**Shrimp Task Force Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2022, 1:00pm**

**VIA Webinar**

**I.** Pledge of Allegiance

**II.** Roll call

**Voting Members Present:**

Rodney Olander

Acy Cooper

Lance Nacio

Jeff Drury

Phillip Tran

Kirsten Baumer

Alan Gibson

Andrew Blanchard

Randy Pearce

Chalin Delaune

**Voting Members Absent:**

Ronald Anderson

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Peyton Cagle

Bryan Marie

Jack Isaacs

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Adam Eitmann

Gene Cavalier

Justin Gremillion

**III.** Rodney Olander motioned to approve the April 20, 2022 meeting minutes, 2nd by Kristen Baumer. Motion carries.

**IV.** Rodney Olander motioned to amend the agenda by adding item, C. To Discuss TEDs Reimbursement- STF and item D. To Discuss the Menhaden Bill- STF, 2nd by Kristen. Motion carries.

The task force unanimously adopted the agenda as amended with a roll call vote of the voting members

**V.** New Business

1. Peyton Cagle provided the task force with a presentation on setting the opening date for the 2022 spring inshore shrimp season

LDWF season recommendation-

Zone 1- the open areas would open May 16, 2022 @ 6AM and then the marsh areas would follow a week after, opening on May 23 @6AM

Zone 2- Barataria, Terrebonne, and Vermillion- open on May 9 @ 6AM

Zone 3- Calcasieu and Sabine open on May 23, 2022 @ 6AM with the Mermentau River opening on May 28 @6AM

Andrew Blanchard stated that LDWF does great with biological data available and 1 thing that they do not do is look at the economics of when the industry should open and what is best for the fishermen with the opening of the season, with his experience would like to see a statewide opening. The economics are going to take care of the small shrimp in these zones, need to catch the larger shrimp that is available.

Andrew Blanchard motioned for the task force to recommend a May 12, 2022 statewide opening for all three zones, 2nd by Lance Nacio. Motion did not carry as a substitute motion was made and passed

Lance Nacio stated that he would like to back what Andrew Blanchard is saying that we do not need to open just one zone, processors are wanting larger shrimp so we can bear holding off a little bit, split the difference and trying to open it all together

Rodney Olander stated that he does not know if LDWF Commission would support a state-wide opening on the 12th and if not would not recommend holding the season opening to the following Monday state-wide. If zone 2 is ready now I say we go with May 9th, concern with LDWF Commission not going for a statewide opening on the 12th due to small shrimp in some areas of zones 1 and 3. Do not want to see zone 2 get held back another week, would recommend opening zone 2 on May 9, 2022

Peyton Cagle stated that to get larger shrimp, that is completely understandable, but to open seasons a week to a week and a half early, you are looking at brown shrimp resources that are below 20% at 100ct or bigger. If we look back we didn’t do a special season on April 20 because they did not want to damage the brown shrimp count but we are considering doing something that could possibly cause harm by opening up the season early, especially in zones 1 and 3

Alan Gibson stated that looking at the information we received last week and the information we are receiving now and the size differences between zones 1, 2, and 3, would agree with what Rodney recommended- opening zone 2 and leaving 1 and 3 to open a little later when the resource gets to the biological, marketable size, we need to get our fishermen working but at the same time we do not need to destroy our resource

Andrew Blanchard stated that the reason he suggested a state-wide opening on May 12 is because we are right in the middle of a dead tide right now, so three days one way or the other shouldn’t do any harm to the resource, stated that he also recommended the May 12 date because if all the boats come to zone 2 for an opening there will not be enough ice and unloading docks to handle the volume of shrimp within a 3-5 day period

Rodney Olander made a substitute motion to open Zone 2 on May 9, the open waters of zone 1 on May 16, Biloxi Marsh area on May 23rd and zone 3 on May 23 with the Mermentau River opening on May 28th, 2nd by Alan Gibson.

Randy Pearce stated that he is completely against the a May 9th or even a May 12th opening, stated that he thinks it would be best for both the fishermen and the processors to open zone 2 on May 16 because that gives us bigger shrimp which means the fishermen make more money and the processors get sizes that they can sell

Chalin Delaune stated that he would concur with what Randy Pearce is suggesting and would say that there is a disconnect between the biology of what a marketable size is and the economics of what a marketable size is

Jeff Drury stated that a 16th opening would you also be able to open certain portions of zone 1 on the 16th as well the more area we have open at the same time the less congestion we will have with the boats

Rodney Olander stated that if zone 2 waits until May 16th to open there is a risk of losing a lot of the product and due to that aspect would not be in favor of waiting until the 16th

