LA Oyster Task Force

Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 1:00pm

Jean Lafitte Civic Center

4953 City Park St, Jean Lafitte, LA 70067

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Roll call and introduction of guests**

**Voting Members Present:**

Dan Coulon

Jakov Jurisic

Brad Robin

Brandt Lafrance

John Tesvich

Peter Vujnovich

Willie Daisy

**Voting Members Absent:**

Shane Bagala

Tracy Collins

Byron Encalade

Al Sunseri

Sam Slavich

Mitch Jurisich

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Carolina Bourque

Justin Gremillion

Brian Marie

Harry Vorhoff

Brian Lezina

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Karl Morgan

1. Dan Coulon Motioned to approve the March 9, 2021 meeting minutes, 2nd by John Tesvich. Motion carries.

John Tesvich motioned to amend the agenda and add item J. To Discuss the possibility of growing seed oysters in prohibited areas, 2nd by Brandt Lafrance. Motion carries.

Dan Coulon motioned to approve the April 6, 2021 meeting agenda as amended, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

1. **Treasury Report**

Remaining Fund Balance: $480,763

Remaining Budget Balance: $111,359

Jakov Jurisic motioned to approve the treasury report as presented, 2nd by Dan Coulon. Motion carries.

1. **Committee Reports**
2. Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee- no report
3. Enforcement Report-

Brian Marie reviewed the enforcement report:

OTF CASE REPORT MARCH 9-30

Region 4

Nothing to report

Region 5

Nothing to report

Region 6

Terrebonne

1 – sell oysters without a wholesale license.

Lafourche

1 – take oysters from an unapproved area (polluted)

Seizures 5 sacks of oysters

Region 8

St Bernard

2 – fail to maintain records

1 – fail to report commercial fisheries data

1 – sell oysters without a wholesale license

1 – no vessel license

Seizures 340 sacks of oysters

1. Legislative Committee- no report
2. Legal Committee- Update on Joe Piacun, need to schedule meeting to further review the scope of work; refer to related item under new business for further discussion
3. Research Committee- no report
4. Coastal Restoration Committee- no report
5. Marketing Committee- no report; the LA Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board has not had a meeting since the beginning of Covid-19
6. Health Committee- no report
7. Aquaculture Committee- No report
8. Joint Task Force Working Group Committee- Joint Task Force meeting tomorrow at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport for 1pm to discuss submitting comment on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion draft EIS
9. **New Business**
10. Carolina Bourque led discussion on the 2019 Fisheries Disaster Spending Plan

Background:

$165 million total appropriated by Congress for declared fisheries disasters in the U.S. during the 2019-2020 federal FY.

• Louisiana’s allocation was announced by NOAA and equals approximately $58 million (before administrative costs).

• Administered through NOAA Fisheries with a grant coming directly to LDWF once a spending plan is approved by NOAA.

* How to utilize flood disaster monies to assist the industry in being more resilient to floods in the future
* Programs should strengthen long-term economic and environmental sustainability of the fishery:

1. Grants for equipment reimbursement
2. Surveys – Industry is paid to participate
3. Work programs and bycatch studies that provide payment to the industry for participating
4. Oyster rehabilitation – public and private
5. Similar to POLR for private leases
6. Cultch plants
7. Research – Fresh water resilient oysters
8. Infrastructure Grants
9. Provides grants to local entities to upgrade facilities to increase access for commercial and charter vessels during flood events
10. Hydrologic / Habitat Improvement Grants

a. Provides grants for projects and studies that modify habitat /water flow to improve flood resiliency

1. Aquaculture Grants
2. AOC / Nursery / Hatchery
3. Some fund available for species other than oyster

* Draft to be published for official public comments
* Internal LDWF meeting to finalize the draft
* Already received some industry input through prior task force meetings, and general comments and suggestions submitted by the public
* Looking for any other general ideas that we might have missed

Jakov Jurisic asked if there is anything that can be done as a board to acquire additional funding as the $58 million will not cover the damages Louisiana has faced, $150 million loss in St. Bernard alone

Carolina stated that the way the federal government calculates the amount of money dedicated to each state is through revenue loss in 2019

Dan Coulon is there some guidelines for how much money can be used for administrative costs compared to actual development of the industry? Carolina Bourque stated that administrative costs should be no more than 5%

Jakov Jurisic asked why do we have to look for other research to develop an oyster that will be more resistant to fresh water? First we have to address rehabilitation public and private, when we talk about rehabilitation on private seed grounds, we haven’t had a season last two years or this year, and probably not next year so why do we spend money on different projects when this money is desperately needed for the industry.

