**MINUTES CRAB TASK FORCE MEETING**

**September 27, 2012**

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

The Crab Task Force meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Bauer at 1303 p.m.

A roll call was then made:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VOTING**  |  | **NON-VOTING**  |  |
| Gary Bauer | X | Alan Matherne | X |
| Pete Gerica |  | Carl Britt | X |
| Dennis Landry | X | Melissa Daigle |  |
| Roy Meek |  | Julie Anderson | X |
| Pete Peterson | X | Rex Caffey | X |
| L.J. Sandras |  | Jack Isaacs | X |
| Kernny Comardelle | X | Jeff Mayne |  |
| Keith Watts | X |  |  |
| Trudy Luke |  |  |  |
| Rodney Parfait |  |  |  |
| Kim Alfonso | X |  |  |

A quorum of 6 voting members was present.

New members Kernny Comardelle, Dr. Rex Caffey, Dr. Jack Issacs, and Alan Matherne were introduced.

**Adoption of Minutes and Agenda**

Keith Watts moved and Kim Alfonso seconded that “the previous meeting’s minutes be approved as written” -- motion carried (all in favor).

Keith Watts moved and Pete Peterson seconded “to adjust the Agenda by moving item #13 to item #5, and moving item #11 to item #7” -- motion carried (all in favor).

Keith Watts moved and Kim Alfonso seconded that “the amended agenda be approved” -- motion carried (all in favor).

**Public Input**

There was no input from the public.

**LA Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board activity**

Ewell Smith began the discussion with an explanation of Act 852 of 2012, which called for new membership on the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board (LSPMB). Current appointments to the LSPMB would end on 12/31/2012. The Crab Task Force was asked to nominate representatives for the LA Crab Industry to the Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions for appointment to the LSPMB. Nominees would need to be approved by the

Natural Resources Committee. Gary Bauer is the current Crab Industry representative on the LSPMB.

Ewell offered a presentation outlining where LSPMB budget is derived. Currently, only 8% of budget is statutory funding. All other budget is derived from federal grants or BP funding related to Deepwater Horizon. Ewell stated that the challenge is to figure out how to fund seafood promotion into the future. The 2013 LSPMB budget is $651,087, of which the Crab Industry accounts for 7%. An overview of marketing outlets and activities includes Trade Shows; billboards; websites such as LASeafoodNews.com, Buy.LASeafood.com, and Sell.LASeafood.com; an e-newsletter, eSplash; and television commercials. Examples of TV commercials were viewed. Ewell mentioned that the Sell.LASeafood.com website has many tools for commercial fishermen and seafood dealers to use to help build their businesses. Also, Louisiana Seafood will be represented at the Aspen Food and Wine Show and the NRA Show. Ewell also presented a video production that would follow each different seafood species “from the water to the plate.” The video segments will be seen on television sports channels.

Gary Bauer reiterated that in approximately a year and a half the LSPMB budget will be reduced to the 8% statutory funding, as federal grants and BP funding will end. Ewell suggested and Keith Watts agreed that emphasis needed to be placed on those marketing programs which are most beneficial to the industry. Dennis Landry asked about the process of creating a “water to plate” segment for the crab industry. Ewell advised that the cost of the production was $8,250.00 and the Crab Task Force could allocate crab marketing funds to be used for that, just as the Oyster Task Force had done.

**Trade Adjustment Assistance**

Dr. Rex Caffey presented an overview of Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAAF). The presentation covered information on eligibility requirements for the TAAF Program, how to apply for the TAAF Program, some of the benefits of the TAAF Program, and the current status of the TAAF Program. Dr. Caffey stated that the TAAF Program was originally for farmers, and that much of the emphasis of the Program was placed on education. A copy of the power point presentation was distributed to Task Force members. Keith Watts mentioned that the Blue Crab Industry needed to determine how to best determine production losses by product type related to imported crab products.

**Gulf Seafood Trace Program**

Malinda Kelley, with GCR Consulting, made a presentation introducing the Gulf Seafood Trace Program. This program is an effort to move away from a market driven solely by price. The Gulf Seafood Trace program offers a means by which consumers can be confident in the origin of the seafood they are purchasing. The program consists of three main components; Electronic Traceability, Marketing Module, and Data Quality and Confirmation. Enrollment in the program is voluntary and complimentary. Dennis Landry asked Gary Bauer about his experience with the Gulf Seafood Trace Program. Gary described his experience as having been positive. He stated he used the program because of some customers he has who require it.

