EASTERN BAY

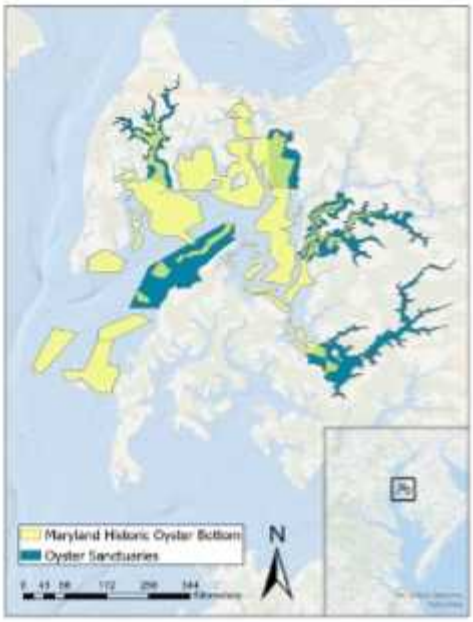
OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP

OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP

MEETING #5 – SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY REPORT

CHESAPEAKE BAY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
GRASONVILLE, MARYLAND



FACILITATED SOLUTIONS

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

EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 FACILITATOR'S MEETING SUMMARY REPORT

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SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 FACILITATOR'S MEETING SUMMARY REPORT

OVERVIEW OF THE EASTERN BAY OYSTER COALITION'S MEETING #5 ACTIONS

I. MEETING SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

The fifth Oyster Coalition Workgroup meeting was held at the American Legion Post in Stevensville, Maryland. The Oyster Coalition Workgroup (OCW): received an overview of the updated Project Workplan-Schedule; received a summary and provided feedback on the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center's education plan; received an update and provided feedback on NOAA's spatial tools for oyster siting; participated in an interactive habitat survey results group GIS mapping exercise working with revised maps from Meeting #4; and discussed agenda items and information needs for the sixth and final OCW meeting on December 4-5, 2024. Specific actions from Meeting #5 included: **1)** Providing additional feedback based on the updated habitat survey maps on potential locations for priority planting, aquaculture siting, shell moving and reclamation, co-siting of plantings between management zones, and areas that could be divided or removed from the fishery; **2)** Discussing, refining, and approving the Draft OCW Report and Recommendations for the Plan; and **3)** Discussing the objectives and approach and providing feedback regarding the Dec. 4, 2024 Community Open House Forum.

(Attachment 1 – Key to Common Project Abbreviations)
(Attachment 2 – Glossary of OCW Project Terms and Definitions)

II. OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP MEETING PARTICIPATION

The following OCW members participated in the Wednesday, September 25, 2024 meeting conducted in-person at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Grasonville, Maryland:

Kathy Brohawn (Rusty McKay, alternate), Scott Budden, Brian Callam, Ben Ford (Autumn Conely, alternate), Moochie Gilmer, Jeff Harrison, Richard Jones, Chris Judy, Jim Moran, Vicki Paulas, Ward Slacum, Dan Sweeney, and Troy Wilkins (Mike Eber, alternate).

(13 of 17 members participated – 76%).

Absent OCW Members:

Mark Galasso, Nick Hargrove, Matt Latham, and Jason Ruth.

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

Jennica Moffat (ORP), Gerard Smith (NOAA), Jason Spires (NOAA), and Jennifer 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 on the OCW Webpage. Located at the following URL: https://www.oysterrecovery.org/our-work/oyster-restoration/easternbaycoalition

III. AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The OCW voted unanimously to approve the agenda for the September 25, 2024 meeting as presented. Following are the key agenda items approved for consideration:

- ✓ To Approve Regular Procedural Topics (Meeting Agenda, Summary Report, and Workplan Update).
- ✓ To Hear a Presentation on CBEC Education Plan and Provide Feedback.
- ✓ To Receive an Update on NOAA's Spatial Tools for Oyster Siting and Provide Feedback.
- ✓ To Participate in an Interactive Habitat Survey Results Group Mapping Exercise with Revised Maps.
- ✓ To Hear a Summary, Discuss, Refine, and Approve Draft Recommendations for the Plan.
- ✓ To Hear Summary of and Provide Feedback on Objectives and Approach for Community Open House.
- ✓ Next Steps and Agenda Items for Meeting #6 – December 4-5, 2024.

Amendments to the Posted Agenda:

There were no amendments to the Agenda.

(Attachment 4 – September 25, 2024 OCW Agenda)

IV. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 31-AUGUST 1, 2024 FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY REPORT

The OCW voted unanimously to approve the July 31-August 1, 2024 OCW Meeting Facilitator Summary Report as presented. The approved report will be posted to the project webpage.

Amendments: None

V. REVIEW OF UPDATED PROJECT WORKPLAN AND SCHEDULE

Jeff Blair provided the OCW with a review of the Project Workplan and Schedule and answered members' questions. The September 25, 2024 meeting represented the Workgroup's fifth of six meetings scheduled for the process.

Throughout the project, the OCW members representing management and restoration agencies have committed to vetting the strategies and actions under consideration with their leadership to gauge support and feasibility of implementation. The OCW is in the final stages of evaluating the relative

priority and efficacy of strategies and associated actions (options) 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 Final Report and Recommendations for the *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* for submittal to the Oyster Recovery Partnership.
- Jeff noted that it is important to the process itself as well as the process outcomes that all Workgroup members participate in the meetings to ensure that all perspectives are included in the discussions and the rankings, and to ensure that the Workgroup's recommendations are supported by all of the stakeholder interests represented on the Workgroup.
- The Workgroup Meeting Dates are as follows:
  - Meeting #1 – February 2-3, 2024 – Completed
  - Meeting #2 – March 29-30, 2024 – Completed
  - Meeting #3 – May 29-30, 2024 – Completed
  - Meeting #4 – July 31-August 1, 2024 – Completed
  - Meeting #5 – September 25, 2024
  - Meeting #6 – December 4-5, 2024
- The Community Workshop Forum will be held on December 4, 2024 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Place Kent Narrows.
- The Workgroup meetings will held at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center.

(Attachment 5 – Project Workplan and Meeting Schedule)

VI. CHESAPEAKE BAY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER EDUCATION PLAN SUMMARY AND OCW FEEDBACK

Vicki Paulas, Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (CBEC), provided the OCW with a summary of the CBEC's Oyster Education Plan. Following questions and answers, an opportunity was provided for OCW feedback regarding the same.

Summary and Overview of the Presentation

See presentation on the project webpage. The notes below capture additional points relevant to the update:

- Current education focus is on oyster biology, ecology, and oyster reef diversity
- Some volunteer events to engage the public in restoration (plant spat bags)
- CBEC wants to form additional partnerships with stakeholders to promote the industry and history of oysters.
- Focus on (1) K-12 education and (2) adult education and engagement

Summary of OCW Feedback Regarding the Education Plan:
(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)

- Need programs that attract and engage adults.
- Make water accessible to CBEC's guests to access CBEC oyster lease and restoration area
- Use catchy message phrases in marketing and education programs such as "oysters need oysters to make oysters."
- Oyster reef ecology and ecosystem topics
    - Deploy eel and crab pots from CBEC pier to catch live oyster reef/estuarine specimens (*Moochie Gilmer offered to provide old crab and eel pots*)
    - Have a fishing contest where some groups fish over the reef and others fish areas with no reefs to demonstrate a comparison regarding how reefs attract and support other fish.
    - Describe and use technology to monitor or visualize water quality (e.g., satellite imagery, Eyes on the Bay, SeaBoss).
    - Provide a wholistic balanced message regarding the role oysters play in filtering the Bay. They are not the whole solution, rather they are one of numerous key solutions including good land use management, reduction of nutrients, etc.
    - Focus not only on oysters cleaning the Bay, rather focus on providing the message that it's important to clean up the Bay for oysters, fish, watermen, recreation, etc.
- Enhance education of oyster history
    - Watermen's history should be added to curriculum
    - Display old photos showing historical aspects of the oyster fishery.
    - Provide a history of Kent Narrows, the watermen, and the area oyster fishery.
    - Provide a history of local oyster bar names (when known).
        - Have kids make up stories regarding the history of bar names, or a story of why oyster bars whose names were lost to history were given their names.
- Engage the public in how oysters are harvested from hatchery, to replenishment, to harvesting, to processing, to eating them.
    - Install a setting tank at the CBEC kayak pier. Conduct setting and educate on restoration/replenishment/aquaculture (oyster production) practices
    - Have a hand tonging station at the pier – demonstrate what's involved and how hard it is to harvest oysters.
    - Solicit old oyster harvest gear to provide hands-on activities demonstrating harvest (*ORP offered to donate Little Nippers display and activity*)
    - Oyster bean counting came to demonstrate harvest to kids (*Autumn Conley/ShoreRivers can provide details)*
    - Bring local chefs to (1) make and (2) teach oyster dishes – to engage people in eating local oysters using local knowledge
    - Market and sell swag and oysters from CBEC's Pearly girl oysters brand
- Conduct or host workforce development seminars and workshops for people trying to get into the fishery and aquaculture – a gap exists that could be filled by CBEC.
- Important for NGOs to work together and acknowledge that they all play different rolls that collectively leverage positive results – it's a team effort.

VII. NOAA's Spatial Tools for Oyster Siting Update and OCW Feedback

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

Gerard Smith (JJ), Oxford Lab NOAA**,** provided the OCW with an update regarding NOAA's spatial tools for oyster siting. Following questions and answers, an opportunity was provided for OCW feedback regarding the same.