Carolina Bourque stated that one of the points of researching to build a more resilient oyster is if floods were to happen again we would have different spots where oysters wouldn’t die like they did in 2019. The oysters would be able to survive and it wouldn’t be such an extreme mortality event

Pete Vujnovich when it comes time for public input would the task force be able to comment and ask for the percentages to be redistributed, will there be a public comment period?

Jakov Jurisic recommended that the task force get more involved with this issue than they already are, maybe beneficial to request a special meeting

Jakov Jurisic motioned to request for LDWF to meet with the OTF to further discuss the issue of the Oyster Strategic and Rehabilitation Plan’s spending percentage distribution, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

John Tesvich stated that at a previous meeting the strategic plan had numbers a breakdown of categories and spending distributions, remember submitting comments on this plan at that meeting, can you tell us what the comments and suggested changes were. Don’t see any new information here, saw the draft previously and comments and suggestions were made and this is the same information being presented. Would like more information as to what the comments were and what are some changes that can be made otherwise we are just discussing old business

Brad Robin stated that when the task force first saw the presentation there was $25 million set aside for the study for fresh water oysters and the task force objected to this, what is worrisome is that it seems like none of the task force comments and recommendations have made a difference in the draft. There are other things like planting cultch that we know will make a direct positive impact for the industry right now, we need to put the money where it can best be used right now to help the industry

Carolina Bourque stated that in terms of rehabilitation we do have permitted areas in Drum Bay, the NRDA money from post oil spill got approved and this year they will be building cultch plants. 200 acre cultch plants in Drum Bay area. This is still in the permitting process but once it becomes public will be requesting bids, hoping for this to be done this year. Also have funds for Sister Lake and another 200 acre cultch plant and the brood reefs on the east side of the river

John Tesvich asked if the plan be finalized without the oyster industry seeing the numbers? As a task force we are volunteering we are not the general public, the expectation is that the OTF works with LDWF on the draft and not treated like the general public and we don’t feel that is right. Supposed to help provide input early on, we are at the table, asking now that LDWF to look at this and sit with OTF at an open or private meeting to be at the table to discuss this further. Would like to request that $10M of this money go towards closing Mardi Gras Pass. Closing Mardi Gras Pass is a major issue and an issue that the industry has been dealing with and so if there is some money this should be a priority. We are not the general public and the expectation of the task force is that we work with LDWF on the draft of this plan and then it goes to the public

John Tesvich motioned that the OTF send a letter/ email to LDWF requesting that $10 million of the $58 million in fisheries disaster economic relief funding go towards the closure of Mardi Gras Pass, 2nd by Dan Coulon. Motion carries.

1. Cole Garret led discussion on the proposed commercial licensing restructure

Using the alligator industry as a model, the Alligator Advisory Council has a promotion and management account and they are able to expend monies from that to promote their product and are also able to do research and enforcement as well

John Tesvich stated that right now the Oyster Development Account comes out of tag sales, $.05 cents a tag is dedicated into this account and that is strictly what OTF uses for expenditures. Now what is being presented is that the Oyster Development Account will be combined with other accounts that LDWF can expend from. With the combining for these accounts will LDWF be able to expend from OTF’s account without OTF’s approval or will it be strictly with the task force’s approval that these fund will be able to be expended?

Cole Garrett stated that approval for expenditures from the combined account will be in conjunction with the OTF. The amount of money that is currently in the Oyster Development Account would still and will remain dedicated to serving the purposes of the OTF

John Tesvich stated that the issue is that the OTF does not deal with salaries and how much money specifically goes to oyster enforcement. The OTF’s fund is for marketing promotion and for doing projects specific to the oyster industry. So in the future the task force would have to be shown a budget and make decisions on what goes to enforcement, etc. This will be a lot more complicated and possibly more controversial. Not happy about getting into the management of LDWF’s personnel and expenditures

Cole Garrett stated that goal is for the fees that the oyster industry is paying would be 100% reinvested back into the oyster industry. the department shall not use more than, sub account in this larger account If way more tags are sold one year

