

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Potomac River Fisheries Commission
Colonial Beach, Virginia**

June 1, 2017

Commissioners Present: Dennis C. Fleming (MD) – Chairman, John M.R. Bull (VA), - Vice-Chairman, Phil L. Langley (MD), A.J. Erskine (VA), William L. Rice, Sr. (MD), , Ida C. Hall (VA) and Dave Blazer (MD). Lynn H. Kellum (VA) – Secretary, was unable to attend the meeting.

Officers Present: Martin L. Gary – Executive Secretary, Ellen B. Cosby – Assistant Executive Secretary and Michael C. Mayo – Legal Officer.

Others Present: Lt. Catherine Medelin – MDDNR Law Enforcement; 1st Sgt. Bell and MPO T. Wilkins – VMRC Law Enforcement; Gordon Selckmann – ICPRB, Dave Secor – UMCES, Jim Uphoff – MD DNR, John Morris – Crab Advisory Committee, Richard Riche – Potomac River Working Watermen Association (PRWWA), Robert Raley, Sam Dorough, Monica Schenemann, Jeff Schenemann, and several others who did not sign the guest register.

Press: None

Vice-chairman Bull called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. noting that there was a long agenda today. Commissioner Rice provided the invocation and Vice-chairman Bull led the pledge of allegiance.

Consideration of Minutes

Commissioner Hall questioned why a portion of the Mallows Bay discussion from the March meeting was not included in the minutes. She felt the discussion and questions from the Commissioners and public after the presentation were important and should be included.

Vice-chairman Bull asked Mr. Gary if the meeting was audio taped. Mr. Gary stated it was. Vice-chairman Bull asked if the audio tape could be posted as the record. Mr. Gary stated it could be done if that is the pleasure of the Commission. Vice-chairman Bull felt that was a good option and there would be no doubt about whether or not the summary accurately reflected all comments.

Commissioner Erskine asked Mr. Gary if there was a list of questions and comments that were being submitted to NOAA from the meeting. Mr. Gary explained the public comments that were taken during the public comment period were submitted to NOAA before the deadline and are part of the minutes presented.

Commissioner Hall stated she has no problem with the audio being posted on the website, but she feels a written record of the summary should be good for people who may not be able to listen to hours of audio. She feels the questions and comments could be summarized, but strongly feels they need to be placed in the minutes.

Commissioner Rice asked Becky if she could listen to the audio to include what Commissioner Hall is requesting. Becky stated it would take time to do it.

Vice-chairman Bull stated if the Commission would like staff to amend the minutes and put a more detailed summary, a motion needs to be made in order to do so.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hall, seconded by Commissioner Blazer and unanimously passed to direct staff to include a summary of the questions regarding Mallows Bay that were asked by the Commissioners and the public and a brief summary of NOAA staff's comments and answers to those questions from the March 20th meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hall, seconded by Commissioner Blazer and unanimously passed to correct the slate of officers to reflect the slate for 2016-2017 not 2017-2018.

A motion was made by Commissioner Blazer, seconded by Commissioner Hall and unanimously passed to adopt the minutes as modified from March 20, 2017.

Delinquent Seafood Catch Report Hearing

Beau D. Littek – Absent – Mr. Littek was called to today's hearing for failure to file catch reports for his fyke net license. This is Mr. Littek's 3rd offense (Class IV). Staff's recommendation is revocation of all licenses. *A motion was made by Commissioner Erskine, seconded by Commissioner Langley and unanimously passed to suspend all licenses until Mr. Littek appears before the Commission.*

James P. Nelson – Absent – Mr. Nelson was called to today's hearing for violation of Reg. II, Sec. 4(b) – Taking or catching of oysters in a closed area. Mr. Nelson received a citation on November 16, 2016 by MD DNR Police for harvesting in a closed area of Jones Shore. Mr. Nelson pled guilty and received a \$500 fine with \$300 of that suspended, court costs of \$22.50 and a CICF fine of \$35.00. He was placed on probation that will end on August 2, 2017 and six months of jail time that was suspended. Because he was in violation of a PRFC Regulation, he was also called to appear before the Commission. *A motion was made by Commissioner Erskine, seconded by Commissioner Langley and unanimously passed to suspend all licenses until Mr. Nelson appears before the Commission.*

Law Enforcement Update

Lt. Medelin from MD DNR Police advised in the past month, two warnings were written for improper tag display and recreational fishing without a license. She advised that from this point forward, she will keep track of Potomac River citations for future updates. She noted that MD DNR Police are doing background checks with hopes of a new class in 2018. We are always in need of manpower. She will keep everyone updated each quarter as things move along.

Ofc. Tommy Wilkins from VMRC Marine Police stated they have been very busy with the oyster season. They inspected thirty vessels and six oyster buyers when Ragged Point opened for harvest. As the Striped Bass season closed, there were numerous complaints on gear violations. Six citations were issued between March and May for gear violations. As the weather warms up we've received complaints for crab violations. Recently a complaint has come into the office at Quantico Creek in reference to Striped Bass poaching. An operation plan that was put into place was delayed because the officer assigned to that left the agency. Another operation plan is being worked on at this time for implementation. Vice-chairman Bull asked what kind of gear violations were written for the Striped Bass fishery. Ofc. Wilkins stated they were for improper flag displayed and gear being left out after the season ended.

Winter Crab Dredge Survey Results – Dr. Tom Miller, CBL

Dr. Thomas Miller of UMCES, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory provided a presentation and addressed Commissioner's Questions. Dr. Miller explained the basic methodology of the survey, that it is conducted during the winter when crabs are sessile, and can be counted by taking timed dredge samples at randomly selected locations throughout the Maryland and Virginia portions of the Bay including the Potomac. The survey has been conducted since 1990. In this year's survey, total abundance dropped slightly from 2016 number of 553 million crabs to 455 million crabs. Juvenile recruitment was the 4th lowest in the 28 year time series at 125 million crabs. Adult females were recorded at an all-time high level of 254 million crabs, which exceeded the target level of 215 million crabs and well over the threshold level of 70 million crabs. Adult male crab abundance fell by 16 percent, from 91 million to 76 million crabs. Commercial landings increased in all three Chesapeake jurisdictions to approximately 60 million pounds, which is a 20% increase baywide. Exploitation remained under the fishery target for the 9th consecutive year. Following the presentation, Mr. Erskine asked Dr. Miller if 2016 had many positive results. Dr. Miller indicated, yes, that we are managing the fishery in a sustainable way, but we do have a shortage of young crabs from the 2016 spawn that will be spawners in late 2017. Mr. Erskine followed by asking about whether there are concerns with male abundance? Dr. Miller replied that he did not, mainly because reproduction is highly variable year to year, and management actions could be constrained by too tightly limiting options by constraining options with control rules with both male abundance and female abundance. Ms. Hall asked if we are managing harvest, what we could do to protect the crabs without constraining harvest further? Dr. Miller indicated we have to acknowledge there is going to be a wide degree of uncertainty, and we have the fundamentals down and we need to stick to them (female control measures). Vice Chairman Bull asked Dr. Miller if he was suggesting or recommending that we should not worry about the future? Or should we take management measures to better ensure the likelihood that the management measure of the past several 5 years offer continued success? Dr. Miller indicated the current fundamentals are correct to seek to ensure high female abundance. It is likely under those measures, you are more likely to get high levels of recruitment, but not a guarantee. And you are going to have years where you have high female abundance, yet low recruitment. Mr. Bull followed by asking if the low juvenile abundance, the 4th lowest on record, is that an alarm bell to you? Dr. Miller indicated that he would look back into the past to the early 1990s, when we saw years of low recruitment followed by a year of very high recruitment. Nearly record recruitment. Where you get concerned is when you see pattern of low recruitment year after year. So one year of low recruitment by itself is not reason for immediate concern.

Several consecutive years of low recruitment are cause for concern. Mr. Langley asked if there is a specific month where the majority of female crabs spawn? Dr. Miller indicated females release their eggs at the mouth of the bay, with peaks in June and July, and the young crabs come back into the bay in peaks of August and September. Mr. Langley followed by asking about salinity and weather conditions and how much of an impact that may make? Dr. Miller indicated the overwintering females tend to aggregate from Tangier Island south in periods of low or high abundance. The major concerns are the conditions at the bay mouth when the females are releasing their offspring (June and July), and when the offspring are coming back (August and September). Dr. Miller indicated that he did not think the conditions in the springtime would affect this animal as much as an animal like a Striped bass which is spawning in the spring. Mr. Rice asked Dr. Miller if we should afford more protection to sponge crabs to allow them to release their eggs, like Striped bass? Dr. Miller indicated that is something you could consider, but he was not sure the spatial data has been sufficiently scaled to tell you where those actions should be. Connecting areas to spawning sanctuaries to provide channels for movement might also be worth considering, though it is uncertain on exactly how that could occur. Mr. Rice indicated that shifts the burden to Mr. Bull, because they (Virginia) owns the nursery. Mr. Rice indicated that he gets complaints that females are protected only to be caught with sponges before they release their eggs. Mr. Rice mentioned he read a female crab produces about 6,000 young. Dr. Miller indicated that a female carries about 5 million eggs, and that about 6,000 would not be a bad guess. Mr. Rice indicated a female sponge crab might be worth about 35 cents, but the value of the number of young she produces might be worth a lot more than that. He further stated anything we do will impact somebody. Dr. Miller indicated that the reproductive value of blue crabs has been calculated. A female crab has the highest reproductive value the day she releases her eggs. Prior to that time, reproductive value is lower. The challenge is developing regulations that are fair and equitable to watermen up and down the bay. The jurisdictions deserve a lot of praise for the collaboration that has taken place to manage this species. Mr. Rice followed by asking.... if he caught a sponge crab here in the river and released it, would it make it to the spawning grounds? Dr. Miller replied....not if you caught it (laughter). He then further stated that yes, he does think that there would be a good chance that it would make it. Mr. Bull stated he acknowledges the ongoing debate over the harvest of sponge crabs, and asked Dr. Miller considering the management measure that have been focused on females since 2008, would it be fair to say that Virginia's crabbers have taken the brunt of these harvest reductions, in that the focus has been on females, given the predominant gender is female in the southern end of the bay? (long pause) Dr. Miller replied it is an inevitable consequence that female conservation resides there and that he would give Virginia a great deal of credit for its actions. Mr. Rice asked when you look at the male crab, would you look at the management being driven more economically than the female crab? Dr. Miller indicated that we are at a point where the economics should begin to become a priority. Mr. Rice stated he was recently eating crabs at a restaurant on Kent Island and the couple sitting next to him were eating crabs they paid \$108 dollars a dozen for, and they were happy with what they had. And that in his estimation, it is amazing that public seems to have no aversion to price so long as they get the quality of the product they seek. Vice Chairman Bull indicated we now need to look at how we make this fishery better, and economically potent. Mr. Gary asked if Dr. Miller could characterize the timing of recruitment of the 4th lowest year class in the winter dredge survey and when they will be exploited by the fisheries. Dr. Miller stated the fastest growing crabs will recruit by September, then October and November. Mr. Blazer asked relative to the new July 1st to June

