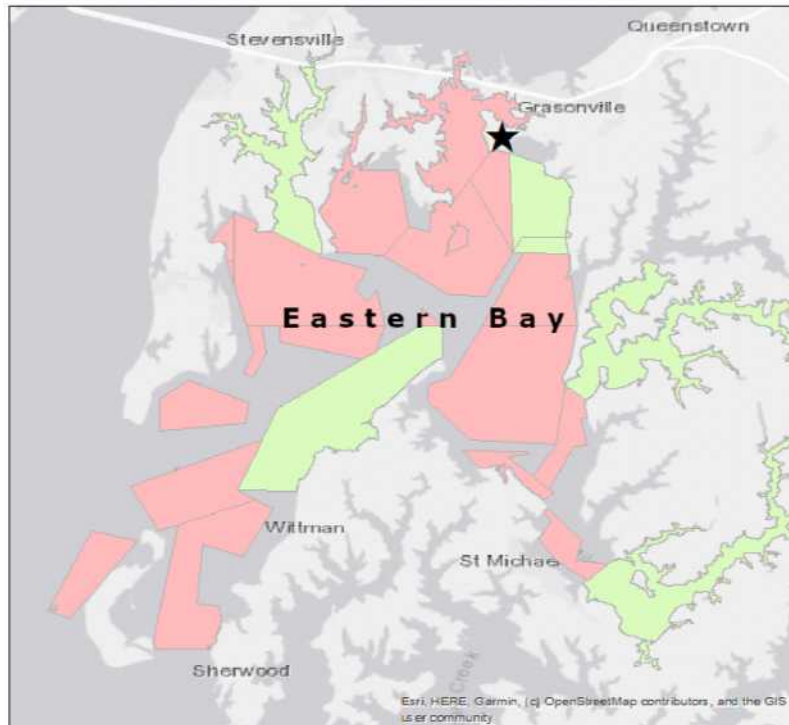


EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP



OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES (UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2, 2024)

CONVENED AND SUPPORTED BY



PROCESS DESIGN, CONSENSUS-BUILDING AND FACILITATION BY JEFF A. BLAIR



OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICES AND GUIDELINES
TABLE OF CONTENTS

EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP PROJECT SUMMARY.....	2
WORKGROUP GOAL STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES	3
OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICES AND GUIDELINES	4
ASSUMPTIONS, PRINCIPLES, AND PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES	4
CONSENSUS BUILDING PROCEDURES	6
CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS PROCESS PROCEDURES	7
MEMBER ALTERNATE, ATTENDANCE, AND ABSENTEE COMMENT POLICES	9

Chesapeake Bay – From Space



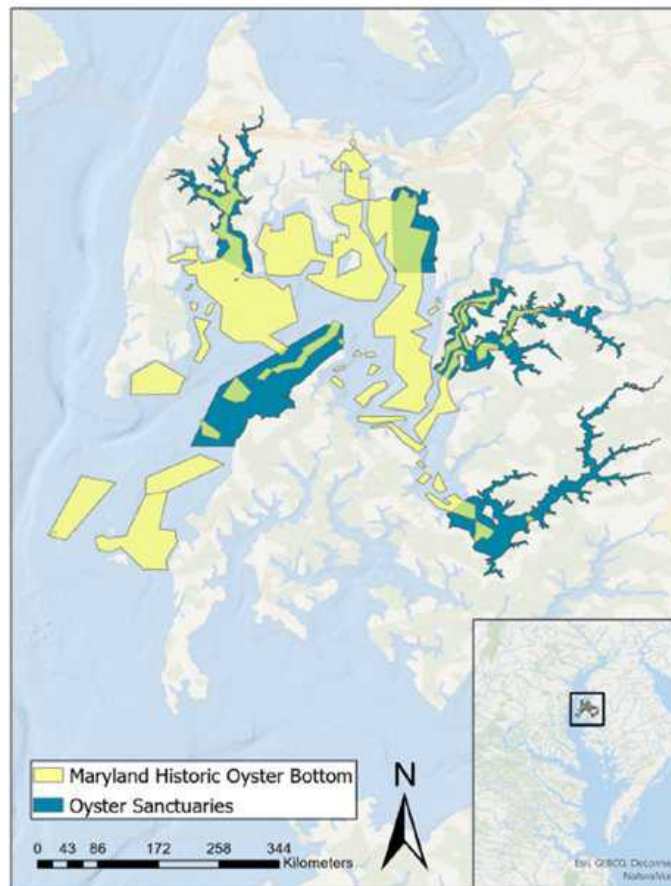
EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION PROJECT GOAL AND SUMMARY (UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2, 2024)

