

**Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council  
Minutes – January 9, 2014**

**Members Attending:**

Don Webster	Chris Sherman	Don Flax
Tony O'Donnell	Jon Farrington	Joanna Kille
Kathy Klausmeier	Stacy Kubofcik	Erin Butler
Andy Lazur	Karl Roscher	Kathy Brohawn
Reggie Harrell	Andy Buck	Johnny Shockley
Craig Mask		

**Guests:**

Kim Coulbourne, DHMH – CFP	Larry Jennings, CCA
Rona Kobell, Bay Journal	Tal Petty, Hollywood Oyster Co.
Steve Schneider, DNR	Jill Parisi, ORP
Alyssa Cranska, DNR	Steve Coe
Chris Judy, DNR	Bill Mahoney, MD Coastal Bays Program
Jill Buck, Patuxent Seafood	Katie Busch, DNR
Ted Cooney, Madhouse Oysters	Rebecca Thur, DNR
Scott Robinson, Jr., Madhouse Oysters	Stephanie Richards, DNR
Scott Robinson, Sr., Madhouse Oysters	Scott Budden
Mike Sewell, NRP	John VanAlstine
Fred Millhiser	Bill Cox

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Webster called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Lt. Sherman of the NRP was congratulated on his recent promotion to Captain.

**Administrative:**

Approve November Minutes

The November meeting minutes have been tentatively reviewed and will be submitted to the Council for final review pending revisions.

Announcements (Chairman Webster and Members)

- 40<sup>th</sup> Annual East Coast Commercial Fishermen's & Aquaculture Trade Exposition, Ocean City, Maryland taking place January 17 – 19th. Aquaculture Seminar Program includes information regarding the protection of leases with participation by Lloyd Ingerson, Tal Petty and Eric Wisner.
- East Coast Shellfish Growers Association (ECSGA) will conduct a program on best management practices, handling mortality and marketing on January 21<sup>st</sup> in the C-1 conference room at the Tawes Building. Pre-registration is requested if you are planning to attend so enough materials are available. Chairman Webster will send information to those interested.
- Dr. Harrell, Director of the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center at UMD: Grant money is available through this federally funded program with industry driven priorities. Request for Proposals for a two-

year grant are provided through an open process. Must be multi-state (13 Northeastern states and DC), have an Extension component and have direct application to the industry.

- Emergency regulations to increase from \$0.50 to \$2.00 the price paid by the State for whole oyster shell were completed, submitted and approved by Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR) .
- Mr. Roscher: Work group has been established to discuss active use requirements (Farrington, Witt and Brohawn) and will meet in February. New members are still being accepted.
- Dr. Lazur: Information on Sea Pact distributions. There is a second round Request for Proposals for funding on Aquaculture improvement projects with January 28<sup>th</sup> timing. Information is available at [www.seapact.org](http://www.seapact.org).

## **Reports:**

### Aquaculture Division Report (Mr. Roscher)

Mr. Roscher provided Council members with a summary of the Department's shellfish aquaculture leasing and permitting activity. The Department did not receive any new shellfish aquaculture lease applications between November and December of 2013. One new submerged land lease was issued and a final notice was mailed to one applicant who has failed to return their signed lease documents. One Public Information Meeting was held for a lease under protest in St. Mary's County. Five public notice periods concluded with no comments on one and protests received on the other four. Five lease applications are currently in various stages of protest. Six new lease applications packets were prepared to be forwarded to the Corps of Engineers for review.

From September 2010 through January 8, 2014, the Department received 203 lease applications with 141 received since August 1, 2011 when the Department began accepting applications for water column leases. The State has issued 91 new commercial shellfish leases totaling 1,647 acres. An additional 56 lease applications are in process, with six currently incomplete. A large number of individuals were authorized to work on aquaculture leases in 2013; the total number of SAHP and registration cards issued from January through December of 2013 was 1,263. Out of 328 active leases and 3674 total acres, St. Mary's has the greatest number of active lease sites with 77 with Dorchester having the most acreage at 846.31.

A snapshot of leases declaring summertime landing locations/harvest in 2013 shows that 295 total leases were permitted with SAHP by September. Of these, 139 declared for summer landing and 30 reported summer harvest.

Aquaculture Division staff prepared and sent out the annual shellfish aquaculture lease invoice mailing on November 15, 2013. The packet included the 2014 lease rent invoices, 2013 Annual Usage Report forms, Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit/Registration Card Renewal forms and 2014 Declaration of Summer Harvest Landing Location forms with other documents. Rent and report forms were due to be returned to the Department by January 1, 2014. They are coming in and being compiled.

Regulations require anyone using a power dredge to harvest a lease in a Sanctuary provide notification to NRP 48 hours in advance. A new Sanctuary Harvest Notification Call-in Program will be implemented in 2014. Leaseholder harvest information reported to a Power Dredge Hotline will be provided to NRP. Information about the notification regulations and process will be included with the permit mailings starting on January 17<sup>th</sup> when the first round is distributed.

