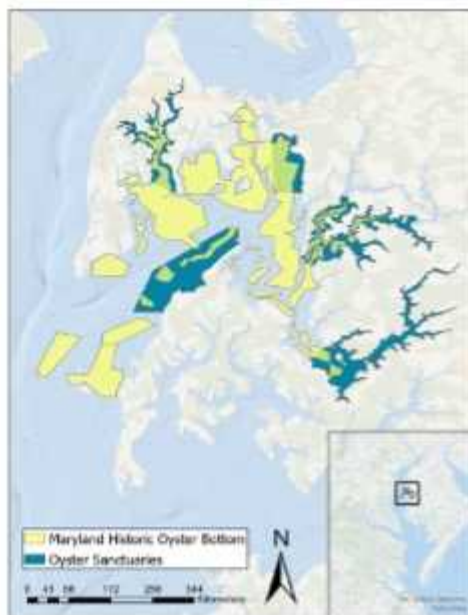


**EASTERN BAY  
OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP**



**MEETING 1 – FEBRUARY 2-3, 2024  
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING  
FACILITATOR’S SUMMARY REPORT**

**CHESAPEAKE BAY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER  
GRASONVILLE, MARYLAND**



**PROCESS DESIGN, MEETING FACILITATION, AND REPORTING BY JEFF A. BLAIR**

**EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP  
FEBRUARY 2-3, 2024 FACILITATOR’S MEETING SUMMARY REPORT**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

*TABLE OF CONTENTS*..... 1  
*TABLE OF ATTACHMENTS*..... 1

**I. MEETING SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW** ..... 2  
**II. MEETING PARTICIPATION** ..... 2  
**III. WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF THE ORP’S GOAL IN CONVENING THE OCW** ..... 3  
**IV. INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES**..... 3  
**V. MEETING OBJECTIVES**..... 4  
**VI. OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICIES AND GOAL STATEMENT ADOPTION** ..... 4  
**VII. EASTERN BAY SYSTEM OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS** ..... 7  
**VIII. REVIEW OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS** ..... 10  
**IX. RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK ADOPTION**..... 12  
**X. GOALS, VISION THEMES, OUTCOME, AND OBJECTIVES ADOPTION** ..... 14  
**XI. IDENTIFICATION OF INITIAL STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATION**..... 16  
**XII. UPDATED WORKPLAN-SCHEDULE REVIEW** ..... 20  
**XIII. NEXT STEPS** ..... 21

*ATTACHMENTS*..... 22 - 38

**1. KEY TO COMMON PROJECT ABBREVIATIONS** ..... 22  
**2. GLOSSARY OF OCW PROJECT TERMS AND DEFINITIONS** ..... 23  
**3. MEETING PARTICIPATION LIST** ..... 25  
**4. MEETING AGENDA** ..... 26  
**5. OCW WORKPLAN, SCHEDULE, AND PROJECT AREA MAP** ..... 28  
**6. MEETING EVALUATION RESULTS**..... 30  
**7. OCW ADOPTED PROCEDURAL POLICES AND GUIDELINES** ..... 31  
**8. ABOUT THE OCW FACILITATOR AND RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE** ..... 38

**EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP  
FEBRUARY 2-3, 2024 FACILITATOR'S MEETING SUMMARY REPORT**

**OVERVIEW OF THE EAST BAY OYSTER COALITION'S FEBRUARY 2-3, 2024 ACTIONS**

**I. MEETING SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW**

The first Oyster Coalition Workgroup meeting was held at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (CBEC) in Grasonville, Maryland. The Oyster Coalition Workgroup (OCW): received an overview of the Oyster Recovery Partnership's (ORP) goal in convening the OCW; participated in introductions and expressed their desired outcomes for the OCW process; heard presentations on: "History and Scope of Eastern Bay," and "History and Current Status of the Oyster Population in Eastern Bay;" received a summary of the OCW's Pre-Meeting Questionnaire results; reviewed the proposed Framework for developing recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* (Plan); identified and discussed an initial list of strategies for achieving the Project's Goals and Objectives; received an overview of the Project Workplan-Schedule; and discussed agenda items and information needs for the March 29-30, 2024 OCW meeting. Specific actions included unanimous: **1)** Adoption of OCW Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines; **2)** Adoption of Guiding Principles for the OCW; **3)** Adoption of an OCW Goal Statement; **4)** Adoption of the Plan Framework: Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, Objectives, Strategies, and Actions; and **5)** Approval of Goal A, B, and C, and the associated Vision Theme, Outcome, and Objective for the three Goals of the Plan.

*(Attachment 1 – Key to Common Project Abbreviations)*  
*(Attachment 2 – Glossary of OCW Project Terms and Definitions)*  
*(Attachment 6 – Meeting Evaluation Results)*

**II. OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP MEETING PARTICIPATION**

The following OCW members participated in Day-1 (Friday) of the February 2-3, 2024 meeting conducted in-person at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville, Maryland:

Kathy Brohawn, Scott Budden, Brian Callam, Ben Ford, Mark Galasso, Moochie Gilmer, Nick Hargrove, Jeff Harrison, Richard Jones, Jodi Baxter, designated alternate for Chris Judy, Matt Latham, Jim Moran, Vicki Paulas, Jason Ruth, Ward Slacum, Dan Sweeney, and Troy Wilkins.

(17 of 17 members participated – 100%).

*Absent OCW Members:*

None.

The following OCW members participated in Day-2 (Saturday) of the February 2-3, 2024 meeting conducted in-person at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville, Maryland:

Kathy Brohawn, Scott Budden, Brian Callam, Ben Ford, Mark Galasso, Moochie Gilmer, Nick Hargrove, Jeff Harrison, Richard Jones, Jodi Baxter, designated alternate for Chris Judy, Matt Latham, Jim Moran, Vicki Paulas, Jason Ruth, Ward Slacum, Dan Sweeney, and Troy Wilkins.

(17 of 17 members participated – 100%).

*Absent OCW Members:*

None.

#### **OCW LEADERSHIP TEAM AND FACILITATOR**

Jeff Blair, Olivia Caretti, Beth Franks, and Ward Slacum.

*(Attachment 3 – Meeting Participation)*

#### **MEETING FACILITATION**

Meetings are facilitated and meeting summary reports prepared by Jeff A. Blair of Facilitated Solutions, LLC. Information at: <http://facilitatedsolutions.org>.



*(Attachment 8 – About the Workgroup’s Facilitator)*

#### **ADDITIONAL MEETING ATTENDEES**

Jen Walters (ORP).

#### **PROJECT WEBPAGE**

Information on the Oyster Coalition Workgroup project, including agenda packets, meeting reports, draft Plan Framework, and related documents may be found at the OCW Webpage. Located at the following URL: <https://www.oysterrecovery.org/our-work/oyster-restoration/easternbaycoalition>

### **III. WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF ORP’S GOAL IN CONVENING THE OCW**

Olivia Caretti, ORP Coastal Restoration Program Manager, welcomed participants and explained the ORP’s goal for convening the OCW is to develop consensus between stakeholder interests on recommendations for a *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* (Plan). The Plan will be submitted to the Oyster Recovery Partnership and subsequently to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and other agencies and entities as appropriate.

### **IV. INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

Jeff Blair, OCW Facilitator, opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. on February 2, 2024 and welcomed all participants. Jeff also asked all OCW members to introduce themselves and provide their primary goal for the OCW process.

Summary of OCW member goals:

- Unified approach with all interests incorporated into the approach.
- More oysters in Eastern Bay.
- Healthier Eastern Bay.
- More sustainable oyster population.
- More bottom to work.
- Consensus and shared goals.

## V. AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The OCW voted unanimously to approve the agenda for the February 2-3, 2024 meeting as presented. Following are the key agenda items approved for consideration:

- ✓ To Review Oyster Coalition Workgroup Goals and Expected Outcomes.
- ✓ To Review and Adopt Oyster Coalition Workgroup Operational and Procedural Polices and Guidelines.
- ✓ To Discuss and Adopt Oyster Coalition Workgroup Guiding Principles.
- ✓ To Discuss and Adopt Oyster Coalition Workgroup Goal Statement.
- ✓ To Provide Relevant Background Information on the Eastern Bay Region of Maryland.
- ✓ To Review Questionnaire Results.
- ✓ To Discuss and Adopt Draft Goal Framework: Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives.
- ✓ To Identify and Discuss a List of Initial Strategies for Achieving the Project's Goals and Objectives.
- ✓ To Discuss Next Steps, Schedule and Assignments.

*Amendments to the Posted Agenda:*

There were no amendments to the posted agenda.

*(Attachment 4 – February 2-3, 2024 OCW Agenda)*

## VI. OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICIES AND GOAL STATEMENT ADOPTION

Jeff Blair, OCW Facilitator, reviewed the proposed Operational and Procedural Polices and Guidelines for the Oyster Coalition Workgroup process. The Polices and Guidelines include: the following:

- Oyster Coalition Workgroup Assumptions, Principles, and Participation Guidelines;
- Oyster Coalition Workgroup Consensus Building Procedures;
- Oyster Coalition Workgroup Consensus Solutions Process Procedures;
- Oyster Coalition Workgroup Options Acceptability Ranking Process;
- Oyster Coalition Workgroup Guiding Principles; and
- Oyster Coalition Workgroup Goal Statement.

