

Oyster Task Force Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
New Orleans Lakefront Airport
6001 Stars and Stripes Blvd.
New Orleans, LA

- I. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll call and introduction of guests

Voting Members Present:

Mitch Jurisich
Brad Robin
Brandt Lafrance
Al Sunseri
Peter Vujnovich
Sam Slavich
Jakov Jurisic

Voting Members Absent:

Shane Bagala
Matthew Slavich
Brandon Debarge
Willie Daisy
Steve Pollock

Non-Voting Members Present:

Robert Caballero
Mike Garrity in for Davis Madere
Brian Lezina

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Bryan Wallace
Kyle Balkum

III. Approval of January 14, 2026 Meeting Minutes and the March 3, 2026 Agenda

Brad Robin motioned to approve the January 14, 2026 meeting minutes, 2nd by Brandt Lafrance. Motion carries.

Al Sunseri motioned to amend "Agenda Item A" on the March 3, 2026 agenda to hold discussion on new bills, 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. Motion carries.

IV. Treasury Report

Remaining Fund Balance- \$563,946
Remaining Budget Balance- \$53,723

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

Mitch Jurisich opened the floor for discussion.

Jakov Jurisic asked how many tags where sold in January.

Sonya Self stated 60,000 white and 6,000 green tags.

Jason Froeba stated that under the current OTF's budget of 158,000 there would not be enough funds to fund SeaD Consulting. Jason Froeba stated that an amendment would have to be submitted at the next legislative session to raise the OTF's budget. Jason Froeba stated that LDWF is responsible for the OTF's budget and would need to know soon if they would like to raise their budget for the next fiscal year. Jason Froeba stated that the process for approving the budget has changed and the budget approval committee only meets twice a year.

Al Sunseri stated that the budget needs to be adjusted for inflation. Al Sunseri asked if the budget could be amended to \$200,000 to fund future projects.

Mitch Jurisich asked if raising the budget would have to be added as an additional agenda item.

Jason Froeba suggested to tie the motion to SeaD consulting agenda Item D to give a reason for the increased funding.

Al Sunseri stated that the extra funding would also be used for promotion and would not be used for just funding SeaD Consulting. Al Sunseri stated that the motion should not be tied to SeaD Consulting because it is a controversial topic.

Jakov Jurisic motioned to amend "Agenda Item A" to discuss a potential increase of the budget under HB1, 2nd by Al Sunseri. Motion carries.

Al Sunseri stated that there needs to be a change in how funds are dedicated to the Oyster Development Fund and make sure that monies from tag sales are put into the dedicated oyster fund.

Jason Froeba stated that funds in the Oyster Development Fund are dedicated through legislation and the other oyster fund (Public Oyster Seed), is completely different. Jason Froeba stated that the Public Oyster Seed fund pays for staff salaries for sampling and also for cultch plants.

Al Sunseri stated that the budget has been the same for almost 20 years and the OTF could possibly receive proceeds that come from claims on the public oyster ground as an additional funding source.

A. Public and Private Oyster Grounds Committee- No Report

B. Enforcement - Lt. Mike Garrity provided the enforcement report

January 19th-February 18th 2026

Region 6: (Terrebonne, Lafourche, Grand Isle, St. Mary)

Terrebonne:

1 - Take Oysters Closed Season from State Grounds

1 - Violate Sanitation Code (log book)

1 - Take Oysters Illegal Hours

Seizures:

900 lbs. un-sacked

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

Plaquemines:

1 - Violate Sanitation Code (Log book)

1 - take Oyster No Harvester License

Seizures:

47 sacks

Adam Young stated that Region 8 Enforcement in conjunction with Baton Rouge HQ conducted drone footage of a vessel harvesting off bottom oysters. Adam Young stated that LDWF cited this individual for violating R.S. 56:424 E. (1) which states no person shall harvest, possess, sell, barter, trade, purchase, or exchange or attempt to sell, barter, trade, or exchange oysters in the state of Louisiana or in interstate commerce unless such oysters are taken from areas approved by the state health officer in accordance with R.S. 40:5.3. Unless otherwise permitted by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, when any vessel is found to be harvesting within an unapproved or closed area, all oysters on board the vessel shall be deemed to have been taken from unapproved or closed waters and shall be deemed to constitute a hazard to the safety, health, and welfare of the citizens of the state.

