**Oyster Task Force Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 27, 2016, 1:00pm**

**UNO Advanced Technology Center**

**2021 Lakeshore Drive, STE 210**

**New Orleans, LA 70122**

**Voting Members Present:**

Shane Bagala

Wilbert Collins

Dan Coulon

Leo Dyson

Byron Encalade

Jakov Jurisic

Brad Robin

Brandt LaFrance

Al Sunseri

John Tesvich

Sam Slavich

Peter Vujnovich

Willie Daisy

**Voting Members Absent:**

Mitch Jurisich

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Mark Schexnayder

Gordon Leblanc in for Lance Broussard

Captain Chad Hebert

Karl Morgan

Brian Lezina

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Motion to accept the August 23, 2016 meeting minutes by Al Sunseri, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

Motion to accept the September 27, 2016 agenda by Al Sunseri, 2nd by Jakov Jurisich. Motion carries.

**Oyster Financial Report:**

Fund Balance: 395, 297

Budget Balance: 265, 713

August oyster tag sales- 200,400

Motion to approve the financial report by Al Sunseri, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

**Public/ Private Oyster Grounds Committee:**

No Report

**Enforcement Report:**

Captain Chad Hebert provided the TF with an enforcement update

There were 34 oyster-violation tickets issued since the last meeting and of those 34 violations 145 sacks and almost 500 mini sacks of oysters have been seized and returned to the water.

**Legislative Report:**

No Report- planning on having a meeting prior to next OTF meeting

**Research Report:**

No Report

**Coastal Restoration Report:**

The OTF Coastal Restoration Subcommittee proposed the following recommendations to the OTF for approval and review:

1. To accept the Environmental Defense Fund’s working group report on the Mid-Barataria sediment diversions
2. Recommendation for the TF to write a letter to LDWF requesting a study on using sediment diversions to enhance the fisheries in the state of Louisiana
3. Ask that the OTF Research Committee accept and review oyster specific data, information gaps in the report on the Mid-Barataria sediment diversion and submit additional analysis to the OTF

Motion to accept and approve the recommendation of the OTF Coastal Restoration Subcommittee by Jakov Jurisic, 2nd by Wilbert Collins

**Marketing Report:**

No Report

**Health Report:**

Gordon Leblanc addressed the TF with the Health Report

Reported that the Office of Public Health and the FDA have been conducting on-water refrigeration checks and of all the boats checked- Louisiana is 100% in compliance.

**Sustainability Report:**

Damon Morris addressed the TF with the sustainability update

Al Sunseri asked that Damon Morris participate in the coastal restoration subcommittee and sediment diversion conversation to contribute on behalf of the sustainability of oyster industry

Al Sunseri made a motion to recognize and continue to support the sustainability efforts of LDWF and the Audubon Nature Institute’s sustainability certification program and to pursue those resources through management and coastal restoration efforts, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

**Professionalism Report:**

Darren Bourgeois addressed the TF with a professionalism update

Starting on October 15, 2016 the test will be available for those who plan on applying for or renewing their oyster harvester’s license

Darren requested that the TF create a subcommittee to establish the criterion and standards for the Public Seed Ground new applicant training, permitting

Currently in ‘Phase 2’ of Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program-Phase 2 marks the completion of the oyster harvesters training video, as well as the finfish, shrimp and regulatory management video which will complete the 8 video series and begin ‘Phase 3’

The TF will work on constructing a subcommittee for advising the Public Seed Grounds apprenticeship program criterion

Jakov Jurisic was appointed chairman of OTF Public Seed Grounds Apprenticeship Program Subcommittee

Byron Encalade asked that the apprenticeship program work with Sandy Nguyen, of the Coastal Communities Consulting, for language barrier problems

**Aquaculture Report:**

No Report

**New Business:**

Mark Schexnayder provided the TF with an update on the findings of surveying Area 1-N and Calcasieu Lake

Jakov Jurisic made a motion to request that LDWF provide the OTF with more detailed analysis on the dead zone cases and further documentation from public and private leases to track losses and oyster death causes. Asked that LDWF provide a report that includes dead zone contours and percentages, 2nd by Dan Coulon. Motion carries.

John Tesvich suggested that the TF write a letter to LDWF to request a report on recent dead zones and oyster mortality rates

Al Sunseri requested for LDWF to sample East Cove for oysters before the next commission meeting

Cole Garrett addressed the TF with discussion and goals of the NOI to amend Title 76 as it pertains to oyster leasing

**Goals of Oyster Lease NOI:**

1. To update the application process- part of that will include the 90-day period of contest for private claimants
2. Establish a process to determine designation for access channels for new leases that are going to be subordinate to oil and gas activity
3. Establish rules/ processes governing joint leasing of water bottoms
4. To provide preferential rights and moratorium lifting structure

In addition to the above goals, LDWF is also looking into reviewing some of the rules that include:

1. Allowing LDWF to perform desktop surveys in lieu of a professional survey being done at the option of the applicant
2. There are also some longstanding policies that have developed over the years of issuing oyster leases that never made it into rule; this would be a good opportunity to include those policies in writing in the rule making process

Richard Raynie, of CPRA, addressed the TF with an update on oyster sampling in the Barataria Basin for the System Wide Assessment and Monitoring Program

Andrew Whitehurst addressed the TF with a presentation on the Pearl River (flood control) Project

Karl Morgan suggested that there be a request for the least damaging feasible alternative, incorporating a dry system opposed to a lake to control flooding, or it is possible that the state of Louisiana could require a consistency review under the Coastal Zone Management Act and if consistency is denied then a federal permit will not be granted

Brad Robin made a motion for the TF to write a letter to the secretary of DNR to request a consistency review on the Pearl River Project and respond on behalf of the TF, 2nd by Al Sunseri. Motion carries.

Brad Robin stated that he will work with St. Bernard Parish to also submit a letter response on their stance to the Pearl River Project

Byron Encalade addressed the TF with a discussion regarding the hardships facing oystermen engaged in aquaculture

John Supan suggested tasking this item to the aquaculture subcommittee

**Public Comment:**

Ben Mitchell addressed the TF with a SPMB update

Next OTF meeting set for Monday, November 7, 2016 for 1pm in New Orleans

Motion to adjourn by Wilbert Collins, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.