

**OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP
 OPTIONS ACCEPTABILITY RANKING EXERCISE WORKSHEET
 MAY 29-30, 2024 – MEETING #3**

ACCEPTABILITY RANKING EXERCISE OVERVIEW AND RANKING SCALE

During the meetings, OCW members will be asked to develop and rank options (strategies and actions) using a 4-Point acceptability ranking scale. This is consistent with the Consensus Building Procedures unanimously adopted by the OCW on 2 February 2024. Once ranked for acceptability, options with a ≥ 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 (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 re-evaluated 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.

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 an 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).

The following scale will be utilized for the ranking exercises:

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

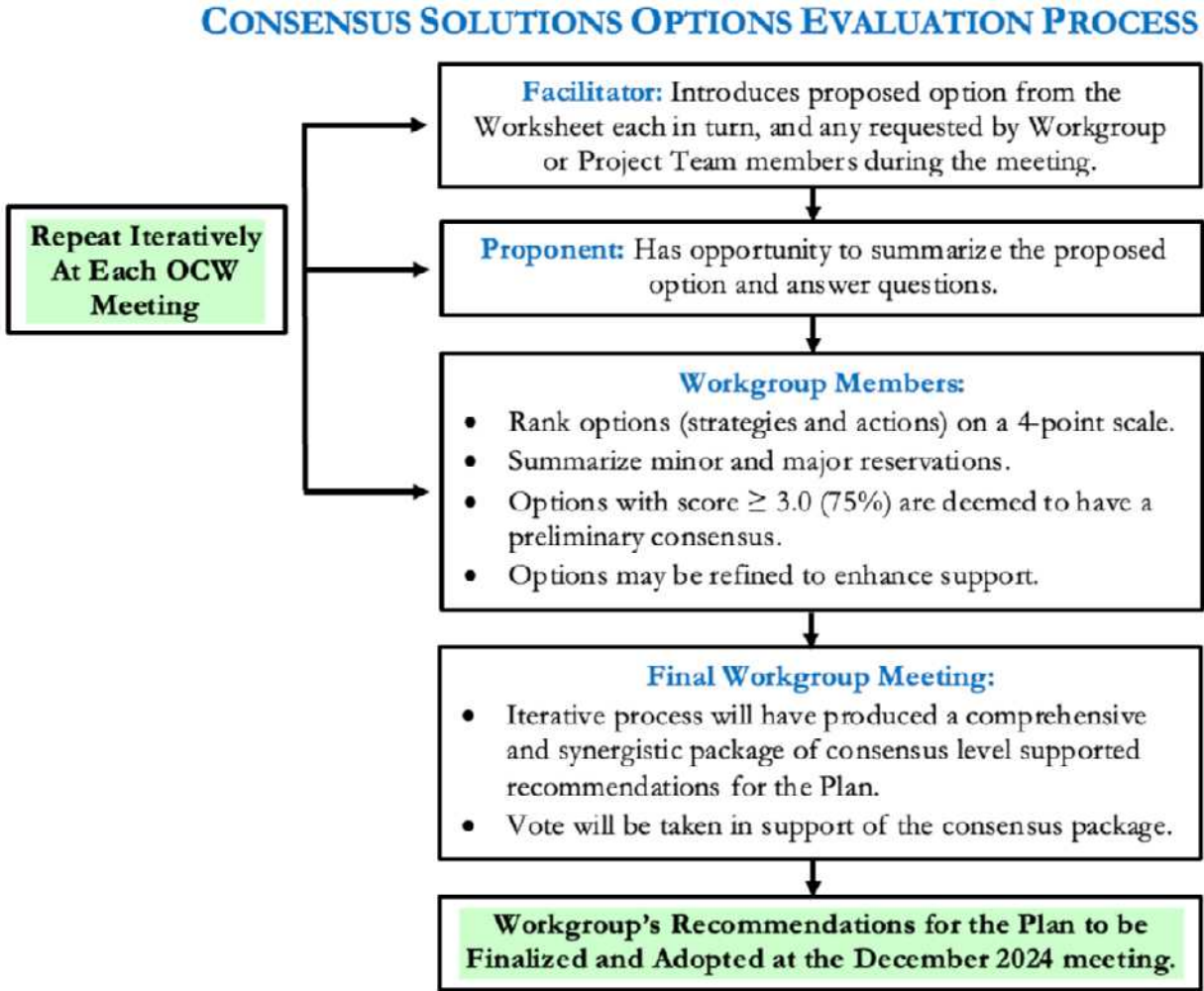
The *Options Acceptability Ranking Exercise Process* and the *Consensus Solutions Process* (Fig. 1) was designed by Jeff Blair of Facilitated Solutions, LLC. Information at: <http://facilitatedsolutions.org>.



CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS OPTIONS EVALUATION PROCESS

- Facilitator will introduce each option (strategy and action) from the *Plan Framework* in turn.
- Proponent and/or ORP Project Team Member as appropriate, will have an opportunity to provide their rationale for proposing the option.
- OCW members may ask clarifying questions.
- The options will be ranked, each in turn using the 4-Point Acceptability Ranking Scale.
- OCW members may briefly summarize their minor and major reservations.
- Options that achieve a ranking score of ≥ 3.0 (75%) will be deemed to have a preliminary consensus level of support and will be further evaluated as appropriate.
- Options may be refined to enhance support across stakeholder interests.
- This process will be repeated iteratively during each OCW meeting until a comprehensive and synergistic package of recommendations has achieved a consensus level of support.
- The only vote will be taken at the end of the last meeting in support of the consensus package of recommendations. A 75% or greater level of support is required for consensus.
- All ranking results are preliminary until the vote is taken during the final meeting.

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



STAKEHOLDER ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE CONSENSUS SOLUTIONS APPROACH



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.**

WORKSHEET ORGANIZATION BY GOALS AND TOPICAL ISSUES	
SECTION 1 (Page 4)	Options Achieving a Consensus Level of Support (An average of ≥ 3.0 or 75%): are numbered from highest to lowest rank starting with #1 by topical categories, and revised options for ranking.
SECTION 2 (Page 18)	Adopted Plan Framework.
SECTION 3 (Page 20)	Performance Measures.
SECTION 4 (Page 23)	Options Not Achieving a Consensus Level of Support: $< 75\%$ Support, and Options Not Ranked.

KEY DEFINITIONS

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.

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

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

**SECTION 1 – RANKED CONSENSUS OPTIONS: ≥75% SUPPORT
AND REVISED OPTIONS FOR RANKING**

OVERVIEW

The preliminary list of options (strategies and actions) in this Worksheet were identified by Workgroup members during the February 2-3, 2024 meeting as topics they would like to evaluate. The draft strategies and actions for each of the Goals in this Worksheet were drafted by the ORP Project Team based on this initial list of potential options to serve as a framework for discussion, and are not intended to influence the Workgroup’s recommendations. All of the strategies and actions are recommendations from the OCW and will be directed to the appropriate agency, entity, and or organization. The strategies and actions are intended to ensure that the full range of options for each suggested strategy are evaluated, and to inform the Workgroup’s final consensus package of recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland*. The initial strategies and actions were ranked through the consensus process during the March 29-30, 2024 meeting.

OVERREACHING DIRECTION FOR REVISING STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

All of the strategies and actions were refined by the ORP Team to clarify meaning and in conformance with the OCW’s intent (from rankings, discussions, and comments during Meeting #2). Duplications and redundancies were eliminated, similar actions combined when possible, and clarifications made to ensure that the specific intent of the strategies and actions are clear and easily understood. In addition, the strategies and actions were re-ordered and re-numbered to reflect a logical sequencing of steps.

NUMBER OF STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR RANKING		
GOAL	STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
A	6	18
B	4	12
C	3	13
TOTALS	13	43

I. GOAL A – ENHANCE THE OYSTER RESOURCE IN EASTERN BAY

OPTIONS ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: ≥75% SUPPORT

Strategy A-1. (previous Strategy 4) Improve oyster habitat and broodstock in Eastern Bay by relying on scientific and industry expertise and integrating stakeholder input into a restoration plan.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
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Action 1.A. (previous Action 4.A + Action 2.E) Conduct regular habitat mapping to understand the extent and condition of existing oyster habitat and identify priority areas that need enhancement or could be re-delineated for other activities.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
•				

Action 1.B. (previous Action 4.D + Action 6.A) Integrate the use of alternate substrates into Eastern Bay oyster restoration by relying on existing data on the suitability, availability, and effectiveness of different types of substrates that have been approved by DNR.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
•				

