

## Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council Minutes – May 11, 2017

### Members Attending

Reginal Harrell	Stuart Dawson	Jim Mullin
Donald Webster	Don Meritt	Ron Buckhalt
Karl Roscher	Lt. Catherine Medellin	Kristen Shock
J.D. Blackwell	Terry Witt	Evan Richards (representing
John VanAlstine	Kim Coulbourne	Sen. Klausmeier)
Eric Wisner	Kathy Brohawn	

### Guests Attending

Walter Witt, Jr. (Industry)	Capt. Brian Rathgeb (NRP)	Rebecca Thur (DNR)
Chris Aiken (Industry)	Steve Schneider (DNR)	Allison Roe (MARBIDCO)
Larry Jennings (CCA)	Kathryn Busch (DNR)	Kevin Chu (NOAA/GARFO)
Adriane Michaelis (UMD)	Nat Warning (DNR)	David Alan Tibbetts (Industry)
Dr. Cliff Mitchell (DHMH)	Alyssa Cranska (DNR)	Ward Slacum (ORP)
Robin Henderson (DHMH)	Kari Bradberry (DNR)	
Amy Hontz (DHMH)	Maude Morris (DNR)	

### Call to Order

Chairman Harrell called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and asked guests and members to introduce themselves.

### Administrative

#### Approve March Minutes

The March 9th meeting minutes were approved as submitted to the Council, with one correction; Kathy Brohawn noted that she was in attendance at the March meeting and requested that she be added as an attending member. The minutes were approved as amended.

#### Announcements

Vice-chairman Webster announced the upcoming Cultchless Seed Workshop at Horn Point Laboratory on May 16, 2017 at 10:00am. Everyone is invited to attend.

Kathy Brohawn informed Council members of the Norovirus outbreak in the Pacific Northwest. The ISSC recently hired someone to attend recreational boat shows to share information about Norovirus. Ms. Brohawn campaign materials that were developed to educate the public to Council members.

Chairman Harrell shared the news that the USDA is considering their FY 2018 budget and aquaculture programs seem to be going to be defunded. He urged Council members to contact Congressman Andy Harris to tell him how important aquaculture is in this region and ask that he support it.

Mr. Blackwell mentioned that Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) is looking for aquaculturists to participate in an event to educate the public. This event will be open to anyone in the State.

## **Reports**

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

The Division received 8 new shellfish lease applications since the last meeting. A total of 26 new applications have been received in 2017. In addition, five new Shellfish Lease Agreements have been executed since the March meeting.

In 2017, 65 Shellfish Import Permit applications have been received with 48 issued and one denied.

One new Shellfish Nursery Permit application has been received and two new permits issued since the last meeting.

Since September 2010, the office has received 421 lease applications. The State has issued 219 new commercial shellfish aquaculture leases. There are currently 388 active leases covering 6,242 acres.

In 2017, the Division issued 1,940 permit cards (519 Permittees, 1,421 Registrants). To date, the number of individuals permitted for 2017 is 454.

In 2014, the Department surveyed leaseholders to see if they wanted their lease coordinates included in a closure book with the response mixed. Many leaseholders were in support of it while others were concerned that this information would result in increased theft. In an effort to assist with NRP with enforcement efforts, the Aquaculture Division is moving forward with development of an online tool that will contain lease coordinates. The intent is for the tool to be as current as possible with new leases added as soon as they are executed.

Mr. Wisner inquired whether the law requiring that leases are marked would be changed once this new tool was available. Mr. Roscher indicated that, at this time, there would be no changes to the marking requirements but that it could be considered in the future.

Mr. Roscher updated the Council on protested applications:

- There are currently 22 open protests
- Public Information Meeting was held in Queen Anne's County on March 30<sup>th</sup>
- Biological Survey was conducted in Monie Bay Sanctuary after being protested by two watermen from Somerset County. The Department met with the watermen to discuss the survey which resulted in the protests being withdrawn. These leases have since been issued.
- Received three new lease application protests in Talbot County:
  - Two in Harris Creek protested by an adjacent landowner
  - One in Miles River protested by the Talbot County Watermen's Association with concerns over clamming

### Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Programs (Allison Roe, MARBIDCO)

Ms. Roe provided the Council with a handout summarizing approved Aquaculture loans. MARBIDCO has done \$3.2 million in loans, remote setting is at \$60,000, and one loan is in process. There is currently \$205,000 remaining from the State and \$1.7 million available from reverted funds. For questions contact Linda Arnold.

### Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission (Mr. Blackwell)

No Aquaculture related topics were discussed at the last TFAC meeting.

The OAC will discuss choice for restoration tributaries at their meeting on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.

SMADC is putting together new grant/funding/loan assistance programs and have structured them to include aquaculture projects. There are new MARBIDCO programs available for aquaculture through the commission.