THE PROJECT SUMMARY

The Oyster Coalition Workgroup is being convened by the Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP), with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Workgroup members represent Maryland's three major oyster stakeholder groups – wild harvest, restoration, and aquaculture – as well as NGOs, citizen, and governmental interests that affect and are affected by the oyster fishery and oyster habitat restoration activities in Eastern Bay, Maryland and its tributaries.

The goal of the Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup (Workgroup) is to develop consensus recommendations for oyster policies, management, and restoration/replenishment activities that improve oyster production and the ecological and ecosystem services from oyster habitat restoration, and meet the needs of industry, citizen, NGOs, and government stakeholders in Eastern Bay and its tributaries. This includes (1) defining annual and long-term goals for each individual stakeholder group and collectively across all groups, (2) identifying resources required to meet these goals, and (3) defining performance metrics to track progress. The Workgroup process will be informed by the best available science and shared stakeholder values, resulting in the economically and ecologically sustainable long-term maintenance and growth of oyster production and oyster habitat restoration in Eastern Bay and its tributaries.

The recommendations will be developed by the Workgroup through a facilitated, consensus-driven process and compiled into a *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland*. The plan will be shared with Maryland DNR and the Oyster Advisory Commission for implementation.



GOAL STATEMENT

The goal of the Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup (Workgroup) is to develop consensus recommendations for oyster policies, management, and restoration/replenishment activities that improve oyster production and the ecological and ecosystem services from oyster habitat restoration, and meet the needs of industry, citizen, NGOs, and government stakeholders in Eastern Bay and its tributaries. This includes (1) defining annual and long-term goals for each individual stakeholder group and collectively across all groups, (2) identifying resources required to meet these goals, and (3) defining performance metrics to track progress.

The Workgroup process will be informed by the best available science and shared stakeholder values, resulting in the economically and ecologically sustainable long-term maintenance and growth of oyster restoration and production in Eastern Bay and its tributaries.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.) Workgroup members will strive to work together collaboratively, and seek to understand and respect differing perspectives.
- 2.) The Workgroup will strive to achieve consensus on the evaluation and development of recommendations submitted to the ORP's Project Team and appropriate management and regulatory agencies.
- 3.) Workgroup members agree to identify and evaluate a range of options for possible inclusion in the Plan that are informed by the best available science and shared stakeholder values, and predicated to result in the economically and ecologically sustainable long-term maintenance and growth of oyster production and oyster habitat restoration in Eastern Bay and its tributaries.
- 4.) The Workgroup will operate under policies and procedures that are clear, concise, and consistently and equitably applied.
- 5.) Workgroup members will serve as accessible liaisons between the stakeholder groups they have been appointed to represent and the Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup, and should strive to both inform and seek input on issues the Workgroup addressing from those they represent.
- 6.) Workgroup members will demonstrate commitment to the process, and be willing to reach consensus on development and adoption of the Plan.

WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL:

- When we seek common ground and action;
- Differences and problems are honored and not “worked;”
- Listen and participate actively, attentively, and respectfully;
- Create a shared vision for the Eastern Bay of Maryland System; and
- **Are willing to reach consensus.**

**EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP
OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

ASSUMPTIONS, PRINCIPLES, AND PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL AND HAVE GOOD CONVERSATION WHEN:

- ✓ All voices are invited, respected and heard.
- ✓ All experiences are treated as valid.
- ✓ Notes are captured in writing real-time using computers.
- ✓ We listen to each other.
- ✓ We observe time frames.
- ✓ We seek common ground and action.
- ✓ Differences and problems are honored—not “worked”.
- ✓ There is full and active attendance.
- ✓ We make the time and space to connect with each other.

THE FACILITATOR WILL SEEK TO:

- ✓ Structure and facilitate a process that will enable us to discover and build on our best moments and practices as stakeholders in the Eastern Bay of Maryland System.
- ✓ Keep us informed of established parameters for time and tasks.
- ✓ Support and facilitate Workgroup discussions.
- ✓ Create the environment that helps people to be at their best.
- ✓ Keep purpose front and center.
- ✓ Suggest and encourage new ways of thinking and doing.
- ✓ Keep us focused and on track.
- ✓ Start and stop on time.

WORKGROUP MEMBERS WILL:

- ✓ Participate actively and share opinions in the conversation—engage fully in this process.
- ✓ Tell stories, provide information—make meaning.
- ✓ Experiment & take risks to share, while engaging in conversation with others.
- ✓ Actively contribute to the creation of a shared vision, and restoration and management strategies for a healthy and sustainable Eastern Bay of Maryland System.
- ✓ Listen actively, attentively, respectfully.
- ✓ Take responsibility . . . for the conversation and the ideas developed here.
- ✓ Be here for the entire Workgroup process, be on time, and be *here* while you’re here.
- ✓ Refrain from using electronic devices during the Workgroup meetings—keep all electronic devices turned off or in a silent mode; your participation is valued.
- ✓ Be willing to reach consensus.

Four Personal Guiding Principles:

1. Be impeccable with your word.
2. Don't take things personally.
3. Don't make assumptions.
4. Always participate fully.

EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP MEMBERS' ROLE

- ✓ The Workgroup process is an opportunity to explore possibilities. Offering or exploring an idea does not necessarily imply support for it.
- ✓ Listen to understand. Seek a shared understanding even if you don't agree.
- ✓ Be focused and concise—balance participation & minimize repetition. Share the airtime.
- ✓ Look to the Facilitator to be recognized. Please raise your name tent or hand to speak.
- ✓ Speak one person at a time. Please don't interrupt each other.
- ✓ Focus on issues, not personalities. *"Using insult instead of argument is the sign of a small mind."*
- ✓ Avoid stereotyping or personal attacks. *"Mud thrown is ground lost"*.
- ✓ To the extent possible, offer options to address other's concerns, as well as your own.
- ✓ Participate fully in discussions, and complete meeting assignments as requested.

OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT TEAM'S ROLE

- ✓ Provide science-based research and information as requested by Workgroup members and the facilitator.
- ✓ Consult with stakeholders and provide guidance in using tools and objective science to analyze proposed options.
- ✓ Use best available tools and science to analyze options in response to stakeholder input.
- ✓ Organize meeting logistics and provide relevant documents for use during meetings.
- ✓ Attend all Workgroup meetings.
- ✓ The ORP's OCW Project Team will deliver a project report that will include the results and products of the Workgroup to managers, regulators, and other agencies as appropriate for consideration in its planning for restoration and management of the oyster fishery and Eastern Bay of Maryland ecosystem.

FACILITATED SOLUTIONS, LLC FACILITATOR'S ROLE

- ✓ Design, facilitate and report on a collaborative Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup process.
- ✓ Assist the Workgroup members to build understanding and consensus on action recommendations.
- ✓ Provide process design and procedural guidance to members.
- ✓ Assist members to stay focused and on task.
- ✓ Assure that participants follow the Workgroup's *Operational and Procedural Polices and Guidelines*.
- ✓ Accurately and fairly capture summary of key discussion points during the Workgroup meetings.

