

Maryland DNR
Summer Meeting of the Sport Fisheries
Advisory Commission

Tuesday,
July 22, 2014

Held at the
Tawes State Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland

Maryland DNR
Summer Meeting of the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission

July 22, 2014

SFAC Members Present:

Bill Goldsborough, Chair

Micah Dammeyer

Rachel Dean

Mark De Hoff

Beverly Fleming

Jim Gracie

Phil Langley

Val Lynch

Ed O'Brien

Vince Ringgold

David Sikorski

Roger Trageser

Frank Tuma (*proxy for Tim Smith*)

SFAC Members Absent:

Dr. Ray P. Morgan II

James Wommack

Maryland DNR Fisheries Service

Tom O'Connell

Noreen Eberly

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KEYNOTE: "---" denotes inaudible in the transcript.
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A F T E R N O O N S E S S I O N

(3:10 p.m.)

Welcome and Announcements

by Bill Goldsborough, Chair, SFAC

and Tom O'Connell, Director, MD DNR Fisheries Service

MR. O'CONNELL: I would like to welcome everybody.

For those of you who are not commissioners, my name is Tom O'Connell. I am the director of the fisheries service for Maryland DNR. Thanks for all of you who came.

All of you should have an agenda. You will note that we added an hour to this agenda based upon the number of topics that we need to discuss. It remains a full agenda, and our chairperson, Bill Goldsborough, will do a great job facilitating us through tonight's meeting I am sure.

I have got just two general announcements. One is, you know that Rachel Dean has been sitting in on behalf of tidal fish for the last couple, two or three meetings. Legislation was approved to formally require a Tidal Fish Advisory Commission member on sports fish.

That bill went into effect on July 1, and the appointments office has approved Rachel's appointment for the commission. So welcome as a former commissioner.

And then secondly I don't think all of you have had a chance to meet our Assistant Secretary Dr. Dave Goshorn. He took over Frank Dawson's responsibilities and is in charge of

1 all the aquatic resource programs within the
2 department: boating, resource assessment service, Chesapeake
3 and coastal services and fisheries.

4 He has done a great job as assistant secretary. He
5 began in fisheries probably 25 or so years ago working for
6 striped bass, and he has been a strong supporter of our unit
7 and the fish that we all value. So I appreciate Dave. I
8 don't know if you want to say a word or two.

9 DR GOSHORN: I didn't have a speech prepared, so I
10 won't. I can't stay thankfully for the entire four-hour
11 meeting, but just thank you all for everything you do. I have
12 met some of you. I haven't met others but feel free,
13 especially those of you I haven't met, at any time -- anyone
14 here who works for fisheries knows how to reach me -- to give
15 me a call, e-mail me, set up a time to meet. I will be glad
16 to speak with you.

17 But thank you all for sitting through these
18 three- or four-hour meetings.

19 MR. O'CONNELL: Thanks a lot, Dave. I am going to
20 hand it over to Bill. Bill has got a few general
21 announcements.

22 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: All right. Welcome, folks, to
23 our summer meeting. At some point we may want to revisit the
24 notion of holding four of these a year since we always seem to
25 not have enough time and had to an extra hour this time. But

1 that is a discussion for another time perhaps.

2 A couple of follow-up things I think we want to
3 touch on before we go to the public comment. First I will
4 note we have a couple members who aren't here and I don't know
5 if they are coming or not, but Ray Morgan and James Wommack,
6 and we don't know if their proxies are coming. I do see Frank
7 is here for Tim Smith, Frank Tuma. Thank you, Frank.

8 It looks like everybody else is here, right? Good.
9 Rachel, formal voting member now. A couple follow-up things
10 on the -- you remember we had some communications about a
11 possible tournament workgroup based on I guess the thing up in
12 the Gunpowder, and Mike had raised that concern.

13 And what we are going to do about it now that that
14 was withdrawn, that request for a tournament. Basically what
15 we decided from those communications, if you recall, was to
16 keep the workgroup intact but just have it be on hold and
17 ready if we need it for similar issues that might come up.
18 Make sure everybody is comfortable with that, and then we will
19 move on. Okay with that, Micah?

20 MR. DAMMEYER: Yes, I am okay with that. It sounds
21 great.

22 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: You also just got an e-mail from
23 me. Yes, Jim? Sorry.

24 MR. GRACIE: I would just like to add -- I am not
25 sure I am okay with it. I may be. I really think it would

1 make sense at some point, and there is no urgency on this, for
2 the workgroup to start talking when they don't have a gun
3 pointed to their heads with an imminent tournament.

4 I think we would have a more thoughtful discussion
5 that way and not be under the pressure to hurry up and do
6 something. So I am not sure I agree with waiting until we get
7 another tournament. I really would like the workgroup to
8 consider getting together sometime in the next year and not
9 wait for the next issue.

10 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: In the next year sounds like a
11 good timeline to me. I tell you what, let's charge the
12 workgroup at this point, if this works for you, Jim -- and
13 maybe I can ask Noreen to remind us who all is on the
14 workgroup besides our chairman Micah -- to come up with some
15 objectives for their deliberations.

16 MR. GRACIE: By the next meeting?

17 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Does that sound good? By the
18 next meeting. How does that sound, Micah?

19 MR. DAMMEYER: Sounds good to me.

20 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: We will send a follow-up e-mail
21 to you and the other members about that as a reminder.

22 MR. DAMMEYER: Sounds great.

23 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Okay. Thank you, Jim. And I
24 apologize for the lateness of my e-mail to you all this
25 morning. Some of you may not have had a chance to even get it

1 much less read it. But you remember from the last meeting we
2 had a request from Ed O'Brien that the commission consider
3 some kind of recognition for Dr. Torrey Brown, who passed this
4 spring, and as we all know, was a giant in Maryland natural
5 resources.

6 And we appointed a workgroup to work on that. Ed
7 and Jim Gracie and myself and Dave Sikorski are on that
8 workgroup. And thank you to Jim for coming up with a draft.
9 That is what I circulated to you this morning. And I know
10 that a couple of you did get a chance to look at it. I
11 appreciate that, even with the short notice.

12 But what we need to figure out on that is how we
13 want to proceed. Everything that I have heard so far is great
14 support for Jim's draft. I certainly share that. But there
15 may be a couple of different ways that we communicate that
16 sentiment, and I guess I would like to open the floor for just
17 a second to see if anybody has any preferences on that.

18 Do we do it as a letter to the family, to the
19 governor? Do we do it as a resolution? I think Tom might
20 have had a couple of other ideas. Tom?

21 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes, I mean, we might be able to put
22 something in like a frame and house it here somewhere at the
23 department. We can obviously put it on our Website and share
24 it through our social media tools and let people know the
25 value we all had, still have, for Torrey. So I think there

1 are a wide variety of venues that we can help celebrate the
2 life of Torrey Brown in, and get that nice resolution that Jim
3 drafted out to people.

4 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Anybody have any thoughts?

5 MR. GRACIE: I like the idea of having some
6 permanent display here in the building that says something
7 about him. It doesn't have to be that draft. It could be
8 almost anything. There should be something here that people
9 can see when they walk in.

10 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Can we --

11 MR. O'CONNELL: I can look into that.

12 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Look into that? Okay. Is
13 everybody comfortable with that approach? Good, okay. We
14 will look into that.

15 Another item following up was you remember at the
16 last meeting we had a presentation on the proposed designation
17 of the Mallows Bay as a national marine sanctuary around the
18 Potomac? And there was a follow-up e-mail on that. The issue
19 before us right now is whether or not this body wants to send
20 a letter of support itself?

21 I think we all had a pretty positive discussion at
22 the last meeting. I don't know if any folks have any other
23 thoughts but let's open the floor for just a second on that
24 and see if anybody has any objection to the commission writing
25 a letter of support for that designation. Ed?

1 MR. O'BRIEN: Well, it worries me a little bit
2 because my experience around the country with the ---
3 association is that a lot of people can be affected by this in
4 different areas.

5 We are talking about a small situation in Maryland
6 but this whole program of designated areas where people can't
7 fish, this could take off like gangbusters. And there are
8 certain organizations that really want it to.

9 So I would just be very cautious about it when you
10 set a precedent. And that is all I want to say.

11 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Does that translate into a
12 recommendation on this particular request?

13 MR. O'BRIEN: I think we ought to be cautious. I
14 really do. I would be interested to see what other people and
15 organizations think about it because it has really got some
16 recreational and commercial people very worried as to how far
17 this kind of thing can go.

18 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Roger?

19 MR. TRAGESER: From the feedback I have gotten on
20 it, and we have been solicited a little bit more directly to
21 provide support through our organization, and of course our
22 first question, because recreational fishing more than
23 anything else is what a prohibitive status would impact.

24 But we have been guaranteed that, at least for this
25 particular area, that there are not going to be any changes

1 made to the ability to go in there and fish recreationally.
2 Now how or if it has any impact on a commercial end down
3 there, but from the recreational side we have been told
4 nothing is going to change. And we wouldn't support it if it
5 did.

6 It may have merit for what it is trying to recognize
7 and designate but when you start taking those things that are
8 in place now, and then you pick those pieces apart from it
9 that make it enjoyable to everybody, like fishing, to me the
10 means doesn't outweigh the benefit that you really get from
11 that.

12 Our understanding is it is not going to impact the
13 fishing recreationally anyway.

14 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Tom, can you shed some light on
15 that?

16 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes, that presentation at the April
17 meeting, you know, that question came up and, you know, the
18 response was that -- the only fisheries that would be impacted
19 are those fisheries that may have a destructive nature to the
20 structure they are trying to protect there through this
21 designation, those ships and all that.

22 And recreational fishing, you know, they don't see a
23 problem with that. The question about commercial fishing was
24 raised, and it was demonstrated that there are lot of national
25 sanctuaries under this program that do allow commercial

1 fishing but there are others that -- you know, certain gear
2 types that may impact the structure that is being protected.
3 It could be restricted.

4 I think where we are, just to remind people where we
5 are in the process is, you know, people are looking for a
6 letter of support for the National Marine Fisheries Service to
7 consider this area as a potential sanctuary.

8 It is a lengthy process. You know, once it gets
9 identified, there is a plan that gets developed. Restrictions
10 are discussed. Public comment is allowed. So, Roger, I agree
11 with you. That is what I have heard. And there will be more
12 opportunities, if this proposal goes forward, to examine more
13 closely what activities would be allowed or may be restricted.

14 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Jim?

15 MR. GRACIE: The term marine sanctuary I think gives
16 us all pause because that has been used to mean no fishing
17 areas in lots of places around the country and I think that is
18 the basis for Ed's concern. I don't want to speak for him but
19 that is certainly a concern of mine.

20 We, in response to marine sanctuaries, the fisheries
21 community as you know banded together and had passed by the
22 general assembly a Freedom to Fish Act some years ago in
23 response to this, to that concern. I would like to see, if we
24 are going to write a letter of support, that we would indicate
25 that we support this as long as it is not a restriction on

1 recreational or commercial fishing activities.

2 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: That is what I was going to
3 propose. How does that sound to everybody?

4 MR. GRACIE: Because it is a lengthy process and
5 other people will weigh in long after we have sent our letter
6 of support. And that could change.

7 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: One thought on that legislative
8 history. I think the term was marine-protected areas that was
9 going around at the time, and I am not sure that bill passed,
10 Jim.

11 MR. GRACIE: No.

12 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: That Freedom to Fish bill? I
13 know we had one.

14 MR. GRACIE: I thought we all got it together the
15 second year and it did pass.

16 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Well, I could be wrong.

17 MS. HUNT: It has a lot of limitations.

18 MR. GRACIE: Yes, it did.

19 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Okay, so if everybody is okay
20 with that, we will go ahead with a letter that qualifies it,
21 that it is our understanding that this would not be
22 restrictive of recreational fishing.

23 Okay. And I guess that is all for the up-front
24 follow-up we need to do. We will take public comment now. Is
25 there anybody here who would like to address the commission

1 for items not on the agenda? I beg your pardon. Ken
2 Hastings?

3 MR. HASTINGS: I didn't see a sign-up sheet.

4 MS. EBERLY: It was in the corner.

5 MR. O'CONNELL: That is okay, Ken.

6 ***Public Comment***

7 MR. HASTINGS: My name is Ken Hastings. I am a
8 recreational fisherman. And in the past I have discussed or
9 tried to discuss with you the aspects of allocation policies
10 and whatnot.

11 There are a couple new aspects of allocation that
12 have happened since the last time I had that opportunity.
13 Some of you may be aware -- let's see, is Phil Langley here
14 today? Oh, yes. The Potomac River Fisheries Commission has
15 initiated an attempt to grab hold of some recreational unused
16 allocation because the feeling is that recreational fishermen
17 are not catching all the striped bass that they are allotted.
18 Of course, allocation and quota are not always the
19 same thing. In commercial areas, I assume that they are.
20 Billy Rice made the motion -- Billy's the chair, of course, of
21 our Tidal Fish Advisory Commission. And Tom O'Connell sits on
22 the commission and so does Phil. And Dennis Fleming sits on
23 the commission also.

24 And I wasn't there. I was on travel. But I think
25 my intel is flawless. And it is my understanding that Tom,

1 Phil Langley and Dennis Fleming opposed this attempt. But in
2 spite of that, the commission assembled a simple majority.
3 Fortunately for us a simple majority doesn't make it for this
4 case. They needed a super majority and somebody didn't show
5 up that day and so they didn't have enough to do that.

6 If you think that is an odd thing to happen, then I
7 would like to also tell you about what happened at the last
8 industry yellow perch workgroup meeting. The stated mission
9 of this workgroup was to allow the industry to catch their
10 full allocation, which they weren't doing. They are having
11 trouble catching all the fish. They want longer seasons.
12 They want some concessions.

13 And the fishermen intend to catch all their
14 allocation, and I think the fisheries service has made a
15 commitment to help them do that. There is no workgroup
16 committed to the recreational people catching their total
17 allocation of anything. It is apples and oranges. We don't
18 treat allocation the same way that the commercial people do.

19 Our allocation decisions are made pretty much in a
20 vacuum. I have discussed before about that we don't have
21 metrics for success. Fair and equitable are just words on
22 paper without that. And we don't know how the allocation
23 decisions further the goals of the recreational fishery
24 because I, for one, don't know what goals we have for
25 recreational fisheries.

1 Do we view recreational fishing as something that
2 should be guided by metrics of success like catch-per-unit
3 effort, success ratios, things like that? Things that would
4 tell you, would sort of define, a quality recreational
5 fishery? Or are we happy with it just the way it is?

6 This sounds like SFAC territory to me. I think that
7 is something that should be discussed soundly here, especially
8 in light of these two new things that happened.

9 I also found something else. I discovered that on
10 June 10 and June 30, there was an ad hoc Sport Fish Advisory
11 Commission meeting to discuss ASMFC and striped bass. I did
12 not see any indication that they were advertised meetings.
13 They should have been public meetings. They should have been
14 advertised. They didn't show up on the events calendar. And
15 I didn't see any public notices.

16 So I just wanted to point it out. It is probably an
17 oversight but it is certainly an important thing to people
18 like me who live and die by the Open Meetings Act and public
19 information acts to make sure that they are complied with.
20 Thank you.

21 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Ken. As I indicated
22 in an e-mail to you guys a little while ago, last week I
23 suppose, per our discussion at the last meeting, it was my
24 intent, if everybody is comfortable with this, to revisit that
25 issue of striped bass allocation under the Estuarine and

1 Marine Fisheries Management Planning, after the discussion of
2 the Striped Bass Addendum IV.

3 You remember previous, before the spring
4 meeting -- of course this issue had come up before and I did
5 an e-mail survey of you guys asking how you felt about this
6 issue. And I did get one -- actually a proxy, Dave Smith, who
7 did respond, as I think you all remember.

8 Pretty much similar to what Ken just said, thinking
9 that it was an important issue and that we ought to discuss
10 it. So we did bring it up at that meeting but Dave was not
11 able to be there. Did not get any direction to the contrary
12 from any of you all.

13 So I made a decision to put it on the agenda for
14 this meeting under that agenda item. So if it is okay with
15 everybody, we will continue to do that. And after we have the
16 discussion of Addendum IV, we will open the floor to the
17 discussion of striped bass allocation. Does that work for
18 everybody? Vince?

19 MR. RINGGOLD: Yes, in regard to -- Dave Smith is my
20 proxy, and MSSA. We believe the allocation doesn't need to be
21 looked at, at this point. We have more important things we
22 need to concentrate on.

23 Allocation for us is not on the table. We would
24 like to postpone that, and we would possibly visit that
25 somewhere in the future but at this point right now we don't

1 | feel it is necessary.

2 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Okay, so Dave's request is --

3 | MR. RINGGOLD: We would like to have that withdrawn.

4 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Is withdrawn at this point? Any
5 | other thoughts on that? Jim, you had your hand up.

6 | MR. GRACIE: I am just not clear. I had a question.
7 | Maybe it is moot now. Were you going to open the discussion
8 | to striped bass allocation or allocation in general because
9 | they are two issues.

10 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: I know. I was going to get to
11 | the second one and ask what you all think but I wanted to
12 | reference my e-mail to the group first, which was only about
13 | striped bass. But I will come back to the yellow perch, if
14 | that is what you are getting at.

15 | MR. GRACIE: It was just a question. I am not
16 | really getting at anything.

17 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Okay. I am going to get back to
18 | that in just a second. So it is the consensus of the
19 | commission that we don't need to have that discussion on
20 | striped bass allocation at that point? That was the sense of
21 | most of the responses I got back in the spring. Okay, well,
22 | we certainly have a full enough agenda.

23 | With regard to yellow perch, there have been
24 | discussions at tidal fish, and it is on the tidal fish agenda
25 | for Thursday to discuss some interest on behalf of the

1 commercial fishery to expand into some areas to be able to
2 roll over unused quota, I think. Is that the other piece of
3 it that Steve Leigh had asked for?

4 And as indicated by Ken, there is -- I guess there
5 is a possibility of considering some kind of allocation shift
6 or that has allocation implications perhaps? Yes, Jim.

7 MR. GRACIE: Yes, my only concern is that I am not
8 sure where that information is coming from. My understanding
9 is that none of that is going to happen without an update to
10 the fisheries management plan for the yellow perch, and in
11 that context I am happy with that going forward.

12 Ad hoc meetings by one of the commissions, I don't
13 think, I don't think should affect the fisheries service
14 decisions on operating fisheries management plans, without
15 them going through the process that we developed a long time
16 ago. Am I correct, Tom?

17 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes, so tidal fish did ask to
18 revisit a couple issues, and when our staff convened the
19 yellow perch fishermen, only a couple of them came, first of
20 all. But we made it clear that we, just in the past year,
21 went through a yellow perch FMP review, which included
22 allocation, and we got no recommendations to make changes from
23 sport fish or Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission.

24 So we are not -- in order to trigger an allocation
25 review, we have an allocation policy to allow somebody the

1 opportunity to petition us and evaluate it. The yellow perch
2 fishermen had requested a variety of changes. There is one
3 item that is under regulatory scoping that we will talk about.

4 They did request opening the Choptank and Nanticoke.
5 That would be an allocation change. That would have to go
6 through a more formal review process. We are not considering
7 that at this time.

8 They have not been able to catch their fully
9 allocated quota in the upper bay, in the Patuxent River, in
10 Chester River. And the regulatory idea that we are scoping is
11 to provide them an opportunity to catch that allocation.

12 It is not giving more allocation to them. It is
13 allowing them to catch the allocation under the policy
14 decision several years ago. And we will cover that in a
15 little bit more detail under regulatory scoping. We will let
16 you know what we are talking about.

17 MR. GRACIE: Of all the things we did with the
18 Fisheries Management Task Force, Nancy can tell you, we
19 probably spent more time on this process than anything else
20 that happened there, and I thought it was a well thought out
21 process and I hope we are going to stick to it.

22 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Jim, Tom. And before
23 we leave the public comments we received with respect to
24 striped bass, this issue in the Potomac River, PRFC, where
25 there was a proposal to shift unused recreational quota to

1 commercial and, by Ken's description of events, the Maryland
2 delegation opposed that. That is accurate?

3 MR. O'CONNELL: Except for one, Billy Rice.

4 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Except for Billy Rice, who made
5 the motion. Does the commission have any comment they would
6 like to make on that issue with respect to the way your
7 representatives voted on PRFC?

8 (No response)

9 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Can we assume, in other words,
10 that you support the vote of Tom and Phil and Dennis to oppose
11 the shifting of recreational quota to commercial when it is
12 uncaught? I am seeing heads nod around the table. Okay, that
13 is all I wanted to hear.

14 MR. GRACIE: You want a motion so you can have it on
15 the record?

16 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: That would be great, sure.

17 **MOTION**

18 MR. GRACIE: I move that we support that position.

19 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Second? Dave Sikorski. Jim
20 Gracie, motion. Dave Sikorski, second, supporting the vote of
21 those three PRFC commissioners to oppose shifting of
22 recreational quota to commercial of Potomac striped bass.
23 Everybody got that? Tom, you have a comment?

24 MR. O'CONNELL: Just a quick comment. You know,
25 Maryland having a fishery allocation policy, it is pretty

1 rare, and it allows a more formal public process when
2 allocation review decisions are made. I mean, that was one
3 vote of changing the allocation at the Potomac River, and it
4 wouldn't have been any public opportunity to talk about that.

5 Following that meeting, I have had conversation with
6 the Executive Secretary, Marty Gary, whom you know, and John
7 Bull, who is my counterpart.

8 And we have agreed that if it comes back on the
9 table, we are going to strongly advocate that before the
10 commission makes any decisions, that a more formal public
11 review process -- we do have a Chesapeake Bay FMP. It is not
12 just Maryland for striped bass. It is Maryland and Virginia
13 and Potomac River.

14 So John Bull and I will be, you know, looking to
15 ensure that if the issue comes back up, there will be a public
16 opportunity before the commission acts on that.

17 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any discussion on the motion?
18 Dave?

19 MR. SIKORSKI: Another clarification with PRFC. Is
20 John the current commissioner, because the Website, it has
21 Jack Travelstead.

22 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes, John is, yes.

23 MR. SIKORSKI: Okay, because Jack is retired?

24 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes.

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any further comments on the

1 motion? Do I see any objections to the motion?

2 MR. GRACIE: Public comment? If we are going to
3 vote on a motion, we allow for public comment first.

4 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Oh, thank you, Jim. Is there any
5 public comment on the motion?

6 (No response)

7 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Seeing none, do I see any
8 objections from the commission on the motion?

9 (No response)

10 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Motion passes unanimously. Thank
11 you all.

12 MS. DEAN: Can I go down as an abstention?

13 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Oh, I am sorry not to give you
14 that opportunity, Rachel. Yes. Rachel Dean abstains. Thank
15 you. Okay, so let's get into the body of the agenda. And on
16 that there were two things I neglected to mention.

17 One is, since we have extended the meeting to seven,
18 the department has been so kind as to provide some food.
19 Unless you had a procedure in mind, just whenever anyone is
20 hungry they can go grab a bite --

21 MS. EBERLY: I think so.

22 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: -- rather than take a break
23 because we have such a full agenda. If you all are okay with
24 that, let's do it that way. The other item was unfortunately
25 the distinguished Jim Gracie has to leave at 5:00 p.m. and we

1 striped bass, clearly knowing what they are doing is wrong
2 because they were hiding fish. And a fair number of folks
3 were caught doing that.

