

**Shrimp Task Force Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2026
Terrebonne Parish Main Library
151 Library Drive
Houma, LA 70360**

- I. Pledge of Allegiance**
- II. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:06am.

III. Roll call

Voting Members Present:

Rodney Olander
Andrew Blanchard
Lance Nacio
Kristen Baumer
Alan Gibson

Voting Members Absent:

Randy Pearce
Jeff Drury
Phillip Tran
Chalin Delaune
Acy Cooper

Non-Voting Members Present:

Konnor Lockfield
Allison Dumas in for Gene Cavalier
Capt. Jeff Boyd in for Davis Madere

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Bryan Wallace
Jack Isaacs

- IV.** Rodney Olander motioned to approve the December 10, 2025 meeting minutes, 2nd by Kristen Baumer. Motion carries.

- V.** Rodney Olander motioned to approve the February 25, 2026 amended meeting agenda, 2nd by Kristen Baumer. Motion carries.

VI. Federal Shrimp Permit Report

The board was presented with an updated copy of the Federal Shrimp Permit Report

VII. Financial Report

Remaining fund Balance - \$487,187
Remaining Budget Balance - \$86,173

Rodney Olander motioned to approve the financial report as presented, 2nd by Kristen Baumer. Motion carries.

VIII. New Business

A. To Hear a Presentation Regarding Shrimp Testing Findings – SeaD Consulting

David Williams stated that the Louisiana Department of Health has a database and SeaD Consulting has one as well to compare import information. David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting and LDH went to Alexandria to test in restaurants. David Williams stated that the restaurants that LDH tested were all in compliance but SeaD Consulting found that they were not. David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting and LDH both tested in Houma and the restaurants were in compliance. David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting also went into restaurants in Monroe but LDH did not test at any of the restaurants. David Williams stated the LDH tested in two of the three restaurants in Slidell that were tested by SeaD Consulting and LDH said they were in compliance but they were not. David Williams stated that this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting does targeted testing in restaurants to verify authenticity. David Williams stated that when LDH tests they look for where or not the menu is in compliance with their disclosure check and make sure that the product is labeled correctly. David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting has a different approach and they look at restaurants that state through any form of marketing that they are serving Gulf of America seafood. David Williams stated that they use covert sampling to get a real diner experience. David Williams stated that he recently when to a sports bar that was serving seafood and they had a sign saying that they may or may not serve local seafood but to ask the server. David Williams stated that when he asked the server if it was local shrimp the server confirmed that it was local American shrimp but it was not.

Sherri Blanchard stated that if someone asks the server where the seafood is from, the manager is supposed to come answer the question.

David Williams stated that the situation show that layered oversight is needed to produce stronger outcomes. David Williams stated the SeaD Consulting identified multiple markets with inauthenticity and proactive action is needed. David Williams stated that consistent enforcement is needed and it is critical that genetic testing is completed.

David Williams stated that there are implications for American shrimp. David Williams stated that the Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) has made an amazing campaign and got some legislation passed but the situation is terrible because shrimp is still labeled in correctly. David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting came up with a dollar amount on a daily basis for the level of inauthenticity in Louisiana. David Williams stated that on a daily basis, mislabeling costs Louisiana diners and shrimps around \$225,000 a day.

David Williams stated that based on the testing completed by SeaD Consulting, the inauthenticity percent in Monroe was 54% and it was 13% in Slidell. David Williams stated that one of the goals of SeaD Consulting is how can they affect markets through retesting. David Williams stated they SeaD Consulting has media outreach to raise awareness and get the consumer interested. David Williams stated that one of the most recent media coverage was a 24 minute documentary through Business Insider.

David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting has a full 20-page report of their findings that show trends that are happening in the market in Louisiana with authenticity. David Williams stated that they need to collaborate with the department of health to help each other.

Alan Gibson stated that SeaD Consulting has really good information but someone from the department of health should be present at the meeting. Alan Gibson stated that the task force has done their part as an advisory panel but the department of health needs to show up because they are a part of the task force. Alan Gibson stated that the tests are already paid for and the state is not fully backing the task force as they should.