30th management cycle, could you comment on how that affect the overall management process? Dr. Miller responded that this has been for the good to allow a more adaptive approach, but that he would reiterate that the reproduction of this animal is highly variable, and that our ability to be adaptive is limited because of this. The longer trend rather than a single point estimate is what we need to be focused on. Mr. Blazer commended the work of CBSAC, and indicated that MD wishes to look at items in the future that are male oriented such as sperm limitation since that is the dominant gender in the MD portion of the Bay. Vice Chairman Bull indicated that it might be time to start looking into the quality of the fishery. Mr. Blazer indicated that the management landscape is complex, but the future looks brighter. Mr. Bull indicated the future looks much better than it did 4 years ago. Mr. Rice asked if it would make more sense to be moderately conservative and stabilize things within our means rather than wait for a crisis situation? Dr. Miller replied that would make a lot of sense. Vice Chairman Bull thanked Dr. Miller for his continued good work and support of the Commission.

Crab Harvest Report

Mr. Gary presented the 2017 preliminary crab harvest report for April and May. He stated there were 4,189 bushels of hard crabs, 319 pounds of peelers and 52 pounds of soft crabs harvested so far this season. He noted that April was well above the long term average.

Crab Advisory Committee Report – April 26, 2017 & May 30, 2017 (Teleconference)

Mr. Gary presented the report noting that there were two meetings he will talk about. The meeting on April 26th opened with the results of the winter crab dredge survey and the crab harvest report. There was a discussion of the possible 2017/2018 crab management options. Mr. Gary reviewed the bushel limits for last season and how many times they reached their limits on any given day. At that time, Maryland and Virginia had not decided what they were going to do regarding crab management in their jurisdictions. The committee agreed to wait to see what Maryland and Virginia do and to have a teleconference once the information is available. The committee tabled a discussion of commercial crab licenses under corporation/business designation and designated crabber. Current regulations do not define who can be a designated crabber. This is not a conservation or management issue, but a concern of a person holding more than one license by way of individual, company and/or multiple companies. They reviewed current vacancies on the committee and elected the current Chairman and Vice-chairman for another term.

A teleconference took place on May 30th and Mr. Gary provided information regarding what the other jurisdictions were going to do for the 2017/2018 crab season. He advised that Maryland and Virginia are considering shortening their seasons for this year and they are considering adjustments to their bushel limits. In Virginia, it's a mixed male/female bushel limit and in Maryland it's a female only bushel limit. Currently we do not know what that is going to be yet. He explained that Virginia is leaning towards implementation in early November. With this information, the committee made a recommendation to retract from the season ending on December 10th back to November 30th and to consider another year's worth of data before they look at additional measures.

Discussion of Possible Management Responses for the 2017/2018 Management Year

Vice-chairman Bull noted that Virginia has been briefed twice on these issues and we are aware of the high abundance of spawning age females. The low juvenile level is of great concern and VMRC has authorized advertising for a public hearing to discuss closing the crab fishery at the end of November instead of December 20th and instituting reduced bushel limits through entirety of November. In the spring would be a later opening than last year.

Commissioner Blazer stated MD DNR met with their industry workgroup on May 17th and will meet again on June 21st to solidify a recommendation. They will also meeting with the Tidal Fish Advisory Committee who will review the workgroups recommendation and will make a final recommendation to MD DNR to hopefully enact something around July 1st. They are looking at a variety of management tools such as season reduction and bushel limits.

Commissioner Langley asked Dr. Miller if there is an actual percentage based on conservation that should be achieved. Next he asked staff if going from December 20th back to November 30th achieves this.

Dr. Miller explained that he could look at the rates of harvest through the year to estimate what fraction we think those recruits will be caught. Trying to figure out what fraction of crabs survive the following winter is always going to be an unknown. It comes down to how much risk the jurisdictions want to take on board. We can give you guidance, but the long term impact is always going to be uncertain.

Mr. Gary stated he does not have a quantified answer because he has not been working from that baseline. He's been working from a shared concern of the low juvenile index and in formulating whatever management response PRFC is going to move forward. We are going to do something meaningful to protect those recruits that are coming into the fishery. At the same time, we're looking to work with industry to do it in a manner that doesn't disadvantage them relative to the other jurisdictions, so there is some sort of consistency. In talking to our advisory committee and industry, they want to end the season on November 30th and he feels they may be willing to talk about bushel limits in the future. Bushel limits are what he is going to propose as a staff recommendation and he will do that when the Commission is ready.

Vice-chairman Bull stated he would like to hear from the industry on their thoughts regarding this issue.

Dustin Westman crabs in Virginia and the Potomac River. He stated that three quarters of his crabbing is done in Virginia because he has to leave the lower Potomac at the end of July because of the female bushel limits. You can't make a living on 14 bushels of females a day in the lower Potomac. He doesn't see any reason for the Potomac to try and save the females when they move into the Chesapeake Bay and are harvested in Virginia waters. He doesn't understand that and would advise the PRFC not to impose any restrictions until Virginia addresses that.

John Morris stated he crabs all three jurisdictions and noted there is a large abundance of females and he would like to the season end on November 30th and leave the bushel limits alone.

Richard Riche stated he is part of the Potomac River Working Watermen and crabs in the Potomac River all year long. He doesn't crab in any other jurisdiction. Our organization is made up of watermen from Maryland and Virginia. We are working very hard between ourselves to bridge the gap and work together. We feel like we just need to leave it be. The numbers and abundance are great and if anything, put the season back to November 30th. He sees the concern with the low juvenile abundance, but we don't know what will happen. If something happens next year, then we will need to take action. He also agrees with Commissioner Rice and he doesn't see anything that needs to be addressed here today.

Mr. Gary referenced the first sentence of the Compact of 1958 between the two states that says "Maryland and Virginia are both vitally interested in conserving and improving the valuable fishery resources of the tidewater portion of the Potomac River." He reiterated looking at those performance levels, and what he is going to propose is still within the boundaries of the harvest. He reviewed the harvest by pot limits and showed each potter individually and what their harvest was each day. On average, a 500 pot licensee harvested 12 bushels, a 400 pot licensee harvested 4 to 7 bushels and a 300 pot licensee harvested 4 to 10 bushels a day.

Commissioner Hall asked how this data relates to where the crabs are caught in the Potomac River. Mr. Gary explained that harvest is reported by area and what he's seen from the reports; he can advise that it's the lower third of the river for the majority of the harvest. He said John Morris, who is one of the largest Potomac River crabbers could respond to that as well. Mr. Morris stated the fishery has changed. He said the watermen are not fishing for female crabs like they used to. There is not much effort in the lower river during the fall of the year.

Vice-chairman Bull asked Mr. Gary for staff's recommendation. Mr. Gary noted that based on the information that's been gathered, his recommendation would be to maintain the 2017 calendar year crab fishery with a closing date of November 30th. That was already adopted at the March Commission meeting. In addition, implementation of bushel limit reductions as follows:

500 Pot License from 24 bu. to 20 bu.

400 Pot License from 19 bu. to 16 bu.

300 Pot License from 14 bu. to 13 bu.

The implementation would be effective November 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

Vice-chairman Bull stated the recommendation is to address the low juvenile abundance level that will recruit in the fall, but it strikes him odd that the implementation runs through June 30, 2018. This implies the Commission is setting the bushel limits for the entire management cycle. Mr. Gary stated that is a correct interpretation and follows the agreement the jurisdictions have made for that specified cycle. This is a start to protect that recruitment that Dr. Miller talked about and based on what he said, the majority of that recruitment is in October and November to that exploitable size range. Out of respect for the industry, Mr. Gary tried to reach a middle ground by implementing on November 1st. This would be the best opportunity to achieve regulatory consistency with Virginia.

Commissioner Hall questioned what time of year it was when the 500 pot crabbers were catching the 24 bushels on a daily basis. Mr. Gary explained this is the 2016 harvest data and they were generally caught in the months of October and November.

