

PowerPoint and Rockfish Recipes
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May 3, 2010

Mariah, the kids and I went with some other legislators to Port Isobel near Tangier Island this past weekend for a legislative retreat sponsored by the League of Conservation Voters and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

It was a great time and, more importantly for the legislators, educational. The legislators spent a fair amount of time indoors looking at power point presentations, so we learned a lot. And in reflection, what is remarkable to me is the breadth and depth of what I learned.

A very eclectic mixture of what I learned is as follows:

I met a grower who said that he has a strain of native oysters bred for aquaculture that he is growing to market size (three inches) in 9 months.

There is a really cool insect called the Nordic isopod which we saw when we dragged for peelers in the grass beds. It is an actual member of the insect family even though it is subaqueous.

There is an animal that grows in the grass beds that looks just like submerged aquatic vegetation.

There are only two people on Tangier who gill net and have rockfish tags. The rest sold their quotas back in the day.

The new federal legislation sponsored by Senator Cardin from Maryland allows nutrient trading between sources and within the watershed.

The crabs were just starting to move into deepwater in the Northern portion of the Bay when the sanctuary kicked on May 1st and kicked those watermen out.

You can eat sea lettuce (an aquatic plant) but it taste like cardboard.

The Elizabeth River down near Norfolk has had an organized cleanup effort that has been so successful that now more than 40% has been opened to commercial shellfish harvest.

Farmers are making good progress toward goals set forth in the Chesapeake 2000 agreement.

Urban storm water runoff is eroding much of that progress.

One guy who fishes for rockfish will make the trip to Crisfield, Maryland in a 16 foot open skiff loaded down with rockfish. I think that is a tad loco but he fishes close to a mile of gill net in the same boat so it makes sense.

The East Coast has the best area in the country for wind energy – land or sea – and wind energy should soon be the cheapest production of all energy.

The proximity of the East Coast to the population makes getting wind energy to the sources much easier.

One Tangier woman I met cooked delicious rockfish in the oven at 250 degrees for 5 or so hours. I cook mine at 350 for a much shorter time.

And, I learned (again) that not all the best learning is from a power point presentation.

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