



*Martin O'Malley, Governor*  
*Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor*  
*John R. Griffin, Secretary*  
*Joseph P. Gill, Deputy Secretary*

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## CY 2010 and FY 2011 Fisheries Service Priorities

Priorities aligned with Fisheries Services' 4 Core Functions

### Status Report January 2011

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#### BACKGROUND

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Fisheries Services' 4 Core Fisheries functions were developed in 2008 by the Management Team as part of a strategic planning exercise. In reviewing all the jobs that are performed by Fisheries Service, the Management Team was able to categorize all of the jobs under the following 4 Core Functions:

- I. Protect, conserve and enhance fisheries resources.
- II. Provide and enhance fishing opportunities, including access.
- III. Provide sustainable economic opportunities.
- IV. Promote and protect fisheries resources through public outreach and education.

Fisheries Services' 4 Core Functions were presented at the 2009 and 2010 Fisheries Summit at New Germany State Park. At the 2010 Summit, staff was asked to work in groups and pick the top 3 priorities in each of the 4 Core Functions that our efforts over the next year should focus on. The priorities are listed in this report by Core Function and Division responsibility.

The next actions needed are for the Management Team to further work with the Program Managers to find ways to incorporate these priorities into their annual work plan (i.e. staff's PPEs). While new assignments come up throughout the year, an agreed upon work plan that focuses on our priorities will help us make advances on these important tasks. A defined list of priorities will also allow the Management Team to clearly communicate priorities to Fisheries' staff and our constituents, assist with strategic planning, and to track progress over time.

If your current project is not listed in this document it does not mean that it isn't a priority. The priorities included in this document are intended to focus mostly on new initiatives for 2010 and beyond. The Management Team may consider some staff re-assignments to advance key priorities. However, our ability to make significant advancements will depend on the ingenuity of every staff person to find creative ways to work on these priorities. The Management Team welcomes your ideas.

**I. PROTECT, CONSERVE AND ENHANCE FISHERIES RESOURCES**

PRIORITY	DIVISION(S)	COMPLETION
<p>Fisheries Management – conduct and participate in all necessary activities to evaluate, conserve, and provide for the public benefit of fisheries resources (e.g. stock assessment, inter &amp; intra state working groups, environmental review, habitat protection, ....)</p>	<p align="center">ALL</p>	<p align="center">Ongoing</p>
<p>Legislation – Obtain General Assembly approval in 2010, and obtain Department approval to request Administration support for 2011 legislation for the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Broad fishing gear authority....</li> <li>2) Expanded DNR FMP Authority</li> <li>3) Recreational Fishing License –approval for proposed sport fishing license fee structure to comply with Federal angler registry and continue funding increase</li> <li>4) Increase SFAC seats</li> </ol>	<p align="center">Legislation, Regulation and Environmental Assessment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) DNR approval to introduce gear bill in 2011.</li> <li>2) Completed in 2010.</li> <li>3) Completed in 2010.</li> <li>4) Completed in 2010. The addition of three new appointments to SFAC and TFAC pending final action. Expected to be made in January 2011.</li> </ol>
<p>Funding/Staffing –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Maintain existing funding and staffing levels, including MES contractual positions.</li> <li>2) Resolve DBM decision to not allow the extension of long-term contractual employees. Continue to seek opportunities to convert contractual positions to permanent positions.</li> <li>3) Obtain approval for re-initiation of \$3.0 million of capital funds to support Maryland’s oyster restoration and aquaculture development program.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Administration</li> <li>2) OOS/Administration</li> <li>3) Admin/Shellfish</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ongoing. No positions were cut in 2010.</li> <li>2) Ongoing, and working with Dept. of Budget and Management request for conversion of federally funded positions by Board of Public Works. Action expected by spring 2011.</li> <li>3) Submitted request for \$5 million to DBM in July 2010, and working closely with DBM staff to re-new this funding during challenging budgetary times. Partial funding is most likely.</li> </ol>
<p>Licensing &amp; Harvest Reporting –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Improve compliance with commercial and charter boat harvester and dealer reporting requirements,</li> <li>2) Establish and administer increased penalties for</li> </ol>	<p align="center">Legislation, Regulation and Environmental Assessment</p> <p align="center">Estuarine and Marine Fisheries</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Made program re-organization, approved regulation to increase penalty for non-reporting, and implemented new standard operating procedures for tracking</li> </ol>

