

**Aquaculture Advisory Council**  
**April 05, 2019**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Sec. Douglas Fisher, Mr. Joseph Cimino (Comm. Catherine McCabe), Mr. Loel Muetter (Comm. Shareef Elnahal), Dr. Daphne Munroe (Dr. Dave Bushek), Mr. Mike De Luca (Dr. Robert Goodman), Dr. Douglas Zemeckis, Ms. Lisa Calvo, Mr. Barney Hollinger, Mr. William Avery (Mr. George Saridakis), Ms. Betsy Haskin, Mr. Maury Sheets, Dr. Amanda Wenzel

**Members Absent:** Mr. Joseph Constance (Sec. Tahesha Way), Mr. John Maxwell

**Public in Attendance:** Jessica Cobb (DEP), Jenny Tomko (DEP), Brick Wenzel, Wayne Robinson, Ned Gaine, Bruce Eklund (USDA, NASS-NJ)

Sec. Fisher called the meeting to order; a quorum was present.

Motion to approve January 25, 2019 minutes made by Mr. Hollinger, second by Mr. Sheets. All in favor; motion carried.

*Public Comment*

Brick Wenzel, President of Ocean County Farm Bureau, provided comments on offshore wind proposals, related infrastructure, and potential impacts (e.g., electromagnetic field impacts, heat from transmission lines leading to changing water temps and potential induced upwelling).

*2019 Red Knot Conservation Measures (A. Wenzel)*

A copy of the full Conservations Measures, including 2019 changes was provided to the Council (print and email). The two main changes are highlighted in the document for the Council. Italicized text is quoted material, not “new” for 2019.

Major Change 1: CM#4; beginning of season May 7th as opposed to May 1<sup>st</sup> (unless birds arrive earlier). Major Change 2: if arriving by boat and maintaining 500 feet from tide line, can access any time (as opposed to 2 hours before and after low tide).

B. Haskin: the beaches are closed May 7th to the public, so this change matches aquaculture measures with other user restrictions for access. The boat access is reconciling the subtidal and intertidal measures.

*Future ADZ Development (R. Babb)*

DEP (Green Acres program) acquired large upland parcel (Delsea Woods), including the camp ground area behind the mobile homes; now all access to Bay can occur via public lands. Also included ~50-acre riparian grant.

Additional area of interest is the “infill” between the two current sections of the intertidal ADZ. During the initial 2005 ADZ process, the infill area was removed due to tidelands review and

lack of approval. Recently worked through an alternative Tidelands process, including attending Tidelands Resource Council (TRC) meetings, to gain approval/permits.

Between the infill and new riparian, 20 individual 3-acre leases. Process for expansion is slow and smart. This will allow consideration for farm density (social, production, disease), and trying to keep only the “good actors”.

- 2019 working on the relocation of the norther growers to the ADZ via grant processes. Each grower is being offered 2 leases, for a total of 6 acres/grower.
- 2020-2022, reassess at the end of each year, 2-4 leases per year, if warranted.

Plan is to place storage in the upland area for growers (sheds & parking). Remainder of parking, closer to the beach, reserved for other public users (kayak, bird-watchers, etc.).

L. Calvo- any plans for a process to remove bad players from area/leases? Craig (Tomlin) & Jenny (Tomko) have been working on revising the lease agreements to address lease utilization. This involves legal staff and Shellfish Councils.

S. Fisher- do you have information on the objectors for Tidelands. Is it a viewshed issue? There is no information on objections because there was no response. This is upland owners, not the TRC members. The TRC members are supportive of aquaculture. The current policy says upland owner has right as far as eye can see. That’s too vague. S. Fisher- maybe this is a legislation item? R. Babb- there needs to be a more transparent, predictable policy.

S. Fisher- are there studies that show what these leases may yield, so new farmers have an idea of future production potential? Nothing for the intertidal lease areas in ADZ. S. Fisher- I’m asking because there has to be opportunities for someone new to enter this industry.

S. Fisher- what issue is most concerning that warrants the slow process for developing the new leases? Giving due consideration to the current, established farms and limiting the new actors to ensure they are operating appropriately before bringing in even more growers. S. Fisher- I ask because, this is similar to wineries, where the market is large enough that a large aggregate bulk may be a benefit. R. Babb- this isn’t the only location that oysters can be grown. There are 30,000 acres of leases in the State where oysters could be grown.

#### *Aquaculture Red Knot Stakeholder Committee Update: (M. De Luca)*

Highlights from last meeting:

1. New Co-chairs elected/re-elected, Tim Dillingham and Matt Williams.
2. Reviewed past processes and made recommendations to improve transparency, bylaws, continue to engage science community/experts. Agreement that a science symposium on this issue will be open to the public.
3. Briefing on ADZ & lease from Russ Babb (similar to AAC presentation).
4. Schedule more meetings in the fall to ensure group is ready to present to the AWG.

S. Fisher- does anyone know where the numbers are on the red knot? [Vague responses that blogs may be stating higher numbers than in years past.]

