**Louisiana Oyster Task Force Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 7, 2019 1:00pm**

**St. Bernard Port Harbor and Terminal**

**100 Port Blvd. Chalmette, LA 70043**

**I. Pledge of Allegiance**

**II. Roll Call and Introduction of Guests**

**Voting Members Present:**

Mitch Jurisich

Peter Vujnovich

Willie Daisy

Tracy Collins

Dan Coulon

Byron Encalade

Shane Bagala

Brad Robin

Brandt Lafrance

Sam Slavich

Peter Vujnovich

Jakov Jurisic

**Voting Members Absent:**

Leo Dyson

John Tesvich

Al Sunseri

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Carolina Bourque

Brian Lezina

Frank Cole in for Karl Morgan

Justin Gremillion

Bryan Marie in for Edward Skena

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

**III. Approval of December 3, 2019 meeting minutes and the January 7, 2020 agenda**

Motion by Peter Vujnovich to approve the December 3, 2019 meeting minutes, 2nd by Tracy Collins. Motion carries.

Motion by Jakov Jurisic to approve the January 7, 2020 meeting agenda as presented, 2nd by Tracy Collins. Motion carries.

**IV. Treasury Report:**

Remaining Fund Balance- $460,807

Remaining Budget Balance- $106,755

December total tag sales- 83,120

Jakov Jurisic motioned to approve the financial report as presented, 2nd by Willie Daisy. Motion carries.

**V. Committee Reports:**

1. **Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee report:**

The committee discussed-

* Temporarily waiving the oyster seed ground permit fee- decided to wait to see what happens with the Federal Disaster Assistance funding and would like to look into the possibility of being reimbursed for the permit through disaster assistance funding. The committee also discussed reducing the seed grounds permit fee and/or creating another license, which would give the holder of the permit the option to purchase the license
* The suspension of oyster lease rental fees and the oyster seed ground permit fee, the committee decided to wait on taking action on this item until more information is available on the Federal Disaster Assistance funding, also would like to look into the possibility of reimbursing these fees through the assistance funding
* The committee discussed the marking requirements on oyster lease signs and poles- Mitch Jurisich agreed to compile questions for LDWF legal and enforcement so that they can provide more information at the next Public-Private Oyster Seed Ground Committee meeting

1. **Enforcement Report:**

Lt. Bryan Marie provided the board with the enforcement report

November 23rd – December 27th

Region 4 (Iberia)

None

Region 5 (Calcasieu and Cameron)

8-Take oysters unapproved area

1- Intentional concealment destruction or deposit fish or wildlife

3- Violate Comm. Actions on state seed grounds, fail to tag and log book

1- Take or Poss. Comm. Fish w/o vessel license

3- Violate Calcasieu Lake Oyster Regulations

2 – violate sanitary code (vessel regulations – no human waste receptacle)

1 – fail to display proper numbers on vessel

7 sacks seized

Region 6: (Terrebonne, Lafourche, Grand Isle)

Terrebonne

2-Unlawfully take oysters from a private lease

2-Fail to display proper numbers on vessel

4-Violate Sanitation code (improper waste bucket)

Seized – 2 dozen oysters

Lafourche

None

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

St. Bernard

None

Plaquemines

1 – violate sanitary code (vessel regulations – no human waste receptacle)

1. **Legislative Committee:**

The committee discussed a proposed resolution that would require CPRA to restore the ecological basis for wildlife based industries in the Coastal Master Plan

The committee recommended working with Senator Hewitt to draft a resolution to protect and promote a sustainable oyster resource and to make the necessary changes to the State’s Coastal Master Plan to provide as such. Would also like to include Dr. John Zach Lea and his input in this regard in the future, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

The committee discussed increasing fines for the theft of oysters

The committee recommended that board members Willie Daisy and Jakov Jurisic compile a list of questions to send to LDWF legal for clarification on the current laws and what can be done to make amendments ; requested that legal take the issue back to LDWF to begin preliminary discussions and the committee planned to continue discussion at their next meeting

Dan Coulon stated that he thinks LA Wildlife and Fisheries should recoup proceeds from fines and court fees for oyster related penalties and recommended that the committee bring this up for discussion at a future meeting

**Research Committee**: no report

**Coastal Restoration Committee**: no report

**Marketing Committee**: no report

The Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board has not yet met, but an executive director has recently been appointed and the board plans to meet in February 2020

Samantha Carroll, the LA Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board- Executive Director, stated that she has some information to pass onto the task force to distribute, handouts for their use in DC

**Health Committee**:

Justin Gremillion provided the health report, stated that as of today LDH is proposing to close the Calcasieu Ship Chanel due to point source pollution. The Calcasieu Ship Chanel is not closed as of today, but is being proposed for closure

**Aquaculture Committee:** no report; a meeting set for January 23 in Grand Isle, LA

**Joint Task Force Working Group:** no report

**VI. New Business**

1. **To Hear an Update on the Federal Fisheries Disaster Declaration**

Harry Blanchard provided an update on the Federal Fisheries Disaster Declaration. Currently the information has been submitted to the Federal government and it is being reviewed. There is no known timeline on when the review will be completed.

