

**Oyster Task Force Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 9, 2019, 1:00p.m.**  
**2045 Lakeshore Dr., RM 216**  
**New Orleans, LA 70122**

**I. Pledge of Allegiance**

**II. Roll call and introduction of guests**

**Voting Members Present:**

Tracy Collins  
Dan Coulon  
Leo Dyson  
Jakov Jurisic  
Mitch Jurisich  
Brad Robin  
Brandt Lafrance  
Al Sunseri  
John Tesvich  
Sam Slavich  
Peter Vujnovich  
Willie Daisy

**Voting Members Absent:**

Shane Bagala  
Byron Encalade

**Non-voting Members Present:**

Carolina Bourque  
Gordon Leblanc in for Justin Gremillion  
Adam Young in for Major Edward Skena  
Karl Morgan  
Erin P.

**III.** Dan Coulon motioned to approve the November 27, 2018 meeting minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

Request to add two items to the agenda under new business: Item E. To Discuss the Proposal of Legislation that would allow for the use of scrapers in Lake Calcasieu and item F. To Discuss the Farm Bureau's Consulting Offerings and Crop Insurance

Motion to approve the agenda as amended by Sam Slavich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Coulon.  
Motion carries.

**IV. Treasury Report:**

Remaining Fund Balance: \$341, 368  
Remaining Budget Balance: \$65, 983

Tracy Collins motioned to accept the treasury report as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Coulon. Motion carries.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **A. Public Oyster Grounds Committee**

Mitch provided an update from the January Commission meeting and announced that the Commission postponed their vote on the oyster lease moratorium lifting NOI until the February 2019 meeting

#### **Enforcement Report:**

Nov. 20- Jan 2

#### **Region 4 (Iberia)**

None

#### **Region 5 (Cameron and Vermillion)**

##### **Cameron Parish**

9-violate Calcasieu Lake Oyster Regulations (use dredge)  
3-intentional concealment, destruction or deposit fish or wildlife illegally taken or possessed  
2-take undersize oysters from natural reef

13 sacks of oysters returned to water

##### **Vermillion Parish**

1-possess less than 10% untagged or improperly tagged oysters  
3 sacks of oysters returned to water

#### **Region 6: (Terrebonne, Lafourche, Grand Isle)**

##### **Terrebonne**

8-take oysters closed season (sister lake)  
6-take oysters illegal hours (sister lake)  
3-take oysters from an unapproved area (polluted)  
1-unlawfully take oysters off a private lease  
1-failure to have written permission  
2-take commercial fish without a commercial license  
2-take oysters without a scraper license  
2-take oysters without an oyster harvester license  
130 sacks of oysters seized

**Region 8: (Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Orleans, St. Tammany)**

**St Bernard Parish**

- 1-Violate Seed Ground Permit Requirement
- 1-Use Illegal Oyster Scrapper on State Seed Ground
- 1-Fail to Have Written Permission
- 1-Fail to display numbers on top vessel
- 2-No Commercial Scrapper License
- 1-No Commercial Vessel License
- 6 Sacks of Oysters Seized

**B. Legislative Committee Report:**

No report

**C. Research Committee Report:**

No report

**D. Coastal Restoration Report:**

No report

**E. Marketing Report:**

The Marketing Committee met and discussed proposing a 1 year budget of \$50,000; plans to continue discussions on the creation of a social media presence and an oyster industry website. Sea Grant to provide quotes at next meeting.

At a previous oyster task force meeting, the board nominated Jakov Jurisic to serve as the task force representative on the Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board. The task force was asked to also submit the names of two alternates.

Al Sunseri motioned to nominate Tracy Collins and Willie Daisy as the alternates for the Oyster Task Force seat on the Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brandt Lafrance. Motion carries.

**F. Health Report:**

No report; There is currently one inspector in the state for inspecting out-of state shipments; LDH is working to train more and plans to provide an update to the task force at the next meeting

Gordon Leblanc announced that there will be a map showing on Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the Jefferson Parish Health Unit (111 Causeway Blvd, Metairie, LA 70001) between the hours of 9 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.

I will be presenting the March April 2019 and May August 2019 Reclassification lines.

Leo Dyson entered at 2:01pm

**G. Professionalism Report:**

No report

**H. Aquaculture Committee Report:**

No report; the committee plans to host its next meeting on Thursday, January 17, 2019 for 10:00am at the LDWF headquarters located at 2000 Quail Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70898

John Tesvich entered at 2:03pm

**I. Joint Task Force Working Group Meeting:**

No report

**New Business:**

A. Dr. Robert Twilley of Sea Grant and Fisheries Assistant Secretary Patrick Banks, provided the task force with an update on the Coastal Fisheries Industry Adaptation Workgroup

**LSF Objectives**

1. Identify challenges facing the fishing industry related to changing environmental conditions (coastal land loss, water quality, etc.).
2. Identify environmental, economic and policy information that could be helpful to members of the seafood industry.
3. Discuss restoration and protection projects, including issues related to when and how projects are brought on line.
4. Identify adaptation strategies that could help the industry.
5. Identify funding sources, if necessary, that could help the industry put adaptation strategies into practice.