Commissioner Blazer stated he understands the proposal and the concern he has is the age 0 recruits start showing up in September. If we're waiting to put those bushel limits in effect until November 1st, we may not get the full reduction in the exploitation rate that we're looking to achieve. He may be interested in moving the date for the bushel limits back to September 30th or October 1st where those recruits are starting to enter the fishery.

Vice-chairman Bull stated part of this is timing and the window of harvest opportunities as the crabs migrate down the river in the fall. If we're conserving them in Maryland and conserving them in a slightly different time frame as they make their way down the Potomac River, it means there's more conservation when they hit Virginia. The conservation measures in Virginia will protect them the rest of the way.

Commissioner Hall directed her statement to Vice-chairman Bull, noting that Virginia manages by bushel limits but is not specific to females. She felt a bushel limit there might not impact the harvest of the females. Vice-chairman Bull pulled November and December harvest data from Virginia for 2016 and reported last December, 120,000 lbs of which 94,000 lbs. were females and last November, 1.5 million lbs. of which 1.3 million lbs. were females. Whatever bushel limits Virginia enacted for the reduced bushel limits for November will be overwhelming female in conservation measures.

Commissioner Erskine stated he understands staff's recommendation and appreciates all the hard work that goes into running the data. He noted hearing from the public and Dr. Miller, he feels we're in a pretty good situation and the numbers are going higher except for the age 0 recruits. We were told by the leading scientist that's annual variability in the data and we should expect that. He doesn't have a concern that it may be a trend. He wonders if the Commission is micromanaging the fishery on an annual basis, where we're doing more harm because we're not allowing the data to speak to us in a trend. Our conservation measures have worked and we need to give them time to settle in and see what happens.

Commissioner Hall agrees with Commissioner Erskine's comments. Looking at the data presented and Dr. Miller's comments, the crab fishery is highly variable and there's been a great deal of fluctuation. We are harvesting within a sustainable level. She doesn't have a problem cutting the season back to November 30th but would like give this a chance and see if what we are doing now is working. If it's not then we can address that because the variability of the crab is going to constantly change. We should manage within a sensible level and continue the management and make notice of any trends that develop, good or bad, and then change our course if we need to.

Commissioner Langley asked Dr. Miller if crab recruitment is similar to striped bass recruitment, where it's not as critical in numbers of crabs but more about the conditions. A small number of crabs in the right conditions can have a good reproduction cycle. Dr. Miller explained there are several factors that affect the survival of young crabs from when they enter the Chesapeake Bay

in September to when they see them in December as part of the winter dredge survey. The challenge we have is that we don't know the number of crabs that are entering the Bay.

Commissioner Blazer respects the Commission's attempt to try and reach some sort of stabilization. He feels we've reached a point, in Maryland as well, where we appreciate the flexibility. The winter dredge survey has been a reliable tool to help manage the fishery. We have the ability to make adjustments accordingly. As managers we are looking for a conservative risk. In this case, because the recruits are so low, we're looking at the fall fishery and we have to protect that year class so we have a brood stock to produce more crabs.

Vice-chairman Bull noted that three years ago we were faced with a depleted spawning stock and we took action. It required us to reduce the risk that this was going to get worse. That has paid off and where we're at now, Dr. Miller confirms, we are in pretty good shape and this low recruitment level is a warning sign, to let it ride as it were is an unacceptable risk. We have worked hard to get us to this point and he's not comfortable in hoping this is a one time low level of juveniles and it was just one of those things. The more we conserve the better changes we will have to have higher abundances in the future. He would like to see action taken and would like to do more than just returning to the season ending on November 30th. He's not comfortable with staff's recommendation of bushel limits set through June 30, 2018, but he could see October as the middle ground for conservation and risk aversion versus keeping the watermen working through the fall in a meaningful way. The data shows last fall they weren't harvesting their data limits so a bushel limit reduction does something but he doesn't think it does everything. To not do anything is too risky from his perspective.

A motion was made by Commissioner Blazer, seconded by Commissioner Rice to follow some of staff's recommendation to reduce the season length by ten days from December 10th to November 30th and implement the reduced bushel limits as follows: 500 pot = 20 bu., 400 pot = 16 bu. and 300 pot = 13 bu. with an implementation start date of October 15th for the remainder of the 2017 and into the spring through June 30, 2018.

Commissioner Rice stated this is extremely hard but he thinks that it's necessarily what we are going to do for the overall crab abundance here on the Potomac as much as it's going to send a signal to Virginia and Maryland that we are in agreement with where we started back a number of years ago and everybody has to do their part. He feels there is good faith with both Maryland and Virginia that they will do their part and unfortunately the PRFC is the first to make a decision. These reduced bushel limits aren't going to affect too many people for a long period of time according to last year's information. He wouldn't vote for it if he didn't think it was the right thing to do.

Commissioner Erskine shares what his fellow Commissioners are feeling. We are trying to have consistency among the other jurisdictions and there are hard decisions to be made. He still stands by what he said earlier and that we are managing from a specific data point and he heard loud and clear, that there is not a concern unless we see a trend. He thinks as much as we want to act as one entity, three jurisdictions are managing for a common resource and he stated he could not vote in favor of this motion.

Vice-chairman Bull stated in the interest of time and several failed motions, he asked Commissioners Erskine and Hall what they would like to see. Commissioner Erskine stated he would like to see status quo, but he knows that's not going to happen. He could be in favor of some sort of modified bushel limits. He doesn't believe in the bushel limits and stated because they are not catching the bushels doesn't mean the effort isn't there. It doesn't mean we are conserving crabs, it means we aren't taking them out of the water. He thinks, again, we're managing around a specific point and that's dangerous. We have a chance to review this each year and if something were an exceptional situation, and then he would understand management measures. It seems that bushel limits are what are going to move forward here. From the data Mr. Gary showed, the 300 pot license is the most common license and would prefer not to see that impacted.

Mr. Mayo suggested calling for the vote on the motion that was made so we can see where the Commission stands and move forward from that position.

Mrs. Cosby pointed out to the Commission that bushel limits are a fairly new management technique in the river that previously was managed by seasonal closures. This gives a little more flexibility and allows the watermen to work on the water. It's a matter of adjusting the catch limits and it does provide more flexibility in management.

Commissioner Langley asked if the bushel reductions were based on a percentage for all license types. All the crabbers with higher bushel limits probably have more invested in their gear, so a percentage across the board would be a more equitable solution. Mr. Gary explained it was a subjective exercise and he didn't have any quantified metric target. Our dominate license is the 300 pot license, so he was more sensitive to that gear type. He's trying to do something meaningful and it will hopefully result in some reductions. The abundance of females is projected to be much lower next year so what's going to happen next year with a lower abundance? This tightening may not result in any savings if this low year class manifests itself like the data in the winter dredge survey suggests.

Commissioner Blazer asked what the bushel limits were in 2015. Mr. Gary noted the bushel limits were implemented in October of 2015 and they were maintained going forward. We are now addressing the upcoming cycle.

Commissioner Rice explained prior to bushel limits there was a rolling season closure for females when females were migrating down river.

Commissioner Langley stated he wouldn't want to say short term management on this species is a knee jerk reaction based on the life expectancy of the species. He thinks it involves some sort of year to year action to protect each year class as they come along.

Vice-chairman Bull called for the vote of the motion made by Commissioner Blazer and seconded by Commissioner Rice. With a vote of 4 to 2 (Hall & Erskine) the motion fails.

Commissioner Erskine stated something Virginia has done as a management tool is to close the fishery one day a week (oyster fishery). Is that something that could be quantified for the

reduction percentage from a conservation perspective? Commissioner Rice stated it would accomplish zero because he has to let his pots soak three days before they are worth fishing. He's already taking off three days a week to let his pots soak.

Chairman Fleming arrived to the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

Commissioner Rice asked Commissioner Hall and Commissioner Erskine to offer up something since they did not approve the last motion. Commissioner Hall stated she was not ready to make a motion and wanted to talk this through some more. She commended Mr. Gary on his efforts. In looking at the bushel limits, she doesn't feel the same in regards to bushel limits as Commissioner Erskine. We saw that the 500 pot licensees are not catching their limit regularly but she thinks that Commissioner Langley had a very valid point. If we're going to reduce bushels, which she doesn't support, it needs to be across the board with a percentage that's fair. This is one of the reasons she can't support the bushel limits proposed. She supports status quo.

Vice-chairman Bull asked Mr. Gary when the fall Commission meeting is scheduled to take place. Staff noted it's scheduled for September 7th. Vice-chairman Bull asked the Commission if it would be helpful to table all of this until the September meeting, look to see what Maryland and Virginia do, then decide what we should do. Would that be helpful?

Mr. Gary advised that Order 2016-11 River Wide Female Crab Harvest Limits for Management Year 2017-2018 expires at the end of June. At the very minimum, the Commission would need to extend that to allow you the flexibility to wait.

Commissioner Rice stated what the Commission does here, doesn't affect the overall crab population as much as it affects our gentlemen's agreement. If we hold off on the decision, that definitely gives us time.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rice, seconded by Commissioner Erskine noting under the present circumstances with the uncertainty in the population of crabs but also in the light of cooperation between the three jurisdictions, the Potomac River holding the least amount of harvest, feels it's necessary to delay our decision until what time Maryland and Virginia have moved forward with their decisions. He puts forward that the Commission extends our present regulations to stay in effect until September 7th. At that particular time, the Commission shall move forward with further management actions pertaining to the new crab harvest.