<p>non-compliance,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Improve accuracy through educational programs including video and form feedback protocols,</li> <li>4) Develop dock monitoring program as e-reporting expands</li> <li>5) Initiate pilot program(s) to begin implementing electronic reporting system for commercial, charter boats, and recreational fisheries.</li> <li>6) Provide the necessary support to the Information Technology Division within the Department to implement (1/1/11) COMPASS.</li> </ol>		<p>reports;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Implemented new regulations in February 2010;</li> <li>3) First harvest report education will happen at 2011 MD Watermen Association tradeshow in Ocean City. Further training materials under development for 2011.</li> <li>4) Potential development in 2011 to accompany pilot text-message reporting program. More likely, pilot implementation in 2012.</li> <li>5) Ongoing. Pilot text message reporting implemented in 2010. Increasing participation in e-reporting via SAFIS</li> <li>6) Ongoing. Implementation of COMPASS delayed due to contractual issues. Implementation to begin in June 2011 and completed by end of year.</li> </ol>
<p>Enforcement – Improve compliance with fisheries management rules through more severe penalties and improved cooperation by judiciary system (i.e. expand pilot natural resource day to other counties). More in-service training with NRP.</p>	<p>Legislation, Regulation and Environmental Assessment</p>	<p>Ongoing. Communication between NRP and Fisheries has improved, and is reported to be the best in many years. Natural Resource Day implemented by Anne Arundel Courts in Spring 2010, and working to expand to other counties in 2011.</p>
<p>Communications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continue communications training for all staff</li> <li>2) Identify and implement action to improve inter-agency communication with our state and federal partners.</li> <li>3) Improve intra-agency coordination (e.g. Parks) for regulations, fish passage, stream restoration projects.</li> <li>4) Improve media relations.</li> <li>5) Determine and develop multi-lingual strategy</li> </ol>	<p>ALL</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ongoing (report number of staff that took training, including Bleker conference calls)</li> <li>2) Ongoing. Established new Chesapeake Bay Program Fisheries Goal Implementation Team consisting of Fisheries Directors from MD, VA, PRFC, DC, NMFS and ASMFC. This team meets monthly.</li> <li>3) Ongoing with good success within Aquatic Resources’ Units, but needs improvement with Land Resources’ Units</li> <li>4) Ongoing, but needs further</li> </ol>

	enhancement 5) Needs enhancement.
<p>Environmental Review –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Coordination – Provide enhanced support to the Environmental Review Program in recognition that the impacts of land-use decision on aquatic resources are our most significant long-term threat. This support shall not be limited to reactive strategies such as more permit reviewers from Fisheries, but also strategies to be more proactive such as technical information to support the blue and green infrastructure projects.</li> <li>2) Resource Map Database Development - create comprehensive set of resource maps for targeted protection programs, for analysis of impacts due to land use and watershed disturbances, and improve database utilities to create more efficient work flow for Regional biologists.</li> </ol>	<p>Directed staff</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Made re-organization, and ongoing with good success;</li> <li>2) Ongoing</li> </ol>
<p>Alternative Commercial Fisheries Management – Complete listening sessions, establish industry advisory body, initiate and develop potential fishery management design options, and evaluate potential for pilot program in 2011.</p>	<p>Steve Early &amp; Estuarine/Marine</p> <p>Ongoing. Contracted Environmental Defense Fund to provide education and training, and coordinate industry led design and evaluation team. Completed two fishery exchange trips, several listening sessions, conducted legal and socio-economic analysis in 2010. Industry led blue crab design team to be in place by February 2011. Commercial striped bass and blue crab advisory workgroups to be in place in February 2011.</p>
<p>Engage in and support new Chesapeake Bay Program Fisheries Goal Implementation Team – focus on ecosystem based fisheries management, and improving fisheries management coordination among Bay jurisdictions.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Ongoing. Chesapeake Bay Program Fisheries Goal Implementation Team consisting of Fisheries Directors from MD, VA, PRFC, DC, NMFS and ASMFC. This team meets monthly, and convened two fisheries stakeholder meetings in 2010. Several fisheries technical</p>

