



Virginia Oyster Restoration Workgroup Meeting Notes

May 8 2024, 1-3pm

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/uhh-ceny-uno>

Or dial: (US) +1 513-491-3053 PIN: 672 946 679#

Agenda:

- Welcome, and note that this is a public meeting.
- Recap of April 22 (Earth Day) York River completion event with Governor Youngkin. And don't miss the [Bay Program's Instagram post on the accomplishment](#), with 14,000+ likes and 1.4 million+ views from over 635,000 unique accounts.
- Update on 2023 oyster restoration Annual Update document. Summary info is [here](#), see presentation titled '2023 Ten Tribes Progress'.
- Reef construction and monitoring updates.
 - see above for York River event
 - Lynnhaven River - contractor, Coastal Design, has started efforts to survey Craney Island shell pile, construction not expected until Oct. 1, due to pause for summer season recreational use of Broad Bay, 23.2 acre reef, striped design, height 12", 2 layers - 6" crushed stone, 6" fossilized oyster shell (from Craney Island). Schedule? 4-5 months of construction expected. Plans to mark the occasion can be discussed in the future. Note that there are 17+ year old restored reefs in Lynnhaven.
- Pocomoke Sound/ Tangier Sound- Corps may be interested in working there- on the VA side, may try to work w MD on a joint project; Rom's hydrodynamic models show these areas as important for larval transport. MD and VA in the Pocomoke Sound is connected closely; also Tangier Sound area. Tangier Sound modeling includes Maryland's portion, for modeling purposes.
 - USACE and VMRC (non-federal cost share partner) made the decision to look at doing work in Pocomoke. Why Pocomoke? Past and current good reefs; agreement with VMRC and Corps Norfolk; potential for nexus w/ harvest grounds (including potentially building new harvest areas); potential to build some nearshore reefs as shoreline protection for Tangier Island communities and Saxis (on VA Eastern Shore); Corps has funding to start Pocomoke work- there is a lot of good oyster habitat in that subregion, so it could have a lot of restored reefs.
- Discussion: ideas on how tributaries should be selected beyond 2025.

–informal discussions previously have centered on Pocomoke Sound/Tangier Sound, Hampton River, Mobjack Bay, etc. but how would stakeholders formally select the tribes

–(Rom) - establishing goals and objectives is key, previously we just wanted to increase oyster populations, but the next phase could be more ecosystem service oriented (ecological, fishery enhancement, etc.). What could be accomplished through oyster restoration besides just restoring the oyster populations? Could we restore the Bay's oyster metapopulation? Interest in shoreline/ shallow subtidal reefs for erosion protection. Maybe should not be just about oysters anymore.

– Could be a nominating kind of process that VMRC convenes and manages, where the public or other stakeholders (agencies, etc.) nominates their tributary. There should be criteria developed by oyster restoration stakeholders in Virginia.

-Other business

-Mobjack Bay reef construction should start this spring (mid-May). Outside of '10 tribes'; 65 acres (approx) of subtidal reefs, plus a living shoreline; in NOAA Middle Peninsula Habitat Focus Area.

-Great Wicomico reef - contract awarded at the end of this year for reef rehabilitation (2004 reefs) and an expanded reef