A member of the audience asked if the department of health was notified of the meeting.

Andrew Blanchard confirmed that the department of health was notified about the meeting.

Alan Gibson stated that the only way that the task force is going to make the SeaD Consulting information useful is to get the department of health involved.

Kristen Baumer stated that all the task force can do is ask for a special meeting with the department of health and show them the inauthenticity rate. Kristen Baumer asked what type of campaign the task force is going to initiate at the state level to try to lower the percentage and enforce the laws. Kristen Baumer stated that the task force can continue to spend money and prove what they already know but the task force is at the stage with the results to change this through the department and enforce the laws.

Alan Gibson stated that during original discussions for SeaD Consulting testing, there were discussions of possibly teaching the department of health how to do the test.

David Williams stated that some other states are moving away from the department of health completing the test because they have a lot on their plates when they go in to a restaurant inspections. David Williams stated that SeaD Consulting would like to initially lay down a way of enforcing to hold people accountable.

Sherri Blanchard asked if the Shrimp Task Force had any legislative contact to sponsor legislation for the enforcement of authenticity.

Alan Gibson stated that the task force would have to get with the department of health to see what's being done and what they could do.

Kristen Baumer stated that there needs to be a meeting between the task force, LDWF, DAF, and LDH to address this issue.

B. To Hear a Report of the LDAF Seafood Safety Task Force February Meeting – LDAF

Allison Dumas stated that the imported seafood safety fee is collected by the department of LDAF to anyone possessing a LDH commercial seafood permit. Allison Dumas stated that the fee goes towards testing imported seafood. Allison Dumas stated that processors and distributors are required to report imported seafood transactions quarterly. Allison Dumas stated that reporting started in quarter 4 of 2025 and they should be expecting the next round of results at the end of March.

Allison Dumas stated that the LDH conducted 114 inspection in restaurants from September to November of 2025 and assessed \$33,500 dollars in fines. Allison Dumas stated that the LDAF does inspections of imported crawfish and shrimp in commercial and retail spaces to see if imports are mislabeled as Louisiana seafood. Allison Dumas stated that imports must state its country of origin in 30 point black font. Allison Dumas stated that a total of 367 labeling inspections resulted in 18 stop orders of 724 pounds of seafood. Allison Dumas stated that the LDAF also inspects imported crawfish and shrimp for hazardous chemicals and out of 511 total samples 4 shrimp samples tested positive for contaminants from Thailand, India, and Indonesia. Allison Dumas stated that the LDH was notified of this contaminated shrimp and properly disposed of the product.

Rodney Olander asked if they know for a fact that the shrimp was disposed of.

Allison Dumas stated that the product in Louisiana was but if the distributor is out of state FDA would have to work with that states counterpart to destroy the product.

Alan Gibson asked if contaminated shrimp is reported to any federal agencies.

Allison Dumas stated that LDAF only reports to the FDA.

Allison Dumas stated that 1,200 total package labels were inspected that resulted in the 18 stop orders.

A member of the audience asked what percentage of the total amount of imports were being inspected.

Allison Dumas stated she does not have a percentage but all the shrimp being tested for antibiotics are imported. Allison Dumas stated that random samples are pulled from grocery stores and retailers.

Lance Nacio stated that in 2024 1.7 billion pound of shrimp was imported and the FDA tested 0.1% of that shrimp.

A member of the audience asked if the imported seafood fee is a flat fee.

Allison Dumas stated that it is flat fee but it will go up in price every year until 2028. Allison Dumas stated this year's fee is \$500, 2027 will be \$750, and 2028 and beyond will be \$1000.

A member of the audience asked if the fee could be assessed per pound of shrimp imported.

Allison Dumas stated that this fee is flat and will stay that way.

Andrew Blanchard stated that any imported shrimp entering the state has to be recorded by the LDH.

Allison Dumas stated that the import statistics will be available in the near future.