### **Continuing Business**

#### Annual Report Development (Ms. Coulbourne)

The 2017 Final Report Committee met by conference call. They reviewed recommendations included in last year's report and they are including two of them this year. The Committee recommends: (1) water quality monitoring (MDE) and (2) disease diagnostic services (DNR Cooperative Oxford Lab). The disease diagnostic services support would fund an additional technician to allow for better and quicker services for testing oysters for disease. The Committee also recommended that funds be provided to DNR to create an Aquaculture Innovation Fund, to support new concepts, ideas, and methods for production of aquaculture products in Maryland. This would be funded at \$100k annually and be overseen by an advisory board. Vice-chairman Webster added that this concept is currently operating in other states with success and that Maryland growers have good ideas and this would provide a good opportunity to assist the industry.

Vice-chairman Webster inquired whether supporting/funding NRP should be included in this year's Final Report. Captain Rathgeb informed the Council that NRP only very recently got back funding for a helicopter, a tremendous asset, after fighting for it for several years. Also, the last academy class graduated at the end of 2016 and there will likely not be a new class until February 2018. Overall, the number of NRP officers continues to dwindle. Vice-chairman Webster requested that Cap. Rathgeb write a recommendation for the Committee to consider for including NRP funding/support in the report.

The annual report must be filed by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The draft will be emailed to the Council by June 1<sup>st</sup> for final approval.

#### ***Motion: Brohawn/Blackwell***

The Council voted unanimously, to accept the recommendations from the Committee, including the NRP piece. The Committee will have the draft out to the Council by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### SAV Workgroup (Mr. Roscher)

Mr. Roscher provided Council members with a handout which included a list of SAV workgroup members as well as the minutes from their first, and most recent, meeting.

The SAV Workgroup was created to look into the interactions between submerged aquatic vegetation and Shellfish Aquaculture leases/activities. An organizational meeting was held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 2-4pm at the Wye Research and Educational Center. They have agreed on monthly meetings, with the next scheduled meeting to be held in June. On October 1<sup>st</sup> a formal report including the findings of the workgroup will be made available to the Council.

### **Presentation**

#### Vibrio Management in MD (Katie Busch, DNR, Kathy Brohawn, MDE, Dr. Cliff Mitchell, DHMH)

The National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) is a cooperative program, between state and federal governments, which promotes and improves the sanitation of shellfish used for human consumption. Various state agencies, FDA, EPA, NOAA, and the shellfish industry are participants in the NSSP.

For Maryland, the Department of the Environment (MDE) is responsible for classification and management of shellfish growing areas; Department of Natural Resources (DNR) oversees harvester compliance and patrols; and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) conducts laboratory testing and manages dealer compliance.

The Model Ordinance, developed by the NSSP, provides guidance to participants to ensure that shellfish are produced using safe and sanitary methods. Per the Model Ordinance each state is annually required to conduct a risk analysis using data from the previous year. Using the information from the risk analysis, the state develops a *Vibrio* management plan.

Ms. Brohawn discussed the importance of *Vibrio* management:

- Consumer demand for shellfish growing year-round
- Shellfish are frequently consumed raw
- Bacteria multiply much faster as temperature increases
- “Time to Temperature” control to limit bacterial growth, keep risk low, protect consumers

Mrs. Busch explained some of the regulations for Harvesters and Dealers in Maryland during the months of June through September:

- Harvesters: shade oysters, maintain air flow, designate a single landing location, document harvest start time on tag, deliver to a certified dealer by curfew (varies during summer months)
- Dealers: document harvest start time and cooling start time, HACCP plan that identifies *Vibrio* risk, adhere to: time and temperature requirements for receiving, selling, and shipping

Mrs. Busch also discussed DNR management actions:

- Disseminate landing designation information to the Natural Resources Police (NRP)
- Memorandum to leaseholders in mid-May (joint effort with DHMH)
- Provide harvest reports to DHMH during summer in order to track dealers accepting product
- Enforcement of harvester controls
- Coordination of FDA field visits for evaluation

The state of Maryland has met the NSSP criteria for establishing a Risk Assessment and applying the management controls as set forth in the *Vibrio* Control Plan. The next evaluation will occur between June 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017.

Dr. Mitchell identified some of the things that are considered if there is an illness or outbreak:

- Can we identify the source/location?
- How long from harvest to identification of the source?
- Is there still likelihood of exposure?

When DHMH receives a report of a *Vibrio* case their first step is to get laboratory confirmation and initiate an investigation. Based on the findings of the investigation, authorities may be forced to close certain harvest areas. When areas can be reopened depends on several factors, including the number of linked cases.

#### Oyster BMP Expert Panel Update (Ward Slacum, ORP)

The Expert Panel has been in operation since 2015 with the goal of evaluating oyster aquaculture practices in relation to nutrient effectiveness and eventually coming up with a BMP. Their plan is to make a recommendation this fall which will be evaluated by the Bay Program.

#### **New Business**

Mr. Roscher noted that MARBIDCO has remote setting funds available and they have not received any applications in a couple of years. Justification must be provided for why there is funding leftover and there may be issues with carrying the funds over to next year. It might be beneficial to send leaseholders

information about the remote setting funding available. It is unclear why there has not been much interest in this program.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm with the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Thursday, July 13, 2017 at 6:30 pm in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, C-1 Conference Room.