

Oyster Task Force August 26, 2015 meeting minutes

Meeting called to order at 1:05 p.m.

UNO Center for Resource Management

Ashley Roth called the roll.

Voting Members Present:

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

Voting Members Absent:

Mitch Jurisich

Non-Voting Members Present:

Mark Schexnayder
Gordon LeBlanc in for Lance Broussard
Chip Kline
Captain Chad Hebert in for Lt. Col Sammy Martin

Non Voting Members Absent:

Kyle Graham

Motion by Al Sunseri to approve the minutes from May 5, 2015, second by Wilbert Collins. Motion adopted.

Motion approved to add oyster convention sponsorship to the agenda.

Motion to approve treasure's report by Al Sunseri, second by Wilbert Collins. Motion approved

Motion by Jakov Jurisic to sponsor 2015 oyster convention (\$5,000), second by Al Sunseri. Motion adopted.

Buddy Pausina will continue to serve on the public/private oyster committee. Mitch Jurisich will co-chair. John Tesvich said that the next time the public/private committee meets they would like to discuss diving boards on dredges, this was an agenda item suggested by Wilbert Collins.

Mr. Buddy Pausina also noted that the aquaculture committee needs to be added to committee list on the agenda.

Dan Coulon asked that the appeals board be listed as an agenda item for the next meeting, they have some ideas they would like to bring to the task force.

Mr. Buddy Pausina said that there has been a request that an appeals board for off-bottom aquaculture.

Enforcement report— In June and July, 367 sacks of oysters seized, 20 dredges seized. The department can physically seize boats, but do not currently do that other than on paper due to logistics of storing boats.

Legislative report- Cole Garrett presented a recap of the oyster related bills for the 2015 session.

- **HB 341 – Additional Penalties for Illegal Taking of Oysters from Leased Acreage**
 - Provides for license revocation, mandatory VMS, and community service for violations
 - Effective 8/1/15 as Act 211
 - **HB 579 – Increases Lease Rates on Oyster Leases and Dedicates Funds**
 - Increases oyster lease rental rates from \$2/acre to \$3/acre beginning January 1, 2016
 - Dedicates oyster lease revenue to the Public Oyster Seed Ground Development Account
 - Effective 8/1/15 as Act 343
- **HB 680 – Private Oyster Leases on Private Properties**
 - Creates a 90-day period for private landowners to challenge the issuance of an LDWF oyster lease
 - Makes LDWF leases subservient to existing recorded private leases on dual-claimed land and establishes a right of first refusal for private lessees
 - Creates a presumption of legal harvest on private water bottoms not issued by the state for lessees of private recorded leases
 - Voluntarily Deferred in House Natural Resources Committee
- **HCR 104 – Creates the Oyster Moratorium Lifting Committee**
 - Comprised of 2 Oyster seats, 2 oil and gas seats, 1 landowner, and ex-officio members
 - Provides a list of 13 items to be specifically examined by the committee
 - Requires a 2/3 vote of the voting members to take action
 - Died in Conference Committee

HB 341, Cole Garrett clarified that it was the oyster harvester's license that would be revoked.

Al Sunseri asked that the Coastal Restoration committee try to bring some speakers to talk about colmatage or colmata (Italian). Suggested speakers were the Corps and historians. John Tesvich asked that Al Sunseri get with Dan Coulon to make that happen.

Marketing report: Ashley Roth presented the quote and production summary from Tempt Productions. Motion by Peter Vujnovich to improve an increase in budget up to \$50,000 for the video production. Peter Vujnovich retracted his previous motion and asked to move forward with the current proposal from Tempt Productions for \$49,957.96, second by Jakov Jurisic. Motion adopted.

Health report: Gordon LeBlanc-they have done some refrigeration evaluations that went well. The NSSP harvester training requirements were presented Model ordinances require that harvester go through education training. October 15 (in Houma) and 21 (in Belle Chasse) will be the next education sessions. Jakov Jurisic commented that the training sessions might coincide with the season opening and asked that Darren Bourgeois adjust his training dates. ISSC would like for the training requirements be tied in to getting a license. Mark Schexnayder said that the NSSP discussion can be had at the next legislative committee meeting.

Sustainability: Damon Morris addressed the task force, sustainability programs are ongoing. Louisiana oysters will be certified through the Audubon Program. Peter Vujnovich is part of the technical advisory committee. John Tesvich asked if the task force could see some of the drafts of what is being worked on.

Professionalism: March 1, 2016 is the date of the seafood summit, it will be in Kenner this year instead of Houma. Current Oyster workshops are Oct. 15 in Houma and 21 in Belle Chasse. Discussions will be weights and measures and any other suggestions. LAFisheriesforward.org is the website for the fisheries forward program. Year one videos are complete, working on year two.