Jakov Jurisic stated that the task force’s money should be left where it is without being tampered with, we voluntarily tax ourselves. Previously money that was derived from harvester’s license sales that went towards the Oyster Strike Force, the unit was disbanded and the money went away. Finds issue with this proposal

John Tesvich stated that what the OTF is being told is that the bill will be drafted in a way where the OTF will still have the money from tag sales, but it depends on how the legislation is written and the assurance and if it’s written. Once this goes into legislation you lose some control of how this might be handled

Cole Garrett asked if the OTF would like to set a 5-year average or set aside the $.05/ oyster tag sale?,

Pete Vujnovich stated that he would suggest keeping the account and dedicated funds how it currently is, dedicating $.05/ oyster tag sale

Jakov Jurisic motioned to request that LDWF leave the Oyster Development account how it is currently set up, by dedicating $.05 cents per oyster tag sale, 2nd by John Tesvich. Motion carries.

John Tesvich thinks that the oyster development account should be left alone and all of the other oyster related accounts can be combined.

Cole Garrett stated that two items of feedback the LDWF received on the bill, originally proposed a $10 deckhand license and that has been removed. Also heard what was said during the last meeting regarding the Public Oyster Seed Ground Vessel Permit and appropriate changes are going to be made

John Tesvixh stated that he appreciates that there are budget issues within LDWF and there are budget issues in a lot of commercial fishermen accounts also. The hardship goes all the way around, all fisheries are suffering and as you have mentioned the obligation of LDWF is to expand into other areas and you are adding new things like invasive species and aquatic plants additional duties. Need to look at how LDWF can be creative in raising money from other sources than just fisheries. When Wildlife and Fisheries Commission was started it started as an oyster commission and it regulated oysters and it depended on money from the state and oyster leasing and so it was a 1-to-1 relationship. You had the funding and you had a duty. Now you have some of the same old funding but you have a lot more duties and I don’t see that it’s a 1-to-1 representation. The task force feels that LDWF is going in different direction and is not working with the seafood industries and is taking direction and input from NGOs and they are getting more and more influential on our industry and what are they contributing. If they are getting the representation then why aren’t they contributing? Let’s think outside the box, how can we get some money from these people who increasingly having more and more influence on the industry

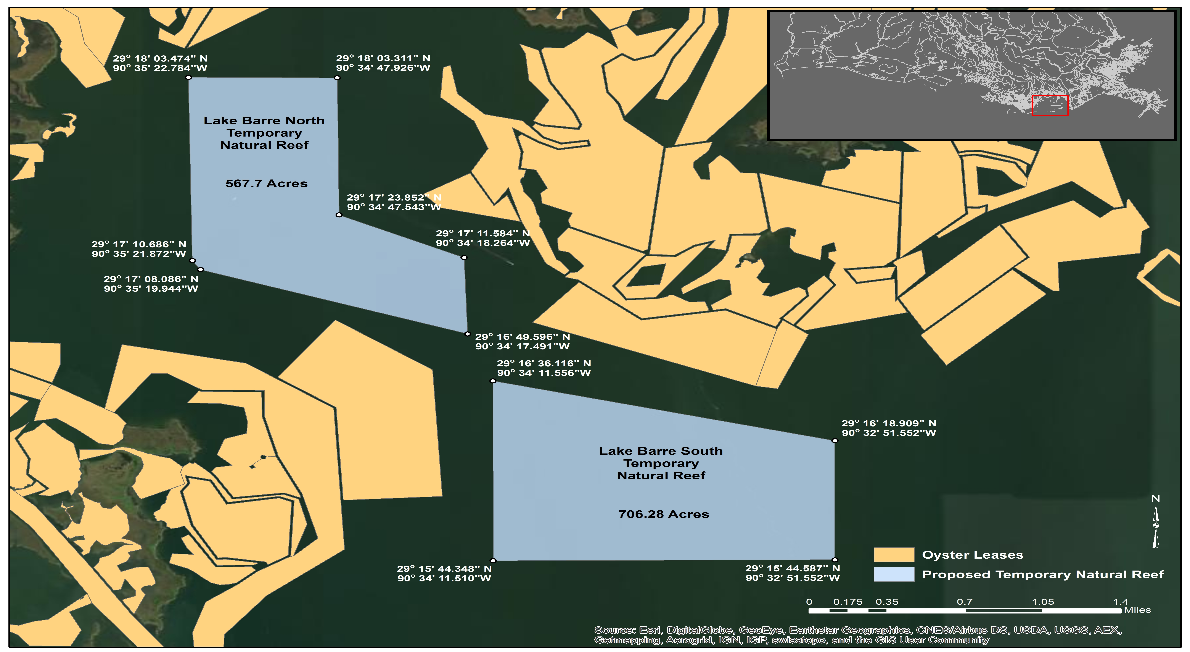
Cole Garret there are three members on the LDWF Commission that have to representatives of the coastal parishes as well as the commercial seafood industry, there is representation. The way that LDWF is seeking to protect the industry is by investing money back into the industry, have to be creative, can't overstate the importance of fisheries. Do derive $28 million from recreational as opposed to $7/8 million from the commercial industry, $11 million increase on the recreational side compared to a $4 million increase on the commercial side

