

Maine Seafood Alliance  
Directors' Meeting  
May 14, 2008 10:00 A.M  
Down East RC&D Office-Cherryfield  
Agenda

Meeting called to order at 10:05 by President Markos

Present: Jim Markos, Dan Rogde, Randy Ramsdell, Cecil Wood, Becky Beal, Stan Bayley, Ginny Olsen, Albert Carver, Frank Batson-Addison, DMR-George Lapointe- Darcie Couture-Denis Nault, Jessie Logan-Senator Collins Office.

Item 1 Minutes of April 8 meeting-motion by Dan, second by Ginny to accept as printed, carried.

Item 2 Treasurer's Report Balance as of 5-14-2008 \$9,883.26. This amount includes a return from the Town of Freeport in the amount of \$2,23.64 from the donation made to the Audit fund.

Item 3 Red Tide – Darcie Couture gave an update on the Red Tide season so far. Southern Maine has closures but none downeast yet. She feels changes implemented over the last two years allow for a more efficient handling of the closures. Jim reminded the board that some of those changes are being funded by the last of the disaster funds. It could take up to an additional \$100,000 in Darcie's budget when those funds run out. Darcie is working with the media to get the word out that red tide closures do not always effect the whole coast and that shellfish in stores and resteraunts is certified and safe.

Item 4 Forum 2008- work continues to get clam day on Friday of the Forum and develop a greater presence for the shellfish industry. Denis mentioned that the Maine Shellfish Wardens Assoc. is interested in partnering on programs. George agreed to make suggestions about possible programs. There is still interest in having a session on marketing and MSA is planning on sponsoring Tom Harrington from the Review Team and ? from FDA.

Item 4 Legislative and DMR Updates – Commissioner George Lapointe – Jim welcomed George and asked him to talk about the effect of recent legislation on DMR and the shellfish industry. George prefaced his remarks by pointing out that in these economic times State government has to deal with tough issues and diminished funds. He highlighted the following bills:

**LD2039** – The “Truck” law. After some very contentious debate the legislature directed DMR to “to institute a system by rule for the sale of soft-shell clams at landings by holders of commercial shellfish licenses to holders of wholesale seafood licenses and holders of retail seafood licenses.” Staff is drafting regulations that will go to public hearing, then the DMR Advisory Council for final Passage.

**LD2038** which became **PL606** – What began as the “Private Lab” bill became the catch all bill for many of the elements of the Water Quality Review.

- DMR is developing to pilot two projects that will utilize private labs.
- DMR has implemented some of the review recommendations and is working on others, including an adjustment in water depth of sampling.
- The commissioner is filling out the membership of the Shellfish Advisory Council and will provide MSA with a member list when the process is final. Ginny Olsen and Randy Ramsdell from the MSA Board have been asked to serve.

Other Concerns for the Department- The Administration has asked all of the Natural Resource departments (DMR, Conservation, DEP, IF&W) to meet and explore way to consolidate with a goal of merging the departments into no more than two. This process is underway. They are trying to find efficiencies without loss of essential services. Board members commented that there was a need for MSA to monitor this process closely and react when appropriate>

## Q&A

“What about upcoming legislation?” The department must have concepts to the administration in September.

“How can MSA help with the legislative process?” (This question led to quite a bit of discussion) Be sure and keep the Marine Resources Committee and your local legislators informed about what is important for the industry. Keep George informed about what MSA is concerned about and is in support of or not.

“People Cobscook are concerned about their scallop resource and the lack of scallops along the rest of the coast, do you have any immediate plans to make changes? Are closures a possibility?” There were two bills passed this session and we have no immediate plans to make closures. There will most likely be a bill on the scallop industry in the next legislative session.

“Are you set for water quality testing this season, staff, overtime, etc.?” The bill that stopped newspaper ads for closures has helped put some dollars back. The use of more automated rain gauges was brought up. These help pinpoint areas of heavy rain and can provide more specific data to keep the size of closures smaller. DMR staff are working on a plan to determine how many are needed and where to locate them. MSA and other organizations could help with the purchase of these units. There was discussion at this point about ways to broaden the efforts to get restricted areas closed for pollution open by bringing together local, state and federal organizations that have an interest in cleaning up the intertidal zone.

There was some general discussion about problems in the industry and how important it is for MSA and other organizations to work together and speak with one voice. Jim commented that for the first time it appears that this is beginning to happen.

Item 5 Other – Cecil brought up concerns about the ocean quahog fishery and asked for time on the next agenda for a discussion.

Next meeting: Wednesday June 11 10:00 in Cherryfield

Adjournment at 12:05