**Louisiana Oyster Task Force Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 10:00am**

**Mitch Jurisich, Chairman**

**East Bank Regional Library**

**4747 W Napoleon Ave.**

**Metairie, LA 70001**

**I.** Pledge of Allegiance

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

**Voting Member Present:**

Dan Coulon

Mitch Jurisich

Brad Robin

Brandt Lafrance

Al Sunseri

Matthew Slavich

Sam Slavich

Steve Pollock

Peter Vujnovich

**Voting Members Absent:**

Shane Bagala

Tracy Collins

Jakov Jurisic

Willie Daisy

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Carolina Bourque

Justin Gremillion

Edward Skena

Sarah Roy

Harry Vorhoff

Brian Lezina

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

**III.** Brad Robin motioned to accept the January 24, 2023 meeting minutes, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

Brad Robin motioned to approve the February 14, 2023 meeting agenda as presented, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

**IV.** Treasury Report

Remaining Fund Balance- $571,515

Remaining Budget Balance- $27,744

January Tag Sales- 126,102

Peter Vujnovich motioned to approve the treasury report as presented, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

**V.** Committee Reports

1. Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee- no report
2. Enforcement Report

January 4th-February 6th

**Region 4** (Iberia)

None

**Region 5** (Calcasieu and Cameron)

Cameron

1-Failure to Display Proper Number on Vessel

4-Violate Calcasieu Lake Oyster Regulations, 2 for over the limit in east cove and 2 for no Calcasieu Lake Oyster Harvester Permit

1-Violate Commission Action on State Seed Grounds, fail to report oyster harvest before 9pm

**Seizures:**

**14 sacks returned to water**

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

Terrebonne

1-Failure to Display Proper Number on Vessel

2-Take Oysters Illegal Hours

2-Taking Oysters From Unapproved Area, Polluted

2-Unlawfully Take Oysters Off a Private Lease

2-Failure to have written permission

**Seizures:**

**6 sacks returned to water**

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

**St. Bernard**

1-Take Comm Fish W/O Comm Gear Lic

1-Take Comm Fish W/O Comm License

1-Take Oysters W/O Harvesters License

3-Take Oysters Illegal Hours

3-Violate Sanitation Code (Logbook)

3-Violate Sanitation Code (Waste Bucket)

**Seizures:**

**50 sacks and 10 Mini sacks returned to water**

**Plaquemines**

1-Taking Oysters from Polluted Area

2-Fail to Cull Oysters in Proper location

1-Intentional Concealment of Evidence

1-Take Comm Fish W/O Comm License

2-Take Comm Fish W/O Vessel Lic

1-Violate Sanitation Code (waste Bucket)

**Seizures:**

**2 Mini Sacks Seized and returned to water**

1. Legislative Committee Report- no report
2. Legal Report- no report
3. Research Report- no report
4. Coastal Restoration Committee Report- no report
5. Marketing Committee Report- Anna Koehl stated that BMF is working on a 1-pager of information for the task force to distribute at the LA Fisheries Forward Summit, need some fishermen/ oyster industry profiles of some guys in the field if anyone is interested in participating get in touch with Anna. Plans to attend the 2023 Croatian Fest to get footage
6. Health Committee Report- Justin Gremillion stated that the OTF asked for some feedback on the upcoming ISSC proposals on the types of tags and illnesses associated with those two tags. Pulled that data and are working on more. Went back to 2017, the anomaly was Covid- function went down a little bit so it throws off the numbers slightly. Working on cross-referencing consumption data- the issue is those aren’t always approximate numbers.