Action 1.C. (previous Action 2.F) Identify suitable locations for deploying alternate substrates to improve existing habitat, reduce sedimentation, and improve spat recruitment.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
•				

Action 1.D. (previous Action 4.A) Evaluate restoration practices that will improve oyster broodstock, including moving adult oysters.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
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Action 1.E (*previous Action 4.B + 7.A*) Evaluate opportunities to involve industry in restoration siting and monitoring and outline how contributions will be integrated.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Strategy A-2. Evaluate existing practices to increase the availability of oyster shell for habitat enhancement.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 2.A. Evaluate and implement the existing shell reclamation practices of bar cleaning and dredging from existing fishery areas in Eastern Bay to move shells from unproductive to productive locations.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 2.B. (*previous Action 5.A*) Evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of using shells produced through aquaculture as a potential new source of shell for restoration.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 2.C. (*previous Action 2.B*) Evaluate and implement existing practices to increase the amount of shell retained from oyster harvest and aquaculture in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.D. (*previous Action 2.C*) Evaluate and acquire other sources of shell, including from other locations.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 2.E. (*previous Action 2.D*) Evaluate and acquire shells from existing oyster sanctuaries and/or reserve areas that can be used for seed areas and/or public fishery replenishment.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Strategy A-3. (*previous Strategy 5 + Goal B, Action 5.D + Action 5.B*) Identify opportunities for aquaculture expansion in Eastern Bay that complement existing restoration and fishery practices and consider logistical limitations and habitat requirements, with a focus on areas where shells have been recently removed for bottom enhancement.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 3.A. (*previous Goal B, Action 9.A*) Connect oyster harvesters, aquaculture leaseholders, and representatives from other fisheries that depend on a healthy oyster habitat to improve cohesion among ongoing and emerging activities in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 3.B. Collectively generate a list of pre-approved areas acceptable for new aquaculture leases to avoid future conflict.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Strategy A-4. (*previous Strategy 7*) Develop a long-term monitoring plan to demonstrate whether strategies and actions are working and to allow for adaptive management of the Eastern Bay oyster resource.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>

Comments				
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Strategy A-5. (previous Action 3.B) Identify specific roadblocks in the regulatory process or existing regulations at the state, county, and local levels that create challenges for oyster restoration/production. Propose options to overcome these or improve transparency in the process.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 5.A. (previous Action 3.A) Recommend that DNR improve transparency in shell import and alternate substrate approval permitting process for restoration practices.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 5.B. (previous Action 3.C) Recommend that DNR develop a process to improve coordination and communication between agencies and to stakeholders.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 5.C. (previous Action 3.D + Goal B, Action 9.D) DNR should review and update regulations that restrict the expansion of aquaculture on Yates Bars and near SAV beds. At the very minimum, improve transparency in the existing aquaculture permitting process and regulations.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Strategy A-6. (previous Strategy 1 + Goal B, Action 6.B) Evaluate the cost of existing and proposed enhancement practices that are recommended by the OCW, and identify funding for short- and long-term efforts.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				

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Action 6.A. (*previous Goal B, Action 6.C*) Allocate money from recreational oyster license purchases to oyster restoration in harvest areas.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 6.B. (*previous Goal B, Action 1.B*) The OCW supports and recommends finalizing the development of a viable implementation framework or plan for nutrient credits which can be used to support oyster enhancement activities.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 6.C. (*previous Goal B, Action 6.A*) Invest public funds equitably between sanctuaries and public fishery areas.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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II. GOAL B – MANAGE THE OYSTER FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE TO INCREASE AND SUSTAIN HARVEST AND A THRIVING ECONOMY
OPTIONS ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: ≥75% SUPPORT

Strategy B-1. Evaluate and enhance the current strategy for sustainable management of Eastern Bay oyster resources.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 1.A. (*previous Strategy 2 + Action 2.A*) DNR should define and monitor progress towards targets and thresholds for sustainable harvest levels in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 1.B. (*previous Action 2.A + Action 5.A*) DNR should implement a joint decision-making process with industry to manage oyster harvest bars based on these thresholds and should implement appropriate changes in a timely manner.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 1.C. (*previous Action 8.A + Strategy 8*) In the event of a shellfish closure or delay in the oyster harvest season due to climate change or poor environmental conditions, DNR should adjust the oyster season and/or implement procedures to mitigate the health risk.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 1.D. (*previous Action 1.C*) Evaluate the establishment of a rotational harvest framework within sanctuaries by allowing watermen to use their funds to restore and harvest bars in sanctuaries where no restoration has been done. Recategorize areas in sanctuaries that have not received restoration as rotational harvest areas.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
•				