### **Summary and Overview of the Operational and Procedural Polices and Guidelines**

#### **UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED 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 ( $\geq 75\%$ ) 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.

**UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP ACCEPTABILITY RANKING PROCESS (CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS PROCESS) SUMMARY**

- During meetings the OCW will evaluate options (strategies and actions) using a Strategies Evaluation Worksheet consistent with the Consensus Building Procedures unanimously adopted February 2-3, 2024.
- During the meetings, OCW members will be asked to develop and rank options using a 4-Point acceptability ranking scale. Once ranked for acceptability, options with a  $\geq 3.0$  average ranking (75%) will be considered preliminary consensus recommendations for inclusion in the package of recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* (Plan).

The following scale will be utilized for the ranking exercises:

<b>ACCEPTABILITY RANKING SCALE</b>	<b>4 = Acceptable</b> <i>I agree</i>	<b>3 = Acceptable, I agree with minor reservations</b>	<b>2 = Not Acceptable, I don't agree unless major reservations addressed</b>	<b>1 = Not Acceptable</b>
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- OCW 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 OCW 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).

- This is an iterative process (the options agreed to at each meeting serve as the starting point for the next, and no recommendation is final until the last meeting), and at any point during the process any option may be reevaluated and re-ranked at the request of any OCW or ORP Project Team member.
- The status of a ranked option will not be final until the final OCW meeting, when a vote will be taken on the entire package of consensus ranked recommendations for submittal to the Oyster Recovery Partnership. The OCW will finalize their recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* at the December 5, 2024 meeting.

### **UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP 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 Region of Maryland; and
- **Are willing to reach consensus.**

### **UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP 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.

### **Summary of Questions, Responses, and Comments:**

*(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)*

- A Workgroup member asked how many of the other processes that Jeff has facilitated were successful and implemented. Most (not all) have been implemented successfully. Jeff highlighted recent work in Apalachicola and Pensacola Bays as examples.

Following the opportunity provided for questions and answers, and Workgroup discussion, the Oyster Coalition Workgroup took the following actions:

#### ***Oyster Coalition Workgroup Actions:***

**MOTION** – The Workgroup voted unanimously, 17 – 0 in favor, to adopt the proposed Oyster Coalition Workgroup Guiding Principles.

**MOTION** – The Workgroup voted unanimously, 17 – 0 in favor, to adopt the proposed Oyster Coalition Workgroup Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines.

**MOTION** – The Workgroup voted unanimously, 17 – 0 in favor, to adopt the proposed Oyster Coalition Workgroup Goal Statement.

The OCW Adopted Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines are available on the project webpage: <https://www.oysterrecovery.org/our-work/oyster-restoration/easternbaycoalition>.

*(Attachment 7 – OCW Adopted Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines)*

## **VII. EASTERN BAY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS**

Presentations are available on the project webpage: <https://www.oysterrecovery.org/our-work/oyster-restoration/easternbaycoalition>.

### **A. HISTORY AND SCOPE OF EASTERN BAY**

Olivia Caretti, ORP Coastal Restoration Program Manager, provided the OCW with an overview of the History and Scope of Eastern Bay.

#### **Summary and Overview of the Presentation**

##### **Roadmap to Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition**

- Challenge: Unifying stakeholders to integrate oyster production efforts across sectors.
- 2019-2022
  - OAC tasked with developing set of management actions & recommendations.
  - Outcome: Annual funding for Eastern Bay, integrated approach across sectors.
- 2021-2022
  - Legislation passed to provide funding over 25 years to support restoration in sanctuaries & fishery in Eastern Bay (\$1M/yr each).
  - Some work by DNR and stakeholders towards integrating across sectors.
- 2023-2024
  - Oyster Coalition Workgroup convened by ORP.
  - Ongoing plantings in Eastern Bay.



### Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition

- Project goal: Develop a strategic plan to optimize oyster production over the long term that supports all oyster stakeholder groups.
  - Establish collective and individual stakeholder goals (OCW),
  - Delineate oyster habitat,
  - Generate local stewardship.
- OCW Outcome: Comprehensive Strategic Plan developed for Eastern Bay.

### Eastern Bay Landscape and OCW Context.

- Shift from primarily agricultural/natural shoreline and land use surrounding Eastern Bay to residential/hardened over the last 50 years.
- This has degraded Eastern Bay natural resources, water and habitat quality.
- Resulted in a shift from booming to limited seafood industry.

### Summary of Questions, Responses, and Comments:

*(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)*

- The group discussed the geographical boundaries of Eastern Bay, and whether/how they can be updated.

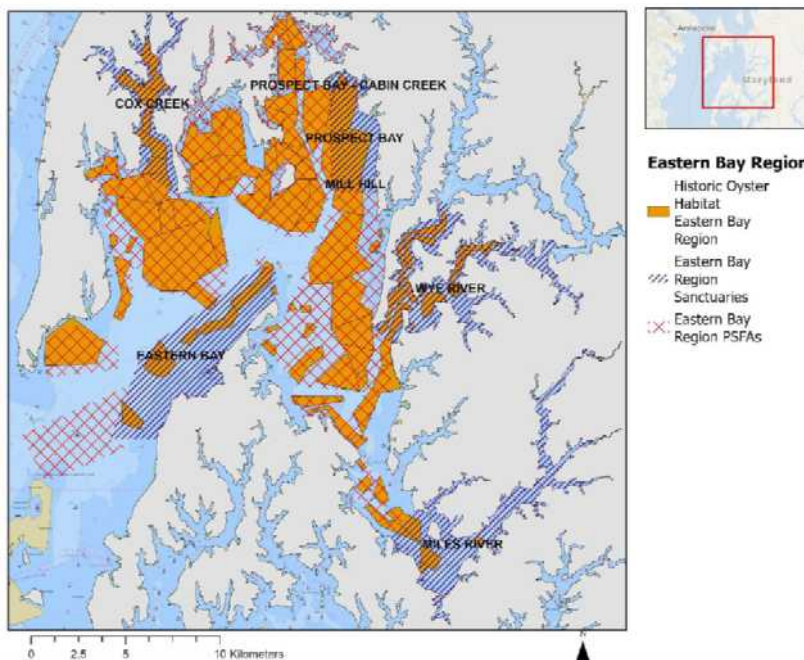
### B. HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE OYSTER POPULATION IN THE EASTERN BAY REGION

Jodi Baxter, Deputy Division Director, MDNR Shellfish Division, provided the OCW with an overview of the History and Current Status of the Oyster Population in the Eastern Bay Region.

### Summary and Overview of the Presentation

- Eastern Bay Region (NOAA harvest reporting code)= Miles River (060), Wye River (099) and Eastern Bay (039).
  - Historic oyster habitat = 1906-1912 Yates Survey plus its amendments,
  - Sanctuary = no harvest areas,
  - PSFA = no leasing allowed.

### *Eastern Bay Management Zones and Historic Oyster Habitat*



### **Plantings in Eastern Bay**

- Historic fishery plantings (prior to 2006) = mostly dredged shell, some fresh shell, some seed (older).
- Sanctuary plantings = spat on shell (SOS), few reef balls at Mill Hill & Cabin Creek.
- Current fishery plantings (2010-2022) = mostly fresh sell and SOS, some seed from VA (planted in 2017-2018).

### **Queen Anne County Watermen Association Activities (Troy Wilkins)**

- Direct larvae release in Eastern Bay with NOAA (2022 & 2023).
- Bar cleaning and shell consolidation using private funds (2020-2023).
- Clam rig shell reclamation (2024?).

### **Natural Spatfall (DNR fall survey dredge data)**

- Data from 1980 – 1995 show variations with approximately 140 spat per bushel as the high during the period.
- 1997 showed a huge increase in spat (10x increase).
- Recruitment dropped to < 20 spat/bu. in 2000-2020 following high disease in 1999.
- Current upward trend (2021 and 2022 show increased spat of around 60 spat/bu/). Anecdotally, 2023 was very high.
- Highest recruitment along eastern EB and Miles River – will help guide where to plant substrate vs. oysters & substrate.

### **Disease**

- Disease low recently, but seeing an increase following multiple years with high salinity.

### **Harvest**

- Most harvest from EB proper (NOAA code 039) – specifically, Bugby and Parson Island.
- Harvest has been in decline in EB – Oyster population decline? Or are people choosing to harvest in other areas?
- Historically most harvest via hand tong, now most harvest from divers.
- Two power-dredge study areas were opened in 2011 (Wildground, Parson Island).

### **Stock Assessment Results (2023)**

- Fishing at or below the target fishing rate for last 5 years.
- Market abundance in Miles River in depleted status.