Commissioner Blazer stated this is not advantageous for Maryland because this kicks the can down the road and doesn't make a decision. He's afraid their workgroups may take the same position and not do anything. He would much rather see the Commission take action today and noted he can't support delaying it any further.

Commissioner Erskine seconded the motion and stated he wouldn't call it a compromise he would call it a delay. In regards to Commissioner Rice's comments of having the least harvest, he would think it would be prudent for the Commission to see what the larger jurisdictions are going to do, proportionally speaking, are going to have for management measures. The data shows the Potomac River doesn't have the amount of harvest as Maryland and Virginia, but this is a significant issue and giving this a delay and time to discuss this further is necessary.

Commissioner Rice asked Commissioner Blazer how long it takes in Maryland for a regulation to become effective. Commissioner Blazer explained a public notice has to be posted and 48 hours later it can go into effect. If Maryland does anything, they are shooting for a July 1st effective date. Part of that is the season closure may be impacting November and our bushel limits, if implemented, would go into effect in July.

Vice-chairman Bull called for the vote and with 6 in favor and 1 against (Blazer), the motion passed.

The following Order was amended to reflect the motion:

ORDER # 2017-09
(replaces #2016-11)

**RIVER WIDE FEMALE CRAB HARVEST LIMITS
FOR MANAGEMENT YEAR 2017-2018**

THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION, having found it necessary for the preservation of the crab population, having considered the protection, promotion, growth and conservation of the crab resources, and pursuant to its authority under Regulation I, Section 7(a) and Regulation VII, Section 7.

HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS: it shall be unlawful for any commercial crab pot licensee to take or catch, or attempt to take or catch more than fourteen (14) bushels for 300 pot licenses; nineteen (19) bushels for 400 pot licenses and twenty-four (24) bushels for 500 pot licenses of female crabs per day from June 10, 2017 through September 17, 2017 in the Potomac River.

AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED: this Order #2017-09 shall become effective June 10, 2017 and remain in effect through September 17, 2017.

Vice-chairman Bull called for a recess so Chairman Fleming could take over the meeting.

Recess: 11:09 a.m.
Reconvene: 11:20 a.m.

Delinquent Seafood Catch Report Hearing

Chairman Fleming stated the Commission was going to go back to the delinquent seafood catch report hearing to address a couple of items.

James P. Nelson – Chairman Fleming noted for the record that his licenses, meaning all of his licenses (inclusive) are suspended until he appears before the Commission.

Robert L. Raley – Chairman Fleming advised that Mr. Raley was called before the Commission at the March meeting. Mr. Raley did not appear at that meeting, which resulted in a mix up as to who he was working for and some address issues. As a result, the Commission deemed him ineligible to renew any Potomac River Fisheries Commission license until his unpaid balance of the oyster tax is paid, his weekly seafood catch reports are corrected, and he must appear before the Commission. Since then, he has worked with staff to get his reports filed correctly and has paid all of his oyster taxes due. Mr. Raley appeared before the Commission today and has been cooperative. It's now up to the Commission to decide on his eligibility status going forward.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rice, seconded by Commissioner Blazer and unanimously passed to reinstate Mr. Raley's eligibility to renew his licenses.

Commissioner Bull asked Mr. Raley what caused this problem. Mr. Raley stated he was employed through a company with someone else. He turned his reports in to them and they didn't get mailed in. As for the address, it wasn't being mailed to him. He had no idea he was even delinquent. He wasn't aware he was called to the March meeting until someone told him after the meeting had ended. As soon as he heard about it he contacted Mrs. Cosby and took the necessary steps to resolve the situation.

Chairman Fleming advised that he was going to amend the agenda and discuss Finfish Issues instead of Oyster Issues. The Commission had no problem with that.

Striped Bass Acoustic Telemetry Presentation – Dave Secor, CLB

Dr. David Secor of UMCES, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory provided a presentation to update his work using acoustic telemetry tags with Striped Bass. Dr. Secor indicated his research uses a technology that is similar to EZ pass with vehicles, allowing himself and other researchers to observe long distance movements over time up and down the Atlantic coast. The focus of today's update is for 2014 data, when 100 Striped Bass were surgically implanted with acoustic receivers. The primary reason for the study was to look at age/size specific emigration from the Chesapeake Bay with Striped Bass. Fish of both a smaller and larger size range were tagged. The tags "ping" a signal on a unique frequency that is picked up by receivers which have been deployed in many locations of the Chesapeake and up and down the Atlantic coast. In the Chesapeake, receivers are located at the Nice Bridge, St. George's Island, Cedar Point and the Bay Bridges near Annapolis. Over 60 researchers up and down the coast are using the technology and supportive infrastructure, and over 50 species of fish are being studied, including sharks and Cow Nosed Rays. Bay community participants included CBL, SERC, VIMS, NOAA, and the Navy. Coastwide, receivers extend from Chesapeake Bay to north of Cape Cod, MA. Predictably, fish of all sizes are seen in the rivers such as the Potomac in the spring and later, Ocean transmitters pick up the larger fish as they leave the Bay. Dr. Secor compared fish implanted in 2015 and 2016 and looked at movements by age, size, and gender. One finding was that emigration seemed to be more delayed than the age 3 suggestion from other tag based data. For Potomac departures which left the Chesapeake Bay: 37 out of 71 spring fish left the Bay. Of those 37 fish, 13 visited Massachusetts waters, 5 went as north as Long Island, 2 went as far as the Delaware Bay, Many undetected (ocean is a big place). The exit location for those fish was: 6 snuck out undetected, 22 passed through the Chesapeake Mouth, and 9 passed through the C&D Canal. Regarding departures and inhabitation of tagged Striped bass in the Potomac River: About half of the tagged spawning run fish were coastal migrants. Most coastal emigrants left during spring (April), but a few left during late fall months. Coastal emigrants are larger fish, with a threshold of about 32" TL, age 7. No difference between sexes in size-dependent emigration. Upper Potomac Striped bass most frequented March-May. High Potomac inhabitation of spawning run fish 24-28". Small fish tagged during fall in lower Potomac showed a strong connection to Patuxent River. Dr. Secor explained what happens to Striped bass that do not emigrate and remain resident in the Bay during the summer. They may assimilate in areas that are subject to dissolved oxygen "squeeze" where the fish are located in the middle portion of

the water column between lower oxygen areas at the bottom and very warm areas in the upper part of the water column. Areas with dissolved oxygen levels at mg/L or less can be lethal to Striped bass. Dr. Secor illustrated other spatial information off the coast. In summary: *Telemetry studies are confirming past views on size and sex dependent migration and inhabitation & that bigger fish leave. About half of spawning run fish were coastal migrants. There is a strong connection between the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers. The C&D Canal is an important migration corridor. Telemetry can match fish movements to habitat, forage availability, but such studies are field intensive and pricey. Telemetry back bones (EZ pass) could be used to monitor yearly changes in emigration rates and fish availability in the Potomac, linking these to fisheries and ecosystem health.* Mr. Langley stated he was a bit surprised by some of the findings, and that he was under the impression that the Potomac had a mostly male population of Striped bass (resident). He asked if Dr. Secor's findings supported that. Dr. Secor stated it would because they tend to be smaller. The reason because there is a different mortality rate and they die at an earlier age and they don't tend to reach the size that females do. Mr. Mayo asked what should someone from the public do if they catch a tagged fish. Dr. Secor indicated he would hope the fish would be released and that the tag states such. Mr. Langley stated the migration might have occurred earlier this year and asked when his data might show this. Dr. Secor indicated there is approximately a one year delay. Mr. Blazer stated that other fisheries Directors are indicating range expansion may be occurring to the north, but not south and asked what his data might be showing in that regard. Dr. Secor indicated that they (Striped bass) do not appear to be going any further north than the Gulf of Maine. He also noted that North Carolina has lost receiver assets recently. Dr. Secor also indicated that Gary Shepard of the USF&WS was looking into the relative contribution of various stocks based upon regional telemetry studies. Ms. Cosby asked if the Navy has been timely in providing data from their arrays. Dr. Secor confirmed that they have been very timely in providing that data. Mr. Gary asked how secure the funding is for future acoustic tagging work. (Long pause) Dr. Secor said he is not very secure (laughter). He indicated it is a patch work effort to pull together a variety of partners, their funding and other resources to make it work. That they are doing their best, but nothing is guaranteed. Mr. Langley remarked on how he used to see large migrant Striped bass in November of many years, but that we have not seen them as prominently in recent years. Dr. Secor replied that he cannot answer that, in part due to the fact that receiver arrays are removed in the winter to prevent ice damage. Mr. Fleming remarked on the "summer squeeze" and asked for more detail. Dr. Secor explained the physics of thermal stratification. Mr. Fleming remarked about the aggregation north of Chesapeake Beach and asked if Dr. Secor would like to make any comment on this. Dr. Secor mentioned this "evacuation behavior" is worth studying but that it might be dependent upon variability with dead zone prevalence and severity.

