Welcome to the Spring 2025 Fish GIT Meeting

March 25 & 26, 2025

Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Fisheries GIT Outcome Language Development

Fish GIT Executive Committee Meeting
March 11, 2025

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Timeline

March 25-26: Fish GIT Meeting

April 10: Outcome language draft due

TBD: Final outcome language due

May 7-8: MB reviews final outcome language

Definitions

Outcome = The change in state we aim to influence or the future state we aspire to reach as a result of our actions.

Output = Actions we plan to take as partners to achieve the outcome

Indicator = Metrics used to track desired change in the system and/or to track progress toward the outcome.

Factors Influencing = Current or future factors (e.g. environmental, political, social) that are likely to affect the achievability of the outcome and the actions we take to meet the outcome goal.

SMART Goal = A **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound target, used to guide restoration and protection efforts

Blue Crab Sustainability Outcome:

Draft language: *Maintain a sustainable bay wide blue crab fishery through cross jurisdictional coordination that supports healthy population and fishing communities by achieving abundance and harvest rate targets as determined by the benchmark stock assessment. Communicate progress toward achieving abundance and harvest rate targets through the annual blue crab advisory report, and refine targets through 20xx based on best available science.*

Outputs:

- Benchmark stock assessment
- Annual Blue Crab Advisory Report
- Research

Indicators:

- Blue crab abundance (adult female, Adult male, juveniles)
- Exploitation rates (catch, landings)
- Control rule
- Economic Value

Factors Influencing:

- Changing environmental conditions within the Chesapeake Bay and along coastal waters can influence the habitat quality and population of blue crabs. In response to such changes, continue research to better understand impacts to blue crab populations and continue the application of adaptive management practices within the review of annual winter dredge survey results.

- Overwintering mortality

Fish Habitat Outcome:

Draft language: *Maintain suitable shallow water habitat area* for key species through focused water quality, conservation** and restoration*** improvements informed by a synthesis of fisheries science and habitat assessments completed by xxxx.*

**Suitable shallow water habitat area is the measurable metric we will develop to define a current baseline of fish habitat quality and track changes over time*
*** Protecting areas with already high functioning habitat & fish productivity*
****Efforts in areas with somewhat degraded habitat where additional resources can help improve ecosystem functioning and increase species resilience*

Outputs:

- Tidal segment Living resource habitat assessment to score habitat suitability in the 92 tidal segments. Apply the results of the assessment to identify areas for water quality improvements, conservation priorities and habitat restoration strategies.
- Status and trends of structured habitat (oysters, SAV, tidal wetlands, shoreline condition) linked to fish productivity if possible to define habitat objectives (how much habitat is needed to sustain x level of productivity)
- Strategies to build habitat and fish resilience as temperature increases
- Assessment of forage availability, trends and projections of change. Is there enough food now and going forward for key predators
- Evaluation of movement and behavior of striped bass and other species relative to habitat conditions

Indicators:

- Forage abundance for key species
- Habitat use and movement patterns (spatial indicators at local, bay and regional scales)
- Fishery surveys

Oyster Restoration Outcome:

Draft language: *Continually increase finfish and shellfish habitat and water quality benefits from restored oyster populations. Restore and conserve at least 1800 acres of oyster reef habitat to achieve restoration success metrics while maintaining reefs established under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*

Outputs:

- Review and update (if necessary) reef success metrics
- Selection of focus areas
- Determine the extent to which Artificial Reef Programs can contribute to this outcome
- Focus area restoration plans/blueprints
- Oyster reef construction and seeding
- Implementation progress reports
- Oyster reef performance monitoring reports

Indicators:

- Oyster reef restoration (habitat success metrics)
- Continued evaluation of ecosystem services

Sustainable Oyster Fishery Outcome:

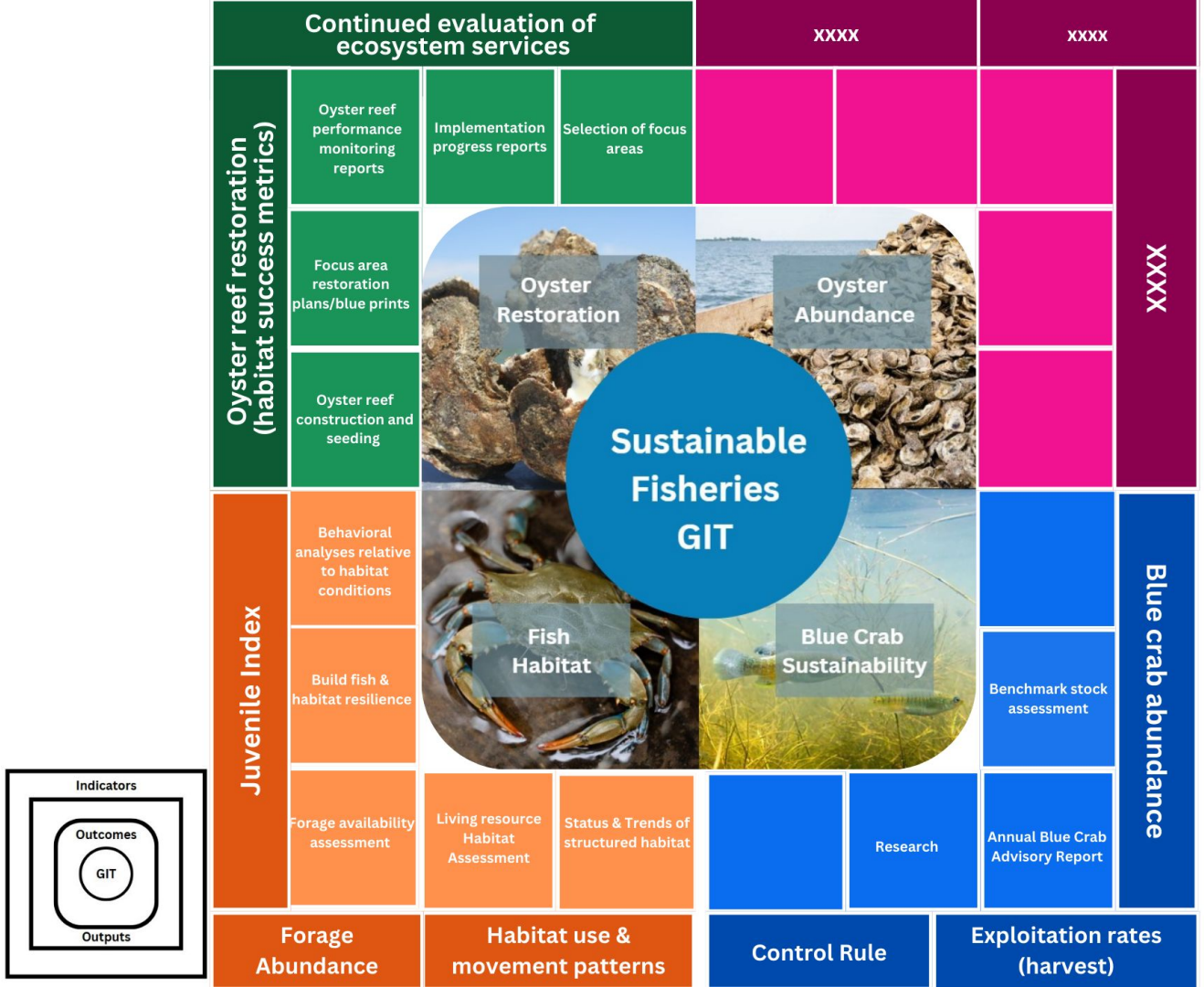
Draft language: *Oyster Abundance: Enhance the capacity of oysters to improve water quality through increased oyster abundance in the sustainably managed fishery and aquaculture.*

Outputs:

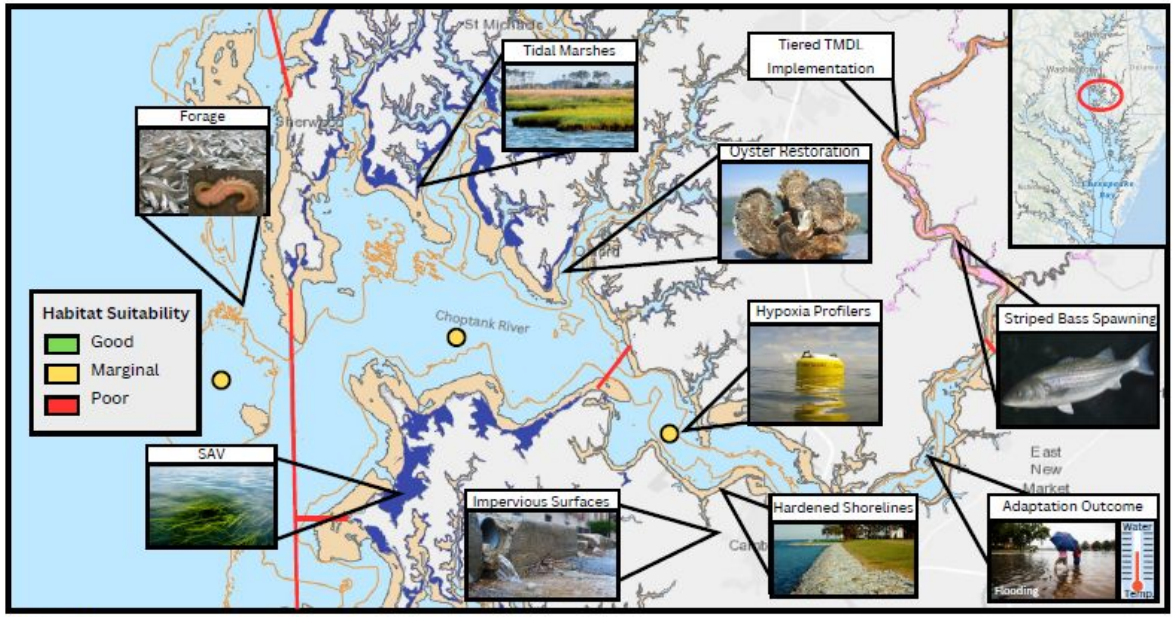
- Go beyond what is already occurring in wild oyster harvest and aquaculture. The idea is to promote an increase of oysters above a baseline to maximize water quality benefits while providing economic opportunities.
- Oyster BMP should be explored as a tool to achieve this outcome, but it does not need to be the only driver or approach for increasing oyster abundance.
- Setting numerical targets–could be time-bound outputs and include items like a population assessment (not necessarily Bay-wide, it could be assessments of select areas), and metric development.
- Incorporate network connectivity between harvest and sanctuary reefs
- Watermen apprentice program? Balance pros and cons

Indicators:

- Economic impact of oyster industry?
- Water quality and habitat benefits
    - BMP
    - Economy


Continued evaluation of ecosystem services
XXXX
XXXX
Oyster reef restoration (habitat success metrics)
Oyster reef performance monitoring reports
Implementation progress reports
Selection of focus areas
Focus area restoration plans/blue prints
Oyster reef construction and seeding
XXXX
Oyster Restoration
Oyster Abundance
Sustainable Fisheries GIT
Fish Habitat
Blue Crab Sustainability
Juvenile Index
Behavioral analyses relative to habitat conditions
Build fish & habitat resilience
Forage availability assessment
Living resource Habitat Assessment
Status & Trends of structured habitat
Research
Benchmark stock assessment
Annual Blue Crab Advisory Report
Blue crab abundance
Indicators
Outcomes
GIT
Outputs
Forage Abundance
Habitat use & movement patterns
Control Rule
Exploitation rates (harvest)

Tidal Fish Habitat Interconnectivity



3/14/2025

1:217,972

0 1.5 3 6 mi

0 2.25 4.5 9 km

VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, EPA, NPS, SAV Ecology, Monitoring, & Restoration Program, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Esri, HERE, NPS