Adam Young stated that the field agents involved in the investigation had no proof that the oysters were being harvested in this instance. Adam Young stated R.S. 56:424 F. (1) which states the act of culling oysters, which is the act of discarding undersized oysters or dead shell, shall be performed only on the open state designated public grounds or leases on which the fisherman is authorized to take oysters. At no time will the act of culling oysters be permitted in areas closed to harvesting oysters.

Adam Young stated that violations entail license verification and fishermen being placed on a vessel monitoring system. Adam Young stated LDWF allowed an oyster dealer to manipulate their log books and records but cited a commercial fishermen for not maintaining their log book which resulted in the seizure of their oysters. Adam Young stated that selective enforcement took place and after each received identical violations only one was forced to discard their product. Adam Young stated that he reported this incident to the State Board of Ethics which recommended he report it to the Attorney General's office and thinks news media should cover the story.

Adam Young stated that the agents involved in the incident are still employed even though they violated LDWF policy. Adam Young stated that any fisherman who wants a copy his records can reach out to him. Adam Young stated that LDWF Legal could not verify the violations but he was able to find them and thinks the time management of Region 8 should be audited. Adam Young stated that the public health violations of consumer's safety should not be left up to the enforcement officers. Adam Young stated that seafood safety is very important to fisherman and knows their actions influence credibility and FDA certification.

Al Sunseri stated that processors should follow the rules for culling oysters. Al Sunseri stated that LDWF and LDH need to work together to solve this issue. Al Sunseri stated that the act of culling onshore needs to be dealt with and should be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Brad Robin stated that everyone in the oyster industry needs to be held accountable for their actions.

Robert Caballero stated that under current tumbling laws harvesters are required to identify the line and basket that the oysters are tumbled and keep them separate from the marketable oysters.

Al Sunseri stated that an AOC park of 14 acres could allocate 2 acres of the park to disposing of oysters.

Robert Caballero stated that some AOC lease are only 2 acres.

Al Sunseri stated that that the AOC Park leases are close to each other so only one plot could be designated for the purpose of culling.

Mitch Jurisich stated that a buffer zone should be created for the purpose of purging oysters.

Jakov Jurisic stated that it has to be 500 feet away from adjoining leases so others are not polluted.

C. Legislative

Mitch Jurisich stated that items from the legislative committee meeting will be discussed in agenda item A of New Business.

D. Legal- No Report

E. Research

Dr. Earl Melancon provided the task force with a draft of the agenda a Louisiana Oyster Industry event listed below.

Louisiana Oyster Industry: Visioning Its Future

JUNE 17, 2026

LSUAg Iberia Research Station
Seafood Processing Demonstration Laboratory
603 LSU Bridge Rd., Jeanerette, Louisiana
9:00 am – 3:00 pm

DRAFT AGENDA TOPICS

- **Session: Natural Renewable Resource Sustainability: Our Changing Coastal Habitats**
 - AOC farms
 - Public Oyster Grounds
 - Private Traditional Leases
 - Coastal Restoration
- **Session: Markets - Imports and Exports and Domestic Sales**
 - Import and Export Supply Chain in U.S. and abroad
 - Louisiana and the Gulf Sales
 - Local Sales
- **Session: Markets - Consumer Needs, Preferences, and Challenges**
 - How Restaurateurs see Customer Preferences and Demands for Product Types
 - Louisiana Dealers and Processors and Future Consumer Preferences
 - Processors and Small Shops - Local Sales
 - Seafood Safety Challenges
 - Market Opportunities (what are we missing?)
- **Session: Workforce Development**
 - Industry Needs at Multiple Levels
 - State and Federal Programs Available
- **Session #5 Innovations**
 - Automation and Technical Tools
 - Product Development

Dr. Earl Melancon asked if any members of the task force would like to add to the agenda.

Al Sunseri asked to add mechanizing oyster harvesting and processing with AI and robotics. Al Sunseri cited a lack of processors and labor shortages as a need for new development new technology but new technologies could also be used on the harvesting level.

Dr. Earl Melancon stated that he would take a look into the AI concept and research if anyone is using AI or robotics. Dr. Earl Melancon stated that virtual calls would allow people to call in from around the world to give their opinions on mechanization.

Sam Slavich asked to add how to address negative media coverage of oysters.

Dr. Earl Melancon stated that an updated agenda will be available at the next OTF meeting.

F. Coastal Restoration

Captain George Ricks stated that he attended a CPRA meeting on February 25th.

