January 13, 2015

Meeting called to order at 1:12

Roll was called and there was not a quorum present since many members were not back from lunch yet, but the Chairman proceeded with discussion of the agenda items and a quorum was established at 1:14 p.m.

**Voting Members Present:** **Voting Members Absent:**

Al Sunseri- entered at 1:14 p.m. Peter Vujnovich

Brad Robin-entered at 1:14 p.m Jakov Jurisic

Brandt LaFrance-entered at 1:14 p.m.

Byron Encalade- entered at 1:14 p.m.

Dan Coulon-entered at 1:14 p.m.

John Tesvich

Buddy Pausina

Sam Slavich

Shane Bagala-entered at 1:14 p.m.

Wilbert Collins- entered at 1:14 p.m.

Willie Daisy

Byron Encalade-entered at 1:14 p.m.

**Non-Voting Members Present:** **Non-** **Voting Members Absent:**

Mark Schexnayder Chip Kline

Lance Broussard- Gordon LeBlanc in Kyle Graham

Lt. Col. Sammy Martin

Karl Morgan

Motion to approve minutes from December 9, 2014, adopted

Motion to approve minutes from December 18, 2014 meeting, adopted

Motion to adopt the financial report, motion adopted.

Mr. Buddy Pausina went through the public/private committee report from November 13, 2014

The committee recommended that Patrick Banks make a report to the task force twice a year.

Some of the problems discussed in this report should be:

* The public grounds are covered with mussels in many areas is this the problem with the low spat fall?
* What can be done about this situation?
* Can the public seed grounds support themselves?
* Should the department alone try to rebuild these grounds or should it let private industry do it or both?
* Develop a plan to combat this problem

In that report under Item B, Al Sunseri made a motion to accept the committee’s recommendations for a report from Patrick Banks of the public seed grounds. Mr. Buddy Pausina asked for more than a stock assessment but also some plans for how to address the situation for why we don’t have stock and what is being done to enhance stock. It was suggested to do the report in July with the stock assessment. The task force will consider recommending to LDWF to open an opening Area 1 North of the MRGO at the next OTF meeting depending on the current sampling results.

Under Item C the recommendation was that LDWF define what is a mini sack, or any unit or container that is not a full sack. Second recommendation under Item C was how to indicate mini sack on a trip ticket to have the department include instructions with trip tickets so that people know how to properly fill out trip tickets for mini sacks and other measures. Mark Schexnayder mentioned the oyster day the department held last month and said that you can use the current trip ticket to record the volume properly, including mini sacks. There will be another outreach in March and the Department can look into other options to modify trip tickets if the industry wants that. Recommendations passed. The committee would like for the department to do an audit that compares units of sacks on trip tickets to unit of sacks on the severance form to see how far apart we are without giving out private information. The committee would also like the department to provide a report on the viability of severance tax. Also get an opinion from the task force and the department as to who should pay the tax. Al Sunseri said that historically the severance tax was a fisherman’s tax, for people taking oysters off the bottom. At some point that shifted. Recommendations adopted. Mr. Pausina said that you need to discuss the viability of the severance tax before anyone can decide who should pay the tax.

Item D in the committee report: Patrick Banks said they are trying to get out and sample the areas in half moon area again for the January sampling.

E. VMS- Title 56 431, the committee recommends to go along with enforcement recommends for potentially adding a clause in the statute regarding theft from private leases to include a harsher penalty to require community service. Enforcement will bring recommendations to next task force meeting.

Mr. Buddy Pausina said that to summarize the VMS topic will require much more input from the industry and the task force. The Committee asked the task force whether they want to continue the discussion on VMS requirements or to put it aside.

Al Sunseri made a motion for the committee to continue to pursue the VMS discussion. Al Sunseri made a substitute motion to ask that the department come up with what types of VMS systems are best for the industry, Sam Slavich made a substitute motion that LDWF bring back to the task force what they want to do with the system. Al Sunseri said that LDWF didn’t ask for VMS systems to be imposed, the task force asked for it. Sam Slavich clarified that he just wants to know what they would collect. Randy Pausina said that the department could provide pros and cons about it, but it would be up to the task force for what they wanted to collect. Sam Slavich withdrew his motion. Al Sunseri also withdrew his motion. Al Sunseri made a motion to send the VMS discussion back to the committee for further deliberation, second by Brad Robin. Motion adopted. Al Sunseri did ask for the department to let the task force know the pros and cons of the different systems. Mr. Buddy Pausina said that the department has already recommended a system, Faria, which costs approximately $40 a month.