GUIDELINES FOR BRAINSTORMING

- ✓ Offer one idea per person without explanation.
- ✓ No comments, criticism, or discussion of other's ideas.
- ✓ Listen respectfully to other's ideas and opinions.
- ✓ Seek understanding and not agreement during this phase of identifying issues or options.

THE NAME STACKING PROCESS

- ✓ Determines the speaking order.
- ✓ Participant raises hand to speak during Workgroup meetings. Facilitator will call on participants in turn.
- ✓ Facilitator may interrupt the stack (change the speaking order) in order to promote discussion on a specific issue or, to balance participation and allow those who have not spoken on an issue an opportunity to do so before others on the list who have already spoken on the issue.

EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP CONSENSUS BUILDING PROCEDURES

The Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup (Workgroup) will seek consensus on its recommendations for options to be evaluated using the best available science and decision-support tools for restoration and management of the Eastern Bay of Maryland oyster resource. General consensus is a participatory process whereby, on matters of substance, the members strive for agreements which all of the members can accept, support, live with or agree not to oppose. In instances where, after vigorously exploring possible ways to enhance the members' support for the final package of recommendations, and the Workgroup finds that 100% acceptance or support is not achievable, final consensus recommendations will require at least 75% favorable vote of all members present and voting. This super majority decision rule underscores the importance of actively developing consensus throughout the process on substantive issues with the participation of all members and which all can live with. In instances where the Workgroup finds that even 75% acceptance or support is not achievable, publication of recommendations will include documentation of the differences and the options that were considered for which there is more than 50% support from the Workgroup. The report that will be a product of the Workgroup process will clearly describe the level of agreement between Workgroup members on each specific recommendation as well as on the suite of recommendations as a whole.

The Workgroup will develop its recommendations using consensus-building techniques with the assistance of the facilitator. Techniques such as brainstorming, ranking and prioritizing approaches will be utilized. The Workgroup's consensus process will be conducted as a facilitated consensus-building process. Workgroup members, project staff, and the facilitator will be the only participants seated at the table. Only Workgroup members may participate in discussions and vote on proposals and recommendations. The facilitator, or a Workgroup member through the facilitator, may request specific clarification from a subject area experts in understanding an issue.

The Facilitator will work with the Project Team and Workgroup members to design agendas that will be both efficient and effective. The Project Team will help the Workgroup with information and meeting logistics.

The Workgroup may convene subcommittees which have assigned tasks in specific areas. For example, an outreach and community engagement sub-committee could be responsible for making recommendations about public awareness strategies and resources.

To enhance the possibility of constructive discussions as members educate themselves on the issues and engage in consensus-building, members agree to refrain from public statements that may prejudice the outcome of the Workgroup's consensus process. In discussing the Workgroup process in any form of media, members agree to be careful to present only their own views and not the views or statements of other participants. In addition, in order to provide balance to the Workgroup process, members agree to represent and consult with their stakeholder interest groups. The Workgroup as a group develops consensus recommendations on issues, and does not advocate for them outside of the Workgroup process. Members are free to advocate for their own stakeholder interests, but again should be careful to present only their own views. Workgroup members agree not to speak negatively about other Workgroup or Project Team members during, between, and/or after meetings.

CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS PROCESS PROCEDURES

ACCEPTABILITY RANKING SCALE FOR OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the Organizational Meeting, Workgroup members will be asked to evaluate and rank project goals, vision themes, outcomes, and objectives using a 4-Point acceptability ranking scale. During subsequent meetings Workgroup members will be asked to develop proposed options, to review existing consensus level ranked options, to propose any additional options for Workgroup consideration, and to rank the options for acceptability.

Once ranked for acceptability, options (strategies and actions) with a ≥ 3.0 average ranking (75%) will be considered preliminary consensus recommendations for inclusion in the package of recommendations for the *Long-Term Oyster Restoration and Management Strategic Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* (Plan).