4 And so in preparation for this meeting I did contact
5 that lieutenant to ask him how he felt about these cases and
6 why we might be seeing more of them. Is it that we have
7 particularly proactive officers? What would he attribute
8 these cases to?

9 And his answer was that at the beginning of his
10 career some 20-some years ago, 15 officers, 14 or 15 officers,
11 worked Dorchester County, whereas now there are 4 or 5. And
12 the responsibilities of those officers are so much greater and
13 so much more varied than they were when we were experts at
14 fish enforcement. And that is what we did. We did fish and
15 we did boats.

16 So we are continuing to work but we are becoming a
17 more reactive police department and a less proactive police
18 department. But we are continuing to train, and the good news
19 is we are getting fresh faces out there all the time. We are
20 hiring good people, we are training them and we are working
21 very hard to get our force up as efficiently as we can.

22 As everyone knows, we do have our new cadet program.
23 It is really successful. It is great, it is great news. So
24 if you are out there on the water and you meet our cadets, we
25 would appreciate it if you would greet them and meet them

1 | because they will probably be next in line to have our jobs
2 | too if the program works the way we would like it to.

3 | And for those of you who don't know, just a quick
4 | aside: This program is a little different. I don't know if
5 | we ever went over it. The cadets go to a different part of
6 | the DNR and they rotate through, so they spend some time in
7 | fisheries, maybe as much as six weeks. They spend some time
8 | in our communications center.

9 | And the idea is that we create these really
10 | well-rounded people who understand the biology of it and they
11 | understand from a perspective that really gives them good
12 | discretion and good judgment. And it is working out very
13 | well. We have really chosen some great folks for it.

14 | Questions?

15 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Questions for Lt. Mauk?

16 | (No response)

17 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: I know we are all very glad to
18 | hear that about the new classes coming through the academy.
19 | That is great. I know you need it too.

20 | LT. MAUK: Just can't hire fast enough because we
21 | are leaving so -- you know, we are such an elderly department
22 | right now. The average age of our officers -- I will get the
23 | number for you next time because it would be interesting to
24 | find out.

25 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Well, this commission has long

1 supported efforts to improve enforcement and support NRP, and
2 we continue to, I am sure. Thank you. All right. Let's move
3 on to regulatory updates and scoping. Jacob?

4 ***Regulatory Updates and Regulatory Scoping Items***

5 ***by Jacob Holtz, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

6 MR. HOLTZ: All right, how are you all doing today?
7 I am going to start with the regulatory update because that
8 shouldn't take too long. On the front of the page you will
9 see the public notices that we issued through the last
10 quarter. Nothing that affected recreational fishing. It was
11 all aquaculture lease, commercial striped bass, openings and
12 closures, commercial horseshoe crabs.

13 On the other side, the two regulations that became
14 effective last quarter were Menhaden allows bycatch permittees
15 to name an operator. And crabbing charters, that regulation
16 became effective two weeks ago.

17 The regulations that have been proposed and are
18 following the APA process: Some of these, the comment period
19 is closed and some, the comment period is still open.

20 Those regs that would affect this commission, there
21 is a two-year study that we are going to be doing in the
22 Atlantic Ocean for summer flounder for a two-week period in
23 the spring and a two-week period in the fall in a small area
24 of the ocean. We are going to be allowing commercial
25 hook-and-liners to catch summer flounder the same size as the

1 rest of the commercial sector.

2 MR. RINGGOLD: Can't hear you.

3 MR. JACOB: I am sorry. It will be letting
4 commercial hook-and-line fishermen catch summer
5 flounder at the same size as the rest of the commercial sector
6 in the study area for the study time period, which is -- right
7 now it is 14 inches versus 16 inches.

8 Also we redid our recreational gear regs. Those are
9 scheduled to be effective in September on a permanent basis.
10 It gets rid of the three-rod limit that we had done last year,
11 so permanently the reg is now -- it is an unlimited number of
12 rods in tidal waters.

13 And then we had a couple other clarifications. We
14 are going to be getting rid of finfish trotlines
15 recreationally. That was something that NRP had expressed a
16 great deal of concern about in addition to some other
17 recreational folks.

18 Currently the emergency regs that are in effect, the
19 only one is the gear that is currently keeping the three-rod
20 limit out of reg, and then we have proposed an emergency reg
21 to let spiny dogfish permittees declare for their permit when
22 --- opens up.

23 That is the regulatory update. Moving on to
24 scoping --

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Hang on a second, Jacob. Any

1 | questions for Jacob on the regulatory -- Jim?

2 | MR. GRACIE: Yes. I think I got myself confused.

3 | There are three-flounder limits now recreational?

4 | MR. HOLTZ: It is four, isn't it? It is four
5 | flounder at 16 inches, I think.

6 | MR. GRACIE: What are the limits for flounder for
7 | recreational, for hook-and-line commercial and other
8 | commercial?

9 | MR. HOLTZ: Right, there is recreational, there is
10 | hook-and-line commercial and --

11 | MR. GRACIE: And what is each of those minimum
12 | sizes?

13 | MR. HOLTZ: It is 16 inches for recreational, 16
14 | inches for commercial hook and line, except for the study
15 | area, which will be in effect -- the first segment of that
16 | study will be in this coming October.

17 | And then there is the commercial, everything but
18 | hook and line, which is 14 inches. So in that study area --

19 | MR. GRACIE: The study area will be 16.

20 | MR. HOLTZ: The study area will be 14 for
21 | hook-and-liners just like it is --

22 | MR. GRACIE: I wasn't clear from the way you said it
23 | which one was going down and which one is going up.

24 | MR. HOLTZ: So yes, the 16 is going to 14 in that
25 | study area for commercial hook and line.

1 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Has the study area been
2 identified yet?

3 MR. HOLTZ: It is from one to three miles off the
4 coast. So it doesn't include any part of, inside one mile, so
5 it doesn't include any of the coastal bays either.

6 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Tom?

7 MR. O'CONNELL: You may recall there was the
8 individual, Mr. Bill Feevus*, who has brought this issue
9 before this commission, Tidal Fish Advisory Commission for the
10 last several years. The big issue the department has had is
11 with the user conflicts behind the coastal bays, with people
12 fishing very close to each other with different size limits.

13 So we are trying to explore this, allowing this
14 activity in the off-shore area for two weeks in the spring and
15 two weeks in the fall for two years and evaluate, you know,
16 what kind of user conflicts/enforcement problems develop. So
17 that is the regulation that is being proposed.

18 MR. GRACIE: And how do you establish where they are
19 caught with that kind of a limit?

20 MR. HOLTZ: They can't have summer flounder in their
21 possession while they are fishing that are underneath the
22 regular hook-and-line size limit. So if they go out and catch
23 14-inch flounder in the study area, they basically have to
24 motor back in, unload, and then go back out if they want to
25 continue fishing.

1 MR. GRACIE: And if they are a quarter of a mile
2 short of the study area, how are you going to know that? That
3 is what I mean. How are you --

4 MR. HOLTZ: So if they are fishing and they are not
5 in the study area, they can't have flounder that are under 16
6 inches.

7 MR. O'CONNELL: It is just through the available law
8 enforcement.

9 MR. GRACIE: It is a pretty big study area for
10 available law enforcement to check, isn't it?

11 MR. HOLTZ: Well, most of it is within the sight of
12 the NRP office in Ocean City so --

13 MR. GRACIE: You think.

14 LT. MAUK: We have similar enforcement hurdles in
15 Virginia waters and Maryland, and once you work that area for
16 a time, you develop an enforcement strategy. I am not going
17 to say it is perfect, but it is doable.

18 MR. GRACIE: Okay.

19 MR. HOLTZ: All right, moving on. Any other
20 questions on the regs before we move on to scoping?

21 (No response)

22 MR. HOLTZ: With the scoping, just as a reminder,
23 these are regulation changes that we are working on. We don't
24 have a set proposal yet.

25 We come to you folk to get feedback on these ideas,

1 to tell you what our current plan is as far as getting public
2 feedback on it and to see what your opinions on it are and if
3 there is any other additional outreach you think would be a
4 good idea for us to do before we went forward with an actual
5 proposal.

6 With that in mind, we have a number of regulatory
7 changes that we are thinking about that we wanted to get your
8 opinions on. First, blue crabs. The change would be to just
9 clarify that -- it would be to change what people have to
10 label their recreational crabbing gear with.

11 Right now they have to label it with their DNR ID.
12 And the coastal bays and the Atlantic Ocean recreational folks
13 don't need a crabbing license so they may not have a DNR ID.
14 This change would just be to say that you can label your
15 crabbing gear, you know, your collapsible crab traps with your
16 name and your address rather than your DNR ID if you are in
17 the coastal bays or Atlantic Ocean.

18 Our current scoping plan is just to scope it on our
19 Website. Does the commission agree with that plan for now?

20 (No response)

21 MR. HOLTZ: Second on the list would be crayfish.
22 The Department is considering prohibiting the catch, use or
23 possession of crayfish. This would be statewide. If you had
24 a crayfish in your possession, it would need to have the head
25 removed. Currently we have this headless requirement in a few

1 of our watersheds but because of the difficulty in telling
2 where you are in the watershed, especially for your average
3 recreational angler, and the invasive nature of a number of
4 these crayfish, we are going to propose that for statewide.

5 Jay Killian had a nice presentation during our last
6 commission meeting, if you remember. Our current scoping plan
7 is to scope it on our Website through August, and we realize
8 that there needs to be more than just on our Website right
9 now.

10 Some of the ideas that we have had are sending
11 e-mails to our Constant Contact list, to possibly have an open
12 house or some sort of public meeting, sending out a Survey
13 Monkey, e-mailing -- I think we have the ability to e-mail
14 everybody who has a current fishing license. But we just want
15 to be able to get this information out to the public. And so
16 we would also turn to you as commissioners.

17 Because crayfish are commonly used as bait, and
18 because anglers are the largest factor in spreading invasive
19 crayfish in the state, we would really appreciate if you
20 reached out to your different groups just to get some
21 feedback, just to gauge public response on the -- if we did go
22 forth with that ban and with the understanding that the reason
23 that we are doing this is to limit the spread of an invasive
24 species.

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Questions for Jacob on the

1 | crayfish issue. Jim?

2 | MR. GRACIE: Can you -- would you be in a position
3 | to provide us a little fact sheet on the scoping in an
4 | electronic format so we can get it to our organizations'
5 | newsletters?

6 | MR. HOLTZ: We can get that to you, yes.

7 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Other comments?

8 | MR. TUMA: Have you gotten any feedback from the
9 | bait suppliers and people who would be selling crayfish?

10 | MR. O'CONNELL: No, I have not. Gina, are you aware
11 | of any?

12 | MS. HUNT: No.

13 | MR. O'CONNELL: It gets back to like the three-rod.
14 | We have to reach out to tackle shop owners to ensure they are
15 | aware of this. I did reach out to Mike Sawyers from the
16 | Cumberland Times newspaper this past weekend. And he put a
17 | message out in their local paper and Facebook page, trying to
18 | start getting people aware of what is going on.

19 | But, you know, the immediate reaction is typically
20 | adamantly opposed. We really have to get some information to
21 | make anglers aware of the implications of the invasive species
22 | to know that they threaten what they value, the fisheries in
23 | Maryland.

24 | And so it is going to be a big effort to try to
25 | educate, to get the public to understand why we are proposing

1 something like this. And I think it is a great idea to put it
2 on a fact sheet, and if you guys can help get that word out to
3 your members, we can get some really good input before we get
4 to a regulatory proposal standpoint.

5 MR. TUMA: I would guess that most of the spread is
6 from using it for bait, right? And you are not going to be
7 catching your own. I am not that much of a freshwater
8 fisherman anymore but I would assume most of them are buying
9 bait from a shop and using it in the different ponds and
10 streams, lakes, et cetera. It seems like that would be the
11 source, where the issue would be most prevalent.

12 MR. GRACIE: You may be underestimating that. When
13 I was fishing with crayfish in small-mouth streams, I caught
14 my own. I never bought crayfish in my life.

15 MR. : You are in that same stream. You
16 are not propagating it from one --

17 MR. GRACIE: Well, you know, they are pretty mobile.

18 MR. : Just throw them in the back of the
19 truck.

20 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Don Cosden has a comment to help
21 us out on this issue. Don?

22 MR. COSDEN: I believe when Jay did his
23 presentation, he did do some outreach and a survey on anglers.
24 And I believe he looked at the number of bait dealers. It is
25 relatively few bait dealers selling crayfish. It may have

1 only been like two.

2 MR. HOLTZ: It was a handful.

3 MR. COSDEN: And the thing about these invasive
4 crayfish, he made the point, in the streams where they are
5 really abundant, you can walk around and pick up half a
6 spackle bucket full of crayfish in half an hour or so. So
7 that is the case where somebody might find that stream and
8 say, oh boy, I can get all the bait I need, collect them and
9 take them down the road. That is what we are finding.

10 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Dave?

11 MR. SIKORSKI: Well, I don't know that crayfish are
12 a very popular food in Maryland. They obviously are in the
13 South. But after that last sport fish meeting when we had the
14 crayfish presentation, I looked online and there was a fishing
15 report where some guys had obtained crayfish from a commercial
16 fisherman that caught them in, I think, eel pots for possibly
17 catfishing, if I am not mistaken. He caught them somewhere.

18 And the guys got them from him and they cooked them
19 and they ate them and they had a good time. And like crab and
20 lobster, they are generally cooked live.

21 So if I had a cooler full of crayfish for a little
22 barbecue, and I don't know, I get pulled over, it could be one
23 of those unintended consequences of a regulation where, you
24 know, I am not really going to spread them. I am going to put
25 them in a pot and eat them. Keeping in mind there is also a

1 potential commercial fishery that could exist.

2 MR. O'CONNELL: You know, it is allowed in tidal.
3 We have also had recent requests to allow it nontidal waters,
4 which we have not been supportive of. But, you know, there is
5 some commercial harvest of crayfish so we would be talking to
6 the Tidal Fish Advisory Commission as well to make them aware
7 of this proposal.

8 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any other comments?

9 MR. LANGLEY: I just want to clarify that at the
10 time that if they are interested in catching their own, once
11 it comes in their possession, they need to remove the head at
12 that time.

13 MR. HOLTZ: So I will make sure we get that fact
14 sheet out to the commission so that you can give that to your
15 folks. Moving on to the nontidal changes for 2015, first we
16 would be changing the spring put and take trout stocking
17 closures for Sideling Hill Creek and Flintstone Creek from the
18 1 and the 4 closure to a 0 closure.

19 This would make the fish accessible once we stock
20 them. There have been a lot of complaints about poaching in
21 these areas. And so this would at least give everybody a fair
22 shake to get at the fish.

23 Removing the No.3/No. 4 closure for the entire
24 spring put-and-take stocking schedule and just have one open
25 day. It will again just increase fish availability for

1 anglers. It will also reduce the loss of fish due to any
2 weather events that we might have.

3 This will obviously be more beneficial for anglers
4 who can fish during the week because right now if the areas
5 are closed during the 3 and 4 closure period, they open up on
6 a Saturday. So at least in theory, those fish aren't being
7 targeted until that Saturday.

8 But we think that it will ultimately be better for
9 the fisheries. It would extend the existing catch-and-return
10 trout fishing area limited to artificial lures and flies on
11 Little Hunting Creek from the upper boundary of Cunningham
12 Falls to State Park Manor Area to all the way up to the upper
13 boundary of Cunningham Falls State Park.

14 The reason for this would be to protect the brook
15 trout and brown trout populations in that area. Just to
16 maintain the high-quality fishery that it currently is. We
17 would add the Governors Bridge Natural Area in Prince George's
18 County to the spring stocking schedule with a daily limit of
19 two per day to provide additional trout fishing opportunities
20 in southern Maryland.

21 And we would increase the possession limit to twice
22 the daily creel limit for a number of fish species to make the
23 possession limits consistent with other nontidal species. It
24 wouldn't increase for eel, baitfish, Muskie and Tiger Muskie.
25 Those fish that we would be changing the possession limit are

1 | in your packets.

2 | For all these changes right now, our ideas are just
3 | to scope them on our Website. We are planning on having two
4 | or three meetings in the state, across the breadth of the
5 | nontidal area, held in August and September. And then we
6 | would also be using a Survey Monkey to get feedback on this as
7 | well. Any questions on that?

8 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Jim?

9 | MR. GRACIE: A couple things. I am not sure that
10 | discussion of eliminating the closure periods for trout
11 | stocking -- in the past it has been observed and discussed
12 | extensively that going from a single opening day trout season
13 | to staggered openings has decreased excitement, license sales
14 | and participation.

15 | And the staggered openings male, have the same
16 | effect. In other words, they promote more interest in it, a
17 | broader interest in it. And eliminating that completely makes
18 | it kind of a ho-hum thing. So we may be undermining our
19 | efforts to market trout fishing to more fishermen.

20 | And I don't mean to get into a full discussion here
21 | but the other side of that coin is that August and September
22 | are terrible times to get public input. So I think that is a
23 | mistake too.

24 | MR. HOLTZ: Would you have another suggestion?

25 | MR. GRACIE: I think you need to postpone it for a

1 year and do it in the springtime when people are focused on
2 trout fishing, like between January and April 1. Have your
3 scoping then, and wait a year to do it because then you will
4 get more input on it.

5 MR. HOLTZ: So you would suggest holding all of
6 these changes for a year.

7 MR. GRACIE: The closures, the trout stream
8 closures.

9 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: We have some input from Don that
10 might help us out.

11 MR. COSDEN: I think the use of the Survey Monkey
12 may provide us a lot of feedback. We found in the case of
13 some tidal bass regs that we had been looking at, people will
14 pass this on.

15 We have a large database now that we can get
16 through, of e-mail addresses, to thousands of fishermen. And
17 we can pass this out, we can ask them to pass it to their
18 buddies if they are interested. And I think there would be
19 interest.

20 I would say with the tidal bass questions that we
21 sent out, we had over 600 responses. They took a survey of
22 about 10 or so questions. So I think we would get some good
23 feedback. And certainly if we felt like the word hadn't
24 gotten out.

25 MR. GRACIE: Well, what is the timing for doing the

1 Survey Monkey?

2 MR. COSDEN: It would be ready to go out in August
3 consistent with the --

4 MR. GRACIE: I don't think people are going to pay
5 attention. We had public hearings on trout regulations in
6 August and September around here and nobody showed up anywhere
7 for years. You know that.

8 MR. COSDEN: We had them in spring year after year
9 and nobody shows up.

10 MR. GRACIE: You have to look at what is on the
11 agenda too.

12 MR. COSDEN: Coming into the meetings, they don't
13 seem to want to do that. The feedback we got on Survey Monkey
14 was, this is great. I don't have to travel across two
15 counties to get to a meeting.

16 MR. GRACIE: I absolutely agree with that. My only
17 issue of concern is the timing. I think it is the wrong time
18 of year to get public attention on something that is six
19 months removed in the calendar from their activity.

20 MR. DEHOFF: A quick question concerning the twice
21 the daily creel limit for the species. Is there really that
22 much of a need for the rationale based on multi-day,
23 freshwater nontidal trips that this is needed to have someone
24 be able to possess twice their daily limit?

25 MR. HOLTZ: We get this request or this concern I

1 | guess from people generally coming from out of state saying,
2 | you know, if I am on a trip or doing like a float trip, how am
3 | I going to -- am I limited to basically one daily limit for
4 | the entire trip?

5 | So that concern has been raised by more than a
6 | couple people.

7 | MR. DEHOFF: I am just trying to think of what
8 | bodies of water and rivers and things like that would you make
9 | a multi-trip on.

10 | MR. O'CONNELL: Later on in this meeting you are
11 | going to hear an update from the Sportsmen Marketing
12 | Initiative and you will hear that one of their focal areas is
13 | trying to focus on nonresidents coming in for multi-day trips.
14 | Deep Creek Lake is one example, ice fishing in the wintertime
15 | or fishing in the summer.

16 | People come for the weekend, they want to take
17 | multiple -- a higher possession home with them in the freezer.
18 | I agree that it is -- you think about it, there is not a lot
19 | of areas but we do get these requests periodically and it does
20 | tie in with a marketing initiative that you will hear about a
21 | little bit later today.

22 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any comments, Don?

23 | MR. COSDEN: Yes. Sorry to keep jumping in on your
24 | meeting here. Technically this would apply to what you have
25 | at home so if you have a creel limit in your freezer -- you

1 | didn't want to eat them today but you wanted to go catch more
2 | tomorrow, technically you would be breaking the law or not
3 | complying with regulation.

4 | If you want to have a fish fry, you might want to
5 | have 20 some fish to fry up if you have got a big family.

6 | MR. GRACIE: Maybe I am the only old freshwater
7 | fisherman here, but standard regulations in Maryland used to
8 | have a creel limit, and the possession limit was always twice
9 | the creel limit. That is historically the way we managed
10 | fisheries in Maryland.

11 | MR. O'CONNELL: Is that not the case now, Jacob?

12 | MR. HOLTZ: It is the case with some of the species
13 | but not all the species so this would just be extending that
14 | to those species.

15 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: We will get another opportunity
16 | to consider this under the marketing initiative discussion.
17 | Okay, Jacob.

18 | MR. HOLTZ: Moving on, we have about a page long of
19 | penalty changes for 2015. Rather than go through each one of
20 | those individually, if you want to take a look at it. Our
21 | current plan is to scope it on the Website. I would like to
22 | point out we had our Penalty Workgroup meeting in June and we
23 | didn't have a single representative from the sport fish
24 | commission attend that meeting.

25 | This is the third year in a row that we haven't had

1 a sport fish commission member come to the penalty workgroup
2 meeting. And we would really appreciate it if we had some
3 input from the sport fishing side of things.

4 The last three years we have only had two members
5 from the tidal fish commission come. It has been the same two
6 members.

7 MR. SIKORSKI: Do we have people who are supposed to
8 attend those meetings?

9 MR. HOLTZ: Yes. I think I am sitting in the seat
10 of one of the guys.

11 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Throw us under the bus. Who are
12 we supposed to --

13 MR. HOLTZ: James Wommack, then looking over --

14 MR. SIKORSKI: That is you.

15 (Laughter)

16 MR. HOLTZ: Yes, that is me. And then looking over
17 the notes from actually, I think it was last July's meeting,
18 Val Lynch, Roger Trageser and Tim Smith all had ended up
19 volunteering for it as well. Sarah Widman sent out a reminder
20 e-mail and I don't think she heard back from anybody.

21 So that is just one of those things. We really do
22 value the input, especially on the penalty side of things. We
23 could just use your help.

24 MR. SIKORSKI: With some of these workgroups
25 sometimes, you know, we end up on them, we forget, we miss an

1 e-mail for whatever reason.

2 Is there any, for something like this, the Penalty
3 Workgroup, which is pretty universal among the people we
4 represent, is there any reason why we can't just say, hey,
5 all commissioners we would like a couple of you to come to
6 this meeting. Can any of you make it? And the first couple
7 that reply go, hey, we are coming. Rather than it be four
8 specific commissioners who maybe can't come.