**MSC Update**

Rene LeBreton led a discussion on how to find ways to help crab fishermen and processors benefit from having sustainability certification through Marine Stewardship Council. Gary Bauer spoke briefly about his experience with MSC certification and what benefit he has seen. He stated that he has seen most benefit in retail and restaurant markets. Rene mentioned that the sustainability certification of the Louisiana Blue Crab Industry through MSC was good for the next 5 years. Any requirements for maintaining certification beyond that period would be handled by LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries. Alan Matherne asked if anyone could use the MSC logo on their crab products. Rene explained that individual fishermen or processors wishing to affix the MSC certification logo to their crab products must first complete an audit by Scientific Certification Services (SCS).

Rene further stated that LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries was working with Audubon Institute to build a Louisiana Certified Seafood Program. Also, the Agency is designing an origin tracking program to certify products as Louisiana Seafood.

**Suitability Mapping**

Mark Schexnayder presented maps indentifying areas that are suitable for alternative oyster culture. This method of oyster culture would consist of floating “cages” used to grow oysters. These cages may result in limited navigation in areas where they are used. LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries is asking members of the LA Crab Task Force to go to the Agency’s website to view the maps and determine if there are areas that crab fishermen would prefer that this method of oyster culture not be allowed.

Pete Peterson stated he thought there was a tremendous amount of liability associated with this type of aquaculture. Clint Guidry, from the Shrimp Task Force, also mentioned there was no language in the legislation for this program that would prevent any foreign entities from sub-leasing current oyster leases for the purpose of conducting this type of aquaculture.

At this point it was decided to further alter the agenda and move item #10 – Serviceable Crab Trap Law ahead of item #8 – Results of 2012 Derelict Crab Trap closures.

**Serviceable Crab Trap Law**

Mark Schexnayder stated there has been issue raised with the current Serviceable Crab Trap Law and interaction of different commercial fishing gear types. Shrimpers who have caught a crab trap in their trawl and maintained it on board their vessel can and have been ticketed for theft of the crab trap. Clint Guidry, from the Shrimp Task Force, addressed the Crab Task Force on the issue and asked if the two groups could work together to change the current law to allow a different way to dispense with crab traps caught in commercial shrimp trawls. Cole Garrett recommended that the Crab Task Force appoint a sub-committee to meet with representatives of the Shrimp Task Force to discuss the matter.

Pete Peterson moved and Keith Watts seconded that “the Crab Task Force create a sub-committee to meet with representatives of the Shrimp Task Force to discuss the possibility of amending the current Serviceable Crab Trap Law.” -- motion carried (all in favor).

**Results of 2012 Derelict Crab Trap closures**

Dr. Julie Anderson, of Louisiana Sea Grant, presented an overview of the results from the 2012 Derelict Crab Trap Program events. 2012 events netted a total of 2,708 derelict and abandoned crab traps. 310 volunteers with 66 vessels participated in the 2012 events.

Julie stated that Louisiana Sea Grant was currently promoting educational efforts to try to reduce the numbers of derelict and abandoned traps being left in Louisiana marshes. Also, crab trap by-catch data collected during the 2012 Derelict Crab Trap Program events was being used in studies at LSU. Further, a reporting database has been created where people can report where and when crab traps have been lost. Information from this database can be used to quantify the number of crab traps lost in Louisiana waters on a yearly basis.

Donnye Bourn asked how commercial crab fishermen were notified of the crab fishing closures. Carl Britt stated that all licensed commercial fishermen in affected parishes, as well as, surrounding parishes were sent letters from LDWF announcing the closures.

**Notice of Intent for 2013 Derelict Crab Trap closures**

Carl Britt made a brief presentation outlining the dates and locations for the Derelict Crab Trap Program events to be held in 2013. The first crab trap closure will take place in portions of Plaquemines Parish east of the Mississippi River over a 10-day period beginning on Feb 16, 2013 at 6:00 am and ending on Feb 25, 2013 at 6:00 am. A second crab trap closure will take place in a portion of St. Bernard Parish over a 10-day period beginning on Mar 9, 2013 at 6:00 am and ending on Mar 18, 2013 at 6:00 am.

Pete Peterson moved and Dennis Landry seconded that “the Crab Task Force support the Derelict Crab Trap Program events scheduled to be held in 2013.” -- motion carried (all in favor)

**Crab Task Force Vacancies**

Pete Peterson announced that he was retiring from the crab industry and was resigning from the Crab Task Force. Keith Watts introduced Donnye Bourn as a prospective new member to the Crab Task Force. Donnye is a fellow crab fisherman from the Lake Pontchartrain area who could fill the vacancy from Pete’s resignation.

**Next Meeting / Agenda Items**

The task force requested that the next meeting be held on December 6, 2012.

There were no suggested agenda items for the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

Keith Watts moved and Kim Alfonso seconded that “the meeting be adjourned” -- motion carried (all in favor).

The Crab Task Force meeting was adjourned by Chairman Gary Bauer at 1607 p.m.