

Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council Minutes – March 9, 2017

Members Attending

Reginal Harrell	Eric Wisner	Terry Witt
Donald Webster	Stuart Dawson	Kim Coulbourne
Karl Roscher	Don Meritt	Kathy Brohawn
J.D. Blackwell	Lt. Catherine Medellin	
John VanAlstine	Delegate Mautz	

Guests Attending

Harold McBee, Jr. (Industry)	Adriane Michaelis (UMD)	Alyssa Cranska (DNR)
Scott Budden (Industry)	Kevin Chu (NOAA)	Kari Bradberry (DNR)
Rob Witt (Industry)	Kaity Goldsmith (MARCO)	Maude Morris (DNR)
Bill Cox (Industry)	Steve McHenry (MARBIDCO)	Rebecca Thur (DNR)
Ted Cooney (Industry)	Robin Henderson (DHMH)	George O'Donnell (DNR)
John Barnette (Industry)	Capt. Brian Rathgeb (NRP)	Chris Judy (DNR)
Scott Robinson, Sr. (Industry)	Steve Schneider (DNR)	Bill Anderson (DNR)
Chris Aiken (Industry)	Kathryn Busch (DNR)	
Larry Jennings (CCA)	Nat Warning (DNR)	

Call to Order

Chairman Harrell called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and asked guests and members to introduce themselves.

Administrative

Announcements

Chairman Harrell noted recent changes to the Aquaculture Coordinating Council members and asked members to introduce themselves.

Council membership can be viewed at:

<http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/mgmt-committees/acc-members.aspx>

Approve January Minutes

The January 12, 2017 meeting minutes were approved as submitted to the Council.

Coordinating Council Operations (Vice-Chairman Webster)

Vice-chairman Webster provided the Council with an overview of the ACC:

- 2003 legislation created a task force on Seafood and Aquaculture which was chaired by Senator Klausmeier. This led to the creation of the ACC by the legislature.
- One ACC charge is to formulate and make proposals to the Governor and General Assembly by July 1st of each year on ways to “advance aquaculture” in all forms.
- Council meetings are held bi-monthly, on the second Thursday of odd-numbers months, at 6:30pm at DNR building.

Vice-chairman Webster pointed out that, while members do not make regulatory changes, every member should understand that they have a voice and role in helping to advance this industry.

Reports

2017 Legislation Summary (Delegate Mautz)

Delegate Mautz updated the Council on the following legislation:

- House Bill 1200 - directs the Department to study conflicts between SAV and aquaculture leases and make recommendations to the Governor by December 1, 2017. This bill is expected to be voted on at a subcommittee on 3/9/17.
- House Bill 120 - Seafood Marketing is moving from MD Department of Natural Resources to MD Department of Agriculture. After several meetings, Delegate Mautz has been assured this move will benefit the aquaculture industry.
- House Bill 924 - Out of subcommittee. This bill would prohibit the Department of Natural Resources from reducing or altering boundaries of specified oyster sanctuaries until the Department develops a plan for the scientific management of the oyster stock following completion of a specified study and reports.

Aquaculture and Industry Enhancement Division Report (Mr. Roscher, DNR)

The Division received 14 new shellfish lease applications since the last meeting. A total of 18 new applications have been received in 2017. In addition, two new Shellfish Lease Agreements and one Revised and Restated Lease Agreement have been executed since January.

In 2017, 22 Shellfish Import Permit applications have been received with four issued and one denied.

Three new Shellfish Nursery Permit applications have been received and three new permits issued since last meeting.

Since September 2010, the office has received 413 lease applications. The State has issued 214 new commercial shellfish aquaculture leases. There are currently 384 active leases covering 6,181 acres.

In 2017, the Division issued 1,859 permit cards (506 Permittees, 1351 Registrants). To date, the number of individuals permitted for 2017 is 445.

Mr. Roscher updated the Council on protested applications:

- There are currently 22 open protests.
- Hollywood Oyster lease (#179) - Appeal hearing in St. Mary's County Circuit Court in December 2016 is awaiting decision. The lease has been issued and is being worked by the leaseholder.
- Lumpkins (#286) - The Department held a meeting with protestants in November 2016. Afterwards they met with the Applicant to further discuss plans for the lease. The meeting resulted in withdraw of protests and the lease is in the process of being issued.
- Barnette (#321) - January 17, 2017 there was a pre-hearing conference with OAH with no protestants participating. The OAH judge issued a motion to vacate the protests and lease documents are pending execution.
- MD Water Holdings (#255) –The court ruled in favor of the Department. No appeals were filed and the lease is being issued.
- Basel (#171) - Protests were received based on clamming conflicts. The Department worked with the Applicants and protestants to revise the lease area, which has not been protested and the lease is in process of being issued.

Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Programs (Mr. McHenry, MARBIDCO)

Mr. McHenry provided the Council with a handout summarizing approved Aquaculture loans. MARBIDCO has made 80 loans and currently has 61 active projects (59 regular & 2 remote setting).