9 MR. HOLTZ: We can send out an e-mail to the entire
10 commission and say, this is when we are having the meetings.
11 We could absolutely do it that way if that works --

12 MR. SIKORSKI: We very well may have already gotten
13 the e-mail but rather than, you know, starting with --

14 MR. HOLTZ: I think generally the idea had been if
15 we have a subset of people that is committed to
16 that -- everybody kind of understands why the system is the
17 way it is and all that and then we don't have to basically
18 start from scratch every meeting.

19 MR. GRACIE: Continuity is important.

20 MR. SIKORSKI: Well, there is no continuity if
21 nobody is showing up.

22 MR. HOLTZ: Right.

23 MR. RINGGOLD: When is the next meeting?

24 MR. HOLTZ: Generally we only have the one meeting
25 in the springtime to go over the last year's worth of

1 penalties and try to figure out what we need to change. Last
2 year we had two other, I think two other meetings, one in
3 November and I am not sure if we had any other ones.

4 But it is really not a big time commitment. It is
5 one or two meetings a year generally. So that is just my
6 personal aside. We could really use your help.

7 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Tom -- hold on a second, Jacob.

8 MR. O'CONNELL: Hey, Jacob, you are doing a great
9 job by the way.

10 MR. HOLTZ: Thank you.

11 MR. O'CONNELL: I think you provided a really nice
12 level of detail on the purpose and all the rationale. But
13 just recognizing our time constraints today, I am wondering if
14 maybe you could maybe jump into yellow perch. I think that is
15 one this group is interested in.

16 And then while Jacob is going over yellow perch,
17 just browse through the other ones. I think you will notice
18 that they are kind of maybe not as --

19 MR. HOLTZ: They don't apply.

20 MR. O'CONNELL: They don't really apply to the Sport
21 Fish Advisory Commission but if you guys see something that is
22 of interest, let Jake know and we will circle back on one
23 those. But if you could maybe cover yellow perch and then see
24 if there are any others we need to cover.

25 MR. HOLTZ: Absolutely. So skipping down to yellow

1 perch, the fisheries staff met with commercial yellow perch
2 permit holders on July 8 to discuss potential changes. And
3 they came up with two potential changes that we are going to
4 go forward with and scope.

5 The first would be to change the season end date
6 from March 10 to April 1. The industry requested this change
7 so they would have more of an opportunity to fully harvest
8 their commercial quota. We would still have public notice
9 authority to close the season early if the quota was met
10 sometime in the middle or if it was met before the old season
11 end date.

12 We have a lot of wiggle room with it, so this would
13 just eliminate the need to extend it through a public notice
14 and just put everybody on -- make everyone aware that is how
15 long the commercial fishing season would be going until.

16 The second change would be a potential change to the
17 live market tagging requirements. The two options that we are
18 looking at are either removing the tagging requirement for the
19 live market or maintaining the tagging requirement but not
20 charging for the tags.

21 The way the live market tagging works is the guys on
22 the live market purchase the yellow perch tags. When they are
23 going to harvest for the live market, they call us two days
24 ahead of time so that way a fisheries staff person can meet
25 them at the dock, count the fish with them and then the

1 harvester hands over that number of tags.

2 So say he harvested 100 live yellow perch. He gives
3 100 tags back to the fisheries service representative. It is
4 really just kind of a waste. So we would just be looking at
5 ways to reduce that waste.

6 Our current scoping plan was to -- we had the
7 meeting with the permit holders on the 8th, and we would also
8 put it on our Website. We didn't think that it needed to be
9 scoped any further but we would be open to hearing from you
10 guys.

11 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Questions on the yellow perch
12 issues? Mark?

13 MR. DEHOFF: So basically what we are doing is we
14 are making a change to the existing season to allow greater
15 opportunity to catch their allotment.

16 MR. HOLTZ: Yes.

17 MR. DEHOFF: Okay. There are -- it seems to me that
18 there are quite a few other species and other user groups who
19 also do not meet our, catch their entire allotment. Is it
20 equitable to make this change for these people, this user
21 group, and not consider it for other user groups?

22 And I personally feel that, you know, we have -- a
23 lot of thought has been put into setting these seasons. There
24 is science behind most of them, I would imagine.

25 And, you know, if the weather, the season and things

1 | like that conspire against the user groups and make them
2 | ineligible or unable to catch their entire allotment, if we
3 | set this precedent, I feel that this may run over into all
4 | different user groups that are going to ask for this change.

5 | And one of the biggest groups that hasn't met their
6 | allotment in quite a number of years is recreational striped
7 | bass. And, you know, personally I think this is an
8 | opportunity for the species to catch up a little bit. You
9 | know, if they don't get the chance to catch them, well then
10 | that is good for the species.

11 | We are giving them a chance to bounce back a little
12 | bit, you know, instead of going out there and trying to catch
13 | every single one that we possibly can. Sure, we found that
14 | the science dictates that we are okay taking that many out of
15 | the ecosystem but we are certainly better off fish-wise if
16 | those fish remain in the ecosystem.

17 | MR. O'CONNELL: It is a good question. I think it
18 | is a case-by-case basis. You know, we had some pretty
19 | controversial and lengthy conversations about yellow perch
20 | several years ago. And we were able to develop a scientific
21 | framework that could determine a very conservative and
22 | sustainable level of harvest.

23 | And we feel like, you know, the commercial guys and
24 | recreational should be awarded that opportunity to catch it.
25 | You know, we are fortunate that the accountability measures

1 that are in place for yellow perch require daily reporting so
2 we can account for it on a daily basis.

3 You are right that, you know, other species, for
4 recreational, we find out that they were under their quota
5 targets, striped bass for example. Unfortunately, the
6 accounting system for recreational striped bass is through the
7 federal Marine Recreational Information Program, and we don't
8 know until well after the year is over with.

9 If we had the same type of accountability standards
10 in place for recreational, we may also be able to afford
11 increased opportunities to catch the scientifically based
12 allowable harvest.

13 We spent a lot of time going back and looking at,
14 you know, why the March 10 date was established and determined
15 that, you know, it wasn't for a biological reason. And that
16 also at that time we established up river fyke net closure
17 areas, which were designed to address the user conflicts that
18 were being experienced.

19 So, you know, we feel that we can afford this
20 opportunity to allow the commercial guys to catch the
21 allocation that is a scientifically determined safe level and
22 still avoid the user conflicts up river. So that is kind of
23 how we got to this basis.

24 You know, your question is a good one, and I think
25 it is an incentive for recreational anglers to, you know, get

1 to an accountability standard that would allow us to better
2 assess in a more timely manner where sports fisheries are
3 throughout the year.

4 And I know CCA, for one example, and others are
5 looking toward trying to improve the accountability on the
6 recreational side. That would be my response to that concern.

7 MR. DEHOFF: And I understand the differences
8 between the recreational and the commercial aspects of it. It
9 just seems that, you know, we had come to a decision that we
10 could all live with a couple years ago and the yellow perch
11 seem to be rebounding relatively nicely.

12 And it just -- now they are coming back and saying,
13 hey, you know, we can't catch that many fish. Well, that is
14 good for the fish. I just wanted to put my opinion in.

15 MR. O'CONNELL: No, I appreciate that. Thanks.

16 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Anything else on that? Jim?

17 MR. GRACIE: I don't understand the tagging system.
18 I am sorry.

19 MR. HOLTZ: So for regular, the regular market, they
20 tag it just like they would take a striped bass. They
21 actually use the same tags and it looks almost ridiculous that
22 you would put such a big tag on a little fish.

23 MR. GRACIE: Is it like a --- tag?

24 MR. O'CONNELL: No, it is like a commercial striped
25 bass tag.

1 MR. HOLTZ: Like through the mouth and gill. With
2 the live market, the way it works right now is they give
3 fisheries a call two days ahead of time to say, hey, I am
4 going to go out two day from now. I am going to harvest for
5 the live market. This is where I am going to be.

6 When they get to the dock, they hand over the tags
7 that they already purchased. You know, if they caught 100
8 fish, they hand the fisheries service person 100 tags that
9 aren't used. They just end up getting thrown away or marked
10 somehow and disposed of eventually.

11 MR. GRACIE: I don't understand, what do you mean by
12 aren't used? If they caught 100 fish don't they use 100 tags?

13 MR. O'CONNELL: It is a live market.

14 MR. HOLTZ: They are selling them live like in
15 tanks.

16 MR. GRACIE: So they are not actually tagging the
17 fish. The tag is there so they can prove that --

18 MR. HOLTZ: Right. And so if they are already
19 meeting the department representative and we already have that
20 level of accountability --

21 MR. GRACIE: Okay.

22 MR. HOLTZ: Does that make a little more sense?

23 MR. GRACIE: Thank you.

24 MR. HOLTZ: Okay.

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So, yes, I mean, that is the

1 exact point. They are looking for ways to improve on that
2 inefficiency.

3 MR. HOLTZ: Yes.

4 MS. DEAN: Tom, can you share with the commission,
5 what are the numbers that the commercial have been able to
6 harvest in the past years? My understanding is it is
7 considerably lower than what is allocated. Do you know those
8 numbers?

9 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes, in regard to their performance
10 against the quota? In the rationale, the last two years, 32
11 and 27 percent of the quota has not been harvested. And what
12 is interesting is it looks like, and we have extended it over
13 the past years, but you know one or two extra days, because
14 the fishery is starting to peak when it is being closed down,
15 would allow them to catch that quota.

16 So it is probably unlikely for them to go to April
17 1st. This was one of our coldest springs on record, and I
18 think we went to March 20, Mike? But we thought, let's put
19 April 1st.

20 We will monitor on a daily basis and give them the
21 opportunity. They are calling in daily. There is low risk to
22 exceed the quota. We do some projections based upon catch
23 rates and if there is not a full day's catch left, we usually
24 close it down.

25 MR. GRACIE: And there are still the same staggered

1 openings for recreational and commercial. The recreational
2 fishermen get first crack at them before March 10.

3 MR. O'CONNELL: The recreational fishery is open
4 year round.

5 MR. GRACIE: Right, so they are out there.

6 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes.

7 MR. GRACIE: One of the rationales that we discussed
8 in all this -- well, it is twofold. One, to give the
9 recreational fishermen the first chance, and the other was to
10 give some of the fish a chance to spawn before they are
11 commercially harvested.

12 MR. O'CONNELL: And that quota and the up river no
13 fyke lines were allowed to -- once those fish got above those
14 lines to, and typically the fishery, the commercial fishery is
15 typically closing when the spawning is starting to really
16 peak. It is just with such a small quota, it doesn't take
17 many days once those fish really start running.

18 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any other comments on the yellow
19 perch stuff? Okay. Did you get a chance to look at some of
20 the other species that Tom mentioned? Any thoughts on any of
21 that, that you want to bring up? Because otherwise we will
22 move on.

23 (No response)

24 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Seeing none, thank you, Jacob.

25 MR. HOLTZ: Thank you.

1 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: We will move on to the
2 legislative agenda. Gina?

3 ***2015 Legislative Session Ideas***

4 ***by Gina Hunt, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

5 MS. HUNT: Hi. I am going to try to be quicker so
6 we can get back on time here. And I apologize, you did not
7 get this in an e-mail or even obviously in a booklet of
8 materials so I just walked it around for you to take a look at
9 in regard to ideas for the 2015 session.

10 And really I will just preface this with saying that
11 we have noticed certainly in the past that the department is
12 more successful with legislative ideas when the ideas are
13 brought to the public earlier than January. So this is our
14 time that we thought we would come to the commissions and just
15 throw out some possible ideas for next session.

16 They are just ideas. They are not necessarily bills
17 that are going to happen, and they are certainly not
18 necessarily bills that would be departmental. But these are
19 things that we have seen as issues or areas that are
20 opportunities of concern.

21 So the handout is double-sided. And the first one,
22 the first concept, is a housekeeping bill. You may recall
23 that we have had legislation in the past that is housekeeping,
24 twice actually that I can remember probably in the past five
25 years.

1 And by housekeeping we mean these are things, these
2 are items that are in statute that are either inconsistent or
3 no longer valid or just antiquated and no longer really are
4 relative to fisheries management now. So they would not, by
5 removing them, make any kind of controversial change. They
6 are just things that really don't mean anything or belong
7 there anymore.

8 So what you see here is a list of bullets. Under
9 No. 1, housekeeping. And these are all concepts and ideas
10 that would be part of a housekeeping legislation. This may be
11 a little difficult to understand without having the law right
12 in front of you. Obviously the natural resource article is
13 cited in the bullet.

14 I can explain any of them to you if you want, but I
15 didn't think I would walk through each and every one of them
16 because it might be really -- take a lot of time.

17 Some of them, I will say, some of them were kind of
18 made obsolete when the gear authority came in, when we got
19 gear authority in law, and we put in those gear regs. So that
20 made some of these statutes obsolete.

21 Some of them are just things like, you know, statute
22 uses locations like houses and points of land that are no
23 longer really even there, and we want to use lat-long
24 coordinates.

25 One of them is that we currently have the authority

1 | to issue complementary licenses for nontidal licenses but not
2 | tidal. So, you know, if the president of the United States
3 | asked us for a license, we would have to say, I am sorry, sir.
4 | We cannot give you a complementary license in tidal waters.

5 | So maybe a little consistency. And it hasn't
6 | happened. I am not saying it has happened, but that is --
7 | yes, we have free fishing days, sir, and you could go there.

8 | So, you know, you could look through these and
9 | e-mail me questions or concerns or whatever you would like.
10 | That would be great. Again it is an idea that, of course, is
11 | not meant to be controversial.

12 | The second one on the back is a dam removal tax
13 | credit. So you know we have a fish passage program in the
14 | department, and the goal of that program is certainly to
15 | ensure passage upstream for our anadromous species.

16 | And that used to mean that we put in fish ladders.
17 | Any more it is about removing those blockages. And so we have
18 | the blockages in Maryland actually listed by priority. How
19 | important it is to remove, and a number of those are on
20 | private property.

21 | So, you know, we have been really trying to get
22 | folks to have some kind of reason to remove the blockage, but
23 | for a private property owner it is just -- a lot of them like
24 | it for a number of different reasons. They want to keep their
25 | blockage.

1 And so this is kind of a -- rather than the stick
2 approach, where we tell them they have to remove a blockage,
3 it would be a little bit more of a carrot, where you say, hey,
4 if you could remove this fish blockage, you could get a tax
5 credit.

6 So in here is kind of just an example of maybe what
7 a tax credit could be and how fisheries could calculate what
8 that tax credit would be depending on the priority of the dam
9 removal.

10 So this, you know, obviously would be a bill that
11 would cost the state a little bit of money in the sense that
12 there would be less tax revenue. But we wouldn't be
13 anticipating more than one or two dam removals per year on
14 these kinds of properties so it is not significant. But, you
15 know, again it is just an idea, and if you have any thoughts,
16 recommendations or concerns, we would appreciate having them
17 now.

18 The third one is changing the recreational fishing
19 license from a calendar year to a license that would be valid
20 for 365 days. So there are a few states that do have this,
21 including our neighbor Virginia. And, you know, we don't get
22 a lot of calls or concerns or anybody who says, oh, my
23 goodness, I can't believe I am going to buy this license in
24 August and it expires in December.

25 But it may just be people are kind of used to it.

1 So there is some information that we have received from some
2 of these other states that shows what they had happen when
3 they changed to a 365-day license.

4 Their short-term license sales went down and their
5 long-term license sales went up because if you were going to
6 buy a license maybe in November, you might not buy the annual
7 license. Maybe you would just buy the one that was good for a
8 week because, you know, it is going to expire soon.

9 So there are revenue implications to it, and we are
10 looking into those ideas right now. And certainly also with
11 Virginia having a 365-day license, and we are on a calendar
12 year, we have a reciprocity agreement with Virginia for our
13 tidal licenses. So there is also that issue of maybe somebody
14 is just going to go to Virginia and buy the license in
15 November rather than buying ours.

16 So anyway, these things are certainly areas that we
17 are looking into, and this I think would seriously, obviously
18 impact sport fish commissioners and your stakeholders so we
19 would welcome some feedback or any other things you think we
20 should look into when considering moving this to a 365 --

21 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Jim, go ahead.

22 MR. GRACIE: On the dam removal tax credit --

23 MS. HUNT: Yes?

24 MR. GRACIE: Who is taking the lead on that? Fish
25 passage groups? Is somebody actually working on that?

1 MS. HUNT: Well, what we would be doing right now is
2 simply just taking this idea out for consideration. There is
3 no bill.

4 MR. GRACIE: My organization would probably want you
5 to add credit for removing thermal impacts from trout streams,
6 which isn't in the list of priorities. In other words, the
7 dam on the trout stream makes the trout stream too warm for
8 trout because of the summer spillover.

9 MS. HUNT: Right.

10 MR. GRACIE: These are usually small ponds, not big
11 dams. So based on this credit, there would be no significant
12 incentive unless you would give some credit for changing the
13 thermal --- in trout waters.

14 MS. HUNT: Well, if it is a blockage it is
15 already -- you are saying it is not a blockage to a stream.
16 It is in a pond?

17 MR. GRACIE: It is a blockage to a stream.

18 MS. HUNT: Yes, well then it should be --

19 MR. GRACIE: But if your credit is based on the
20 dam's height times the dam's length, if it is a tiny little
21 dam, it is not going to get enough credit to give anybody a
22 real incentive.

23 MS. HUNT: I see.

24 MR. GRACIE: In fact there is a bigger impact to
25 that, not just to fish passage but the thermal impact, which

1 | should get some credit too.

2 | MS. HUNT: Okay.

3 | MR. GRACIE: Because we have probably 65 or 70 in-
4 | line ponds in the Gunpowder watershed that are making trout
5 | streams uninhabitable for trout because of their summer
6 | temperatures.

7 | MS. HUNT: Okay. You get paid more based on the
8 | species or habitat that you are improving.

9 | MR. GRACIE: That is why I asked if there is a
10 | workgroup working on this because I am pretty sure that Trout
11 | Unlimited would want to have some input and get involved in
12 | the dialogue.

13 | MR. O'CONNELL: Could we follow up with you, Jim?

14 | MR. GRACIE: Yes.

15 | MR. ---- : Like you are saying, based on the
16 | quality of the impediment itself, not just the square footage
17 | of the dam.

18 | MS. HUNT: Right. Yes, that was just literally an
19 | example we came up with, how you might calculate it, but that
20 | is an excellent point, Jim. We could use that as a matrix for
21 | how you come up with a price and what your credit could be.

22 | MR. GRACIE: If you had a workgroup set up, I am
23 | sure I could get a couple volunteers who are knowledgeable
24 | about this who would volunteer to be on it too.

25 | MS. HUNT: Okay. Any comments about the 365

1 license? Concerns?

2 MR. DEHOFF: The only thing I see is it might -- the
3 note you had on there about the sport fishing decal and how
4 that would be handled.

5 MR. O'CONNELL: We have contacted Virginia, and they
6 have found a way to deal with that and we are waiting for some
7 input back from them to see if it could be something we could
8 work out in Maryland as well.

9 I will just also add that the Potomac River
10 Fisheries Commission, you may recall Roger brought an issue to
11 us in regard to nonresident fees in regard to the Potomac
12 River in Maryland. There was an incentive for people to go to
13 the Potomac River. They have adjusted their fees. They will
14 go into effect in 2015. They are also looking at a
15 365-calendar year license.

16 So, you know, if we don't go forward with a 365, we
17 may find ourselves in a similar situation with reciprocity,
18 that anglers find out and begin going to other states and we
19 lose revenue on that.

20 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Also lose anglers. And I think
21 another aspect you could add to your list of pros for the
22 idea, benefits to the idea, is that if somebody does end up
23 buying a year-long license late in the year, it is an
24 incentive for them to come back and fish again in Maryland.

25 And I will just say that I bought the Florida

1 year-long license probably for six or seven years now, and I
2 think it is a great idea, a 365-day license.

3 MS. HUNT: And to be clear, this wasn't just a tidal
4 365 days. It would apply to tidal and nontidal. I mentioned
5 Virginia's reciprocity but it wouldn't just be tidal licenses.

6 Okay, public notice authority: You know, we spoke
7 to both commissions before and formed a workgroup of
8 commissioners from sport fish and tidal fish, and we had our
9 first meeting on public notice authority on July 8. And there
10 were sport fish members present. There were also tidal fish
11 members present.

12 There was quite a bit of discussion of what the
13 department's current authority is and what criteria is already
14 in regulation for how we would do those public notices.

15 And really, you know, after all the discussion, all
16 the materials that were handed out, I think where we were is
17 that on the commercial side of things, members from the
18 commission needed to go back and talk to their membership,
19 talk to their organizations, and discuss what criteria, or if
20 they would support any public notice authority legislations.

21 So we will be having a subsequent meeting of this
22 workgroup probably in early August. I haven't scheduled a
23 date yet. But it would then, when we come back from that
24 meeting, we would have the feedback from those organizations
25 on what criteria they think they could feel comfortable with.

1 And, you know, just to be clear, what I told them at
2 the time was, you know, there is no bill unless everyone
3 agrees because we are currently using public notices, as you
4 could see with what Jacob handed out. You know, nothing has
5 changed because there wasn't legislation approved last year.

6 However, the state's attorney had suggested a
7 clarification of this authority. It is still something that
8 we had said we will look into trying to get that clarified in
9 statute. But without the clarification we are still doing our
10 job and we are still managing fisheries by public notice.
11 So I will just keep you up to date after that next meeting.

12 Fisheries Habitat Stamp: This is something that
13 actually came about as maybe a possible amendment to
14 legislation last year, and as you will recall, there was a
15 bill that had required nonresidents to pay a surcharge, and it
16 would be on like crabbing licenses, nonresident crabbing
17 licenses, and that money would have gone to oyster
18 restoration.

19 So that bill didn't pass but during session and
20 while that bill was still alive, there were discussions about
21 trying to amend it, make it something a little broader, maybe
22 not targeting nonresidents. And so the concept is still alive
23 though I am not sure if there was any more discussion maybe
24 from this group or from tidal fish on what, or if anything, a
25 habitat stamp would look like or should move forward.

1 So it is just on again the list of possible ideas.
2 And we would welcome any comments from this group.

3 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Jim?

4 MR. GRACIE: Do you know what the feedback was,
5 negative to this? Was it moving from one sector to another?
6 Was that what the objection was?

7 MS. HUNT: On the original bill or --

8 MR. GRACIE: The original bill.

9 MS. HUNT: Well --

10 MR. GRACIE: Crabbing license money to oyster
11 restoration.

12 MR. SIKORSKI: It was another fee.

13 MR. O'CONNELL: And some organizations within this
14 room approached the legislators to introduce the nonresident
15 crabbing bill and it seemed like they were already kind of
16 zoned in and in trying to push this forward, and weren't
17 interested in amending the bill to something broader that
18 would be a voluntary thing.

19 And talking to several of the stakeholders we
20 thought about -- you know, if you have one general fisheries
21 habitat stamp, you know, how do you get someone from Deep
22 Creek Lake interested in that when that money may be largely
23 used for the bay?