Lower Potomac River Benthic Community Data Presentation – Tom Parham & Jim Uphoff, MD DNR

Tom Parham and Jim Uphoff of MD DNR provided a presentation on "Why are Striped Bass leaving the Lower Potomac River?" What changes are we seeing in the Potomac River and lower Bay habitat since 2006? Mr. Parham indicated that beginning in about 2006, reports were indicating rockfish were moving out of the Potomac River much sooner than normal and heading up to join the summer school of fish residing in the area from about the Choptank River north to Eastern Bay. Prior to 2007, Charter captains could catch rockfish on the main Bay from

Solomons Island down to the Maryland line on reefs from 30 -35 feet deep. After 2007 that pattern disappeared. Historic data has suggested that mature females leave the Bay. Some males leave as well. Most males & some immature females stay in Bay (residents). Tagging in the 1950s and 60s indicate most resident Striped Bass move to mid-Bay region, though some remain in tributaries. Questions that have been asked are: Are there less Potomac fish or did they swim up the Bay? Did something change that makes fishing less efficient? Did habitat change so that fish are in the system, but not using deep spots like they used to? Mr. Uphoff took over the presentation and remarked that an important aggregating habitat, the Dominion gas docks closure removed a good lower Bay spot. To attempt answer these questions, Mr. Uphoff remarked on the following concepts: General shifts over time in locations of legal fish, catch data, distribution of tagging returns, forage location, rockfish nutrition/conditions over time, and fishing reports. Mr. Uphoff presented MD DNR external anchor tag data which included: Fish tagged on Potomac spawning grounds, data split: 2000-2006 & 2007-2013, Chesapeake Bay May-August returns only, and returns from Potomac & lower Bay NOAA areas divided by all returns in Bay (MD & VA).

The information did not suggest migration change, with 56% in 2000-2006 (64 total returns), and 59% in 2007-2013 (68 total returns). Mr. Uphoff suggested the NMFS MRFSS catch data was lower from 2008-2014. Mr. Uphoff then discussed diet of the resident Striped bass. The most prevalent prey item was polychaetes (May worms and other benthic dwelling worms), followed by large menhaden, and then surprisingly clams (perhaps by feeding around browsing Cow Nosed Rays). Mr. Uphoff explained that historically Striped bass were spread out over more locations due to less hypoxia and a different size management paradigm. In recent years, hypoxia is much more prevalent and we are managing for larger fish. Those fish have less suitable habitat and areas to inhabit. Tom Parham then took over the presentation and started by asking the question What changes are we seeing in the Potomac River and lower Bay habitat since 2006? That appears to be the time when the shift in distribution of Striped bass occurred. Mr. Parham showed a slide to illustrate that in recent years the best water quality in the summer has been in the middle upper bay area in terms of cooler temperatures and dissolved oxygen. Mr. Parham then discussed and showed slides related to prey items and benthic surveys. In the lower Potomac River, benthic food items were very limited in the early time frame (2007-2009). Benthic food items were more available in the middle/upper bay. Recently, Roberto Llonzo, a benthic researcher has indicated that dissolved oxygen levels are rebounding, but it may take several years for a rebound to occur. Mr. Parham concluded with the following observations: Available information does not offer a clear explanation. Tagging data does not support a distributional shift. Resident rockfish may have been at low abundance in some years.

Habitat conditions in the deeper waters of the lower Potomac/lower Bay became poorer, and fish may not have been able to use habitat they once did. Less bottom-dwelling forage in lower Potomac/lower Bay is a possibility. Mr. Langley asked if the benthic community is improving from north to south. Mr. Parham stated that the recovery and corresponding trend has been “spotty.” Mr. Uphoff concluded by stating that “Counting fish is a lot harder than counting trees, as they move and you can’t see them.”

Recess: 12:45 p.m.
Reconvene: 1:15 p.m.

Order 2017-03 “Revised” – 2017 Recreational and Charter Fishing Season, Size and Catch Limits

Mrs. Cosby presented the revised Order and noted that Black Sea Bass needs to be updated. She stated it is status quo from last year. Chairman Fleming felt there was no controversy in these Orders and he would like to go through each one and have one motion for all three.

Order 2017-04 “Revised” – 2017 Commercial Fishing Season, Size and Catch Limits

Mrs. Cosby presented the revised Order and noted the same as the recreational Order for updating Black Sea Bass.

Order 2017-08 – Commercial Atlantic Menhaden Catch Limits and Restrictions

Mrs. Cosby advised this is a housekeeping issue to bring the current Order into the 2017/2018 management year.

A motion was made by Commissioner Blazer, seconded by Commissioner Erskine and unanimously passed to adopt Order 2017-03 “Revised”, Order 2017-04 “Revised” and Order 2017-08 as presented.

**O R D E R #2017-03 “Revised”
(replaces #2017-03)**

**2017 RECREATIONAL and CHARTER
FISHING SEASON, SIZE AND CATCH LIMITS**

THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION, having found it necessary to comply with certain provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA) and the provisions of Regulation III, Sections 9, 10 and 11; **HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** recreational and charter seasons, size limits, and catch limits provided for in Regulation III, Section 9, 10, and 11 shall be for the species named therein as follows:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Size Limit</u>	<u>Catch Limit</u>
American Eel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	9" min.	25 per person
Atlantic Croaker	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	9" min.	25 per person
Black Bass (Large or Small Mouth)	March 1 - June 15	15" min.	5 per person
	All other times	12" min.	5 per person
Black Drum	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	16" min.	1 per person
Black Sea Bass ⁽¹⁾	May 15 - Sept. 21 & Oct. 22 - Dec. 31	12 ½" min.	15 per person
Bluefish	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	8" min.	10 per person
Catfish: Bullhead	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	6" min.	No limit
Blue	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Crappie	Jan 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	10 per person
Pike or Chain Pickerel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No limit
Red Drum	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	18" min. – 25" max.	5 per person

River Herring	.....	C L O S E D	.....
Shad (American or Hickory)	.....	C L O S E D	.....
Snakehead ⁽²⁾	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Spanish Mackerel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	15 per person
Spot	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Spotted Sea Trout	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	10 per person
Striped Bass	.....	P U B L I S H E D S E P A R A T E L Y	.....
Sturgeon (Atlantic or Shortnose)	.....	C L O S E D	.....
Summer flounder	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	17" min.	4 per person
Tautog	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No Limit
Weakfish	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	12" min.	1 per person
Yellow perch	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	9" min.	10 per person

(1) – **Black Sea Bass** – The tail filament is not to be included in the total length of the fish.

(2) – **Snakehead** – It shall be unlawful to possess a live snakehead fish (of the family *Channidae*) only so long as necessary to **kill the fish** as specified in Order 2010-06.

AND, IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED: this Order #2017-03 “Revised” shall become effective June 10, 2017 shall supersede and repeal Order #2017-03 and remain in effect until further notice.

**O R D E R #2017-04 “Revised”
(replaces #2017-04)**

**2017 COMMERCIAL
FISHING SEASON, SIZE AND CATCH LIMITS**

THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION, having found it necessary to comply with certain provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA) and the provisions of Regulation III, Sections 9, 10 and 11; **HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** that commercial seasons, size limits, and catch limits provided for in Regulation III, Section 9, 10, and 11 shall be for the species named therein as follows:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Size Limit</u>	<u>Catch Limit</u>
American Eel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	9" min.	No limit
Atlantic Croaker	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Black Bass (Large or Small Mouth)	.....	C L O S E D	.....
Black Drum	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	16" min.	1 fish
Black Sea Bass* ⁽¹⁾	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	11" min.	No limit
Bluefish*	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Catfish: Bullhead	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	6" min.	No limit
Channel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	8" min.	No limit
White	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	10" min.	No limit
Blue	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Pike or Chain Pickerel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No limit
Red Drum	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	18" min. - 25" max.	5 fish
River Herring	.....	C L O S E D	.....
Shad (American or Hickory)	.....	C L O S E D (See Order #2013-01 for By-Catch Provisions)	...
Snakehead	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit ⁽²⁾	No limit
Spanish Mackerel*	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No limit
Spot	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Spotted Sea Trout	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No limit
Striped Bass	.....	P U B L I S H E D S E P A R A T E L Y	.....
Sturgeon (Atlantic or Shortnose)	.....	C L O S E D	.....
Summer flounder**	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	21,962
Tautog	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No limit

Weakfish***	July 28 - Dec. 31	12" min.	50 lbs / day
White perch	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	6" min.	No limit
Yellow perch	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	9" min.	No limit

- (1) – **Black Sea Bass** – The tail filament is not to be included in the total length of the fish.
- (2) – **Snakehead** – It shall be unlawful to possess a live snakehead fish, (of the family *Channidae*) only so long as necessary to **kill the fish** as specified in Order 2010-06.

***BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** the commercial fisheries for black sea bass, bluefish, and/or Spanish mackerel, have daily catch limits (landing limits) imposed subject to ASMFC notification and may be closed immediately by Order of the Commission upon notification by both Maryland and Virginia that the ASMFC/MAFMC established commercial harvest quota for such species has been landed and the state waters are closed for the harvest of such species.

****BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** that when the PRFC summer flounder quota, based on the ASMFC quota as established by the MD/VA/PRFC In State Commercial Summer Flounder Landings Memorandum of Understanding, is reached the fishery shall be closed. Providing that daily landing limits may be imposed when 80% of the quota is projected to be landed.

*****BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** that subject to the provisions of the ASMFC Weakfish Management Plan pound netters are permitted to possess no more than 50 lbs. (1 bushel) of legal size weakfish from February 15th through July 27th. The allowance must be less than or equal to the poundage of other lawfully harvested species.

AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED: this Order #2017-04 “Revised” shall become effective, June 10, 2017 shall supersede and repeal Order #2017-04 and remain in effect until further notice.