**Coastal Fishing Industry Adaptation Workgroup - Oysters**

- Move to More Productive Areas
  - Lift Oyster Lease Moratorium
  - Turn Some Public Grounds into Leasable Areas
  - Modify vessels to fish farther from home port
    - Refrigeration
    - More efficient engines to burn less fuel
- Modify Operations to Off-Bottom Cultivation
  - Further develop hatcheries
  - Further develop seed sources
- Compensation/Mitigation

The task force suggested adding the following to the industry's list of adaptation tools: re-education, salinity control (specifically Mardi Gras Pass), funding for reef relocations, and funding to move reef material from leases that are now non-productive to leases that are workable

Mitch stated that Black Bay and other areas and concern for abandoning areas and just moving to another area

George Ricks expressed concern for the State adapting and controlling fresh water intrusion

**B.** Mitch Jurisich updated the task force on the commercial licensing restructure

LDWF is seeking feedback from the industry to make changes to the commercial licensing fees

The task force sent the commercial licensing item to the Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee for further review and discussion

**C.** The task force considered funding for the 2019 Oyster Industry Convention

Al Sunseri motioned to provide \$5000 funding to the LODGA for the 2019 Oyster Convention, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

### **Seafood Industry Convention on Coastal Restoration Slated for January 19, 2019**

The Louisiana Seafood Industry Convention on Coastal Restoration will be held Saturday, January 19, 2019 at the Hilton-New Orleans Airport, 901 Airline Drive, Kenner, Louisiana.

The convention is organized by the Louisiana Oyster Dealers and Growers Association to help the state's seafood industry address the impacts of coastal restoration, particularly Mississippi River diversions. The forum will also attempt to bring Louisiana's oyster, crab, shrimp and fish industries and trade associations together to discuss important issues, to make business contacts and to socialize. Seafood will be served several ways during a reception following the afternoon session.

Registration is \$20 and begins at 8:00 am. Registration includes seminars, coffee and reception. Lunch will be available for purchase at the Hilton's Second Line Bar & Grill.

For more information, contact John Tesvich at [jtesvich@ameripure.com](mailto:jtesvich@ameripure.com) or 504-912-2750. Convention topics and speakers include:

- **Industry Perspective-** *John Tesvich*- Louisiana Oyster Dealers & Growers Association

- **Canals: Most Louisiana Land loss is Caused by Canals and Restoring Canals is Successful, Relatively Inexpensive, and Overdue-** *R. Eugene Turner*- Louisiana State University
- **You Can't Make Old Friends - Ideas for Sustaining Louisiana's Salt Marshes** *Chris McLindon*- New Orleans Geological Society
- **Economic Considerations for Coastal Restoration** *Rex Caffey*- LSU Center for Natural Resource Economics & Policy
- **Caveats of Diversions-** *Susan Testroet-Bergeron*- Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
- **Diversions: Lessons Learned?-** *George Ricks*- Save Louisiana Coalition
- **History of Sediment Diversions and Current NEPA Processing-** *Dennis Lambert*- Professional Engineer, Fellow, American Society of Civil Engineers
- **Coastal Fisheries Adaptive Workgroup-** *Robert Twilley*, Louisiana Sea Grant College Program
- **Industry Panel Discussion**

**D.** The board discussed providing funding to hire a scheduler for their upcoming D.C. Hill meets

Al Sunseri made a motion to provide up to \$2500 in funding to pay Seb O'Kelly to set up the task force's Washington, D.C. Hill meetings, Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

**E.** Leo Dyson led discussion on a proposal for legislation that would allow for the use of scrapers in Lake Calcasieu; asking that the OTF legislative committee consider this legislation for discussion

The board sent this item to the Legislative Committee for further discussion and to use the next year to begin working on legislation to possibly propose in the next legislative session

**F.** To Discuss the Farm Bureau's crop insurance and consultant offerings

Ron Herrell addressed the task force with information regarding the Farm Bureau building an oyster insurance program. Senator Whitehouse, from Rhode Island, was successful in getting language added in the 2018 Farm Bill, which recognizes oysters and certain other shell fish as an ag commodity. Oysters are now eligible for federal subsidized crop insurance. In Sec. 11122 Research and Development Authority, directs the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) to hold stakeholder meetings to solicit producer and agents (providing insurance coverage) feedback so as to improve effectiveness of the insurance program. In carrying out this charge, the FCIC shall address several factors, one being paragraph (VI) "treating the different growth stages of aquaculture species as separate crops to recognize the differences in perils at different phases of growth." This language provides a vehicle for oyster farmers and other shellfish farmers to address the inadequate insurance options oystermen experience.

Oyster farmers are at a high risk of losing their crop due to numerous situations including weather events, diseases, predators, and most importantly changes in the marine environment (salinity) through the life stages of the oyster. These risks justify the necessity for oyster farmers to have workable, affordable insurance options just like those available to land farmers. It was recommended to request these offices to follow through with the charge in the Farm Bill and that the Louisiana oyster industry be at the table to help put together a workable and effective crop insurance product for oyster farmers.

Dan Coulon plans to bring Farm Bureau applications to the next meeting for those interested in joining

#### **G. Officer Elections**

Al Sunseri motioned to nominate Mitch Jurisich as the Oyster Task Force chairman, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tracy Collins. Motion carries, 1 opposed- Jakov Jurisic.

Al Sunseri motioned to nominate Peter Vujnovich as Oyster Task Force vice chairman, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

The Task Force thanked John Tesvich for his hard work and dedication to the industry and to the Oyster Task Force during his time as chairman

Next meeting set for Tuesday, February 19 for 1pm at the West Bank Regional Library- 2751 Manhattan Blvd. Harvey, La 70058

Motion to adjourn by Brad Robin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brandt Lafrance. Motion carries.