Action 1.E. (*previous Action 1.D*) Consider and establish a rotational harvest framework in non-productive bottom, incorporating practices such as rotational investment and management of entire oyster bars.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
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Action 1.F. (*previous Action 1.H*) Evaluate existing harvest gear regulations and locations in Eastern Bay and consider changes that will promote sustainable oyster harvest (e.g., expanding patent tong or dredge areas).

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
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Action 1.G. Evaluate management practices that are implemented successfully in other areas and consider whether they would be appropriate to apply in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
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Strategy B-2. (*previous Strategy 4*) DNR should enhance enforcement and reporting mechanisms that ensure accurate information on oyster harvesting in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= Acceptable	3= Minor Reservations	2= Major Reservations	1= Not Acceptable
Comments				
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Action 2.A. (*previous Action 4.A + Action 7.B*) Engage with NRP and industry stakeholders to discuss and implement effective solutions to quantify and limit poaching and illegal harvest, with a focus on available technology (e.g., GPS, drones).

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 2.B. (*previous Action 4.B*) Develop methods to account for illegal and unreported harvest when assessing the effectiveness of restoration.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.C. (*previous Action 4.D*) Evaluate harvest reporting standards in collaboration with seafood processors.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Strategy B-3. (*previous Action 7.A*) DNR should support leaseholders to develop and implement experimental aquaculture harvest practices and processes.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Strategy B-4. (*previous Action 1.F*) Address all statewide oyster management issues by evaluation and forwarding recommendations from the OCW to appropriate entities for consideration.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 4.A. (*previous Action 1.E*) The OCW recommends that OAC and/or TFAC evaluate and establish a comprehensive limited entry program for full-time seafood industry workers, ensuring accessibility for full-time seafood industry workers and their family members.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 4.B. (*previous Action 3.A + Action 3.B*) The OCW recommends the establishment of a state law requiring that all local jurisdictions establish right-to-work laws to protect seafood industry workers and facilitate industry operations.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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III. GOAL C – AN ENGAGED STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE OYSTER RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT
OPTIONS ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: ≥75% SUPPORT

Strategy C-1. Establish a coordinated public relations and marketing effort among stakeholders (including Dept of Ag./MD’s Best Seafood) to enhance public perception and support for commercial fisheries and aquaculture occurring in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 1.A. Identify strategies to monitor and respond to the spread of misinformation about Chesapeake Bay/Eastern Bay oysters.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 1.B. Market ecosystem services provided by oysters.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 1.C. (*previous Goal A, Action 7.B*) Develop a process to communicate monitoring results to secure future funding for oyster production in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Strategy C-2. Establish educational opportunities to improve public awareness of Eastern Bay oyster culture.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.A. Create opportunities to engage with local waterman and aquaculture leaseholders to learn about the investment and process for harvesting oysters, with the goal to ensure that industry maintains access to oyster resources and commercial infrastructure.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 2.B. (*previous Action 2.B + Goal B, Strategy 3*) Educate elected officials on challenges and opportunities for the expansion of oyster production in Eastern Bay, including zoning restrictions, (*previous Goal B, Strategy 3*) right-to-work laws, access to working waterfronts, and opportunities with the oyster BMP.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 2.C. Maintain community restoration programs such as Marylander’s Grow Oysters that are primarily designed to be educational for the public.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.D. Improve the market for local oysters by identifying opportunities to engage stakeholders in the preparation and eating of locally caught oysters.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.E. Establish educational programs that are hosted locally (e.g., at CBEC) that focus on watermen, aquaculture, and the history of commercial seafood activity in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.F. Increase recreational oyster dive charters/hand tong charters to educate the public about oyster reef ecology and the commercial oyster industry.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.G. Improve education and accountability of recreational harvesters by establishing and enforcing a recreational oyster license.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 2.H. Identify technologies that can be used to educate a broader audience about Eastern Bay oyster habitat and culture.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Strategy C-3. Evaluate strategies and incentives to retain people in the commercial oyster industry and remove barriers to young entrants.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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Action 3.A. Develop an apprentice program to train people entering the oyster fishery or aquaculture, including education on the required investment, training using various gear types, connecting them to the community, etc.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
•				

Action 3.B. Establish education programs that introduce young people to aspects of the oyster fishery and inspire them to consider a career on the water.