ORDER #2017-08
(replaces #2016-10 “Revised”)

COMMERCIAL ATLANTIC MENHADEN CATCH LIMITS AND RESTRICTIONS

THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION, having found it necessary to comply with certain provisions of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Amendment 2 and Addendum I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (IFMP) for Atlantic Menhaden and the provisions of Regulation I, Section 7(a)(2):

HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS: the catch limit for Atlantic menhaden provided for in Regulation III, Section 10(a) shall be 2,709,809 pounds. A weekly menhaden harvest call-in program will be imposed when 70 percent of the catch limit is projected to be landed. When the PRFC Atlantic menhaden catch limit is reached, all commercial fisheries shall be closed to all gear types.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED: When the commercial fisheries for Atlantic menhaden are closed, subject to the provisions of the ASMFC Amendment 2 and Addendum I to the IFMP for Atlantic Menhaden, PRFC commercial fishermen using stationary multi-species gear are permitted to possess and/or land no more than 6,000 pounds of Atlantic menhaden for a single vessel per day, which must be harvested by the licensee from his licensed net(s). In this case, stationary multi-species gears are defined as pound nets, anchored/staked gill nets, and fyke nets. Exception – a single vessel may land/possess no more than 12,000 pounds of Atlantic menhaden per day when there are two PRFC pound net licensees physically on board who each have at least one of their pound nets set and fishing and prior to the fishery being closed and the by-catch provisions being implemented, no more than 6,000 pounds of Atlantic menhaden are harvested from either of the licensees nets.

AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED: this Order #2017-08 shall become effective June 10, 2017 shall supersede and repeal 2016-10 “Revised”, and remain in effect until June 1, 2018.

Chairman Fleming went back to Oyster Issues that were previously skipped in the agenda to accommodate the presenters.

Oyster Harvest Report

Mrs. Cosby presented the oyster harvest report and noted the report is in the process of being revised. She reported there are adjustments that need to be made in regards to licenses sold. She reported the following:

Tonger's	27	Hand Scrape Personal	52
Tong Boat Operator's	32	Vessel	30
Assistant	13	Assistant	<u>9</u>
Power Assist Hand Tong	<u>7</u> (not inc. as a lic.)		91 Lic. Sold
	72 Lic. Sold	Total Licenses Sold:	164
Registered Buyer	13	OMR Participants	30
		Participants	5
		Assistant	<u>12</u>
			47 Lic. Sold
		Grand Total:	223 Licenses Sold

Mrs. Cosby reported the bulk of the harvest for tongers was taken from Cedar Point (2,994 bu.) and for hand scrape from Jones Shore (3,510 bu.). The total oyster harvest was 7,508 bushels. Under the OMR program, in September and December of 2016, there were 959 bushels harvested, in March/April 2017 the harvest was 2,403 bushels for a total of 3,362 bushels harvested for the 2016/2017 season.

Oyster Strategic Planning Panel Report – March 29, 2017-07-24

Mr. Gary presented the report noting that the panel meets about every other month. They last met on March 29th. The primary topic of that evening was sanctuaries. They are now known as “special management areas for ecological services”. The discussion noted that the current three areas are not providing any ecological services. This topic came back to the panel for a discussion of additional areas in the lower river for consideration. Another discussion took place in regards to funding that will become available from NRG and if any of that should be appropriated early on to a special management area(s) for ecological services. Some members of the panel wanted to move forward with planting while others wanted to survey the bottom of the candidate sites. A few of the sites have been looked at, Huggins Bar and Knots Hollow Bar, which had hard suitable substrates with some shell. Those results will be presented at their next meeting. The NRG discussion will also take place. Mr. Gary is waiting on word from NRG to see if oyster work can be deferred until 2018. The panel wants to make sure they are spending the money appropriately. The next meeting is scheduled for June 7th at 3:00 p.m. He hopes to start a discussion on aquaculture leasing if time permits.

Chairman Fleming asked if there are meeting minutes created after the panel meets. Mr. Gary explained there are meeting summaries that are drafted and approved by the panel. When the panel approves them, they are presented to the Commission at its next quarterly meeting.

Chairman Fleming would like the summaries presented in the draft packet so the Commission can be prepared ahead of time and that will speed up the process.

Oyster Management Reserve Program Meeting Report (OMR) – May 18, 2016

Mrs. Cosby presented the spreadsheet for the program. This was presented to the participants at their meeting. At the end of 2016, the funds for the program were \$59,599.00. With the renewal season for 2017 the funds increased to \$89,042.50. The participants voted to hire Shop Cove, LLC for up to \$100,000 of planting triploids on Ragged Point. On April 21st, 3.18 mil. spat on shell were planted totaling \$11,925.00. On May 18th, 4.57 mil. spat on shell were planted totaling \$17,137.50. On May 30th, 2.04 mil. spat on shell were planted totaling \$7,650.00. They are charging \$3,750 per mil. spat on shell. This invoice has not been paid yet because it was just done. The other two have been paid already.

Chairman Fleming questioned the error in funds that was reported. Mrs. Cosby explained it was a calculation error on her part that has been resolved.

Commissioner Erskine asked what the budget is for the OMR now. Mrs. Cosby stated it is correct on the report that was presented. The 2017 season started with \$117,107.00. The participants voted to spend up to \$100,000 to plant this year. Commissioner Erskine stated there would be roughly \$17,000 left before license fees and taxes are collected for the following year. Mrs. Cosby agreed.

Chairman Fleming understands that errors are made, but has a concern that when they were making decisions based on a figure of money they thought they had but had they truly known how much money they really had, they may have made a different decision. He wants the integrity of the program to be all it can be so we can possibly go forward with this most unique oyster cooperative. Mrs. Cosby stated that she made the participants aware of the calculation error at their May 8th meeting and where it stands now. She asked them if they wanted to scale back the program to \$80,000 and they agreed to proceed with the \$100,000. They are going to be looking at different options of obtaining more money for the program. They are aware of how much the program has. She stated she has open books and the participants can look at it anytime.

Mr. Gary added that the participants have not shown interest of trying to scale back and be frugal. Part of that may be they believe in the triploid model and that's what they want to pursue. After the plantings that will occur this year, there will be \$15,000 in the reserve. If the fee structure stays the same, that will bring in around \$48,000, bringing the funds to \$65,000. That is far less than they spend to maintain this program. It seems they have to take corrective action on their fee structure in order to maintain the scale consistent with how many people are in the program. It has grown over the years and that's very positive. He has suggested bringing in an economist to analyze the fee structure, noting that if changes are made to the license fees that would require a public hearing.

Chairman Fleming asked how the program would afford an economist. Mr. Gary explained if someone is used from NOAA or UMD they would be acceptable. Jorge Holzer with UMD, who used to work at MD DNR may be interested in looking at this. We have a possible source and

Mr. Gary is willing to reach out and touch base with Mr. Holzer if that's what the Commission wants.

Commissioner Erskine agrees that bringing in an economist would be a good idea. He noted that most of the areas surveyed are indicative of very high return. For the number of bushels planted, you should see a two to three bushel return on that one bushel planted. If that's the case, the program will generate more money.

Chairman Fleming asked the Commission if they want to direct Mr. Gary to procure the services of this economist, posthaste, to present back to the OMR participants so we can try to get ahead of this.

A motion was made by Commissioner Erskine, seconded by Commissioner Hall and unanimously passed to direct staff to obtain an economist or other appropriate person, at no cost to the Commission, to review the OMR Programs future financial situation.

Oyster Planting on Gum Bar Update (RNOHP)

Mrs. Cosby advised that Gum Bar oyster bar was planted on May 15th and 16th. Cowart Seafood planted 4,623 bushels of James River seed on approximately ten acres of ground. The total cost to plant was \$58,127.50. The remaining funds in that program are \$248,383.66.

Mr. Gary noted that Lower Cedar Point oyster bar was opened early based on the fall survey that determined the oysters were ready to harvest last winter. The original plan was for a four year harvest delay, and leaving some amount of oysters on the bar. If there's a plan in place, Mr. Gary likes to stick to it unless it's the Commissions desire that when the oysters are ready, we open the bar(s) and harvest them whether it's three years or four years. He would like to amend the plan to state that.

Commissioner Erskine felt it's better to have flexibility. He feels it should be higher than 50 percent market size, but should also be lower than 90 or 95 percent market size before opening the bar to harvest. He feels 75 percent is a reasonable number. Chairman Fleming stated that requires the Commission to set a policy, outside of an Order, that would be an internal Commission decision as to when to open an oyster bar if and when they reach 75 percent. Mr. Gary explained that he feels the plan should be amended to provide the flexibility of when to open and close the oyster bars by Order of the Commission.

Commissioner Erskine stated there are a lot of other reasons as to why the oyster bars in the program should be opened or closed at any given time. As he thinks about the 75 percent idea, he is realizing that a hard number may not be the way to go. When you look at mortality events, economic reasons or hardships that may occur, there may be issues and reasons that it may need to be managed differently. Chairman Fleming felt this issue should be referred to the Oyster/Clam Advisory Committee for further discussion. Commissioner Erskine felt the OCAC would be a good starting place for discussions.

Commissioner Langley agreed that language needs to be added that would allow flexibility to open and close the oyster bars. Commissioner Rice agrees with the flexibility portion of the plan. He questioned if the plan is in Regulation or just a written plan to follow. Mr. Gary explained this is a written plan dated August 2012 and was presented to the Commission at the September 2012 Commissioner meeting. The document is recorded and adopted with a timeframe of each oyster bar being closed for four years. Based on what we experienced last year and the Commission's desire to be more flexible, he would suggest amending the plan but still adjust Orders as needed. Commissioner Rice stated he would like a draft document to be created with the changes and presented to the Oyster/Clam Advisory Committee for consideration.