L. Calvo- would be helpful if the State would present the aerial study results at the symposium so that can be reviewed relative to historic data.

D. Munroe- ASMFC is just finishing a benchmark assessment of horseshoe crabs, so that may be ready for the next meeting.

Discussion ensued on horseshoe crab populations, commercial harvest, and the NJ moratorium on harvest. S. Fisher provided background on the issue.

D. Munroe- motion that the State report out on aerial surveys, for all segments, at the next red knot- aquaculture science symposium. Also include the ASMFC data/report in the symposium. Second by L. Calvo & B. Hollinger (taking second by L. Calvo). Motion carried (unanimous).

B. Hollinger- need the data from the feeding studies. Brook Maslo & Joanna Burger work needs to be fully reported and discussed.

*Aquaculture Development Plan: (L. Calvo & M. De Luca)*

Introduction of the committee, L. Calvo and M. De Luca as co-chairs.

Timeframe: completed by the end of the year.

Products: ~20-page document that speaks to items in depth, along with 2-page documents that can be used with legislators (and other State agencies).

Began process with a top 10 issues priority list (really a top 13). Survey developed to garner grower input into the process, specifically with a focus on the top 10 list. Sent to email lists from NJDA & NJDEP, BSF this week. Survey can be taken on phone, computer, tablet.

Working on a draft outline for the ADP Update. Also looking at additional aquaculture opportunities such as recirculating, offshore, other species. Coordinating the ADP Update Committee with other aquaculture workgroups to ensure efforts are not duplicitous, but rather build off each other.

D. Zemeckis- is this considering aquaculture offshore, in federal waters? M. De Luca- not sure how this would be addressed in the ADP, but definitely an item for the future. At the very least it should be given mention. L. Calvo- this is a living document that must be responsive to items as they arise.

*Councilmember Comments:*

M. De Luca- reported out on status of production at the AIC. Last year, there was a crash in production. This year has been doing very well with production of the disease-resistant oyster line. Additional research starting this year to investigate production of several shellfish species for lower salinity environments.

D. Munroe- provided a copy of her work from 2018 investigating horseshoe crab movement/interactions. Will conduct additional work for 2019. The 2018 study was conclusive so no need to replicate again. Focus on sonar data collection for 2019; should address some of the 2018 study criticisms. A report on the 2019 work also begin provided to the red knot-

aquaculture SC/AWG, as well as others interested. Using sonar in 2018, showed that HSC move around farms the same way they move throughout any other environment. No issue with HSC movement due to farm gear. See YouTube channel- Munroe Lab (link provided to A. Wenczel to send to AAC). \*D. Munroe work (Didson sonar) collects a video which shows movement. J. Smith is using side-scan sonar which is stills, showing location relative to gear.

B. Avery addressed the National Shellfish Initiative (commenced by NOAA). Currently occurring in 10 states. NJ has some components already formed that could be used for this initiative, but not fully cohesive. D. Zemeckis- includes aquaculture, fisheries, and restoration.

S. Fisher- “local” is hugely important in purchasing right now. In our Jersey Fresh/Jersey Seafood program, we have logos that are all different products, but we don’t have a cohesive, unifying marketing logo. I developed something to try out and it’s a cohesive Jersey Seafood hat. See if we can umbrella seafood as it relates to local, related to NJ. NJ is big producers and consumers, but we don’t have a title to recognize your work. L. Calvo- the Jersey Fresh stamp is so well-recognized, it would be great to use the Jersey Fresh stamp or to replicate the font of Jersey Fresh onto Jersey Seafood. S. Fisher- any suggestions for what you need, I’m with you. D. Zemeckis- Ned & I were speaking with Tom Beaver (Director of NJDA Division of Markets) and possibly ways to reinvigorate the Jersey Seafood program & brand.

D. Munroe- ASMFC RFP for regional pilot projects for sustainable aquaculture...and it includes regional market & economic studies, grants, training, ADZ development & planning.

B. Avery- (East Coast Shellfish Growers Association Update) European trade is getting close to final. Major issue is related to milk producers (objections to trade). Only Massachusetts and Washington exports at first, then expand states as program succeeds.

*Old Business:*

1. AAC Bylaws. Motion to approve L. Calvo, second B. Hollinger. Motion carried (unanimous)
2. NASS Census of Aquaculture (Bruce Eklund)- Data collection through May. Survey done every 5 years & data is used to show importance of the industry. Need good data for complete/accurate view of industry. S. Fisher- NASS takes amazing care to ensure data is not divulged that can identify an individual grower. It doesn’t make any sense to not do this survey.

*Public Comment:*

N. Gaine- suggested that new logo (cohesive Jersey Seafood) would be really useful as an apron, with 2 front pockets. S. Fisher- good suggestion. We may just need to get more participation from growers, paying the \$30 fee (which is nothing), or even raising the fee to ensure we can produce these items.

Meeting adjourned.