Mitch Jurisich asked a question regarding how NOAA will look at losses (revenue loss or product loss) Harry stated that in the past it could be either one, but what has been said is that for this event it would be a revenue loss.

Brad Robin stated that it was his understanding that Mississippi has already conquered some grant money, not for the disaster, but for the Bonnet Carre Spillway and was wondering where Louisiana was in going after such grants? Carolina Bourque stated that she spoke to a representative from the MS Department of Marine Resources and they said they have not heard anything yet. Adding that LDWF would need the information on where the grant money is coming from and how MS obtained it to move forward

Mitch stated that if we are looking at revenue loss you have to look through 2020, revenue loss won’t show until the 2020 year

1. **The task force took up item C at this time, ‘To Discuss OTF Participation at the 2020 LA Fisheries Forward Summit’**

Mitch Jurisich stated that it might be beneficial for the OTF to have a booth with information for participants at this year’s LFF summit; the summit will be on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 from 8-4pm at the Kenner Pontchartrain Center

The task force discussed having industry related brochures and flyers to give out at the event and have the oyster industry video playing in the booth. Also discussed having information from the Oyster Fest and the State Coastal Map available for viewing

Jakov Jurisic motioned to spend up to $3,000 for promotional items for the OTF booth at the LA Fisheries Forward Summit, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

Jakov Jurisic stated that if more funding is needed the task force can plan to take this up at the next meeting and consider additional funding

1. **The task force discussed creating a legal committee**

Jakov Jurisic stated that the task force used to have a legal committee and would like to suggest recreating the committee. Would like the committee to interview attorneys outside of the department for hire

Jakov Jurisic motioned to create a legal committee within the LA Oyster Task Force, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries

Sam Slavich suggested that a state attorney sit on the committee as well

The task force discussed hiring a lobbyist or consultant to set up meetings and serve as a representative for the OTF in DC

Duncan Kemp stated that he would have to look into whether or not the task force can legally hire a lobbyist and he would have to look more into it before providing an official answer

Dan Coulon stated that Farm Bureau has lobbyists that may be able to help the task force

Mitch Jurisich appointed Jakov Jurisic and Brad Robin as the Legal Committee chairmen

1. **The task force discussed the upcoming 2020 LA Alive event in Washington, D.C.**

Mitch Jurisich asked that the task force submit a list of those who need wristbands for the LA Alive event

Jakov motioned that the OTF set up meetings with the Mississippi delegation while the task force is in Washington, D.C. and in the instance certain delegates are not available at this time, the task force should set up another trip to Washington, D.C. to attend these meetings, 2nd by Tracy Collins. Motion carries.

1. **The task force opened the floor for the elections**

Brad Robin motioned to elect Mitch Jurisich as the OTF Chairman, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

Jakov closed nominations for chairman, 2nd by Willie Daisy. Motion carries.

Brad Robin nominated Peter Vujnovich, 2nd by Willie Daisy. Motion carries.

Jakov Jurisic motion to close nominations, 2nd by Willie Daisy. Motion carries.

**VII. Public Comment**

Mitch Jurisich mentioned that there is an ongoing battle on TV and in the newspaper about what’s best for building the coast. Two articles were presented to the task force, one about diversions and one about dredging. The first one titled, ‘Giant dredges create new delta near mouth of the Mississippi’, while the second is titled, ‘Mid Barataria Sediment Diversion could create, save 47 square miles of land over 50 years.’ Diversions are at the expense of all of the fisheries and it could create land, but that doesn’t mean it is going to. Dredges down at the mouth of the River last year built 2700 acres of land and this year they are projected to build 9,000 acres. Would like the task force to work closely with CRPA to make some changes and implement more dredging

Jakov Jurisic stated that LDWD recently requested for all task force members to provide verification and the status of their representing organizations. Jakov provided the chairman with his verification and credentials.

**VIII. Next meeting set for Tuesday, February 11, 2020 for 1:00pm Lakefront Airport.**

The task force set a joint Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds and Legislative Committee meeting for 9:30am prior to the full task force meeting

**IX. Tracy Collins motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Willie Daisy. Motion carries.**