Summary and Overview of the Presentation

See presentation on the project webpage. The notes below capture additional points relevant to the update:

- JJ indicated there were 2 main purposes for presenting to the OCW: 1) to provide a preview of the tool and its current status; and 2) a major component of the tool relies on input from stakeholders. NOAA is requesting that OCW members and the constituents they represent can assist with gathering a broad group of stakeholders to provide input.
- The oyster siting tool is still under construction.
- Some components of the tool are operational and NOAA wants OCW feedback on them.
- Interested in determining from stakeholders their perspectives regarding where to and where not to site activities such as aquaculture, and the reasons why.
- NOAA is beta testing the tool and would like OCW members to participate as second round of beta testing.

Project Goals Summary:

- Develop a tool to inform site selection for oyster restoration and aquaculture in Eastern Bay that incorporates stakeholder input.
- Identify ecologically ideal locations for oysters.
- Minimize conflict with current competing waterway uses.
- Solicit input from a broad group of stakeholders to include their preferences in site selection – using Stakeholder-Supported Restoration Suitability Model (SSRSM) approach based on Howie et al. (2024).

Survey Questions and Process

- Questions:
    - How often do you visit the Eastern Bay and its tributaries?
    - How do you primarily use the Eastern Bay and its tributaries?
    - Is your income directly dependent on the Eastern Bay and its tributaries?
    - If you work in the study area, for which sector do you work?
    - Do you, in principle, support oyster restoration and aquaculture in Eastern Bay and its tributaries?
- Responses will result in a spatial layer showing where oyster siting is supported – will be added to the model

Next Steps

- Improvements to HSI
- Including more competing uses.
- Getting survey out and processing results.
- Incorporating prediction of ecosystem services.

Summary of Questions, Responses, and Comments on the Presentation:
(Note initials are only used to identify ORP Project Team members, presenters, and state agency representatives)

- The tool could be useful in determining where to conduct restoration and/or consider changes in allowable uses, but stakeholders should be consulted prior to any decisions being made regarding changing current uses or restoration activities.
- Additional ideas that should be added to competing use layer:
    - NOBs – to capture where DNR permits already allow for oyster activities (outside NOBs require special permits);
    - Oyster Yates Bars;
    - Public Shellfish Fishery Areas;
    - Separate MDE conditional areas from restricted areas (currently one competing use layer);
    - Oyster sanctuaries; and
    - Existing (or pending) aquaculture leases.

VIII. HABITAT SURVEY RESULTS GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL AREAS FOR REVISIONS TO CURRENT REGULATIONS

The OCW continues the engagement from Meeting #4 by participating in an interactive exercise using GIS data and updated maps to identify potential areas for the following:

- Priority Planting Locations - Specific Bars or Portions of Bars That Need Additional Cultch vs. Spat;
- Sanctuary Data and Co-Siting Plantings Between Management Zones;
- Aquaculture Siting Locations;
- Areas That Could Be Candidates For Reclaiming/Moving Shell (Gray Shell); and
- Evaluate Locations Where Unproductive Oyster Habitat Could Be Removed from Oyster Fishery.

General themes and questions from Meeting #4 are as follows:

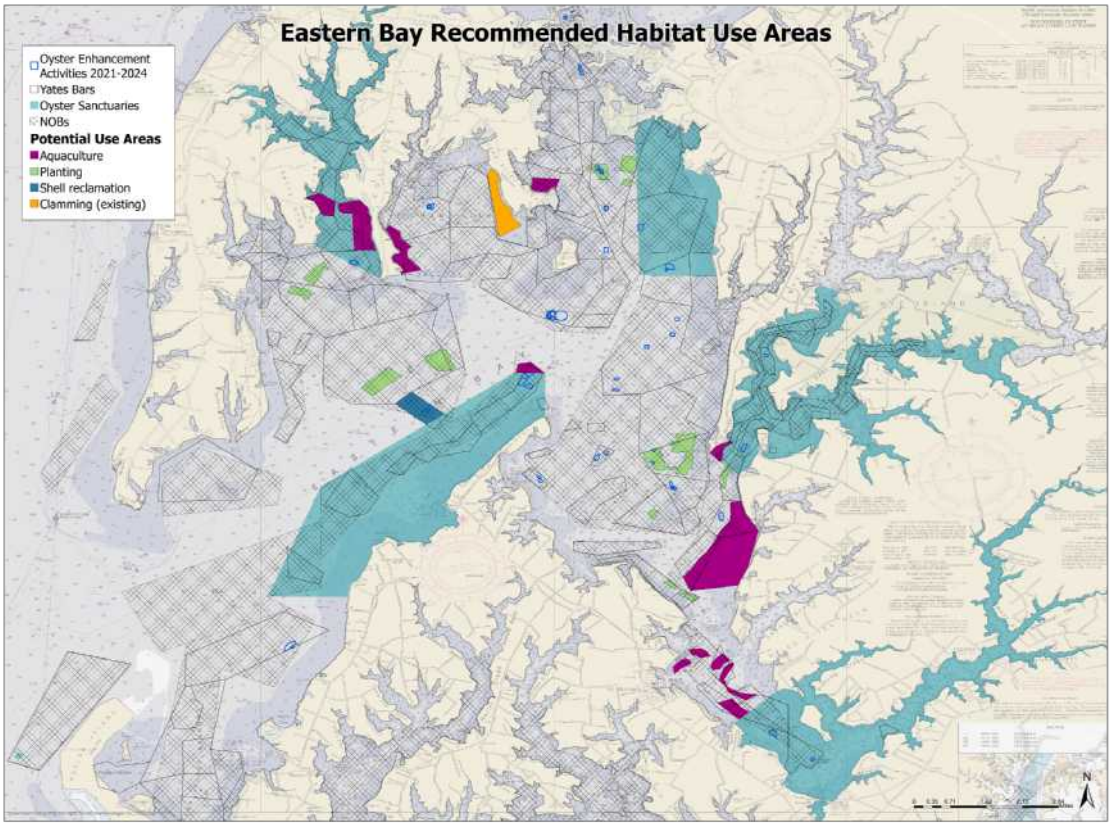
- Most areas discussed for planting were discussed for planting spat-on-shell unless otherwise stated.
- Potential areas for expanding aquaculture (bottom and water column leases) will require modifying Yates Bars, Natural Oyster Bars, and PSFA regulatory boundaries. This requires additional evaluation by DNR.
- Potential aquaculture areas were sited in locations that:
    - Have not been harvested recently,
    - Logistically feasible (e.g., protected from wind, close to land operations, etc.), and
    - Have habitat scores within 0-50% range.
- Potential aquaculture areas will need to be evaluated further by considering additional stakeholder uses, including crabbing and clam areas, where people hand tong, etc. to minimize conflict.

- There are some areas that have received bar cleaning and previous plantings that have not been productive. These areas would be better suited for areas where shell can be reclaimed and moved to other productive bars.

During Meeting #5 the Workgroup provided additional recommendations regarding topical issue areas. The recommendations were captured during the meeting using ArcGIS and will serve as the basis for revised maps for discussion during the final OCW meeting. The revised maps will be distributed to the Workgroup in advance of the December 4-5, 2024 meeting to allow time for stakeholders to vet options with their constituent groups in preparation for offering any revisions and additional areas to consider during the December meeting. Following are the topical issue areas discussed:

- Do you agree with the proposed uses and locations from last meeting?
    - JH requested to see data from DNR showing the results of bar cleaning. There was a discussion about where bar cleaning may be most effective – in locations where shell is buried a few inches below the surface sediment.
- Are there other uses or locations to discuss?
    - Clamming
    - Alternate substrates
        - OCW preferences in fishery areas were for using shell, slag, crushed concrete, and limestone substrates (sizes of 1-3"). The material needs to be harvestable by existing gear types.
        - OCW preferences in sanctuaries were for using substrate in locations where there is no existing oyster habitat, but where habitat was present historically. Small substrates were preferred to allow access by other fisheries (e.g., trot lining for crabs).
        - OCW preferences for aquaculture were for using a combination of strategies. Currently a special permit is required to deploy anything other than shell on private leases.
    - Sanctuary restoration
    - Hand tong areas
    - Areas close to shore
- Does the OCW recognize that areas identified as unproductive oyster habitat could be evaluated for other uses?
- In addition, Workgroup members were asked to consider and be prepared to discuss the following during the final meeting, Meeting #6.
    - Was this process useful?

Proposed Activities and Locations Map from Meeting #4 (Integrated Habitat Data and OCW Member Input)



IX. Draft Report and Recommendations for the Plan Review and Approval

Olivia Caretti, ORP, reviewed the *Draft OCW's Report and Recommendations for the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland (Plan).*

Summary and Overview of the Discussion

The Workgroup was asked whether there were any proposed revisions and/or additional topical issue categories missing from the Draft Report that should be included. Following is a summary of the Workgroup's discussions:

- There were no additional topics suggested, and the consensus was that the Draft Report and Recommendations has the correct mix of topics and content for inclusion in the Report and Recommendations for the Plan.
- DNR provided several comments which will be addressed in the Report by the ORP Leadership Team.
- The ORP Leadership Team will draft the Draft Final OCW Report and Recommendations incorporating any approved revisions, and to format and edit the document for presentation, clarity, and consistency per the Workgroup's direction.

- A Draft Final Report and Recommendations for the Plan will be provided to the OCW on or around November 25, 2024.
- The OCW will vet the Draft Final Report and Recommendations with the public during the December 4, 2024 Public Workshop Forum.
- The OCW will decide whether to make any revisions to the Plan based on public input during Day-Two of the December 2024 meeting.
- The OCW will discuss, refine as needed, and adopt the Draft Final Report and Recommendations for the Plan during the second day of the final meeting on December 5, 2024.

Oyster Coalition Workgroup Action:

MOTION – The OCW voted unanimously in favor, to approve the Oyster Coalition Workgroup's *Draft Report and Recommendations for the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland (Plan)*, and to charge the ORP Leadership Team with drafting the Draft Final OCW Report and Recommendations incorporating any approved revisions, and to format and edit the document for presentation, clarity, and consistency.

