

Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council
Minutes – May 8, 2014

Members Attending:

Don Webster	Christopher Sherman	Kathy Brohawn
Tony O'Donnell	Karl Roscher	Matt Weiss (for Sen. Klausmeier)
Andy Lazur	Don Flax	Terry Witt
Reggie Harrell	Erin Butler	

Guests:

Steve Schneider, DNR	Tal Petty, Industry	Kim Coulbourne, DHMH
Maude Morris, DNR	David Alves, NMFS	Craig Mask, Industry
Stephanie Richards, DNR	Jay Fowler	Pat Mahoney
Alyssa Cranska, DNR	Jane Fowler	Larry Jennings, CCA
Rebecca Thur, DNR	Linda Arnold, MARBIDCO	John VanAlstine, Industry
Katie Busch, DNR	Rona Kobell, Bay Journal	Roby Witt, Industry

Call to Order:

Chairman Webster called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Administrative:

Approve March Minutes

The March 13, 2014 Minutes were approved, as written, by the Council.

Announcements (Chairman Webster and Members)

- This meeting was supposed to mark a transition in leadership on the Council with Andy Buck taking over as Chairman. Mr. Buck will assume his place as Chairman at the July 10th meeting as he was unavailable to attend tonight. Chairman Webster encouraged all members to attend the July meeting as there are special events planned for the Agenda that evening.
- Chairman Webster introduced David Alves from NOAA-NMFS Office of Aquaculture who discussed his role in improving relations with the mid-Atlantic area and encouraged members of aquaculture industry to contact him if they have questions or concerns.
- Kathy Brohawn provided a copy of a Vibrio flyer entitled, "Marylander's Guide to Skin Wounds and Water Contact" to the Council members. The intent is to distribute the informational flyer widely through websites and outreach. A copy of the flyer will be made available to TFL holders along with their closure area book. Interested persons are welcome to contact her with questions, web access information or for copies of the flyer. The flyer will also be posted on the Aquaculture Division website.
- Karl Roscher introduced Maude Morris, the latest employee added to the Aquaculture Division, commenting that the Aquaculture Division is now fully staffed.
- Matt Weiss was introduced as the new aide to Senator Klausmeier as she was unable to attend this meeting.

- A copy of the most recent East Coast Shellfish Growers Association (ECSGA) newsletter was provided for Council Members.

Reports:

Aquaculture Division Report (Mr. Roscher)

Mr. Roscher provided Council members with a summary of the Department’s shellfish aquaculture leasing and permitting activity. This included the status of hydrographic surveys, public notice updates and new lease applications prepared and forwarded to the Corps of Engineers for review. Out of 25 Shellfish Import Applications received this season, 19 have been issued. In the period between March and April the Aquaculture Division received six new shellfish aquaculture lease applications; five new lease applications were issued and three new leases are pending issuance. The cycle time for processing a lease application will be reported as a regular part of the Aquaculture Division Report and is currently six months from application to issuance.

Two protest mediation meetings were held regarding leases in St. George’s Creek and the Chester River. Neither of the protests could be resolved. Accordingly, DNR’s Office of the Attorney General has forwarded Contested Case Hearing requests to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). In total, seven lease applications are currently under various stages of protest, including three in the St. Mary’s River sanctuary.

A review of lease application processing details was given by Mr. Roscher for the Division including the number of applications received by calendar year. The state has issued 98 new commercial shellfish aquaculture leases totaling 1,828 acres. An additional 62 lease applications are in process, 2 of which are incomplete. Currently, there are 262 Submerged Land Leases (3,400 acres) and 48 Water Column Leases (178 acres) for a total of 310 leases (3,578 acres).

So far in 2014 a total of 1,282 Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit cards have been issued to 415 individuals. This represents a large number of people who are permitted to work in the Maryland aquaculture industry - in some cases on multiple leases. SAHP regulation updates are pending submission to the Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR) board regarding the ability to deny a card or circumstances where revocation or suspension, usually for commercial reasons, would be available as a legal option. An appeals process would be established (within 30 days) for extenuating circumstances.

Mr. Roscher addressed the 2014 Summertime Harvest Season where leaseholders who declare their intent to harvest must designate a single landing location to the Department. Specific requirements for providing shade, maintaining airflow and delivery of product to a licensed and DHMH certified dealer by specific times (see below) are effective starting June 1st.

11:30 am	June 1 – June 30
10:30 am	July 1 – August 31
12:30 pm	September 1 – September 30

The Aquaculture Division Report concluded with the Board having a broad ranging discussion on several topics including the Chester River lease application protest (clamming in Queen Anne's County) and expanded/improved communication between the aquaculture industry and watermen.

Motion: (Roscher/O'Donnell) - Passed

Invite representatives of the Maryland Watermen's Association and Queen Anne's County Watermen's Association to the July 10, 2014 meeting to discuss issues relating to clamming and aquaculture.

Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Programs (Linda Arnold, MARBIDCO)

Ms. Arnold provided a summary of the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) Shellfish Financing Program since 2011. This summary detailed 52 loans totaling approximately three million dollars of which a total of two million had already been dispersed. In the Remote Setting category there have been four projects approved totaling \$90,500 with \$60,000 having been dispersed. For all aquaculture projects there are 56 projects in 10 counties and these are associated with 47 TFL holders.

