

Virginia Saltwater Sportfishing Association (VSSA)

<http://joinvssa.org/> <http://ifishva.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lfishVA/>
ifishva@gmail.com

Subject: Meeting Minutes – Artificial Reef Committee July 17, 2018

The first meeting for the Virginia Artificial Reef Committee met on Tuesday, July 17, 2018 from 7 pm to 8 pm via teleconference. Committee members in attendance included:

- Mike Avery
- Kyle Krabill
- Phillip Fahy
- Jerry Hughes
- Curtis Tomlin
- Bob Reed
- Don Mauzy

Committee members introduced themselves. Mike Avery provide a broad overview of the intent of the committee. VSSA believes that a separate organization such as a non-profit like VSSA can assist, coordinate, fund raise, and organize efforts to restart Virginia's Artificial Reef program which has been stagnant and neglected for a number of years. This committee will be an exploratory committee to determine the feasibility of VSSA, as a non-profit, to restart, rebuild, and fund Virginia's artificial reef program. VMRC is the lead state agency but year after year VMRC has been subjected to budget cuts just like all state agencies has in the past. Our license funds keep the program going but now only minimal effort and funding is taking place at the state level. We see other states building more inshore and offshore reefs, yet Virginia remains stagnant in this area. This committee will be a no more than 6-month effort to put together a plan of action on how (and if) VSSA can assist our state agencies for the artificial reef program. This exploratory committee will:

1. Determine the feasibility of a non-profit (VSSA) leading efforts to rebuild - restart the Virginia Artificial Reef Program.
2. Layout the local, state, and federal regulatory requirements for such a program.
3. Explore options for funding and leveraging contracts / contractors for reef material.
4. Outline the manpower requirements (mostly volunteer) to achieve the goals.
5. Outline (in broad terms) for new material for existing reefs and need for new reefs both inshore and offshore.
6. Write a plan of action for VSSA to consider taking action by the end of the 6-month effort.

Here are some tasks (Due by Aug 21) for committee members per the discussion:

- Bob – Lay out the local, state, and federal regulations that need to be followed to both add to an existing reef and build a new reef in a new location.
- Kyle – Outline what other states are doing for their reef programs (see enclosure for results so far)

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- Don – Broadly outline the cost and effort and how best can we leverage contracts to dispose of materials as part of a contract.
- All – Who should VSSA partner and coordinate with such as (VMRC, COE, Ocean City Reef Foundation, VIMS, Fishing Clubs etc.)

Conversations with VMRC Reef Coordinator (Alicia Nelson) indicate that adding to existing reefs is a relatively straight forward process. No additional permits are needed as the reefs are already permitted. VMRC would need to inspect the material to ensure no hazardous material exists, then supervise the deployment into an existing Virginia reef location. The best way to handle the process is VSSA finds or funds the material and pays for the contractor (barge operator) to deploy the material. No money would go to VMRC as that complicates the process with procurement rules. Creating a new reef is a different matter as the approval process is long and complicated. VSSA will investigate the process and report back.

VSSA Artificial Reef Meeting Schedule (3rd Tuesday of each month)

- August 21 7 pm to 8 pm
- September 18 7 pm to 8 pm
- October 16 7 pm to 8 pm
- November 20 7 pm to 8 pm
- December 18 7 pm to 8 pm

*Dial in code sent to members via email.

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Extra Reading:

From Kyle: Per our talk last night, here are some links that provide background information on the process of permitting and building an artificial reef. Florida has a nice pdf document explaining how they do it, check this link. This is the most clearly spelled out path I have found yet.

<https://nmsfloridakeys.blob.core.windows.net/floridakeys-prod/media/archive/sac/othermaterials/20150217ahacoe.pdf>

The National artificial reef workshop is actually held in Alexandria Virginia each year, here is a link to the website for that workshop, some good background information here but nothing is spelled out on how to get started.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/recreational-fishing/national-artificial-reef-workshop>

This is the latest guide I could find (2007) on how the whole process works, issued by NOAA. Some very good information here.

<https://www.bsee.gov/sites/bsee.gov/files/research-other//narpwcover3.pdf>

And here is the document describing permitting for reef building in navigable waters
<http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Portals/39/docs/regulatory/regs/33cfr322.pdf>

lastly if we ever intend to use a old ship / barge (like was done with the liberty ships off Wachapreage and other areas) we have to follow the EPA guidelines on ocean vessel dumping found here

<https://www.epa.gov/ocean-dumping/disposal-vessels-sea>

I have reached out to Alicia Nelson at VMRC who is in charge of the Artificial reef program for Virginia and will start asking a few questions. I have also sent an email to Capt Monty Hawkins of the OC reef foundation (ocreef.org) To tell him what we are trying to do and get some of his contacts at the ACOE and any other federal agencies that we will need to get approval with.

Some key points below, note the required pre and post surveys, that will cost.

Minimum vertical clearance & buffer areas

Deployment methodologies

Survey areas (Pre & Post)

Reef material must be effective for a minimum of a 25 year storm event

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Vessels equal to or larger than 60 ft. at a 50-year storm event
Structure must be stable & not move or break up with resultant loss of habitat
The Permittee shall be responsible for the ownership, maintenance & liability of the project site.

Weigh at least 500 pounds

Clean – no asphalt, creosote, or other toxic residues

No free floating material or other deleterious substances

Designed, selected and deployed to avoid entrapping marine life

Heavy gauge ferrous & vessels that equal or exceed 60 ft. hull length, shall be prepared and deployed in accordance with all applicable U. S. Coast Guard, EPA, MARAD, FWCC, and/or other applicable state or federal agency regulations or policies.

From the [Ocean City Reef Foundation](#). Start w/VA's Reef Director. You have an excellent program - just don't get much luv up the coast! VA will hold your permits. Ocean City took ours over when MD dropped their reef program in 1997.

The state now has one guy at MD DNR who does the Chesapeake reefs & Ocrf out front here. Chesapeake guy is Mike Malpezzi- though slow at first, he's doing great over ther now! Lots & lots of CHEAP (but large!) Reef.. our State guy certainly knows yours - I can get contact info for you if needed.

When you get going, I think divers would really like a reef at WQ can.. We could make it a bi-State reef - could make a big site there.

I'll help you all I can!

Monty

Other key references.

<http://www.asafc.org/habitat/artificial-reefs>

<https://www.gsmfc.org/publications/GSMFC%20Number%20121.pdf>