MINUTES CRAB TASK FORCE MEETING

April 8, 2010

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Crab Task Force meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Bauer at 4:33 p.m.

A roll call was then made:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VOTING** |  | **NONVOTING** |  |
| Gary Bauer | **X** | Rusty Gaude | **X** |
| Roy Meek |  | Mark Benfield |  |
| Dennis Landry | **X** | Walter Keithly |  |
| Pete Peterson | **X** | Vince Guillory | **X** |
| Keith Watts | **X** | David Lavergne | **X** |
| L.J. Sandras | **X** | Melissa Daigle | **X** |
| Pete Gerica | **X** | Ewell Smith | **X** |
| Pat Templet |  | Cliff Comeaux for Jeff Mayne | **X** |
| Billy Landry |  |  |  |

A quorum of **6** voting members was present.

Adoption of Minutes and Agenda

Pete Gerica moved and L. J. Sandras seconded that “the previous meeting’s minutes be approved as written” -- motion carried (all in favor).

Keith Watts moved and Pete Peterson seconded “to add a discussion of how to get soft shell crabs added to the current trip ticket reporting system” on the agenda -- motion carried (all in favor).

Pete Gerica moved and L. J. Sandras seconded that “the amended agenda be approved” -- motion carried (all in favor).

**Public Input:**

Rusty Gaudet introduced Julie Anderson, who is a new fisheries agent for Louisiana Sea Grant Program.  She will be based at the LSU campus.  She has a lot of background in the study of crabs.

David Lavergne introduced a mail-out survey which will be sent to dealers and a personal interview program for processors in Gulf States.  There will be a modest compensation for participation in the program.

Gary Bauer opened the floor for discussion on adding soft shell crabs to trip tickets.  Keith Watts stated that federal relief is tied to trip ticket data and soft shell crab sales are not included on trip tickets.  He further stated many soft shell crab producers received no hurricane relief because their sales were not included in trip ticket data.  Soft shell crab sales were once recorded on trip tickets but are not any longer.  Marty Bourgeois stated trip ticket data tracks input rather than output.  Other data is reported on monthly shedder reports.  Pete Peterson stated there are two forms used currently that document the number of crabs shed and their value at sale but the data on these forms was not used to determine hurricane relief eligibility.  Rusty Gaudet suggested using a system similar to Maryland where soft shell crab production is fully documented.

Keith Watts and Pete Peterson seconded that "the LA Crab Task Force request that LDWF use soft shell crab production data from monthly shedder reports in any future disaster funding or other financial assistance programs." - Motion carried (all in favor).

Marty Bourgeois presented a promotional video made during the most recent Crab Education Day.  Gary Bauer thanked Ewell Smith and Marty Bourgeois for their work on the video production.  Dennis Landry recommended and Ewell agreed that the video be made available via YouTube, with a link emailed to Crab Task Force members and interested parties.

**HB 953/HB 45**

 LA Crab Task Force members were given copies of these pieces of legislation to read.  All were in agreement with the language of both bills.

**Boston Seafood Show**

Gary Bauer thought it was a great success.  The aquarium was troublesome but effective.  Interest in the Louisiana booth was tremendous.  Ewell Smith stated that this year's show was much better than last and the aquarium was a big part of the success.  Dennis Landry stated he was amazed at what he saw.  Rene LeBreton mentioned that trade leads are now available at laseafood.com.

**National Seafood Marketing Board**

Ewell Smith mentioned there has been a desire to establish a National Seafood Marketing Board and Alaska is leading the initiative.  Two hundred fifty organizations across the country have signed on.  $100,000 in tariffs need to be collected to fund the establishment of the Board.  LA is in a lead role in the Gulf Coast region to get other agencies on board.  Gary Bauer stated that Alaska is asking for State's marketing boards or task forces to offer official support.

Pete Gerica moved and Dennis Landry seconded that "LA Crab Task Force send a letter of endorsement for the effort to create a National Seafood Marketing Board through the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board." - motion carried (all in favor).

**MSC Certification**

Gary Bauer stated we are on the verge of receiving full certification.  The LA Crab Task Force has set aside $100,000 for the evaluation fee.  SCS estimated a cost of $74,000 to $76,000.  Recently some industries (namely Alaskan fisheries) that were previously certified have begun moving away from MSC certification and certifying instead through other agencies such as SCS and Global Trust, partly because of additional costs after certification is achieved.  Gary posed the question of whether LA Crab Task Force should continue to pursue certification through SCS and become the first certified sustainable blue crab fishery or back-off from that and wait to be certified by the State of Louisiana.  Pete Peterson asked what additional costs were involved after MSC certification.  Gary stated additional costs came in re-certification fees every five years.  Ewell Smith and Rene LeBreton discussed the need for the State to develop a third party certification system for all of its fisheries but the process would take some time.  Pete Peterson asked if the State of Louisiana would be able to afford the cost of developing a certification program.  Ewell stated basically that the State couldn't afford not to develop a certification program because the demand for certified sustainable product is growing.

Keith Watts moved and Pete Peterson seconded that "LA Crab Task Force continue to move forward on MSC certification" - motion carried (1 nay vote).

Pete Peterson and Pete Gerica seconded that "LA Crab Task Force officially request LDWF to develop a State-run third party sustainability certification program for LA seafood" - motion carried (all in favor).

**Global Trust**

Gary Bauer introduced Global Trust as a third party sustainability certifier who could possibly be used by the State when they move forward on their certification program.

**H-2B  Immigrant Labor Program**

Gary Bauer stated that there should be an official letter of endorsement from LA Crab Task Force.

Pete Gerica moved and Dennis Landry seconded that "LA Crab Task Force send official letters of endorsement of H-2B Immigrant Labor Program to appropriate Legislators" - motion passed (all in favor).

**Marketing and Promotion Activity**

Tabled to next meeting

**Other Business**

Vince Guillory distributed personal financial disclosure forms which all Task Force members must submit to LA Department of Revenue by May 15, 2010.

**Next Meeting and Agenda Items**

Task Force requested the next meeting be held in the second week of June.  There were no suggested agenda items at this time.

Pete Peterson moved and Pete Gerica seconded that the "meeting be adjourned" - motion carried (all in favor).

The meeting was adjourned by Gary Bauer at 6:48 p.m.