(Attachment 7 – Draft OCW Report and Recommendations for the Plan)

X. SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH FOR COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE FORUM ON DECEMBER 4, 2024 AND OCW FEEDBACK

The ORP provided the Workgroup with a summary of the objectives and approach for the Community Open House Forum as follows:

- The Forum is designed to be interactive with several informational stations that participants can self-select based on interest. Each station would have a subject expert and a notetaker to record and respond to participants questions, comments, and feedback as follows:
    - Station 1: Restoration Recommendations and Outcomes.
    - Station 2: Management Recommendations and Outcomes (Staffed by DNR).
    - Station 3: Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes and Additional Outreach Initiatives.
    - Station 4: Habitat Survey Process, Mapping Exercises, and Results.
- The OCW will evaluate a summary of the feedback during day-two of the December 4-5, 2024 meeting.
- The Forum will run from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Place Kent Narrows.

The Workgroup members indicated their support for the objectives and approach for the Open House Forum, and the following members volunteered to assist with the informational tables:

- A ShoreRivers representative, Dan Sweeney, Scott Budden, Moochie Gilmer, Jeff Harrison, Brian Callam, Chris Judy, and Rusty McKay. In addition, ORP will request that Jim Moran participate.

XI. NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURNMENT

The December 4-5, 2024 meeting will focus on refinement and adoption of the OCW *Draft Final Report and Recommendations for the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland.* The December meeting concludes the OCW process.

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.
- Interactive Habitat Survey Results Group Mapping Exercise Continued With Revised Maps.
- Review of Community Open House Workshop Feedback.
- Summary, Discussion, Refinement, and Adoption of the OCW *Draft Final Report and Recommendations for the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland. (Day 2).*
- Overview of Marketing, Communication, and Distribution Plan Regarding the OCW's Report.
- Summary of Next Steps.
- Workgroup Appreciation

ADJOURNMENT

The Facilitator thanked Workgroup members, ORP Project Team members, and all other meeting attendees for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 25, 2024.

(Attachment 6 – Meeting Evaluation Results)

ATTACHMENT 1
KEY TO COMMON PROJECT ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
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	*Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland*
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).

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
OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

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

OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP LEADERSHIP TEAM	
OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP	
Olivia Caretti	Coastal Restoration Program Manager
Beth Franks	Senior Manager
Ward Slacum	Executive Director
FACILITATED SOLUTIONS, LLC	
Jeff Blair	Workgroup Facilitator, Consensus Building, and Process Design

ATTACHMENT 4
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 MEETING AGENDA

MEETING #5 OBJECTIVES

- To Approve Regular Procedural Topics (Meeting Agenda, Summary Report, and Workplan Update).
- To Hear a Presentation on CBEC Education Plan.
- To Receive an Update on NOAA's Spatial Tools for Oyster Siting and Provide Feedback.
- To Participate in an Interactive Habitat Survey Results Group Mapping Exercise with Revised Maps.
- To Hear a Summary, Discuss, Refine, and Approve Draft Recommendations for the Plan.
- To Hear Summary and Provide Feedback on Objectives and Approach for Community Open House.
- Next Steps and Agenda Items for Meeting #6 – December 4-5, 2024.

AGENDA – WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

11:30 a.m.		***LUNCH – PROVIDED BY OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP***
1)	**12:00 p.m.**	**WELCOME AND ROLL CALL**
2)	**12:15**	**REGULAR ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURAL ISSUES REVIEW AND APPROVAL** • **Agenda Review and Meeting Objectives (Sept. 24, 2024)** • **Approval of Facilitator's Summary Report (July 31 – August 1, 2024)** • **Approval of Updated Project Meeting Schedule and Workplan (Sept. 24, 2024)**
3)	**12:30**	**CHESAPEAKE BAY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER EDUCATION PLAN SUMMARY AND OCW FEEDBACK** • OCW Feedback on Plan and Recommendations for Additional Topical Items.
4)	**1:00**	**NOAA'S SPATIAL TOOLS FOR OYSTER SITING: UPDATE AND OCW FEEDBACK** (John Jacobs, Director, Oxford Lab NOAA) • Update and Feedback from the OCW.
~1:45 p.m.		***BREAK***
5)	**2:00**	**INTERACTIVE HABITAT SURVEY RESULTS GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE WORKING WITH REVISED MAPS – CONTINUATION FROM MEETING #4** • Discuss and Identify Options Based on Survey Results and Revised Maps.
6)	**3:30**	**SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, REFINEMENT, AND ADOPTION OF DRAFT OCW REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PLAN** • Summary of Report and Consideration of Any Proposed Revisions. • Approval of Draft OCW Report and Recommendations for the Plan.
7)	**4:30**	**SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH FOR COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE FORUM ON DECEMBER 4, 2024 AND OCW FEEDBACK** • Summary of Objectives and Approach for the Open House Forum. • Discuss Open House Forum Objectives, Approach, and Content.
8)	**5:15**	**NEXT STEPS AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING** • Review of Action Items and Assignments. • Review of Agenda Items for the 6th. OCW Meeting (December 4-5, 2024). • Complete Meeting Evaluation.
~5:30 PM		***ADJOURN***

ATTACHMENT 5
WORKPLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE

OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP MEETINGS SCHEDULE AND WORKPLAN – 2024
UPDATED SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

MEETING	DATES	OBJECTIVES

Meeting #1	**Feb. 2-3, 2024**	**Organizational Meeting**
		• Adoption of Oyster Coalition Workgroup's Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines:
		  ○ Assumptions, Principles, and Participation Guidelines;
		  ○ Consensus Building Procedures;
		  ○ Consensus Solutions Process Procedures;
		  ○ Options Acceptability Ranking Process; and
		  ○ Guiding Principles, and Goal Statement.
		• Presentations on the Eastern Bay Region of Maryland.
		• Review of Questionnaire responses.
		• Discussion and adoption of draft Framework for the Plan: Vision Themes, Goals, Outcomes, and Objectives.
		• Identification of initial list of strategies for evaluation.

Meeting #2	**March 29-30, 2024**	• Presentations on decision support tools: spatial tools for oyster siting, and OysterFutures simulation model. Overview of DNR regulatory processes related to oysters. • Discussion of the application of spatial tools for oyster production in Eastern Bay. • Discussion of ORP's Eastern Bay Habitat Survey Plan. • Mapping Exercise on Oyster Habitat: Current harvest locations, and proposed locations for expanding wild-harvest and aquaculture. • Identification, discussion, and acceptability ranking of options (strategies and actions), and resource needs to achieve Project Goals and Objectives. • Identification of revised, hybrid, and new options for evaluation. • Discussion and acceptability ranking of performance measures to track progress towards Objectives and Goals.
Meeting #3	**May 29-30, 2024**	• Presentations and discussions about oyster substrate. • Update and preliminary results from ORP's Eastern Bay Habitat Survey. • Overview of local stakeholders and resources in Eastern Bay. • Identification, discussion, and acceptability ranking of revised options (strategies and actions), and resource needs to achieve Project Goals and Objectives.

		• Identification of revised, hybrid, and new options for evaluation. • Discussion and acceptability ranking of revised performance measures to track progress towards Objectives and Goals.
Meeting #4	**July 31-Aug. 1, 2024**	• Presentation on results of ORP's Eastern Bay habitat survey. • Discussion regarding how results of Eastern Bay Habitat Surveys will inform recommendations and inclusion in the Plan. • Discussion of OCW stakeholders resources available to support the goals of the OCW Project. • Discussion regarding formation of an OCW Successor Group, and consideration of an associated Draft Framework for ensuring implementation of OCW recommendations. • Acceptability ranking of proposed revisions to consensus ranked objectives, strategies, actions, and performance measures (options) for inclusion in the *Draft Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland* using the Strategies Evaluation Worksheet Process. • Adoption of the final package of Performance Measures to track progress towards objectives and Project goals. • Discussion and approval of Draft Outline for the OCW *Report and Recommendations for the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland.* • Interactive habitat survey results group GIS mapping exercise..
Meeting #5	**Sept. 25, 2024**	• Presentation on CBEC education plan and OCW feedback. • Spatial tools for oyster siting update and OCW feedback. • Interactive habitat survey results group mapping exercise continued with revised maps. • Summary, discussion, refinement, and approval of the OCW *Draft Report and Recommendations for the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland. (Day 2).* • Discussion of objectives, approach, and content for December 4, 2024 Community Open House Forum and OCW feedback.
Community Open House Forum	**Dec. 4, 2024** 6:00pm – 8:00pm	• Community education on the OCW goals and process. • Community input on the OCW outcomes and recommendations for a *Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland.*
Meeting #6	**Dec. 4-5, 2024**	• Evaluation of Community Open House input.

		• Interactive Habitat Survey Results Group Mapping Exercise Continued with Revised Maps. • Summary, discussion, refinement, and adoption of the Oyster Coalition Workgroup's *Report and Recommendations for a Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland,* and submittal to the Oyster Recovery Partnership. • Communication, Marketing, and Distribution Plan for Full and Short Summary Versions of the OCW's Report and Recommendations for the Plan. • The Oyster Recovery Partnership will finalize the Report and distribute to relevant agencies, entities, and organizations as appropriate. • Workgroup Appreciation and Celebration.

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 12 of 12 end of meeting Evaluations completed (100% of Participants).

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*
4.6	7	5	0	0	0

2.) The meeting objectives were met.

Average out of 5	*5. Strongly Agree*	*4. Agree*	*3. Neutral*	*2. Disagree*	*1. Strongly Disagree*
4.6	7	5	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*
4.6	7	5	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	6	6	0	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*
4.5	7	4	1	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	6	6	0	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*
4.5	6	6	0	0	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*
4.7	8	4	0	0	0

Additional Feedback

- Good drawing out the quiet members.

ATTACHMENT 7
OCW DRAFT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PLAN

SUSTAINABLE OYSTER RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EASTERN BAY, MARYLAND

OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the Oyster Coalition Workgroup members for dedicating their time and expertise to this effort. The watermen members were especially valuable in providing historical and practical knowledge of oyster habitat and harvest in Eastern Bay.