Chairman Fleming questioned if the Commission seeks an economist, should he or she also look at the economics of the RNOHP at the same time? Mr. Gary stated yes. Commissioner Erskine noted the funds available in the RNOHP are much greater than the OMR program. He feels the economist is needed more for the OMR program. Chairman Fleming stated he asked the question because the Commission needs to know if the RNOHP is able to support itself in the long run. He would rather stay ahead of plan before we run into issue with that.

Order 2017-07 – Rotational Natural Oyster Harvest Bar Established

Mrs. Cosby advised that the plan calls for Gum Bar to be closed for four years since it was planted. Commissioner Blazer stated given the conversation the Commission just had, do we want to close Gum Bar for four years or do we want to close it for three years? Mrs. Cosby advised that Orders can be changed in a timely manner. Commissioner Erskine stated Commissioner Blazer brings up a good point that we may want to make it three years, knowing that there's a possibility they may reach market size by then.

Commissioner Rice questioned if the Order could be adopted to say September 30, 2021 or as the Commission deems the planting is ready to harvest. Mr. Mayo suggested adding language that says "no less than three years, subject to the Commission extending it."

A motion was made by Commissioner Blazer, seconded by Commissioner Erskine and unanimously passed to adopt Order 2017-07 with the following editorial changes: Paragraph 2 after Gum Bar for "at least three years or until September 30, 2020 or any extended time as deemed by the Commission."

ORDER #2017-07

Rotational Natural Oyster Harvest Bar Established

THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION, having given consideration to the protection, promotion, growth and conservation of the oyster resource and having found it desirable to establish a Rotational Natural Oyster Harvest Program for the purpose of rehabilitating the oyster fishery in the middle-river area of the Potomac River, and subject to its authority under Regulation I, Section 8(a): **HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** that Gum Bar (650 acres) is designated as a Rotational Natural Oyster Harvest Program area.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED: That it shall be unlawful for any person to take, catch or attempt to take or catch oysters by any means at any time on Gum Bar for at least three (3) years, or until September 30, 2020, or any extended time as deemed by the Commission.

AND, IT IS FURTHERED DECLARED AND ORDERED: That this Order #2017-07 shall become effective June 10, 2017 and remain in effect until September 30, 2021.

Commissioner Rice questioned the RNOHP report noting that in December 2016 2,994 bushels were harvested from the 2013 planting on Lower Cedar Point. He questioned what the 70 percent equates to? Mrs. Cosby advised there were 4,250 bushels planted and 2,994 bushels harvested. That is 70 percent of what was planted. Commissioner Rice stated that's comparing bushels of harvest to bushels of seed. That doesn't necessarily reflect how many bushels of oysters are on the bar. Mrs. Cosby stated that is correct. Commissioner Rice stated the plan states we are suppose to leave 25 percent of oysters on each bar. He feels there is a big difference of leaving 25 percent of market size oysters compared to 25 percent of seed planted. Mrs. Cosby stated she can strike that percentage so there's no confusion with the plan.

Richard Riche, President of the Potomac River Watermen's Association stated the OMR program has not been presented very well. The commercial community that he's talked with does not want any money or funding from NOAA to fund the OMR program. They do not want any obligation with NOAA. The commercial community doesn't want to see any NOAA money coming into the Potomac River. They feel there are enough rules and regulations from NOAA. This program was designed to be self-supporting and it's been a flop; some of the participants are ready to bail that's he's talked to. From an economic and ecological standpoint, the NROHP program has put more oysters in the Potomac River than the OMR has and with less money spent. In surcharges and taxes, the NROHP has generated more money for the PRFC than the OMR program has. We're beating a dead horse as far as some of the participants are concerned. We want to make sure that the OMR participants could decide that they want to write a grant to NOAA and get this funding. We're asking the Commission to step in and not let that happen. The watermen are aware that half of the CLR funds generated by the Commission go to the OMR program. They feel that money would have been better spent in the NROHP. They would like to that money go towards the natural fishery or go somewhere else.

Commissioner Rice clarified that any grant submitted to NOAA would have to be approved by the Commission. Mr. Mayo stated the Compact states the Commission can accept and apply for grants at any time.

Commissioner Erskine advised from the data Mrs. Cosby has presented, the only harvest we have so far is from the 2013 planting on Lower Cedar Point. That was Great Wicomico seed and the count was very high. All the other plantings have been James River seed and we don't know what the harvest will be yet.

ASMFC Issues

Summary of the 2017 Spring Meeting/Preview of 2017 Summer Meeting

Mr. Gary focused on three species that were of importance. The full meeting summary was presented in the packet.

Atlantic Striped Bass – Addendum V did not pass. All the Bay jurisdictions supported that and this leaves us waiting for the Benchmark Stock Assessment in 2018. The next management decision may not occur until 2019, if at all.

Atlantic Menhaden – Updates to Addendum III will be a hot topic at a stand alone meeting in the future in Baltimore.

New Jersey – The state of New Jersey was found to be out of compliance with Summer Flounder. Commissioner Bull confirmed this and that the Secretary of Commerce is to be notified and will act accordingly. New Jersey was deficient in their conservation equivalency plan on how to reduce their Summer Flounder landings. Mr. Gary stated that New Jersey could potentially challenge the ruling and it would be an interesting thing to watch unfold.

Annual Compliance Reports

Mrs. Cosby advised the annual compliance reports were e-mailed to the Commissioners prior to today's meeting. She reviewed some of the species and statistics that were submitted. Copies of the reports are available for the public upon request.

Bluefish – 2016 harvest was the lowest in 50 years
American Eels – 46 percent increase from 2015 landings
Summer Flounder – 36 percent decrease from 2015 landings
Weakfish – no harvest
Croaker – 30 percent increase from 2015 landings
Spanish Mackerel – highest level in 5 years
Spot – lowest on record, 90 percent down from 2015 landings

Mrs. Cosby presented the Striped Bass landing data for 2016 to the Commission for informational purposes only.

Items for Public Hearing Consideration

Mr. Gary explained the Commission needs to approve these items for a public hearing, but he also asked the Commission to consider deferring this for a future public hearing. There are issues with the budget and the fees with the OMR program that still need to be discussed. He suggests holding off because there may be more items to consider.

Mrs. Cosby explained two Regulations: Reg. I, Sec. 2(1)(2) – Hook and Line is to clarify who can be aboard a hook and line vessel; and Reg. I, Sec. 2(s)(2) – Removal of Stakes is to allow pound net poles to remain in the water between seasons. Mrs. Cosby advised that the pound net season is from February 15 to March 25 and from June 1 to December 15; however, most of the pound netters fish in the fall. Industry is requesting to leave the pound net poles out between December and February. In 2015, there were two pound netters that fished in March. In 2016, there were three pound netters that fished in March. No one fished in February. Since no one has set pound nets in February over the last several years, she sees no rush in getting this Regulation changed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Blazer, seconded by Commissioner Bull to defer the Regulations presented today to a future public hearing yet to be determined. The motion passed with 6 in favor (Commissioner Hall was out of the hearing room).

Executive Session – 2:22 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Erskine, seconded by Commissioner Blazer and unanimously passed to go into Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel matters.

Reconvene – 3:07 p.m.

A roll call vote was taken to confirm that only legal and personnel matters were discussed in Executive Session. All Commissioners agreed.

Third Quarter Disbursements and Cash-on-Hand

Mr. Gary presented the report for the third quarter disbursements (January through March) for the operational budget totaling \$163,479. A report of the cash-on-hand was presented showing 611,002.60 as of May 31, 2017. He noted the sport license sales are down, but the projected sales of \$110,000 are yet to be determined until the fiscal year ends. He is concerned with the sport sales. Overall, the 2017 revenues are above what was brought in at this time in 2016.

Chairman Fleming noted that on the disbursements side there are percentages to show where we are within the budget. He asked if the same thing could be done for the revenue side. Mr. Gary stated staff would work on that.

Chairman Fleming asked again about on-line recreational license sales. He feels the future is buying licenses by phone or computer. It's a convenience for the customers. Mr. Gary agreed and advised that he has talked with two vendors who do smaller state sales. He has not had an opportunity to follow back up with the vendors. He stated he will reach out again next week and if he doesn't hear back from them, he is back to square one trying to figure out what to do. Chairman Fleming stated we may need to think out of the box and look at other options (example: Amazon) and see what can be done. Mr. Gary stated he is concerned with the MRIP confidentiality of personal data.

Commissioner Langley asked Mr. Mayo if there are any legal obligations about how the Commission handles this situation. Mr. Mayo stated he did not know of any, but as things move forward he would have to look into it.

Mr. Gary reminded the Commission of when Roger Trageser from the Maryland Sport Fish Advisory Commission came to the PRFC and stated Maryland was losing revenue because people from New Jersey were buying our license and the fees were cheaper. Currently there is an \$8,000 delta between Maryland and Virginia appropriations. That could be made up by eliminating the non-resident license fee. This is what is leading to the agent refunds and making the whole process awkward.

A motion was made by Commissioner Erskine, seconded by Commissioner Blazer and unanimously passed to accept the third quarter disbursements and cash-on-hand as presented.

Budget Committee Report (Commissioners Blazer and Kellum)

Commissioner Blazer deferred to Mr. Gary to present the report. This has been a dynamic situation due to the audit report and the preliminary findings. This is going to continue to be a dynamic situation continuing into the September Commission meeting.