24 So that kind of morphed into an idea that if there
25 was this idea, you would have a nontidal -- it could be used

1 for stream restoration projects, you have a tidal that could
2 be used for artificial reefs. And you have an oyster one that
3 could be used for oysters.

4 And then we have this new Fisheries Habitat
5 Workgroup going now, so -- and, you know, you could get
6 creative and you could have a drawing contest and actually
7 have a collectible stamp that people would voluntarily
8 contribute for.

9 But it is really in the early stages of an idea,
10 and, you know -- some states have these voluntary habitat
11 stamps. We haven't done the research to see how much money
12 they collect. But it would be important to make it very clear
13 that money would be solely used for habitat-related projects.

14 MR. GRACIE: But it wouldn't be a state income tax
15 check-off.

16 MS. HUNT: No, this would be something like when you
17 go in to buy your recreational fishing license, you could say,
18 I will put \$5 to nontidal restoration and that would, you
19 know, just be something you do.

20 You know, personally I have had to buy something
21 before where it came to like an odd price, if you have ever
22 done that, and then they round it up to the next dollar and
23 they take that change and apply it to something. I am not
24 sure if you have ever had that experience.

25 But they are like, oh, okay, I bought something for

1 \$5.64. Would you be okay with us charging you \$6 and donating
2 the rest? It sounds like pennies but it really, when you have
3 seen it applied to thousands of people, it actually makes a
4 difference.

5 So I am not sure if a habitat stamp would even have
6 a set price. You could just donate whatever -- add \$1, add
7 \$10, whatever it is you actually want to donate to that cause.

8 But again the original bill was totally different
9 than this, and it only applied to nonresidents. And it only
10 applied to crabbing licenses, and the money went to oysters.
11 This would be a much different, and on a voluntary basis.

12 MR. DEHOFF: I guess one of the questions I know
13 some of the people in our group are going say is, is it
14 possible to earmark that money strictly for those causes and
15 know that it is going to go there? Is it possible for the
16 department or the fisheries to do that?

17 MS. HUNT: If you wanted those three causes?

18 MR. DEHOFF: Yes.

19 MS. HUNT: Yes. I mean, if you want to make sure
20 the money goes to yellow perch, probably not. That is going
21 to be tough.

22 MR. DEHOFF: Their concerns are more that it is not
23 going to end up in the general fund or something like that as
24 moneys are collected.

25 MR. O'CONNELL: We would need some legislative

1 language to make it clear, the intent. Maybe some annual
2 report to demonstrate some accountability of how the funds are
3 used. I think that definitely would be something that we
4 would really want to try to make language to give people a
5 comfort level that the money is going for what they think it
6 is.

7 So kick that idea around and, you know, I don't know
8 if it is something the department plans on pursuing, you know,
9 as a departmental bill but it is an idea that I think, you
10 know, it could have some positive benefits and I would be
11 willing to work with any organization that may want to think
12 about it more and try to get a sponsor for it.

13 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So is the habitat workgroup
14 discussing this idea too?

15 MR. O'CONNELL: They have not yet. It is something
16 they could. But we are still kind of -- you will hear a
17 little bit later where that workgroup is at. We are trying to
18 still envision what that group's charge is. I don't know,
19 Jim, do you think that is something the workgroup could
20 discuss?

21 MR. GRACIE: Certainly.

22 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any other questions or comments
23 for Gina on the legislative ideas?

24 (No response)

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Gina. Okay, like I

1 | said before, we are going to move up the inland stuff ahead of
2 | the estuarine, if you all are okay with that still. I will
3 | bring up Don. Thank you, Don.

4 | ***Inland Fisheries Management Plan -- Paper Mill Issue on Potomac***

5 | ***by Don Cosden, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

6 | MR. COSDEN: I am going to talk briefly about this
7 | situation on the north branch of the Potomac. I sent out a
8 | document I think late last week, and hopefully everyone had a
9 | chance to read it. So I won't go over all the background
10 | because that was a couple pages of background.

11 | But let me just say the north branch is a
12 | high-quality trout stream. Thanks to the cold-water discharge
13 | from the Jennings Randolph Reservoir, we potentially have
14 | conditions to support trout for 20 miles of river there. It
15 | depends on how dry the year is and how hot it is. And as you
16 | can see here sometimes how bad the discharge is out of the
17 | wastewater treatment plant in Westernport.

18 | I will say this discharge has been here since I was
19 | a baby I guess, and that is sort of quite how long ago. And
20 | many years ago it was awful but nobody cared because the river
21 | was dead. But nowadays thanks to a lot other water-quality
22 | efforts, the river is alive.

23 | We stock it. There are put-and-take trout sections,
24 | there are catch-and-release trout sections. There are wild
25 | fish, natural spawning. We augment that with several hundred

1 thousand fingerlings every year. And we get an occasional
2 brown trout in excess of 20 inches. And it not unusual to
3 catch rainbow trout 17 or 18 inches. And you get an
4 occasional brookie that comes out of a local stream.

5 This particular discharge is from the sewage
6 treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant. But it is like
7 this because of the waste stream out of the paper mill in the
8 town of Westernport. And it has been a problem but over the
9 years we have had improvements.

10 We had incremental improvements in 1990, during
11 permit negotiations. We had more improvements in 2000, and
12 each time we saw the river improve and we saw the fisheries
13 improve. It is not clear -- that is not to say we haven't had
14 issues. We have had issues in the past. There were periods
15 when the turbidity from the discharge caused the fish to shut
16 down, and plenty of complaints.

17 But typically it was -- maybe it occurred that way
18 for a few days and then it tended to clear up and the fishing
19 would come back on. We are not sure exactly what has gone on
20 this year. But as soon as it got warm enough that the
21 fishermen got out on the river, we started getting complaints
22 about the condition of the river.

23 In fact, there was an inspector who came out one day
24 and inspected the plan, looked at the condition of the river,
25 and you might have seen in the e-mail string, he noted that

1 the river did look pretty turbid, but that the discharge was
2 within the limits of the permit.

3 That permit was issued in 2001 and was supposed to
4 be up in 2006, and tracking 2005 and 2006 we were having some
5 conversations with MDE about reducing the amount of suspended
6 solids, the color and the turbidity in the river. But those
7 conversations stalled and we were unaware several years ago
8 apparently that MDE had started up this permit process again.

9 And the bottom line is when I contacted MDE recently
10 after getting all these complaints, I found out that there was
11 a permit that was pending, a new permit. I didn't have a
12 chance to review that until after I sent you guys the
13 document, and just last week I got a copy of the new permit,
14 which has apparently been issued and comes into effect on
15 September 1 now.

16 So I quickly went through this permit and I tried to
17 glean the differences, and it is very difficult to decipher in
18 a lot of cases. I am not a water quality expert by any means
19 but it does appear that they are making some substantial
20 reductions in turbidity, in color, in total suspended solids.

21 However, it is not clear to me and some of us here
22 that these reductions are going to significantly reduce the
23 conditions that people are complaining about on the river. I
24 have received data -- I requested data from this year because
25 this is when really the complaints were coming in. And I did

1 get May's data already. I am still waiting for June and July.

2 What I was able to glean from the monitoring that
3 has been going on there -- the first real complaints we had
4 were May 25 and 26, Memorial Day weekend. Anglers and guides
5 were out, and we had several complaints. And the conditions,
6 or the monitoring data that I looked at for those couple of
7 days unfortunately appear to be within the limits of the new
8 permit. Jim?

9 MR. GRACIE: What is the sampling frequency? Is it
10 a grab sample daily? Grab sample weekly?

11 MR. COSDEN: It is grab sample, 24-hour grab sample.
12 What I found in the monitoring report that I got though -- I
13 am only getting for the river grab samples, I am only getting
14 a weekly recording of those grab sample.

15 MR. GRACIE: You mean a composite?

16 MR. COSDEN: I guess it is a composite.

17 MR. GRACIE: You get one number.

18 MR. COSDEN: I am getting one number for the week.
19 So I don't know if truly they are getting the daily readings
20 and then just averaging them and giving us those numbers, but
21 we are going to request that we get all the data that are
22 available at least.

23 My point in doing that is that we have, I have
24 e-mails of specific days where there were complaints, and I
25 have asked some of the guides to come back to me with their

1 notes, their days when they noticed it was unfishable.

2 And I am going to try to match those up with
3 whatever the monitoring data show for those particular days so
4 we have a better idea of whether these new limits are truly
5 going to make a difference or not.

6 MR. GRACIE: I have a procedural question. Didn't
7 the environmental review comment on this permit? There is a
8 clearinghouse procedure on NPDES permits.

9 MR. COSDEN: I immediately spoke to our guys and to
10 the environmental review. No one has a record of having been
11 notified. They certainly don't have records of us being in
12 conversation with MDE. However, understand this was several
13 years ago that this process would have started up.

14 I don't have the exact dates. I believe the river
15 keepers here who may have some more exact dates for us --

16 MR. GRACIE: MDE would have to have a record of
17 feedback from environmental review in order to issue that
18 permit.

19 MR. COSDEN: Perhaps not a record -- only a record
20 of having notified us. I cannot guarantee that
21 something -- typically wastewater treatment discharges aren't
22 on our radar. They occur in places where they are set at
23 certain limits. They don't have notable impacts in waters --

24 MR. GRACIE: That permit used to be a five-year
25 NPDES permit. The reason it took 11 years to come out is

1 | because a bunch of us kept the battle going to try to get
2 | those limits --

3 | MR. COSDEN: Well, there is no doubt about that.
4 | And there is no doubt that in 2005 and 2006, MDE was
5 | definitely aware that this permit was of great interest to us
6 | and a concern to us, as well as others. So I don't know what
7 | to say. All I can say is, no, we did not comment, and we
8 | would have preferred to have the opportunity to comment.

9 | We have been told that the conversation can
10 | continue. In fact, our assistant director, Dr. Goshorn, has
11 | spoken with MDE recently and requested a meeting, and we are
12 | waiting to have that confirmed that we can get together and
13 | have this discussion.

14 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Don, I understand we have a guest
15 | who wants to address the commission on the issue. Were you
16 | going to introduce him?

17 | MR. COSDEN: Sure. Do you have a statement?

18 | MR. O'CONNELL: Introduce yourself for the record.

19 | MR. COSDEN: This is Brent Walls. He is the Potomac
20 | River keeper for that section of the Potomac. I guess there
21 | are several.

22 | MR. WALLS: My name is Brent Walls. I am the Upper
23 | Potomac River keeper. I am one of three river keepers in the
24 | Potomac watershed. Our main goal is to protect the public's
25 | right to clean water for fishing, swimming and drinking.

1 And we do that through several avenues, and one is
2 enforcing the state and federal clean water pollution control
3 laws, advocating for changes either in the legislative process
4 or through public opinion.

5 And I do have a direct connection to all the river
6 guides up in there. There are seven or eight river guides and
7 outfitters that routinely take clients up and down the north
8 branch and the Savage River. And this is a particularly big
9 eyesore for the north branch.

10 And it has been going on, like Don had indicated,
11 for several years. It is an 8-year-old permit, so they have
12 been over lapsed in requiring these new permit standards for 8
13 years. And Potomac Riverkeepers has been trying to push MDE
14 to initiate this new permit.

15 And I am glad to hear that it sounds like they are
16 considering September 1 as actually issuing this permit. But
17 even in the permit guidelines right now, the turbidity
18 standards, as it stands, is 300 for a maximum reading, and
19 then an average of 150. Apparently the paper mill has been
20 making some changes and so they are having a much greater
21 amount of turbidity going into the wastewater treatment plant.
22 And they are having higher instances of getting close to that
23 300.

24 And so if they have more than one close to the 300
25 max limit, then their average monthly is going to be over the

1 permit limit, and there will be violations. So I think that
2 is possibly one of the holdups that are being considered for
3 this time.

4 We have not received any comments from MDE on our
5 petition for some of the changes, and they have reduced some
6 nitrogen impacts to the river also. But like I said, there is
7 a huge economic interest. I think it is in the paperwork that
8 Don had submitted to you all. There are a number of guides up
9 there who really make their living up there.

10 And also there are a number of people who fish the
11 river for sustenance. It is a relatively poor area,
12 especially on the West Virginia side, so there are folks who
13 are there catching the fish to put food on the table.

14 One of the main concerns, other concerns, we have
15 is thermal impacts of this facility. Like Don had indicated,
16 because of the Jennings Randolph Dam and because of the
17 lime --- they are curbing the acid mine drainage.

18 We have an excellent cold-water fishery that is
19 contributing to the natural propagation of some of the fish
20 species. But the thermal impacts from the paper mill and from
21 the treatment plant, you get 90 degree water -- that right
22 there is about 90 degrees, coming out into that river.

23 You literally can wade through there and feel a huge
24 difference. It is like going to into really hot bath water.
25 And that changes the dynamics of the stream right there, right

1 | there, an actual line.

2 | And so that has been big concern. And the reason
3 | why this is allowed is because of MDE's use of the mixing
4 | zone. Clean Water Act states that all states can use this way
5 | of, for certain permits. A lot of states out there in the
6 | United States have been outlawing the mixing zones. But this
7 | one right here is a mile long.

8 | So they have actually done studies that say, well,
9 | it is fully mixed all the way across the river stream, and it
10 | takes a mile of river to do that. And so for that entire mile
11 | you are getting this kind of turbid water and the thermal
12 | impacts.

13 | And that is breaking up the river segment and
14 | creating a barrier for the cold-water fisheries.

15 | MR. GRACIE: You are pretty familiar with the
16 | restrictions on mixing zones. One of them is it cannot create
17 | a barrier.

18 | MR. WALLS: Yes, and this obviously -- even though
19 | it is a diffuser; that is, there are several parts to this
20 | discharge pipe, it certainly does create a barrier.

21 | But they are allowed based on the current
22 | legislative practices of what the mixing zone is. They are
23 | allowed to have that designation, even if it is a, you know,
24 | in part a barrier.

25 | (Slide)

1 MR. COSDEN: This picture here is actually taken at
2 the mixing zone, which is about a mile downstream. This was
3 on a different day. This was actually last Tuesday. And
4 during this -- this looks like a typical stream after a big
5 thunderstorm maybe. But upstream, this was clear water
6 upstream of the discharge here.

7 So this is all due to the discharge at the treatment
8 plant, and it seems to be persisting much worse than it has in
9 the past few years at least.

10 MR. WALLS: I mean, it will be really good to
11 actually get this new permit. We have been pushing and
12 pushing and pushing and so that was one of the things I was
13 going to ask the commission, that now that the state is
14 looking to actually issue the permit, I was going to ask the
15 commission to at least weigh in on this.

16 The other thing that I was going to ask, or at least
17 inform you, especially coming from the legislative side of
18 things, is Potomac Riverkeepers is looking at developing a
19 campaign to try to minimize or change the practice and use of
20 mixing zones in the state of Maryland because mixing zones are
21 starting to be used in other current permits.

22 Right now the waste energy facility that is being
23 proposed in Frederick County is utilizing the mixing zone
24 policy of the state to be able to discharge into the Potomac
25 because it can't discharge into the Monocacy because it would

1 pollute the Monocacy.

2 So therefore we are going to go to a larger river
3 body because of the mixing zone ability to mix all the
4 chemicals.

5 MR. GRACIE: What are the effluents they are talking
6 about there?

7 MR. WALLS: For that facility it is basically a
8 trash incineration. There is cooling water, and so we are
9 concerned of the different chemicals that will be interacting
10 with the ash and then it is a 10-mile long pipe and then there
11 are other --

12 MR. GRACIE: I am sorry. Cooling water doesn't
13 interact with the ash. Cooling water may have chlorine in it
14 to keep it from --

15 MR. WALLS: That is true but it is also co-joining
16 with the stormwater of the facility, and it is a 10-mile long
17 pipe, which has other inputs, and the inputs are unknown. So
18 the cumulative effect is unknown also.

19 But anyway it is the mixing zone policy that we are
20 looking at. And that might be something that we would
21 approach the commission down the road to maybe support or
22 consider supporting us in trying to make some changes to the
23 mixing zone policy.

24 MR. GRACIE: On the mixing zone issue, we have just
25 started forming a group called the habitat workgroup from not

1 just this commission but from a bunch of commissions that are
2 interested in aquatic life. And that might be a stronger
3 forum to get support for that. The habitat issue is
4 significant for these things.

5 So that would obviously -- I would encourage you to
6 bring your concerns and requests to this commission but we
7 would probably get you in a broader group.

8 MR. WALLS: Okay, great.

9 MR. GRACIE: I am not sure I understand enough to be
10 supportive of your joyful embracing of a permit when I haven't
11 seen the limits and I am not sure they are going to make much
12 positive difference. I am little confused here about -- I
13 haven't seen numbers. I don't know the numbers. I am a
14 chemist by training so I know something about this stuff.

15 MR. COSDEN: I have the numbers. I can provide you
16 the numbers, anybody who is interested. Like I said, I
17 received them on Friday. It is difficult to look at numbers
18 and know what that means in the stream here, that is why I
19 would like to get the monitoring data, see what the measured
20 results are.

21 And they measure in the effluent, that is
22 continuous. I think that is pretty accurate. But then when
23 you do grab samples a mile downstream, it becomes a little
24 more difficult to know, is this truly characterizing the
25 river?

1 Perhaps these limits would result in a cleaner
2 stream. Maybe the monitoring results aren't as accurate as we
3 think. But what I am seeing, the little bit I have been able
4 to correlate with four fishing days, it doesn't look too
5 promising.

6 MR. GRACIE: You talked about maybe when you were a
7 little kid or before you were born. That plant has been there
8 a long time. It was before the Clean Water Act amendments ---
9 for an update. I mean, turbidity is one of the issues. The
10 other one is the solids that are deposited on the bottom. And
11 the elimination of interstitial flows in the substrate.

12 That got better in the last permit review because
13 they reduced the ISS in it.

14 MR. COSDEN: It did but we are going to initiate
15 some benthic monitoring specifically above and below that.

16 MR. GRACIE: Can you tell me where we are in the
17 process because if they issued a permit, I think that means
18 they would issue a public notice and there is a comment
19 period. Or are we already past that?

20 MR. WALLS: Last year in September is when the
21 comment period was. And we had submitted comments at that
22 time, and there was a public presentation.

23 MR. COSDEN: And we were unaware of it
24 unfortunately.

25 MR. GRACIE: So this permit is going to go final

1 September 1st. I am not sure there is anything you can do to
2 change that at this point unless there is a court battle
3 involved because --- would prevail, and they can't turn around
4 and take a permit that they have negotiated with a company and
5 change it and not face lawsuits from them.

6 MR. COSDEN: Well, you can always review a permit.
7 We did so in the water appropriations permit for Deep Creek
8 Lake just a couple years ago because of the vehement
9 objections of property owners.

10 So that is a possibility. I have been told that we
11 will be allowed to keep this discussion going about some of
12 these limits that we are most concerned about. I don't know
13 where that is going to go though.

14 MR. GRACIE: Well, I am glad to hear you are going
15 to get the monitoring data because it might be crucial. If
16 you are looking at composite samples for weekly, it is not
17 really going to tell you much. You need to look at limiting
18 conditions.

19 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: All right, so we do have a new
20 permit taking effect September 1st but we are not sure how
21 happy we are about that permit. We know it is an improvement
22 but maybe not as much as we would like, and we want to keep
23 the discussion going. Is that pretty much where we are?

24 MR. COSDEN: That is correct.

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: I would like to see if any

1 commissioners would like to chime in on this but from what Jim
2 has had to say, and Brent and Don, it does seem to me like we
3 ought to encourage the habitat committee, subcommittee
4 workgroup, to take up this issue and engage, perhaps be our
5 voice in that ongoing discussion. That is what I would
6 suggest. Any thoughts from the commission? Jim?

7 MR. GRACIE: I think I would like to be a little
8 more proactive than that.

9 **MOTION**

10 MR. GRACIE: I would like to make a motion that the
11 commission support the adoption of the new permit with
12 continuing discussion supported by monitoring work being done
13 by fisheries. That would be the way I would put it.

14 So we are on record as saying we are glad you
15 improved the permit but we are not sure we are happy with the
16 end results and we need to have a continuing dialogue about
17 that. I think that will set the stage for a future
18 discussion. The habitat group isn't going to be ready to do
19 anything in the immediate future so -- certainly not by
20 September.

21 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Okay, that sounds good. Did you
22 get that motion? Okay. Is there a second to Jim's motion?

23 MR. DAMMEYER: I will second that.

24 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Micah. Any
25 discussion?

1 MR. GRACIE: I mean, it is one of my favorite
2 fisheries.

3 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Yes, right.

4 MR. GRACIE: We were talking about a two-day trips.
5 I do an -- have been doing it for more than 15 years. I
6 haven't gone last year or this year yet -- overnight float
7 trips from Black Oak Flats to the fairgrounds and stop
8 at --- . And it is great smallmouth fishing from --- down and
9 some good trout fishing above that.

10 MR. DAMMEYER: Check his cooler.

11 (Laughter)

12 MR. LANGLEY: My only question is, I guess, on the
13 current permit, are they using the most modern technology to
14 reduce emissions into the river or what is available versus
15 what is being used in these current permits?

16 MR. WALLS: That was our concern in one of the
17 parameters of color. We had requested that they reduce the
18 amount of color because there is turbidity, there is total
19 suspended solids and then there is color because of the
20 tannins from the mill process.

21 And they are not, in our opinion, not using the best
22 available technology for the color. They are and have
23 implemented nutrient-reducing technologies, so they are
24 definitely significantly reducing that aspect of it.

25 And the permit does decrease. I mean, it is going

1 from 800 to 300 per NTUs, and the total suspended solids
2 quantity loading is severely reduced. So I mean there are
3 definitely some major reductions compared to the --

4 MR. GRACIE: Do you happen to recall the numbers on
5 the TSS? That I what I worry about the most.

6 MR. COSDEN: We had some numbers here.

7 (Pause)

8 MR. COSDEN: So the existing permit for TSS, the
9 daily max, is 34,000 pounds per day.

10 MR. WALLS: Yes.

11 MR. COSDEN: Which is 219 milligrams per liter.

12 MR. GRACIE: Thank you. Now I can process it.

13 MR. COSDEN: That gets reduced, so that gets
14 reduced, the daily max gets reduced from 219 milligrams per
15 liter to 100 milligrams per liter.

16 MR. GRACIE: Oh, okay.

17 MR. COSDEN: So it is significant.

18 MR. WALLS: It is almost in half.

19 MR. GRACIE: I don't want to put everybody to sleep,
20 but when you change the kind of paper you are making, those
21 changes, and you need different filtration. What they do is
22 add clays and particulates to the fiber that they get out of
23 the wood. And that gives the paper different properties.

24 And the finer particles are harder to filter out,
25 and they clog the filters, so best available technology vary

1 with what process you are using in paper making.

2 MR. COSDEN: It appears that they have changed their
3 process --

4 MR. GRACIE: Well, I mean, the whole paper industry
5 is changing. --- used to make a lot of newsprint. Nobody is
6 buying newsprint anymore.

7 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any other discussion on the
8 motion?