Thank you to the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center for providing a meeting space for the Coalition.

Thank you to Guy Spurry for captaining his working vessel for patent tong sampling of oyster habitat in Eastern Bay.

Others…?

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

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.

1.1 History of Oysters in Eastern Bay

This section will include a summary of:

- Historic oyster recruitment
- Historic harvest – including seed program and harvest for market
- Fishery replenishment activities – both historic and current
- Establishment of oyster sanctuaries – including following restoration activities
- Broader environmental conditions that reflect and/or affect oysters – including land use change, water quality
- Seafood economy of the region – including how this changed to response to the above items

1.2 Current Management Framework and Challenges

The Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition succeeds other stakeholder processes that were coordinated by Maryland DNR, the Maryland Oyster Advisory Commission, and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences. All groups were convened to engage oyster stakeholders to reach a consensus on management needs and actions for oyster restoration or production in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay tributaries.

The current focus on Eastern Bay began in 2019 when DNR established a small pilot group of oyster stakeholders to discuss oyster production needs for the fishery and sanctuaries. The intent was to gauge stakeholder input as DNR developed new management priorities for the Bay. …..

In 2020, the state reconvened an advisory commission made up of oyster stakeholders representing industry, federal agencies, NGOs, state elected officials, and the scientific community to evaluate and reach consensus on oyster management priorities for Maryland. The Oyster Advisory Commission (OAC) evaluated over 100 modeled management scenarios for oysters in the Chesapeake Bay. The only management consensus outcome was for the state to collectively plan and undertake a combination of replenishment, restoration, and aquaculture activities in EB over 25 years, with an equal amount of funding ($1M annually) allocated for planting spat in sanctuaries and spat and shell on fishery reefs in addition to current restoration activities. The funding was allocated by State Bill 830/House Bill 1228 during the 2022 legislative session.

The OAC also identified several business practice recommendations, including improving organization and cooperation among groups and integrating projects across oyster production sectors (fishery, aquaculture, restoration). DNR supported this recommendation and agreed that implementing this approach in Eastern Bay would be beneficial.

While these efforts collectively drew attention and funding to support Eastern Bay oyster production, challenges related to overlapping resources, conflicting user interest, and outdated spatial data on oyster habitat necessitated further planning and agreement on how to use these funds most effectively, and how to integrate the new funding into existing activities. The Oyster Recovery Partnership

solicited funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants program to establish the Oyster Coalition Workgroup (OCW) to address these challenges.

The overarching goal in convening the OCW was to develop a strategic plan for optimizing oyster production in Eastern Bay over the long term using a process that supports and creates synergy among all Eastern Bay oyster stakeholders. This was accomplished through (1) a stakeholder-driven, consensus-based process, (2) an updated habitat survey of Eastern Bay that was used to help identify areas suitable for future oyster production, (3) improving stakeholder relationships in the OCW setting, and (4) improving public education of oyster production in Eastern Bay.

1.3 Purpose of the Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan

This Plan provides a framework for the long-term sustainable restoration and management of the oyster resource and ecosystem in Eastern Bay, Maryland. The Plan outlines a set of recommendations intended to be implemented by state and federal agencies, local government, and NGOs working in this region. The Plan also provides guidance for tracking progress to meet the goals and objectives set by the OCW.

The Plan will be submitted to DNR for immediate implementation following final approval by the OCW. Changes to state regulation may be required to implement some recommendations. The OCW encourages DNR to regularly update the stakeholders and continue to incorporate stakeholder input throughout the implementation process.

2.0 Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup

The Oyster Coalition Workgroup (OCW) was convened 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, citizens, 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 was informed by the best available science and shared stakeholder values, and the aim was to establish the economically and ecologically sustainable long-term maintenance and growth of oyster restoration and production in Eastern Bay and its tributaries.

The OCW consisted of 17 members representing 11 interest groups, all of which operate businesses, manage resources, work with the public, or conduct other work in Eastern Bay (Appendix C). Many OCW members represent multiple perspectives. Candidate OCW members were selected from ORP and DNR's local network of partners operating in Eastern Bay and screened through an informal discussion conducted by the project team, where appropriate. OCW members were selected to ensure that they represented the collective interest of their respective organizations and/or constituents.

Oyster Coalition Workgroup Member Perspectives and Affiliations (#)

- Oyster fishery (11)
- Seafood processors (3)
- Aquaculture (6)
- Non-profit/NGO environmental organizations (5)
- Oyster restoration (10)
- Recreational fishing interests (4)
- Biologist/scientist (3)
- Fishery managers (2)
- Federal, state, or local government (4)
- Citizen interested in Chesapeake Bay health (4)
- Other (1 – clam fishery)

The OCW members attended six Coalition meetings between February and December 2024, as well as a community open house in December 2024 (Appendix D). OCW members were also asked to complete a questionnaire during the fall of 2023, prior to the first OCW meeting (Appendix F). The results of the questionnaire were compiled and synthesized to build a foundation for discussion at the first OCW meeting in February. During the OCW meetings, members participated in the development, evaluation, and ranking of recommendations outlined in the following sections. Some OCW members provided additional context, clarity, input, and vision during follow-up discussions when requested by the Project Team. The OCW members also participated in discussions related to the implementation of the Plan, including providing input on the design, interpretation of results, and action items resulting from the supporting Eastern Bay habitat survey, which should be leveraged as a starting point for DNR's implementation of the Plan (Section 6).

All OCW meeting materials are posted on the project webpage (https://www.oysterrecovery.org/our-work/oyster-restoration/easternbaycoalition).

2.1 Consensus-Building Process

The OCW developed the framework, strategies, and actions described in this Plan using a consensus-building process designed and implemented by Facilitated Solutions, LLC (Figure xx, Appendix G). Consensus is a participatory process whereby the members strive for an agreement that all members can accept, support, or agree not to oppose. OCW members evaluated all components of this Plan using the best available science, data, stakeholder knowledge, and decision-support tools for oyster production in Eastern Bay. All components in the Plan were ranked and refined to reach consensus through three iterations using the options evaluation process and worksheets (Appendix G, H). Two additional opportunities for discussion and refinements were provided with the Workgroup's approval of the Draft Plan and adoption of the Final Plan. In cases where the OCW found that 100% acceptance or support was not achievable, final consensus recommendations required at least 75% favorable vote to be included in this package of recommendations.

The OCW developed its recommendations using consensus-building techniques with the assistance of the facilitator. Techniques such as brainstorming, ranking, and prioritizing approaches were used.

OCW members, the project leadership team, and the facilitator were the only participants seated at the table, and primarily only OCW members contributed to discussions. Only OCW members voted on proposals and recommendations. The facilitator or project leadership team provided clarification when needed.

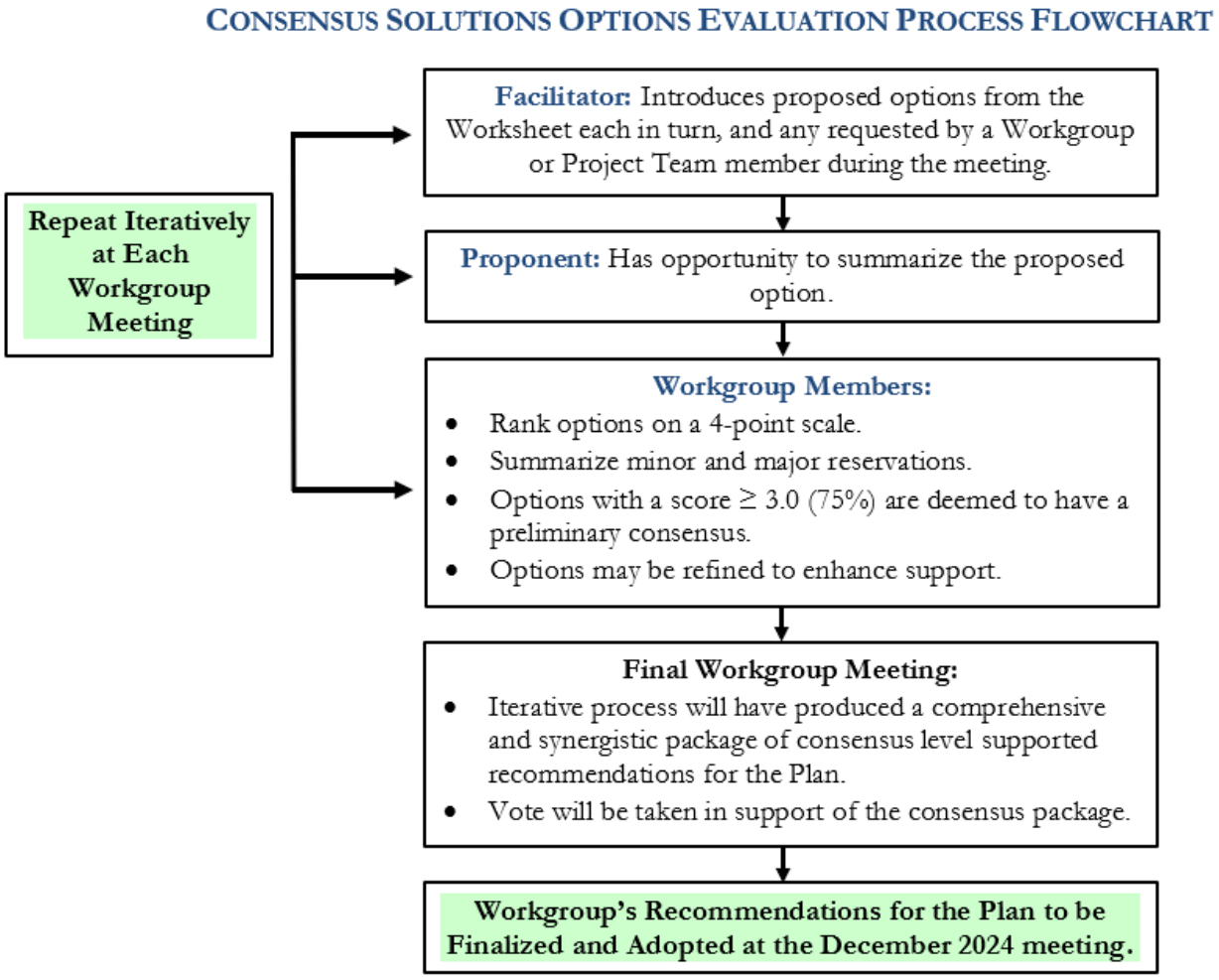


Figure xx. OCW consensus process, developed by and adapted from Facilitated Solutions, LLC.