2022- fuchsia tags- 1 confirmed illness and 7 from white tags

2021- fuchsia tags- 3 confirmed illnesses and 6 from white tags

2020- fuchsia tags- 1 confirmed illness and 4 from white tags

2019- fuchsia tags- 4 confirmed illnesses and 6 from white tags

2018- fuchsia tags- 3 confirmed illnesses and 7 from white tags

2017- fuchsia tags- 2 confirmed illness and 7 from white tags

In every case there has been less illnesses associated with fuchsia tags, but there may be less fuchsia tags sold over all

1. Aquaculture Committee Report- Steve Pollock stated that the committee met and discussed the possibility of setting up a formal appeals process for the LA Sea Grant AOC Grant Program, stressed the need for a process in place.
2. Joint Task Force Working Group- no report

**VI.** New Business

1. The board discussed the March-April seasonal reclassification line in LA-28 (Vermilion and Iberia Parishes)

Concerns with the current and proposed line, the line right now goes from 3 1/2 – 8 miles off-shore. Concern with why this line has moved so far out. LDH stated that they will take a look into this

Jennifer Armentor stated that samples coming back in from this area have not been good, it takes 5 years worth of data that is averaged over time to make changes. Spoke to the FDA and got an extra sampling station 37, which will provide more sampling data to draw these lines differently. Vermillion Bay has a lot of fresh water 3.3PPT getting high fecal coliform. Requested that LDH provide an exact map of this area that pinpoints distances and why the line is where it is

1. The task force considered a draft letter regarding opposition for a Cameron Parish LNG Project

Mitch Jurisich stated that he received a call from Ryan Mallory and he stressed that Cameron Parish needs this project and that the area relies on oil and gas for jobs

Brad Robin stated that he would be willing to support the letter and the effort

Brad Robin motioned to support the letter opposing the Cameron Parish LNG project, 2nd by Steve Pollock. Motion withdrawn, motion does not pass

Sarah Roy stated that the letter should include a permit number for the project so it can be referenced and contact information for whoever signs it

Steve Pollock stated that he does not like that the drafted letter addresses each department separately, believes it should be one complete letter

Steve Pollock motioned to draft a new letter from the OTF opposing the Cameron Parish LNG project. The draft letter is to be reviewed and approved by the Oyster Task Force before moving forward and signed by the vice-chair Peter Vujnovich, 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries, 1 abstain- Mitch Jurisich.

1. The task force discussed the progress of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

Brian Lezina stated that the timeframe for groundbreaking is late this calendar year, 5 years on total construction. Mitigation for oysters-$32 million $4 million for seed grounds work, $15 million enhancing public-private grounds, $4 million broodstock, $8 million AOC, $1 million marketing/ outreach, other mitigation pot includes $17 million oyster strategic plan; all permits are in place to get started on the project, will plan to come back to the task force to provide

LDWF stated that they plan to provide an update on the Oyster Strategic Plan at a future meeting

1. The board discussed the Oyster Strike Force license fee

Revenue from the strike force fee is deposited into the Oyster Resource Management Account (Fund #W43)

The dedicated uses of this fund per RS 56:10

All expenditures and allocation of monies from this fund shall be administered by the department. The Oyster Resource Management Account is intended to defray the cost of the oyster program within the department, specifically to assist in funding salaries and financial support including associated indirect costs for employees in the oyster program, the management of the oyster population, law enforcement activities associated with oyster industry, research on all aspects involved with the oyster resource and industry, enhancement of the state's public oyster seed grounds, research into propagation and habitat, oyster hatchery operations, and the administrative functions of the oyster lease and survey section of the department.

1. Carolina Bourque provided a reminder regarding reporting harvesting information

**Every vessel harvesting oysters from the Public Oyster Areas for market shall report harvest information to the LDWF before 9 pm each day fished. Vessels shall provide the following information: Captain’s name, oyster harvester number, boat number, the total number of sacks harvested that day, and the public oyster area fished.**

**Call 1-800-442-2511 or email** [oyster@wlf.la.gov](mailto:oyster@wlf.la.gov) **to submit harvest reports. This reporting does not substitute for trip ticket reporting.**

**Discussed the possibility of imposing fines for those who are not following the rules, could possibly be done by the Commission, so far only have one case**

**VII.** Public Comment

CPRA is coming out with the 2023 Annual Plan, would like to provide a presentation to the task force at their next meeting

Mitch Jurisich announced that Carolina Bourque would be taking another position with LDWF. Thanked Carolina for all of her help and service over the years.

**VIII.** Next Oyster Task Force meeting set for Tuesday, March 14, 2023 for 10am at the ~~Lakefront Airport~~ LDWF Headquarters- 2000 Quail Drive Baton Rouge, LA 70808

**IX.** Brad Robin motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.