

**Crab Task Force Meeting Minutes, October 8, 2015**  
**Lindy Boggs Center**  
**2045 Lakeshore Dr., STE 236**  
**New Orleans, LA**

Meeting called to order at 1:06pm

Allison West called roll:

Voting members present:

Eric Blanchard  
Chalin Delaune  
LaQuita Meek  
Trudy Luke  
Pete Gerica  
James Bergeron  
Rodney Parfait  
Kim Alfonso  
Eddie Chagnard  
Warren Delacroix  
Paul Alfonso

Voting members absent:

Non-voting members present:

Jack Isaacs  
Mark Schexnayder  
Captain Chad Hebert

Non-voting members absent:

Julie Anderson Lively  
Melissa Daigle  
Alan Matherne

Motion by Pete Gerica to add item "Crab Trap Landings" to the agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> Eric Blanchard- motion adopted

Pete Gerica made a motion to approve September 22 minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kim Alfonso

Kim Alfonso made a motion to approve the financial report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Eddie Chagnard

Jack Isaacs presented to the Task Force a summary of blue crab landings by volume categories

Pete Gerica requested that Jack Isaacs provide a break down of fresh product licenses at the next meeting

#### Discussion of constituents' meetings

Trudy Luke provided feedback from Terrebonne and Lafourche Parish: both areas agree with the moratorium; however, they did have an issue with the income requirement that states that 75% of a fisherman's income must from commercial fishing to be grandfathered in. Constituents of this area agreed that a fisherman should become grandfathered in if they are in the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program. Recreational crabbers should follow the same rules as the commercial crabbers. Constituents said that they agree with a flat fee and fee increases. They are against any type of harvest closure and seasons; would like to see harsher regulations for repeat offenders. A few expressed interest in the 3-mile-line, and concern about harvesting immature females.

Paul Alfonso presented feedback from Plaquemines Parish/ Ship Channel- Constituents agreed that rather than the 75% income requirement use trip ticket landings requirement and whoever is in the program now to be grandfathered in. Would like to see limits on sanctuaries.

Kim Alfonso said that constituents from Delacroix want 75%

Eric Blanchard gave feed back from docs and said they would prefer trip ticket landings to the 75% income requirement.

James Bergeron said that his constituents were against the 75% income requirement, but agreed with the trip ticket requirement. The preferred plan is good but should be considered as a long term plan, good for trip tickets for the 2 years

Chalin Delaune suggested lowering the 75% income requirement to 50%

Warren Delacroix said the people he spoke with are against the 75% income requirement

Pete Gerica said he received feedback that proposed closing crabbing season during a slow time of the year. There was also interest in using a tiered system that allows fishermen to fish a certain number of traps based on what percentage of their income is coming from commercial crabbing. For instance, if 50% of your income were from commercial crabbing than you would be allotted to fish a predetermined amount of traps.

Paul Alfonso stated that he was not for any closures because fishermen who rely on crabbing for 100% of their income will not survive during the time crabbing is closed.

Jeff Marx asked if anyone received negative feedback on a license fee increase and all were in favor

Cole Garret asked the Task Force if they received any feedback on the mentorship aspect that was apart of the preferred recommendation that we do away with sponsorship and just go to a two-year mentorship program that mirrors the mullet fishery?

Pete Gerica said no one had a problem with this as long as people have a way to get back in

Trudy Luke said the areas she has spoken with want to leave the Fisheries Forward Program as it is now

Jack Isaacs stated that the Department is currently surveying crabbers and the Task Force may want to consider taking these into account as an additional source of input. So far, LDWF has conducted about 299 surveys that will be available in about a month with comments.

Cole Garret stated that there is a moratorium in place right now, remember we grandfathered in the people who held a license in 2011-2014 for two of those years. What is being proposed now is that the grandfather includes not only did you hold a license for two of those year but you also must have trip tickets to prove you have landings from two of those years. Right now we also have a sponsorship program where a doc dealer can sponsor you or a mentorship program that is not near two years. So we are looking at 2 different things: 1. Are you decreasing the amount of people who can get in through the grandfather and 2. What requirements are you going to have for the mentorship program for new entrants?

Darren Bourgeois said there is currently 142 people in the apprenticeship program and that's combined with the apprenticeship/sponsorship and of those 142, 82 have completed.