AVERAGE	<i>4= Acceptable</i>	<i>3= Minor Reservations</i>	<i>2= Major Reservations</i>	<i>1= Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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SECTION 2 – ADOPTED PLAN FRAMEWORK

EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP PLAN FRAMEWORK FOR THE SUSTAINABLE OYSTER RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EASTERN BAY, MARYLAND ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY 2 FEBRUARY 2024

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.

SECTION 3 – PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOAL A – ENHANCE THE OYSTER RESOURCE IN EASTERN BAY

Objectives	Recommended Metrics
A1) To achieve a healthy and sustainable oyster population in Eastern Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oyster density (m²) – adults, spat, sub-legal Oyster biomass (m²) – adults, spat, sub-legal Annual recruitment rate
A2) To enhance ecosystem services through the restoration of oysters in Eastern Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area (acres) restored annually Pounds of nitrogen & phosphorus removed annually from reefs Water clarity – percent increase in light reaching 2m depth Area (acres) of SAV in Eastern Bay, assessed annually
A3) To expand oyster aquaculture in Eastern Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of aquaculture leases operating in Eastern Bay annually Acres of active oyster leases in Eastern Bay Number and volume (bushels) of oysters planted/deployed in leases annually Annual harvest from leases (bushels)

Ranking of Revised Objectives and Performance Measures for Goal A

AVERAGE	<i>4= Acceptable</i>	<i>3= Minor Reservations</i>	<i>2= Major Reservations</i>	<i>1= Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 				

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

Objectives	Recommended Metrics
B1) To achieve high levels of sustainable oyster harvest from Eastern Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual oyster harvest from Eastern Bay through wild harvest and aquaculture (bushels) Harvest/fishing rate/CPUE Number of commercial oyster licenses in Queen Anne and Talbot Counties

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of oyster trips reported in Eastern Bay • Proportion of dealer buy tickets purchasing seafood from Eastern Bay, annually
B2) To improve recreational and other commercial fisheries and tourism activities in Eastern Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual recreational oyster harvest from Eastern Bay • Number of recreational oyster licenses in Queen Anne and Talbot Counties • Number charter trips reported in Eastern Bay annually • Number of harvest trips and harvest (bushels/lbs.) reported for other fisheries in Eastern Bay (clam, finfish, blue crab) annually • Number recreational boating trips in Eastern Bay annually • Water clarity – percent increase in light reaching 2m depth • Pounds of nitrogen & phosphorus removed annually through harvest • Pounds of nitrogen & phosphorus removed annually through aquaculture

Ranking of Revised Objectives and Performance Measures for Goal B

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
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GOAL C – AN ENGAGED STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE OYSTER RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT

Objectives	Recommended Metrics
C1) To achieve a broader awareness and understanding of the natural and cultural value of healthy oyster habitat in Eastern Bay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number people engaged – K-12, adults • Number of Eastern Bay oyster educational materials developed • Number of businesses participating in outreach • Number of restaurants in Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties serving local oysters
C2) To secure funds for oyster enhancement in Eastern Bay over the long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds allocated by Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties for oyster restoration, annually

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds allocated by the state for oyster restoration in Eastern Bay, annually
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Ranking of Revised Objectives and Performance Measures for Goal C

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
Comments				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 				

SECTION 4 – RANKED OPTIONS NOT ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT AND OPTIONS NOT RANKED (< 75 SUPPORT)

I. GOAL A – ENHANCE THE OYSTER RESOURCE IN EASTERN BAY

OPTIONS NOT ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: < 75% SUPPORT

Initial Action 2.C. Identify sources of substrate that have been approved by DNR for use in Eastern Bay over the long-term, including as a base for planting oysters.

Workgroup Action

- The Workgroup did not rank original action 2-C.
- The Workgroup asked that this be incorporated into one of other existing actions to eliminate duplication.
- Similar actions should be revised and combined as appropriate to eliminate redundancy and reduce the number of actions.
- **This action has been clarified and incorporated into the revised strategies and actions under Goal A**

Initial Action 3.D. Review and evaluate regulatory boundaries that restrict uses of shellfish management area/oyster bars for multiple oyster practices.