### **Current DNR Eastern Bay Projects**

- Formed from OAC Consensus Results (2021) and resulting legislation (2022).
- \$1M /year - Sanctuary spat plantings (started 2023, continuing in 2024).
- \$1M/year - Fishery shell and spat plantings (starting 2024).
- Ongoing sonar mapping by Maryland Geological Survey (started 2021).
  - Last Bay bottom survey in 1980s.
  - Last time oyster boundaries delineated was in 1906.
  - Critical need to re-delineate oyster boundaries from new maps.

### **Summary of Questions, Responses, and Comments:**

*(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)*

- The group discussed the transition in harvest gear types in Eastern Bay.

- Dive harvest currently preferred method since more efficient and can harvest in deeper water, which can be inaccessible to hand tongs,
- Hand tongs moved to harvest areas outside EB or switched gear,
- In 2009 and 2010, QA Co lost 37% of bottom with the creation of sanctuaries (most was hand tong bottom).
- The group also discussed DNR’s data, including:
  - Density dependence in disease data,
  - Accuracy in bar-level harvest reporting,
  - The resolution of MGS sidescan maps.
- Workgroup members comments are incorporated into Section XI. (Identification of Initial Strategies for Evaluation) of this Summary Report.

## VIII. REVIEW OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Jeff Blair reviewed key results from the OCW Pre-Meeting Questionnaire including successful Workgroup process outcome, tail winds, headwinds, and trends affecting the Eastern Bay, and issues and options the Workgroup should consider. Jeff indicated that the Plan Framework including the draft Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives were developed from the results of the Questionnaire and served as the basis for the proposed draft language.

### Summary and Overview of Key Questionnaire Results

<b>SUMMARY OF SUCCESSFUL WORKGROUP PROCESS OUTCOMES</b>
1) Consensus and a shared goal(s) for oyster habitat and production in Eastern Bay.
2) A focused, realistic, equitable, united, and executable plan for oyster habitat and production in Eastern Bay.
3) Strategies to create a self-sustained and enhanced oyster population in Eastern Bay.

<b>TAILWINDS-FACTORS ENHANCING THE HEALTH AND SUCCESS OF THE EASTERN BAY SYSTEM</b> <i>From the Questionnaire Responses – Listed In order of frequency</i>
1) Favorable historic, geological, geographic, and recent environmental conditions.
2) Recent focus on and support for oyster restoration and replenishment activities in Eastern Bay.
3) Maintenance of harvest areas.
4) Management tools and initiatives.
5) Improved communication and changes in perception.

<b>HEADWINDS-FACTORS IMPEDING THE HEALTH AND SUCCESS OF THE EASTERN BAY SYSTEM</b> <i>From the Questionnaire Responses – Listed In order of frequency</i>
1) Lack of oyster habitat and broodstock to support sustainable population.
2) Conditions, fisheries management, and activities in Eastern Bay are limiting the recovery of oysters, harvest, and the ability to properly manage them.
3) Continued development in watershed continues to degrade water quality.
4) Collaboration and communication continues to be challenging.

<b>TRENDS-AFFECTING THE EASTERN BAY SYSTEM</b> <i>From the Questionnaire Responses – Listed In order of frequency</i>
1) Political support is generally in favor of oysters, but is challenging to navigate.

2) Overdevelopment in watershed continues.
3) Economy and funding are currently favorable for oyster production. However, funding is competitive, not guaranteed, not always well spent, and gaps remain.
4) Increased oyster activities and management initiatives focused on Eastern Bay.
5) Current environmental conditions and impacts from climate change will have variable impacts on oyster production and habitat value.
6) Limited availability of substrate (i.e., shell) due to competing substrate needs.
7) Loss of widespread knowledge of oyster culture in Eastern Bay continues.

<b>SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND OPTIONS THE WORKGROUP SHOULD EXPLORE</b> <i>From the Questionnaire Responses – Listed In order of frequency</i>
1) Dynamics, interacting benefits, and conflicts between oyster management zones and activities in Eastern Bay.
2) Shell resource dynamics and needs – options for recovering, retaining, cost, sources, and deployment, shell budget for Eastern Bay.
3) Location of and rationale for current management boundaries delineating public fishing grounds, sanctuaries, and aquaculture. Considerations for changing these and rationale.
4) Equitable distribution of space, resources, and funding among oyster stakeholder groups and equitable strategies to sustain oyster production.
5) Optimize siting of public fishery replenishment, sanctuary restoration, and aquaculture leasing. The characteristics that are used to determine oyster habitat worthy of repletion activities.
6) Land use impacts on watershed, water quality, and oysters.
7) Unified oyster population and harvest goals for Eastern Bay.
8) Define key groups in Eastern Bay watershed.
9) Alternate materials – allowable substrates, sources, infrastructure to deploy, permitting, etc.
10) Existing efforts in Eastern Bay and groups conducting these – oyster plantings, monitoring, education, public engagement.
11) Information on management and priorities from DNR, QA and Talbot Counties for Eastern Bay – water quality, oysters, other fisheries/habitats, land use, recreation and tourism.
12) Strategies to engage public.
13) Explore management plans/efforts in other regions of Chesapeake Bay, and investigate components from those that may be applicable to Eastern Bay.
14) Consequences of not having a plan, how to maintain the plan, who owns and implements the plan.
15) How to design a collaborative structure that can be adaptive based on user input.
16) Define goals, objectives, and metrics to achieve measurable results.
17) Current funding and workforce development goals, needs, and plans to support comprehensive restoration and growth of oyster industry in Eastern Bay – is current framework and funding enough?

**Summary of Questions, Responses, and Comments:**

*(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)*

- There was an extensive discussion of the Questionnaire Summary Report results, as well as several suggestions for additional items to consider/factors influencing oysters and the OCW success. These discussion items have been captured in Section XI (Identification of Initial Strategies for Evaluation).

The Questionnaire Summary Report is available on the project webpage:

<https://www.oysterrecovery.org/our-work/oyster-restoration/easternbaycoalition>

## IX. RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK ADOPTION

Jeff Blair reviewed key results from the OCW Pre-Meeting Questionnaire, noting that the Plan Framework including the draft Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives were developed from the results of the Questionnaire and served as the basis for the proposed draft language.

Jeff first reviewed Workgroup members' perspective regarding an undesirable future for the Eastern Bay System as follows:

<b>A VERY UNDESIRABLE FUTURE FOR THE EASTERN BAY SYSTEM IN 2033</b>
1) A decline in or elimination of the oyster population.
2) A lack of momentum, interest, and resources available for oyster restoration and production.
3) Poor resource management and planning.

Jeff then reviewed Workgroup members' perspective regarding a successful future for the Eastern Bay System as follows:

<b>HEADLINES 2033 – BALTIMORE SUN AND WATERMEN'S GAZETTE</b>
1) Eastern Bay Revival: A Triumph in Environmental Restoration and Sustainable Management.
2) Eastern Bay Shows a Heartbeat.
3) A return to the 60s.
4) 10 years later: We have more oysters in Eastern Bay because we figured out how to work together.
5) Oyster harvest levels in Eastern Bay not seen in 30 years are sustained for fifth year in a row.
6) Recreational fishing tournament held in Eastern Bay a huge success thanks to restored oyster habitat.
7) Today the State of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are happy to report that the Eastern Bay on Maryland's Eastern Shore is no longer on the States endangered list.
8) Eastern Bay Oysters are Making a Splash.
9) The Remarkable Oysters of Eastern Bay.
10) Good planning and Mother Nature returns Eastern Bay to thriving.
11) Localized oyster harvest dominated by spat from Eastern Bay is setting records not seen since the fifties.

Next, Jeff reviewed Workgroup members' perspective regarding the benefits of oysters and oyster habitat, what successful restoration and management would look like, and finally, vision of success themes as follows:

<b>SUMMARY OF BENEFITS THAT OYSTERS AND OYSTER HABITAT PROVIDE</b>
1) Ecosystem benefits of providing habitat, filtration, protection of coastal areas, and serving as a keystone species to improve the broader Eastern Bay ecosystem.
2) Economic benefits to the seafood industry, recreational fishing, and as a food source.
3) Educational and cultural role.

<b>SUMMARY OF WHAT SUCCESSFUL RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT WOULD LOOK LIKE FROM QUESTIONNAIRE</b>
1) A self-sustained, resilient, and healthy oyster population.
2) Maximized ecosystem services associated with oyster habitat.

3) Healthy and well-managed harvest.
4) Increased oyster aquaculture production and the expansion of aquaculture.
5) Continued and expanded oyster restoration and replenishment activities.
6) Improved communication and cohesion among stakeholders.
7) Science-based and adaptive approach to decision making and management that would allow for all of the above.