David Williams asked how long hazardous chemical testing takes.

Allison Dumas stated a week and half to two weeks.

David Williams stated that India is testing for certain antibiotics in shrimp farming but not for the antibiotics being most commonly used to make it look as if no antibiotics are being used.

Allison Dumas stated that the FDA allows for a certain level of antibiotics to be shipped with the product but in commerce there is zero tolerance. Allison Dumas stated that the law follows FDA guidelines but they are trying to change the language in that law to say zero tolerance.

Lance Nacio asked what the cost of testing was.

Allison Dumas stated 250-300 dollars per test.

Allison Dumas stated that there will be another meeting sometime in June at the LDAF headquarters in Baton Rouge, LA.

C. To Hear an Update on the STF Washington, D.C. Trip and Discuss Future Trips – STF, Andrew Blanchard

Andrew Blanchard stated that 5 members of the taskforce went to Washington, D.C. to talk with congressmen about passing legislation on limiting imports and increasing labeling standards on imports. Andrew Blanchard stated that the shrimping industry is in trouble if they not able to get legislation passed under the current presidency. Andrew Blanchard stated that the oyster industry had great representation at the event. Andrew Blanchard stated the shrimping industry did not see as much exposure as compared to the oyster industry.

A member of the audience stated the shrimp industry should do more for the Washington D.C. trip such as increasing the amount of shrimp dishes.

Andrew Blanchard stated that money should be allocated towards the event to advertise Louisiana shrimp.

Lance Nacio stated the Southern Shrimp Alliance is doing a shrimp boil in late April. Lance Nacio stated that more shrimp could have been sent to the event to have a more resounding presence. Lance Nacio stated that having multiple shrimpers cooking different shrimp dishes would garner more attention.

Andrew Blanchard stated that the people at the event will not peel boiled shrimp. Andrew Blanchard stated the dishes should be able to be picked up and eaten easily.

Rodney Olander stated that under the current administration Louisiana has never been in a more favorable position to pass legislation. Rodney Olander stated if things do not change now they might never. Rodney Olander stated that at the D.C event, they discussed a 25% reduction on the number of shrimp imported into America. Rodney Olander stated that they also discussed TAA funding for Fishermen, testing of imports, and NOAA funding. Rodney Olander stated that last year the crawfish industry received NOAA funding months after their disaster, but the shrimping industry had to wait until 2025 to receive funding form a 2019 disaster. Rodney Olander stated that NOAA should do a better job at releasing their money for disasters.

Rodney Olander stated that they also talked about TEDs with legislation. Rodney Olander stated that NOAA needs know how many nesting sites are needed to consider taking turtles off on the endangered species list. Rodney Olander asked why NOAA does not builds a hatchery along the coast to save sea turtles. Rodney Olander stated that NOAA should send a representative to the Shrimp Taskforce meetings. Rodney Olander stated that geographically Louisiana does not have nesting sites because it is a wash areas without many sandy beaches so TEDs are not necessary.

Rodney Olander stated that they spoke to Rep. Clay Higgins regarding title 32 which requires USDA to purchase \$30 million dollars' worth of shrimp. Rodney Olander stated that in the past they have purchased medium grade shrimp but requested that they purchase smaller sized shrimp. Rodney

Olander stated that it is harder to sell smaller shrimp in the current market so the program could buy back the low valued shrimp. Rodney Olander stated that the buyback would open up more freezer space and create a market for that size of shrimp.

Lance Nacio stated that they did not have meeting with Rep. Higgins but they did talked to him for a while in the hallway. Lance Nacio stated that Rep. Higgins is pushing for a 100% ban on imports in Louisiana to draw attention to the problem. Lance Nacio stated that the destruction of hazards imports was another talking point. Lance Nacio stated that that if hazards imports are destroyed instead of being loaded back onto the boat it could reduce imports by half.

A member of the audience asked what kind of feedback that are receiving from representatives based on their request.

Rodney Olander stated that they received positive feedback and believes the current administration can get it done if they see fit.