Legend

- Tidal segment boundary line
- 5m shallow water contour
- 2m shallow water contour
- SAV (2019-2023)
- Striped bass spawning habitat
- Hypoxia Buoy Profilers

Agenda for today

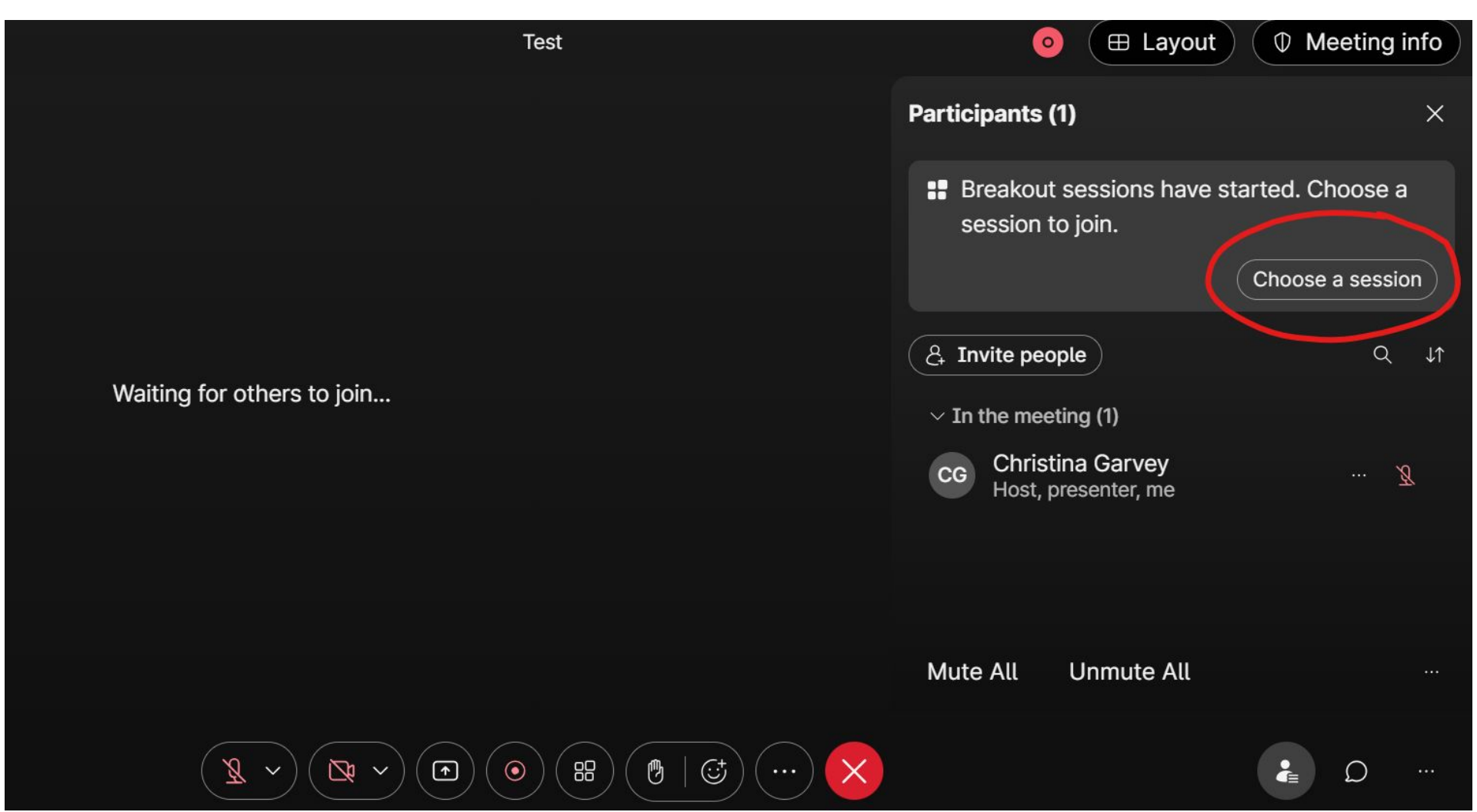
Breakout Session	10:00am - 11:30am
Lunch	11:30am - 12:30pm
Report-out Session	12:30pm - 2:00pm