Mitch Jurisich asked what the forecast on the river was.

Captain George Ricks stated that the river was on the rise.

Jakov Jurisic asked about the reception of a social media post about Neptune pass. Jakov Jurisic stated that no one is talking about the damage done to public seed grounds.

Captain George Ricks stated there was an extremely low tide when the photos for the social media post were taken.

Jakov Jurisic stated that tall oyster reefs were present during normal tide a few weeks back.

Captain George Ricks stated that American Bay and Mardi Gras Pass also have damage.

Mitch Jurisich stated that a crevasse study is going on by the corps of Engineers and they have had a meeting with the corps about this issue. Mitch Jurisich stated that there will be a possible closure of Neptune Pass.

Patrick Banks stated that the Corps plan was to go back to previous 6% of the river.

Captain George Ricks stated that the current flow affects navigation channels.

Mitch Jurisich stated that a 30% flow was sucking ships over in Neptune pass, so that's why it had to be closed.

Jakov Jurisic stated that where Neptune Pass meets the river it's about 80 or 90 feet deep.

Mitch Jurisich stated that there was exposed pipelines in that area. Mitch Jurisich stated not everything on social media needs to be commented on and ignoring the post would be the best option.

Jakov Jurisic stated that the post goes away but it plants a seed about how great the project is in the minds of people against the oyster industry.

Mitch Jurisich stated that people will comment their opinions on social media no matter if they are right or wrong.

G. Marketing

Anna Koehl stated that the LTWBYO event in Washington, DC went extremely well and there was media coverage of the event in the state of Louisiana. Anna Koehl asked if the OTF had any recommendations for next year.

Mitch Jurisich stated it was a well-attended and successful event that outcompeted many other events. Mitch Jurisich stated that there was close 200 to 250 people in attendance. Mitch Jurisich stated that the oysters served were great and the marinated oysters have to come back next year. Mitch Jurisich stated that there was a lot of positive feedback from people present at the event.

Anna Koehl stated that from a cost breakdown perspective the open bar was not a huge expense.

Mitch Jurisich stated that he is thankful for the positive light BMF has shined on the oyster industry. Mitch Jurisich asked if they received the final donation total.

Anna Koehl stated that when they receive it LDWF will work with the OTF on receiving the funds.

Brad Robin stated some people had difficulty getting there due to flight delays but the event itself was exceptional. Brad Robin stated their scheduled meetings went well and they accomplished a lot at their meetings. Brad Robin stated that people were reaching out to them to be a part of the event next year.

Jakov Jurisic stated that next year they could have better crowd control at the door leading into the event.

Mitch Jurisich stated that everyone entering the event was given wristband.

Anna Koehl stated they never left the door and gave a wristband to everyone entering but some improvements could be made to keep the line flowing.

Jakov Jurisic asked if anyone could not make the event due to the weather.

Mitch Jurisich stated that Brad took a little while to get there.

Al Sunseri stated that he could not attend the event because of the weather but appreciated the work BMF did for the event.

Brad Robin stated that individual parishes were represented well at the event.

Mitch Jurisich stated that giving out beads was a good idea and next year they should do light up beads.

Al Sunseri stated that crisis communication for outbreaks is something that needs to be monitored by marketing. Al Sunseri stated that a plan needs to be developed for when there is an outbreak or problem in the oyster industry.

A member of the audience asked if the OTF could promote restaurants that sell Louisiana oysters at the Washington, DC event.

Mitch Jurisich stated that they are doing all they can to promote Louisiana oyster based on their budget.

Jakov Jurisic stated that the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board needs to meet more regularly. Jakov Jurisic stated that the last meeting year over 2 years ago. Jakov Jurisic stated that they should contact the Lieutenant Governor encourage them to have meetings quarterly or biannually.

Mitch Jurisich stated that the marketing board should be the one marketing oysters because they have the resources to do it.

H. Health - No Report

I. Aquaculture - No Report

J. Joint Task Force Working Group - No Report

VI. New Business

A. To Discuss the Proposed Changes to R.S. 56:428 (A) for Oyster Lease Renewals in Navigational Areas - OTF

Mitch Jurisich stated that changes to R.S 56:428 (A) were not introduced so they will not hold discussion on it but will discuss new bills mention at the legislative committee meeting.

Mitch Jurisich stated that HB 669 is expanding the Port of Grand Isle AOC Park 27 acres westward away from a prohibited zone.