In addition, Ms. Arnold reported that all of the NOAA funds for seed and shell have been used. There is some capital money available, but these loans are in-house and should be used by the end of the physical year. Going forward, a number of the original loans have amortized so some of the money previously loaned will be coming back to be available for future program loans.

Workgroup: Industry Development Priorities (Dr. Andy Lazur)

Dr. Lazur reported that he is working with Mr. Roscher and that the survey is ready and will go out one week from today. A three week turnaround is planned and they hope for a good response rate; if not, a reminder mailing will be sent. An update of survey will be provided at the July meeting.

Workgroup: Active Use Requirements (Karl Roscher)

Mr. Roscher discussed the plans to get feedback about active use requirements from leaseholders on the Eastern and Western Shores. Meetings are planned to take place in June and he will report to the ACC on the outcome.

New Business:

Support for a Sea Grant funded project on shellfish biosecurity regulations

Members discussed the presentation made to the Council last year by Dr. Ryan Carnegie, a shellfish pathologist from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, regarding the adoption of a uniform policy for East Coast states to guide regulations on interstate transport of seed based on regional prevalence of disease. The East Coast Shellfish Growers Association (ECSGA) supports the proposal developed by Dr. Carnegie, "Streamlining Biosecurity Management in the Context of Regional Molluscan Shellfish Transfers". Chairman Webster asked if the Council felt it was appropriate to send a letter supporting the proposal's concept that could be included with Dr. Carnegie's proposal submittal to NOAA's National Sea Grant Program.

Motion: (Butler/Lazur) – Passed

To send a letter of support from the Aquaculture Coordinating Council to be included with Dr. Carnegie's proposal, "Streamlining Biosecurity Management in the Context of Regional Molluscan Shellfish Transfers" directed towards NOAA's National Sea Grant Program.

Development of 2014 Annual Report

Due June 30th, the 2014 Annual Report will bring key issues to the attention of the Governor on behalf of the Council. Mr. Roscher reviewed the notes provided in advance of tonight's meeting provided by Council Members addressing topics and suggestions to be considered before the report is drafted. A few of the submitted topics and suggestions that were discussed include:

- Funding for resources for MDE water quality monitoring - Funding was successfully obtained last year as a result of recommendations made in the previous year's report. Is there a need for additional funding (perhaps for equipment) that could be addressed in this year's report?
- NRP comments regarding the need to hire additional officers and the Strategic Plan the NRP has put in place - A copy of the strategic plan was provided by Captain Sherman to the Council for consideration as part of the topics and suggestions under review.

Motion: (Sherman/O'Donnell) – Passed

To adopt the NRP recommendation to support their Strategic Plan for FY 2015- FY 2019 that lays out the specific number of officers needed to augment the NRP force.

- Clearance zones around pound nets – How past and current policies regarding inactive/active pound net sites has affected lease locations, their shapes and the best way to address industry concerns about such zones.
- To expand the section of the report about the "Current Status of Shellfish Aquaculture" – This would include an overview of how the review process has changed over the years and how the length of time it takes to have a lease application reviewed has shortened during the last year.
- Include hard data in the report on the number of jobs and economic impact the industry has in Maryland. The Aquaculture Division now has a full year's worth of hard numbers associated with the quantity of bushels harvested and the number of individuals that have been issued SAHP

cards. Erin Butler added that she would be able to provide details on the number of leaseholders that have become certified dealers.

- The suggestion for funding an expanded program for the Maryland crabmeat quality assurance program to include cultured oysters to support the wider industry. Discussion included the difference in the processing/packaging of crab as compared to that of oysters, how education on *Vibrio* can help the industry and the potential for the inclusion of clams in such a program.
- Recommendation to modify the MDNR contract being renegotiated with Maryland Port Administration (MPA) funding for aquaculture that currently limits funds to TFL holders. Discussion centered on the success of the program after its first two years of availability and the potential for increased interest of TFL holders over the next few years as supported by continued industry success and growth.
- Mr. Roscher added that resources for the Oxford Lab (Technician) should be included in the report as resources are needed to expand their program.

Additional New Business Discussion:

Delegate O'Donnell commented on the results of the Fall Oyster Survey and indicated that the positive results were good news and a success story to which aquaculture contributes.

Erin Butler discussed a report regarding product imported into Canada. These products are validated by the Canadian standard for import and they will be testing imports from other countries.

Public Comments:

Remarking on the Lease Coordinate Data Sharing Survey which had been reviewed at the last meeting, Roby Witt brought to the attention of the Council that he felt the closure book is not large enough to show leases in enough detail to be useful.

John Van Alstine addressed the issue of harvester identification cards and that he has lots of people listed as a pool to use to get a few when needed. He feels that if the figure of permitted individuals is used to show jobs in Maryland aquaculture it may be misleading in how many jobs are actually being created.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm with the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Thursday, July 10, 2014 at 6:30 pm in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, C-1 Conference Room. Chairman Webster encouraged attendance at this next meeting because of special topics on the agenda.