<b>SUMMARY OF VISION OF SUCCESS THEMES FROM QUESTIONNAIRE</b>
1) Self-sustained oyster population.
2) Sustained and booming harvest from fishery and aquaculture.
3) Focused, impactful, sustainable resource management.
4) Economic bounty and tourism.
5) Cultural significance.
6) Careful planning, relying on science and expertise, collaboration.
7) Generous dedicated funding.
8) Ecosystem benefits and resilience.
9) A healthy ecosystem.
10) Improved oyster production and habitat.
11) Engaged and supportive stakeholders, culture, and economy.

Jeff Blair subsequently reviewed the proposed Plan Framework based on Workgroup members' Questionnaire responses, as follows:

**Draft Framework for development of Recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland (Plan)*.**

**GOAL A – ENHANCE THE OYSTER RESOURCE IN EASTERN BAY**

- Vision Theme
- Outcome
- Objectives
  - Strategies
  - Actions

**GOAL B – MANAGE THE OYSTER FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE TO INCREASE AND SUSTAIN HARVEST AND A THRIVING ECONOMY**

- Vision Theme
- Outcome
- Objectives
  - Strategies
  - Actions

**GOAL C – AN ENGAGED STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE OYSTER RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT**

- Vision Theme
- Outcome
- Objectives
  - Strategies

- Actions

**Summary of Questions, Responses, and Comments:**

*(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)*

- Workgroup members suggested minor revisions to language of Goal A, which was incorporated into the adopted Framework version.

Following the opportunity provided for questions and answers, and Workgroup discussion, the Oyster Coalition Workgroup took the following action:

***Oyster Coalition Workgroup Action:***

**MOTION** – The Workgroup voted unanimously, 17 – 0 in favor, to adopt the proposed Framework for development of recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* (Plan).

**X. PLAN GOALS, VISION THEMES, OUTCOMES, AND OBJECTIVES ADOPTION**

Jeff Blair reviewed the proposed draft Plan Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives. Following are the results of the acceptability ranking or each in turn:

**GOAL A. ENHANCE THE OYSTER RESOURCE IN EASTERN BAY**

**Vision Theme A:**

A healthy, self-sustained Eastern Bay oyster population.

**Outcome:** By 2034 oyster resources that include natural habitat, public oyster grounds, and privately operated aquaculture leases will be thriving and contributing toward a sustainable population and improvements to the Eastern Bay System.

**Goal A Objectives**

**A1)** To define what constitutes a healthy and sustainable oyster population in Eastern Bay, with target and threshold levels identified.

**A2)** To develop strategies and dedicate resources required to restore the oyster population to a self-sustaining level.

**A3)** To define measurable ecosystem health metrics to quantify ecosystem services resulting from the restoration of the oyster population in Eastern Bay.

**A4)** To develop stakeholder recommendations for a Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay.

**GOAL B. MANAGE THE OYSTER FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE TO INCREASE AND SUSTAIN HARVEST AND A THRIVING ECONOMY**

**Vision Theme B:** A productive oyster population that sustains a vibrant commercial oyster fishery, a thriving aquaculture industry, and recreational and tourism related activities.

**Outcome:** By 2034 both private and public oyster resources will sustain a vibrant commercial oyster fishery, a thriving aquaculture industry, and recreational and tourism related activities in Eastern Bay.

**Goal B Objectives**

**B1)** To develop strategies and dedicate resources required to sustainably harvest oysters.

**B2)** To define a sustainable level of oyster harvest from the commercial fishery and aquaculture.

**B3)** To evaluate baseline data and establish targets to improve recreational and other commercial fisheries and tourism activities in Eastern Bay.

**B4)** To evaluate existing Eastern Bay oyster regulatory and management boundaries to maximize oyster production and provide a sustainable harvest that supports a thriving oyster economy.

**GOAL C. AN ENGAGED STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE OYSTER RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**Vision Theme C:** Stakeholders in Eastern Bay are committed to working together to advocate for a sustainably managed oyster habitat and a healthy Eastern Bay ecosystem.

**Outcome:** By 2034 stakeholders and the public are informed of the importance of sustaining the health of oysters in Eastern Bay, and are engaged and working actively together along with elected and appointed leaders and managers to invest in and implement the Plan.

**Goal C Objectives**

**C1)** To develop outreach and educational strategies to promote the value of healthy oyster habitat in Eastern Bay.

**C2)** To create a network of community experts on the Eastern Bay ecosystem and oyster culture and resources dedicated to the long-term health of Eastern Bay.

**C3)** To develop a funding framework for maintaining oyster production and healthy oyster habitat in Eastern Bay.

**C4)** To ensure that industries and businesses within Eastern Bay are engaged in and supportive of the long-term health of Eastern Bay.

**Summary of Questions, Responses, and Comments:**

*(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)*

- Workgroup members’ refinements were incorporated into the adopted language for the Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives.

Following the opportunity provided for questions and answers, and Workgroup discussion, the Oyster Coalition Workgroup took the following action:

***Oyster Coalition Workgroup Action:***



**MOTION** – The Workgroup voted unanimously, 17 – 0 in favor, to adopt the Draft Plan Framework in the form of the approved Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives.

## **XI. IDENTIFICATION OF INITIAL STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATION**

Workgroup members were invited to offer an initial list of strategies they would like to put on the table for evaluation for each of the three Goal areas. In addition, members offered several overarching considerations they felt should be considered in evaluating options for strategies as follow:

- Whether a strategy is viable in terms of budget and funding.
- Understanding and planning for agency timeframe requirements regarding how long approved polices and projects are likely to take for implementation.
- Consider creating a brief cheat-sheet that summarizes the Workgroup’s recommended actions. As an example, for restoration recommendations: how much cultch is needed, how much will it cost, and what are the expected benefits/outcomes to be achieved for the expenditure and effort.

The Facilitator indicated that the initial list of draft strategies will be compiled and organized into a Strategies Evaluation Worksheet, and the Workgroup will conduct a strategies acceptability ranking exercise as a group activity during the next and subsequent meetings. The Strategies Evaluation Worksheet will be distributed to Workgroup members in advance of the March 29-30, 2024 Oyster Coalition Workgroup meeting.

Following are the initial list of strategies offered by Workgroup members for further evaluation:

### **GOAL A – RESTORATION: INITIAL STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATION**

#### **Funding and Cost**

- Identify funding for restoration (cultch and spat).
- Evaluate cost of existing and new restoration/reclamation practices.

#### **Substrate**

- Identify/evaluate alternate substrate.
- Develop a plan to use substrates that are (1) approved and (2) can work in Eastern Bay, including as a base for planting oysters (e.g., crushed concrete, limestone, etc.).
- Evaluate and identify appropriate shell reclamation practices:
  - From existing habitat,
  - From oysters that are harvested.
  - From aquaculture (does not need a lot of shell but does produce a lot – could this be a new source?).
- Bar cleaning to make shell accessible to spat.
- Need for substrate is immediate – focus on a strategy to get shell in the water this year, focus on other substrates for future.
- Evaluate other sources of shell, including shells from West Coast (*Crassostrea gigas*)
- Identify and develop priority list of areas that have some shell but need enhancement (e.g., Heron Island)
- Open sanctuaries for some level of harvest to reclaim shells or make shell accessible to spat – will balance shell budget. Use commercial fisheries surcharge to fund additional restoration.

#### **Regulations**

- Evaluate regulations/policies that are in place for restoration process and try to simplify:

- Substrate type (other than currently approved native shell) and where approved to plant (sanctuaries vs. fishery bottom),
- Process to approve other substrates,
- Shell import permit process and making this more transparent,
- Reduce time that shells must be aged before deployed (currently 12 months in MD),
- County-specific regulations for where shell can be stored/aged (e.g., in Talbot County, shells cannot be sorted within 100ft of shoreline).
- Develop interagency group(s) related to permitting and regulation – to educate and improve transparency in process.
- Identify regulatory hoops that need to be overcome in the short vs. long-term.
- Evaluate regulatory structure.
- Evaluate the regulations and obstacles to approval for restoration projects.
- Secure protection for packing houses and aquaculture from zoning restrictions.
- All regulatory groups should have open and transparent policies and procedures that don't conflict.
- Interagency Coordination groups are needed.
- Review and evaluate regulatory boundaries that restrict uses of Yates Bars.

### **Restoration Approaches**

- Conduct regular habitat mapping to:
  - Understand extent of existing habitat,
  - Identify areas that should be invested in by fishery,
  - Re-delineate non-productive areas for other activities.
- Include watermen/industry as consultants on restoration siting.
- Improve oyster broodstock by planting/relaying adult oysters.
- Plant oysters and substrate (mixed approach to address lack of substrate and consistent broodstock)
- Assess reef design and locations to ensure substrate is accessible to spat (where, how high, etc. to keep siltation from covering the cultch).
- Assess other practices to ensure substrate is accessible to spat:
  - Bar cleaning (e.g., clean before planting with spat),
  - Shell reclamation,
  - Shell relay program (e.g., take shells on 300 acres and pile-up to make 150 acres) – What happens to the areas that shells are removed from? (A: depends on bottom type).
- Create base of rock/concrete and shells on top.
- Within sanctuaries don't use spat-on-shell but spat-on-alternative cultch type.