3.0 Goal Framework and Structure of the Plan

The OCW agreed that to optimize oyster production in EB over the long term, oysters must be (1) enhanced, (2) managed sustainably, and (3) there must be support for these two components from stakeholders and the public. These three themes form the foundation of the OCW's goal framework

Goal A: Enhance the oyster resource in Eastern Bay.
Goal B: Manage the oyster fishery and aquaculture to increase and sustain harvest and a thriving economy.
Goal C: An engaged stakeholder community that supports sustainable oyster restoration and management.

and structure of the Plan, which outlines the components required to achieve the overarching vision for EB.

In the following sections, each goal has an accompanying vision theme, defined outcome, and set of objectives. To achieve these objectives, each goal has a series of strategies with associated actions to implement the strategies. Performance measures to track progress toward the objectives for each goal are listed in Section 5.

Success will require implementing strategies and actions towards objectives under all three goals within the framework collectively – success cannot be achieved by only implementing recommendations from one or a subset of the three goals. The goals were developed to work cohesively, not in isolation.

The framework was adopted unanimously at the first OCW meeting on February 2, 2024 and was revised at the third meeting on May 30, 2024 to ensure that objectives were measurable and concise.

4.0 Recommendations for Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management

The OCW generated consensus recommendations through a total of three iterations of ranking and revisions. The initial recommendations were derived from the initial list of options identified by OCW members at the first meeting in February. The OCW recommendations address key issues related to the three goal areas outlined in Section 3. The OCW recommends that 13 strategies and 42 actions be considered and implemented by DNR or other appropriate agencies to achieve these goals.

Summary of OCW Recommendations

- Improved communication
- Continued need for stakeholder involvement
- Proper siting of enhancement activities
- Substrate needs
- Aquaculture expansion
- Monitoring
- Permitting and regulatory gaps/needs
- Funding
- Adaptive management and accepting new management practices
- Increased enforcement

Several recommendations were identified for Eastern Bay that are also relevant to other tributaries and/or the entire state. These include management, regulatory, and permitting recommendations, as well as recommendations intended to increase participation and sustain the livelihood of the oyster industry.

Another major theme is the need to improve communication throughout the oyster production process. Several discussions centered around the need to increase transparency in the regulatory and permitting processes managed by the state, including for oyster aquaculture. The OCW also recommends improving inter-department and inter-agency communication to streamline these processes. Improved communication with the public and local officials will be key for securing political and financial support for Eastern Bay oyster activities. In addition, several recommendations underscore the continued need for engaging stakeholders in the entire restoration process – including planning, monitoring, and adaptive management – well beyond the timeframe of the OCW itself.

4.1 Goal A. Enhance the Oyster Resource in Eastern Bay

Vision Theme: 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.

Objectives

1. To achieve a healthy and sustainable oyster population in Eastern Bay.
2. To enhance ecosystem services through the restoration of oysters in Eastern Bay.
3. To expand oyster aquaculture in Eastern Bay.

Strategies and Actions

The OCW recommends that six strategies and 18 actions be considered and implemented to enhance the oyster resource in Eastern Bay (Table x). These strategies and actions address the following challenges or themes to achieve the objectives for Goal A:

- Proper siting for enhancement – including the importance of involving stakeholders in the planning and siting process
- Substrate needs – including retaining and reclaiming shell, using alternate substrates, and other sources of shell
- Aquaculture expansion – removing regulatory and stakeholder roadblocks
- Monitoring to understand progress
- Permitting and regulatory gaps/needs
- Securing funding to conduct enhancement activities

Table x. Goal A strategies and actions. The score is listed in parentheses for options not receiving 100% consensus.

Strategy	**Actions**
1. Improve oyster habitat and broodstock in Eastern Bay by relying on scientific and industry expertise and integrating stakeholder input into a restoration plan that covers sanctuaries, harvest areas, and aquaculture.	1A. 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. Funding should not come from existing restoration funds. 1B. 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 and seek any changes to law needed to allow and/or provide for funding. 1C. Identify suitable locations for deploying alternate substrates to improve existing habitat, reduce sedimentation, and improve spat recruitment. 1D. Evaluate restoration practices that will improve oyster broodstock, including moving adult oysters from one

	location in Eastern Bay to another to improve survival and reproduction. 1E. Evaluate opportunities to involve industry in restoration siting and monitoring and outline how contributions will be integrated.
2. Evaluate existing practices to increase the availability of oyster shell for habitat enhancement.	2A. 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. 2B. Evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of using shells produced through aquaculture as a potential new source of shell for restoration. 2C. Evaluate existing practices and implement programs to increase the amount of shell retained in Maryland from oyster harvest and aquaculture in Eastern Bay. 2D. Evaluate and acquire other sources of shell within the state of Maryland and from other locations.
3. 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.	3A. 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. 3B. Collectively generate a list of areas acceptable to fishery and aquaculture stakeholders for new aquaculture leases to avoid future conflict.
4. 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.	[No specific actions identified]
5. 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.	5A. Recommend that DNR improve transparency in shell import and alternate substrate approval permitting process for restoration practices. 5B. Recommend that DNR evaluate and enhance interagency coordination groups to improve coordination and communication between agencies and stakeholders. 5C. DNR should review and update regulations that restrict the expansion of aquaculture on Yates Bars in sanctuaries

	and near SAV beds. At the very minimum, improve transparency in the existing aquaculture permitting process and regulations. *(97.5% consensus)* 5D. DNR should review and update regulations that restrict the expansion of aquaculture on Yates Bars in public fishery areas. At the very minimum, improve transparency in the existing aquaculture permitting process and regulations.
6. Evaluate the cost of existing and proposed enhancement practices that are recommended by the OCW and identify funding for short- and long-term efforts. Include any available resources/references as an Appendix to the OCW's Report (Appendix I).	6A. Allocate money from recreational oyster license purchases to replenish public fishery oyster bars. 6B. 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 that remain within the Eastern Bay System. 6C. Prioritize providing or increasing funding for restoration in sanctuaries that have not yet, or not recently, received restoration.

4.2 Goal B. Manage the Oyster Fishery and Aquaculture to Increase and Sustain Harvest and a Thriving Economy

Vision Theme: 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.

Objectives

1. To achieve an increased level of sustainable oyster harvest from Eastern Bay.
2. To improve recreational and other commercial fisheries and tourism activities in Eastern Bay.

Strategies and Actions

The OCW recommends that four strategies supported by 12 actions be considered and implemented to sustainably manage the oyster fishery and aquaculture in Eastern Bay (Table y). These strategies and actions address the following challenges or themes to a:

- Adaptive management and implementing new management and harvest practices
- Increased enforcement
- Facilitating industry operations

Table y. Goal B strategies and actions. The score is listed in parentheses for options not receiving 100% consensus.

Strategy	**Actions**

1. Evaluate and enhance the current strategy for sustainable management of Eastern Bay oyster resources.	1A. DNR should define and monitor progress towards targets and thresholds for sustainable harvest levels in Eastern Bay 1B. DNR should implement, or enhance as needed, a process to collaborate with stakeholders to develop consensus recommendations for the management of oyster harvest bars based on these thresholds, and should implement appropriate changes in a timely manner. 1C. In the event of adverse impacts from climate change and/or environmental conditions, the appropriate state agencies should adaptively make changes to oyster harvesting regulations as required to maintain public health (e.g., adjustments to season, closures, etc.). 1D. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a pilot project to test a rotational harvest framework within specified sanctuaries by allowing watermen to use their funds to restore and harvest bars in specified sanctuaries where no restoration has been done. Based on the results, consider recategorizing areas in sanctuaries that have not received restoration to serve as the locations selected for potential rotational harvest areas. *(85% consensus)* 1E. Consider and establish a rotational harvest framework in non-productive bottom in fishery areas, incorporating practices such as rotational investment and management of entire oyster bars. 1F. 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) along with a proportional increase in enforcement to ensure compliance. 1G. Evaluate management practices that are implemented successfully in other areas and consider whether they would be appropriate to apply in Eastern Bay.
2. DNR should enhance enforcement and reporting mechanisms that ensure accurate information on oyster harvesting in Eastern Bay.	2A. 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).

	2B. Develop methods to account for illegal and unreported harvest when assessing the effectiveness of restoration and replenishment. 2C. In collaboration with seafood processors, evaluate enhancements to and/or eliminate problems with existing harvest reporting standards.
3. DNR should support leaseholders to develop and implement experimental aquaculture harvest practices and processes.	[No specific actions identified]
4. Forward any OCW recommendations that have state-wide oyster management impacts to the appropriate advisory groups (e.g., OAC, TFAC) for evaluation.	4A. The OCW recommends that OAC and/or TFAC, in collaboration with stakeholder interests, 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. 4B. 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. *(OCW members representing state agencies abstained)*

4.3 Goal C. An Engaged Stakeholder Community That Supports Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management

Vision Theme: 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.

Objectives

1. To achieve a broader awareness and understanding of the natural and cultural value of healthy oyster habitat in Eastern Bay.
2. To secure funds for oyster enhancement in Eastern Bay over the long term.