Dr. Earl Melancon stated that originally 27 acre expansion was approved to go southward toward opens waters, but Grand Isle waters were reclassified and they are not allowed to expand south.

Mitch Jurisich stated that the task force has no stance on the issue and will take no action HB 669.

Mitch Jurisich stated that HB 889 provides bulk tagging for AOC oysters. Mitch Jurisich stated that there should be no revenue lost on tag sales if bulk tagging went into effect. Mitch Jurisich stated that enforcement may have an issue enforcing the law change at docks.

Lt. Mike Garrity stated that it will cause problems for enforcement if AOC oysters are tagged differently from traditionally harvested oysters.

Mitch Jurisich stated that this law change was requested by only one AOC farmer and not by the whole AOC community. Mitch Jurisich stated some AOC parks wash their oyster on the dock prior to tagging. Mitch Jurisich stated that traditional oyster farms must tag and bag their oyster on the lease before offloading on the dock.

Al Sunseri stated that this law should not be passed as it goes against national standards in oyster tagging.

Mitch Jurisich stated that he talked to the Rep. Joseph Orgeron, the author of HB 889, and informed him that the whole oyster industry should support a bill change before it is put into effect.

Dr. Earl Melancon stated that he attended a Sea Grant meeting discussing the process of tagging AOC oysters. Dr. Earl Melancon stated AOC farmers were taking their oysters on land to wash and sort them and considered using a bulk tag to bring their oyster back to their farms. Dr. Earl Melancon stated that the AOC farmers, LDH, and LDWF enforcement present at the meeting agreed

that bulk tagging would not be a suitable solution to the problem. Dr. Earl Melancon stated that AOC farmers should keep a working log and that there was no need for bulk tagging. Dr. Earl Melancon stated that some AOC farmers were taking oysters off the boat individually to be washed but this is not allowed under current rules because oysters must be sacked and tagged before unloading. Dr. Earl Melancon stated that the term bulk tagging creates confusion at all levels of oyster harvesting so it was decided at the meeting to not use the term bulk tagging. Dr. Earl Melancon stated that the AOC farmer who proposed the bill for bulk tagging was not at this meeting.

Al Sunseri stated that people should know why tagging is required before making changes to tagging laws.

Brad Robbin stated that the task force cannot support HB 889.

Peter Vujnovich motioned to **oppose** HB 889 which provides relative to bulk tagging of oysters, motion 2nd by Brad Robin. None opposed, motion carries.

Mitch Jurisich stated that HB 770 decreases the term of oyster lease on state water bottom from 15 years to 5 years.

Sam Slavich motioned to **oppose** HB 770 which decreases the term of oyster leases on state water bottoms, motion 2nd by Brad Robin.

Mitch Jurisich opened the floor for discussion.

Mitch Jurisich stated that Rep. Joseph Orgeron, the author of HB 770, wanted to make the oyster lease terms consistent with Louisiana's Coastal Master plan which comes out every 6 years. Mitch Jurisich stated that the issue between oyster leases and coastal restoration projects has already been solved through the oyster lease acquisition and compensation program. Mitch Jurisich stated shortening lease terms would make it easier to remove oyster leases for restoration projects. Mitch Jurisich stated that the cost to buy an oyster lease through the acquisition and compensation program is small in comparison of the total cost for a restoration project. Mitch Jurisich stated that barren water bodies can take multiple years to develop and a 5 year lease term does not guarantee return on investment. Mitch Jurisich stated that there are valid reason why oyster leases are not renewed such as WMAs or when an oyster lease becomes land. Mitch Jurisich stated that there is no need or benefit from changing the lease term and does not know who proposed the bill since CPRA was not involved.

Al Sunseri stated that the LDWF commission will be discussing HB 770. Al Sunseri asked if someone could let the commission know that they oppose the change to a long standing 15 year oyster lease term.

Mitch Jurisich stated that the task force needs to find out who pushed for HB 770.

Brad Robin asked if the task force could send a letter to the commission.

Patrick Banks stated that their position on HB 770 can be sent through an email.

Mitch Jurisich asked to send the task force's stance on all the bills discussed today to the commission.

Sam Slavich motioned to **oppose** HB 770 which decreases the term of oyster leases on state water bottoms, motion 2nd by Brad Robin. None opposed, motion carries.

Mitch Jurisich stated that HB 652 presented by Rep. Jacob Braud adds a member to the Oyster Task force from the Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

Brad Robin motioned to **support** HB 652 which provides for the membership of the Oyster Task Force, motion 2nd by Peter Vujnovich.

