MINUTES CRAB TASK FORCE MEETING

November 19, 2009

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Crab Task Force meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Bauer at 4:49 p.m.

A roll call was then made:

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

A quorum of six voting members was present.

Adoption of Minutes and Agenda

Pete Peterson moved and Pete Gerica seconded that “the minutes and the agenda be approved as written” -- Motion carried (all in favor).

Public Input

There was no input from the public.

MSC Certification

Gary Bauer gave an update of the MSC Certification progress. Gary identified Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) as the group who would continue the evaluation process for MSC certification. The State of Louisiana will be the client for the process and not Pontchartrain Blue Crabs. Therefore, LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries will be responsible for applying for grants from Sustainable Fisheries Fund to offset evaluation costs. Gary stated that the granting agency appeared to be pleased to see the state get behind this initiative. Rene LeBreton, Assistant Executive Director of Louisiana Seafood Marketing and Promotion Board, is in negotiations with SCS to decide on a payment schedule according to benchmarks. The next step will be to sign the contract and move forward with the evaluation.

Crab Education Day

Martin Bourgeois stated that everyone did a great job on Crab Education Day. All went well except for the bumpy boat ride. Rusty Gaude mentioned he saw on footage of Crab Education Day on the television show “Louisiana, the state we’re in”. Marty also mentioned seeing a Crab Education Day spot aired on WWL news, as well. Mark Benfield suggested using any video footage available from Crab Education Day at crab booths at future seafood shows. Marty suggested that the Crab Task Force ask Louisiana Seafood Marketing and Promotion Board to make copies of the video and make it available for distribution.

Keith Watts moved and Pete Gerica seconded that “the Crab Task Force ask Louisiana Seafood Marketing and Promotion Board to make copies of the video and make it available for distribution” -- Motion carried (all in favor).

Gary Bauer suggested compiling a complete list of Crab Education Day attendees and sending them all a thank you acknowledgement and a copy of the video.

CROP INSURANCE

Gary Bauer stated that he understood that crop insurance was made available to oyster fishermen. Martin Bourgeois stated that Crop Insurance Systems was asked by Louisiana oyster fishermen if they would be able to get this insurance, and were told that only oyster lease holders would qualify, as they actually cultivate oysters on their leases. Keith Watts suggested that soft-shell crab shedders may be able to meet those criteria. Marty suggested asking Robert Cerda with Crop Insurance Systems to make a presentation at a future Crab Task Force meeting. Keith suggested that soft-shell crabs be put back on trip tickets. Gary stated that the federal government is pushing the fishing industry toward self-insurance. He posed the question, “Is boat and equipment insurance an option?” Keith stated that insurance on commercial boats is far too expensive.

Pete Peterson moved and Pete Gerica seconded that “the Crab Task Force invite Robert Cerda with Crop Insurance Systems to make a presentation at a future meeting” -- Motion carried (all in favor).

HB 551

Gary Bauer gave a very brief overview of HB 551, which seems to focus on products imported from China. Gary suggested that Venezuelan imports be targeted in the same manner. Gary suggested tabling this item for further discussion when a representative of Louisiana Seafood Marketing and Promotion Board is in attendance.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION ACTIVITY

The discussion of marketing and promotion activity was tabled until a representative of Louisiana Seafood Marketing and Promotion Board is in attendance. Roy Meek asked if there were any details on the Boston Seafood Show. Pete Gerica and Gary Bauer mentioned that information on the Boston Seafood Show would be available on the Louisiana Seafood Marketing and Promotion Board website, which is currently being reworked.

Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program

Vince Guillory stated that the Crab Task Force had voted to endorse the Derelict Crab Trap Clean-up to begin on February 27, 2010 to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. Presentation for the February 28 – March 8, 2010 closure and crab trap clean-up was made to the LWF Commission and was well received. Saturday, February 28, 2010, was designated as a “volunteer day”. The closure area is very similar to the 2007 closure and crab trap clean-up in the Lafitte area. Vince mentioned that in 2007 a total of 1,498 derelict crab traps were collected. Of those, over 700 came from the Lafitte area.

Other Business

There was no additional business.

Next Meeting / Agenda Items

The task force requested that the next meeting be held in mid-January. Suggested agenda items included a disaster relief update. Keith Watts stated he would like to discuss how to have soft-shell crabs added to trip tickets.

Pete Gerica moved and Pete Peterson seconded that “the meeting be adjourned” -- Motion carried (all in favor).

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Gary Bauer at 6:12p.m.