9 (No response)

10 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Jim, could you repeat it?

11 MR. GRACIE: I will try.

12 MR. O'CONNELL: I got it. Move to support MDE
13 adoption of the new UPRC wastewater treatment plant permit
14 with continuing monitoring and discussions with Maryland DNR
15 to ensure adequate protection of the river fishery resources.

16 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: And we have a second from Micah.
17 If there is no further discussion, can I see a show of hands
18 for support for the motion? All in favor?

19 (Show of hands)

20 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you. All opposed?

21 (No response)

22 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any abstentions?

23 (No response)

24 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Motion passes unanimously. Thank
25 you, Jim. Thank you, Brent. And Don, did you have something

1 else?

2 MR. COSDEN: I think that is all for now.

3 MR. O'CONNELL: You mentioned tidal bass earlier, I
4 guess, in regard to the Survey Monkey.

5 MR. COSDEN: Yes. I won't go into that. I will
6 just say that we have been scoping some potential changes to
7 tidewater bass regulations and it has been pretty successful.
8 We have had 665 respondents take this survey so we are getting
9 some good information. And this appears to be a good way to
10 get the word out.

11 Previously when we would hold our public meetings in
12 the evenings around the state, you would be lucky to have
13 three or four folks show up and talk to us unless we were
14 proposing something really controversial. Then you might get
15 a roomful. But never, I don't think, have we ever actually
16 reached 600-plus people with a proposed reg change.

17 MR. O'CONNELL: Thanks, Don.

18 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: All right. Thank you, Don. So
19 that finishes up the inland report. So we will jump back to
20 the estuarine and marine fisheries management planning. Let's
21 start off with Nancy.

22 MS. BUTOWSKI: So I am going to go over the draft
23 reviews for the summer flounder FMP and the king and Spanish
24 mackerel FMP.

25

1 ***Fishery Management Plan Reviews***

2 ***Summer Flounder***

3 ***by Nancy Butowski, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

4 MS. BUTOWSKI: So I think most of you are already
5 familiar with the process. If you have forgotten it, I will
6 just advise you to look at one of the appendixes in the draft
7 reviews. You will see a flow chart.

8 As you know, fisheries service puts together a plan
9 review team that goes through all the components of the
10 fishery management plan and also the fishery allocation
11 policy. And then we come up with a recommendation as to
12 whether or not the framework is still appropriate for that
13 particular species.

14 And then part of this whole review process is to
15 involve you and the tidal fish group to provide some input and
16 comments on what the recommendations are from the plan review
17 team.

18 (Slide)

19 So before we get into the actual review, just to
20 remind you of the 2014 review schedule before we get into the
21 reviews themselves. We are down there by July for summer
22 flounder and mackerel. And I just want to remind you that we
23 have got croaker and spot and American eel on the agenda to be
24 reviewed for October.

25 And I have on hold for eel because there is going to

1 | be a discussion at the August ASMFC meeting about a particular
2 | addendum to a amendment that may cause a delay in actually
3 | completing the review. So just to let you know that.

4 | And also to point out the dates for the allocation
5 | requests. So if there is something that you want to review in
6 | regard to allocation or request a change in allocation, we
7 | need to have your materials sent in by August 15 for croaker
8 | and spot and then August 30 for American eel.

9 | (Slide)

10 | So I am going to start with the Chesapeake Bay
11 | summer flounder FMP review. A Chesapeake Bay program plan was
12 | developed in 1991 and then amended in 1998. It has been
13 | reviewed over the years several times. And since 2007 it has
14 | been annually updated.

15 | The summer flounder plan basically has a management
16 | framework that addresses four areas: the control of fishing
17 | mortality and protecting the spawning stock. When the plan
18 | was first adopted there wasn't a specific overfishing
19 | definition, which is why we put together the amendment in
20 | 1998.

21 | And it follows with the coastal management
22 | guidelines as set forth through the management council and
23 | ASMFC. And now we are dealing with targets and thresholds,
24 | and we abide by what is set forth according to appropriate
25 | fishing mortality and what we want to hit for a spawning stock

1 biomass.

2 In addition, there are actions for collecting data
3 for coastal stock assessments. So Maryland currently does a
4 summer flounder juvenile index calculation for the --- and
5 trawl surveys in the coastal bays.

6 We also collect biological data from pound nets in
7 the Chesapeake Bay and then additional information from
8 off-shore trawl catches.

9 The summer flounder are found in a wide variety of
10 habitats, from the ocean to the coastal bays to the Chesapeake
11 Bay. So as far as water quality and protecting habitat
12 measures, the Chesapeake Bay habitat and water quality is
13 really led through the Chesapeake Bay programs agreements
14 where they target certain water quality and habitat issues for
15 finfish in general.

16 For the coastal bays, there is a comprehensive
17 coastal management plan that also addresses habitat and water
18 quality issues that would affect finfish, especially summer
19 flounder. And the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
20 deals with ocean issues regarding habitat.

21 And as I mentioned, summer flounder are harvested
22 both from state waters and federal waters. They move in shore
23 and off shore during different times of the year. And they
24 also are found northward and southward along the coast.

25 So it is really important that we have consistent

1 and compatible management measures through the council and the
2 commission, and so we follow their guidelines.

3 (Slide)

4 In the draft review you will notice that there is a
5 table in the back, and I will just direct you to look at that
6 as far as what has been put together for management measures
7 from the council. There is a whole list -- I think it is a
8 three-page table actually that has all the different
9 amendments and a brief synopsis of what has happened via those
10 amendments.

11 ASMFC has adopted similar amendments and addendum
12 except for two from the council but again, they are working
13 hand in hand because of the overlap in harvest.

14 Back in the 1990s, the summer flounder stock was at
15 its lowest stock size and so rebuilding plan and schedule was
16 put together starting in 2000. In 2010 the stock was declared
17 rebuilt.

18 The most recent stock assessment for summer
19 flounder -- again this was a coastal stock assessment. There
20 is not a specific Chesapeake Bay or Maryland stock
21 assessment -- was completed in 2013. At that time they -- it
22 was a benchmark stock assessment so they updated the
23 biological reference points. And accordingly the stock is
24 considered not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

25 The fishery is based on -- the calculation of a

1 total allowable catch, so that is determined based on the
2 stock assessments. The total allowable catch is then divided
3 or allocated 60 percent for the commercial fishery and the
4 remaining 40 percent for the recreational harvest limit.

5 And then states -- again, that is based on historic
6 catch. And then each of those -- the commercial quota and
7 then the harvest limit is then allocated as a state-by-state
8 level again based on a specific time period that was in the
9 1980s.

10 So that the Maryland commercial harvest is allocated
11 about 2 percent of the coastal commercial quota, and the
12 Maryland recreational harvest limit is almost 3 percent of
13 what the coastal harvest limit is determined.

14 (Slide)

15 Just to focus a little bit on coastal management.
16 It happens to be in flux right now based on the northeast
17 trawl survey. It has been determined that the stock along the
18 coast has expanded its distribution northward, and there is
19 also -- appears to be some changes in the center of biomass,
20 some seasonal shifts in distribution.

21 So taking that into consideration, there has been
22 some new management measures implemented for 2014. And that
23 has to with instead of just having a state-by-state
24 conservational equivalency approach to controlling fishing
25 mortality, they have come up with a regional approach to try

1 for this year where Maryland, Virginia and Delaware all have
2 the same size limit, possession limit and season.

3 And that is to allow for some flexibility
4 and -- maybe Mike can even talk a little bit more about the
5 whole purpose of the regional approach. You want to do it now
6 or later?

7 MR. LUISI: I can do it later.

8 MS. BUTOWSKI: Okay. As a result of the changing
9 distribution, and then a Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management
10 Council went through a two-year strategic review and strategy
11 for the vision for the next few years.

12 They got quite a bit of input from the commission
13 members and the council members regarding summer flounder
14 management. Also from the stakeholders too, so people are
15 concerned about what is in the plans right now. Are the goals
16 and actions appropriate especially given the change in
17 distribution?

18 And they have initiated a new amendment, Amendment
19 21. So ASMFC has come on board with that, and it is going to
20 be discussed as far as the timeline at the August meeting. So
21 I think at the end of August there should be some better idea
22 of how you can provide public input for this whole process.

23 They are going to do this comprehensive review of
24 the summer flounder framework. And I forgot to mention that
25 summer flounder is part of a multi-species management approach

1 | because they are caught in the trawl fisheries off shore with
2 | black sea bass and scup.

3 | So when you look at the management course over the
4 | years you will see in that table that I referred to earlier
5 | that there is a whole -- several amendments that address scup
6 | and black sea bass as well.

7 | Well, they are going to just be looking at summer
8 | flounder, and they are going to take this comprehensive
9 | approach over the next couple of years. And I have listed
10 | some of the things they are going to be talking about. And it
11 | has to do with, again, whether or not we could have a regional
12 | or the state-by-state conservation equivalency.

13 | And potential changes in state allocations and
14 | commercial versus recreational allocations. So just to keep
15 | that in mind that there is this general changing atmosphere
16 | right now, and that extensive review is probably going to take
17 | several years. And the completion date is supposed to be like
18 | around 2017 or 2018.

19 | (Slide)

20 | So the fishery service plan review team recommends
21 | that or has concluded that both the summer flounder FMP right
22 | now and the amendment is an appropriate management framework,
23 | and they recommend reviewing the plan again once the council
24 | and the commission have done their extensive review. And
25 | there may be some changes that may result in significant

1 changes to our management as well.

2 Any questions regarding the summer flounder review?

3 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Questions for Nancy?

4 (No response)

5 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So it sounds like a lot of
6 potential changes coming in the next couple years here and
7 along the coast, state and federal waters. And here is a
8 conclusion the PRT has reached on what action to take now,
9 which is basically let's stay on top of that and adjust as
10 needed.

11 MS. BUTOWSKI: Yes.

12 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: That summarize it?

13 MS. BUTOWSKI: Yes.

14 ***Spanish/King Mackerel***

15 MS. BUTOWSKI: Okay, so we also reviewed the
16 Chesapeake Bay program, king and Spanish mackerel FMP. And
17 this plan was adopted in 1994. It has only been reviewed once
18 since that time but it has been annually updated since 2007.

19 And I would like to just preface this discussion
20 with making a note that mackerels, Maryland is kind of near
21 their northern distribution and inland distribution of these
22 two species, and especially for Spanish mackerel as far as the
23 center of abundance.

24 We are at the northern limit, so just to keep that
25 in mind. It is rare that we catch a king mackerel in Maryland

1 waters. And Spanish mackerel coming into the bay is a highly
2 variable visitor.

3 So a lot of what is in the current Chesapeake Bay
4 plan has a lot of Virginia specific actions, and again
5 Virginia has more of an opportunity, especially for Spanish
6 mackerel. They do see a few king mackerel too but mostly a
7 lot of the actions are directly related to Virginia.

8 So the management framework in the plan addresses
9 these four areas, and that is, again, to be consistent with
10 what is happening on a regional basis.

11 So the center of abundance and importance for both
12 mackerel species happens to be in the south Atlantic so the
13 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has the main lead in
14 providing recommendations as to what we need to do as far as
15 minimum size creel limits and controlling fishing mortality.

16 Secondly, as part of the whole process we need to
17 provide as much information as we can regarding biological
18 data. Again for Maryland we don't get that opportunity very
19 much. We hardly have anything on king mackerel but Spanish
20 mackerel we will get periodically and when we do, we do
21 collect information from pound nets when they do show up.

22 As far as monitoring catch and quotas, both species
23 are managed under a total allowable catch, so if the fishery
24 was to be shut down in federal waters we would need the
25 authority to shut down our fishery as well. That hasn't

1 | happened that I know of.

2 | The third area of the management framework has to
3 | deal with reducing waste in bycatch and hook and release
4 | mortality.

5 | Again, these are not big issues for Maryland, in
6 | Maryland waters. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
7 | Commission did just put together a two-year pilot program that
8 | they are looking at reducing the minimum size for Spanish
9 | mackerel that are caught in pound nets, from 12 inches to 11
10 | 1/2 inches to be able to use the discard mortality toward the
11 | harvest limit.

12 | To my knowledge, Chesapeake Bay -- jurisdictions in
13 | Chesapeake Bay did not go with changing the minimum size limit
14 | at this time. So we are not part of that pilot program but
15 | they are at least looking at that.

16 | And again improving water quality and habitat are
17 | mainly issues that are going to be addressed through the
18 | Chesapeake Bay program outcomes on water quality and habitat,
19 | and deal with finfish, not specifically mackerel.

20 | (Slide)

21 | As I mentioned, mackerel are jointly managed through
22 | the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Gulf
23 | Council. ASMFC does have a Spanish mackerel FMP. The last
24 | stock assessment for Spanish mackerel -- again, this is based
25 | on south Atlantic stock assessments -- was completed in 2012.

1 At that time, Spanish mackerel has not been overfished and
2 overfishing not occurring.

3 For king mackerel a stock assessment is currently in
4 progress. But based on the last one that occurred in 2009,
5 the king mackerel stock is not overfished, and overfishing is
6 not occurring.

7 Again I think I mentioned the fishery is based on a
8 total allowable catch. There is a commercial quota and a
9 recreational catch limit. Again these are limited, and their
10 occurrence, both species' occurrence in Chesapeake Bay and
11 Maryland are really limited and sporadic so we don't even
12 really meet any of the quota issues.

13 (Slide)

14 So based on that review, the plan review team has
15 concluded that the current king and Spanish mackerel FMP is
16 still an appropriate framework, and it recommends that the
17 plan be incorporated by reference into Maryland regs. This
18 did not happen at the time that it was completed.

19 Actually we needed to have authority to regulate
20 Spanish mackerel so we actually went in need of conservation
21 at that time.

22 So Spanish mackerel is one of the species in need of
23 conservation, and consequently having it adopted into our regs
24 by reference did not occur, so we suggested that happen at
25 this time. So that about sums it up for king and Spanish

1 mackerel. Any questions?

2 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Questions for Nancy?

3 (No response)

4 MS. BUTOWSKI: Again, this is your opportunity to
5 provide input on those draft plans. Hopefully you have had a
6 chance to look at them. If not, I would suggest that you get
7 any comments that you have back to us by -- I think I was
8 looking at the calendar -- August 8 seems like a good day.

9 It is a Friday and it gives you more than two weeks
10 to actually look at it and provide some comments.

11 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: And that applies to both the
12 summer flounder and the mackerel.

13 MS. BUTOWSKI: Yes. And I will be doing the same
14 presentation for the tidal fish and they will have the same
15 kind of timeline as well.

16 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Okay, great. Thank you, Nancy.
17 So you have got until August 8 if you want to consult with
18 some of your constituents, if you will or fishing buddies or
19 whoever you talk to. And if you get some feedback that you
20 would like to offer, please do so.

21 All right, so let's move then on to the ASMFC summer
22 meeting. Tom?

23 ***ASMFC Summer Meeting Agenda Review***

24 ***by Tom O'Connell, Director, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

25 MR. O'CONNELL: Sure, thank you. The meeting is

1 going to be August 5, 6 and 7 in Alexandria, Virginia. It is
2 an opportunity to come and observe the process if you have the
3 opportunity.

4 The two biggest items on the agenda, one of them is
5 striped bass, and I am going to be going over that in more
6 detail in a few minutes. The other one, just a note, is
7 American eels. It is on the agenda for final action.

8 It is largely an issue with concern to commercial
9 fishermen, recognizing that recreational fishermen also value
10 having eels plentiful in the Chesapeake Bay for ecological
11 purposes as well.

12 But just FYI, the board is looking at some pretty
13 substantial reductions to American eels, particularly the
14 yellow eel fishery, which Maryland accounts for about 55
15 percent of the total coastwide yellow eel landings for the
16 Atlantic coast.

17 And our fishery has grown in the last five years,
18 when most others have decreased. And our population appears
19 relatively healthy in regard to -- you know, it is still at
20 low levels but it seems to be at more stable levels than other
21 areas along the Atlantic coast.

22 But it is something that is going to be of major
23 concern to the eelers in Maryland. They are looking at
24 establishing a yellow eel quota and looking at various
25 benchmarks and times to set the baseline. And if you

1 establish a more recent timeframe, Maryland -- you know, the
2 impact to Maryland is more equitable.

3 But if you go back to historical time periods, the
4 potential implication could be Maryland would take most of the
5 reductions for the entire Atlantic coast.

6 Just FYI, something I am sure we will have more
7 discussions with the Tidal Fish Advisory Commission. We had a
8 public hearing. We had about 20 commercial eelers attend a
9 couple weeks ago.

10 One other item that is looking for final actions is
11 a draft addendum on spot and croaker. And spot and croaker,
12 there is limited data available. They are not able to do a
13 quantitative stock assessment. But the board is looking at
14 using some qualitative data to establish some biological
15 reference points which would serve as triggers, which would
16 result in management action if they are tripped.

17 So Harry Rickabaugh is our spot/croaker specialist.
18 He wasn't able to make it here tonight. But Mike Luisi is
19 going to provide a brief overview. Tim Smith, who wasn't able
20 to make it here tonight, he personally asked that we make sure
21 the commission is aware of this draft addendum going forward.
22 Thanks, Mike.

23 ***Spot/Croaker Draft Addendum Review***

24 ***by Mike Luisi, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

25 MR. LUISI: Thanks, Tom. I will keep this brief.

1 Tom already mentioned that both the croaker and the spot are
2 lacking in any biological reference point information. There
3 is no stock assessment for spot and the one for croaker is
4 limiting.

5 So the current triggers that would offset
6 management, that would indicate that management is necessary
7 have to do with changing or -- you want to think of it kind of
8 as a moving target as far as a line if you want to think about
9 where the stock is compared to a line.

10 If the stock is below the line, there is a trigger
11 that sets. If it is above the line, it is healthy. And in
12 the current management framework, the line changes each and
13 every year because the line is an average, an average of over
14 a short period of time. So every time a new indices is
15 developed, the line adjusts.

16 And one of the issues with that is that if you have
17 very slow declines in population over a long period of time,
18 that line will continue to drop, but you may never trigger the
19 trigger for management. And that was one of the issues that
20 was brought up and was a concern.

21 So a new approach is being considered. It is called
22 the traffic light approach. And it is a simple concept.
23 There is a green, a yellow area and a red area.

24 Now in the traffic light approach, the way that the
25 approach works is instead of having a moving target, a

1 reference point is going to be set, and that reference point
2 will be based on time periods for each species where the
3 fishery was determined to be healthy.

4 So for croaker that time set, that time series was
5 between 1998 and 2008. So the average of those years, the
6 indices that were -- both dependent and independent
7 data -- develop the indices values and that becomes the fixed
8 line now that is saying, well, if the population is at this
9 fixed level, it is healthy.

10 And for spot I don't know the years but it is
11 another long time series, a 12-year time series. Spot
12 populations tend to be very cyclical.

13 So the technical committee and those who were
14 working with the plan development team chose years for which
15 there were some cyclical patterns, not just periods of high
16 abundance or low abundance but found a spot in time when the
17 population did what the population does.

18 So now that we have these fixed levels, the whole
19 point of doing that is to evaluate the new indices each year
20 to determine whether management triggers need to happen. And
21 the way that this addendum, if it were to be moved forward and
22 finalized, there are a series of different options that would
23 set off these triggers.

24 So for spot -- I will keep it even more general. If
25 the new indices come below those fixed reference points

1 | between 30 to 60 percent of the time in the future years, it
2 | will set off a trigger. And I will go through a couple of the
3 | different triggers that could happen as far as management.

4 | The trigger is what starts the management process.
5 | So if a trigger is off set, meaning that it is not just one
6 | year that the stock is below the point, the reference point,
7 | but a number of years -- for croaker it would be three. For
8 | spot, it would be two. The trigger gets fired, and management
9 | happens.

10 | Now there are a number of different options or just
11 | a couple. One of the options would be that the coast, there
12 | would be a coastwide management regime established for any
13 | state that deals with spot and croaker.

14 | And that would be whatever is determined -- whether
15 | it is a season size limit, reduction in gear, bag limitations,
16 | whatever it might be -- that would be determined by the board
17 | and all states would have to comply with whatever those
18 | measures that would set.

19 | There is another trigger, another management option
20 | that allows the states to do what we always refer to more as
21 | state-by-state conservation equivalency. So if a reduction is
22 | needed, each state along the coast would be able to use
23 | seasons, size limits, reductions in gear, bag limits in order
24 | to develop its management framework for how the state would
25 | handle that particular reduction.

1 Now on top of that, if we go to state by state,
2 there are two ways of looking at when the management action
3 happens. And one of them would be if either the commercial
4 catch and the recreational harvest estimate falls below that
5 line.

6 There are three sources of independent fishery data
7 that are collected along the coast. So we would want to think
8 of it as there are two traffic lights. So under option three
9 for each state, if one of the traffic lights falls below the
10 line over a certain number of years, you would initiate those
11 management options.

12 Another subset of option 3 would be that both
13 traffic lights would have to be below. So not only does
14 commercial harvest, recreational harvest estimates and all the
15 other fishery independent information that we get through
16 sampling, they would both have to be below these targets in
17 order for actions to happen.

18 So we had a public hearing here at the Tawes
19 Building. We had one recreational angler in attendance
20 favoring option 3 for both species, which kind of puts the
21 ball in the state's court for making changes.

22 Down in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia and New
23 Jersey, other public hearings were held. There were some
24 folks -- everybody was in favor of the option 3B, which would
25 give states, give each of those states the option to decide

1 | happen virtually overnight to where a species disappears off
2 | the water. Sea trout was the big example.

3 | MR. LUISI: Yes, that is the one that everyone
4 | refers to when you talk about that. I don't think I had any
5 | factor in that. I started working here 15 years ago and had a
6 | boat and did a lot of fishing for sea trout but I couldn't
7 | have caught that many so I am not sure I had much to do with
8 | it.

9 | But, you know, I am not quite understanding your
10 | reference to that versus the triggers that would be set.

11 | MR. O'CONNELL: If we had a couple years of very
12 | high harvest and then it just dropped off, like your example
13 | of spotted sea trout, if one of the triggers is related to
14 | harvest, the two- or three-year period that harvest drops to a
15 | very low level that would trigger some management action to
16 | put further protection on the resource.

17 | So I don't know if that is what you are trying to --

18 | MR. O'BRIEN: I am just saying it happened so fast
19 | and so dramatically that the arithmetic triggers are out the
20 | window. Am I just wondering if people are recognizing it
21 | could happen -- it has happened on croaker to a degree too.

22 | MR. O'CONNELL: So as Mike says, for spot they are
23 | looking at a two-year time frame --

24 | MR. LUISI: And I should mention that if you think
25 | of that line, there is a difference between being 30 percent

1 | below and then 60 percent below the line. There are different
2 | degrees of reductions that would be necessary over those
3 | periods of time.

4 | So there are varying degrees of management that
5 | would kick in given a 30- or 60-percent reduction.

6 | MR. : On the spot that don't have -- a
7 | spot harvest is not really related to a size with croaker. Is
8 | it predicted to be the harvest level based on size our
9 | poundage or what?