Strategies and Actions

The OCW recommends that three strategies supported by 12 actions be considered and implemented to engage the broader stakeholder community in Eastern Bay (Table z). These strategies and actions address the following challenges or themes to achieve the objectives for Goal C:

- Education strategies to improve public awareness and perception
- Securing future of oyster industry

Table z. Goal C strategies and actions. The score is listed in parentheses for options not receiving 100% consensus.

Strategy	Actions
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.	1A. Identify strategies to monitor and respond to the spread of misinformation about Chesapeake Bay/Eastern Bay oysters. 1B. Market ecosystem services provided by oysters. 1C. Develop a process to communicate monitoring results to secure future funding for oyster production in Eastern Bay.
2. Establish educational opportunities to improve public awareness of Eastern Bay oyster culture.	2A. 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. 2B. Educate elected officials on challenges and opportunities for the expansion of oyster production in Eastern Bay, including zoning restrictions, right-to-work laws, access to working waterfronts, and opportunities with the oyster BMP. *(OCW members representing state agencies abstained)* 2C. Maintain community restoration programs such as Marylander's Grow Oysters that are primarily designed to be educational for the public. 2D. Improve the market for local oysters by identifying opportunities to engage stakeholders in the preparation and eating of locally caught oysters. 2E. 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. 2F. Increase recreational oyster dive charters/hand tong charters to educate the public about oyster reef ecology and the commercial oyster industry. 2G. Identify technologies that can be used to educate a broader audience about Eastern Bay oyster habitat and culture.

3. Evaluate strategies and incentives to retain people in the commercial oyster industry and remove barriers to young entrants.	3A. 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. 3B. Establish education programs that introduce young people to aspects of the oyster fishery and inspire them to consider a career on the water.

5.0 Performance Metrics

A series of performance metrics were proposed by the project leadership team in collaboration with UMCES and DNR and were evaluated, revised, and ranked by the OCW. The recommended metrics are intended to regularly quantify outcomes and results of the implemented Plan. This is essential to track progress towards the OCW goals and objectives and to ensure that OCW recommendations are implemented successfully.

The exact targets and thresholds for each metric will need to be defined by DNR or the appropriate agency (see Goal A, Strategy 1, Action 1A and Goal B, Strategy 1, Action 1.A), as well as the timeframe for evaluation. Both should be defined in collaboration with stakeholders. For example, for Goal A, Objective 1, the definition of a "healthy" and "sustainable" oyster population in Eastern Bay will need to be specified. The OCW proposed that DNR use historic oyster densities as a benchmark when evaluating what would be reasonable given the current performance of the system. However, the OCW cautions DNR not to be too restrictive and declare success too early in the process – the recommendations provided here are intended to be implemented over the long term.

The OCW recognizes that data types may not currently exist for some of the proposed performance metrics, or there may not be existing capacity to collect some of these data. However, the OCW requests that DNR or the most appropriate agency critically assess opportunities and options to develop methods and capacity to track all proposed metrics. Missing information may unintentionally overestimate success and jeopardize progress.

Lastly, the OCW recognizes that some metrics may not solely be driven by increases in the oyster population. Like the goals outlined in this Plan, the performance metrics are intended to be assessed collectively and to understand the performance of the Eastern Bay system as a whole.

Goal A. Enhance the Oyster Resource in Eastern Bay

Objectives	Recommended Metrics
A1. To achieve a healthy and sustainable oyster population in Eastern Bay.	• Oyster density (m2) – adults, spat, sub-legal • Oyster biomass (m2) • Annual recruitment rate • Annual volume of cultch (bushels)
A2. To enhance ecosystem services through the restoration of oysters in Eastern Bay.	• 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.	• 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)

Goal B. Manage the Oyster Fishery and Aquaculture to Increase and Sustain Harvest and a Thriving Economy

Objectives	**Recommended Metrics**
B1. To achieve an increased level of sustainable oyster harvest from Eastern Bay.	• 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 • 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.	• 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 (e.g., # Queen Anne & Talbot County landing permits, annual boater surveys, recreational fishing surveys or CCA data, economic benefit analysis of increased eco-tourism and recreational activities, and other new data collection approaches) • 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

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.	• Number people engaged – K-12, adults • Number of Eastern Bay oyster educational materials developed (e.g., signage at local environmental centers, lesson plans, etc.) • 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.	• Funds allocated by Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties for oyster restoration, annually • Funds allocated by the state for oyster restoration in Eastern Bay, annually • Community funds raised for oyster restoration, annually (e.g., through QA & Talbot Co crab pot Christmas trees, ORP & ShoreRivers Build-A-Reef partnership, etc.)

6.0 Recommendations for Implementation

6.1 Information Gaps and Challenges to Implementation

- Potential areas that the OCW discussed for expanding aquaculture should be evaluated further with a broader group of stakeholders, including representation from the crab, clam, and other commercial industries.
- Changes to regulations and permitting processes will be required to implement some of the recommendations. DNR should embrace and prioritize this for achieving outcomes for Eastern Bay most effectively and with stakeholder support.

7.0 References

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fishing and Boating Services and the Oyster Advisory Commission in consultation with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. 2021. Final Report: Oyster Advisory Commission Consensus Recommendations on Oyster Management. A report to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly as required by Natural Resources Article 4-215 and 4-204. Submitted December 1, 2021.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix A. Key to Common Abbreviations

CBEC – Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
CBF – Chesapeake Bay Foundation
EB – Eastern Bay, Maryland
EPA – US Environmental Protection Agency
HPL – UMCES Horn Point Laboratory
MDE – Maryland Department of the Environment
MDNR – Maryland Department of Natural Resources
NGO – Non-governmental organization
NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOB – Natural Oyster Bar
NRCS – Natural Resource Conservation Service
OAC – Oyster Advisory Commission
OCW – Eastern Bay Oyster Coalition Workgroup
ORP – Oyster Recovery Partnership
Plan – Sustainable Oyster Restoration and Management Plan for Eastern Bay, Maryland
PSFA – Public Shellfish Fishery Area
QAC – Queen Anne's 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
YB – Yates Bar

Appendix B. Glossary of Oyster Coalition Workgroup 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).

Goal – A statement of the project's purpose to move towards the vision expressed in 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 – How, in concrete terms, 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 – The expected results 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 resource – 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 metrics/measures – The regular, quantitative assessment of outcomes and results, which generates reliable data on the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of programs and plans.

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. For the OCW, restoration refers to practices conducted to enhance oysters in sanctuaries, harvest areas, and through aquaculture.

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 Oyster Coalition Workgroup stakeholders include but are not limited to aquaculture, business, economic development, tourism, environmental, citizen groups, recreational fishing, commercial seafood industry, regional groups, local, state, and federal government.

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.

Appendix C. Oyster Coalition Workgroup Membership and Leadership Team

OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION	
MEMBERS (#17)	**AFFILIATION**
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO): ENVIRONMENTAL AND CITIZEN GROUPS	
18. Ben Ford	ShoreRivers (Miles-Wye Riverkeeper)
19. Vicki Paulas	Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
20. Ward Slacum	Oyster Recovery Partnership
21. Dan Sweeney	The Nature Conservancy
RECREATIONAL FISHING	
22. Mark Galasso	Tuna the Tide Charter Service
SEAFOOD INDUSTRY	
23. Scott Budden	Orchard Point Oyster Company, Aquaculture
24. Moochie Gilmer	Queen Anne County Waterman, Clam Harvester
25. Nick Hargrove	Wittman Wharf Seafood, Talbot County Waterman and Aquaculture
26. Jeff Harrison	Talbot County Waterman
27. Richard Jones	Queen Anne County Waterman
28. Matt Latham	Queen Anne County Waterman
29. Jason Ruth	Harris Seafood Company, Queen Anne County Waterman and Aquaculture
30. Troy Wilkins	Queen Anne County Waterman (Designated Alternate: Mike Eber)
LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT	
31. Kathy Brohawn	Maryland Department of Environment
32. Brian Callam	Maryland DNR – Aquaculture & Industry Enhancement Division
33. Chris Judy	Maryland DNR – Shellfish Division (Designated Alternate: Jodi Baxter)
34. Jim Moran	Queen Anne County
OYSTER COALITION WORKGROUP LEADERSHIP TEAM	
OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP	
Olivia Caretti	Coastal Restoration Program Manager
Beth Franks	Senior Manager
Ward Slacum	Executive Director
FACILITATED SOLUTIONS, LLC	
Jeff Blair	Workgroup Facilitator, Consensus Building, and Process Design

Appendix D. Oyster Coalition Workgroup Meeting Schedule and Workplan

Appendix E. Oyster Coalition Workgroup Operational and Procedural Guidelines

The Operational and Procedural Policies and Guidelines were unanimously adopted by the first OCW meeting on February 2, 2024. The adopted policies and guidelines can be accessed on the project webpage: https://www.oysterrecovery.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Oyster-Coalition-Workgroup-Operational-and-Procedural-Policies-and-Guidelines-Adopted_2-February-2024.pdf.

Appendix F. Oyster Coalition Workgroup Pre-Meeting Questionnaire Summary Report

A questionnaire was administered to the OCW members in advance of the Organizational Meeting scheduled for February 2-3, 2024. The questionnaire was designed to solicit an initial set of key issues and questions from stakeholders. The OCW members responses were summarized in the summary report on the project webpage and incorporated into the organizational meeting packet. Themes from the responses formed the foundation of the initial draft goals, vision themes, outcomes, and objectives that were evaluated through the consensus-building process.

Summary report: https://www.oysterrecovery.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Eastern-Bay-OCW-Questionnaire-Summary-Report-1.pdf.