Workgroup Action

- The Workgroup did not rank original action 3-D.
- The Workgroup stated it needs clarification regarding what is intended (e.g., gear types, and aquaculture is not allowed in public fishery areas)
- **This action has been clarified and incorporated into the revised strategies and actions under Goal A**

Initial Action 4.E. Evaluate existing shell reclamation practices that may be suitable for enhancing habitat, including bar cleaning and shell relay.

Workgroup Action

- The Workgroup did not rank Initial Action 4-E.
- The Workgroup stated it is redundant, not needed, and part of existing BMPs.

Initial Strategy 6. Evaluate research needs to effectively enhance the oyster resource in Eastern Bay.

- **This strategy was redundant with other strategies/actions in Goal A so has been removed.**

Initial Action 6.B. Evaluate effectiveness of existing or new shell reclamation practices that can be implemented to enhance oyster habitat.

- **This action was redundant with other strategies/actions in Goal A so has been removed.**

Initial Action 6.C. Evaluate effectiveness and cost of other suggested practices/strategies proposed by the OCW.

- **This action was redundant with other strategies/actions in Goal A so has been removed.**

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

OPTIONS NOT ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: < 75% SUPPORT

Initial Action 1.C. Consider and establish a rotational harvest framework for oyster harvest (in sanctuaries and existing harvest areas), incorporating practices such as rotational investment and management of entire oyster bars.

AVERAGE	4= <i>Acceptable</i>	3= <i>Minor Reservations</i>	2= <i>Major Reservations</i>	1= <i>Not Acceptable</i>
<i>March 29-30, 2024 Ranking Result</i>				
1.31	0	0	4	9
Comments				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watermen don't want to discuss rotational harvest. They are concerned that once an area is closed it won't be reopened. We don't have enough bars to work as it is. If a bar(s) is closed that puts more pressure on the remaining open bars. We could support this if was in areas in sanctuaries where no restoration has been done, watermen could use their funds to do restoration and then harvest, replant, harvest, etc. Planting shell in mudholes (bad bottom) not worthwhile. DNR is opposed to harvesting in sanctuaries. Oysters need to stay in sanctuaries. Consider a system to pay watermen to plant but not harvest oysters in sanctuaries, 				

Initial Action 1.F. Evaluate the feasibility of and establish an oyster relay program, incorporating market-sized oysters from closed areas managed by MDE.

Workgroup Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Workgroup did not rank Initial Action 1-F. Polluted waters area are natural sanctuaries and should remain so. This option already exists and a recommendation from the OCW is not needed.

Initial Action 4.E. Evaluate, propose, and enforce best reporting practices (e.g., e-reporting) that should be implemented for tracking and quantifying commercial and recreational oyster harvest from Eastern Bay.

Workgroup Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original Action 4-E is a duplicate of 4-C. Combine this as needed with Action 4-C. This was not ranked as written This action has been incorporated into the revised strategies and actions under Goal B

Initial Action 8.A. Implement an annual review of the commercial oyster fishery season relative to water temperatures and adjust the season appropriately.

Workgroup Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Workgroup did not rank Initial Action 8-A. The OCW drafted a revised Action 8-A.

Comments

- Health risks.
- Adjust to account for early closure.
- State-wide issue.
- TFAC issue.
- Discuss with packers.
- Spawning season is an issue.

Initial Action 8.B. Establish an oyster relay program that will move oysters from temporary or expanded MDE shellfish closure areas to open harvest areas in Eastern Bay to maintain harvest levels.

Workgroup Action

- The Workgroup did not rank Initial Action 8-B.
- Not needed – in place already.

Initial Action 8.C. Expand water quality and disease monitoring to help identify potential human health risks and inform appropriate management/mitigation actions or area closures (e.g., vibrio, wastewater treatment plant spills, septic discharge, lawncare, etc.).

Workgroup Action

- The Workgroup did not rank Initial Action 8-C.
- Action is not needed, this is already being done.

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

OPTIONS NOT ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: < 75% SUPPORT

Initial Action 1.B. Identify strategies for education surrounding sewage spills.

Workgroup Action

- The Workgroup did not rank Initial Action 1-B.
- Eliminate, this is covered in other actions.