**LA Oyster Task Force Meeting**

**Tuesday, December 13, 2022, 1:00pm**

**New Orleans Lakefront Airport**

**6001 Stars and Stripes Blvd.**

**New Orleans, LA**

**Mitch Jurisich, Chairman**

**I.** Pledge of Allegiance

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

**Voting Members Present:**

Shane Bagala

Jakov Jurisic

Mitch Jurisich

Brandt Lafrance

Al Sunseri

Matthew Slavich

Sam Slavich

Willie Daisy

**Voting Members Absent:**

Tracy Collins

Dan Coulon

Ryan Mallory

Brad Robin

Steve Pollock

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Carolina Bourque

Jennifer Armentor in for Justin Gremillion

Major Edward Skena

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Harry Vorhoff

Brian Lezina

**III.** Peter Vujnovich motioned to approve the November 15, 2022 meeting minutes, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

Jakov Jurisic motioned to add an item under New Business, ‘To Consider Writing a Letter to General Holland of the Corps of Engineers to request a Meeting with the Oyster Industry and to Request a Delay of the Issuance of the Permit for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

Peter Vujnovich motioned to approve the December 13, 2022 meeting agenda as amended, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

**IV.** Treasury Report

Remaining Fund Balance- $561,143

Remaining Budget Balance- $28,675

Tag sales for the month of November 99,600

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

**V.** Committee reports

1. Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee report- Committee met this morning and discussed some changes to the oyster tags, the committee submitted a draft/ suggestion for LDWF to make changes to the tags

Al Sunseri suggested whenever you get the mock up send over to the ISSC to make sure it meets the national sanitation program and as long as it meets that and ask them for suggestion if it doesn’t meet the requirements NSSP model ordinance; this would be on generic tags not on pre-printed

Patrick Banks stated that typically, any changes are sent to the printer, LDH and FDA signs off on the tag before anything is printed

Jakov Jurisic motioned to approve the report and committee recommendations, 2nd by Sam Slavich. Motion carries.

1. Enforcement report:

Major Edward Skena introduced Capt. Tim Fox as Steve Mcmannis’ replacement

**November 2nd- November 30th:**

**Region 4** (Iberia)

None

**Region 5** (Calcasieu and Cameron)

Cameron

None

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

Lafourche

2-No Licenses

**3 Sacks seized**

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

Plaquemines

None

**St. Bernard**

6-Take undersize oysters from natural reef

1- No commercial License

1- No commercial gear license

1- No oyster harvester license

1- Obtain license by fraud

2- Untagged oysters from seed grounds

2- Violate sanitation code-refrigeration

2-No seed ground permit

**115 Sacks seized**

Jakov Jurisic requested feedback on the undersized oysters violations asked how many were seized? What % of undersized oysters were found?; why are the legal oysters not kept- allowed 15%; The task force sent the discussion to Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee to discuss the 15% allowance on undersized oysters, would like to discuss further how is the sample taken, what is returned- Joint committee- legal, enforcement, and public-private oyster seed grounds committee

Andy Wilson suggested making a joint protocol between LDWF and the TF about gathering appropriate samples- establish a protocol

1. Legislative report- no report
2. Legal report- no report
3. Research report- no report
4. Coastal Restoration report- no report
5. Marketing report- Anna Koehl stated that BMF is starting to plan for 2023 and looking into priorities; may need marketing committee meeting prior to the next OTF meeting; need more media replies and letters to the editor

Jakov Jurisic stated that the SPMB met in BR; invited Sam Carrol to come to OTF to provide meeting report when next meeting is set and will request this report for the next OTF meeting, also mentioned that he was assisting his daughter in doing a promotional oyster industry video that will look into the process of producing oysters from planting to the dinner table

1. Health report

Jennifer Armentor stated that there was 1 vibrio case, tested positive but type is unknown, retail went out and did an inspection, a routine inspection was done that week and no time/temp issues, the new white tag rules for vibrio- in the process of getting all the reports together and collecting the buoy data to plug into vibrio calculator. Dr. Kanter is open to the proposed change, but this is a long process so may take some time, TX Galveston Area 1 recalling oysters of all kinds, closed December 8 for Norovirus, up to 12 restaurants mostly in New Orleans area, LA has over 40 cases, Texas has round thirty reported case, and Florida has right under 40 cases, right now just destroying oysters, these oysters cannot be re-planted because it will transfer Noravirus into water must destroy by putting bleach on them,