		workgroups/committees have also been formed and are providing technical support to this team.
Allocation – develop fisheries allocation policy	Estuarine and Marine, Cooperative Oxford Laboratory	Discussions with DNR Secretary to develop this policy was initiated in December 2010. Need to determine next steps.
<p>Project/Species specific:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Oysters - implement proposed oyster restoration and aquaculture development plan.</li> <li>2) Menhaden - Obtain ASMFC approval for modifying the biological reference points for menhaden that take into consideration their ecological importance, and initiate development of an Amendment to the FMP to adopt more conservative biological reference points.</li> <li>3) River herring – Investigate strategies to reduce bycatch and establish appropriate tolerance limits to support implementation of a harvest moratorium in 2012.</li> <li>4) Fish Passage - Obtain necessary permits and implement removal of Simkins dam.</li> <li>5) a) Pre-spawn Striped Bass Fishery – Evaluate all pre-spawn striped bass fisheries in Chesapeake Bay (MD and VA), and recommend management options, if needed, for implementation for the 2011 fishing season. b) Develop options for obtaining accurate catch and effort data for the wave 1 intercept striped bass fishery in VA and NC, and work towards obtaining federal or grant funds to implement.</li> <li>6) Fish/protected species health assessment – all watershed baseline fish health</li> <li>7) Hatchery Production - continue assessment of American shad restoration efforts; renew Inland coldwater production</li> </ol>	Estuarine/ Marine, Hatcheries, Inland, FMP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Regulation adopted in Sept 2010, implementation in progress;</li> <li>2) Draft Addendum under consideration;</li> <li>3) In progress, with plan to implement harvest moratorium on all river herring fisheries (direct, and incidental) by 2012;</li> <li>4) Dam removal to be initiated in Oct 2010 and completed in January 2011;</li> <li>5a) TBD, and 5b) Survey instrument developed, priority identified with CBP Fisheries Goal Implementation Team, supporting funding needs to be identified;</li> <li>6) Needs more focused attention.</li> <li>7) Ongoing. Investigations being initiated with Horn Pt for bass and muskie tank culture techniques, DJS cooperative project being expanded to Green Ridge facility.</li> </ol>

Program Review: Ensure that field operations are fully supporting current and near-future assessments and FMP needs; are statistically robust; and are as efficient as possible.

ALL

Ongoing, but needs enhancement.

**II. PROVIDE AND ENHANCE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING ACCESS**

PRIORITY	DIVISION	COMPLETION
<p>Develop and distribute more outreach material to promote fishing in Maryland. (Access information for small paddle boats (kayaks, canoes); Improved promotion of free fishing days; Promote lesser known fishing opportunities; Youth/handicapped fishing opportunities/access; promote less popular species (trays, spadefish))</p>	<p align="center">All, w/ Communication &amp; Marketing lead</p>	<p>Distributed enhanced MD Fishing Guide in December 2010.            Angler’s log, Fisheries Service Twitter, Diamond Jim Twitter, Diamond Jim Facebook, Internal video productions, Maryland Fishing Challenge promotion, expanding species for state record consideration, press releases (YP), etc, ongoing, evolving and more to come in 2011. Working to develop an angler access database and maps.</p>
<p>Access:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increase shore access to fishermen (Identify and map shoreline access (yellow perch, trout)). Work with boating to identify funding opportunities.</li> <li>2) Identify and prioritize locations where the establishment of additional fishing piers and boat ramps would be beneficial, and work with the Department’s Land Acquisition staff, as needed, and Boating Services to identify funding opportunities.</li> <li>3) Consider landowner easements for public access.</li> <li>4) Research urban locations</li> <li>5) Evaluate the feasibility of a youth only trout week (1<sup>st</sup> week)</li> </ol>	<p align="center">All, w/ Communications &amp; Marketing lead</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Resolved issue at Stemmers Run in Cecil County to maintain fishing access; working with Parks Service to add fishing access at Palmer State Park; ongoing and needs more focus with resolution of western MD access points (Youghiogheny River access at Friendsville, ramp improvements at Yoder FMP and McCoole).</li> <li>2) Needs more focus; Love Point Park planning progressing, Perryville public pier under construction</li> <li>3) Needs more focus; AG office (Joe Heckwolf) suggested developing a system to facilitate NR Law, Title 5, Subtitle 11. Public Recreation on Private Land and Land Owned by Local Governments, similar to written for hunting.</li> <li>4) Needs more focus;</li> <li>5) Needs further internal discussion recognizing this would be controversial before initiating an outreach plan to obtain</li> </ol>