10 | For instance, a few years ago we had a very cold
11 | winter, early freeze, killed off all the spot. That following
12 | year we had very few that were harvestable, what I call
13 | harvestable. You know, 6- to 8- or 10-inch spot. We had a
14 | lot of small ones. But that year there were hardly any spot
15 | in the bay after that happened at least in this area.

16 | So I am wondering what you are using as a trigger.
17 | Is it poundage or --

18 | MR. LUISI: It is a combination of all the
19 | different factors. So a die-off would cause -- if you are not
20 | catching spot, if recreational and commercial fishermen aren't
21 | catching fish, you develop what is called a relative index of
22 | abundance. So you compare this year's catch with previous
23 | years' catch. And you compare that catch to that bar.

24 | And you add in both all the recreational catch, the
25 | commercial catch, and then other indices that we collect as

1 agencies. You know, the sampling and the survey work that we
2 do not only here but along the Atlantic coast -- CHESMAP and
3 EMAP and the other groups that do the work to collect that
4 information.

5 So that is -- it develops these, you think of it
6 just as terms of abundance. So something like what happened
7 last year, when we had the -- you just didn't see them. They
8 weren't here. Well, that would probably indicate, that would
9 probably have a low index of abundance for that particular
10 year and would probably likely be below that reference point
11 period.

12 Now the year after was better. So you are bouncing
13 around that line, which is probably most likely what will
14 happen.

15 MR. TUMA: It is especially significant with
16 short-lived species like spot. I mean, I don't know what
17 their life expectancy is but it has got to be short.

18 MR. LUISI: It is short.

19 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Phil, yes?

20 MR. LANGLEY: I was just curious, Mike. It seems to
21 be over the last three years we have seen good numbers of
22 croaker but much smaller fish than there have been in the
23 previous years. Is there anything that we can attribute that
24 to as far as -- that would trigger, and I don't why but we are
25 seeing a lot of juvenile fish, fish that are just legal and

1 anywhere from 8 1/2 to 12-inch range.

2 Customary in the south bay over the years there was
3 a lot of 14- to 16-inch, you know, a different rate of fish
4 than what we seem to be seeing now. Do you have any idea what
5 could have triggered that and where the bigger fish have gone?

6 MR. LUISI: I mean, off the cuff I would say -- I
7 mean without having any of the information, and again Harry is
8 our species guy. He is in the weeds of all numbers, croaker
9 are also not a very long-lived species.

10 So you could attribute it in some way to year-class
11 strength, and that certain year classes are starting to fizzle
12 away, and you are seeing the influx of maybe better year
13 classes in recent years where you are seeing a lot of the
14 juvenile fish and less of the adults.

15 But without -- I mean that is just, that is one
16 thing that you could look at.

17 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Dave?

18 MR. SIKORSKI: So ultimately we could get to a point
19 where getting in that red zone at least or even the yellow
20 zone could lead to harvest restrictions in both sectors in an
21 effort to get you back to the green zone.

22 MR. LUISI: Right.

23 MR. SIKORSKI: We pretty much have no limitations on
24 spot right now, recreationally at least.

25 MR. LUISI: Right. That is what it would mean.

1 MR. SIKORSKI: Okay.

2 MR. LUISI: And you could use any of those different
3 tools, seasons or size limits, gears -- whatever they might
4 be.

5 MR. O'CONNELL: So now you give the presentations.

6 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any other questions for Mike?

7 (No response)

8 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: All right. Thank you, Mike.
9 That brings us to striped bass.

10 ***Striped Bass Draft Addendum IV Discussion***

11 ***by Tom O'Connell, Director, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

12 MR. O'CONNELL: All right. Let's see if we will
13 liven up the meeting here on striped bass.

14 MR. LUISI: I am going to step away from the table.
15 (Laughter)

16 MR. O'CONNELL: This is a really difficult issue and
17 an issue for striped bass that we haven't had in place since
18 the moratorium years. And, you know, there is a wide range of
19 perspectives on what needs to be done with striped bass not
20 only along the Atlantic coast but within the state of Maryland
21 and the people you all represent.

22 And I think we all have to keep in mind we all have
23 a similar interest to ensure that this fishery remains healthy
24 so we can enjoy it today and tomorrow. So, you know, respect
25 each other's perspectives. You know, we have different

1 constituents and, you know, we have just got to work together
2 and roll up our sleeves and try to figure out how best to go
3 forward.

4 (Slide)

5 What I want to do, I mean, at this point -- so last
6 October the board decided to move forward with new reference
7 points, which did not include a bay-specific reference point
8 that we have had for a number of years.

9 And to begin talking about management strategies to
10 bring the fishery removals back to the target level,
11 recognizing that we are not overfished. Overfishing is not
12 occurring but the spawning stock biomass is decreasing. It
13 has been decreasing, and projections show it could be -- it is
14 likely to cross that threshold level.

15 And Amendment VI requires the board to take action
16 when we are in these conditions. In April we talked about
17 striped bass a little bit. We formed an ad hoc group that met
18 on June 6. We had a good turnout of commissioners, some
19 public. Our staff put together a suite of various options to
20 have some discussions about.

21 After that meeting we learned that there were some
22 revisions to what level of reductions may be required under
23 various timeframes of rebuilding, whether a one year or three
24 year. We modified that presentation and sent it out to all of
25 you on June 30.

1 It is the presentation that -- I don't know if I got
2 the right one, Noreen. We will see. Either way, we will
3 figure it out. But what I want to do today, I don't think we
4 are at a point that, you know, we really need to get into the
5 weeds of the addendum. This is an opportunity that I want to
6 keep you informed of where we are in the process.

7 At the August meeting the board is going to be
8 considering a draft addendum to go out for public review, so
9 we don't have a draft addendum yet. But given the importance
10 of this issue, the attention it has been getting for over a
11 year here in Maryland, we have been trying to keep you
12 informed.

13 And for Bill Goldsborough and myself, as well as
14 Russell Dize, who represents Maryland on the board, we really
15 appreciate the input from you and we will get at tidal fish on
16 Thursday, to make sure that the range of options and
17 timeframes that are being considered in the addendum are
18 reasonable.

19 So I think we need to be looking at -- the input I
20 am trying to get today at is, you know, what is your opinion
21 in regard to sending something out to the public? Initially
22 this addendum began to look at a one-year plan. And if we go
23 forward with a one-year plan, we are looking at a 25-percent
24 reduction.

25 A 25-percent reduction from 2013 harvest levels, not

1 quotas, but harvest levels. You know, I made a motion, and
2 the board approved, to also consider a three-year plan
3 recognizing that the stock remains healthy and recognizing the
4 socioeconomic impacts of such a large reduction.

5 The board approved that, and going with the
6 three-year plan would require a 17-percent reduction. So 25
7 percent for one year, 17-percent reduction for three years,
8 and there was also a component where the three-year plan would
9 be phased in over three years.

10 And let me just back track for a second. Under
11 the -- there are two options for a three-year plan. One
12 option is you take action the first year and you keep it in
13 place. You keep that same action in place for three years.
14 And if you do that you need about a 17-percent reduction.

15 Another option with the three-year plan is you take
16 incremental steps, and you would take about a 7-percent
17 reduction in year 1, you would further take further
18 restrictions in year 2 to achieve another 7 percent, further
19 restrictions in year 3 to take another 7 percent.

20 So over three years you are getting the reduction.
21 There is some concern from the recreational side that, you
22 know, that three-year phased in plan could be very confusing.
23 The change in the regulations every year. So from a
24 sportsman's perspective, you know, you may have some
25 compliance issues.

1 But that is kind of the range -- this is the
2 timeframe of options that the board is considering. A
3 two-year plan is viable because it is within the range of one
4 to three. But the two-year plan is not specifically
5 identified in the draft addendum at this point in time.

6 The two-year plan would be about a 20-percent
7 reduction, and you would implement everything in year one.
8 You keep it in place for two years. So just try to summarize,
9 there are a lot of numbers: 25 percent for one year, 20
10 percent for two-year, 17 percent for three-year.

11 All those require action the first year and keeping
12 them in place. And then the 3-year plan where you take about
13 a 7-percent reduction each of 3 consecutive years. And 2013
14 harvest being the baseline.

15 (Slide)

16 So working with staff, we decided to just give you a
17 sense of what changes have to be made under those various
18 reductions. And it really -- there are a few different
19 timeframe options but it really boils down to a couple things.

20 I am going to first talk about the summer/fall sport
21 fishery. You got size limit and you got creel limit. The
22 technical committee is very cautious about using seasonal
23 restrictions because the data is not very good.

24 The seasonal data is collected under the federal
25 MRIP program. It is in two-month waves, so unless you are

1 going to look at a two-month seasonal adjustment, the data is
2 not very good to evaluate whether or not you can achieve your
3 desired reductions.

4 (Slide)

5 But if you look at the summer and fall fishery, one
6 option is the creel limit. You go from two fish to one fish,
7 and you can achieve the reduction necessary for a one-year
8 plan of 25 percent. So whether you are looking at one, two or
9 three years, one-fish creel limit, you could get to all three
10 of those timeframes.

11 What we heard back is that a one-fish creel limit
12 could have significant impacts to the charter industry.
13 Parties that want to go out for two fish may not want to go
14 out for one fish. Anglers also may not be as interested to go
15 out.

16 So it becomes like a stakeholder preference. You
17 have got a one-fish creel limit or you can look at size limit.
18 When you look at size limits, you are looking at 18 to 20
19 inches. Again, you can keep it 18 if you reduce your creel to
20 one fish. But if you feel like a two-fish creel is very
21 important, then you have to increase your size limit to either
22 19 or 20 inch in order to get to the level of reductions.

23 And what we heard is that, you know, there is a lot
24 of dependency on those fish that are recruiting into the
25 fishery, and even a 19-inch size limit is going to be, you

1 know, hurtful. You know, impact.

2 And we know because the projections show that a
3 19-inch size limit is an 18-percent reduction. So I mean that
4 confirms what the model projects, that, you know, looking at a
5 19- or 20-inch size limit, if you want to maintain a 2-fish
6 creel.

7 (Slide)

8 If you look at the spring trophy fishery, again we
9 are already at one fish so you can't reduce the creel. So if
10 you want to maintain the season, which we heard is very
11 important to the charter industry, to book the trips. They
12 are very dependent upon that fishery for their livelihood.

13 But if you want to keep the season the third week
14 and Saturday, that you have to go to a 35- to 36-inch size
15 limit. So from 28 to 35 to 36 to reach those levels of
16 reductions that the board is considering.

17 If that size limit is too excessive, you can bring
18 it down to about 33 or 35, but you have to delay the start of
19 the season to maybe April 26 or May 1. So there is a
20 tradeoff. You can save a couple inches of fish but you are
21 going to forgo a couple days to a week of fishing.

22 So those are the types of scenarios that are being
23 played out under the one-, two- and three-year plan. That you
24 do everything the first year and you hold it in place. There
25 are some various options that we have looked at for doing the

1 tiered plan where you take a little bit each of three years.

2 It gets more complicated because we have to get into
3 the seasonal aspects where maybe you have a one-fish creel
4 limit for July and August and the rest of the season you have
5 two fish.

6 And those are the types of scenarios you have to
7 consider to look at that tiered-in plan. From the Atlantic
8 coastal perspective, I know Beverly is representing and Val
9 from that group, again, you know, right now it is two fish at
10 28 inches. If you reduce your creel to one fish, whatever
11 plan gets decided, you are good.

12 If you feel that two fish is very important, you
13 have to look at size limit. You have to increase your 28-inch
14 size limit to about 32 or 33 to maintain your two-fish creel.
15 Or if you want to maintain that 28-inch, you can look at a
16 slot limit. And you have to look at like at 28 to 34.

17 You can also look at a 28 to 34 with a one fish over
18 36 but that is a really small, narrow slot between 34 and 36.
19 There is only 35. I know there are a lot of numbers there
20 but, you know, it really comes down to in the Chesapeake Bay
21 you are looking at a 19- or 20-inch fish. In the spring
22 fishery you are looking at somewhere between like a 33- to
23 36-inch fish depending on if you want the season or not.

24 And along the coast you are looking at like a 32 or
25 33 or you go down to one-fish creel and keep your 28-inch.

1 (Slide)

2 So the board is going to be meeting in August, and
3 there has been a lot of activity. I can tell you that at the
4 technical committee level, at the plan development team level,
5 these are a lot of moving pieces still.

6 And the technical committee's inability to recommend
7 a bay-specific reference point at this time is making this a
8 really difficult situation for the bay jurisdictions because
9 some of the reference points that have been put forth to the
10 technical committee, and not discounted but not recommended,
11 show that our level of reduction would be much less than us
12 under this coastwide reference point.

13 And recognizing that, you know, our fishery outside
14 of the spring fishery and maybe the late fall fishery is
15 predominantly a male fishery, with the goal of improving the
16 spawning stock biomass, you know, the model has not taken into
17 account our fishery being predominantly males.

18 So a major reduction would lead to significant
19 socioeconomic impacts to our recreational and commercial
20 fisheries, and not yield the protection that the model is
21 projecting.

22 So we have been staying in almost weekly contact
23 with our counterparts down in Virginia. We have united on
24 this. We are just trying to figure out how to go forward. We
25 still would like to recommend that the commission consider an

1 interim bay reference point and charge the technical committee
2 to continue working on it.

3 Absent that we feel like the range of options from
4 one to three, you know, is a good range to be considering.
5 Absent the bay reference points, you know, the department's
6 current perspective is to try to phase this in over a two- or
7 three-year timeframe. And hopefully the technical committee
8 would have some time to come to an agreement on the bay
9 reference point and we could come back and revisit this issue.

10 So with that -- and one last thing. During the ad
11 hoc workgroup process, we did get a variety of other ideas, a
12 universal maximum size limit for the entire coast. You know,
13 tournaments, catch and release. But a lot of those issues are
14 on the periphery of this conversation.

15 We can talk about those issues as we develop a more
16 comprehensive plan but for where we are right now, we really
17 need to put our heads together in regard to size limit, creel
18 limit and seasons and gain some consensus among the diverse
19 group of stakeholders here and recognize that whatever option
20 is not included in the draft addendum, there is still the
21 conservational equivalency provision for the states.

22 So if the addendum comes out and there is an option
23 that is not in there, it doesn't mean that it is not available
24 to us. We can still pursue it through conservational
25 equivalency but we have to demonstrate and get board and

1 technical committee support that it achieves the level of
2 reduction that is being targeted.

3 So with that maybe we will open it up and see what
4 people's thoughts are.

5 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Yes, let's do that. First though
6 you forgot to recognize our advisory panel membership.

7 MR. O'CONNELL: Oh, good thing. We are fortunate to
8 have a good representation on the striped bass advisory panel.
9 Captain Ed O'Brien has had a long-term tenure, and Dave
10 Sikorski has been there for the last two or three years.

11 The advisory panel has been requesting, you know,
12 more opportunities to engage in these management decisions,
13 and I think they are finally being heard. And there is a
14 conference call I think scheduled probably in the next week or
15 two that hopefully Dave and Ed will be able to participate on.

16 And it would really good for the board to hear from
17 the people affected by these decisions. And it is going to be
18 pretty diverse. Stakeholders in New England haven't been
19 seeing fish, and they really feel like some drastic actions
20 are needed.

21 Chesapeake Bay, it is kind of mixed. You talk to
22 the Solomons crowd, you know, they haven't been seeing fish.
23 That could be related to abundance. It could be related to
24 abundance and/or some temperature dissolved oxygen squeezes
25 that I have met with Phil Langley and Tom Ireland* about and

1 Billy Rice recently. But there is a diversity of opinions, I
2 will say.

3 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: All right. Well, thank you, Tom.
4 So I do want to open it up for discussion, feedback for Tom.
5 Just keep in mind the way he started off describing the
6 situation is so we have the meeting of, ASMFC summer meeting,
7 in a couple weeks, at which point they are going to decide on
8 the public hearing draft of the plan addendum.

9 That will then go out and then there will be a long
10 public comment period and public hearings in September and
11 October. So what we are seeking now is any feedback from the
12 commission on the kinds of things that you think would be
13 worthwhile having in that addendum.

14 So the addendum will include options for the major
15 decision points, several different options that will then go
16 out to the public. So I don't think now is the time to take
17 hard and fast positions in favor of a specific action
18 necessarily, though you may have one, which is fine.

19 But the main thing we want to do is get any feedback
20 you have on the kinds of options you think it would be
21 worthwhile having in that addendum. So with that, comments
22 from the commission.

23 *Questions and Answers*

24 MR. TUMA: I will start off with just a suggestion.
25 Consistency is going to be the best bet. Three years, 17

1 percent reduction, and however you work it out, I think is a
2 lot better than fluctuating seasons and creel limits.

3 It is too hard manage, too hard to promote our
4 business that way and have the people come in and try to
5 figure out what the rules and regulations are. We have enough
6 with the regulations we have now. That is my only suggestion
7 at this point. Overall I think a consistent, three-year span
8 would probably be the best bet.

9 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Frank. Other
10 comments. I saw a hand over here. Val?

11 MR. LYNCH: Yes, I would agree with the three-year
12 approach. I would also suggest focusing on the two fish. I
13 think that is important both for the charter boats as well as
14 the individual recreational anglers because they don't want to
15 spend the time, the money and the fuel just to be able to go
16 out and catch of one fish. That is important to everybody.

17 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So keep the possibility for a
18 two-fish creel as an option with whatever else needs to go
19 with that, of course.

20 MR. LYNCH: Exactly. With a focus on a three-year
21 spread and a two-fish creel.

22 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Vince, do you have your hand up?

23 MR. RINGGOLD: Yes, I am in agreement with
24 everything I am hearing. My one question is this. The way
25 that you put some things, you say let's do something and put

1 | it in place for three years. Then what?

2 | MR. O'CONNELL: Then it gets re-evaluated with the
3 | next stock assessment to determine where we are in regard to
4 | the fishing mortality reference points and spawning stock --

5 | MR. RINGGOLD: Then you could be looking at other
6 | changes and all.

7 | MR. O'CONNELL: It could be liberalization. It
8 | could be, you know, more restrictive. It all depends on where
9 | we are with the stock and the fishing pressure.

10 | MR. RINGGOLD: But I would -- I mean, my
11 | constituents, as we have talked, we definitely want to keep a
12 | two-fish minimum. You know, we need that, especially in our
13 | charter industry. And the three-year, as long as we are
14 | keeping sustainability, I don't think there is an issue there.

15 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: When is the next assessment?

16 | MR. O'CONNELL: I think it is in 2016.

17 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: And that will be an update?

18 | MR. O'CONNELL: So that would be like --

19 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So in 2017, which would be the
20 | third year, the commission will have at its disposal the next
21 | assessment. It will just be an update assessment but it will
22 | still be another three-year update on what the model says
23 | about the population.

24 | So we will have the benefit of having had the first
25 | two years under whatever scenario is adopted plus that new

1 science to answer your question or to speak to your question,
2 Vince, about what happens after those three years. What else?
3 Phil and then Beverly.

4 MR. LANGLEY: I am just curious. Do we have any
5 idea of when possibly down the road, do we have envisioned
6 that within a year, year and a half, that we could possibly
7 have Chesapeake Bay reference points established to -- because
8 that may help one way or the other.

9 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes, you know, talking to our
10 technical expert Alexi Sharov, he felt like if the technical
11 committee really focused on this, they could have something
12 developed by the end of the year.

13 It wouldn't be in time for this addendum but if it
14 were something that was supported by a technical committee,
15 you know, the commission could initiate in another addendum to
16 establish the bay-specific reference point.

17 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Beverly?

18 MS. FLEMING: As far as the coast is concerned, most
19 of the people that I have talked with recommend one fish and
20 not changing the size limit, and no seasons, which would just
21 make it confusing. Surf fishing and a fish year-round.

22 MR. O'CONNELL: Thanks.

23 MR. TUMA: The size limit in the Atlantic coast
24 is --

25 MS. FLEMING: 28.

1 MR. TUMA: 28.

2 MS. FLEMING: Two at 28.

3 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So you are suggesting going to
4 one fish at 28 is the best scenario for the people you have
5 talked to.

6 MS. FLEMING: Yes.

7 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Others?

8 MR. DEHOFF: All the folks I have talked to are also
9 very -- feel very strongly about keeping the two fish in the
10 bay. One of things that several have mentioned is the fact
11 that, when I gave the presentation, the slot limit option was
12 only in the coastal. And quite a few of them thought that
13 would be something that would be worthwhile looking into in
14 the bay. Don't know whether it is too late to get to that
15 point because if that is allowed -- but one of the most
16 high-profile fisheries recovery stories is the redfish.

17 And the slot limit has been a very effective measure
18 practice with the redfish up and down the coast, and a lot of
19 people see that where you are allowing the small fish to grow
20 to spawning size and then you are protecting your smaller
21 fish.

22 MR. O'CONNELL: There has been some examination of a
23 slot limit in the bay that I can't recall the details. But I
24 recall the slot being very tight. But it is something that --

25 MR. TUMA: That is not what they are talking about.

1 They are talking about a maximum --

2 MR. O'CONNELL: A maximum size, okay. And that is
3 something that may -- well, if it doesn't make it in the draft
4 addendum it is something that we can always evaluate too
5 through conservational equivalency.

6 MR. TUMA: Right.

7 MR. O'CONNELL: But that is something that we could
8 examine if the commission was interested in that, kind of see
9 what that would look like.

10 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Other comments? Ed?

11 MR. O'BRIEN: I have got to say it because one thing
12 that is difficult to talk about but is so true is that the
13 northern states, that combination up there, has been after the
14 bay, going back to when we came out of the moratorium. We are
15 the ones who paid the price and they just -- every time a
16 migration of striped bass doesn't suit what they would like to
17 see, they come after us.

18 Well, they come after us anyway because we do have a
19 very good fishery, and we should, because here is where the
20 fish spawn. That is a responsibility that we share. You all
21 have been pretty darn good in the 40 years I have watched this
22 thing.

23 We went into the moratorium, we paid a price. When
24 we came out of the moratorium, we were very, very
25 conservative. And we have gradually increased things.

1 But it really gripes me, the emotionalism that comes
2 out of those people directed toward the bay. Now emotionalism
3 gets fueled by such things as a dramatic situation in
4 television and the papers about a commercial catch where one
5 or two people can ruin it for everybody in the state,
6 recreational and commercial.

7 So that is the kind of thing that gets used. It is
8 very emotional. But it may just be -- it is a temporary
9 thing. When we went to a slot, if you remember, we went, got
10 off of that slot really fast when they saw they made a mistake
11 in their calculations. And the fishery wasn't as bad as they
12 thought it was.

13 They had the votes, and they get it by one vote so
14 many times, one vote. The technical committee, right
15 now -- Tom, you probably wish I wouldn't get into it, but you
16 know it is true. It is dominated right now by the northern
17 states. Now in the midst of all this, if this hits us pretty
18 hard, as you have described, and I am hoping after August
19 there may be some common sense that gets into this.

20 The last two years, I think, I know from my
21 standpoint where I fish, and it goes all the way up the bay,
22 Tilghman Island, would says the same thing, Breezy Point, it
23 is the best fishing we have ever seen this time of year. It
24 is fantastic. And isn't it amazing when it comes to the Young
25 of the Year calculations, all the arithmetic, it seems every

1 year, not just the last two years, we have got an abundance of
2 17- to 19- 20-inch fish.

