

**Oyster Task Force Meeting
Tuesday, September 5, 2017
2021 Lakeshore Dr., STE 210
New Orleans, LA 70122**

Voting Members Present:

John Tesvich
Dan Coulon
Brandt Lafrance
Peter Vujnovich
Jakov Jurisic
Willie Daisy
Mitch Jurisich
Brad robin
Sam Slavich
Al Sunseri

Voting Members Absent:

Shane Bagala
Leo Dyson
Byron Encalade

Non-Voting Members Present:

Mark Schexnayder
Brian Lezina
Justin Gremillion
Karl Morgan
Capt. Chad Hebert

Motion to approve the August 1, 2017 meeting minutes by Peter Vujnovich, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries

Request to amend the agenda to add item 'H. Discussion of the LA Fisheries Forward Summit

Motion to accept the agenda as amended by Jakov Jurisic, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

Financial Report:

Oyster Development Account:

Remaining Fund Balance: \$505,322
Remaining Budget Balance: \$306, 322

Public Oyster Seed Ground Account:

Remaining Fund Balance: \$3,530,463
Remaining Budget Balance: \$ 2,530, 463

Motion to accept the financial report by Al Sunseri, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee Report:

Mitch Jurisich addressed the TF with an update from the Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee meeting

The Committee received an updated copy of the draft moratorium lifting NOI; further discussion of the draft NOI is planned for the committee's next meeting- to be held on Tuesday, October 3 for 9:30am

The Committee discussed the stock assessment season recommendations: Suggested doing the Day in the Bay for 7am on October 2 at Campos Marina

Habitat Suitability Index- Committee recommended having a joint meeting with the CPRA and the Corp of Engineers to discuss crevasse control and over flow east of the River and hypoxia at the next OTF meeting

Jakov Jurisic made a motion to accept the recommendation of the committee to request that a representative of CPRA and the Corp of Engineers attend the next full task force meeting to be able to present and discuss the crevasse over flow east of the river, hypoxia in the Chandelier and Breton Sound areas, and also to address the habitat suitability index, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

Shell budget: the Committee discussed the shell budget. Recommended having a joint meeting between the Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee and the Research Committee to come up with PR solutions and ways to present the shell budget to the public and also to consider other factors, i.e. water quality

Enforcement Report:

July 26 – August 25

Region 5: (Cameron, Vermilion)

No citations issued.

Region 6: (Terrebonne, Lafourche, Grand Isle)

- 2 – Fail to have written permission
- 2 – Unlawfully take oysters from a private lease
- 3 – Take oysters closed season (Bay Junop)
- 3 – Take possess commercial fish without a commercial license
- 3 – Take or possess oysters without an oyster harvester license
- 3 – Take commercial fish without a commercial gear license (scraper)

- 2 – Take commercial fish without a vessel license
- 1 – Allow unlicensed person to use commercial vessel
- 1 – Misbranded or adulterated seafood
- 7 – Violate sanitation code (logbook)
- 2 – Violate sanitation code (refrigeration)
- 2 – Violate sanitation code (tarp)
- 1 – Fail to tag sacked oysters
- 4 – Harvest oysters from an improperly marked lease
- 2 – Take oysters from polluted area
- 1 – Possession of untagged oysters

Seizures:

- 32 – Full sacks, 50 – Mini sacks
- 1 – Vessel
- 1 – Oyster dredge

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

- 4-Violate sanitary code (log book)
- 3-violate sanitary code (refrigeration)
- 2-Violate sanitary code (no tarp)
- 7-Unlawfully take oysters from un-leased state water bottoms

Seizures:

- 57 - Mini sacks, 98 – Full sacks

Jakov Jurisic requested that the TF receive a follow up on citations regarding leases that are not properly marked

Legislative Report:

No report

Research Report:

Dr. Earl Melancon announced that WLF has been doing a lot of work east of the river this summer, which would provide the data and ground work to start the RFP for east of the River

Hannah Bernette, a PHD student from the University of Chicago, interested in doing her dissertation on environmental politics and ecosystem restoration and she would like to meeting with board members who are interested in assisting her with some feedback. She is specifically looking for thoughts/ feedback on how oyster fishermen and fishermen at large are overlapping with coastal restoration efforts.