		stakeholder input.
Maryland Artificial Reef Initiative (MARI) – Develop 4 year work plan, performance metrics and monitoring plan.	Communications & Marketing	Initiated discussions with University of Maryland scientists to assist with designing monitoring program. Needs plan to be developed in 2011, and to obtain supporting funding.
Free fishing areas - Evaluate the feasibility of establishing additional free fishing areas, identify potential areas, and develop selection criteria	All, w/ Communication & Marketing lead	Need focused attention. Discussions to be initiated at 2011 Fisheries Summit.
Restore cold water hatchery production capability	Inland & Hatchery	Needs more focused attention. May have opportunity to coop with JR Reservoir. hydro project, may have limited production at Mettikki, Bear Creek production could be increased with Capital Improvement funding for infrastructure but money might be better spent at JR Reservoir.
Assess the existing fishing equipment loaner program with the Aquatic Resources Education (ARE) Program (Cindy Etgen), and determine if the program should be expanded.	Communications & Marketing	Equipment loaner program evaluation with ARE was completed, collaborations with Bass Pro Shops Annual tackle trade in has been initiated, collaborations with Maryland Fishing Challenge Partners has been initiated

### *III. PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES*

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>DIVISION</b>	<b>COMPLETION</b>
Oysters – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Develop new fishery management plan for oysters, obtain regulatory approval and implement prior to 2011 fishing season</li> <li>2) Obtain regulatory approval and implement proposed aquaculture development plan. .</li> <li>3) Provide financial assistance programs (i.e. MARBIDCO) and training to facilitate the development of oyster aquaculture</li> </ol>	Shellfish Legislation, Regulation and Environmental Assessment	1) Needs focused attention in 2011; 2) Regulations adopted in Sept 2010, implementation in progress; 3) \$2.2 million financial assistance program launched in October 2010, and continuing in 2011. Aquaculture open houses conducted in fall 2010. Aquaculture conference conducted in November 2010.



<p>Alternative commercial fisheries management – establish industry advisory body, initiate and develop potential fishery management design options, complete economic baseline, develop management principles, and evaluate potential for pilot program in 2011</p>	<p>All, except for Inland, with Steve Early lead</p>	<p>Ongoing. Contracted Environmental Defense Fund to provide education and training, and coordinate industry led design and evaluation team. Completed two fishery exchange trips, several listening sessions, conducted legal and socio-economic analysis in 2010. Industry led blue crab design team to be in place by February 2011. Commercial striped bass and blue crab advisory workgroups to be in place in February 2011.</p>
<p>Commercial fisheries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Coops – support interested watermen in developing industry coops</li> <li>2) Management plan - develop a commercial fisheries plan for Maryland.</li> <li>3) Sustainable fisheries – support review of blue crab &amp; striped bass fisheries for MSC certification</li> <li>4) Marketing - improve promotion of Maryland seafood in partnership with Dept. of Agriculture’s Seafood Marketing Program &amp; commercial watermen</li> <li>5) Identify underutilized species, and promote fishery development).</li> <li>6) Yellow Perch</li> </ol>	<p>As directed, including Jorge Holzer &amp; Steve Vilnit</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Partnering with EDF and MWA on grant proposal to evaluate industry coops.</li> <li>2) Needs more focused attention. Moving to develop new blue crab and industry advisory committee.</li> <li>3) In progress, with blue crab pre-assessment initiated in fall 2010. Striped bass pre-assessment is complete. Full assessment scheduled for February 2011. Blue crab pre-assessment is underway Steve;</li> <li>4) Taking more active role on Dept. of Agriculture’s Seafood Marketing Advisory Commission. Hired new staff person in fall 2010 to enhance seafood marketing under Dept. of Agriculture’s lead;</li> <li>5) Needs focused attention. Science review of invasive blue and flathead catfish issues initiated in Fall 2010, with goal to develop bay-wide fisheries management policy by September 2011.</li> <li>6) Initiated yellow perch marketing program in December 2010 with initial success in increasing value to watermen and getting fish in local markets.</li> </ol>
<p>Develop baseline descriptions of all commercial and recreational fisheries, support with economic surveys and analyses of existing data – information to be used</p>	<p>Jorge Holzer w/ Steve Vilnit</p>	<p>Established MOU with University of Maryland’s fisheries socio-economic team, including the hiring of new DNR supporting</p>