Brad Robin stated that the east and west side taking a big hit with the oysters being put in the water, millions and millions of dollars being put into the water and we are getting $40-50M from the government, it’s not good business. If the industry keeps taking hit after hit like they are doing the industry is going to pack up and go where we are protected, we are not protected like we used to be

The $58 million dollars that came down from the Feds for disaster recovery is insufficient, we provided data for much greater losses than that and unfortunately we have to do what we can with the money that came down. Your comments are heard and are appreciated

1. The task force discussed designating a temporary natural reef ahead of the Terrebonne Bayou Marsh Creation

Temporary Natural Reef: bedding season



CPRA intends to use approximately 1,500 acres of unleased state water bottoms as a borrow site for a restoration project located in the northwest corner of Lake Barre, Terrebonne Parish (Terrebonne Parish Marsh Creation). Some local oyster fishermen reported the borrow site contains live oyster resources and are asking permission to harvest that resource before CPRA begins operations in December 2021 To open unleased water bottoms to harvest, as you know, we have to designate the bottoms as temporary public oyster grounds through Commission action. In this case, it is being proposed to designate just over 1,200 acres as temporary public oyster grounds.

As you can see in the above map, two areas were selected to designate while attempting to include as much of the borrow site acreage as possible and leave some buffer between our boundaries and neighboring private leases. If approved, the plan is to open the 1,200+ acres as a

bedding-only site during the 2021/2022 oyster season well ahead of

work commencement. Bedding only season would not use the 15% living material rule that is used during oyster season

This would have to go before the LDWF Commission and the Commission would have to approve the area to be designated as a natural reef public seed grounds

John Tesvich suggested supporting this, but would wait until we know how much resource is there to make a final decision

Carolina Bourque stated that the area is currently undesignated water bottoms

Brad Robin stated that the same thing was done in Lake Borgne a while back and it worked well but there was a lot of resource. In favor of this if there is sufficient resource to capitalize on

John Tesvich motioned to recommend that LDWF conduct a biological assessment and if there is sufficient resource the OTF would support establishing a limited bedding season, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

1. Rusty Gaude provided the board with a presentation on a newly funded NOAA grant dealing with the mooring systems of the AOC floating cage installations

**NSGO Rapid Response Funding Request**

Title:     Designs in infrastructure and best management practices to improve alternative oyster culture farming in response to threats from extreme weather events

PIs:        Navid Jafari PhD, Louisiana State University, Dept. of Civil & Environmental Engineering

              Brian Callam PhD, Louisiana Sea Grant, Voisin Oyster Hatchery, Grand Isle, LA

              Rusty Gaudé MS, Louisiana Sea Grant, Marine Extension Program/SE Louisiana

TimeLine:           1-year project to run January 2021-December 2021

Funds Requested:           $50,000 + 50% match

**Need:**  In the wake of the most extreme hurricane season on the Gulf of Mexico during 2020, alternative bivalve aquaculture operations were faced with a number of novel physical challenges which were not foreseen prior to these latest climatic events. In the case of Louisiana, the later of the many storms, Hurricane Zeta, exposed these aquaculture facilities to a set of surge and wave conditions which were catastrophic in damages. Specifically, the failure of the mooring system for the oyster facilities resulted in total losses of both infrastructure and enclosed oyster crop. Despite the use of recommended mooring techniques (sometimes even mandated), the mooring systems failed widely across the aquaculture operations.

Pre-storm oyster cages at Grand isle Aquaculture Park

1. The task force discussed submitting a joint task force comment regarding the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion EIS, get document from BMF

Jakov Jurisic motioned to appoint John Tesvich as the OTF representative to review and draft comment for the Joint Task Force Working Group to submit regarding the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Draft EIS, also members that attend the meeting have full authority to speak on behalf of the Oyster Task Force, 2nd by Dan Coulon.