Coastal Restoration Report:

No report

Announcements:

The TF submitted comment to the Corp of Engineers regarding the Economic Impact Statement for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

The Save LA Coalition will host the 'Battle for the Bayou Bash', a fundraising event and silent auction, on Saturday, September 16 from 6-10pm at the St. Bernard Civic Center. Tickets can be purchased for \$40 in advance, \$50 at the door

Bohemia Salinity Control Structure update: currently working to get the funding and contracts for the engineer work that is needed to secure a permit for the closure of the Bohemia Salinity Control Structure; currently resides in the office of contract for review

Marketing Report:

No report

Health Report:

No report

ISSC is approaching in October and the TF suggested having a health committee meeting prior to discuss ISSC proposals

Sustainability Report:

No report

Professionalism Report:

No report

Aquaculture Report:

No report

Joint Task Force Working Group Report:

No report

The committee plans to meet soon to discuss oyster lease markers

New Business:

Steve Beck addressed the TF to consider a statewide (public-private leases) 3-inch minimum size limit on market oysters. Right now leases do not have a size limit on market oysters

Jakov Jurisic and Brad Robin expressed issue with the 3-inch size limit on market oysters

Mitch Jusicich also expressed concern especially with applying this regulation on private leases that invest their money and materials into

Al Sunseri suggested that the TF come up with definitions of what is considered marketable and wholesome oysters

Jakov Jurisic motioned to take no action on moving forward with a 3-inch minimum size limit on market oysters on private leases, 2nd by Mitch Jusicich. Motion passes.

Al Sunseri made a substitute motion to send the issue to committee to request that the TF develop and discuss the definitions of what a marketable and wholesome oyster is for the half-shell trade and mini sack, 2nd by Dan Coulon. Motion does not pass after vote.

The committee considered a draft resolution for the State's continued work on the Gulf hypoxia issue

Motion to accept the draft resolution to support the State's continued work on the hypoxia issue in the Gulf by Peter Vujnovich, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

Item 'C. Discussion of Tagging Regulations for Mini-Sacks' was previously discussed under the Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee report; the board deemed that no further discussion on the issue was necessary

Jack Isaacs addressed the TF with oyster import data

Steve Beck provided the TF with an update on the summer 2016 oyster die-off. The TF received a report in the winter (2016) of the findings and a document is being prepared on the report. The written report will be produced as a sub-section in the annual 2016 stock assessment. The 2016 stock assessment is set to be finalized in the near future

Steve Beck addressed the TF with an update on the assessment of oyster loss on public reefs east of the MS River, stated that document is completed and awaiting approval

The TF considered funding and participation in the 2018 LA Alive and Acadiana events

John Tesvich stated that in the past, the LA Alive booth funding was around \$9,500 and a cap for funding is usually set for the 'Let the World Be Your Oyster' reception. Also mentioned that last year the two events were held separately, the LA Alive event is usually in January or February and the Let the World Be Your Oyster event was held in May last year. The task force came to the consensus that the oyster reception was more effective in May when the events were separated

Jakov Jurisic made a motion for the task force to continue participation and funding for both the LA Alive and the 'Let the World Be Your Oyster events, hosting them separately, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

Dan Coulon suggested asking the Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board to aid in throwing these events and representing the industry with marketing materials, etc.

Jakov Jurisic requested contacting Tracy Collins with Collins Oysters to participate in next year's events

Earl Meloncon made an announcement: The Louisiana Fisheries Forward Summit will take place on March 6, 2018 at the Pontchartrain Center. In its 4th year, the summit encompasses the seafood industry with a whole section on oysters. Requested that the task force recommend vendors that may be interested in participating. Stated that they will be requesting \$5,000 of funding from the Oyster Task Force at the next meeting.

John Tesvich requested feedback on the total budget for the summit for the next meeting

Public Comment:

Discussion on the oyster season recommendations

Willie Daisy suggested changing the sack limit to 35 instead of 50 in Sister Lake

Next Oyster Task Force meeting set for Tuesday, October 3, 2017 for 1pm in New Orleans

The Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee meeting is set for 9:30am on Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Brad Robin made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Brandt LaFrance. Motion carries