

The Mid-Shore Regional Council (MSRC) held a scheduled meeting on September 12, 2019 in conjunction with the Council's annual field trip. This year the Council went to the Cordova salmon facility (American Salmon) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chesapeake Bay Office – Cooperative Oxford Laboratory in Oxford for tours.

MSRC members and guests met at the Council office at 8:00 a.m. to board the bus and head to our first stop in Cordova.

MSRC members in attendance included: Burton Wilson, Carolyn Spicher, Kelley Cox, Senator Addie Eckardt, Wilbur Levensgood, Anthony Casey, Joyce Harrod, Dan Rider, Walter Chase, Delegate Chris Adams, Delegate Johnny Mautz, James Redman, Jerome Stanley, Chuck Callahan, Frank Divilio, Peter Leshner, and Andrew Hollis. Guests in attendance were: Talbot County Assistant County Manager Jessica Morris; Dorchester Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bill Christopher; Assistant to Delegate Mautz – Bob Zimmeroff; DNR Fish Health & Hatcheries Program Director Brian Richardson; Rural Maryland Council Executive Director Charlotte Davis; F³ Tech Program Director and American Salmon principal Chris Hlubb; Maryland Department of Commerce representatives Ewing McDowell (Industry Specialist) and Nancy LaJoice (Senior Business Development Representative); Institute Marine Environmental Technology (IMET) Assistant Director Nina Lamba; DLLR Apprenticeship Navigator Patty Shreves; Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Board members Tony Kern and Rob Nicholson; Maryland Cooperative Extension Educator Shannon Dill; MARBIDCO Executive Director Steve McHenry; Chesapeake Culinary Center/Shore Gourmet representative Julie Thomas; Town of St. Michaels Town Manager Jean Weisman; Caroline County resident Sherry Levensgood; Senator Van Hollen's Eastern Shore Regional Director Melissa Kelly; Congressman Andy Harris' Community Liaisons Mike Arntz and Keith Graffius; USDA Rural Development representatives Denise Lovelady (State Director), Letitia Nichols (Business & Cooperative Program Director), and Shawn Drury (Legislative Specialist); ESRGC Project Manager Mary Buffington; Dorchester County Economic Development Director Susan Banks; Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism representatives Cassandra Vanhooser (Director) and Sam Shoge (Coordinator); and ESEC Executive Director Mike Thielke. MSRC staff present was Scott Warner and Terry Deighan.

Tour

Salmon facility in Cordova

We arrived at the old Allen Harim processing plant at 8:30 a.m. where we were met by Chris Hlubb and many of our Board Members who chose to drive. Mr. Hlubb is a principal of American Salmon. He gave the group a broad overview of how the former poultry facility will be transformed into a state of the art, first of its kind, fully contained salmon farm. He took the time to explain how the facility will renovate existing buildings and add new buildings to help with processing, growing, and a whole range of other amazing things to include recycling methane gas from the wastewater treatment plant and utilize it to create energy/heat. Mr. Hlubb informed the group that he will go into more detail via a PowerPoint presentation after lunch.

*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chesapeake Bay Office –
Cooperative Oxford Laboratory*

The final stop on our tour was NOAA in Oxford. We disembarked the bus at which time we were greeted by NOAA Oxford Lab Director Suzanne Skelley and NOAA Research Fisheries Biologist John Jacobs. We were divided into three groups. Each of the groups was taken on a tour of four different stations. We learned about GIS tracking, disease control, oyster bed marking by illuminating paint, and so much more. Our last stop before lunch was at the sturgeon tank where we heard from DNR Fish Health & Hatcheries Program Director Brian Richardson.

We then took a short walk to NOAA's Environmental Training Center where lunch was waiting. Lunch was enjoyed by members of the MSRC Council and guests as well as many members of the NOAA staff that took the time to educate us earlier on our tour.