3 What's going on here? Aren't they supposed to be
4 out in the ocean? People say, well, they are all males. I
5 don't know. Maybe they are. I don't think they are. I have
6 talked to charter boat captains in New Jersey, Cape May,
7 talked to them in New York. They are saying the same thing I
8 just said. It is some of the best fishing we have ever seen.

9 And they are talking about big fish, over 28 inches.
10 But still there are those sullen people from a few states up
11 there, New England, the council is dominated by these people,
12 and, hey, we got problems. We are not seeing the fish we
13 should be seeing, and it is all the bay's fault.

14 You get tired of it after a while. And you have
15 handled this tremendously. And when you got that flexibility
16 into it to go one, two, three years, that was pretty dramatic.
17 You asked them to trust you, and I think you pointed out a
18 very valid thing at the time about the economic effect that
19 this could have right here within a radius of 100 miles of
20 where we are right now.

21 The hotels, the bait shops, gasoline. I mean, it is
22 pretty dramatic. The charter boat industry, if we had to go
23 with one fish, I think it would be extremely damaging relative
24 to who we might get the following year or two.

25 We have got to be very careful and we have got to

1 | stay a little bit mad. Anyway, that is my emotional --

2 | MR. O'CONNELL: I would just add one point. You
3 | know, the one thing that is very concerning is that -- and I
4 | wasn't involved at the commission level at the time. I was
5 | here at DNR but -- Maryland, Virginia and Potomac River fought
6 | extremely hard in 1997 to get a bay-specific quota.

7 | To be looked at separately from the coast,
8 | recognizing our fishery characteristics are different. And
9 | what is being proposed right now, if we don't have a
10 | bay-specific reference point, there is no longer a bay quota.
11 | We are under the same type of coastal harvest restrictions
12 | with a 2013 harvest as the baseline, you know, with everybody
13 | else.

14 | And talking to Rob O'Reily* in Virginia, that is
15 | something that we fought hard for, and we really feel like we
16 | can manage our fishery better if we have the tools to monitor
17 | and evaluate and adapt as we have done over the years.

18 | You know, we have evaluated our fishery annually.
19 | We have adjusted our quota annually while the coastal quota
20 | has been constant for a number of years.

21 | MR. O'BRIEN: Nobody has done more than us, Tom,
22 | Maryland, through all these years when it comes to
23 | understanding its own fishery. And that doesn't go up and
24 | down the coast everywhere, that competence.

25 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Vince?

1 MR. RINGGOLD: When we go back to three years, I
2 would just hope that we are not going to complicate it like I
3 have seen on some of it to where one year it is 33 inches, and
4 we get a full season. And the next year it is 34 inches and
5 we got to bring the season back a month and a half. And then
6 it goes to 35 inches.

7 Are we looking at a simplistic, such as option one
8 was you just increased to 36 inches and there you are. We
9 would go to option two. Are we going to say for three years
10 we increase to a size limit and it stays that way? We are not
11 going to be messing with seasons and up and downs because that
12 is where the complications come in, I believe.

13 MR. O'CONNELL: That is the kind of --- we are
14 looking for. From what I have heard so far from the
15 recreational perspective, I think consistency is important.
16 It is more understandable. You know, you get pretty complex
17 if you start breaking into doing something each year, as you
18 said.

19 MR. RINGGOLD: And that is what we had in the past
20 presentation.

21 MR. O'CONNELL: You know, the one area that I think
22 a three-year tiered plan still has some merit, not to say it
23 doesn't have for recreation, but from what I am hearing is
24 that it is not preferred in the commercial fishery.

25 You know, there will be a pretty substantial impact

1 to the commercial fishery. Tiering in a reduction with a
2 quota system is pretty simple. You know, I think the
3 recreational fishery, --- with you seeing it as not being
4 equitable, particularly if a bay reference point comes up
5 within that three years, and the commercial fishery doesn't
6 take the three years of reduction.

7 But, you know, I think in regard to that, the tiered
8 plan, makes more sense for the commercial, recognizing that if
9 the plan was kept in place for three years, both the
10 commercial and recreational would take the same reduction. It
11 would just be recreational would do it all in one and keep it
12 constant, and the commercial would do it tiered.

13 But the perception is another thing. So just my
14 thought on that.

15 MR. RINGGOLD: In regard to that, with the people we
16 have had meetings with, their biggest concern is after these
17 reductions or options are set into place, that we still need
18 DNR to stand strong if not stronger on the water with
19 violations that come up. We still need the habitat to really
20 be taken a look at because again, being a circle, everything
21 has to be considered when we talk about this.

22 So these are just things that my people have been
23 coming back saying, hey, please mention that. We want to make
24 sure these are taken care of.

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you. Any other comments?

1 (No response)

2 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Great. This has been a good
3 discussion. I appreciate all the input. Anything else on
4 this?

5 MR. O'CONNELL: No, and we are not too far off
6 schedule.

7 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So now we are back to being only
8 12 minutes behind schedule. That is pretty good because we
9 were much further behind than that at one point. So I
10 appreciate all that. Let's move on then to the recreational
11 fishing marketing initiatives update.

12 On your agenda you see we have got -- right now we
13 have got five different items listed. I would like to offer a
14 slight change or two. The last one down there -- I mean the
15 next to the last one down there is the sportsman's marketing
16 initiative. We have David Sutherland here from the Maryland
17 Sportsmen's Foundation.

18 I want to move that one up to being the second one
19 among the five. I think it makes a lot more sense flow-wise
20 and then we are going to add a sixth one, and that is just a
21 clarification from Karen Knotts on the fishing challenge
22 species rule, I believe.

23 Let's start right off with Don on the new
24 recreational fishing access map.

25 MR. O'CONNELL: I want to just give Don and a couple

1 of our staff -- they have been working like for two years on
2 this, what you are about to see, and I think it is going to
3 be -- I hope you guys are really impressed by it, and I hope
4 you can help get the word out because I think it is going to
5 be a great tool for people to find areas to go fishing.

6 It is something Don and a couple of our staff worked
7 very hard on and I am very proud of them and glad that we are
8 here and able to share this with you today.

9 ***New Recreational Fishing Access Map***

10 ***by Don Cosden, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

11 MR. COSDEN: Well, let me say when I first starting
12 thinking about this -- this was cutting-edge technology.
13 Nowadays, everybody has it, and I don't know why it took us so
14 long, but there is more to it than what meets the eye. But
15 the stars finally aligned this year.

16 And we have put together this angler access mapping
17 tool, interactive tool. So this is on our -- we didn't do any
18 big splashy sendoff, here it is, folks, -- because we are
19 still not sure everything in it is perfectly accurate and
20 working the way we want.

21 So this is kind of a feedback period, but it is
22 online, it is usable. It is right on the fisheries page right
23 down here now on the right. And so it is a public access to
24 fishing of all sorts.

25 We have a lot of spots that are at state parks. We

1 | have boating and piers from the boating database. One of the
2 | things we were waiting on was to get a really accurate version
3 | of the boating ramp and pier data. And that is all in here as
4 | well.

5 | There is some information -- if you have a boat and
6 | you want to launch in a particular area, boating has a little
7 | more detail on their Web page about particular ramps and
8 | whatnot but we have tried to capture as much as we could. So
9 | to begin with -- well, you can't really see it but we give
10 | some instructions here about what this is all about.

11 | We have our -- be careful. All this information may
12 | not be accurate so if you end up on a cliff face, turn around
13 | and don't follow your GPS.

14 | Some other information -- I can't really read this
15 | very well. It is basically explaining how this whole process
16 | works. At the bottom of this narrative --

17 | MR. O'CONNELL: You can go up there, Don, if you
18 | want.

19 | MR. COSDEN: Can I work it from up there?

20 | MR. O'CONNELL: You can use your hand and do it up
21 | there.

22 | MR. COSDEN: (away from microphone) I can actually
23 | see what I am -- here is some information further down that is
24 | not showing up.

25 | So we are asking -- right now we are asking people

1 to look at this, send us information if this stuff isn't
2 correct or updated, new sites, anything you may have.

3 We will start with the basic levels of information.
4 You have public access sites. We have trout management areas.
5 We have stocked areas.

6 MR. O'CONNELL: Hold on, Don. I will help you. So
7 we are moving into Frederick. You are in Frederick for the
8 weekend. Where can I go fishing? You pull up this map.
9 Well, look, there is an access point right here. What do you
10 get? Nothing.

11 So then you can get up, you can go -- Don, can you
12 go review some of that information we have in there?

13 MR. COSDEN: Yes. So it is just basic information.
14 Where is this? It is the Monocacy River, Frederick County.
15 Species that are available. If it is a particular park or
16 something, we have access, hours of operation. We even have
17 like what is the accessibility like? Is it easy? Do they
18 have handicapped access?

19 You know, is it really hilly and tough for kids?
20 Like I said -- this must be a boating site. We have ramp
21 information and whether or not there are fees required. Bait
22 shops close by. This is an important one. This is an area
23 that has shoreline fishing. They are really only accessible
24 if you have a canoe or kayak or something.

25 Others are areas you can fish by shore, and I think

1 that is an important distinction about some of these areas.
2 Any special regulations. If there are regulations other than
3 the general regulations in the guidebook, we would list them
4 there.

5 Whether a permit is required or not to use the area.
6 If there is a fee if it is a park. Then also what fishing
7 license type is needed. If I go here and fish, does my day
8 license count or do I need a nontidal inland license. We get
9 that question all the time. Even license vendors who don't
10 know when someone comes in to buy a license, they call us.

11 So here, you can pick your spots and find out what
12 you need.

13 MR. O'CONNELL: You click on the tidal/nontidal
14 lines so you can see -- if you are in Greensboro, Maryland,
15 you know where you need a tidal and nontidal license.

16 MR. COSDEN: Yes, so if you are fishing right close
17 to that spot you can zero in, you can figure out, well, I only
18 have one license. There is a size limit in tidal water that
19 doesn't apply in nontidal water. Do I have to stay below this
20 bridge or can I go above this bridge?

21 MR. O'CONNELL: With some of the presentation
22 you are going to hear from David Sutherland and Steve Linhard
23 on the Sportsmen Marketing Initiative, we think this is going
24 to be a great connection as they promote fishing in Maryland
25 to be a resource to people coming into the state who are less

1 familiar, and to look and see where there are opportunities
2 and to get really good information.

3 There is also connection to I think Google maps
4 where you can driving directions --

5 MR. COSDEN: (Away from microphone) Any one of
6 these points like this with a fishing site, you can just click
7 and get Google directions. It says right here Google maps.
8 Gives you directions to the site.

9 Go back to the western part of the state just really
10 quick. I will make this short. We also have trout management
11 areas, which would include catch-and-release, put-and-take
12 areas, any kind of area that is not under the general trout
13 regulation of two fish per day. And then we have stock areas.
14 Some areas are put-and-take five fish a day. Everybody
15 assumes, oh, that entire put-and-take stretch.

16 Well in some cases we don't give access to a --- or
17 we even stock some areas that don't come under any special
18 management, just two trout a day. Some of those are really
19 popular.

20 So you get all that information here. One thing we
21 -- we don't have that level of information for the streams
22 that we have right now for the points. But we are working on
23 that so you can get an idea, if I go there, are there parking
24 lots or do I just pull off anywhere?

25 So finally we have been talking about developing

1 this into a mobile app with this same information. Right now
2 it works pretty good on an iPad but hopefully we will get this
3 thing adapted for a smartphone application.

4 MR. O'CONNELL: Appreciate it, Don. So go on the
5 Website, give it a try. Share it with members. We have done
6 a soft launch right now, trying to see if there are some bugs
7 in it. And hopefully we will --

8 MR. COSDEN: When you first open it up, at the
9 bottom at this left-hand column, if you see something you
10 don't like, provide us the information. We will check into it
11 and we will update it.

12 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Questions for Don?

13 *Questions and Answers*

14 MR. : In the application, do you know who
15 is actually looking at the site? Is there any way to kind of
16 get some idea of the people or who -- what they are searching
17 for?

18 MR. VILNIT: Yes, you can get some basic analytics
19 on who is looking at the site, where they are coming from.
20 You can look at the city and state where they are coming from.
21 You can get an idea of what type device they are using to look
22 at it.

23 You can't drill down to male/female, age group or
24 anything like that but I mean just the city and state that
25 people are visiting the page from is pretty good, I think.

1 MR. SIKORSKI: Is there a way you can do an exit
2 survey?

3 MR. VILNIT: Yes, we could probably have them put up
4 a pop-up on there and ask them if to do an exit survey.

5 MR. SIKORSKI: If it is going to be beneficial.

6 MR. VILNIT: I mean, any demographic information is
7 always a huge help when doing marketing.

8 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Phil?

9 MR. LANGLEY: Don, how long does it take to -- say
10 if we go in there and look at the specific areas and
11 geographic areas and we aware of some sites maybe that might
12 not be on there, how long does it take to update that?

13 MR. COSDEN: It would only take us a few days as
14 long as we can verify the information. If we are sure it is
15 reliable, it can go up within a couple days.

16 MR. O'CONNELL: Look at that, Phil. There is no
17 access down by you.

18 (Laughter)

19 MR. O'CONNELL: Are you hogging the whole area?

20 MR. COSDEN: I am the inland fisheries chief and I
21 beat our regional managers into providing information from the
22 inland group, and we did get input from a number of people on
23 the estuarine side but I think we are missing a lot of
24 estuarine sites right now.

25 MR. O'CONNELL: So if you can give us details, that

1 | would be great.

2 | MR. DAMMEYER: On like streams and that sort of
3 | thing, will there ultimately be some way to link, you know,
4 | like trout management areas, here are some nearby USGS gauges
5 | and that kind of thing and the links for those too?

6 | MR. COSDEN: Yes, that is a good idea. Actually we
7 | had several other links that we were considering, and I don't
8 | think that we had thought about linking the nearest gauge but
9 | I don't see any reason that we couldn't do that.

10 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Other questions for Don?

11 | MS. FLEMING: Tides, references to a tidal chart?

12 | MR. COSDEN: Tides, yes.

13 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: More work for Don.

14 | MR. O'CONNELL: With one click of a button you go
15 | back and you get tides.

16 | (Simultaneous conversation)

17 | MR. COSDEN: I will write these down and we will go
18 | back and talk about this.

19 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Don. If there are no
20 | other questions for Don, let's move on. And like I said
21 | earlier, now let's move to the Sportsmen Marketing Initiative.

22 | ***Sportsmen's Marketing Initiative***

23 | ***by Dave Sutherland and Steve Linhard***

24 | MR. SUTHERLAND: Steve is going to pass out a
25 | general overview of SMI, to give you an overview of the

1 purpose and the background, sort of the phases we are working
2 on for the Sportsmen's Marketing Initiative, again SMI, the
3 acronym.

4 I would like to first of all thank you, Mr. Chair,
5 for allowing us to be here and talk about this initiative. It
6 is very important. I would like to recognize a few people who
7 are on our board, Bill being one, Ed Liccione, Captain Ed
8 O'Brien, myself and Steve Linhard.

9 We will give you a little backdrop on how SMI began.
10 It really was, you know, an idea that came from Captain Ed
11 O'Brien some years ago. He challenged us in a number of our
12 board meetings to think about how do we better market the
13 charter boat industry and our fishery in Maryland for the
14 benefit of the industry and challenged us to educate people
15 more on those opportunities.

16 So we actually went out and we met with DNR and very
17 candidly it was a slow-moving process, and then we started
18 talking about how can we put some more energy into this? How
19 do we get more people focused on this from a larger
20 perspective?

21 Captain Ed was very focused on the charter boat side
22 of the equation. We started talking about how do we marry
23 this with hunting and fishing and really thinking about the
24 industry. The sportsmen industry in Maryland, between hunting
25 and fishing, is enormous. And we are not doing a good enough

1 job of marketing that.

2 The benefits of that are obvious, which are if you
3 are in the industry and you are a charter boat captain or you
4 are a guide, to be able to bring more people here, whether it
5 is from inside the state or outside the state, the benefits to
6 those people who are in that industry.

7 Aside from that, there is an increase in license
8 sales, which helps promote DNR and more funds for DNR's
9 efforts. As sportsmen we do the lion's share, in my opinion,
10 of supporting DNR through our licenses and fees.

11 We should be proud of that but we also have an
12 obligation I think to go out and try to recruit more people,
13 get more people engaged in our sport and educate them on the
14 benefits of our natural resources in Maryland -- both what is
15 great about it and also what are the challenges through
16 conservation. We owe that to ourselves and the people who
17 participate. There are some big challenges here.

18 So thanks to Captain O'Brien, I think it got us
19 thinking along these lines. We went to a number of
20 organizations that our outlined here -- CCA, MSSA, Guides and
21 Outfitters Association -- a whole host of people and asked
22 them to get on board with us and support the concept of SMI,
23 developing a Sportsmen's Marketing Initiative in the state of
24 Maryland in partnership with DNR and --- .

25 So we went right to the governor and asked the

1 governor to get on board. Captain Ed O'Brien, myself, Bill
2 Miles. We had meetings with the governor's staff and
3 fortunately enough they got it. They understood the
4 importance of this industry and how important it is to try to
5 invest in it from a tourism standpoint, from a natural
6 resources perspective.

7 They took \$300,000 out of the tourism budget toward
8 this initiative. So the Maryland Sportsmen Foundation has a
9 grant agreement with --- to basically work the SMI project,
10 manage it. What we have done in that process is we have
11 agreed to basically work with the Department of Natural
12 Resources, and thanks to Tom O'Connell and his team and Paul
13 Peditto and his team from Wildlife and Heritage.

14 We spent a great deal of time planning and thinking
15 about how do we, how do we move this whole initiative forward
16 and have the broad group of stakeholders involved in the
17 process because there are a lot of people who have a vested
18 interest in this beyond just us recreational users or
19 commercial service providers.

20 So what we have done is -- we started off by
21 creating an 11-person steering committee. That steering
22 committee is made up of people from tourism, economic
23 development, the hunting and fishing community, marketing, et
24 cetera. The chair of that committee is Aaron Frazier from
25 Bass Pro Shops. And he is doing a great job, and we meet once

1 a month.

2 And we have meetings -- we have three different
3 committees that have been set up, that focus on various
4 aspects of SMI, Sportsmen's Marketing Initiative, trying to
5 steer us toward developing databases, reaching out to certain
6 markets, overseeing the direction for the subcontractors we
7 hire. And I will get into that.

8 We hired two different groups to basically to do
9 most of the research, development of a Website, developing a
10 marketing plan and a long-term sustainability plan. And this
11 is not just a one-year initiative. Hopefully the project is
12 going to have -- is going to be sustainable. We will be able
13 to fund it long term so it will be something that we are all
14 proud of and we can continue to build upon.

15 There is no one shot in the arm deal here. This is
16 a learning experience like anything else. So we hired a group
17 called the Eisenberg Group. They are doing all of our
18 research, pulling together data for the Website, building that
19 Website.

20 Then we have a group called Responsive Management,
21 Mark Duda. He has done this nationally. Very talented group
22 of people. They are doing some research, surveys, polling, a
23 whole number of things to bring us a lot of information to the
24 table so we can start thinking about where to market.

25 Tom has brought up in our recent meetings the issue

1 of where we focus. Are we really focused on national, trying
2 to bring people from all over the globe to Maryland? Maybe
3 someday, but I think that right now we are starting out
4 focused on what are the current markets, understanding those.

5 How do we expand those markets? Our adjoining
6 states, they are competing with us -- New York, Pennsylvania,
7 Virginia, they are all competing with Maryland. And we have
8 got to take that seriously.

9 So I think that -- my hope is that we are going to
10 see a focus on those markets, figure out how we can do a
11 better job of marketing within those areas. I think there is
12 also the challenges, you know, of the minority groups, your
13 Latinos, your Asian groups. How do we capture those markets?

14 But also how do we educate them? I mean, how do we
15 educate everybody about the needs and importance of our
16 resources and the opportunities we have? We live in a great
17 place in Maryland, as you all know. The challenges are
18 immense.

19 So right now we are the first phase, the developing
20 stages right now. We have hired, as I said, contractors. We
21 have our steering committee. We are in the process
22 now of data collection. We have an outreach component. That
23 outreach component is very important. We just started that.

24 Val Lynch was very kind enough to provide us the
25 opportunity to go to the Marlin Club if we need to. We are

1 | evaluating now how do we go and reach out on a regional basis.

2 | We have kind of taken a couple steps back on that
3 | because we don't want to go out and not do it right or create
4 | expectations that we can't deliver on. So we are actually now
5 | kind of rethinking. We are going to be doing some survey
6 | work.

7 | So one of the things, Mr. Chair, that I
8 | think -- Steve knows it better than I do -- but we do have
9 | some survey opportunities that we would love to get you guys
10 | engaged in. I guess the question is --

11 | MR. LINHARD: We really need feedback from you guys
12 | and the groups you represent so once we get our survey tool
13 | done, we will be coming to most of you to help, you know,
14 | engage your audience, our audience, in helping us put together
15 | the responses so we will have valid information to go on.

16 | And we hope that the people who participate
17 | currently will help us evaluate and give us good feedback on
18 | the direction we are considering to go in. You will hear more
19 | about that. We are five months in. This is probably a year,
20 | year and a half long project.

21 | And one of things Dave mentioned was sustainability.
22 | One of the things we don't want this to be is a flash in the
23 | pan. You know, you got off to a great start, you had all this
24 | flashy stuff and then all of a sudden, it goes on the shelf
25 | and peters out.

1 One of the real components of this whole project is
2 to build the sustainability of it so that we can continue and
3 grow. Not just at its current level but at a bigger level.
4 And can be sustained from a funding perspective with public
5 and private and user funds. And we want to much sure that the
6 public is involved enough so that it is meaningful to them so
7 that they support it as we go along. Those are all important
8 things you will hear more about.

9 MR. SUTHERLAND: On Thursday we will be meeting and
10 approving a couple different surveys. And unfortunately we
11 don't have that information today but what I would like to be
12 able to do is figure out how do we follow up with this group
13 in an efficient way. Mr. Chair, I mean, however you suggest
14 we do that. It would be very useful for us to be able to get
15 you involved and engaged in that process.

16 So come Thursday hopefully we will have an approved
17 survey, and once that is done and that is complete, then that
18 will be something that we are going to provide online and
19 provide some access. So if you can give us some direction on
20 how best to follow up, that would be great.

21 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: So just so everyone is clear, we
22 have the Maryland Sportsmen's Marketing Initiative that the
23 Maryland Sportsmen's Foundation is taking a lead on working
24 with the state of Maryland. And it has made a lot of progress
25 so far. There is a lot more yet to go.

1 | when we sat down and started going down the road on this is we
2 | looked at other states that do a much better job than the
3 | average state -- meaning Texas, Louisiana, Colorado,
4 | Michigan -- they have got this down. So, you know, we are
5 | learning from those who do it well too.

6 | MR. SUTHERLAND: New York just came out with a -- in
7 | the last six months a very large campaign to really promote
8 | the parks and things of that nature. But they don't have the
9 | ability to deliver. That is the interesting part about it.