Jack Isaacs proposed waiting until the end of the year to see how the apprenticeship program is working. 498 people landed crabs in 2014 that did not land them in 2013, people who caught crabs in 2014 but did not land them in 2011,12,13 that number was 391. It looks like this program that is already in place may be slowing down the number of people entering in. The number of people entering went from about 400-500 people in 2014 to 142 entering in 2015. It may be beneficial to look at it at the end of the year and reassess and make a decision at that point

Warren Delacroix recommended that anyone that is already in the program be grandfathered in and after that no one else would be allowed in

Cole Garret said that there is an existing moratorium now and the motion would be to create a 2-year moratorium and suspend apprenticeship program

Warren Delacroix made a motion to adopt the preferred alternative as previously proposed, 2nd by Rodney Parfait

Continue the current partial moratorium on crab trap gear licenses. Further restrict the grandfather clause and apprenticeship requirements so that the only individuals capable of obtaining a crab trap gear license would be:

- 1) Individuals who held a crab trap gear license for 2 of the 4 years between 2011-2014 AND could prove that 75% of their earned income was derived from commercial fishing as reported in "Schedule C" of their federal form 1040 IRS income tax return for those years; OR
- 2) Individuals who held a crab trap gear license AND prove crab landings via LDWF trip ticket submissions for 2 of the 4 years between 2011-2014
- 3) Individuals who have successfully completed a 2-year apprenticeship program to be developed by LDWF that includes elements from the existing Apprentice Fisherman License (with the exception that an entrant could have previously held a commercial fisherman's license). The basic elements of that program are as follows:
  - a. Two full years participating in the apprentice program
  - b. Must have more than 50% earned income from the capture and sale of seafood species during those two years
  - c. Cannot be convicted of a Class 3 or greater game violation
- 4) Individuals who have entered the current Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program prior to November 5, 2015 and have successfully completed the program.

Motion was not passed due to vote; 3- yes, 3- abstain, 5 no

Jack Isaacs proposed that the Task Force consider using the 10-40 (earned income) instead of schedule C

Cole Garret stated that if the Task Force wanted to mirror the Mullet Professionalism Program, it would be a 50% earned income requirement for commercial fishing activity for the mentorship program. The trip ticket option would be for grandfathering, for people in the years 2011-2014 who had 75% commercial income or trip tickets for two of the 4 years. Assuming you don't meet that criterion to get grandfathered in you have the option of a 2-year apprenticeship program where 50% of your income would have to come from fishing.

Cole Garret said that instead of just having a landing requirement, you could make it a certain number have a minimum threshold,

Chalin Delaune made a substitute motion to adopt the preferred alternative, but specify that an individual must prove a minimum of 60 trips where blue crab landings had occurred, as verified via LDWF trip ticket program, for 2 of the 4 years to qualify for a gear license (Amendments are in bold and underlined):

Continue the current partial moratorium on crab trap gear licenses. Further restrict the grandfather clause and apprenticeship requirements so that the only individuals capable of obtaining a crab trap gear license would be:

- 1) Individuals who held a crab trap gear license for 2 of the 4 years between 2011-2014 AND could prove that 75% of their earned income was derived from commercial fishing as reported in "Schedule C" of their federal form 1040 IRS income tax return for those years; OR
- 2) Individuals who held a crab trap gear license AND prove at least 60 trips with crab landings via LDWF trip ticket program per year for 2 of the 4 years between 2011-2014; OR
- 3) Individuals who have successfully completed a 2-year apprenticeship program to be developed by LDWF that includes elements from the existing Apprentice Fisherman License (with the exception that an entrant could have previously held a commercial fisherman's license). The basic elements of that program are as follows:
  - a. Two full years participating in the apprentice program
  - b. Must have more than 50% earned income from the capture and sale of seafood species during those two years
  - c. Cannot be convicted of a Class 3 or greater game violation establish a minimum of 60 crab landings in 2 of the four,
- 4) Individuals who have entered the current Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program prior to November 5, 2015 and have successfully completed the program, 2nd by Kim Alfonso

Motion passes with 8-yes 3- no

Cole Garret stated that legislation would not be implemented until August 1 of next year. Right now you have the Fisheries Forward Program that has the sponsorship and mentorship aspect and you could go through the commission and strengthen that now.

Randy Pausina stated that the Secretary and the Commission have declaration of authority powers when there is some imminent peril to a fishery. Since the latest crab stock assessment crossed two thresholds it would qualify the crab fishery to meet the 'imminent peril clause,' which will allow us to go to the next commission meeting and instead of doing a notice of intent, 90-day process, there is the option to proclaim a 'declaration of emergency,' which will be effective as soon as it is voted on.

Cole Garret reminded the Task Force that even though the commission action would cut off people from entering the mentorship program; the grandfather portion would have to go through legislation

Chalin Delaune made a motion to urge and request the WLF Commission to take emergency action at the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting to suspend new entry into the current Fisheries Forward Program until such time as the Apprenticeship Program can be developed and implemented. To urge the WLF Commission to promulgate rules for the new Apprentice Program to coincide with when the legislative changes

are effective (August 1, 2016), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kim Alfonso  
Motion passed with 7-yes, 3-no 1-abstain

Jeff Marx presented on crab trap restricted areas

Randy Pausina suggested discussing potential recreational crabbing management options and restrictions with representatives of the recreational fishing interests and report the result of those discussions to the CTF at its next meeting (November 17, 2015)

Jack Isaacs reminded the Task Force to fill out the LDWF crabbing questionnaire

The next CTF meeting date was set for November 17, 2015 at 1pm in New Orleans

Motion to adjourn by Eddie Chagnard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kim Alfonso

Meeting adjourned at 3:15pm

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