Anna Corin with Beuerman Miller Fitzgerald provided an update, an EIS working group has been established with several members of the task force since then we thoroughly reviewed the draft EIS and looked at issues and concerns and highlighted issues and have been reviewing various materials and studies provided by various task force members. Have identified academics and experts that we can speak with as well to help coordinate response efforts and will continue to monitor media and social media just to see what conversations are and stay up-to-date on what is happening

1. Earl Melancon made a request to the task force to present in late April/ early May, AOC project information to the Oyster Task Force

The LDWF has been working with LA Sea Grant to develop a program to help stimulate off bottom aquaculture in Louisiana. LA Sea Grant was asked to be the lead agency to administer the program. We are requesting that at the next Oyster Task Force meeting that you send this item to the appropriate subcommittee to have the information presented and have a follow up that afternoon with the full task force.

The task force sent this item to the Coastal Restoration Committee for further discussion

1. Introduced an upcoming virtual demonstration event on remote setting oyster larvae

La Sea Grant/LDWF Hatchery staff will host an online demonstration to walk you through the process, answer questions, and provide more information on the hatchery, ordering seed and larvae, and cage culture

The demonstration will be ONLINE VIA ZOOM April 29, 2021 2:00 – 3:00 PM

For more information, contact Brian Callam- [Bcalla3@lsu.edu](mailto:Bcalla3@lsu.edu) or Thomas Hymel- [Thymel@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:Thymel@agcenter.lsu.edu)

1. The task force discussed taking immediate action on hiring Joe Piacun as OTF legal counsel

Jakov Jurisic motioned that the OTF Chairman, at his earliest convenience, sign the contract to immediately hire Joe Piacun as Oyster Task Force legal counsel, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries

Cole Garrett thanked Jakov Jurisic for reaching out to try and schedule a meeting where the scope of work can be further discussed. Keep in mind back in November when this request was made it was communicated to the OTF that LDWF would need more specificity as to what Mr. Piacun was going to do before we could recommend to the Secretary that he sign off on this. As part of that letter, I can assure you that we laid out kind of what the Oyster Task Force’s functions were as well as what the functions of the Department are. The Secretary ultimately has to sign off on any contracts for employment as well as to make sure that the money is being expended in the appropriate manner under what OTF’s roll is. Would urge that we continue to have these discussions and that we can hopefully get more specificity under the scope of work so that the recommendation can be made. Certainly, I cannot prevent you making the motion that was made on getting the chairman to sign the contract, but just be aware that if the contract doesn’t meet what the law requires we cannot make the recommendation for the Secretary to sign off on the contract.

Jakov Jurisic stated the specifics are to help represent the board as needed, to help the OTF better understand our legal rights, and to assist in any way deemed necessary. Also there was a request in an email that I received from Duncan Kemp that stated that in order for the Secretary to sign off on the contract LDWF has to be his client. This is absolutely not acceptable for the simple reason that the OTF’s interests are not always the same as LDWF’s. In 421 paragraph 8, if I am not mistaken, it states the the OTF can hire legal counsel.

Cole Garrett stated the answer is not, “no” the answer is the scope of work has to fall within what the duties and obligations are of the task force as well as other legal parameters. For instance if the task force wanted Joe Piacun to be a lobbyist for you there is state law that states that state money cannot be used to lobby the legislature

Jakov Jurisic stated that this is understood, but he understand that from the same section in 421, that legal counsel can represent the task force in legislative and judicial proceedings. I still don’t see how the task force can, in any case, abuse our authority under the law. Also would like to refer to the case that took place in Plaquemines Parish, which was Plaquemines Civil Service Commission vs. Plaquemines Parish Government. The case was before district court in Plaquemines, the Plaquemines Parish Civil Service commission sewed the Plaquemines Parish Government despite the fact that Plaquemines Civil Service Commission is part of the Plaquemines Parish Government.