This is an iterative process, and at any point during the process, any option may be re-evaluated and re-ranked at the request of any Workgroup member or ORP Project Team Member. The status of a ranked option will not be final until the final Workgroup meeting, when a vote will be taken on the entire package of consensus ranked recommendations for inclusion in the Plan.

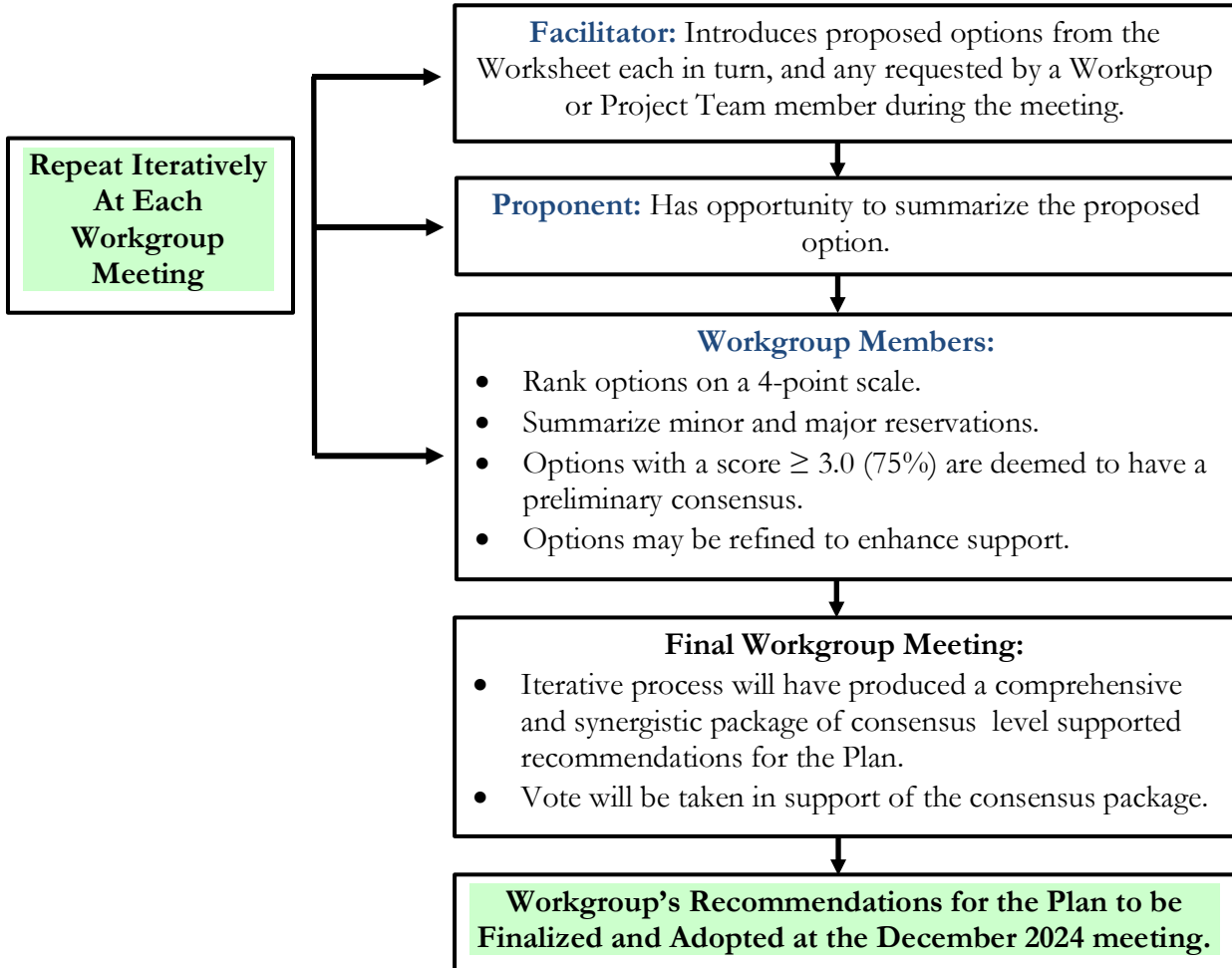
Workgroup members should be prepared to state their minor and major reservations when asked, and to offer proposed refinements to the option to address their concerns. If a Workgroup member is not able to offer refinements to make the option acceptable (4) or acceptable with minor reservations (3) they should consider ranking the option with a 1 (not acceptable).