Steve Sessums with LDAF said that mini-sack regulations should be ready as early as Oct.20 to end of October. Definition of mini sack is 1/3 sack. They haven't started any education on that, but have been visiting several seafood retail establishments. The worst offender was in Alabama, so he is working with colleagues over there to alert them. They will work with LDWF about going to the docks. They didn't want to cause confusion before the law goes into place. They'll start with courtesy inspections for the first couple of months and will let people correct the ones that are mislabeled for a period of time.

Dana Brocato pointed out that there is not a mini sack on the trip ticket. Action item for LDWF to add mini sacks to trip ticket.

Capt. George Ricks presented to the task force. Discussion was held.

Al Sunseri made a motion for the structure of the oyster lease moratorium committee:

Motion:

To have the LOTF Chairman appoint a special committee called the Oyster Lease Moratorium Lifting Committee (OLMLC). The OLMLC shall be charged to propose Department of Wildlife

and Fisheries rules and to propose legislation that are necessary and appropriate for lifting the oyster lease moratorium that has been in place since 2002. The LOTF chair shall chair the OLMLC.

The committee shall include the following voting and non-voting members:

- 1) Members of the Louisiana Oyster Task Force.*
- 2) One nonvoting member selected by the Louisiana Oil and Gas Association.*
- 3) One nonvoting member selected by the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association.*
- 4) One nonvoting member selected by the Louisiana Landowner's Association.*
- 5) One nonvoting member representing the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.*
- 6) One nonvoting member representing the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.*
- 7) One nonvoting member representing the Department of Natural Resources.*
- 8) One nonvoting member representing the State Land Office.*
- 9) One nonvoting member representing the Attorney General.*
- 10) The Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities shall be a nonvoting*
- 11) Two nonvoting member from the Senate Natural Resources Committee*
- 12) Two nonvoting member from the House Natural Resources and Environment Committee*

Second by Dan Coulon. All voting oyster task force members would be voting, the other members of the moratorium committee would be nonvoting. Al Sunseri amended his motion to clarify all voting members of the OTF would be the voting members on the committee. Dan Coulon agreed to this amendment.

John Tesvich said that he will chair the committee for the time being and will call the first meeting.

John asked that LDWF send out letters to the departments and associations asking for the appointment of a member and an alternate to serve on this committee. Al Sunseri suggested that Wednesday, Sept.

23 1 p.m., in Baton Rouge be the meeting date. Exact location in BR to be determined. Chip Kline said that he would help facilitate organizing assembling the organizations and agencies.

Al Sunseri made a motion for task force members that would like to attend the ISSC travel costs for any task force members that want to attend, second by Wilbert Collins. Motion carried.

Mark Schexnayder and Gordon LeBlanc said that if anyone wants to meet in advance to discuss proposals then they can do this on Tuesday, Oct. 6 at 1 p.m. at UNO. This would be a health committee meeting to discuss ISSC proposals.

Patrick Banks presented the 2015 Oyster Task Force stock assessment report.

Patrick presented the departments recommendations:

Open Little Lake, Vermillion/Atchafalaya Bay Area, Lake Tambour and Deep Lake and Barataria Bay on Sept. 9.

Open area 1N, 1S, Hackberry Bay, Sister Lake and Lake Mechant, Lake Chien, Lake Felicity on October 26.

Calcasieu Lake-West Cove on November 1

Sack limits-40 sacks per vessel per day; Calcasieu Lake, 6 sacks per vessel per day

American Bay/Bay Long, sacking only; also DHH area 2 would be sacking only.

Closed: 2014 Hackberry Bay Cultch Plant, Bay Junop, East Side of Calcasieu Lake, Sabine Lake.

Brad Robin made a motion to accept the LDWF season recommendations, but to make all areas that are currently Oct. 26 open on Oct. 15, second Shane Bagala.

Patrick Banks said that last year in some areas a permitted cargo vessel, transporting oysters for other people, they were exempt from the possession limit. Most of those vessels also fish themselves so they are not exempt from daily limit.

Brad Robin asked to amend his recommendation to include increasing the daily sack limit to 50 sacks and a two- day possession. Motion adopted.

Patrick Banks pointed out that by law the Calcasieu task force can make their season recommendations directly to the commission.

A day in the Bay was suggested for Sept. 29. Brad Robin said he would provide the boat. Patrick Banks pointed out that if the purpose of this trip is to amend the season then the task force will have to make sure the commission gives Sec. Barham authority to change the season. Otherwise they would have to go back in front of the commission.

Jakov Jurisic asked that if after the day in the bay if there are any unusual circumstances that warrant going before the commission they could do so.

Tuesday, November 10, 1 p.m. Oyster Task Force meeting with appeals board meeting that morning at 9 a.m.

Motion to adjourn by Dan Coulon, second by Jakov Jurisic.

Meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

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