

Louisiana Oyster Task Force Meeting  
Tuesday, December 03, 2019, 1 p.m.

**I. Pledge of Allegiance**

**II. Roll Call and Introduction of Guests**

**Voting Members Present:**

Shane Bagala

Dan Coulon

Byron Encalade

Jakov Jurisic

Brad Robin

Brandt Lafrance

Sam Slavich

Mitch Jurisich

Willie Daisy

Peter Vujnovich

**Voting Members Absent:**

Tracy Collins

Leo Dyson

Al Sunseri

John Tesvich

**Non-voting Members Present:**

Carolina Bourque

Robert Eellssier for Justin Gremillion

Edward Skena

Frank Cole in for Karl Morgan

John Troutman in for Brian Lezina

**Non-voting Members Absent:**

**III. Approval of October 22, 2019 Minutes and December 03, 2019 Agenda**

Peter Vujnovich motioned to approve the October 22, 2019 meeting minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brandt Lafrance. Motion carries.

Jakov Jurisic motioned to approve the December 03, 2019 meeting agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

**IV. Treasury Report**

**A. LOTF Financial Report & Oyster Tag Sales**

Remaining Fund Balance-\$457,325

Budget Balance-\$108,884

October Tag Sales- 199,240

Peter Vujnovich motioned to approve the treasury report, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Willie Daisy. Motion carries.

**V. Committee Reports**

**A. Public and Private Oyster Grounds Committee**

Harry Blanchet discussed the preliminary findings of the 2019 disaster declaration. Harry explained that NOAA looks at a loss of revenue not a loss of resources. LDWF submitted a report showing losses among LA fisheries (\$20 million loss on the public grounds and \$121 million loss on private leases) and approval from NOAA is still in progress. LDWF does not have a final determination regarding disaster declaration funding.

Marc Maniscalco stated that comments on the oyster lease moratorium lifting are still being summarized and sent to the legislative oversight committee. LDWF hopes to get the document back to the LDWF Commission before January to avoid having to start the process over.

**B. Enforcement**

Edward Skena provided the board with the enforcement report October 12th – November 22nd

**Region 4 (Iberia)**

None

**Region 5 (Calcasieu and Cameron)**

2-Take oysters unapproved area

3 dozen seized

**Region 6: (Terrebonne, Lafourche, Grand Isle)**

Terrebonne

3-Take oysters unapproved area (polluted)

5-Unlawfully take oysters from a private lease

4-Fail to have written permission

2-Use illegal dredge (dive board on public seed ground)

5-Violate sanitary code (vessel regulations)

7 sacks seized

Lafourche

2-Take oysters unapproved area

1-Sanitation code, no tarp

19 sacks seized

**Region 8: (Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Orleans, St. Tammany)**

St. Bernard

None

Plaquemines

1-Violate sanitary code (Refrigeration)

15 Sacks Seized

**C. Legislative**

No report

#### **D. Research**

No report

#### **E. Coastal Restoration**

No report

#### **F. Marketing**

Marketing committee meeting postponed.

#### **G. Health**

No report

#### **H. Aquaculture**

None

#### **I. Joint Task Force Working Group**

Mitch Jurisich spoke to the shrimp task force and the OTF will split a booth at the Louisiana Alive Event on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **VI. New Business**

#### **A. To Hear an Update on the Federal Fisheries Disaster Declaration- LDWF**

Harry Blanchet informed the task force that a draft report was submitted to NOAA. NOAA had questions regarding the report and a 2<sup>nd</sup> draft was submitted to NOAA. LDWF has not received a response yet regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft to NOAA. Additional information for oyster mortality was added to the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft. LDWF established a baseline to determine estimated losses for comparative purposes however, NOAA is focusing on revenue loss and not resource losses. Unfortunately, LDWF does not have a good grasp for losses for private areas. LDWF was able to establish an estimate for losses in private areas. LDWF has not established any programs or projects for the funding but programs and funding allocation will be discussed once additional information is received from NOAA. Questions were asked regarding who can submit a proposal to NOAA. Harry Blanchet informed the OTF that entities must be governmental organizations and proposals cannot be submitted directly from the industry.

#### **B. To Hear an Update on the Sister Lake Season-LDWF**

Carolina Bourque gave the report on Sister Lake oyster season. On opening day there were 94 boats with a 25 sack a day limit per vessel. The season lasted for 8 days total beginning on November 18, 2019 and ended on November 25, 2019. Most of the boats barely reached 20 sacks a day. During the season there were about 127 different boats but on closing day there were only 45 boats.

#### **C. To Discuss the Implementation of Term Limits as Oyster Task Force Chairman-OTF**

Mitch Jurisich stated that term limits should be implemented for the OTF chairman and proposed a one-year term limit. There was discussion regarding a proposed term limit but a proposed term limit was not motioned by anyone on the OTF.

#### **D. To Discuss the Upcoming 2020 Louisiana Alive Event in Washington D.C.-OTF**

Travel planning was discussed for the Louisiana Alive event in Washington. Mitch Jurisich stated that tickets would be split between the OTF and the STF. A discussion was held to determine reservations for the event, a date to leave for the event, and attendees for the event. Jakov Jurisic motioned to approve funds for up to six members for up to six nights travel and accommodations for the 2020 LA Alive Event. 2<sup>nd</sup> Brad Robin. Motion carries.