After lunch we held the meeting portion of our day. Some MSRC members and guests listed above had departed the tour earlier in the day due to other obligations: Delegate Johnny Mautz, Chuck Callahan, Frank Divilio, Andrew Hollis, and Jessica Morris. Senator Addie Eckardt joined us when we first arrived at the NOAA facility.

Action Items

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chase at 12:45 p.m. at which time introductions were made. Mr. Warner was in possession of electronic votes from Ricky Travers, Lenny Pfeffer, Dan Franklin, and Kurt Fuchs who could not attend in person due to other obligations.

Approval of June 6, 2019 Minutes

The first order of business was to obtain approval of the June 6, 2019 minutes. Mr. Stanley made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Spicher seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Treasurer Kurt Fuchs, Scott Warner presented the Treasurers Report. He stated that Mr. Fuchs had reviewed the report prior to the meeting. He also stated that the MSRC is in good shape, almost a quarter into the new fiscal year. Senator Eckardt made a motion to accept the report. Mr. Levengood seconded the motion. Chairman Chase stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion; all opposed have the same rights. Ayes have it. Motion carried unanimously.

Updates

Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC)

ESRGC Project Manager Mary Buffington gave the following project updates.

GIS Circuit Rider

- Continuing to reach out to Mid-Shore towns to schedule meetings to go over service options
- Developing a refined list of services that may be of interest to local jurisdictions
- Curating project ideas that would benefit all counties in the event that local jurisdictions are non-responsive

Foundation Heights

- Foundation heights help in determining First-Floor Flooding (FFF), a measure of structure vulnerability. This data will assist in modeling future flood, vulnerability, and coastal resiliency studies.
- Foundation heights for residential and commercial structures were collected at six inch intervals and paired with a 'worst case scenario' flood event (year 2100 predicted sea level rise with a 0.2% annual exceedance probability flood scenario) to determine the exposure of all three MidShore counties.

Delmarva Index and Economic Dashboard

- The ESRGC partnered with the MSRC and the TCCLES with funding support from the RMPIF to develop the Delmarva Index and Economic Dashboard.
- The Delmarva Index is data repository and hub for local and regional resources including dynamic visualizations and information.
- This free online resource currently features links to the Health, Education, and Economic Dashboards as well as multiple data download options to access the supporting data for these dashboards.
- The Economic Dashboard is a data visualization tool housed within the Delmarva Index that enables users to interact and engage with local and regional economic data.
- These products were completed and delivered to project partners in August 2019. The ESRGC featured these at the MACo booth in Ocean City and had the opportunity to demo for many local representatives. The ESRGC has received lots of positive feedback on the Index and the Economic Dashboard as well as some very helpful insight and questions. The team will continue to market and promote these products and will be working with project partners and the advisory committee on Phase II of the Delmarva Index.
- Phase I of the Index is live at www.delmarvaindex.org
- Economic Dashboard is live at <https://delmarvaindex.org/economicDashboard>

Delmarva Land and Litter Challenge (DLLC)

- The ESRGC partnered with the MSRC and the DLLC to develop the Exploring Chicken Farming on Delmarva website that communicates the current status of the poultry industry on Delmarva, identifies historic patterns and trends, and compares poultry industry data to other agricultural practices.
- It is a data driven ESRI Story Map which utilizes data from Delmarva Poultry Industry, AgriStats, NASS, EPA, and USDA. The DLLC Committee was very engaged in the development and provided a large portion of the text as well as images, video, and other supporting materials.

- Exploring Chicken Farming on Delmarva was completed and delivered to project partners in August 2019. DLLC has received a unanimous vote to release the story map. The communications committee is now working on a release strategy which, of course, has to also be approved. The expected release date with media coverage, post, cards and social media promotion is November.

