

Maine Seafood Alliance Directors
January 12, 2010
9:30 A.M. Sullivan Town Office

Meeting Minutes

Present: Jim Markos, Dan Rogde, Steve Beathem, Becky Beal, Ginny Olsen and Gary Edwards

Item 1 The minutes of the December 8 meeting were accepted as written with the correction of two typos.

Item 2 Report from Commissioner Lapointe on concerns raised at the December 8 meeting. The report is attached.

- 🥥 Mussel closures-After reading George's reply there was discussion about approaching DMR with a proposal for MSA to work with staff to develop and fund a study of known in shore sub-tidal mussel beds that are currently effected by rain closures to determine if there is a way to quantify an amount of rain that causes adverse effects to the mussels. The purpose would be to determine at what amount of rain causes a danger to public health. Gary and Ginny will work Dan and others who harvest mussels to develop a proposal.
- 🥥 Rain Gauges- Gary will get back to George with the amount of dollars available and an estimate of the number of units MSA can purchase. It is hoped that this information will help get the project moving ahead.
- 🥥 Mahogany dredges- George's reply and reports from members engaged in the process indicate that there is good progress being made on the problem. The board passed a motion to offer to pay Ricky Guptill up to \$500 to measure and weigh a sample of drags to aid in determining an appropriate limit to these variables. It was also suggested that digital photos be taken of different drags for comparison.
- 🥥 Comments about how MSA can support the industry. Led to discussion about remaining diligent with the political process as it effects the budget. It was thought that MSA needed to get on the Governor's radar.

Item 3 ISSC discussion- Until FDA appoints a replacement for Peter K the State can only continue to follow the rules as they understand them.

Item 4 Legislative update –Gary, Ginny and Jim will be monitoring the budget process and the Marine resources Committee- Dianne Tilton, Representative from Washington County who sits on the Marine Resources Committee has offered to meet with MSA to talk about concerns in the shellfish industry. Gary will follow up with Dianne, and possibly other members of the committee.

Item 5 Next steps for MSA- Gary will be working on getting the survey and dues billing out as well as updating the web site.

Next meeting: Tuesday February 9 at the RC&D office in Cherryfield.

Report from Commissioner George Lapointe in response to concerns raised at the December MSA Board meeting.

1) With mussel harvesting, why can't the deeper areas be kept open as MSA folks think the water quality isn't impaired in deeper water as it is in shallow water?

There are two important aspects to this question.

From an enforcement perspective, we need line of sight or easily delineated areas and the use of depth contours would be unenforceable. I have verified this with Lt. Talbot who adds that this is very important in following up

From a water quality perspective, there are too many variables to determine what rainfall amount/duration does or does not have an impact on the mussel beds which are not all 'offshore'. There is also a tidal component and circulation to consider. Monitoring deeper water during a flood closure would require boat sampling - feasibility of this would have to be figured out what areas would be monitored and what wouldn't.

2) With respect to rain gauges, what is the reason for the slowness in putting new gauges in to place?

The Growing Area group met on January 8th to go over rain gauge distribution and to make a plan for 2010 and beyond. Jamie and Alison completed a mapping project for the automated and manual gauge needs for the coast that were mapped at the meeting. We added a couple gauges where we thought things looked skimpy when mapped with the other gauges used. Jamie is going to contact Maine Seafood Alliance and see where and how many they are willing to buy? The last correspondence that Robbie had with them (via Gary Edwards) on May 13, 2009 was "MSA is ready to purchase and find host sites for a number of gauges, dependent on the cost of the optimum model needed. In order to move ahead with the project could you provide: Specific make and model number of a unit that meets DMR's parameters. Develop a list of preferred sites, put in order of importance. SOP's for hosting a site, whatever is needed to meet DMR requirements that we can use when finding sites. Any other information needs to move ahead with this project. MSA will purchase the number of gauges that fit it's budget. Find host sites in the locations that help with rainfall closures." Alison and Jamie are planning for April-May to be a good time to train new recruits for both manual and automated rain gauges which would give us time to get some press out there. We were also thinking three different trainings in the coastal downeast area would be sufficient provided we have interest.

3) With respect to mahogany clam dredges, why don't we limit the weight of the dredges as some draggers are using very heavy dredges that people believe will harm the mahogany clam resource?

Reference the weight of drags, Lt. Talbot organized and held a meeting with quahog dealers/harvesters to discuss this issue. Marine Patrol is in the process of inspecting drags to determine the difference in weights and then possibly create an upper weight limit. The Department is investigating and evaluating at this point and there will likely be some proposals that come from it

4) How can MSA help the DMR do it's work?

My thoughts are

- use of Shellfish Advisory Council as primary discussion point because that it was set up to do by statute
- continued dialogue at MSA meetings
- engagement in legislative and budget issues in Augusta