**Crab Task Force Meeting**

**Wednesday, December 8, 2021, 1:00pm**

**Terrebonne Port Commission**

**1116 Bayou Lacarpe Rd.**

**Houma, LA 70363**

**I.** Pledge of Allegiance

**II.** Roll call and introduction of guests

**Voting Members Present:**

Eric Blanchard

Laquita Meek

Sheb Callahan

Trudy Luke

Pete Gerica

George Jackson

Al Cassagne

Britney Breaux

**Voting Members Absent:**

Chalin Delaune

Joey Edgar

Rodney Parfait

Dannon Lacoste

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Peyton Cagle

Jack Isaacs

Bryan Marie

Rusty Gaude in for Julie Lively

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Melissa Daigle

**III.** Pete Gerica motioned to approve the May 3, 2021 meeting minutes, 2nd by Al Cassagne. Motion carries.

**IV.** Pete Gerica motioned to move Item E. under New Business to Item A., 2nd by George Jackson. Motion carries.

Al Cassagne motioned to approve the December 8, 2021 meeting agenda as amended, 2nd by Pete Gerica. Motion carries.

**V.** Financial Report:

Remaining Fund Balance- $275,105

Remaining Budget Balance- $5,931

Trudy Luke motioned to approve the financial report as presented, 2nd Pete Gerica. Motion carries.

**VI.** New Business

1. The task force discussed Senate Resolution 105- which provides relative to taking shrimp in Lake Pontchartrain

Al Cassagne stated that does the CTF have authority to make a decision for the shrimp industry, wouldn’t want the STF making decisions for the crab industry

Andrew Blanchard, chairman of the Shrimp Task Force (STF), stated that the board discussed the economics and the crabs and shrimp being caught in Lake Pontchartrain and the task force voted to leave the rules as they currently stand

Britney Breaux stated that her issue with this is that this was never brought before the task force and the board had no involvement with trying to stop shrimping at night in Lake Pontchartrain. It’s like telling a crabber you can’t crab during the day because I am catching shrimp. It’s nonsense to try and tell the shrimp industry that they cannot trawl at night because others are crabbing. The fishermen are already against each other enough, completely against this, would like to see the rules be left as is

Pete Gerica stated that he fished Lake Pontchartrain for the last 50 years always had this understanding amongst the shrimp fishermen that they don’t go inside the sanctuary line since most of the crabbers put their traps out in the sanctuary line. The issue was that everyone was going all the way to the bank

Al Cassagne stated that this is going to happen all over the state if allowed to do this in Lake Pontchartrain

Al Cassagne motioned to leave the rules as is, to take no action, and to write a joint letter with the Shrimp Task Force to submit to the Senate Natural Resources Committee reflecting this decision, would like to acknowledge the sanctuary line in the letter, 2nd by Trudy Luke. Motion carries.

1. Peyton Cagle led discussion on the derelict crab trap rodeo pilot program and the results from the alternative program survey

Peyton Cagle stated that with input from the industry they developed an alternative to the current program. Surveyed the industry and have not received anything back

Britney Breaux stated that she thinks the alternative where the fishermen who participates in the clean-up can claim their own traps if found is the best option

Peyton Cagle stated that LDWF has been putting more time and money into looking into alternatives and it doesn’t seem like anyone is stepping up to provide input or sign up to participate

Al Cassagne stated to leave the program alone

Peyton Cagle stated that if needed we can talk about this again at a later date, would like more input from the industry

Al Cassagne motioned to leave the derelict crap trap removal program as it is, 2nd Pete Gerica. Motion carries.

1. Jack Isaacs led a presentation on commercial landings of shrimp and blue crabs from Lake Pontchartrain

Pete Gerica stated that it is hard to isolate the Lake Pontchartrain problem, this data is not indicative of Lake Pontchartrain proper

1. The task force discussed hurricane outreach and industry planning

Laquita Meek stated that outreach after hurricanes should work with the whole industry to help everyone

Peyton Cagle stated that a coalition of fishermen are getting together to discuss this, this was initiative that LDWF was asked to help host or put together but is led by the industry

Rusty Gaude stated that Sea Grant is currently conducting a survey along with the AgCenter. This is a very critical part because this to estimate the damage from Hurricane Ida that is going to go to Washington and could generate the potential funds to help on the impacts of Ida. It is imperative that everyone in the industry take this survey. This will provide estimates of the damages in a defensible form

1. The board discussed recreational crabbing possession limit regulations

Peyton led discussion on recreational crabbing possession limit regulations, this was originally brought about a while back when the commercial regulations were changed but did not want to bog down the legislation and possibly prevent it from passing by adding in recreational changes, if the task force wanted to bring this forward this session they would need to find someone to carry the bill and draft legislation

Trudy Luke motioned to change the recreational crabbing regulations to ~~limit take to 6 dozen,~~ prohibit take on crabs that are smaller than 5 inches, and enforce a ban on immature females, 2nd by Eric Blanchard.

Trudy Luke amended her motion on the floor striking “limit take to 6 dozen”, the motion now reads, to change the recreational crabbing regulations to prohibit take on crabs that are smaller than 5 inches and enforce a ban on immature female crabs, 2nd by Eric Blanchard. Motion carries.

The recreational regulations currently reflect a 12-dozen possession limit with no size limit

**VII.** Public Comment- George Jackson stated issues with trawling crabs in Delacroix Island, would like the item added to the next meeting agenda for further discussion

Peyton Cagle stated that to change this something would have to be done through legislation and you would have to limit the bycatch of blue crab, if you were to approach this and look at the data it makes up less than ½ of a percent of the total landed commercial crabbing, can do a bycatch or a restriction

Peyton Cagle suggested adding this to a future meeting agenda and get interested people to attend and discuss

Julie Falgout made an announcement about the Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve, Dr. Twilley will provide a presentation to the board at the next meeting, starting to do town hall meetings encouraged interested parties to attend

**VIII.** Next meeting was set for Tuesday, February 15, 1pm in Houma

**IX.** Motion to adjourn by George Jackson, 2nd Pete Gerica. Motion carries.