### **Aquaculture**

- Focus opportunities for aquaculture in existing fishery areas where shells are removed.
- Use shell from aquaculture/assess potential source of shell from aquaculture
- Identify opportunities for mixed aquaculture practices in Eastern Bay to avoid or support clam bottom, oyster bottom, and crab habitat.

### **Research Needs**

- Evaluate suitability, availability, and effectiveness of different types of substrates.
- Evaluate effectiveness of shell reclamation practices (e.g., bar cleaning – inconclusive results).
- Evaluate effectiveness and cost of other suggested practices/strategies.

## **Monitoring**

- Long-term monitoring is needed to demonstrate that strategies and actions are working.
- Monitoring plan should be developed as part of the restoration plan – to allow for adaptive management and secure future funding.
- Include watermen/industry on monitoring.

## **GOAL B – MANAGEMENT: INITIAL STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATION**

### **Management**

- Develop a spatiotemporal management plan to manage where, when, how many oysters planted and harvested.
- Develop and implement system for nutrient credits.
- Consider rotational harvest/develop rotational harvest framework:
  - In sanctuaries,
  - To manage areas that are planted in fishery,
  - Rotational investment – circulate where plant each year.
- Manage by entire oyster bars (issues with harvesting on sanctuaries if bars are divided, easier if areas are either open or closed).
- Evaluate a limited entry program (i.e., limited to watermen who are full-time in the seafood industry, access for family members, protect those in the industry).
  - Define minimum requirements for purchasing oyster surcharge.
  - Develop tiered entry into oyster fishery/tiered license structure (hand tong → power dredge).
- Some management options are a state-wide issue – OCW should evaluate and forward any recommendations to the appropriate entities for consideration.
- Need to account for the harvest from recreational oyster harvesting – how much is harvested and where the oysters were harvested (locations).
- Evaluate applicability of successful management practices implemented in other areas to Eastern Bay (e.g., rotational harvest in VA).
- Establish oyster relay program (e.g., market sized oysters from MDE closed areas).
- Evaluate (and expand) gear type and locations where different gear types are allowed. (e.g., dredging).

### **Sustainable Harvest Metrics**

- Establish harvest thresholds for bars to avoid overharvesting.
- Establish regional harvest thresholds to avoid flooding market.
- Use collaborative approach between watermen and DNR to monitor bars and decide when to open and close planted bars.

### **Zoning Regulations**

- Advocate for right-to-work laws so industry can have their gear, shell piles, etc. on residential property.

### **Enforcement and Reporting**

- Discuss solutions to poaching – illegal harvesting.
- Work with NRP to improve enforcement.
- Identify options to quantify illegal harvest, and account for this when evaluating effectiveness of restoration.

- Evaluate pre and post-harvest surveys to account for under-reporting.
- Promote/enforce more reporting and more accurate reporting practices (e.g., using e-reporting).
- Work with the seafood processors on reporting and ensuring all oysters purchased are market size.
- Evaluate a recreational oyster license – oyster harvest safety, accountability for location and harvest amounts.

### **Expansion and Siting of Oyster Production Areas (Wild Harvest and Aquaculture)**

- Review process to officially change regulatory boundaries and harvest zones – want to fast-track OCW recommendations.
- Expand allowable harvest areas in NOAA Code 39 to crab pot line.
- Use maps and habitat surveys to determine where to expand harvest and aquaculture locations (develop habitat suitability maps).
- Assess areas where aquaculture could be expanded without impacting other fisheries and habitat (e.g., crab trotlines, SAV, clam areas, oyster harvest areas, etc.).
- Use the Oyster Coalition Workgroup process as an opportunity to identify areas for expansion and/or shifting boundaries. Opportunity for watermen and aquaculture to work together.
- Identify suitable areas for aquaculture based on logistical limitations (e.g., access to water, wind fetch, currents, storage locations, etc.).

### **Funding**

- Funding – investment in public fishery (\$1M/year).
- Establish rotational investment in restoration between sanctuaries and public fishery areas.
- Identify additional revenue streams to pay for plantings/production of oysters.
- Allocate money from recreational license to industry restoration.

### **New and Emerging Technology**

- Consider the use of adaptive and new technology for harvest (fishery & aquaculture).
- Develop experimental harvest practices, processes (aquaculture).
- Investigate technology to assist with quantifying or preventing illegal harvesting (e.g., GPS, drones).

### **Environmental Considerations**

- Evaluate adaptive management options for environmental conditions/climate change:
  - Adjust oyster season to reduce risk of disease to humans (in response to increased water temp),
  - Establish oyster relay program for areas temporarily closed, or if closed areas move/expand,
  - Adaptive closures/mitigation from water quality issues (wastewater treatment plants, septic tanks, lawncare).
- Expand water quality and disease monitoring (e.g., vibrio).

### **Collaboration and Communication Between Stakeholders**

- Get areas preapproved by watermen as acceptable for aquaculture so conflict is avoided.
- Establish standard processes that involve stakeholder collaboration – helps DNR with management and enforcement.
- Involve stakeholders from other fisheries that depend on healthy oyster habitat (i.e., fin fish, crabs, clams, etc.).
- Improve communication with county commissioners, legislators to help improve transparency for aquaculture permitting/regulations and improve expansion of aquaculture.

## **GOAL C – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT: INITIAL STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATION**

### **Marketing and Public Perception**

- Need a coordinated public relations and marketing effort to enhance public perception and support for commercial fisheries and aquaculture (including Dept. Ag./ MD’s Best Seafood).
- Identify strategies to monitor and respond to spread of mis-information about Chesapeake Bay/Eastern Bay oysters.
- Identify strategies for education surrounding sewage spills.
- Market ecosystem services provided by oyster reefs.

### **Public Engagement and Education**

- Need public awareness of working waterfront issues, and what is needed to protect the culture and ensure continued access to the water for commercial harvesting and aquaculture locations.
  - Create opportunities to talk with watermen and growers about investment and industry process.
- Educate elected officials:
  - Issues facing watermen and aquaculture (e.g., zoning restrictions, access to water, needs of working waterfronts),
  - Opportunities for incorporating oyster production in county plans (e.g., oyster BMP).
- Maintain programs such as Marylanders Grows Oysters that are primarily designed to be educational for the public.
- Identify opportunities to engage stakeholders in the preparation and eating of oysters.
- CBEC provides education on watermen’s history in the area.
- Increase recreational oyster dive charters/hand tong charters to educate public about oyster reefs and industry.
- Improve education and accountability of recreational harvesters via recreational license program.
- Leverage technology to reach broader audience (e.g., “OysterCam”).

### **Future of the Industry**

- Develop an apprentice program to train people entering fishery or aquaculture.
- CBEC provides educational aspects the fishery including the investment required to become a watermen, and an opportunity to try tonging at CBEC.
- Strategy and incentives to keep people in the industry and remove barriers to young entrants.
- Education should start with outreach to children, get them excited to think about a career on the water.

## **XII. REVIEW OF PROJECT WORKPLAN AND SCHEDULE**

Jeff Blair provided the OCW with a review of the Project Workplan and Schedule and answered members’ questions. The February 2-3, 2024 meeting represented the Workgroup’s first of six meetings scheduled for the process.

Throughout the project, the OCW members representing management and restoration agencies will be vetting the strategies and actions under consideration with their leadership to gauge support and feasibility of implementation. The OCW is in the initial stages of evaluating the relative priority and efficacy of strategies and associated actions and identifying restoration and management approaches for inclusion in recommendations for a *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland Plan*.

Jeff reported as follows:

- The process consists of six Workgroup meetings and one Community Workshop Forum. The process will culminate with the Workgroup’s adoption of a Draft Report and Recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* for submittal to the Oyster Recovery Partnership.
- The Workgroup Meeting Dates are as follows:
  - Meeting #1 – February 2-3, 2024
  - Meeting #2 – March 29-30, 2024
  - Meeting #3 – May 29-30, 2024
  - Meeting #4 – July 31-August 2, 2024
  - Meeting #5 – September 25-26, 2024
  - Meeting #6 – December 4-5, 2024
- The Workgroup meetings will be held from 1:00 p.m. to approximately 5:30 p.m. on day-one, and from 8:30 a.m. to approximately 1:00 p.m. on day-two.
- The Community Workshop Forum will be held on December 4, 2024 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- The Workgroup meetings and Community Forum Workshop will held at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center.

*(Attachment 5 – Project Workplan and Schedule)*

### **XIII. NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The March 29-30, 2024 meeting will focus on discussion of the Plan Framework and identifying, discussing, and acceptability ranking proposed strategies and actions to achieve the objectives for the Plan’s three Goals.