Mitch Jurisich opened the floor for discussion.

Mitch Jurisich stated that HB 653 presented by Rep. Mike Bayham is similar to HB 652, but HB 653 wanted to add 2 members from the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to the Oyster Task Force.

Mitch Jurisich stated that the task force approved of only one member to be added and suggest supporting HB 652.

Al Sunseri stated that they should make sure there are no amendments to add any other people to the task force on the bill.

Brad Robin motioned to **support** HB 652 which provides for the membership of the Oyster Task Force, motion 2nd by Peter Vujnovich. None opposed, motion carries.

Mitch Jurisich stated that SB 249 and SB 296 presented by Rep. Caleb Kleinpeter add 2 members to the LDWF Commission.

Mitch Jurisich stated that there are currently 3 members of the commercial fishing and fur industry on the commission board. Mitch Jurisich stated that if 2 at large members were added to the commission it may outnumber the representation of the commercial fishing industry in the commission.

Al Sunseri motioned to **oppose** SB 249 and SB 296 which amends the Louisiana Constitution to add two members to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and increase the membership of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, motion 2nd by Brad Robin.

Mitch Jurisich opened the floor for discussion.

Al Sunseri stated that there are already 4 at large members on the task force and adding more would make the commission more biased.

Mitch Jurisich stated the task force wants the commission to stay at its current state to stay fair to all the different sectors such as hunting, recreational, and commercial fishing.

Al Sunseri motioned to **oppose** SB 249 and SB 296 which amends the Louisiana Constitution to add two members to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and increase the membership of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, motion 2nd by Brad Robin. None opposed, motion carries.

Mitch Jurisich stated that HB 588 adds members to the Seafood Safety Task Force.

Mitch Jurisich stated that the Seafood Safety Task Force is going to add a representative from the oyster, crab and finfish industry.

Jakov Jurisic motioned to **support** HB 588 which adds member to the Seafood Safety Task Force, motion 2nd by Brad Robin. None opposed, motion carries.

B. To Hear Oyster Season Update and Consider Sister Lake Reopening Dates - LDWF

Robert Caballero provided the task force with the current oyster season report and the Sister Lake Reopening preliminary proposal listed below.

Table 1. Harvest estimates for the 2025-2026 oyster season on Louisiana's public oyster areas as of 2/23/2026. Harvest estimates are based on either LDWF conducted surveys of oyster harvesting vessels during the oyster season or from daily harvest reporting requirement via eReporting application.

CSA	Area	Season Opening	Season Closure	Season/ Type	Days open to Date	eReporting Harvest	Boarding Report Harvest	Vessels Harvesting
1	POSG East of Mississippi river and North of MRGO	29-Sep-25	1-Oct-25	Bedding season	3	8,375 bbl	9,815 bbl	20
		3-Nov-25	1-Apr-26	Market harvest	113	67,175 sacks	81,911 sacks	105
	Lake Fortuna/Machias	3-Nov-25	28-Nov-25	Market harvest	26	170 sacks	319 sacks	6
5	Sister Lake	29-Sep-25	29-Sep-25	Bedding season	1	550 bbl	3,660 bbl	18
		3-Nov-25	14-Nov-25	Market harvest	12	3,373 sacks	5,307 sacks	65
		10-Dec-25	29-Dec-25	Market harvest	20	9,403 sacks	9,698 sacks	47
6	Vermilion/East and West Cote Blanche Bay/Atchafalaya Bay	8-Sep-25	1-April-26	Bedding season	169	0	0	0
		13-Oct-25	1-April-26	Market harvest	134	0	0	0
7	Calcasieu Lake	1-Jan-25	30-Apr-26	east side: Market harvest	54	107 sacks	960 sacks	10
		1-Nov-25	30-Apr-26	West Cove: Market harvest	115	0	0	0
Total Harvest for the 2025-2026 Oyster Season				Bedding Season		8,925 bbl	13,475 bbl	18*/38**
				Market Harvest		80,228 sacks	98,095 sacks	136*/187**

* Total vessels eReporting for a harvest season.