The following scale will be utilized for the ranking exercises:

ACCEPTABILITY RANKING SCALE	4 = Acceptable, I agree	3 = Acceptable, I agree with minor reservations	2 = Not Acceptable, I don't agree unless major reservations addressed	1 = Not Acceptable
------------------------------------	--------------------------------	--	--	---------------------------

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER FOR PROPOSING AND EVALUATING OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
CRITERIA	EXPLANATION
IMPORTANCE	Is this proposed option critically important to achieving the goals of the <i>Oyster Restoration and Management Strategic Plan</i> ?
TIMELY	Will things get worse if the proposed option is not implemented?
FEASIBLE/PRACTICAL	Is it likely that the proposed option will be successful in achieving the relevant goals of the <i>Oyster Restoration and Management Strategic Plan</i> ?
RESOURCES	Are there resources available, or likely to become available for implementing the proposed option? Is implementation cost effective?
COMMITMENT	Is there commitment from the stakeholders and regulators regarding implementation of the proposed option?

CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS OPTIONS EVALUATION PROCESS FLOWCHART



**EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP
MEMBER ALTERNATE, ATTENDANCE, AND ABSENTEE COMMENT POLICIES**

WORKGROUP MEMBER DESIGNATED ALTERNATE POLICY

- Workgroup members shall notify the Project Team by e-mail when they will not be able to attend a meeting.
- If appropriate, the Workgroup member can provide the name and contact information for a designated alternate who will serve in their place when they cannot attend.
- Alternates shall be of the same stakeholder/constituent groups as the appointed members and knowledgeable on the issues.
- Workgroup members shall provide alternates with a copy of the upcoming meeting's agenda and options evaluation worksheet and consult with alternates on the substantive discussion issues currently before the Workgroup. Alternates should debrief with the member following the meeting.
- Alternates will sit at the table and participate in all substantive discussions.
- Alternates should represent member's views on substantive discussion issues, to the extent possible.
- Alternates shall not be allowed to vote on substantive discussion issues. That right is reserved for Workgroup members.
- Alternates shall agree to follow all Workgroup procedures as stipulated in the Workgroup's *Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines* posted to the project webpage.
- Alternates shall not participate in the discussion of procedural matters or long-term planning matters such as Workplan development.
- Alternates are not defacto Workgroup members, and shall not replace an appointed Workgroup member without being interviewed and approved by the Project Team.

WORKGROUP MEMBER MEETING ATTENDANCE POLICY

Any member of the Workgroup who fails to attend two consecutive regularly scheduled meetings will be contacted by the Project Team to determine why the member was not able to attend and if the member still wishes to serve on the Workgroup. If the member cannot demonstrate his or her absence was for good cause, or no longer wishes to serve on the Workgroup the Project Team will evaluate whether to retain, remove, or remove and replace the member based on the circumstances.

ABSENTEE WORKGROUP MEMBER COMMENT POLICY

Any member of the Workgroup who wishes to have their comments read into the record at a meeting they will not be able to attend may send their written comments by e-mail or regular mail to the Project Team. The member should identify the specific item that the comment pertains to. The Facilitator will read the absentee member's comments into the record during the discussion portion of the specific item the member is commenting on, and the member's comments will be included in the Facilitators' meeting summary report. A Workgroup member may only make one comment per specific item, and each comment will be limited to a maximum of five-hundred (500) words. A Workgroup member may comment on as many items as desired for a given meeting's agenda. Absentee members shall not vote in absentia or by proxy for proposals and recommendations.