Cole Garrett stated that his concern is not that the task force is going to sue anyone, the concern is that the state money that is being expended to hire the attorney is going to meet all of the specifications set forth in the law

Peter Vujnovich stated that the OTF needs an attorney to tell the TF what exactly can be done, the task force is not looking to break laws or cause trouble

Cole Garrett stated that all he needs, which was included in the letter to the task force is further specificity as it pertains to the scope of work, this is necessary for the Secretary to sign off on the contract

Jakov Jurisic stated that the questions that is going to be raised is should the OTF sign the contract and then approach the Attorney General’s Office, the task force is happy to accommodate a meeting with LDWF to further discuss the details but the one thing I would like to make crystal clear is under no circumstances should LDWF be allowed to be Joe Piacun’s client

Brad Robin stated that the 5 cents a tag that is appropriated to the Oyster Task Force is not LDWF’s money, it’s the OTF’s money. We have legal questions, if we have funds that we put up as an industry. Isn’t the money in the OTF account put there for the OTF to better the industry?

Cole Garrett stated that the nickel an oyster tag goes into the Oyster Development Fund which pays for what the OTF does. I can read the list of things that the OTF is supposed to do with the money:

* Monitor the water quality and management requirements of the state's molluscan shellfish propagating areas
* Coordinate efforts to increase oyster production and salability.
* Study the decline in molluscan shellfish salability, the degradation of water quality which could adversely affect consumer health, and the reasons for such declines and degradations, and make recommendations to resolve such problems.
* Make recommendations with respect to issues pertaining to the oyster industry and oyster production to the various state agencies charged with responsibility for differing elements of the oyster industry in this state, including the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the Louisiana Department of Health, the governor's executive assistant for coastal activities, and the legislature
* Employ such personnel as necessary
* Develop markets and marketing strategies for the development of new and expanded markets for Louisiana oysters
* Represent the interests of the Louisiana oyster industry before federal and state administrative and legislative bodies on issues of importance to the Louisiana oyster industry
* Contract for legal services to represent the interests of the Louisiana oyster industry in judicial, administrative, and legislative proceedings
* Administer the funds in the Oyster Development Fund
* Perform any acts deemed necessary and proper to carry out its duties and responsibilities

Again the answer is not, “no”, the scope of work has to fall within the guidelines of what this task force does and what that five cents is supposed to be used for, that is what is being requested, that is the specificity that is needed. The task force falls under the umbrella of LDWF, what’s called an 802 transfer agency, OTF retains some autonomy with policy making and the ability to make recommendations; however, to hire and fire people the contract and approval has to go through the state agency head, which in this case is the Secretary

John Tesvich stated that he agrees with what Cole just said, but would you also agree that there may be times when interests of the OTF/ oyster industry may be different than LDWF. So by having the OTF’s legal counsel have LDWF as a client that means OTF cannot have a legal option separate from LDWF and the task force does want that kind of legal representation

Cole Garrett stated that he thinks that this can be achieved, but thinks that the scope of work would have to fit what the law establishes the OTF’s functions to be and what that 5 cents can be used for

John Tesvich stated that he would like to elaborate with a hypothetical or actually a real issue, Mardi Gras Pass was a failure of a man made structure, this structure was a project that was done in cooperation be Plaquemines Parish Government, the State of Louisiana, and the Corp of Engineers more or less. There is the potential for liability and would you agree that it is in the interest that if we feel strongly that the crevasse should have been closed that we should take legal action to be sure that it is closed

Cole Garrett stated that he has been to enough of these meetings to know that the closure of Mardi Gras Pass is important to the industry and funding it through any mechanism necessary is of importance to the OTF

John Tesvich stated that in following up we have seen very little done except hot air in meetings towards the goal of closing this crevasse.

Cole Garrett stated that he would like to have further conversations on what the scope of work would look like but the contract/ scope of work cannot be accepted as it was previously presented

Brandt Lafrance what needs to be obligated to operate under the scope of the statute

Cole Garrett stated that it falls back to if the contract is strictly with the OTF and there is no oversight from the Secretary or the agency then who is supposed to be, the secretary has administrative duties to make sure that all contracts that are issued under LDWF, including through boards of ours, meet these criteria and he has to monitor those. That is why it is important for any attorney that is hired understands what the scope is

Jakov Jurisic stated that the way he see it is this will all have to be taken up in court and a judge will have to decide. I stated earlier what the task force is looking for and it is to represent the oyster task force and to help us understand our legal rights and to assist in anyway deemed necessary

Cole Garrett stated that in the spirit of cooperation he would like to have a meeting with Jakov Jurisic, as the chair of the Legal Committee and Mr. Piacun as the perspective attorney to see if we can work on a scope of work that is going to amenable to everyone if not we can explore the other options including getting the Attorney General’s opinion