#### **VII. Public Comment**

Members of the task force discussed the status of requiring oyster seed ground vessel permits. The OTF had previously proposed to reduce or waive the fees for permits since very little harvest is occurring. Additional discussion will be held at the next public-private seed grounds committee meeting.

Julie Falgout announced that registration is now open for the 2020 LFF Summit on March 11<sup>th</sup> in Kenner.

The OTF discussed whether they should have a booth at the annual Louisiana Fisheries Forward Summit. Mitch Jurisich stated that future discussion would take place regarding this at the next OTF meeting.

Dr. Zach Lea submitted the following document to be added to the public record.

#### **Public Comment Items for Louisiana Task Force Meeting December 3, 2019**

Submitted by J.D. "Zach" Lea, Ph.D., jdzlea@hotmail.com

##### **1. Resolution: Protect and Restore Wildlife-Based Coastal Zone Industries.**

LOTF should lead an effort to have a Resolution passed requiring CPRA to include in the Coastal Master Plan implementation plans to restore the ecological basis for Louisiana's wildlife-based industries---oyster, crab, shrimp, finfish, bird, etc. CPRA would develop plans that combine storm protection with wildlife industry promotion.

##### **2. Money for repair of Mardi Gras Pass**

FY 2020 Community-based Restoration Program Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Grants  
NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2020-2006306.

The grants are for amounts between \$75,000 and \$3,000,000.

The principal objective of the NMFS Community-based Restoration Program Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration solicitation is to support habitat restoration projects that use an ecosystem-

based approach to foster species recovery and increase populations under NOAA's jurisdiction. Proposals submitted under this solicitation will be primarily evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate how the proposed habitat restoration actions will: 1) help recover threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (hereafter, Listed Species), including species identified by NMFS as "Species in the Spotlight" (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/endangered-species-conservation#species-in-the-spotlight>); 2) sustain or help rebuild fish stocks managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species); and/or 3) contribute to the sustainability of saltwater recreational fisheries. Successful proposals will: 1) identify a habitat-based issue/concern limiting the recovery or sustainability of one or more species targeted by the proposed restoration action; 2) describe in detail the habitat restoration project(s) to be undertaken to resolve the issue/concern and; 3) describe the project(s)' expected outcomes and measurable impact on the project's target species and their ecosystem. **Proposals may include: restoration feasibility and/or design; implementation (i.e., on-the-ground activities); or a combination thereof. Proposals due January 8, 2020.**

### 3. Money for recreational reefs: LDWF Inshore Reefs Program

### 4. Plan for Southeast Louisiana Salinity Management:

LOTF ask LDWF to develop a salinity management plan. See my draft plan attached.

### 5. Public Education Plan Components: webpages, emails, and tweets

I would like to write and post letters to webpages, emails, and tweets on behalf of LOTF. Who should I send the posts to obtain LOTF approval before posting?

## **A Plan to Increase Louisiana Oyster Production East of the Mississippi River (DRAFT)**

### **Combining Storm Surge Protection with Oyster Industry Development**

Work with communities and the State to build multiple storm surge protection barriers that also define oyster production zones. The barriers will allow better water-flow- and salinity-control to rehabilitate traditional oyster bottoms, develop new oyster production areas, reduce man-made-flooding-risk to oyster industry investors, and provide "immediate" increases in storm protection to SE Louisiana. Most of SE Louisiana becomes a managed, oyster production zone with benefits for shrimp, crab, and finfish.

Components of the Plan:

1. Build storm surge protection reservoirs/levees to capture silt and control freshwater from:
  - a. the Fort Saint Philip crevasse
  - b. the Mardi Gras Pass crevasse
  - c. the proposed Mid-Breton Sound Sediment Diversion
  - d. the Caernarvon Diversion
  - e. the Bonnet Carré Spillway
2. Convince the USACE to fund dredging to remove sediment from the River south of NOLA for land-building as an alternative to waiting to dredge it at the mouth of the River

3. Complete the NOAA Land Bridge across upper Breton Sound. See location below.



4. Build one or more storm surge protection levees across the Biloxi Marsh
5. Build one or more storm surge protection levees running southwesterly from the MRGO
6. Build a lock at Hopedale to control freshwater and boats entering SW of the MRGO
7. Build “off-shore” storm surge barrier islands
8. Divert floods of “new”-global-warming-Mississippi-River-system-waters north of Baton Rouge.
  - a. Into the Atchafalaya basin, away from the Bonnet Carré and New Orleans
  - b. Into diversion canals (mini-intercoastal canals) and reservoirs north of Cairo
  - c. Dredge the multiple mouths of the River to drain the system faster

Submitted by John Dale “Zach” Lea, Ph.D., [jdzlea@hotmail.com](mailto:jdzlea@hotmail.com), 985-272-3681. November 9, 2019.

Mitch Jurisich suggested that the issues be added to the legislative committee meeting agenda.

### **VIII. Set Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2020 preceded by an Appeals Board Meeting, a Legislative Committee Meeting, and a Public/Private Meeting.

### **IX. Adjourn**

Jakov Jurisic motioned to adjourn the meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries. Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.