

June 4, 2008 Executive Committee Meeting Notes

Mr. Mark Mansfield (Management Team) welcomed the participants and provided opportunities for the Office of the Secretaries of Natural Resources, Maryland and Virginia, and for the Norfolk District Commander to provide opening remarks. Col. Anninos provided a broad based overview of efforts to date in the Bay community designed to provide the necessary native oyster recovery/restoration efforts. He indicated that those efforts have not been fully successful despite the massive effort by state and federal government agencies. He further indicated that the comprehensive EIS is the foundation document complimented by the native oyster master plan with inputs from the recent Maryland and Virginia oyster panels as the paradigm that we need to achieve results. The comprehensive EIS is the first attempt to publish a comprehensive actionable plan in a collaborative and synchronized fashion. He provided an overview of recent events related to the EIS and indicated that we can not afford delays in completing the draft EIS. Following his opening remarks, each agency was asked to renew it's commitment to completing the draft EIS by July 18, 2008. All joint lead and cooperating agencies renewed their commitments.

Mr. Mansfield provided a summary of the January 28, 2008 Executive Committee meeting with a continuing focus on actions accomplished since that time, to include:

- * The project delivery team, consisting of the joint lead and cooperating agencies, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Service, have continued to meet on a monthly basis to review project status.
- * The Chesapeake Bay Scientific Technical Advisory Committee and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Service/Interstate Shellfish Transport Committee were jointly briefed on the project status, to include the demographic model as well as cultural, economic, and environmental briefings on April 23, 2008 in Baltimore. Key principal investigators provided the updates on cultural and economic assessment components as well as an overview of the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) to date.
- * Coordination between the modeling, assessment, and EIS writing team continues to increase as they work closely to integrate their findings and incorporate them into the draft EIS. In that connection, the ERA writers, the Ecological Risk Assessment and Advisory Group (ERAAG), and the Management Team met on May 12, 2008 in Richmond to go over the latest round ERAAG of comments on the ESA.
- * Revisions to the DEIS schedule have resulted in an improved alignment over time of both the NOAA funded research and the DEIS. The Project Delivery Team and Assessment and Writing Teams do not "believe" there is any ongoing research that is critical enough to postpone the preparation and release of the Draft EIS. It should be recognized that determining the sufficiency of research is not the responsibility of the PDT but rather the formal role of the Oyster Advisory Panel that is chaired by Dr. Brian Rothschild. The OAP is scheduled to review the Pre-Draft EIS later this month in order to evaluate its scientific and technical sufficiency, and identify any critical research that they believe is essential to determining a reasoned choice among the alternatives. The OAP will report their findings to the Executive Committee prior to a decision by the Executive Committee to release the DEIS for public review.

Mr. O'Connell (Management Team) provided a review of the EIS schedule, indicating that the project delivery team is on schedule to deliver the draft EIS on July 18, 2008. Mr O'Connell informed the Executive Committee that schedule modifications (i.e. agency review time shortened) were necessary to proceed with the delivery date, and "pressure points" within the schedule are increasing.

The conference call concluded with a summary of the items listed above and the agreement to talk/meet again after the OAP meets and prior to the delivery date for the draft EIS.