STAC Workshop Proposal

Exploring Alternative Management Strategies for Chesapeake Bay Fisheries

Background

Chesapeake Bay fisheries management includes a variety of standard input and output controls determined by the responsible management agency. Input controls include limited entry on the number of license holders in a fishery, limitations on the amount of gear to be employed, restrictions on where gear can be employed, other gear restrictions such as mesh sizes, and limits on fishing dates. Output controls consist of size limits and quotas. In recent years in domestic and international fisheries, innovative management practices have been employed that seek to improve the efficiency of the fishery while protecting the resource stock and resulting in higher net benefits from fishing to society. These newly applied management techniques include individual fishery (or transferable) quotas (IFQ/ITQ, territorial use rights for fisheries (TURFs) and community development quotas (CDQs). Additionally, in some fisheries there has been experimentation with varying degrees of management power being shared with stakeholder groups, or comanagement.

One of the earliest experiments with ITQs was in the mid-Atlantic surf clam fishery. This fishery was extremely over-capitalized requiring regulations that limited fishing to one or two days per week. Following the introduction of ITQs the fleet size was reduced from about 150 vessels to less than 20, and the boats could now be utilized efficiently. Another example of an ITQ fishery is for Pacific halibut. This fishery used to operate only 1-2 days per year, overwhelming the processing capability, reducing the quality of the catch and resulting in little fresh halibut being available to consumers. An ITQ in this fishery has resulted in a much longer fishing season with high value fresh halibut available over an extended period. An example that may be relevant for management of Chesapeake Bay blue crab is the transferable trap limit and buy back program that has been applied to the Florida spiny lobster fishery.

While there are many benefits from these alternative management techniques, there are concerns as well. In particular, the initial allocation of an ITQ can be a windfall for a few fishermen and create resentment among others. There may be other factors such as enforceability that make these alternatives less appealing when applied under certain circumstances. Some of the benefits and concerns of alternative management have been addressed in a National Research Council report: Sharing the Fish: Toward a National Policy on Individual Fishing Quotas, and a companion report on CDQs, The Community Development Quota Program in Alaska. Another NRC report, "Sustaining Marine Fisheries" also addresses the needs for alternative management, especially "rights-based management" as a way to reduce overcapacity, the major problem that the NRC report identified with respect to overfishing.

Workshop Concept

A 2-day workshop to be held in the June-July period, 2000, would bring in experts involved in the development, design and application of alternative management

strategies in a variety of fisheries to meet with their counterparts involved in Chesapeake Bay fisheries management. Presentations will be made by management agency personnel, stakeholder groups (commercial and recreational fishermen, seafood processors, environmentalists, etc.) and academicians in fields related to fisheries management (e.g. fishery science, economics, anthropology, etc). Breakout groups will consider the potential application of these techniques to Chesapeake Bay fisheries. The presentation format and breakout group discussions will be determined by the workshop steering committee.

Workshop Products

The primary goal of the workshop is to educate the Chesapeake Bay fisheries management community on the potential for adopting alternative management approaches to Chesapeake Bay fisheries. A workshop report will include brief summaries of the presentations and the recommendations of the breakout groups. Breakout groups will be asked to examine specific management alternatives or to look at specific such as blue crab and striped bass. Based on workshop recommendations, STAC members would work with the Living Resources Subcommittee to incorporate a process to explore alternative management techniques in Chesapeake Bay Fishery Management Plans.

Budget

$10,000 – Provide meeting venue ($1,800) and travel expense payment for up to 6 invitees (@ $1,200 per person).

$5,000 requested from STAC

$5,000 to be requested from the Chesapeake Bay Commission's Bi-State Blue Crab Advisory Committee.

We will also approach the Living Resources Subcommittee for co-sponsorship.

Workshop Size – Approximately 50 persons

Workshop Convenors and Steering Committee

Douglas Lipton – University of Maryland College Park

Ed Houde – University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

Judith Freeman – NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office

(With approval we will identify additional steering committee members.)