Lance Nacio stated that a portion of the tariff money goes to testing done by the FDA on imports.

Andrew Blanchard stated that he asked to give the money to the USDA instead of the FDA so the fisherman do not have to be so particular on what they do on their boats. Andrew Blanchard stated that the catfish industry suffered when there was a switch and it took half of the industry out due to upgrades they had to be made to their facilities and ponds. Andrew Blanchard stated that it would be ideal if they can receive the same funding farmers get from the USDA. Andrew Blanchard stated that programs are being developed for the fisheries industry but it may take a long time to come into effect.

Lance Nacio stated that the Southern Shrimp Alliance shrimp boil will be on May 20th.

D. To Discuss the 3-Mile Line Gulf Closures and Possible Early Opening – STF, Rodney Olander

Rodney Olander stated when the 3-mile line closed people were still catching legal size shrimp with grades of 41-50, 51-60, and 61-70. Rodney Olander stated that he did not understand why the 3-mile line was closed because LDWF agents enforce count laws and most fisherman do not catch 80-100 count shrimp due to its low price. Rodney Olander stated that the gulf should stay open year around because if the shrimp are small fisherman will naturally not catch them. Rodney Olander questioned LDWF sampling techniques. Rodney Olander stated LDWF goes out to sample on certain dates but size can vary greatly based on weather conditions such as a front or a south wind.

Rodney Olander stated that the season should also open earlier because it is harder to open the season than it is to close it. Rodney Olander stated that the season is put in place to preserve resources but if fishermen keep declining there will be nobody to preserve these resources for. Rodney Olander stated that there will not be any fishermen left if they are not allowed to work.

A member of the audience asked if the task force gets any data from LDWF on why they close or open the shrimp seasons.

Rodney Olander stated that when LDWF's sample count is over 100 they close the season. Rodney Olander stated that if a front is blowing the size of the shrimp sampled will be smaller, but a few days later the size of the shrimp could be larger. Rodney Olander stated that the 100 count law and enforcement could regulate the size of the shrimp people catch without the use of a shrimping season.

Rodney Olander stated that fisherman do not want to catch 80-100 due to a low price and fisherman will not fish or find other spots where the count is larger.

A member of the audience asked if they could reinstate a ride along program.

Rodney Olander stated that the program stopped a couple of years ago.

A member of the audience stated that the data from that program was not used.

Konner Lockfield stated that the CPUs for commercial fishing is obviously higher in commercial fishing than LDWF sampling, but LDWF is only looking at the size of the shrimp. Konner Lockfield stated that sampling catches a much smaller amount of shrimp and is not looking for the CPUs. Konner Lockfield stated that if smaller shrimp are being caught at higher CPUs by commercial fisherman than a lot of that shrimp is being wasted and that was the reason as to why they closed the season.

Rodney Olander stated that he understands why the season closed when it did, but questions if they should even close it because there are not a lot of fishermen left and they will not catch 80-100s.

A member of the audience asked why 80-100 is the marker for shrimp season closure.

Andrew Blanchard stated the law was put in place many years ago and it would require legislation to change the law.

David Williams stated the market on shrimp changes and the price of small shrimp could rise with a changing market. David Williams stated a law change could be detrimental to the shrimp industry based on an ever-changing market.

A member of the audience asked if the shrimp task force saw any shrimp sampling data collected by LDWF.

Rodney Olander stated the count was over 100 so LDWF made the recommendation to close.

A member of the audience stated that the season cannot be open for one week and closed the next.

Rodney Olander stated that he recommends leaving the season open and letting fishermen and enforcement handle catching the right size of shrimp.

A member of the audience asked if there was any data from 2 years ago the season was left open

Lance Nacio stated that historically for 30 years this area was always closed until April 15th. Lance Nacio stated that 2 years ago the area was left open and it seem to be a trend to keep it open. Lance Nacio stated that current gear can harvest almost every part of the estuary which leads to the estuary not having enough time to recover. Lance Nacio stated that in the past, biologist realized this and decided to close the season to give the estuary time to recover. Lance Nacio asked why smaller shrimp were being harvested if there is not a market for it.