Appendix G. Oyster Coalition Workgroup Options Evaluation and Consensus Process

Acceptability Ranking Exercise Overview and Ranking Scale

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

OCW members were requested to 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 was not able to offer refinements to make the option acceptable (4) or acceptable with minor reservations (3) they were requested to consider ranking the option with a 1 (not acceptable). The following scale will be utilized for the ranking exercises:

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

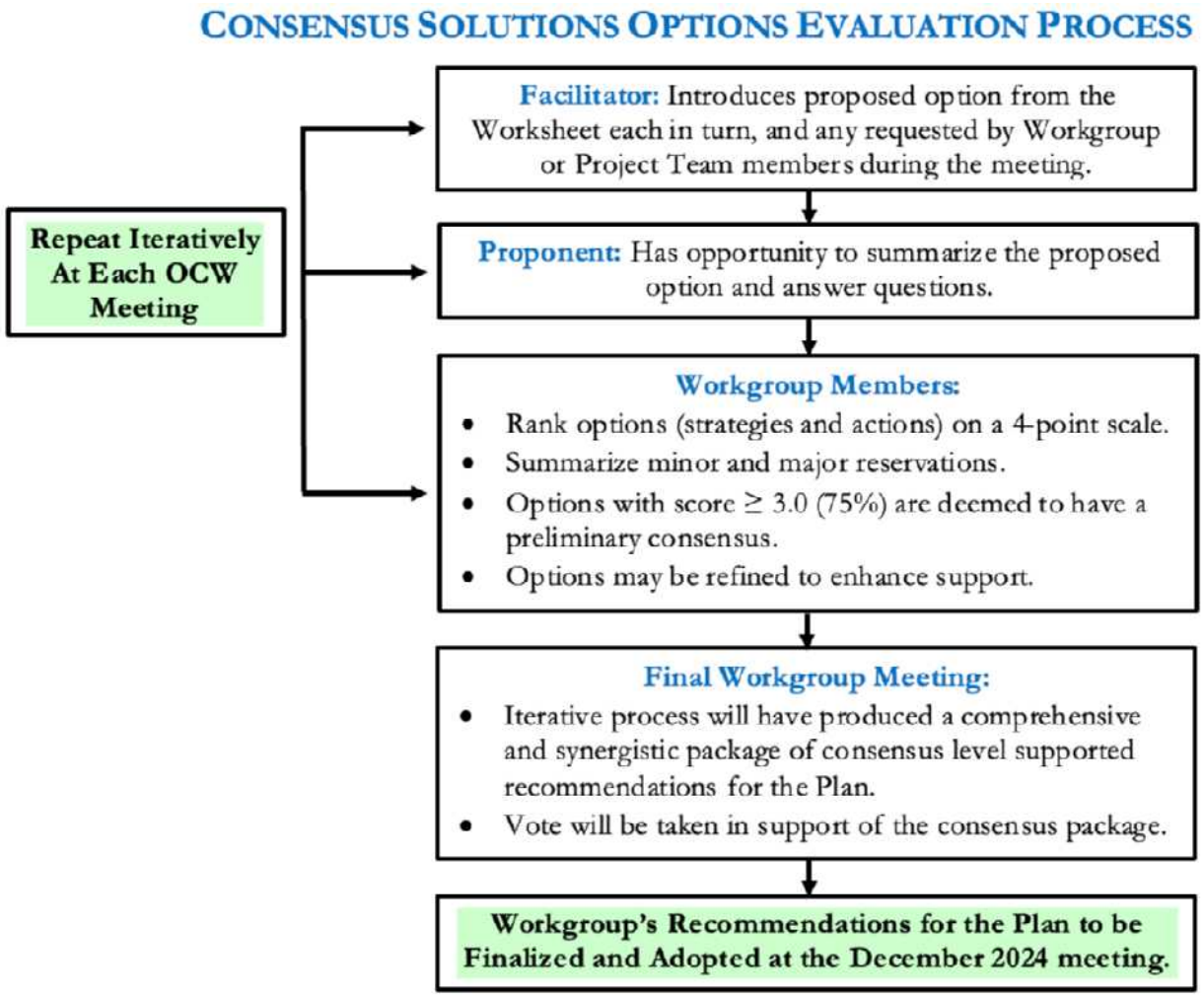
CRITERIA TO CONSIDER FOR PROPOSING AND EVALUATING OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
CRITERIA	**EXPLANATION**
IMPORTANCE	Is this proposed option critically important to achieving the goals of the *Restoration and Management Plan*?
TIMELY	Will things get worse if the proposed option is not implemented?
FEASIBLE/ PRACTICAL	Is it likely that the proposed option will be successful in achieving the relevant goals of the *Restoration and Management Plan*?
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?

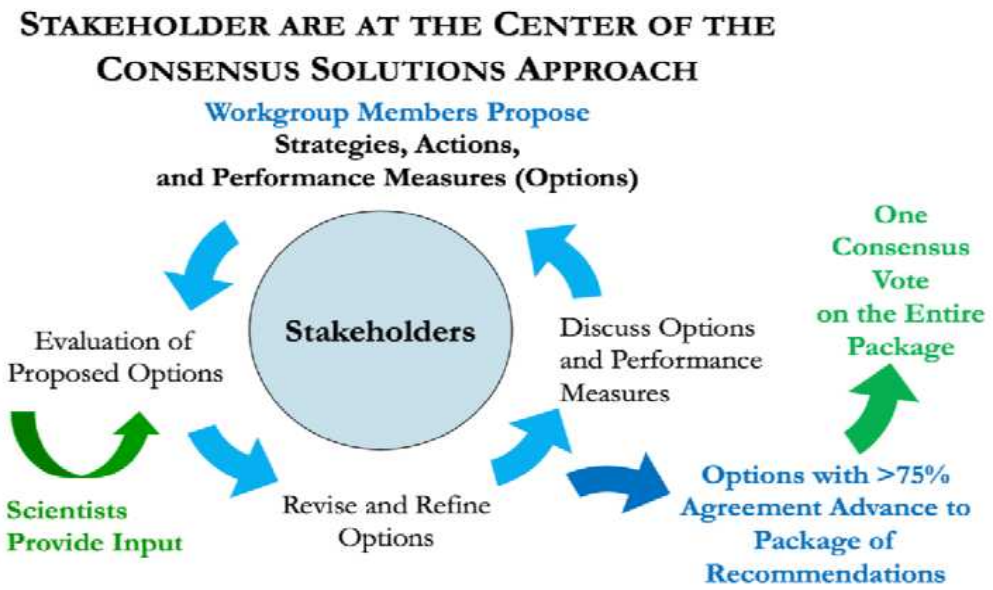
The *Options Acceptability Ranking Exercise Process* and the *Consensus Solutions Process* was designed by Jeff Blair of Facilitated Solutions, LLC. Information at: http://facilitatedsolutions.org.

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.





Appendix H. Options Evaluation Worksheet from the July 31-August 1, 2024, Meeting with Complete Rankings

OPTIONS ACCEPTABILITY RANKING RESULTS

TOTAL NUMBER OF STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: ≥75% SUPPORT

13 STRATEGIES AND 42 ACTIONS

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

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: ≥75% SUPPORT

6 STRATEGIES AND 18 ACTIONS

Strategy A-1. Improve oyster habitat and broodstock in Eastern Bay by relying on scientific and industry expertise and integrating stakeholder input into a restoration plan that covers sanctuaries, harvest areas, and aquaculture.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 1.A. 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. Funding should not come from existing restoration funds. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Comments:

- Note that habitat mapping and monitoring cost money. Recommend in Plan that cost of this should not come from money already allocated to restoration (i.e., separate funding needs to be secured)

Action 1.B. 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 and seek any changes to law needed to allow and/or provide for funding.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 1.C. Identify suitable locations for deploying alternate substrates to improve existing habitat, reduce sedimentation, and improve spat recruitment. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 1.D. Evaluate restoration practices that will improve oyster broodstock, including moving adult oysters from one location in Eastern Bay to another to improve survival and reproduction.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 1.E Evaluate opportunities to involve industry in restoration siting and monitoring and outline how contributions will be integrated. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Strategy A-2. Evaluate existing practices to increase the availability of oyster shell for habitat enhancement. Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024

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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.B. Evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of using shells produced through aquaculture as a potential new source of shell for restoration. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.C. Evaluate existing practices and implement programs to increase the amount of shell retained in Maryland from oyster harvest and aquaculture in Eastern Bay.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 2.D. Evaluate and acquire other sources of shell within the state of Maryland and from other locations. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Strategy A-3. 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. Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024

Action 3.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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 3.B. Collectively generate a list of areas acceptable to fishery and aquaculture stakeholders for new aquaculture leases to avoid future conflict.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Comments:

- Is this something the OCW should be discussing that goes in the recommendations, or do we want the action itself to be the recommendation?
- PSFAs/regulatory boundaries will need to change before areas can be opened. Also need input from other industry members (crabbers, clammers, other fisheries). Some people in the room from these stakeholder groups so can discuss some options based on habitat maps (see Sections VI and XI).

