**Shrimp Task Force Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2020, 10:00am**

**Terrebonne Council Meeting Room**

**8026 Main St., Houma, LA**

**Meeting called to order at 10:05am**

**I. Pledge of Allegiance**

**II. Roll call and introduction of guests**

**Voting Members Present:**

George Barisich

Acy Cooper, Jr.

Lance Nacio

Rodney Olander

Kristen Baumer

Alan Gibson

Andrew Blanchard

Craig Authement

**Voting Members Absent:**

Ronald Dufrene, Sr.

Steven Sode

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Peyton Cagle

Edward Skena

Jack Isaacs

Gene Cavalier

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Justin Gremillion

**III.** Andrew Blanchard motioned to approve the December 11, 2019 meeting minutes, 2nd by George Barisich. Motion carries.

**IV.** Acy Cooper motioned to approve the February 5, 2020 meeting agenda, 2nd by Alan Gibson. Motion carries.

**V. Treasury Report**

Remaining Fund Balance- $666,366

Remaining Fund Balance- $45,460

Alan Gibson motioned to approve the treasury report as presented, 2nd by Andrew Blanchard. Motion carries.

**New Business:**

1. **Jack Isaacs provided the task force with a presentation on the dollar value of shrimp import products compared to the 1980’s**





Kristen Baumer requested some feedback at a future meeting on the price of shrimp today if shrimp kept up with the increased price of gasoline. Also asked for import and price data from the other Gulf states

The task force requested additional feedback by the next meeting on what the value of shrimp should be worth in today’s dollars and how much is shrimp worth today compared to 1980

Alan Gibson stated that in the EU all imports are sent with a bond and inspected and the bond is used to test the product and if the product doesn’t pass inspection it’s destroyed

1. Acy motioned to postpone item B. To Discuss Federal and State Laws Regarding the Labeling of Processed Shrimp Products- STF/LDH until the next meeting, 2nd by Craig Authement. Motion carries.
2. Kristen Baumer provided an update on the shrimp industry trip to Washington, D.C.

Kristen Baumer stated that the STF should try and visit D.C. more often to try and execute and implement a plan and get the support of Congress, both on the House and Senate side to get things done. Right now it seems like we are still in the early stages, some items discussed were bylateral equivalency trade agreements, trade case, and USDA programs and still communicating with our own congressman and senators. Getting staffers engaged from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama and it looks like everyone is interested in a USDA-type program. Would like to look into using a USDA program to utilize money collected to create a program that would help the fishermen and the industry. The next step is to get the staffers all together in one room and start trying to execute a plan of what is achievable. Can use Jack Isaac’s feedback and data to help create programs

The task force would like to look into how much import production has increased vs how much imported product is now coming into our country; The FDA gives importers the choice to go the HASA program route vs equivalency route

Alan Gibson stated that there needs to be limits on imports based on market share, focus work on getting all the offices together to work on this

1. The task force discussed the NOAA issued rule that requires the use of TEDs in skimmer trawl vessels that are 40ft and greater in length

Acy Cooper stated that the TEDs requirement on 40ft boats and greater is just the first step, it’s not fair to the 39ft vessel that doesn’t have to do it and the 40ft does. Attorneys are breaking down the impact study now. It’s not only the issue with TEDs on 40ft vessels, will eventually go to a 3” inch instead of a 4” inch TED and there is a five-year study that’s coming with observers on our boats, so it’s not only the 40ft boats that will take a hit. Stated that the industry is currently doing a bycatch study with LDWF and a study on smaller boats is coming soon. The task force is going to fight this and if a lawsuit comes about it would have to take place in DC and would be expensive. Trying to get the Attorney General involved to help. Waiting on the breakdown of the economic study

Rodney Olander stated that this seems like a discrimination case as there are other user groups who can be causing turtle deaths

George Barisich stated that the STF is working with LDWF to draft a letter to send to all permit holders to let them know the industry is challenging this change

Public Comment on this change ends on February 24, 2020, everyone who opposes this needs to go in and comment

1. Samantha Carroll with the SPMB stated that the board will meet for the first time in a while tomorrow

The creative team put together a pitch for the shrimp industry for a ten, twenty, and thirty thousand dollar option. In NYC, the restaurants have a heath rating (A, B, or C) on the window. This same approach is going to be used, window decals will be sent out to all local restaurants who are complying and serving domestic seafood. So when customers walk in they will know if they are being served domestic seafood. There will also be a PSA on launch that goes out with all of that information. The pitch will include logos on all of the menus, so little stickers will be sent out to stick on each menu or a digital copy will be sent if the menus can be reprinted with the logo. The PSA will inform customers what to look for in restaurants to make sure they are being served domestic. All restaurants are double checked with the health department to make sure they are actually serving domestic.

