



S H E L L F I S H C O N S E R V A T I O N C O M M I S S I O N

Meeting Minutes **Wednesday, August 27, 2014** **6:00 PM – East Conference Room, Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Brown (Chairman), Charles Adams, John Berrett, Bill Mullin, Jessica Joyce, Bob Maloney, Charles Piacentini, Harland Storey.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Shane, Councilor Gruber, Stan Burnham & Chad Coffin

I. Roll Call & Welcome

II. Annual Shellfish Allocations

Tabled to next meeting.

III. DMR changes to Municipal Shellfish Programs

Town Manager Shane explained that we have discovered that we have inadvertently not been following State law in regard to issuing commercial licenses. Our ordinance says that *after March 31st any remaining shellfish licenses shall be issued to Residents and Non-Residents on a first come, first serve basis...* the only requirement for commercial licenses in our ordinance is that logs must be turned in by June 30th each year. If the logs are turned in, a license is required to be issued to that commercial clammer. For example, on April 1st only one person takes a commercial license. That means that 4 licenses are up for grabs to anybody (resident or non-resident). If the following year, all 5 fill out their logs and turn them in, they are all eligible for a commercial license according to State Law. We never realized that this was the rule and had not been following it. We should discuss this at the next meeting and decide if we want to require a volunteering requirement for commercial licenses or to amend any section of the commercial licensing section of the ordinance.

IV. Chad Coffin, Maine Clammer's Association

Mr. Coffin reviewed the following points with the Commission:

What we know:

- Maine's Department of Marine Resources' municipal management program is currently unable to provide direct or consistent assistance to municipal shellfish programs.
- Shellfish resources are at historic lows. Many Casco Bay communities have seen dramatic declines not only in shellfish populations, but in overall marine biodiversity.
- These declines are the result of predation by invasive green crabs.

- The mudflats are not “dead”. Immeasurable amounts of wild shellfish seed settle onto Cumberland’s intertidal zone every summer. Most of these clams, mussels, oysters, quahogs and scallops are not yet being melted away by acidified waters. They are also not being raked up by clam diggers or fishermen. They are most likely becoming another source of protein for invasive green crabs.
- When we experience hot weather, like we did in 2010-2013, invasive green crabs grow and eat everything in their path.

So what can we do? How can a municipal program fight back and move itself towards sustainability and prosperity?

The options:

- 1) **Municipal Teamwork:** Where towns utilize a license conservation requirement to provide necessary manpower to protect areas where the town’s licensed clammer’s dig.
 - So far, this approach been largely ineffective because there has been a lack of proper and consistent planning and oversight.
 - Also, the increased limited entry over the last two decades has resulted a dramatically aged clammer population. It is difficult for an aged fleet to muster the amount of energy needed to protect the flats.
 - This is also an option greatly influenced by the size of a program. A town with only 5 or 6 clammers will also have trouble mounting much of effort to fight green crabs.
- 2) **Incentive-based Conservation Program:** Grant more fishing privileges (access to more harvesting areas or fishing days) to participants who complete a pre-determined amount of conservation work.
- 3) **Municipal Leasing:** State law exists that allows municipal programs to lease as much as 25% of the intertidal gradient within that town’s borders. Leasing options could hold promise towards achieving the goal of restoring shellfish resources. However, leasing must have proper guidance and restrictions (such as leasing to individuals only) in order to preserve public trust resources. Successful clam farming also will benefit wild clammers as it adds biodiversity and increases shellfish spat biomass.
- 4) **Do Nothing and Hope it Gets Better:** This appears to be what most municipal shellfish programs and a large percentage of the Maine’s shellfish industry prefer to do. In the short term it’s much easier and inexpensive to say the lack of shellfish is ocean acidification, disease, a cycle that will pass, etc. Many are awaiting a new market or technology that will add value to green crabs in the hopes that we can somehow fish them out. For the majority who continue to choose option number 4, we sincerely wish you luck.

And:

- Options 1, 2, 3 require towns to transition the management of the resource to one of increased development and oversight of the Shellfish Program. To accomplish this, the town must transition the Shellfish Warden’s job description to focus on resource protection instead of only on enforcement. If transitioning the Warden position is too time consuming to be tackled immediately, the town should hire a dedicated Shellfish Coordinator to immediately set to work protecting the town’s shellfish resources.

The best way for coastal communities to support larger efforts to benefit Maine's shellfish resources is through research.

More specifically, support legislation and/or efforts to fund operations at the Downeast Institute for Applied Marine Research and Education (<http://www.downeastinstitute.org/>).

The Downeast Institute (DEI) is non-profit that has been working conducting applied marine research projects aimed at understanding Maine's shellfish resources since 1986. At this time DEI is woefully underfunded.

V. Town purchase of property with public ocean access

- **Ocean Access Committee member needed from commission**

Motion by Mr. Storey, seconded by Mr. Maloney, to appoint Mr. Adams to the Ocean Access Committee to represent the Shellfish Conservation Commission. Jessica Joyce will be the alternate member.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

VI. Other Business

Next meeting September 29th at 6:00 p.m.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Maloney, to adjourn.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

TIME: 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Moore
Commission Secretary