in developing FMPs, future fisheries, and allocation decisions, and potentially in the		position. Support towards blue crab license buy-back, blue crab baseline economic survey, legislation and regulation economic impact analysis, etc... provided in 2010.
Promote recreational and for-hire sport fishing opportunities (e.g. DBED, MD Fishing Challenge, Veterans Program).	Communications and Marketing	Need to develop and implement more strategic plan, with improved coordination with Dept. of Business and Economic Development. Veterans Program initiated in Sept 2010, but funding needed to continue in 2011.
Implement studies to identify potential consequences and/or benefits of developing fisheries for under-utilized species. Develop FMPs for new fisheries that include current data sources and data needs. Federal Blue Crab Fishery Disaster Funding – Obtain NMFS approval to release funding for all projects, implement CY2010 projects fully, and provide enhanced media coverage of project implementation	Estuarine and Marine, Regulation and Policy Cooperative Oxford Laboratory Administration, Estuarine and Marine, Shellfish and Cooperative Oxford Laboratory	To Be Developed  Ongoing. NMFS approval obtained for all projects.

**IV. PROMOTE AND PROTECT FISHERIES RESOURCES THROUGH PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>DIVISION</b>	<b>COMPLETION</b>
Promote environmental stewardship. Work with Commission to inform recreational and commercial fishermen about management & environmental issues (water quality, invasive species, planner boards, circle hooks, ....)	Communications & Marketing	Ongoing. Distribution of information to our Advisory Commissions/Committees (SFAC, TFAC, OAC, and CFAC) has improved. More advance delivery of meeting information is still needed for some advisory bodies. Need to develop 2011 priorities for these advisory bodies.
Promote Fisheries Service operations down to project level	ALL	Ongoing. Need to develop strategic plan.
Develop and communicate information (multi-lingual - written, online, video, ...): 1) Promote fishing in Maryland, including teaching people about getting started in	Communications & Marketing	Achieved successes in 2010, but need strategic plan to improve effectiveness and efficiency. 1) Needs more focused attention

<p>fishing, responsible angler practices; leave no trace, catch &amp; release. Web page design - incorporate how-to-videos</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Program specific content; interactive data availability, query functions; video gallery of presentations</li> <li>3) Interactive angler access map identifying fishing hot spots, resource status, invasive species advisories (e.g. didymo)</li> <li>4) Real time fishing report accessible online.</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Needs more focused attention, pending integration into components of the 2011 Maryland Fishing Challenge</li> <li>3) Initiated online Hot Spot Fishing Map in spring 2010, conducted several outreach strategies for proposed regulation prohibiting felt-soled waders and boots to mitigate spread of didymo;</li> <li>4) Initiated Angler's Log in spring 2010.</li> </ol>
<p>Encourage staff participation in outreach opportunities..... e.g. angler's log, youth fishing rodeos, state fair, and fishing shows. Evaluate the feasibility of obtaining advertisements for inclusion in the MD Fishing Guide.</p> <p>Work with Education Program to target meaningful education programs</p> <p>Promote fishing tournaments that are ethically responsible and utilize sustainable practices.</p> <p>Investigate the impacts (positive and negative) of marine protected areas in order to be prepared to respond to those interested in pursuing MPAs (i.e. NOAA, MARI).</p> <p>Identify opportunities to involve school/children Fisheries Services' activities.</p> <p>Establish working relationship with Office of Tourism to promote fishing in Maryland.</p> <p>Improve Fisheries' website (i.e. new format; how-to videos; program specific content; interactive data</p>	<p>Communications &amp; Marketing</p> <p>Communications &amp; Marketing</p> <p>Communications &amp; Marketing</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>Communications and Marketing</p> <p>Communication and Marketing</p>	<p>Ongoing with improved staff participation.</p> <p>Needs focused attention.</p> <p>Improved communication among staff from Fisheries Service and Watershed Services' who are manage and conduct fisheries educational programs. Effort initiated in fall 2010 to develop and implement coordinated fisheries outreach and education among Maryland's sportfishing organizations who conduct their own events throughout the year.</p> <p>Needs focused attention.</p> <p>Discussions initiated with Maryland's Artificial Reef Committee, and Watershed Services who is the lead on MPAs, but more focus is needed.</p> <p>Need more focused attention. Some progress with Diamond Jim/Maryland Fishing Challenge.</p> <p>Needs more focused attention</p> <p>Many improvements made to website based upon staff input.</p>

availability, query functions; video gallery of presentations).



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**BEYOND THE CORE FUNCTIONS**

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<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>DIVISION</b>	<b>COMPLETION</b>
Improve budget familiarity among Divisions and Program Managers.	All, with Administration lead	Needs more focused attention. Prepared new budget for Shellfish Division that better aligns funding sources with Division Programs.