Acy Cooper stated that the issue is lack of education to public on imports vs local product

Alan Gibson stated that the board members need a lot more input from the SPMB

Acy Cooper asked how all of this is getting funded, Samantha Carroll stated that it’s through BP, Deep Water Horizon

Andrew Blanchard stated that Vietnam catfish is distinguished calling is Basa so maybe LA Gulf caught shrimp needs another name to distinguish it from other shrimp

1. The task force discussed the purchase of enforcement drones

The state approved extending the budget authority of the STF for the purchase of drones. Rodney Olander, George Barisich, Alan Gibson, Andrew Blanchard attended the meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee Meeting on Budget

Edward Skena stated that he plans to have the drones in by May, currently under bid, which is open for 30 days

Alan Gibson stated that the TF needs to try and get the DA back on the agenda now that they have the drones to try and get cases followed through on

1. The task force discussed the Calumet Cut and its impact on juvenile shrimp retention, it’s not a gate but rather a diversion it never closes originally build in 1942 to divert 30% of the water from the Atchafalaya River, the CFS at Calumet is a little over 200K and the Atchafalaya River is at around 200-230K CFS, so it’s about 50/50.

Thomas Olander requested that the TF support a new committee that is being formed. The Calumet Cut was dug out 50ft deep and as of today from the Intercoastal Canal going back north to the Atchafalaya River it has been washed out to 149ft deep. The Intercoastal Canal has become a finger of the Atchafalaya River. Right now the river is at its peak, informed the farmers, Sierra Club, the sugar mills, Port of Iberia, CCA, St. Mary, Vermillion, Iberia Parish Councilmen are all on board to form a committee. There are three things this group are trying to accomplish: 1. Dredge out the jaws 2. Put up a set of locks west of the Calumet Cut 3. need to rock jetty the water from the Calumet Cut. Also seeking the approval of the LSA and plan to go to CPRA with plans for what is going to be done. Would like a chainwall from Point Aux Fair to South Point.

Acy Cooper motioned to draft a letter of support for the draft of work that it being constructed regarding Calumet Cut, 2nd by Kristen. Motion carries.

1. The board discussed and considered funding for upcoming Shrimp Task Force trips to Washington, D.C.

Kristen Baumer motioned to dedicate funding to send three TF members to D.C. in the spring, 2nd by Acy Cooper. Motion carries.

Thomas Olander stated that the Sierra Club invited him to come and provide a history on the shrimping industry and he stated that he was embraced in such a good light by a club that used to be at odds with the industry. Suggested that the task force consider reaching out to other people and branching out

Julie Falgout stated that she agrees that the TF needs to get their messaging to other people and expand their audience

1. The task force heard an update on the STF vacancies and attendance

At the last meeting it was brought to the board’s attention that there were a few members who have not attended meetings in over a year. Letters were sent out to members who have not participated. The board plans to reach out to these members again and possibly propose some replacements.

1. The task force opened up nominations for chairman

Acy Cooper nominated Alan Gibson as Shrimp Task Force chairman, 2nd by Kristen Baumer. Motion carries.

The chairman opened nominations for vice chairman

Andrew Blanchard motioned to nominate George Barisich as vice chair, 2nd by Craig. Motion carries.

The task force closed nominations

**VIII**. Public Comment:

Douglas Olander expressed concern with people using big mesh webbing to commercial fish, down 70-80% on puppy drum. Have trip tickets back from 2012 caught average of 2200 lbs of fish, currently just catching big black drum which goes into a portion cut. Also concern for dragging on inland waters, pulling big mesh webbing and what this may be doing to the shrimp. Is there any way the STF can look into this in the future? What’s the limits on this and is it legal?

Rocky Dechero proposed charging a dime a pound on imports and giving the money back to the industry

Kristen Baumer stated that Eddie Hayes would be more than willing to come to an upcoming meeting and give an update on the shrimp efforts

Julie Falgout stated that LFF Summit is on March 11 at the Pontchartrain Center in Kenner, registration is open. Urged people to pre-register so that they are guaranteed a meal

Acy Cooper mentioned the shrimp industry ride-alongs requesting participation from the industry for people to sign up

Peyton stated that he needs to know each of the participants, vessel number, captain’s name, what area, GPS coordinates for sites and need this information by the end of February and the goal is to collect during the 2nd week of April

**IX.** The next Shrimp Task Force meeting was set for May 6, 2020 for 10am in Houma. Motion by Alan, 2nd by Lance Nacio. Motion carries.

**X.** Craig Authementmotioned to adjourn, 2nd by Lance Nacio. Motion carries.

Federal Disaster Fund Update

Eddie Hayes update

DA to come to next meeting- agenda item

Sustainability

Shrimp sampling/ season update

USDA fuel program