Commercially Viable Forest Analysis

- This project is being funded by the MSRC through its RMPIF funds.
- The objective of this analysis was to determine the area of forest in Caroline, Dorchester, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties appropriate for harvesting. It combines data derived from 2016 LiDAR from MDDNR/FEMA, 2011 LULC from MDP, and SSURGO soil drainage from USSCS. The constraints were: raster cells that contained objects that were between 30 and 130 ft. tall (assumed to be trees), land use categories of deciduous, coniferous, mixed, or unknown, and soil drainage categories of excessively drained, somewhat excessively drained, well drained, or moderately well-drained. Forest tracts had to be within 0.25 mile of a road and be comprised of an area 5 acres or greater.
- Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot have been completed and the results are being reviewed for both accuracy and usefulness by MD Dept. of Forestry. One of the most important outcomes of this work is the desperate need for a forest mapping inventory of Maryland. Without being certain of even the general type of tree, this data is of less use to foresters.

Rural Maryland Council (RMC)

RMC Executive Director Charlotte Davis gave the following updates.

MAERDAF – Maryland Agricultural Education & Rural Development Assistance Fund

- Ms. Davis stated that the RMC received 101 applications this year for funding. Of those applications, 37 were awarded money.

RMPIF – Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

- Ms. Davis stated that there were 58 applications received this year all hoping for part of the \$2,694, 000 available. Funds this year were awarded in the areas of entrepreneurship, infrastructure & health.
- Ms. Davis stated that 58 applications were submitted for the categories of Health Care, Entrepreneurship, and Infrastructure. The total available funds were \$2,694,000. The MAERDAF review committee awarded 27 grants.

The MSRC meeting portion concluded at 1:06 p.m.

Presentations

NOAA Environmental Education

The first presenter was NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Education Coordinator Bart Merrick. He spoke very enthusiastically about the Chesapeake Bay Program and work being done at NOAA to protect the health of the bay and its inhabitants. He also shared educational ideas to help promote bay health and sharing this information in schools. Mr. Merrick shared a magazine entitled “An Educators

Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE)” with the group. Mr. Merrick’s presentation was informative and entertaining.

We cannot thank the NOAA staff enough for allowing us to visit today; and the generous amount of time that was spent educating our group and the expertise they showed in crafting the information sessions which topics were in line with ongoing projects of the MSRC.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC)

ESEC Executive Director Mike Thielke and F³ Tech Program Director Chris Hlubb presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the future vision of aquaculture and agriculture on the Eastern Shore. It expanded on the visit to the salmon farm earlier in the morning as well as on some of the restoration plans for the former Allen Harim poultry plant. Through the PowerPoint presentation Mr. Hlubb brought the project to life and helped all present realize its potential and what an immense addition to the Eastern Shore it will be. This aquaculture project will be the first of its kind to utilize the waste generated in the processing of the fish and repurpose it in the production of other revenue generating products.

Mr. Thielke’s presentation was also very informative and enlightening as he put forth points that are not thought about on a daily basis such as what a tremendous food shortage we will have in the next 50 years if we do not continue to increase food production. During his presentation he also highlighted value and amount of the planet’s fresh water supply. The PowerPoint depicted just how small an amount of freshwater is currently on the surface of the Earth; it really drove home a need of urgency to have this issue brought to the forefront.

Upcoming Events

Mr. Warner reminded everyone of upcoming MSRC meetings.

- Mid Shore Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting will be held on October 18, 2019 at 12:00pm at Talbot County Free Library in Easton.
- The next Mid-Shore Regional Council meeting will be held the first week of December at the Hyatt in Cambridge in conjunction with the MACo Winter Conference. The meeting will coincide with the Eastern Shore Regional Councils Joint Luncheon Meeting. The MSRC office will clarify the date via email notification.

Announcements/comments

Mr. Warner stated that the day before he attended the Untangled Minds’ AMP (Advanced Manufacturing Professionals) Student Presentations at the Caroline Career and Technology Center. He was very impressed with the poise of the students and how valuable the AMP process is in the development of the participants. He wanted to pass the information along since the founders of the program presented at the December 2018 meeting of the MSRC.

There were no other announcements or comments.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:28 p.m. The group then boarded the bus to travel back to the MSRC office to conclude the day.