10 | They came out, and there was a politico announcing
11 | here is what we are going to do, but they really didn't have
12 | the ability to deliver. Similar to what -- I mean, this is
13 | awesome. I mean this is exciting stuff. That is why I think
14 | the whole partnership with DNR is enormous.

15 | We are not trying to recreate the wheel here. What
16 | we are trying to do is create an umbrella to sort of maximize
17 | and utilize all of our resources in a very logical, efficient
18 | fashion. So it is exciting from that standpoint.

19 | I think this is legitimately a great partnership
20 | opportunity. And I think if we do it right, a lot of people
21 | are going to benefit from this. I think we will be able to
22 | educate a lot of people about the bay and about our natural
23 | resources.

24 | MR. TUMA: This program is an, I assume, Web-based
25 | opportunity at marketing all these resources. The funding is

1 a nonprofit or what is it? How is your funding? I am not
2 sure.

3 MR. SUTHERLAND: We are a 501 (c) 3. The Maryland
4 Sportsmen's Foundation is a 501(c) 3. We received a grant
5 from the state of Maryland through the Department of Business
6 and Economic Development/Tourism. And these are actually tax
7 dollars derived from a tourist tax.

8 MR. TUMA: Okay. I am not trying to get into
9 details. I was just curious. Since you mentioned it, a lot
10 of it is in -- I won't say competition. I hope it is in
11 coordination with what DNR is trying to do and their
12 initiatives and the other organizations to bring customers
13 into the area and market it.

14 MR. LINHARD: It is going to go much beyond just
15 Web-based. We are going to be doing outreach to fishing
16 shows, hunting shows, outdoor shows. It is going to be all
17 avenues.

18 The stakeholder outreach we talked about before,
19 that is probably the most important thing in this phase of
20 development because we want to know from everybody, what are
21 your thoughts? What are your needs? I am not just saying
22 that.

23 That really is a very key component to this because
24 I think there are a lot of people from different businesses,
25 whether they are in CCA, MSA and other organizations out there

1 making a living in this every day. We need input so we can
2 know how to partner with you.

3 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any other feedback for Steve and
4 David? Ed?

5 MR. O'BRIEN: To answer his question, sitting at the
6 table of SMI is DNR. Tom has already made a tremendous input.
7 People like Steve are working with us, and then tourism. You
8 have got everybody there. It is like a team approach, a
9 gung-ho team. And we can't drop the ball. We have got to
10 keep it going. And that means some money. And you are doing
11 a lot to facilitate that.

12 MR. SUTHERLAND: Trying.

13 MR. O'BRIEN: But getting input from everybody is
14 important. Now when you talked about me being the genesis of
15 this for the charter boats, that included all guide boats too.
16 And then it came up, well, hey, how about we get the hunters
17 in this too. And that was a good move.

18 So it is a very interesting organization, SMI, that
19 has been put together. And I think it definitely should go
20 somewhere.

21 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: I think I can speak for the
22 commission and say that the marketing work, the Sportsmen's
23 Marketing Initiative, is consistent with the work of this
24 commission over many years and the interest and the priorities
25 of this commission.

1 And SMI, of course, is just getting started. It has
2 got a lot more of this to go. It seems like it has the
3 potential to pull together all the different marketing
4 interests like Steve Vilnit's work, to Frank's point there,
5 under one umbrella initiative.

6 That would be very powerful. So I think we will
7 find it in our interest to stay in touch with this initiative,
8 to provide -- to serve as a vehicle to provide feedback from
9 our constituencies to the initiative through these guys.

10 And so I think it is in our interest to invite them
11 back, to maintain regular contact and to stay in touch with
12 this initiative and be as engaged as we can to help it
13 succeed. That sound good?

14 MR. SUTHERLAND: And all you have to do is tell us
15 the best way to do that and we will do that. We would love to
16 keep you informed. Our project director, just so you know, is
17 Bill Miles. He is on contract with us to basically manage the
18 relationship with the steering committee and on the Maryland
19 Sportsmen's Foundation so again any questions, anything we can
20 do we would love to help.

21 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Tom?

22 MR. O'CONNELL: Karen Knotts, Steve Vilnit and
23 myself from fisheries go to these monthly meetings. And what
24 I saw was that this is a tremendous opportunity. And it is
25 important to let all you know and your constituents know what

1 | is happening.

2 | And so Dave and Steve graciously agreed to come.
3 | And as we go through these monthly meetings, you know, I think
4 | we will be able to see things that we will recommend you come
5 | before the commission or we will send out to the commission.
6 | And if you think of opportunities, just our monthly regular
7 | communication, I think, will identify those points in time
8 | where it is good to send something out.

9 | This is really exciting. And following Dave and
10 | Steve's presentation you are going to hear from Steve Vilnit
11 | some of the things that the department is doing. And I think
12 | there is a niche for both of us, and we are really working
13 | together as a true partner. And I think we are going to have
14 | some pretty exciting things.

15 | We already have some exciting things. You saw the
16 | access map. You are going to be hearing some other things,
17 | and it is a really exciting time in regard to promotion and
18 | marketing in Maryland's sporting activities. So it is
19 | something to be excited about and spread the word.

20 | MR. DEHOFF: It sounds like your survey is going to
21 | be ready before our next meeting. Is it possible that you can
22 | get access to that, whether it be a link or something like
23 | that, to Bill that he can forward to us so that we can get it
24 | out to our groups prior to our next meeting?

25 | And then if you guys do come back next meeting, we

1 | may have some feedback for you then.

2 | MR. SUTHERLAND: We probably can get it to you
3 | sometime next week.

4 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: That is not soon enough.

5 | (Laughter)

6 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Roger?

7 | MR. TRAGESER: You two mentioned Michigan being one
8 | of a number of states. What popped in my mind is, I don't
9 | know specifically whether Kevin Van Dam, who is Michigan
10 | grown, has done any promotional pieces for them, particularly
11 | their bass fishing resources up there.

12 | But when you have a high-profile spokesperson -- it
13 | can just pertain to a particular aspect, whether bass fishing
14 | or trout fishing or whatnot -- there might be some way to
15 | develop a lot of attention, you know, to that particular
16 | aspect of what we have to offer.

17 | I can't think of a local person off-hand but it
18 | doesn't have to be somebody local. There are a lot of bass
19 | pros who fish the circuit, fish Maryland and areas all the
20 | time.

21 | MR. SUTHERLAND: We could use your help with that
22 | because those are the kinds of ideas that I think are very
23 | valuable to the team.

24 | MR. LINHARD: You are the second person I heard to
25 | mention that. It was mentioned at the last meeting. They

1 (Slide)

2 So we are looking at -- some of the things we are
3 starting to think about is what type of license and what type
4 of discount can we offer?

5 We have the authority to discount up to 50 percent
6 of the price of a license for three years for this pilot
7 program. And this is for first-time license buyers. And we
8 have qualified a first-time license buyer as someone who
9 hasn't purchased a license in the last three years.

10 So we sat down the other day and we looked at all
11 the license types. And we kind of came to the conclusion that
12 the best one would be to do a resident nontidal and a resident
13 bay and coastal sports license, the two big ones.

14 I don't really think on a residential -- I did
15 residential recreational crabbing twice apparently -- but it
16 is a \$5 license. I don't think a 50 percent discount is
17 really going to entice someone to go out there and buy that
18 license. So we kind of looked at the two big ones to try to
19 get more people in there.

20 And also if you have bought a nontidal in the past
21 five years but you have not bought the bay and coastal sport
22 license, you are still eligible to get the discount on the bay
23 and coastal sport license even though you already have the
24 nontidal.

25 This is all open to comments and discussion. This

1 is just our thinking of how we were looking at going forward
2 with this.

3 (Slide)

4 We are also thinking about instead of opening up for
5 the whole year, having a limited time only type of thing.
6 That way you can try to entice people to get in the door. If
7 you know the sale is going on all year, then you might not be
8 as enticed as you are if it is a, hey, it is ending this week,
9 type of thing.

10 So we wanted to open it up for December and January.
11 2015 license sales start December 1, so we wanted to open it
12 up then to see if we could get people right out of the gate.
13 And also do limited sales throughout the year.

14 One of our thoughts was to coincide this with free
15 fishing days. You know, so someone goes out and they try
16 fishing and they really enjoy it. Hey, I can get my license
17 for 50 percent off. So that might be a way to entice them to
18 buy the license if they had a great day fishing.

19 And also give the opportunity if somebody goes out
20 on a charter boat and they don't have their license and they
21 really enjoy it, they can go out at other points of the year
22 and get their license for 50 percent off.

23 (Slide)

24 So how we are going to do this in terms of
25 marketing?

1 (Slide)

2 Social media is one of our big things that we do. I
3 know a lot you follow our social media page. We are up to
4 almost 7,000 followers on the recreational fishing page.

5 We get a lot going through there. So we are going
6 to put it out on there, ask people to share it, do some
7 contests, ask people to share this with their friends. Just
8 help spread the word.

9 We have had some of our posts go out to over a
10 quarter million people so it is a really great tool to use to
11 get the word out.

12 (Slide)

13 We are going to put an advertisement in the Maryland
14 fishing guide so that people can see that and maybe tell their
15 friends, spread the word that way.

16 (Slide)

17 And then other ideas like doing handouts in free
18 fishing areas. Handouts when people go into the state park,
19 when they pay their fee to get into the state park, they will
20 get a handout that says, hey, 50 percent off your license.

21 We do a lot of youth events. Handing out the
22 handouts there. You know, the kids are going out fishing,
23 maybe get their parents. The parents want to get involved
24 with what their kids are interested in, and they can get their
25 license for 50 percent off.

1 (Slide)

2 Our goal here is to stop this decline in license
3 sales. This is -- like I said, over the last 10 years, and I
4 don't know exactly what that number is. Tom, do you --

5 MR. O'CONNELL: It has stabilized in the last 5
6 years but since the 1980s we have probably lost 100,000 to
7 almost 200,000 anglers.

8 MR. VILNIT: So this is a new program, like I said.
9 It is a pilot program. We are trying out something new just
10 to see if this will make a difference. Other states have
11 tried this and have had some success. Other states have tried
12 this and have not had any success. But I figure this is, it
13 is something we should just give a shot, and it can't hurt.

14 (Slide)

15 Other initiatives that we are doing to try to get
16 people into fishing: We have done a photo contests. We did a
17 kids' angling contest this past -- a few weeks ago. Send in a
18 picture of your kid fishing. We had hundreds and hundreds and
19 hundreds of people send in their pictures.

20 My kid is in the middle top so he gets the biggest
21 picture.

22 MR. O'CONNELL: My kid is down in the bottom right.

23 (Laughter)

24 MR. VILNIT: So we are just trying to get people
25 involved. We did a women's fishing contest. We had hundreds

1 of people send in things for that. You know, some of the
2 prizes we have done for them are the hats that we had made.
3 So each of you guys will get the big kid hat.

4 We also had the little kids' hats made up for the
5 kids' contests, and it was funny because we did these kids'
6 fishing contests and we sent out some hats to the kids. And
7 if you notice this kid down here? He actually has this hat
8 on. So it was nice. He sent in a picture for another contest
9 and he had his hat on.

10 He went out, I can't remember the captain's name,
11 but he has a sawyer out of Hoopers Island. We gave him a
12 couple hats. We were out on one of his -- we saw him out
13 there on Hoopers Island and he gave him a couple hats and he
14 gave it out to the kid.

15 So we will get each of you one of these hats.
16 Rachel, I know you have a little one so we figure we will give
17 you the kids' hat. But if any one of you have little ones, I
18 can get you a little kids' hat too. They won't fit any of our
19 big heads. That is one the initiatives we did.

20 ***Charter Boat Finder Web Tool***

21 (Slide)

22 MR. VILNIT: Don showed you the public fishing
23 access map. There is also the map of licensed charter boat
24 and fishing guides, which works very similarly to this map.
25 You click on any of the points. This isn't live but you can

1 the biggest-growing population in this area.

2 So they are doing a Vamos Apescar campaign, which is
3 Take Me Fishing, trying to get people out on the water. They
4 did a lot of surveys and they found that one of the biggest
5 hindrances is people just didn't understand what the rules
6 were. They didn't understand where they could go.

7 So this is basically translating everything into
8 Spanish so that it is easier for them. They can link right to
9 our Website from this to buy their license and also to the map
10 that Don's group did with the access to fishing guides.

11 (Slide)

12 Earlier this spring in April we sent out, or RBFF
13 sent out on our behalf, a time to renew your fishing license.
14 This went out to more than 48,000 people. RBFF paid for this
15 mailing. It went out to anybody who hasn't bought a license
16 in the past five years.

17 We can't really measure the analytics on how well
18 this did because this was sent out through RBFF and this was a
19 paper mailing that went out to everybody. This was paid for
20 by them. But hopefully campaigns like this going forward will
21 help in reminding people.

22 We are also looking at things such as the 365-day
23 license so instead of buying your license in January and
24 having it go through the January calendar year, maybe doing a
25 365-day license to help increase sales.

1 When you do something like that, we could send out
2 an e-mail when you are a month away from your license expiring
3 that says, hey, it is time to renew. Click here to renew your
4 license. Things like that might help to increase the people
5 renewing their license.

6 The research from RBFF showed that once you buy your
7 license, you are 66 percent, the chance of renewing your
8 license are 66 percent. So, you know, we have got to keep
9 people in the system here and try to keep this in front of
10 them and getting them that buy that license. It is harder to
11 win a new angler than it is to keep one in the system.

12 (Slide)

13 Things we are looking at in the future: Doing
14 things like loyalty rewards. We don't know exactly how this
15 program will work yet. Tom and Karen and I were discussing
16 that. You know, it is great that we are rewarding these new
17 people coming in with a 50 percent discount but we have people
18 who have been supporting our program for years and years and
19 years and we would like to do something for them as well.

20 We don't know exactly what this is. The good thing
21 is we can reward somebody for being loyal without having
22 regulations, so this is not something we would have to get
23 anything enacted for. We can go forward with it but we don't
24 know what this is yet.

25 It might be, hey, if you have had a license every

1 year for the past 10 years, you get a prize. You get
2 recognition, something. We are also looking at a potential
3 referral program where I give my ID number to another
4 fisherman who hasn't bought a license before and they buy
5 their license for the first time, I get a discount on my
6 license.

7 That would be something we would need regulation for
8 but it is just other ideas that we are throwing out there to
9 get more people buying licenses. With that, I am going to
10 shut up and save the rest of my voice.

11 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Questions or comments for Steve?
12 Phil?

13 *Questions and Answers*

14 MR. LANGLEY: I was just going to say I like your
15 referral program because one thing that has always been
16 frustrating for me is you can be with a magazine subscription
17 or whatever for 20 years and never get anything free. And
18 your neighbor can sign up down the street and he gets a free
19 wristwatch.

20 (Laughter)

21 MR. VILNIT: What we were talking about is we pay
22 \$200 a month for our Verizon bill but if you can sign up today
23 it is \$10.

24 MR. LANGLEY: And that is where I was thinking a
25 referral program, even if you had an existing license holder,

1 | if they bring a new license holder in to get a license,
2 | discount those guys. That way, everybody who is an existing
3 | license holder is a salesperson for you.

4 | MR. VILNIT: That is what we are thinking, you know?
5 | And who better to get someone new into fishing than someone
6 | who is already fishing. That is the best thing, you know? We
7 | are the ones who are excited about it already. We are the
8 | ones out there every day. We are the ones who can kind of
9 | bring that excitement to someone new.

10 | And we can tell them, hey, you will get 50 percent
11 | off your license, and at the same time you will get a little
12 | kickback too.

13 | MR. DAMMEYER: I like what you got going. You
14 | talked a little bit about marketing. I noticed there was some
15 | hard mailing that was done through the --

16 | MR. VILNIT: Recreational Boating.

17 | MR. DAMMEYER: Yes. Do you know like was that
18 | targeted toward a different demographic or was it just kind of
19 | a blanket thing?

20 | MR. VILNIT: It was -- we went through the computer
21 | system. Basically they pulled anybody who had bought a
22 | license in the past five years but hadn't bought one in the
23 | last three. So if you bought one two years ago but you didn't
24 | buy one last year, you would be on that mailing.

25 | MR. DAMMEYER: Since paper mailings can be fairly

1 expensive -- hopefully it came out of their pocket.

2 MR. VILNIT: It did.

3 MR. DAMMEYER: What I was wondering is like in the
4 future was there talk of shooting for different age brackets
5 that might be more receptive to paper mailings? Like I am in
6 my 30s. If it is paper, it probably goes into a big pile in
7 the corner until yells at me to clean it up.

8 MR. VILINT: And like you said, they are expensive.
9 So that is why we have been targeting more social media. Our
10 marketing campaigns are kind of focusing right now on kids.
11 If we can get the kids fishing they are probably going to take
12 their parents. The parents are going to have to go fishing.

13 MR. DAMMEYER: They need a ride.

14 MR. VILNIT: Right. It is a free ride. And then
15 you get that kid locked in and then that kid is locked in for
16 life and then they have children, so that is kind of where our
17 focus is with limited funds. We are focusing mostly entirely
18 on kids, hence the social media campaigns that are free, and
19 things like that.

20 And you know, kids' hats and going to the kids'
21 events and really getting that demographic nailed down. We
22 are trying to get information out of our new computer system,
23 looking at demographics in terms of which age groups are
24 buying licenses, which ZIP codes are buying licenses.

25 I mean, we just started scratching the surface on

1 our demographics and we found out Pasadena is the ZIP code in
2 the state that sells the most recreational fishing licenses.
3 Interesting things like that. And then the second-biggest ZIP
4 code was Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

5 So it was just really interesting things like that,
6 that you can do with marketing. Okay, well, hell, I got to
7 start marketing in Harrisburg. So we really need to start
8 looking at those demographics. That is why those are so
9 important. The way I am going to market to an 18-year-old who
10 is buying license is not the same way I am going to market to
11 a 50-year-old.

12 And knowing who you are marketing to is the most
13 important thing when it comes to marketing.

14 MR. O'CONNELL: I would just like to add, Steve
15 spends the majority of his time on seafood marketing but he
16 has really brought an inspiration and a lot of energy to
17 fishery service, and it is a generally funded position so we
18 have been relying on him to help brainstorm ideas, and then we
19 have a team of staff, with Karen Knotts and her team, and the
20 partnership with SMI, I think we are gaining some momentum.

21 We are really starting to see some exciting things
22 happen.

23 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Steve. All right. We
24 have got an update from Karen. We are in the homestretch so
25 hang in there folks.

1 *Fishing Challenge Update*

2 *by Karen Knotts, MD DNR Fisheries Service*

3 MS. KNOTTS: I won't take a lot of time because I
4 know everybody is pretty tired. I just wanted to give a quick
5 update regarding the Maryland Fishing Challenge.

6 You folks probably recall that last year we came to
7 you and we talked about the invasive species component that we
8 wanted to add. We have had good response to it. The numbers
9 for our participants this year are running above where they
10 were last year overall.

11 But there was one clarification that came up that I
12 wanted to make sure you were aware of. And that was the
13 Maryland Fishing Challenge has always been a rod-and-reel
14 contest. We brought the invasive species component in, and we
15 had some special rules for it, most obviously that the
16 northern snakehead, blue catfish and flathead catfish that are
17 the eligible species for that component at this point, need to
18 be dead.

19 One thing we did not get into was the rod-and-reel
20 component. Snakehead obviously, a lot of you probably
21 realize, it is a bow fishery. Folks are really excited about
22 it. So what we would like to do is to basically, for the
23 invasive species component only, add a clarification that says
24 any legal recreational gear.

25 So that component already kind of has its own rules,

1 | so what we would like to do is to be able to bring those
2 | snakehead folks in and recognize them. And the impact of how
3 | we treat them here is that we are now making Northern
4 | snakehead an eligible species for state records, and we have
5 | two folks who have applied.

6 | So we needed to get this clarification, make sure
7 | there are no concerns with it, before we go ahead and
8 | recognize those two snakehead. We had one and then it was
9 | broken almost immediately. So they are about 17 pounds, each
10 | of them.

11 | So if you guys are all right with that, we will go
12 | ahead and make that clarification. It will show up on the
13 | Website and in the fishing guide next year that, within the
14 | invasive species component only, any legal recreational
15 | fishing gear.

16 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Any concerns about where they are
17 | headed with that?

18 | MS. KNOTTS: Northern snakehead, blue catfish and
19 | flathead catfish are the three we are recognizing at this
20 | point.

21 | MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: We are down to one more agenda
22 | item, and this ought to be quick, I think. I guess, Tom, you
23 | are filling in for Jim on this, the fisheries habitat
24 | workgroup update?

25 |

1 ***Fisheries Habitat Workgroup Update***

2 ***by Tom O'Connell, Director, MD DNR Fisheries Service***

3 MR. O'CONNELL: Yes, so we have been successful in
4 establishing a fisheries habitat workgroup. We have got
5 members from all of our fishery advisory commissions: sport
6 fish, tidal fish, oyster advisory, aquaculture coordinating
7 council, coastal bays fisheries advisory committee.

8 There have been two meetings. Jim is acting as
9 chairperson right now. A lot of energy, and what is great to
10 see is the passion among the diverse group of stakeholders on
11 a common issue that they all believe in, needing to ensure
12 that the land is managed properly to conserve our fisheries.

13 So the first two meetings have been kind of
14 introductory. Last meeting was pretty interesting. They did
15 a brainstorming session of all the people who value fisheries
16 and just started naming groups of people, trying to get a
17 network of people to reach out to. So you have local
18 leaders -- if you have a land-use issue being decided at the
19 local level, you can reach out and educate and get an advocacy
20 group informed.

21 The next meeting is scheduled in late August. And
22 they are going to be doing a visioning exercise, facilitated,
23 trying to really clearly establish what the vision of this
24 group is going to be. There are a lot of different directions
25 this group could go.

1 So it is exciting. We need to make sure that we get
2 everybody there. At the last meeting, Rachel just mentioned,
3 and I will mention it to tidal fish too if necessary, but a
4 couple of Tidal Fish Advisory Commission members weren't able
5 to make it. So, you know, this is really an opportunity for
6 everyone to really get behind a common interest.

7 So I know it is another meeting but I think -- if
8 you look big picture, these habitat issues are some of our
9 biggest threats to our livelihoods and the people who enjoy
10 fisheries so it is a great opportunity and great project to
11 work on.

12 And as you heard earlier today, there were a couple
13 things that came up that I think this group could, you know,
14 spend a little bit more time on and come back to this
15 commission on those types of issues.

16 So pretty exciting. There is a lot of passion. And
17 I hope that it is going to be something that gains a lot of
18 momentum and yields some positive results for both commercial,
19 recreational, aquaculture and people who just like to fish.

20 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Like they say, no habitat, no
21 fish.

22 MR. DAMMEYER: The only selling point is if we do it
23 at Bill's office again. He was making coffee last time. Free
24 coffee by Bill.

25 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Always an option. Anybody have

1 anything else for the commission?

2 (No response)

3 MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: All right then. I do believe we
4 are adjourned, and we are only eight minutes late.

5 (Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.)

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