**Shrimp Task Force Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 4, 2021, 10:00am**

**LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries**

**2000 Quail Dr.**

**Baton Rouge, LA 70898**

**I.** Pledge of Allegiance

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

Voting Members Present:

Acy Cooper

Lance Nacio

Kristen Baumer

Andrew Blanchard

Rodney Olander

Craig Authement

Voting Members Absent:

Alan Gibson

Non-Voting Members Present:

Peyton Cagle

Bryan Marie

Jack Isaacs

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Meg Bankston

Justin Gremillion

**III.** Rodney Olandermotioned to approve the June 2, 2021 meeting minutes, 2nd by Acy Cooper. Motion carries.

**IV.** Rodney Olander motioned to approve the August 4, 2021 meeting agenda, 2nd by Acy Cooper. Motion carries.

**V.** Financial Report

Remaining Fund Balance- $673,423

Remaining Budget Balance- $59,575

Rodney Olander motioned to accept the financial report as presented, 2nd by Craig Authement. Motion carries.

**VI.** The task force was presented with an updated Federal Shrimp Permit Report

Motion by Rodney Olander to reconsider the approval of the meeting agenda, 2nd by Kristen Baumer. Motion carries.

Rodney Olander motioned to move take up item G. To Discuss TEDs regulations under New Business last, as item M, 2nd by Craig Authement. Motion carries.

**VII.** New Business

1. Peyton Cagle provided the task force with a presentation on the fall inshore shrimp season

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the Mississippi/Louisiana state line westward to the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River to open at 6:00 a.m. August 9, 2021 **except** for the Biloxi Marsh which will open at 6:00 a.m. August 27, 2020.

From the eastern shore of South Pass of the Mississippi River westward to the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the River Channel Buoy Line to open at 6:00 p.m. August 9, 2021.

From the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the River Channel Buoy Line westward to the Louisiana/Texas state line to open at 6:00 a.m. August 9, 2021.

Andrew Blanchard stated that his own opinion would be to go with the data is presented, gets feedback from the industry that more fishing days are needed more than anything else

Rodney Olander stated that most of the fishermen he has spoken to state concern with the TEDs issue, they are not ready, they do not have the TEDs net shops are behind, COVID is running rampant in Louisiana and workers are out, it’s a big issue and if we were to open on the 9th we are going to find that a lot of boats are not ready, if the TED issue was pushed back there would be no issue with opening on the 9th

Action was taken on this item later in the meeting:

*Rodney Olander motioned to recommend pushing back the opening of the fall inshore shrimp season to August 16, 2021 to provide the industry time to deal with TEDs requirements, opening Zone 1: open waters on the August 16 at 6am but leaving Biloxi Marsh, at the crossover, to open on August 27 at 6am, Zone 2: Barataria/ Terrebonne recommend opening on August 16 at 6pm, and Atchafalaya West on August 16 at 6am, 2nd by Acy Cooper. Motion carries.*

1. The task force discussed the future of the shrimp Day on the Bay sampling

Sampling has been conducted for the last three falls and spring of 2019. The task force had originally asked that we do this for three years. We can move forward with the program and at least try and get the three years of data if we have support of the industry and the task force. We developed a protocol we brought the protocol to the task force for approval and to be reviewed and we have issues with the protocol not being followed. It is hard to do any type of comparison when you have one are doing it one way and another area following the protocol. If the protocol cannot be followed we will have to re-adjust the program and consider suspending it

Acy Cooper urged participants to follow the protocol. The task force likes the program and would like to see it continue

Barry Rogers suggested having a meeting before next spring shrimp season with the boat owners (participants) and LDWF to review the protocol

The task force inquired about using the task force account to pay participating fishermen for fuel

1. Jack Isaacs provided the task force with an update on shrimp imports

The task force requested that LDWF look into how Europe handles imports and what percentage of imported shrimp has been going there for the last few years

**Percentage of Volume of *All Shrimp* Imports by Source Nation: 2020**

|  |
| --- |
| **Shrimp Product Imports through May** |
| **Pounds** | **Value** |
| **719,826,697** | **$2,774,103,330** |

