the total allowable commercial landings are 384,172,558 pounds for 2023. This amount represents 75.21% of the coastwide TAC after 1% is set aside for episodic events. All sector-based percentages remain the same per regulation. The purse seine menhaden reduction sector share is 90.04%; the purse seine menhaden bait sector share is 8.38%; and the non-purse seine menhaden bait sector share is 1.58% of the total allowable commercial landings.

Proposal to amend Chapter 4 VAC 20-1270-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Atlantic Menhaden", to establish the percentage Virginia receives of the coastwide total allowable catch per Addendum I to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Kellum seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**18. DISCUSSION:** Request for approval of the 2023 Oyster Replenishment and Restoration Plan (ORP) and the Associated Procurements Procedures.

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management Division, presented the 2023 Oyster Restoration and Replenishment Plan (ORP) and funding with a PowerPoint presentation. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Ms. Kellum recused herself from the discussion to request approval of the 2023 Oyster Replenishment and Restoration Plan (ORP).

# 2023 Oyster Replenishment and Restoration Plan (ORP) and the Associated Procurements Procedures.

Funding Source: Amount:

## Non-Federal

General Funds Replenishment (GF) \$2,500,000

General Funds Restoration (GF) \$1,500,000

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) \$125,000

Non-General Funds (NGF) Oyster Resource

User Fees \$200,000

# **SEED TRANSFER:**

# James River (Nansemond Ridge)

Up to 15,000 bushel of seed oysters @  $\sim$  \$6.00/bu.

## James River (Seed Area)

Up to 10,000 bushels of seed oysters @  $\sim$  12.00/bu.

\$200,000 (NGF) (GF Replenishment)

# **SHELL PLANTING:**

## Bay and Tributaries:

600 – 800 acres of oyster shell restoration @ 1,000 bushels/acre @ \$2.50 - \$4.50/bushel. \$2,500,000 (GF Replenishment) \$0-\$1,500,000 (GF, Restoration) \$0-\$70,000 (NGF)

## Eastern Shore:

6.5-13 acres @ 5-10,000 bushels of shells/acre @  $\sim$  \$4.50/bushel. \$125,000 (NGF-TNC) \$100,000 (GF Restoration)

# **ALTERNATIVE CULTCH (STONE) PROJECTS:**

### Restoration:

Up to 100 acres @ 250-1000 tons/acre @ ~\$50.00 to \$90.00/ton \$0-\$1,500,000 (multiple sources)

## Replenishment:

0-50 acres @ 250 tons/acre @ ~\$50.00 to \$60.00/ton \$0-\$627,000 (GF Replenishment)

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

APPROVAL, BY THE COMMISSION, OF THE REPLENISHMENT PROGRAM WILL ALSO INCLUDE APPROVAL OF THE PROCUREMENT METHODS MENTIONED ABOVE.

# 2023 Replenishment and Restoration Plan:

Associate Member Erskine made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Minor seconded the motion. The motion passed, 6-0-1. Associated Member Kellum abstained.

#### **Procurement vote:**

Associate Member Tankard made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Headley seconded the motion. The motion passed, 6-0-1. Associated Member Kellum abstained.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**19. PUBLIC HEARING:** Proposal to amend Chapter 4 VAC 20-720-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Restrictions on Oyster Harvest", to adjust the public oyster harvest seasons.

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management, gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Button's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Mr. Button explained that in August, when the Shellfish Management Advisory Committee (SMAC) made recommendations on the 2022-2023 harvest season. Many members of SMAC requested that a Commission hearing be scheduled prior to the close of the public harvest season to discuss a possible season extension. Staff collaborated with SMAC to schedule a public hearing in February to allow for more of the total impacts of harvest effort and weather conditions to be considered. Typically, extreme weather events have been the justification for staff support of extensions in some areas in the past.

Staff, working with SMAC over several meetings in 2022 developed recommendations for the Commission on the 2022-2023 public oyster harvest season. The season recommended in August, and adopted by the Commission, accounted for the current and excellent condition of the resource. As such, the season that was established lengthened the hand scrape season by one month in the Rappahannock, James, and Mobjack/York hand scrape areas (compared to 2021-2022 season). Patent tong area seasons were also extended by an additional month and a half in some locations. The intent of this was to provide a consistent and steady supply of Virginia oysters for the majority of the season (October through April), while meeting peak demand for this product in November and December and keeping effort spread between multiple areas and gear types. Thus far, this strategy has largely worked as intended.

The Virginia Oyster Resource is currently in the best condition it has been in a generation. This is based on the most recent standing stock assessment survey conducted jointly by VMRC and VIMS in the fall of 2021.

Staff encourages the Commission to take a conservative and incremental approach when considering increasing harvest amounts.

Staff recommends adopting Amendments to Chapter 4 VAC 20-720-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Restrictions on Oyster Harvest" that do not to extend any area beyond the SMAC recommended areas and that these areas have no more than a 10-working day (2 week) extension.

10-working day season extension for the following areas:

Tangier Sound Black Berry Hangs Great Wicomico

# **Commission Meeting**

Rappahannock Area 1 Deep Rock (closes March 29, 2023) York River All Hand Tong Areas are set to close March 31. Closure date will be April 14, 2023

Chris Moore, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, previously sworn in, commented on the extension. His comments are a part of the verbatim record

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Minor made a motion to approve staff recommendation. Associate Member Headley seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m. The next Commission meeting will be Tuesday, March 28, 2023.

Jamie L. Green, Commissioner

Jamie Hogge, Recording Secretary