



Blue Crab Industry Design Team Off and Running

After months of industry discussion and coordination with EDF, a voluntary group of waterman representatives have kicked off the Blue Crab Industry Design Team effort that will evaluate and discuss priorities, goals and management tools for the commercial blue crab fishery.

The Blue Crab Design Team is charged with thinking long-term and assessing what the future of Maryland's commercial crab fishery can look like. Working with a facilitator, EDF and external experts, and in consultation with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, team members will work together to establish goals and priorities for the industry and reach consensus on an industry proposal that sets forth a constructive path forward.

This effort will include a review of alternative management approaches that are appropriate for

the blue crab fishery as well as various tools (reporting techniques, marketing, branding and other communication strategies) that can help achieve success for watermen and their businesses in Maryland. The membership of the Blue Crab Design Team was selected by the industry through county leadership and is intended to be representative of the diverse regions, gears and interests within the commercial crab fishery. Each region is represented by two watermen per county, one being the principal member.

Each region's representatives were selected to have appropriate gear, and location representation as well as age diversity. In addition, the commercial watermen associations and seafood industry leaders are a part of the team.

The kick-off meeting on March 2, 2011 resulted in productive discussions among the team.

Continue

Welcome to Chesapeake Solutions

Welcome to the fourth issue of Chesapeake Solutions, EDF's newsletter about our work in the Chesapeake Bay. This newsletter is designed to help keep you informed and up to date on all of the developments regarding our work in the region, including the Blue Crab Fishery Management project.

We look forward to continued collaboration with all of the watermen with whom we've worked to date, along with those we've yet to meet, as we explore the future possibilities for alternative fisheries management in the Chesapeake Bay. Please don't hesitate to contact us, Matt Mullin or Kate Culzoni, at any time.

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Resources

www.edf.org

www.edf.org/catchsharesnet

www.edf.org/catchsharedesigncenter

www.marylandwatermen.com

www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/

www.calvertwatermen.org/

Blue Crab Industry Design Team Off and Running, *continued*

Team members discussed operating guidelines and schedules and were presented with management principles by the Department of Natural Resources. The group then began to discuss high priority challenges to address and ways to overcome them.

The discussion included:

- Industry action to improve accountability and reporting
- Ways to enhance coordination among watermen, managers and other strategic partners
- The need to find innovative ways to improve public confidence of commercial fishing industry in Maryland
- Management actions that need to promote diversity, profitability, flexibility and sustainability for crabs and crabbers

Team members highlighted the unique opportunity for the industry to work together to consider and craft its own recommendations for the future in the face of on-going industry challenges. EDF remains excited to be part of this effort and will continue to support the Design Team in achieving its goals throughout the process.

As decided at the first meeting, future meetings will occur on the first Wednesday of each month beginning at 6:30pm. The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Express in Grasonville. If you would like to receive regular updates on the Design Team meetings and progress, please contact:

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Local Watermen, Seafood Buyer Represent Maryland in Global Seafood Summit

Over the past year, EDF has heard loud and clear that one of the biggest challenges of the blue crab industry was the lack of control on the marketing, branding and product differentiation of Maryland crabs. Watermen have explained that no matter what management system is put in place, the amount of crab supply from other states would continue to be a challenge in matching price with the quality taste of crabs in the Chesapeake. In direct response to those concerns, team members from EDF invited some Maryland watermen to attend the annual Seafood Summit in late January in Vancouver.

The Seafood Summit is a global event that attracted representatives ranging from high end retailers like Wegmans and Whole Foods, national seafood buyers, renowned chefs and journalists to conservation organizations, industry associations and government leaders. Participants met to discuss the transformation of the seafood marketplace into an industry that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable for consumers, harvesters, communities and the resource.

The workshops, panels and presentations included information on community-based marketing tools like Community Supported Fishing and ways to add value and confidence in the seafood supply chain using traceability tools that can tell a story about where the fish came from and how they were harvested. Maryland

watermen shared their stories, history and culture of the commercial fishing industry with interested buyers, industry representatives and organizations. In addition, the local participants were able to gather knowledge from seafood experts around the world, connect with potential partners, and have information and opportunities to bring back to their industry colleagues.

The goal of the event was to begin creating momentum to reinvigorate the seafood marketing strategy for the Maryland fishing industry. Through innovation and vision, progress can be made to improve the entire value chain and bring additional profits for all types of blue crab businesses in the important fishing communities around the Bay.

"I can see how some of the stuff we learned this week could help our industry," commented Chris Lingerman, owner of Chester River Seafood in Rock Hall, MD.

One outcome of the trip was the acknowledgement that with better branding, improved management and the highlighted importance of fishing communities, watermen have the opportunity to attract a lot of attention and potential business to the industry and the state. 