** Total vessels observed in boarding runs by CSA biologists.

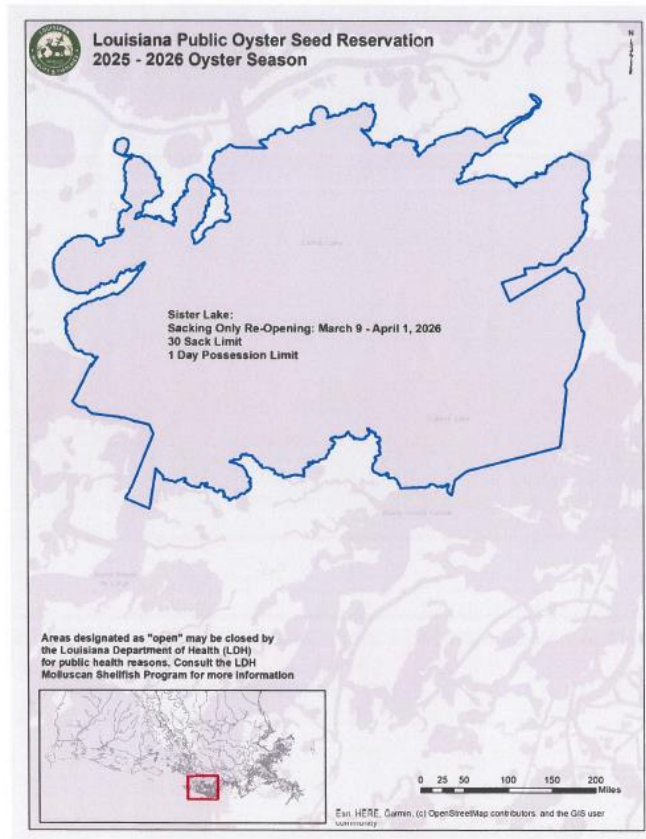
Table 2. eReporting harvest summary for the 2025-2026 oyster season on Louisiana's public oyster areas.

LDH Area	Activity	Volume	Number of Vessels Harvesting	Harvest Trips
Zone 1	Bedding	0 bbl	0	0
	Sacking	1,310 sacks	10	44
Zone 2	Bedding	8,375 bbl	16	36
	Sacking	27,644 sacks	44	958
Zone 3	Sacking	38,221 sacks	78	1,303
Zone 4	Sacking	0 sacks	0	0
Zone 5	Sacking	170 sacks	5	10
Zone 19	Bedding	550 bbl	2	2
	Sacking	12,776 sacks	54	456
Zone 29	Sacking	107 sacks	2	9
Zone 30	Sacking	0 sacks	0	0
Grand Total	Bedding	8,925 bbl	18	38
	Sacking	80,228 sacks	136	2,780

Table 3. CSA Boarding run harvest summary for the 2025-2026 oyster season on Louisiana's public oyster areas.

CSA	LDH Oyster Harvest Area	Seed barrel totals to date	Market Sack totals to date	Total Vessels Market Harvesting	Total Vessels Seed Harvesting
CSA 1N	Area 1	1,690	9,852	.	20
CSA 1N	Area 2	8,125	26,852	.	
CSA 1N	Area 3	n/a	45,207	.	n/a
CSA 1N	Area 4	n/a	0	0	n/a
CSA 1N	Total	9,815	81,911	105	20
CSA 1S	Area 5	n/a	319	6	n/a
CSA5W	Area 19	3,660	15,005	86	18
CSA 6	Area 24-28	0	0	0	0
CSA 7 (East Side)	Area 29	n/a	960	10	n/a
CSA 7 (West Cove)	Area 30	n/a	0	0	n/a
Total		13,475 bbl	98,195 sacks	187	38

Sister Lake Reopening Preliminary Proposal



Mitch Jurisich asked why the e-reporting harvest was lower than the boarding report harvest for Calcasieu Lake.

Robert Caballero stated that only 2 vessel e-report but there are believed to be 10 vessel harvesting.

Jakov Jurisic asked why there was a difference between the 107 sacks recorded by e-reporting and the 960 sacks harvested at the dock.

Robert Caballero stated that LDWF biologist estimate how many sack are being brought in and e-reporting gives the number of sacks fisherman are recording.

Jakov Jurisic asked if there are differences in the quantity of sacks because private harvesters are being mistaken for public seed ground harvesters.

Robert Caballero stated that field agents only monitor people on public seed grounds.

Al Sunseri motioned to support the proposed reopening plan for Sister Lake. 2nd by Peter Vujnovich.

Mitch Jurisich opened the floor for discussion.

Al Sunseri stated that the area would need to be cleaned before the opening.

