

**Oyster Task Force Meeting  
February 16, 2016, 1:00PM  
UNO Advanced Technology Center  
2021 Lakeshore Dr., STE 210  
New Orleans, LA 70122**

Allison West called roll:

**Voting Members Present:**

Shane Bagala  
Wilbert Collins  
Byron Encalade  
Jakov Jurisic  
Mitch Jurisich  
Brad Robin  
Brandt LaFrance  
Al Sunseri  
John Tesvich  
Sam Slavich  
Peter Vujnovich  
Willie Daisy

**Voting Members Absent:**

Leo Dyson  
Dan Coulon

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Mark Schexnayder  
Gordon Leblanc in for Lance Broussard  
Frank Cole in for Karl Morgan  
Captain Chad Hebert

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Motion to approve the February 2, 2016 meeting minutes by Peter Vujnovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

Motion to approve February 16, 2016 meeting agenda by Brandt LaFrance 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

Allison West addressed the TF with treasury report: Fund Balance 344,092, Budget Balance: 228, 949

Motion to approve the treasury report by Jakov Jurisic, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mitch Jurisich. Motion carries

Secretary Melancon suggested that the TF submit a letter to their legislative representatives regarding the OTF account funds stating that the funds are self imposed fees by the industry to promote and further the oyster industry

**Public Private Oyster Grounds Committee:**

Gear Restrictions on Scrapers (dredges):

- Maximum thickness of the tooth not to exceed 11/16 inch- page 2 line 27/28
- 3 inch minimum stretched single mesh bag size
- Page 2, line 29 “remove between the teeth”

Al Sunseri made a motion to approve the proposed legislation favorably with amendments, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Willie Daisy. Motion carries.

*Seed Grounds Vessel Permits:*

Jakov Jurisic made a motion to approve the proposed legislation as it is written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries with 1 opposed.

Byron Encalade stated that he disagreed with the fee increase associated with the permit

*Oyster Seed Grounds Development Account:*

- Add a section that states the Department shall provide an annual report of expenditures from the Oyster Seed Ground Account

Cole Garrett stated that the above addition is already included and addressed in section “D” of HLS 16RS-515

Severance Tax:

- Consolidate severance tax with trip tickets
- Modify trip tickets to include leaseholders
- Make tax payable and recordable based on harvesters ID
- Allow LDWF to establish a credit on severance tax for planting cultch
- Establish a severance tax for residence and 4 times that amount for non-residents
- Failure to repay severance tax shall result in suspension of harvesters license until paid

Al Sunseri made a motion to accept the proposal and recommendations of the Legislative Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Wilbert Collins

Cole Garrett stated that he would begin to draft legislation, but this would not go in until 2017 fiscal session. Suggested that tying trip tickets to the severance tax may cause some reason for concern with misreporting and recommended that since the committee would like to modify the structure and raise the tax that the bill go through the committee for a full year. Do not need legislation to modify trip tickets, but severance tax credits would take legislative action

Mitch Jurisich made a motion to request severance tax draft legislation made available for next year's fiscal session, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jakov Jurisic. Motion Carries.

Jakov Jurisich added that the committee also recommended changing reporting from a barrel to a sack

**Enforcement:**

Captain Chad Hebert provided the Task Force with an enforcement update 3 unlawful taking of oysters on a private lease, 2 cases of unlawfully taking oysters from state water bottoms, seized 86 sacks of oysters that were returned to the water

Willie Daisy recommended inviting the DA's to upcoming OTF meetings to participate

Secretary Melancon suggested hosting DA's meetings parish by parish to discuss enforcement issues

Mitch Jurisich added that it is also the leaseholders responsibility to participate and follow through with conviction cases

**Research:**

No Report

**Coastal Restoration:**

No Report

**Marketing:**

Tempt Films, the company hired for the oyster industry documentary, is seeking interview recommendations

Lisa Manda with the Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board  
Annual Legislative seafood receptions is now being held at the Pentagon Barracks  
on Tuesday, March 29 at adjournment

### **Health Committee:**

Gordon Leblanc stated that Area 1 opened today; all areas are now reopened since red tide

Mark Schexnayder addressed the TF regarding state oyster harvesters training. Contacted NC, SC and Georgia and they handled this training legislatively, Texas has not made any changes yet, but stated that they will have to do it legislatively as well. Mississippi and Alabama made changes through rule making. Suggested the TF go through legislation to make these changes

Al Sunseri suggested doing the harvesters training through rule making instead of legislation

Cole Garret suggested that if the TF would like the harvesters training to be a pre-requisite for the harvester's license this would have to be done through legislation

Gordon Leblanc stated that he would have the chronological order of events from red tide to the TF by Friday

Gordon Leblanc requested \$6500 funding from the TF for the Gulf South Atlantic Shellfish Conference for bus transportation and refreshment sessions

Gulf South Atlantic- Hilton Riverside on June 6-9

Al Sunseri made a motion to provide \$6500 funding from the OTF for the Gulf South Atlantic Shellfish Conference to provide bus transportation and refreshment sessions, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Wilbert Collins. Motion carries.

Al Sunseri made a motion for the TF to pay the registration fees for any LOTF members who would like to participate in the Gulf South Atlantic Shellfish Conference, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jakov Jurisic

Jakov Jurisic amended the motion on the table to include the TF covering registration fees for regional association members who would like to participate in the Gulf South Atlantic Shellfish Conference, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brad Robin. Motion carries

Al Sunseri suggested that the members of the LOTF reach out to the associations they are affiliated with to let them know about this event

Discussion was held on DEQ Water Discharge Permits and how much money is collected from that permit south of I-10 that goes toward oyster enforcement and

oyster water quality testing. The TF inquired about how much money DHH and LDWF have received for DEQ Waste Discharge Permits and how this money is distributed

Al Sunseri suggested John Tesvich write a letter to DEQ requesting the fee breakdown from the last 5 years of the Waste Discharge Permit and how this money is distributed to DHH (Shellfish Sanitation Program, LDWF (enforcement, marine fisheries)

LDWF staff stated that they would provide this information to the TF with out an official letter request

### **Sustainability:**

Damon Morris stated that oyster fishery certification program that the department is working on with the Audubon Nature Institute should be through the process by summer, currently setting up the next round of technical advisory committee meetings

### **Professionalism:**

Julie Falgout provided the TF with an update on the Fisheries Forward Summit on Tuesday, March 1 at the Pontchartrain Center from 8:30AM-4PM. Asked that anyone interested in pre-registering do so by February 24. Anyone who would like to register by phone can call Julie at 985-856-2477

### **Aquaculture:**

No Report

### **Oyster Lease Moratorium Lifting Committee:**

The current legislative draft has been circulated and a group of attorneys that represent oystermen throughout the state will meet tomorrow to review the proposed legislation

Mitch Jurisich suggested that the TF meet after this meeting to finalize

### **Proposed leased area within Public Seed Grounds**

Randy Pausina stated that the department has the TF's proposal for leased area and is currently looking into it, suggested taking the issue to committee for further recommendations and discussion

Secretary Melancon suggested that the TF consider a VMS system to address enforcement issues, lease renewals and productivity

Willie Daisy requested that the Department look at Lake Mechant and consider it as an area for expansion/lease

The next Oyster Task Force meeting will be on Wednesday, March 2 for 1pm in New Orleans

Motion to adjourn by Wilbert Collins, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brad Robin. Motion Carries.

Meeting adjourned at 3:48PM