Peter Vujnovich recommended having a meeting to further discuss the issues

Jakov Jurisic stated that this item has already been voted on and it has been months so I feel that no other action is needed from the board at this time other than instructing the chairman to sign the contract at his own convenience

1. The board discussed oyster appeals board issues

It was mentioned with the licensing restructure to do away with the appeals board and doing away with limited entry by converting it to a strictly $250/ scraper license and having no more limited entry appeals board. The discussion came up as to whether or not the Appeals Board was necessary because there was certain aspects in law, you were grandfathered in because you used the vessel for a certain amount of time or you had a hardship and that hardship could have included that you were overseas at war, you were divorced, etc. There was a certain numeration of hardships that could be considered by the board. The time period for all of these considerations have run and the Appeals Board isn’t as necessary as it was during the early parts. The suggestion was then that even if we did revert back to a limited entry that the Appeals Board be disbanded and allow the LDWF Secretary of Assistant Secretary or some form of the administration to make these decisions

John Tesvich stated that he thinks that the Appeals Board was created to deal with the aftermath of establishing a limited entry. Would support putting in legislation to modify the Appeals Board but not take away the limited entry. The idea of going to a $50 vessel seed permit retention fee was really in respect to not having a season and the economic hardship associated. When things improve do not see a reason to have a retention fee, once things improve and there are oysters on the wild reef you have to pay your full license fees whether you use it or not. I would not be for a permanent $50 retention fee, would need a sunset

Cole Garrett stated that what he is hearing is that the Appeals Board would go away the Secretary could assume that role to look at the criteria that is in law and apply it, limited entry is important and would like to see this remain and would like to some period of time to implement a $50 seed ground permit retention fee and the ability to pay an additional $200/ scraper to fish the seed grounds this would be later evaluated or a sunset would be put in

Peter Vujnovich stated that some of the appeals were not financial and were the result of a death or other things that the law did not cover and so through the appeals board these individuals were allowed to at least be recommended. There are little things that happen and have nothing to do with economics and just have to do with the way the law was written and how stringent it was because it’s on the boat

John Tesvich stated that these are the things that maybe need to be drafted in legislation- ownership of the boat, death in the family, etc.

Brad Robin stated that the appeals board never issued a new license to a new incoming fisherman it was always someone that had a hardship/ circumstance

Jakov Jurisic motioned to recommend that Seed Ground Appeals Board be left as it is at this time, 2nd by

For purposes of the licensing restructure, the board would like to retain limited entry and retain the appeals board and then go to the $50 permit and $200/ scraper and put in a three-year sunset

Jakov Jurisic withdrew his motion and sent the issue to the Legislative Committee to further work out the details

Cole Garrett stated that if this is going to be a part of the licensing bill, this would need to be done by the end of April; will plan to put in the $50 retainer fee and $200/ scraper and will address the other issues through an appeals board bill next session

1. John Zach Lea led discussion on possibly growing AOC seed oysters in prohibited areas

Have personal financial interests in the AOC industry selling gear called the Shellivator, here to ask that the task force recognize that the National Shellfish Sanitation Program recognizes that oyster seed can be gathered from prohibited water, 2. Would like for the OTF to recommend a seed size that can be used, if you raise your oyster seed to a certain level and then you transfer it to open, good water it will take so many days for it to reach market size. NSSP is looking for a seed size that will make it such that the oyster has to stay in the water for 120 days. Would like to allow people to raise seed at their home/ camp

Justin Gremillion stated that currently there are no aquaculture rules, must be created, in the process of creating these rules, process takes anywhere between 6-12 months, correct that NSSP says that seed can be collected in prohibited waters but LDH does not have the rules established yet to say whether or not this will be allowed

John Tesvich stated that the aquaculture rules are separate from on bottom harvest, support the proposal and it should be strictly for aquaculture, would hope one day the relay is relaxed as well

John Tesvich motioned that the task force supports the development of standards for growing seed in other than approved waters by LDH and LDWF, 2nd by Brandt Lafrance. Motion carries. 1 obstain by Jakov Jurisic.

1. No public comment
2. Jakov Jurisic motioned to allow the chairman to set the next meeting at a later date, 2nd by Brandt Lafrance. Motion carries.
3. John Tesvich motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Dan Coulon. Motion carries.