#### **NEXT STEPS AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

- Approval of Regular Procedural Topics (Meeting Agenda and Summary Report).
- Review of Updated Workplan and Meeting Schedule.
- Presentations on Decision Support Tools: Spatial Tools for Oyster Siting (NOAA), and Oyster Fisheries Simulation Model (Mike Wilberg, UMCES).
- Mapping Exercise: Locations Where Watermen Do and Don’t Harvest Oysters, Suggested Potential Locations for Expanding Harvest and Aquaculture Locations.
- Discussion of ORP’s Eastern Bay Habitat Survey Plan.
- Evaluation and Acceptability Ranking of Strategies, Actions, and Resource Needs to Achieve Goals and Objectives.
- Discussion of Performance Measures to Track Progress Towards Objectives and Goals.
- Next Steps and Agenda Items for Meeting #3 – May 29-30, 2024.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Facilitator thanked Workgroup members, ORP Project Team members, and all other meeting attendees for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 3, 2024.

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**KEY TO COMMON PROJECT ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
CBEC	Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
CBF	Chesapeake Bay Foundation
EB	Eastern Bay of Maryland
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
HPL	UMCES Horn Point Lab
MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment
MDNR	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
OCW	Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup
ORP	Oyster Recovery Partnership
OAC	Oyster Advisory Commission
Plan	<i>Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland</i>
QAC	Queen Anne County
SAV	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
SR	ShoreRivers
TC	Talbot County
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UMD	University of Maryland
UMCES	University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

## ATTACHMENT 2

### GLOSSARY OF OCW PROJECT TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**ACTION:** The specific steps and activities taken to implement a strategy.

**ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT:** A process that includes making decisions, evaluating the results, comparing the results to predetermined performance measures, and modifying future decisions to incorporate lessons learned.

**EASTERN BAY SYSTEM:** Eastern Bay is a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay located between Queen Anne and Talbot Counties on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Its main tributaries include the Miles and Wye Rivers. Eastern Bay is connected to the Chester River to the north via Kent Narrows, a working waterfront that supports a thriving commercial and recreational fishing community and includes seafood processing facilities, restaurants, and tourism. The estuary is a mesohaline system with expansive oyster, SAV, and sandy bottom habitats. The project will focus on existing oyster habitats and those areas suitable for oyster aquaculture and oyster restoration activities in Eastern Bay.

**ECOSYSTEM HEALTH:**

A “healthy” ecosystem is one that conserves diversity, supports fully functional ecological processes, and sustains a range of ecological and ecosystem services.

**ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:** The contributions of ecosystems to human wellbeing. These include provisioning services (food, raw materials, fresh water, medicinal resources), regulating services (climate, air and water quality, moderation of extreme events, and erosion prevention), habitat services (habitat for species that support ecosystem services), and cultural services (recreation for mental & and physical health; tourism; aesthetic appreciation spiritual experience).

**ESTUARINE METRICS:** These are variables that can be measured and used to assess the benefits or impacts of the different upstream management and climate scenarios that influence freshwater flow into the Eastern Bay System.

**GOAL:** A goal is a statement of the project’s purpose to move towards the vision expressed in fairly broad language.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:** The Oyster Coalition Workgroup’s Guiding Principles reflect the broad values and philosophy that guides the operation of the Workgroup and the behavior of its members throughout its process.

**OBJECTIVE:** Objectives describe in concrete terms how to accomplish the goal to achieve the vision within a specific timeframe and with available resources. (E.g., by 2033, the State of Maryland will have approved a stakeholder developed Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Management and Restoration Plan for the Eastern Bay System.)

**OUTCOME:** Outcomes describe the expected result at the end of the project period – what is hoped to be achieved when the goal is accomplished. (E.g., *an ecologically, and economically viable, healthy and sustainable Eastern Bay System oyster fishery and ecosystem*)

**OYSTER REPLETION PROGRAM:** A state-managed program to replenish oyster populations and bottom substrate on natural oyster bars that are regularly harvested by the commercial industry. The program is funded by the Maryland Department of Transportation Port Authority, revenue from commercial oyster license renewal surcharges, and bushel tax revenue from commercial harvest. The Oyster Recovery



Partnership (ORP) implements the coordination and oversight of the production and deployment of wild seed, shell, alternate substrate, and spat-on-shell (SOS) to achieve bottom enhancement per requests from the county oyster committees.

**OYSTER RESOURCES:** Sources of oysters that provide natural and cultural benefits to humans. These sources can come from the wild or from aquaculture. The responsible management of oyster resources requires integrated approaches that incorporate the social, economic, and environmental considerations of sustainability.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES:** The regular measurement of outcomes and results, which generates reliable data on the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of a project's objectives.

**RESTORATION:** The process of repairing, through human intervention, sites whose biological communities and ecosystems have been degraded or destroyed. Restoration goals are site-specific, and would include restoration of the health and ecological functions that are self-sustaining over time.

**STAKEHOLDERS:** All groups whether public, private or non-governmental organizations who have an interest or concern in the success of a project and can affect or be affected by the outcome of decisions or activities of the project. The Eastern Bay System Initiative stakeholders include but are not limited to agriculture, silviculture, business, economic development, tourism, environmental, citizen groups, recreational fishing, commercial seafood industry, regional groups, local, state, and federal government, universities, and research interests.

**STRATEGY:** A method, action, plan of action, or policy that can be tested to determine whether it solves a problem and helps to achieve objectives and goals in the context of bringing about a desired future for the Eastern Bay System.

**VISION:** An idealized view of where or what the stakeholders would like the oyster resource and ecosystem to be in the future.

**VISION THEMES:** The key issues that characterize the desirable future for the oyster resource and ecosystem. The Vision Themes establish a framework for goals and objectives. They are not ordered by priority.

**ATTACHMENT 3  
MEETING PARTICIPATION LIST**

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
<b>NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO): ENVIRONMENTAL AND CITIZEN GROUPS</b>	
1. <b>Ben Ford</b>	ShoreRivers (Miles-Wye Riverkeeper)
2. <b>Vicki Paulas</b>	Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
3. <b>Ward Slacum</b>	Oyster Recovery Partnership
4. <b>Dan Sweeney</b>	The Nature Conservancy
<b>RECREATIONAL FISHING</b>	
5. <b>Mark Galasso</b>	Tuna the Tide Charter Service
<b>SEAFOOD INDUSTRY</b>	
6. <b>Scott Budden</b>	Orchard Point Oyster Company and Aquaculture
7. <b>Moochi Gilmore</b>	Queen Anne County Waterman, Clam Harvester
8. <b>Nick Hargrove</b>	Wittman Wharf Seafood, Talbot County Waterman and Aquaculture
9. <b>Jeff Harrison</b>	Talbot County Waterman
10. <b>Richard Jones</b>	Queen Anne County Waterman
11. <b>Matt Latham</b>	Queen Anne County Waterman
12. <b>Jason Ruth</b>	Harris Seafood Company, Queen Anne County Waterman and Aquaculture
13. <b>Troy Wilkins</b>	Queen Anne County Waterman
<b>LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT</b>	
14. <b>Kathy Brohawn</b>	Maryland Department of Environment
15. <b>Brian Callam</b>	Maryland DNR – Aquaculture & Industry Enhancement
16. <b>Chris Judy</b>	Maryland DNR – Shellfish Division – <b>Designated Alternate: Jodi Baxter</b>
17. <b>Jim Moran</b>	Queen Anne County
<i>The names of OCW members participating in the meeting are indicated in bold font</i>	

<b>OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>	
<b>OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP</b>	
<b>Olivia Caretti</b>	Coastal Restoration Program Manager
<b>Beth Franks</b>	Senior Manager
<b>Ward Slacum</b>	Executive Director
<b>FACILITATED SOLUTIONS, LLC</b>	
<b>Jeff Blair</b>	Workgroup Facilitator, Consensus Building, and Process Design
<i>The names of Project Team members participating in the meeting are indicated in bold font.</i>	

**ATTACHMENT 4**  
**FEBRUARY 2-3, 2024 MEETING AGENDA**

**MEETING 1 OBJECTIVES**

- ✓ To Review Oyster Coalition Workgroup Goals and Expected Outcomes
- ✓ To Review and Agree on Operational and Procedural Polices and Guidelines
- ✓ To Provide Relevant Background on Eastern Bay Maryland
- ✓ To Review Questionnaire Results
- ✓ To Discuss and Approve Draft Goal Framework: Goals, Vision Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives
- ✓ To Discuss Next Steps, Schedule and Assignments

**MEETING AGENDA DAY 1 – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2024**

*All Agenda Times – Including Adjournment – Are Approximate and Subject to Change*