Revenue Projections – The Cash Forward Balance needs to be addressed. When he met with the auditors, they informed him that was a plug and that needed to be removed. It was a means to balance the budget with a projection of unexpended cash as you get to the end of the fiscal year. This is typically not done and removing it increases the delta that needs to be balanced. Working the numbers, the budget comes to \$749,600. It is down about \$50,000 after removing the cash forward balance.

Disbursement Projections - Commissioners and the Legal Officer compensations are not proposed to change. He would like to see the Commission in the future give the Legal Officer an enhancement, but for now it is not in the budget. In order to address the delta, employee salaries are going to remain status quo. Advertising will allow for one public hearing for the fiscal year. Health insurance went up by eight percent. Retiree Health Insurance is an amount of money the Commission put into a VA LGIP for future and existing retirees' health insurance benefits that are paid by the Commission. An actuarial study gave a range of options from \$53,500 to a low end of \$45,000. The Commission opted to budget for \$53,500. Trying to explore those values, staff found that the Commission has flexibility and it seems to be pretty broad. This is a significant disbursement given our budget and we are currently funding at the most aggressive level. The auditors have identified a few areas of concerns and this is one of them that was questioned by Mr. Gary. The auditors did not know the answer. He is bringing this to the Commission's attention to see if this is a tool that we can possibly reduce. The artificial reef budget was \$7,000 and that was eliminated. There were two tables presented, one based on Maryland's position of status quo because they are in a freeze. The other is from Virginia's position with a three percent salary increase, which is considered a step increase for the Commission. Based on the numbers there will be no salary increases at this time. This is to address some of the issues the auditors have that they will address at the September Commission meeting. The budget is tentatively set for \$749,600 with Commission approval today.

Mr. Gary referred to the OMR program and the RNOHP, advising that all of the CLR fees collected are split 50/50 between these programs. The VA LGIP holds the funds for the OMR program which are all there (\$15,000). The MD LGIP holds the funds for the RNOHP, but all of their funding is not in the account (\$248,383.66). During lean times, money has been pulled to cover expenses for the Commission. Currently there is \$88,498.06 in that account. We are going to need to readjust everything after the auditors meet with us in September.

Commissioner Erskine noted with the NRG award that is \$100,000 over five years, is that required to go 100 percent to planting oysters? Are there no administrative costs that can be included in that? Mr. Gary explained there is no administrative component and in fact, NRG

wanted minimal overhead. In order for us to get the amount that we received, that was a huge selling point. The way that cash is going to be handled is Claudette Okrasinski is going to be the portal manager for the payments. When that kicks in, she will go through the portal to have NRG pay the vendor directly for services.

Mrs. Cosby noted in her opinion that the cash brought forward is not a plug. This is the amount that is in the checking account and petty cash as of May 1st each year. It averages around \$60,000 for the whole time series of the budget. It's nothing that should be pulled from the budget because it's actual money in the accounts.

Commissioner Blazer thanked Mr. Gary for putting this together and for all of his hard work. He noted that this budget is to get the Commission through until we receive the audit report and the NRG funding. We recognize there are some issues and this may need to be amended in the near future especially based on the audit report we receive in September. There was a long discussion about the cash balance brought forward. In his experience at MD DNR, that is left over money from previous years that we don't account for in the budget for the future year. When a budget is put together, it's how much money are you going to bring in and how much money are you going to spend. If it's left over from the previous year, it was obligated to some type of project at that time. If that project comes back around, the funds are going to need to be there to cover that. If you've got money left over in an account, he's not sure that needs to be part of the budget and that's why it wasn't included. We can spend it if it's there, but not as part of the budget.

Chairman Fleming stated the county has something similar called cash reserves, but that is not included as part of the budget.

Commissioner Bull explained there can often be times when there is a cash flow problem and you need to do something to hold it over until the next set of revenue comes into the account. Virginia operates its budget system that if you have money left over at the end of the year, technically it goes back, but there are ways to put it in non-reverting funds to be able to have the funds in the event some unexpected significant expense occurs. Its prudent fiscal management not to carry over the cash brought forward balance. The concept is sound.

Mr. Gary noted when the budget template was prepped, he asked Mrs. Cosby to not include the cash brought forward. He isn't aware of what that amount would have been. Right now there is \$26,000 in the main checking account. There are things that need to be paid and we have to deal with the money that we have. In order to cover the payroll and the bills that need to be paid, funds are being used from the MD LGIP. In the meantime, we're bleeding money out to the oyster programs. He is trying to be pragmatic about this and it's going to take some brutal discussions. We'll get through it and figure it out, but we're going to have to work together and make some difficult decisions going forward.

Commissioner Blazer stated MD DNR is in the same situation. Their sport fishing license revenues are well below projections and they are 2 to 3 million dollars below where they should be and he's hoping these last six weeks will improve.

Chairman Fleming felt the Commission should defer to the auditor who's accredited and the Commission uses for financial advice. We will come up with a plan of action once we have heard from them.

Commissioner Blazer stated the Commission will need to make a motion to approve this budget for the new fiscal year.

A motion was made by Commissioner Blazer, seconded by Commissioner Langley and unanimously passed to adopt the FY 2017-2018 budget as presented today.

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION
2017-2018 DISBURSEMENTS BUDGET

	<u>2017-2018</u> <u>BUDGET</u>
<u>PERSONAL SERVICES:</u>	
101-109 Compensation of Commissioners & Salaries	\$319,849
<u>CONTRACTUAL SERVICES</u>	
201 Advertising	4,847
201 Agent Fees	4,000
204 Postage	12,000
205 Telephone	7,000
206 800 Line	
207 Internet Service/Website	
208 Electric Current	5,000
209 Freight Expenses	1,000
212 Lease of Equipment	5,000
214 Membership Dues & Subscriptions	500
216 Printing Regulations*	3,000
220 Travel Expenses	17,000
221 Water Service	1,000
224 Photographic Services - Charts	300
230 Computer Support	15,000
235 Sport License Registry	0
270 Repairs to Equipment	1,000
275 Building Maintenance	4,000
280 Financial Account Service Charge	50
281 Bank Charges	250
290 ACFCMA**	97,000
299 Other Contractual Services	<u>14,000</u>
	191,947

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

301 Automotive Expenses	4,000
313 Office Supplies	12,000
330 Household Furnishings & Supplies	2,000
332 Licenses, Tags, Report Books	35,000
400 Resale Supplies	<u>2,000</u>
	55,000

CURRENT CHARGES & OBLIGATIONS:

240 Insurance: Surety bonds, fire, auto liability, workmen's comp.	<u>8,000</u>
	8,000

PENSION AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS:

510 Retirement	23,409
511 Group Life Insurance	3,889
512 Group Health Insurance	59,497
513 Employer's FICA	18,405
513 Employer's Medicare	4,304
514 Deferred Compensation Match	<u>2,800</u>
	112,304

CAPITAL OUTLAY:

801 Office & Other Equipment	5,000
801 Furniture & Fixtures	4,000
803 Auto	<u>0</u>
	9,000

DEVELOPMENT & REPLETION EXPENSES:

331, 333 & 335 Seed Oysters/Shell/C&C	0
336 Oyster Management Reserve	0
339 Artificial Reef Construction/Transportation	<u>0</u>
	0

CAPITAL RESERVES

98 (101) Reserve - future oyster work/hatchery	0
99 (102) Reserve - future retiree health insurance	53,500

TOTAL	\$749,600
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*Partially supported by ACFCMA (Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act) funds

**Fully supported by ACFCMA

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION
2017-2018 BUDGET

RECEIPTS

	<u>2017-2018</u> <u>BUDGET</u>
CLR - Commercial License Registration	34,000
SALE OF LICENSES:	
Fish	75,000
Crab	67,000
Clam	0
Fish - Recreational	85,000
Crab - Recreational	600
OYSTER:	
OMR License	31,750
OMR Identification Tags	5,000
OMR Bushels Inspection Tax	<u>4,800</u>
OMR Subtotal	41,550
Oyster Licenses	12,000
OLS - License Surcharge	12,000
White Identification Tags	4,000
Registered Buyer	350
Oyster Bushels Inspection Tax	<u>3,000</u>
Natural Oyster Subtotal	31,350
APPROPRIATIONS BY STATE:	
Maryland	140,000
Virginia	148,750
SPECIAL GRANTS:	
Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act	97,850
DRAWDOWN of Oyster Reserve	0
INTEREST ON SAVINGS (C/D's)	1,500
RESALE SUPPLIES:	8,000
LICENSE DRAWING	0

SHIPPING & HANDLNG (65-58)	2,000
CPID (65-58)	16,000
MISCELLANEOUS: Confiscated Property, Sale of Tags, Etc.	<u>1,000</u>
TOTAL	749,600

Any Other New Business

There was no new business that was discussed or presented to the Commission from the audience.

Date and Place of Next Meeting

Chairman Fleming stated the meetings seem to be getting longer and longer. Some of the things that happen is we lose people and interest from the community. He asked the Commission on their thoughts of moving the start time of the meetings from 9:00 to 8:30 a.m.

Commissioner Rice suggested have the presenters here at 1:00 p.m. and anyone who would like to see them can do so and if not, the day is done.

Commissioners Erskine suggested having only one presentation at each meeting. Today there were three and that took a considerable amount of time. The presentations are important and helpful, but do take a lot of time in the day. He is good with an 8:00 or 8:30 a.m. start time.

Commissioner Bull stated he can do 8:30 a.m. He advised that VMRC does these meetings on a monthly basis and we're happy to be done by 4:00 p.m.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 7, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. in the John Thomas Parran hearing room in Colonial Beach, Virginia.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis C. Fleming, Chairman

Phil L. Langley, Secretary