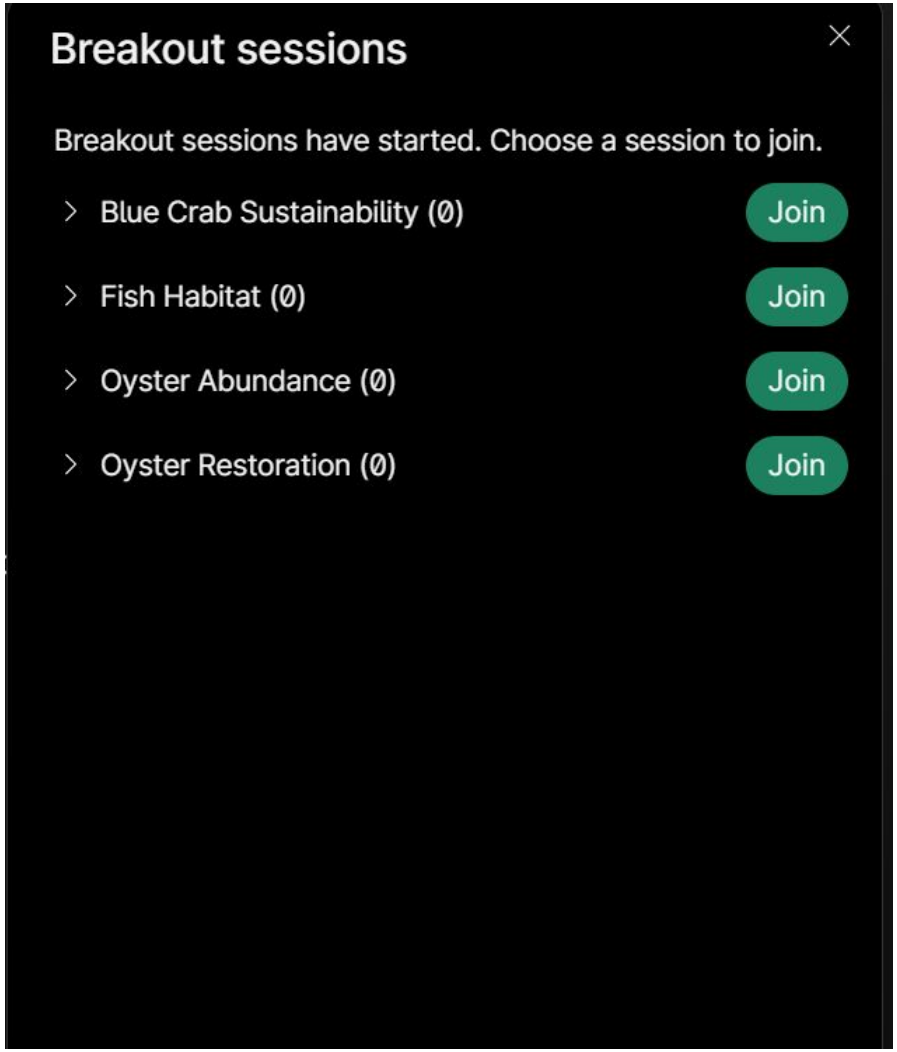
Breakout Session




4 breakout groups:

1. Blue Crab Sustainability *(Ingrid Braun-Ricks)*
2. Fish Habitat *(Chris Moore)*
3. Oyster Restoration *(Kevin Schabow)*
4. Oyster Abundance *(Bruce Vogt)*


Test
Layout
Meeting info
Participants (1)
Breakout sessions have started. Choose a session to join.
Choose a session
Invite people
Waiting for others to join...
In the meeting (1)
CG
Christina Garvey
Host, presenter, me
Mute All
Unmute All


Breakout sessions
Breakout sessions have started. Choose a session to join.
Blue Crab Sustainability (0)
Join
Fish Habitat (0)
Join
Oyster Abundance (0)
Join
Oyster Restoration (0)
Join