<b>12:00 PM</b>		<b>LUNCH AND INTRODUCTIONS – PROVIDED BY OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP</b>
1)	1:00 PM	<b>WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF THE OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP’S GOAL IN CONVENING THE OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP, INTRODUCTION OF THE FACILITATOR</b>
2)	1:15	<b>INTRODUCTIONS &amp; REVIEW OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM THE OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP (OCW) PROCESS</b> <i>(Review Questionnaire Responses)</i>
3)	1:45	<b>AGENDA REVIEW AND MEETING OBJECTIVES</b>
4)	1:50	<b>REVIEW AND ACCEPT PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING PROCEDURES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b>
5)	2:00	<b>EASTERN BAY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM OVERVIEW PRESENTATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History and Scope of Eastern Bay (ORP) (30)</li> <li>• Current Status of Oyster Fishery &amp; Management in Eastern Bay (MDNR) (15)</li> <li>• Ongoing Work in Eastern Bay (MDNR) (15)</li> </ul>
<b>~3:00 PM</b>		<b>BREAK</b>
6)	3:15	<b>REVIEW OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking Back (15)</li> <li>• Looking Around – Key Factors Enhancing or Impeding Oysters in Eastern Bay (15)</li> <li>• Setting the Context – Critical Issues and Challenges (60)</li> </ul>
7)	4:45	<b>REVIEW AND RATING OF OCW DRAFT GOAL STATEMENT</b>
8)	5:00	<b>SHARED VISION OF SUCCESS IN 2045 – MOVING FROM THEMES TO GOALS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undesirable Future and Successful Future <i>(Review Questionnaire Results)</i></li> <li>• Review and Rating of Draft Vision Themes</li> <li>• Discuss Vision Themes as Goal Framework</li> </ul>
9)	5:25	<b>SUMMARY OF DAY ONE AND REVIEW OF DAY TWO AGENDA</b>
<b>~5:30 PM</b>		<b>RECESS AND INFORMAL SOCIAL – PROVIDED BY OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP</b>

## MEETING AGENDA DAY 2 – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2024

*All Agenda Times – Including Adjournment – Are Approximate and Subject to Change*

**COFFEE AND BAGELS – PROVIDED BY OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP**

1)	8:30 AM	<b>WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW</b>
2)	8:45	<b>GOAL A. RESTORE THE OYSTER RESOURCE IN EASTERN BAY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and Refinement as Needed of Draft Vision Theme, Goal Statement, Outcome, and Objectives</li> <li>• Identification of Key Issues</li> </ul>
<b>~10:15 AM</b>		<b>BREAK</b>
3)	10:30	<b>GOAL B. MANAGE THE OYSTER FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE TO INCREASE AND SUSTAIN HARVEST AND A THRIVING ECONOMY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and Refinement as Needed of Draft Vision Theme, Goal Statement, Outcome, and Objectives</li> <li>• Identification of Key Issues</li> </ul>
4)	12:00 PM	<b>GOAL C. AN ENGAGED STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE OYSTER RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and Refinement as Needed of Draft Vision Theme, Goal Statement, Outcome, and Objectives</li> <li>• Identification of Key Issues</li> </ul>
5)	12:50	<b>NEXT STEPS AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the OCW Schedule of Meetings</li> <li>• Review of Action Items and Assignments</li> <li>• Identify Agenda Items and Any Needed Information for the 2<sup>nd</sup>. OCW Meeting</li> <li>• Meeting Evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>~1:00 PM</b>		<b>ADJOURN</b>

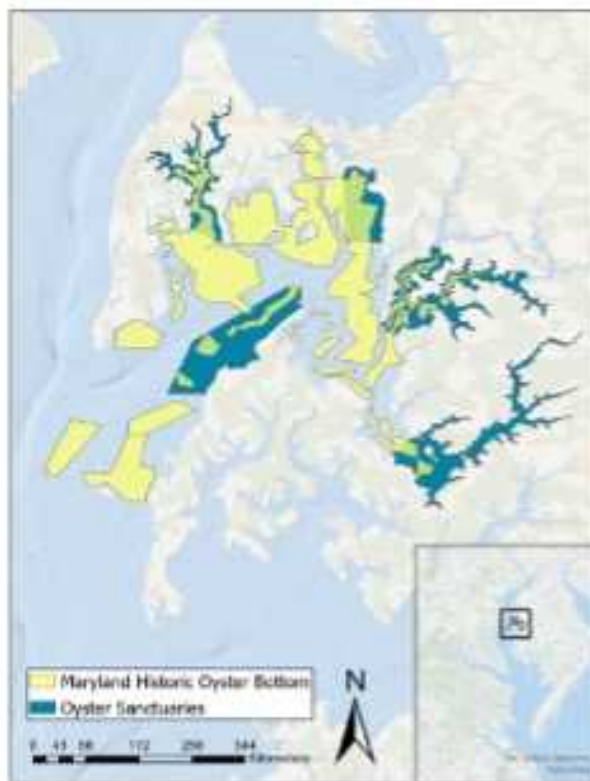
**ATTACHMENT 5**  
**WORKPLAN, SCHEDULE, AND PROJECT AREA MAP**

**OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP MEETINGS SCHEDULE AND WORKPLAN – 2024**  
**UPDATED AS OF THE FEBRUARY 2-3 2024 OCW MEETING**

MEETING #	DATES	OBJECTIVES
Meeting #1	Feb. 2-3, 2024	<p><b>Organizational Meeting. Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview and acceptance of process, Workgroup charge, and goals and objectives of Workgroup Process</li> <li>• Presentations on the Eastern Bay System</li> <li>• Review of Questionnaire Responses</li> <li>• Discussion of draft Framework for the Plan: Vision Themes, Goals, Outcomes, and Objectives.</li> </ul>
Meeting #2	March 29-30, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations on Decision Support Tools: Spatial Tools for Oyster Siting (NOAA), and OysterFutures Simulation Model (Mike Wilberg, UMCES).</li> <li>• Discussion of ORP’s Eastern Bay Habitat Survey Plan.</li> <li>• Mapping Exercise: Locations Where Watermen Do and Don’t Harvest Oysters, Suggested Potential Locations for Expanding Harvest and Aquaculture Locations.</li> <li>• Evaluation and Acceptability Ranking of Strategies, Actions, and Resource Needs to Achieve Goals and Objectives.</li> <li>• Discussion and Acceptability Ranking of Performance Measures to Track Progress Towards Objectives and Goals.</li> </ul>
Meeting #3	May 29-30, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations and discussions about oyster substrate.</li> <li>• Discussion of strategies, actions, and resource needs to achieve objectives and goals.</li> <li>• Discussion of performance measures to track progress towards objectives and goals.</li> <li>• Overview of local stakeholders and resources in Eastern Bay.</li> </ul>
Meeting #4	July 31-Aug. 1, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on results of Eastern Bay habitat surveys.</li> <li>• Discussion regarding how results of Eastern Bay habitat surveys will inform recommendations and inclusion in the Plan.</li> <li>• Discussion of strategies, actions, and resource needs to achieve objectives and goals.</li> <li>• Discussion of performance measures to track progress towards objectives and goals.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptability ranking of proposed revisions to draft objectives, strategies, and actions for inclusion in the <i>Draft Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland</i> using the Strategies Evaluation Worksheet Process.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting #5</b>	<b>Sept. 25-26, 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on CBEC education plan.</li> <li>• Refinement of draft recommendations.</li> <li>• Approval of the OCW <i>Draft Report and Recommendations for the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland. (Day 2).</i></li> </ul>
<b>Community Workshop Forum</b>	<b>Dec. 4, 2024</b> 6:00pm – 8:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community education on the OCW goals and process.</li> <li>• Community input on the OCW outcomes and recommendations for the <i>Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Meeting #6</b>	<b>Dec. 4-5, 2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Plan Revisions</li> <li>• <b>Adopt Final OCW Report and Recommendations for the Plan</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of Community Open House input.</li> <li>• Finalization of plan revisions.</li> <li>• Adoption of the OCW's Report and Recommendations for the <i>Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland</i>, and submittal to ORP.</li> </ul>

**OCW PROJECT AREA MAP**



## ATTACHMENT 6 MEETING EVALUATION RESULTS

Workgroup Members used a 5-point rating scale where a 1 meant “Strongly Disagree” and a 5 meant “Strongly Agree.” The evaluation summary reflects average rating scores and comments from Workgroup members participating in the meeting. There were 15 end of meeting Evaluations completed (88%).

### 1.) The meeting objectives were clearly communicated at the beginning

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.3	5	9	1	0	0

### 2.) The meeting objectives were met.

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.4	6	9	0	0	0

### 3.) The presentations were effective and informative.

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.4	6	9	0	0	0

### 4.) The facilitation of the meeting was effective for achieving the stated objectives

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.5	8	6	1	0	0

### 5.) Follow-up actions were clearly summarized at the end of the meeting

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.3	7	6	2	0	0

### 6.) The facilitator accurately documented OCW Member input

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.5	8	6	1	0	0

### 7.) The meeting was the appropriate length of time.

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.2	5	9	0	1	0

### 8.) OCW Members had the opportunity to participate and be heard.

Average out of 5	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Neutral	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4.6	9	6	0	0	0

### Additional Feedback

- None was offered.

**ATTACHMENT 7**  
**OCW OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**  
**ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY FEBRUARY 2, 2024**

**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 Region of Maryland; and
- **Are willing to reach consensus.**

\*\*\*\*\*



## 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.

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## 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 ( $\geq 75\%$ ) of all members present and voting. For Oyster Coalition Workgroup purposes, **consensus recommendations** shall be defined as any option/recommendation achieving a  $\geq 3.0$  average ranking (75%) based on the results 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.