1. The task force discussed Senate Resolution 105, which provides relative to taking shrimp in Lake Pontchartrain

Peyton Cagle stated that a Senate Resolution was made for the Shrimp and Crab Task Forces to have a discussion and come to an agreement regarding night fishing in Lake Pontchartrain. They asked that a summary or an agreement be brought back to the legislature by February 2022. The crab task force is willing to meet to further discuss the resolution. The crab task force agreed that additional regulations were not needed

The task force is going to try and get a shrimp, crab and joint task force meeting on the same day, Peyton Cagle will provide a map of the current sanctuary area in Lake Pontchartrain; the chairman named Acy Cooper as head of the effort

1. The task force considered funding and participation in the 2022 Louisiana Alive event

Acy Cooper motioned to dedicate 50% or up to $7,500 to fund the 2022 Louisiana Alive event, 2nd by Kristen Baumer. Motion carries.

1. The board discussed the Davis Pond Diversion

Acy Cooper expressed concern with the fresh water, already have enough fresh water with the rain events, need a solution to control the water and close the diversion. Currently running at a continuous 500 cubic feet per second. Would like to have a meeting with the Davis Pond committee or CPRA about this issue and possibly getting it shut off prior to the spring shrimp season

Peyton Cagle suggested that the task force attend a CPRA board meeting and ask that the operation plan be updated and a minimum or low threshold be established

1. To discuss the Fisheries Disaster Spending Plan

The plan was presented to the task force at their last meeting

1. Acy Cooper led discussion on hiring a STF lobbyist

Acy Cooper stated that the task force needs someone to work for them to set up meetings and advocate for the industry in Washington, D.C.

Brian Shinault CEO of American Strategic Partners, headquarters is in D.C. but operate here in Louisiana, firm has several different divisions, will determine the objective of the industry and set a strategy going forward, can help with funding through grants or relief funding, also can work on import issue

Rodney Olander stated that the industry can use a lobbyist firm, suggested getting with the other task forces to have a lobbyist for the seafood industry as whole to split the costs

Cole Garrett stated that the Shrimp Promotion and Marketing Fund is what funds the task force, since this is state funds there are a lot of restrictions on how this money can be spent, there is a constitutional prohibition on using state funding for urging legislators to vote on certain issues. Beyond that there is a lot of statutory prohibitions on not only utilizing state funds to perform lobbying services but also there is a prohibition on state employees or contractors thereof to do that. There is a precedent in the alligator industry to hire someone to act as coordinator and provide information in Washington, D.C., not here to say you cannot do this just letting you know there are a lot of restrictions

The task force sent the item to committee for further discussion and to further iron out a direction forward, look into forming a joint venture with the other task forces, requested that Patrick Banks be on the committee to assist in discussions, will require legal review

1. The task force heard a presentation on offshore wind development in the Gulf

Mike Celata with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management provided a presentation on offshore wind development in the Gulf. Goal is to work with the industry to try and make this project work for all stakeholders

The task force requested that they be involved in the decision making process and expressed concern with placement of the development

1. The task force discussed and considered a sustainability resolution in support of sustainability certification

Fishery Improvement Projects

* Supply chain participation in an action plan to prepare for certification
* Requirement for access in many major markets
* FIPs for shrimp in TX, LA, MS, and AL led by GULF
* Initial focus on demonstrating TED compliance
* Remaining issues in LA include:
	+ Use of precaution in state management
	+ Harvest control rules – actions taken to return the stock to sustainable levels when targets/thresholds are reached/crossed
	+ External review of the management system

Sustainability Resolution

* Modeled off the resolution utilized in the certification of Louisiana blue crab
* Resolution including language demonstrating use of precautionary approach and harvest control rules
* More direct language to demonstrate what LDWF already does – precaution to keep stock at sustainable levels, management actions to rebuild stock when thresholds are reached
* Industry support needed to bring before Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

External Review

* Modeled off the resolution utilized in the certification of Louisiana blue crab
* Resolution including language demonstrating use of precautionary approach and harvest control rules
* More direct language to demonstrate what LDWF already does – precaution to keep stock at sustainable levels, management actions to rebuild stock when thresholds are reached
* Industry support needed to bring before Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Kristen Baumer motioned to support the resolution, 2nd by Acy Cooper. Motion carries.