Robert Caballero stated the area is closed every other year.

Jakov Jurisic asked if there is enough resources in the lake to sustain for the opening period.

Robert Caballero stated that there is enough resources.

Brad Robin asked about the status of area one.

Robert Caballero stated that they are looking at a possible closure of all the grounds east of the Mississippi River.

Brad Robin stated that continued harvesting could negatively impact next year's harvest.

Jakov Jurisic asked at what date it would be closed.

Robert Caballero stated that it be a closed as soon as Friday March 13th and it would have to be announced 72 hours before the closure.

Al Sunseri motioned to support the proposed reopening plan for Sister Lake. 2nd by Peter Vujnovich, All in favor, none opposed. Motion carries.

Peter Vujnovich motioned to revisit agenda item A. 2nd by Brad Robin. Motion carries.

Mitch Jurisich stated to amend HB1 to raise the budget to \$200,000 dollars.

Al Sunseri motioned to amend HB1 to raise the budget to \$200,000 dollars. 2nd by Brandt Lafrance. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carries.

C. To Hear a Report from the Oyster Lease Damage Evaluation Board - OTF

Sam Slavich stated on February 10 he attended the Oyster Lease Damage Evaluation Board's administrative meeting and wanted to make the task force aware of topics discussed at the meeting. Sam Slavich stated that the Department of Conservation and Energy was facing challenges in implementing code for fixing the cost of harvesting oyster on leases. Sam Slavich stated that by law the Department of Conservation and Energy is required to use this formula, but it has not promulgated any rules on how to use it.

Sam Slavich stated that at the meeting they announced the certification of a new biologist named Jordan Frantz. Sam Slavich stated that certified biologist are now allowed to be chosen instead of appointed by the board. Sam Slavich stated that this systems allows for more flexibility for the lease holder.

Jakov Jurisic asked if the formula accounts for the varying cost of different harvest area.

Sam Slavich stated that the purpose of the formula was to account for these variations and notes time of travel and coast of fuel along with other variables. Sam Slavich stated that the formula had to be complex to account for different situations.

D. To Discuss Funding for SeaD Consulting Seafood Testing – OTF

Mitch Jurisich stated the task force does not have funding this fiscal year and will have to wait until July of 2026 when the next fiscal year starts.

Robert Caballero stated that the price of funding the project will not change but SeaD Consulting cannot receive payment until July.

Patrick Banks stated that SeaD Consulting cannot be billed for work they conduct before July.

Mitch Jurisich stated that SeaD Consulting did their own preliminary research to show that there was an imported oyster problem and to get the task force interested in going into contract with them to start testing.

Al Sunseri stated that before they go into contract with them they should be sure that the task force is receiving an increase in funding. Al Sunseri stated that the price of oyster tags could be raised to generate more revenue.

Item was ultimately deferred for discussion at another time.

E. To Discuss Submitting a Letter to the CDC for a Response of the Salmonella Outbreak in Oysters - OTF

Item was deferred for discussion at the next meeting.

F. To Hear an Update on Filling OTF Seat Vacancies and Consider Nominations- OTF

Mitch Jurisich stated there are vacancies of seats on the task force for the Dealers and Grower association, Farm Bureau, and the Oystermen association

Sonya Self stated that there is not a designated person for the Louisiana Department of Health.

Mitch Jurisich stated that Jennifer Armentor of the LDH usually serves in that role.

Mitch Jurisich asked if Farm Bureau had a nomination.

Peter Vujnovich stated that they should be receiving a letter of appointment soon from Farm Bureau.

Jakov Jurisic stated the organizations have to pick a member and send a letter of appointment.

Mitch Jurisich stated that the task force needs the letters of appointment before they can take any action.

VII. Public Comment

Mitch Jurisich stated that the harvester training needs an update to reflect current time and temperature regulations. Mitch Jurisich stated that it will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Brad Robin asked if LDWF cites fisherman for not having the training.

Mitch Jurisich stated that to have a harvester license a fisherman must go through the training.

Gene Cavalier stated that there are several other seafood bills to be aware of dealing with imported seafood including HB 109, HB 121, HB 349, and HB 725.

VIII. The next meeting set for Tuesday, April 7, 2025 for 10:00am at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport. A Legislative and Research Committee meeting will be at 9:00am prior to the full OTF meeting.

IX. Jakov Jurisic motioned to adjourn, 2nd by All. Motion carries