Results of the Lease Coordinate Data Sharing Survey are being compiled and a report will be made to the Council at the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Programs (Mr. Roscher presenting on behalf of MARBIDCO)

Mr. Roscher provided an update for the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO). He reported that for all 51 aquaculture projects in 10 counties there are 33 loans fully drawn with 41 TFL holders having taken advantage of the funding. To date \$1,877,300.10 has been disbursed in the regular Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Program and \$60,000 in the Remote Setting Program. Seven NRCS EQIP assignments totaling \$123,000 have been contracted with the NRCS as of 01/09/14.

Workgroup Report: Industry Development Priorities (Dr. Lazur)

Dr. Lazur reported that the workgroup had hoped to release its survey in early January, but now looks like the survey will be mailed in late January/early February. Results will be analyzed and shared with the Council.

**Unfinished Business:**

Aquaculture Enterprise Zones (Mr. Webster)

The Aquaculture Enterprise Zone (AEZ) incubator concept was discussed with Mr. Webster and Mr. Harrell providing input on how to create a partnership between private and public sectors, including how novel and innovative ideas could be tested for development. This would be part of a solid business plan (such as marketing) and then go on to get financial support before expanding thereby providing minimal risk but increased opportunity. Additional information would be required including availability of land, more details on the Corps' position on the AEZ concept and how other states (e.g. Rhode Island) establish experimental leases is needed. Mr. Roscher will have updated AEZ information for the Council for the March meeting. Mr. Webster encouraged board members to think about it as the Council considers revisiting the topic.

**New Business:**

Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC): Issues and Priorities (Ms. Brohawn and Ms. Bulter)

As a result of the Federal Government shutdown, the ISSC rescheduled the 2013 Biennial Meeting to January 25- 31<sup>st</sup> at St Anthony's Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. Ms. Brohawn and Ms. Butler are planning to attend. Proposals to be deliberated at Task Force level are on the ISSC website:

<http://www.issc.org/2013biennialmeeting.aspx>. Examples include: harmful algal bloom toxin testing; male-specific coliphage testing; determining *Vibrio* closures (to prevent illness); implementation dates for training requirements; and a proposal to return to annual, rather than biennial, meetings.

Because of its impact on the industry, *Vibrio* is a major part of the conference. Details on the importance of harvest data (where the harvest goes), how "outbreak" is defined, and developing improved guidance for the industry were discussed. The Maryland industry is very involved in *Vibrio* prevention and the FDA was impressed by how Maryland had effectively met the under 5 hour requirement. There is need for better science to determine effective methods (ice/ice slurry) for quick temperature control during summer harvest months.

Interested parties who are not able to attend the conference are encouraged to submit ideas and comments (health warnings, education, etc.) to the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association (ECSGA). There is ISSC information

on their website at: [ECSGA.org](http://ECSGA.org) . Ms. Brohawn and Ms. Butler will report to the ACC when they return from the conference.

#### 2014 General Assembly: Session Preview (Mr. Webster)

Chairman Webster thanked both Senator Klausmeier and Delegate O'Donnell for their participation on the Aquaculture Coordinating Council and for their efforts on behalf of the industry in Maryland. Discussion described sustained gubernatorial support for Maryland aquaculture and the credibility the ACC has earned within the General Assembly. Several issues have been raised that may impact aquaculture:

- Priority use of public resources – how will these issues impact the aquaculture industry and is there an effort to prioritize recreational uses over those of watermen.
- Budget concerns and funding and their impact on staffing.
- Oyster Shell Tax Program – A maximum of \$750.00 per year income tax credit exists for recycling oyster shell. Need to determine how to implement the program and its effect on the industry; provide a viable option to return shell to locations like Horn Point when the market price is higher and to aquaculture businesses that cannot offer the tax credit.

The development and approval of new technology benefitting the aquaculture industry was discussed by the Board, specifically Chesapeake Gold's recirculating wet storage system, the first new system of its kind in the state. Substantial effort was required to get it approved, set up and operating with recognition given to the DHMH lab for working through the challenging task of processing a huge number of samples needed to certify the system for use. The project received assistance from the Maryland Industrial Partnerships (MIPS) Program (<http://www.mips.umd.edu>). Mr. Shockley praised Ms. Brohawn and Ms. Butler for their efforts in getting the technology through the approval process and into operation. Mr. Shockley also has a new technology nearing approval that provides a laser imaging grading system for shellfish.

#### **\*Motion:** (Moved by Ms. Brohawn, Seconded by Ms. Butler)

To write a letter recognizing the DHMH Eastern Shore Regional Laboratory for their extensive work in the approval process of Maryland's first innovative storage system for aquaculture molluscan shellfish. Ms. Butler agreed to prepare a draft of the letter.

- The Council approved the motion with no dissenting votes.

**Public Comments:** No public comments were presented.

#### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm with the next regular meeting to be held on Thursday, **March 13, 2014** at 6:30 p.m. at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, C-1 Conference Room.