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, items with a  $\geq 3.0$  average ranking (75%) will be considered preliminary consensus recommendations for inclusion in the package of recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* (Plan).

This is an iterative process, and at any point during the process, any item 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 item to address their concerns. If a Workgroup member is not able to offer refinements to make the item acceptable (4) or acceptable with minor reservations (3) they should consider ranking the strategy with a 1 (not acceptable).

The following scale will be utilized for the ranking exercises:

<b>ACCEPTABILITY RANKING SCALE</b>	<b>4 = Acceptable, I agree</b>	<b>3 = Acceptable, I agree with minor reservations</b>	<b>2 = Not Acceptable, I don't agree unless major reservations addressed</b>	<b>1 = Not Acceptable</b>
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CRITERIA TO CONSIDER FOR PROPOSING AND EVALUATING OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
CRITERIA	EXPLANATION
<b>IMPORTANCE</b>	Is this proposed option critically important to achieving the goals of the <i>Restoration and Management Plan</i> ?
<b>TIMELY</b>	Will things get worse if the proposed option is not implemented?
<b>FEASIBLE/PRACTICAL</b>	Is it likely that the proposed option will be successful in achieving the relevant goals of the <i>Restoration and Management Plan</i> ?
<b>RESOURCES</b>	Are there resources available, or likely to become available for implementing the proposed option? Is implementation cost effective?
<b>COMMITMENT</b>	Is there commitment from the stakeholders and regulators regarding implementation of the proposed option?

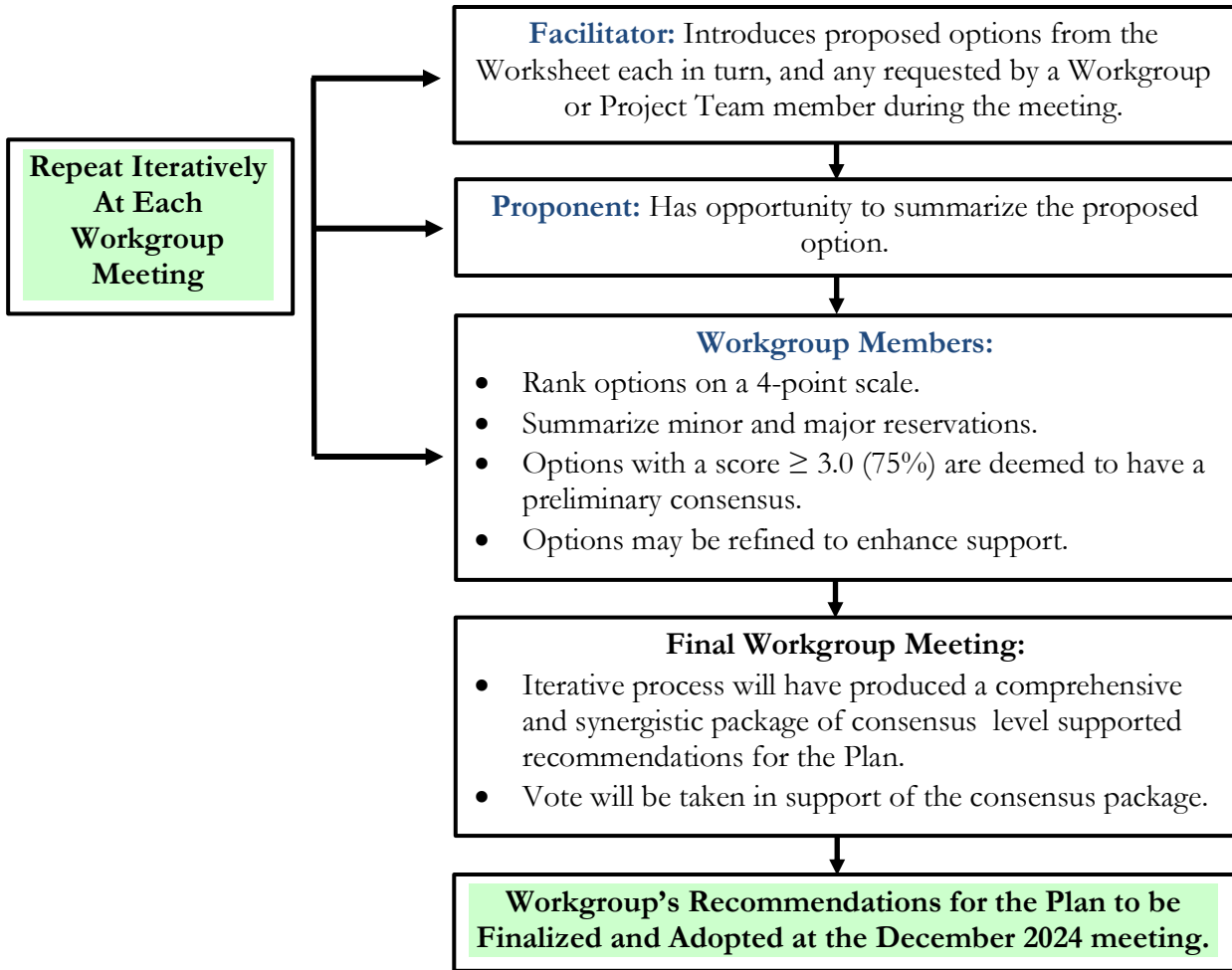
### CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS PROCESS

The *Strategies Acceptability Ranking Exercise Process* and the *Consensus Solutions Process* (Fig. 1) was designed by Jeff Blair from Facilitated Solutions, LLC. Information at: <http://facilitatedsolutions.org>.



Figure 1: Flow Scheme for the Iterative Process of Acceptability Ranking Options.

**CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS OPTIONS EVALUATION PROCESS FLOWCHART**



**STAKEHOLDER ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS APPROACH**



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## **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.

## ATTACHMENT 8

### ABOUT THE OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP'S FACILITATOR

**Jeff A. Blair** has over 30 years of experience in assessing and analyzing complex issues and facilitating meetings designed to build consensus between stakeholder interests, and is the principle and owner of **Facilitated Solutions, LLC**. In addition, Jeff is retired research faculty at Florida State University (FSU) and served as Associate Director for the FCRC Consensus Center at FSU for twenty-one years. He specializes in facilitation and process design and in addition his work includes situation assessment, strategic planning and implementation, and consensus building among diverse stakeholder interests with divergent perspectives on complex issues. He has worked with federal, state, local government, non-governmental organizations, and private sector representatives to design and implement collaborative approaches to consensus-building, planning, rulemaking, and dispute resolution with an emphasis on stakeholder participation in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of policy actions in more than 190 projects and over 2500 meetings. In addition, he conducts custom tailored trainings in various dispute resolution and meeting management topics.

Ongoing projects include serving as process designer, lead facilitator, and conflict resolution consultant for stakeholder groups including: The Oyster Recovery Partnership's Oyster Coalition Workgroup tasked with developing recommendations for a *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* (Chesapeake Bay); and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation's Florida Building Commission's ongoing process of building consensus on all aspects of the Florida Building Code System including facilitating over 1,500 individual meetings for the Commission since 1999 including 70 special issue stakeholder workgroup projects.

Relevant project examples include designing the process and successfully facilitating unanimous consensus agreement between diverse stakeholder interests for the following projects:

- Apalachicola Bay System Initiative. Community Advisory Board. (2019 – 2023). Florida State University Coastal Marine Lab. Recommendations for the *Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Management and Restoration Plan*. **Adopted Unanimously 29 November 2023.**
- Greater Pensacola Bay Oyster Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management Plan. Pensacola Bay System Stakeholder Working Group. (2019 - 2021). The Nature Conservancy. Recommendations for an Oyster Fisheries and Habitat Management Plan for the Pensacola Bay System. **Adopted Unanimously 17 March 2021.**
- OysterFutures. OysterFutures Stakeholder Workgroup. (2015 – 2018). University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and Florida State University FCRC Consensus Center. National Science Foundation. Coastal SEES. Recommendations for Oyster Management and Restoration in the Choptank and Little Choptank Rivers. **Adopted Unanimously 24 March 2018.**
- Gulf Angler Focus Group Initiative (2015 - 2016). Gulf Angler Focus Group. American Sportfishing Association, Coastal Conservation Association, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, and Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. Recommendations for Private Recreational Management Options for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper. **Adopted Unanimously 30 November 2016.**
- Project FishSmart. (2008). Atlantic King Mackerel Fishery Stakeholder Workgroup. University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and Florida State University FCRC Consensus Center. Recommendations for an Atlantic King Mackerel Fishery Management Plan. **Adopted Unanimously 7 November 2008.**
- Lobster Advisory Board. (2005 - 2006). Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Florida Lobster Fishery Management Plan. **Adopted Unanimously 15 May 2007.**
- Blue Crab Advisory Board. (2003 - 2005). Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Florida Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan. **Adopted Unanimously 5 January 2005.**