1. The task force discussed an external review of Louisiana management in support of sustainability certification

**Goal**

To conduct an external and general assessment of key performance aspects of the marine fishery management systems of the Louisiana shrimp fishery and Prestige’s private lease oyster fishery in the State of Louisiana.

**Objectives**

This external assessment will provide a broad perspective of the performance of the current fishery management system implemented by the managing agencies and their decision-making frameworks applicable to the Louisiana shrimp fishery and Prestige’s private lease oyster fishery. We will use as guidelines the requirements and guideposts provided by two sustainable fishery standards and their applicable specific performance indicators or clauses. First, we will use the Sustainable Seafood Standard of the MSC and more specifically we will use Principle 3: Effective Management’s performance indicator 3.2.4: Monitoring and Management Performance Evaluation. This indicator guides evaluation and review design to be appropriate to the cultural context, scale, and intensity of the fishery. The indicator is divided in two scoring issues: 1) evaluation coverage, and 2) internal and/or external review. Secondly, we will use the Fisheries Management System section of RFM. More specifically we will use Clause 1.5: The management system, its institutional arrangements and their legal basis, regulations and other instruments, and management measures and outputs shall be subject to periodic review through identifiable review procedures and mechanisms, and Clause 1.6: The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.

This process will focus on three specific objectives requested by GULF:

1)Evaluate LDWF fisheries data collection procedures,

1)Evaluate LDWF and LWFC fisheries management decision-making process, and its responsiveness to both biological factors and stakeholder concerns, and

1)LDWF fisheries enforcement and compliance procedures.

Kristen Baumer motioned to select the Teleoust quote and dedicate 50% of the costs for shrimp industry review up to $4,000, 2nd by Lance Nacio. Motion carries.

1. The board discussed STF officers and memberships

Andrew Blanchard stated that George Barisich is no longer the chairman and that he, as vice chairman, is now acting as chairman. Asked what the task force wants to do regarding voting a new chairman/ vice-chair

1. The task force discussed TEDs regulations

Barry Rogers stated that not enough TEDs, not enough people to put them in, looking at a skimmer industry that doesn’t know anything about TEDs, how will LDWF enforce minor violations?

Patrick Banks stated that enforcement agents will enforce the law, each agent does a good job at using their own discretion, this has been discussed and notice has been given for a while

Acy Cooper stated that the AG’s office is going to help the industry but need to prove injury first

Acy Cooper motioned for the task force to enter into executive session, 2nd by Rodney Olander. Motion carries.

Acy Cooper motioned to come out of executive session and resume the normal meeting, 2nd by Craig Authement. Motion carries.

Acy Cooper motioned 1. To authorize the LA Attorney General to represent the task force in litigation challenging federal regulations mandating turtle excluder devices in skimmer nets or vessels, 2. to approve up to $150,000 from the Shrimp Promotion and Marketing Fund to assist in funding costs associated with litigation, and 3. To authorize the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to seek additional appropriation authority to fulfill funding obligations arising from the litigation costs, 2nd by Rodney Olander. Motion carries.

Rodney Olander motioned that the task force go back to Item A. To discuss the fall inshore shrimp season, 2nd by Acy Cooper. Motion carries.

Rodney Olander motioned to recommend pushing back the opening of the fall inshore shrimp season to August 16, 2021 to provide the industry time to deal with TEDs requirements, opening Zone 1: open waters on the August 16 at 6am but leaving Biloxi Marsh, at the crossover, to open on August 27 at 6am, Zone 2: Barataria/ Terrebonne recommend opening on August 16 at 6pm, and Atchafalaya West on August 16 at 6am, 2nd by Acy Cooper. Motion carries.

**VIII.** Public comment

**IX.** The task force held off on scheduling a meeting until they could speak and coordinate with the CTF

 **X.** Rodney Olander motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Craig Authement. Motion carries.