Alan Gibson stated that he agrees with Rodney Olander and this has happened in the past, we waited and lost the resource, would recommend going with the substitute motion to open on May 9th in zone 2 and leaving the other areas (zone 1 and 3) to open with LDWF’s recommended dates

Randy Pearce made a substitute motion to open zone 2 and the open waters of zone 1 on May 16th with the Biloxi Marsh area opening on May 23, with zone 3 opening on May 23rd and the Mermentau River opening on May 28th, 2nd by Chalin Delaune. Motion does not carry with roll call vote- 2- yes and 4 no’s

Rodney Olander stated that there are too many areas in zone 2 and we cannot afford to wait, if we hold to the 16th we are keeping the boats out of the water for a week and risking the chance of a bad weather event and losing the resource, with the 9th the data shows it and we are ready to go

Alan Gibson stated that he believes that holding zone 2 until the 16th is too late if the shrimp leave the fishermen will not have anything to catch, not for the opening of zone 2 on the 16th

Barry Rogers stated that he is in support of a state-wide opening on May 12

Kristen Baumer in one zone we don’t want to miss out on crop, worried about getting blocked up at docks/ plants, and some areas are not ready, it all boils down to the science it seems like LDWF’s original recommendation was the best option to cover all of these issues

Since the substitute motion made by Randy Pearce did not pass, the board took up the next substitute motion- Rodney Olander made a substitute motion to open Zone 2 on May 9, the open waters of zone 1 on May 16, Biloxi Marsh area on May 23rd and zone 3 on May 23 with the Mermentau River opening on May 28th, 2nd by Alan Gibson. Motion carries 4 to 3 after vote was recalled.

Rodney Olander- Yes Andrew Blanchard- No

Lance Nacio- No Acy Cooper- Yes

Kristen Baumer- Yes Chalin Delaune- No

Alan Gibson- Yes

1. The task force heard an update on the Audubon Gulf RFM and the Certified Seafood Collaborative Alaska RFM

John Fallon led discussion stating that he is here today to update the industry on some conversations that have been happening regarding shrimp certification. Shrimp Gulf-wide is very likely to enter into certification for sustainability by the end of this calendar year. Currently have a contract with LDWF that ends at the end of September of this year, obviously, if we are going to be entering into certification that is something that needs to be addressed. LDWF has been a partner on this for the last decade and there is some uncertainty about them continuing in their funding role, so we have been discussing some potential alternatives. Having both RFM and MSC certifications is what has been voiced to us or working with another RFM scheme, which is what we will introduce today as the Alaska RFM program. One alternative would be to combine the GULF RFM and the Alaska RFM programs.

Jeff Regnart with the Alaska RFM program provided a presentation to the task force

RFM- Responsible Fisheries Management- RFM is a wild capture certification program with a chain of custody standard. RFM provides a way for companies to communicate both product origin and responsible sourcing without logo licensing fees. The program has been around for about 10 years, 9 certified fisheries, 28 species. The program is GSSI recognized, new owners as of 2019, and the main emphasis is global expansion of RFM.

RFM has two standards-

* fisheries standard

Key components for evaluating fisheries:

1. The fisheries management system
2. Science and stock assessment activities, and the precautionary approach
3. Management measures, implementation, monitoring, and control
4. Impacts on the fishery on the ecosystem
* Chain of custody standard- steps for using RFM logo and/or certification claim

John Fallon stated that if the industry decides to go with a Gulf of Mexico based RFM program we will need to find a sustainable funding source

1. Acy Cooper led discussion on the TED Reimbursement Program

Receiving a bunch of calls saying that people have gone through the whole program and never received the money that was supposed to come to them, there is a lot of questions about where the money is at where did the money come from and how much money is left?

Angela Portier stated that several fishermen have come to her stating that they had not received a reimbursement

Acy Cooper stated that he will try and look into the issue and bring some information back

Peyton Cagle stated that he will also assist with looking into the issue

1. Acy Cooper led discussion on the Menhaden Bill

Acy Cooper asked the task force is he could speak on their behalf at the

Andrew Blanchard stated that this is an important bill for the industry

Rodney Olander motioned that Acy Cooper speak on behalf of the Shrimp Task Force when the Menhaden Bill is heard, 2nd by Andrew Blanchard. Motion carries.

**VI.** Public Comment

Andrew Blanchard asked for an update on drones and how they are being used, stated that he is getting a lot of calls about bootlegging and a lot of the same fishermen are reoffending

**VII.** Next meeting set for August 3, 2022 for 10am at the Terrebonne Parish Main Library

**VIII.** Rodney Olander motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Andrew Blanchard. Motion carries.