Strategy A-4. 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.
Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024

Strategy A-5. 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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 5.A. Recommend that DNR improve transparency in shell import and alternate substrate approval permitting process for restoration practices. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 5.B. Recommend that DNR evaluate and enhance interagency coordination groups to improve coordination and communication between agencies and stakeholders.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 5.C. DNR should review and update regulations that restrict the expansion of aquaculture on Yates Bars in sanctuaries and near SAV beds. At the very minimum, improve transparency in the existing aquaculture permitting process and regulations. **Ranked 3.9 As Revised – May 29, 2024**

Action 5.D. DNR should review and update regulations that restrict the expansion of aquaculture on Yates Bars in public fishery areas. At the very minimum, improve transparency in the existing aquaculture permitting process and regulations.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Strategy A-6. Evaluate the cost of existing and proposed enhancement practices that are recommended by the OCW and identify funding for short- and long-term efforts. Include any available resources/references as an Appendix to the OCW's Report. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 6.A. Allocate money from recreational oyster license purchases to replenish public fishery oyster bars.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 6.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 that remain within the Eastern Bay System. ~~the same watershed~~.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*

4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Comments:

- Watershed needs to be defined – what is the appropriate spatial scale/watershed classification?
- Suggestion to specify to the nearest oyster bar
- Recommend to change "in Eastern Bay" since that would provide a boundary to the region, which is the focus of this recommendation anyway

Action 6.C. Prioritize providing or increasing funding for restoration in sanctuaries that have not yet, or not recently, received restoration.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

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

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: ≥75% SUPPORT

4 STRATEGIES AND 12 ACTIONS

Strategy B-1. Evaluate and enhance the current strategy for sustainable management of Eastern Bay oyster resources. Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024

Action 1.A. DNR should define and monitor progress towards targets and thresholds for sustainable harvest levels in Eastern Bay. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 1.B. DNR should implement, or enhance as needed, a process to work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop consensus recommendations for the management of oyster harvest bars based on these thresholds and should implement appropriate changes in a timely manner.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 1.C. In the event of adverse impacts from climate change and/or environmental conditions, the appropriate state agencies should adaptively make changes to oyster harvesting regulations as required to maintain public health (e.g., adjustments to season, closures, etc.).

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 1.D. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a pilot project to test a rotational harvest framework within specified sanctuaries by allowing watermen to use their funds to restore and harvest bars in specified sanctuaries where no restoration has been done. Based on the results, consider recategorizing areas in sanctuaries that have not received restoration to serve as the locations selected for potential rotational harvest areas.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
3.4	9	2	3	0

Ranked 3.4 – August 1, 2024

Comments:

- The change is an improvement, but still concerns about doing this (1) in a sanctuary at all and (2) in sanctuaries where no restoration was done. Does not mean that those sanctuaries are not productive or that restoration will not be successful. Taking these off the table feels irresponsible. Should instead evaluate areas where there was an investment and where it is not working.
- Establishing a pilot project would hopefully make the intent more clear – suggestion to move this up in the recommendation.

Action 1.E. Consider and establish a rotational harvest framework in non-productive bottom in fishery areas, incorporating practices such as rotational investment and management of entire oyster bars. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 1.F. 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) along with a proportional increase in enforcement to ensure compliance.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Strategy B-2. DNR should enhance enforcement and reporting mechanisms that ensure accurate information on oyster harvesting in Eastern Bay. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.A. 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). **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.B. Develop methods to account for illegal and unreported harvest when assessing the effectiveness of restoration and replenishment. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.C. In collaboration with seafood processors, evaluate enhancements to and/or eliminate problems with existing harvest reporting standards.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Strategy B-3. DNR should support leaseholders to develop and implement experimental aquaculture harvest practices and processes. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Strategy B-4. Forward any OCW recommendations that have state-wide oyster management impacts to the appropriate advisory groups (e.g., OAC, TFAC) for evaluation.

AVERAGE	*4= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 4.A. The OCW recommends that OAC and/or TFAC, in collaboration with stakeholder interests, 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= Acceptable*	*3= Minor Reservations*	*2= Major Reservations*	*1= Not Acceptable*
4.0	14	0	0	0

Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

Action 4.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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024 with the state agencies abstaining.**

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

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS LEVEL OF SUPPORT: ≥75% SUPPORT

3 STRATEGIES AND 12 ACTIONS

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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 1.A. Identify strategies to monitor and respond to the spread of misinformation about Chesapeake Bay/Eastern Bay oysters. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 1.B. Market ecosystem services provided by oysters. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 1.C. Develop a process to communicate monitoring results to secure future funding for oyster production in Eastern Bay. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Strategy C-2. Establish educational opportunities to improve public awareness of Eastern Bay oyster culture. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.B. Educate elected officials on challenges and opportunities for the expansion of oyster production in Eastern Bay, including zoning restrictions, right-to-work laws, access to working waterfronts, and opportunities with the oyster BMP. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024 with DNR abstaining.**

Action 2.C. Maintain community restoration programs such as Marylander's Grow Oysters that are primarily designed to be educational for the public. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.D. Improve the market for local oysters by identifying opportunities to engage stakeholders in the preparation and eating of locally caught oysters. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.F. Increase recreational oyster dive charters/hand tong charters to educate the public about oyster reef ecology and the commercial oyster industry. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Action 2.G. Identify technologies that can be used to educate a broader audience about Eastern Bay oyster habitat and culture. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

Strategy C-3. Evaluate strategies and incentives to retain people in the commercial oyster industry and remove barriers to young entrants. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

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. **Ranked 4.0 – May 29, 2024**

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.**

Meeting #3 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.

Workgroup Action
• Ranked 1.7 – Failed to achieve consensus level of support. • Habitat should remain in sanctuaries

Meeting #3 Action 6.C. (*previous Goal B, Action 6.A.*) Invest public funds equitably (not necessarily equally) between sanctuaries and public fishery areas.

Workgroup Action
• Ranked 2.8 – Failed to achieve consensus level of support. • Major concern with using public funds to support private industry (i.e., fishery is a business). Multiple similar comments. • The requirements of the legislation already provide for this.

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.

Workgroup Action
• Ranked 1.3 (March 29-30, 2024) – Failed to achieve consensus level of support • 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 them 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, • This action has been broken into two more suitable actions which are listed in the rankings above.

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
• 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
• 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
• 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.

Meeting #3 Action 2.G. Improve education and accountability of recreational harvesters by establishing and enforcing a recreational oyster license.

Workgroup Action
• This has already been implemented and is not needed.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES ACCEPTABILITY RANKING RESULTS
ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY 1 AUGUST 2024

GOAL A – ENHANCE THE OYSTER RESOURCE IN EASTERN BAY	
OBJECTIVES	**RECOMMENDED METRICS**
A1) To achieve a healthy and sustainable oyster population in Eastern Bay.	• Oyster density (m2) – adults, spat, sub-legal • Oyster biomass (m2) • Annual recruitment rate • Annual volume of cultch (bushels)
A2) To enhance ecosystem services through the restoration of oysters in Eastern Bay.	• 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.	• 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)

Goal A Performance Measures Ranked 4.0 – August 1, 2024

GOAL B – MANAGE THE OYSTER FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE TO INCREASE AND SUSTAIN HARVEST AND A THRIVING ECONOMY	
OBJECTIVES	**RECOMMENDED METRICS**
B1) To achieve an increased level of sustainable oyster harvest from Eastern Bay.	• 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 • 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.	• 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 (e.g., # Queen Anne & Talbot County landing permits, annual boater surveys, recreational fishing surveys or CCA data, economic benefit analysis of increased eco-tourism and recreational activities, and other new data collection approaches) • 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

Goal B Performance Measures Ranked 4.0 – May 30, 2024

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.	• Number people engaged – K-12, adults

	• Number of Eastern Bay oyster educational materials developed (e.g., signage at local environmental centers, lesson plans, etc.) • 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.	• Funds allocated by Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties for oyster restoration, annually • Funds allocated by the state for oyster restoration in Eastern Bay, annually • Community funds raised for oyster restoration, annually (e.g., through QA & Talbot Co crab pot Christmas trees, ORP & ShoreRivers Build-A-Reef partnership, etc.)

Goal C Performance Measures Ranked 4.0 – May 30, 2024

Appendix I. Resources for Implementation of the Plan

The OCW generated a list of resources that can be leveraged to create an engaged and supportive stakeholder community and help implement some of the strategies and actions outlined in this Plan. The resources are intended to support oyster production beyond the conclusion of the OCW in December 2024. These resources include grant opportunities, local businesses, companies, local experts, nonprofits, and other organizations that can be called upon to build a sense of community and support around the sustainable restoration, harvest, and management of oysters in Eastern Bay.

Organization	**Role**
Wye Research and Education Center/MD Aquaculture Extension, Wye Mills, MD	Education and outreach support
NOAA Oxford Laboratory, located in Talbot County, MD	Research and monitoring support
Talbot County Council	$50k to Eastern Bay oyster enhancement, ongoing for 5 years
ShoreRivers	Marylanders Grow Oysters – 70 growers, waterfront property owners participating
Oyster Recovery Partnership	MGO (in partnership with ShoreRivers), public engagement Resources to engage public officials in restoration
Queen Anne County Watermen Association	Funds raised through Christmas Tree basket sales pledged to supplement fishery enhancement (~$30k/year)
Queen Anne County	County budgets $10k/year for oyster restoration (in fishery) Queen Anne County has installed solar arrays generating property tax revenues for conservation purposes and matching funds up to $12M are available. When the details are finalized Queen Anne County will decide how much additional money willing to invest in oyster planting.
Talbot Watermen Association (non-profit)	Building fundraising capabilities – public donations towards restoration
The Nature Conservancy	Commitment to support aquaculture and fisheries enhancement Commitment to participate in advisory committees/stakeholder groups
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum	Education, cultural history of fishery, ecosystem services of oysters. Would likely be interested in providing education and outreach about EB OCW Plan

Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center	Enhance curriculum to integrate historic focus on fishery in EB (this is an objective of ORP's funding from NFWF for the Coalition)
Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO)	**Mission to serve the State's commercial farming, forestry, and seafood industries. Should be contacted to determine how they might provide resources, including** the possibility of grant or loan funding for aquaculture and/or shucking houses
Carteret County Community College Aquaculture Technology Program, Morehead City, NC	Existing and well-developed program to train individuals seeking to enter the aquaculture industry. Could be used as a model for a pilot program aimed at reducing barriers to entry in Eastern Bay/MD (https://catalog.carteret.edu/aquaculture-technology)
USDA NRCS program	Programs that invest money in aquaculture expansion and best practices – for private lease holders
Ratcliff Foundation	Have historically provided support for oyster industry, including funding to build and maintain facilities, training programs, and industry research

Appendix J. Habitat Survey Methods and Oyster Habitat Maps

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 Florid 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 deigning 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.***