MARBIDCO is receiving repayments and has only one instance of a borrower declaring bankruptcy. Mr. McHenry noted that they now have a pot of “colorless” money (non-restricted funds) and encouraged growers to apply for new loans and spread the word about the program.

Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission & Oyster Advisory Commission (Mr. Blackwell)

Mr. Blackwell reported on House Bill 924, which would prevent the Department from changing any management of sanctuaries until the Department develops a fisheries management plan for the scientific management of the oyster stock following completion of specified study and reports.

Presentation

Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network (Ms. Goldsmith, MARCO)

Ms. Goldsmith gave a presentation on the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network (MACAN):

- The MACAN works to develop a better understanding of the processes associated with ocean acidification, predict the consequences for marine resources, and devise strategies that enable communities to prepare and adapt.
- The ocean is ~30% more acidic today than it was ~300 years ago, due to increasing levels of atmospheric CO₂ and land use changes. Additional CO₂ lowers the pH and increases the acidity of seawater. The current rate of ocean acidification is at an all-time high when compared to historic records.
- MACAN purpose:
 - Nexus of scientists, state and federal agency representatives, resource managers, and affected industry partners dedicated to coordinating and guiding observing, research, and modeling of coastal and ocean acidification
 - Serve as information exchange
 - Identify research needs and vulnerabilities
- MACAN objectives include:
 - Education/outreach
 - Share acidification resources
 - Connect researchers and share research
 - Share best practices in monitoring and sample collection
 - Develop list of regionally impacted species
 - Identify research gaps
 - Address Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan’s *Healthy Ocean Ecosystem Action #3*

Ms. Goldsmith encouraged Council members to explore opportunities to engage with the group by joining the MARCAN listserv and participating in their webinar series.

Email info@MidACAN.org to become a member. Ms. Goldsmith can be reached at: kgoldsmith@midatlanticocean.org

Continuing Business

Annual Report Development (Chairman Harrell)

Chairman Harrell reminded the Council that they need to form a workgroup to discuss annual report recommendations. Vice-chairman Webster recalled that they have strongly supported increasing resources for MD Natural Resources Police in the past. Mr. Roscher said he would send Council members a list of recommendations from 2016. Chairman Harrell asked for volunteers; Ms. Coulbourne volunteered to

chair and Mr. Blackwell volunteered to participate. Mr. Roscher encouraged Council members to reach out to him if they have input, and he will ensure the sharing of ideas with the Council.

SAV Workgroup (Chairman Harrell)

A committee has been formed to address the Aquaculture/SAV issue. Committee members include: Karl Roscher (Chair, DNR), Rebecca Golden (DNR), Bobby Leonard (Industry), Suzanne Bricker (NOAA), Brian Russell (Industry), Rick Meatyard (Industry), Bill Cox (Industry), Larry Jennings (CCA), Allison Colden (CBF), Court Stevenson (Horn Point), Jeff Cornwell (Horn Point), and Reginal Harrell (UMD). The group was assembled with the intention of being diverse, including leaseholders from both sides of the Bay. Meetings will be held, if possible, at the Tawes building and be open to the public. No meetings are currently scheduled and the committee has set a target date of October 1, 2017 for a draft.

Chairman Harrell encouraged interested persons to attend the meetings. He explained that the committee will not be making legislative recommendations. The purpose is to gather facts and explore conflicts. This information will be presented to the Council, which can make legislative recommendations, if necessary.

New Business

OAC Consolidated Strawman Management Plan Proposal (Mr. Judy, DNR)

Mr. Judy updated the Council on the Oyster Advisory Commission:

- The OAC has two major tasks: (1) Recommend the next two tributaries for large scale restoration. (2) Recommend potential changes to the sanctuary program, including possible changes to sanctuary boundaries.
- Several areas have proposed boundary changes. Mr. Judy noted that the Council is welcome to provide input.

Mr. Abel asked what impact House Bill 924 would have on these proposed changes. Mr. Judy explained that this bill would mean no changes would be permitted until the stock assessment report was produced, which will result until December 2018 or later.

Mr. Merrit expressed concern over illegal harvest, especially in sanctuaries. Mr. Judy encouraged anyone with information about poaching to contact him directly so he can communicate with NRP.

Announcements

Ms. Brohawn reminded the Council about the Interstate Seafood Seminar taking place from April 4th-6th. She asked Mr. Roscher to send registration information to Council members.

Ms. Coulbourne announced the HACCP for Shellfish Shipper Workshop on Thursday, March 23, 2017, 9am to 3pm at the University of Maryland Wye Research & Education Center.

Chairman Harrell introduced Bill Anderson, Assistant Secretary for Maryland DNR Aquatic Resources.

Mr. Roscher announced that there are currently two vacant Council seat openings (MDA and MDC), noting a meeting on March 30th with a perspective member from the Department of Commerce.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm with the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Thursday, May 11, 2017 at 6:30 pm in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, C-1 Conference Room.