Al Sunseri only a couple of states that have implemented a recall, do not know if other states have implemented a recall

1. Aquaculture report- no report
2. Joint Task Force Working Group report- no report

**VI.** New Business

1. The board already moved on amending oyster tags under the Public-Private Oyster Seed Grounds Committee Report
2. Andy Wilson provided an update on the oyster mortality event in Empire/ Port Sulphur area

This all started when one fishermen went out on December 29 in Lake Washington and had a pretty productive harvest and came back out on Jan 2 and everything was dead, all oysters were dead could not make much of it- the meat in the shell was desiccated which would indicate that there was no type of chemical or toxic substance- some samples were taken to an LSU pathologist and he concluded it was a toxic algae bloom, no toxic algae bloom was found in any of the samples, but could not come up with any other explanation, talked to other biologists and certain specialist and looked at satellite images and determined there were no major chlorophyll burst at that time so the die off would not be consistent with a toxic algae bloom. The area did show peak salinity in excess of seawater levels, 6 months later it was determined that it had to be a brine release from various production lines that they have in place in the area, there are no records at DNR as to where these pipe lines are located, the only source of where the pipelines are located are owned by the companies themselves, the pipes carry water with 500 times the normal salinity in the area, the only entities who would know who did it are the companies who have the records of where the pipelines are located and own the lines. Had to file a suit and had to file in maritime law, this is no longer in State but in Federal court, little by little getting more information as to someone coming forward and saying when the release was, trying to get the Federal judge to allow for discovery, will often times do a brine release during the holiday, did core samples and ruled out toxicity from chemical release

Jakov Jurisic stated that he has some samples in the freezer and will be happy to share them with Andy Wilson, from Bay Adams and Half Moon Bay

Andy Wilson stated that more crims units after an event like this you could have pinned down where the highest salinity concentrations were, when this happens call someone right away to investigate it, these pipe lines are not monitored or replaced and they are carrying a very corrosive substance, may see more of these events in the future, these pipes were grandfathered in so no one knows where they are but once they fail they have to apply for a new permit

1. Mitch Jurisich provided an update on the oyster industry meeting with the Corps of Engineers

Tried to get in touch with George Ricks waiting to hear back- January 23 decision on permit need to send a registered letter to General Holland before she makes the decision on the permit; would like to see us get a letter over to the Corps and would also like to plan an in person meeting

Jakov Jurisic stated that after SPMB meeting he spoke to the LT Governor to see if there were any strings that they could pull to make this meeting happen will reach out to Sam Carrol to discuss further; Mitch Jurisich stated that the SPMB should send a letter to Corps about the permit as well to at least delay the issuance of the permit until a meeting is possible

Peter Vujnovich motioned to send a letter requesting a meeting between the oyster industry and General Holland of the Corps of Engineers, also to request a delay in the issuance of the permit on behalf of the Oyster Task Force. Would like this request forwarded to the media outlets as well, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

Patrick Banks stated that he would be willing to send a letter on the OTF’s behalf to request a meeting with the Corps of Engineers

1. The board discussed and considered funding for travel, attendance and stay at the 2023 Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference

Jakov Jurisic stated that he sits on the Time/ Temp Committee and would like to attend the ISSC

Other members who expressed interest in attending the conference were Brad Robin, Brandt Lafrance, Jakov Jurisic, Al Sunseri, and possibly John Tesvich (on behalf of the OTF) with the approval of LDWF Legal

Peter Vujnovich motioned to approve funding for travel, membership/meeting registration, and accommodations, 2nd by Jakov Jurisic. Motion carries.

**VII.** Public Comment:

Patrick Banks introduced Louis Temento, Louis has stepped in as the interim head of the oyster lease section also introduced Melissa Longman as the new fisheries administrator over both fisheries and marine

**VIII.** The board set their next meeting for Tuesday, January 24, 2022, 1:00pm at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport, set a Public-Private/ Legal/Enforcement-9:30am and Marketing 10:30am.

**IX.** Jakov Jurisic motioned to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.