Buddy Pausina asked that Tom Soniat address the group with his VMS presentation. The task force ask that Tom Soniat come back again to keep the task force updated. Mr. Zach Lea addressed the task force. Al Sunseri made a motion that Dr. Lea send his proposals to Ashley Roth who will forward them to the task force for their review before they make any recommendations to CPRA.

Enforcement- East of the River, sister lake area, four citations issued for fishing in polluted area, 62 sacks of oysters seized. 14 cases made with licensing, sanitary code issues. Steve McManus reported on St. Bernard/Plaquemines from November-December and a little into January. 2 Citations for fishing on private leases, 2 citations for not having permission from lease holder, 1 no logbook, 3 taking from state water bottoms, 6 polluted charges, 1 improper refrigeration, 3 for no VMS and 1 for no gear license.

Motion by Byron Encalade to recommend to the state officials (write letter to Governor and copy representatives and Sec.Barham) that we need additional enforcement agents. Al Sunseri said that this agent could also work on the weights and measurement issues.

Al Sunseri made a motion that the department (through Cole Garrett) keep the task force up to date on what legislative issues are up for oyster/seafood issues.

Al Sunseri asked if we could potentially move the legislative committee meeting to the last week of January instead of Friday. Ashley Roth and John Tesvich will reach out to Jakov Jurisic to check with him.

Dan Coulon reported on the coastal restoration committee meeting, the group discussed several items. Mr. Coulon will have a report at the next meeting and will be holding future committee meetings, and potentially invite Mr. Lopez and other scientists that have recently published papers. John Tesvich asked that the committee begin working with Dr. Lea on his proposal once the task force receives that.

Dan Coulon asked that Gordon LeBlanc get a letter from FDA about their support of VMS.

Item D under new business was moved up to item A. Ashley will distribute the designated artificial reef water bottom sites to the task force and they will put it as an item on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss.

John Supan reported on the role of hatcheries in oyster restoration.

Steve Sessums with the Department of Ag Weights and Measures division addressed the task force with a presentation on weights and measures. They are going to start going to docks to make sure that things are being done correctly and if not, they will be giving people an instruction sheet on how to correctly label oysters. There is no legal definition of a mini-sack, they will have to do legislation to define what is a mini-sack since a sack is defined. Mr. Buddy Pausina said that we have already asked the department to define the mini sack. Mr. Sessums said that the industry needs to come up with what defines a mini-sack. There was talk of a 5 gallon bucket, but that wasn’t something that the industry agreed on because there was so much variability in the 5-gallon bucket. Ag said that they would be happy to help the industry determine the volume of their mini-sack.

Al Sunseri made a motion that the Departments (health, agriculture and LDWF) continue to look at the marketplace regarding weights and measures. Second by Sam Slavich. Motion adopted.

Mark Schexnayder said that they will reach out to industry who currently uses mini-sacks to make sure that the Department doesn’t put any unnecessary restrictions on anyone.

Motion by Al Sunseri that LDWF re-evaluate the landing data since 2011 sent to NMFS, second by Brad Robin. Al Sunseri amended the motion to go back to 2006, second agrees. Patrick Banks said that the department reports what is reported to them. LDWF does its best to clear up any discrepancies.

Al Sunseri withdrew his motion but the task force agreed that there is discrepancy.

Sam Slavich would like the appeals board legislation to be an agenda item for the next meeting.

John Tesvich nominated as chairman, second. Motion adopted.

Dan Coulon, nominate Dan Coulon for Vice Chairman. Second by Al Sunseri. Motion adopted.

Rusty Gaude would like the incidental harvesting of clams to be on the next meeting. He will send a document to Ashley Roth to distribute to task force.

Tuesday, February 24th at 1 p.m. New Orleans.