Kristen Baumer stated that they open the season when there is a crossover into 80-100.

Lance Nacio asked why 80-100 count shrimp are being used as a marketable criteria when it bring no value.

A member of the audience stated that different shrimpers have different shrimp size needs such as retail shrimp vs dried shrimp.

A member of the audience stated that fishing too early causes there to be smaller shrimp later in the season.

Lance Nacio mentioned how the Atchafalaya River estuary produces smaller white shrimp.

Konner Lockfield stated that some estuaries have lower counts of shrimp that will not go under 100 count.

A member of the audience stated that shrimpers target the size that is most profitable, but he knows that some shrimpers have a need for small shrimp.

Lance Nacio stated that it is a waste to harvest smaller shrimp at 50/60 cents a pound when it would be worth 2 dollars or more in the spring.

A member of the audience stated that it is not guaranteed that those same shrimp from earlier in the season will still be present.

A member of the audience stated that after Hurricane Ida there was nobody shrimping.

Lance Nacio stated that after the BP oil spill there was a stoppage in fishing and as result they were catching 4,000- 5000 pounds of 16 counts all the way into October. Lance Nacio stated that the shrimp did not leave when fishing stopped and contributes disturbance of the fisherman and cold fronts as the main reason why shrimp leave.

A member of the audience stated that the shrimp season is cyclical and in the 1990s there were very few 80 and 70 counts at this time of year, but this past white shrimp season was phenomenal. A member of the audience stated that the cycle of good size shrimp may last for a couple more years but it is still to be determined. A member of the audience stated that in the 1980s there was very few white shrimp. A member of the audience stated that after this most recent cold blast there were very few big shrimp, but 2 days later there was 50-60 count inshore causing a large variation of shrimp counts in a small amount of time.

Andrew Blanchard stated the passes are wider now than they were in the past, changing from a mile to up to 7 or 10 miles wide.

A member of the audience stated that there is moment of 100 count shrimp caused by the wind. A member of the audience stated it would be best to leave the 3 mile line open because fishermen will not catch 80-100s if there is not a good price for them.

Rodney Olander stated that LDWF should consider when there is cold weather or a front when deciding to close the season.

A member of the audience stated that the season should go back to the set dates that they were before.

Rodney Olander stated that a set start date would not be a good idea because of changing environmental factors.

E. To Discuss Possible Early Inside Water Openings for Specific Areas – STF, Rodney Olander

Rodney Olander stated in the past freshwater affected the size and amount of shrimp in areas 2A and 2B west of the Atchafalaya River. Rodney Olander suggested opening the season earlier in the event of a high river due to a higher amount of fresh water in the bay. Rodney Olander stated that so far this year the rivers are low but it could change.

A member of the audience stated that high rivers devastate the area with its large input of freshwater.

Andrew Blanchard stated that they will keep monitoring the water levels.

Rodney Olander stated that overfishing in this area will not be a problem because there is already a lack of fisherman.

A member of the audience stated that varying opening times could cause a price drop.

Rodney Olander stated some years have opened on 50 cents and closed on 50 cents and the price did not move much.

Konner Lockfield stated the commission would like to be aware of this special opening.

Rodney Olander stated the early opening would only happen during a high river. Rodney Olander stated that they would put it in the form of a motion to let the commission know.

A member of the audience asked what water level would trigger a high river.

Konner Lockfield stated on the beginning of March and beginning of April is normally when white shrimp cross over.

Alan Gibson stated that he has no opinion on when the inshore season should open because he does not fish inshore shrimp.

Rodney Olander stated he does not want to lower the count criteria of when the shrimp season starts to 60-80 count. Rodney Olander stated in the West of Vermilion Bay the shrimp count was 70-80 when the season opened and the count was still 70-80 count 2 months later. Rodney Olander stated that certain areas could benefit from a lower count threshold, but not where freshwater threatens the size of the shrimp.

Chris Schieble stated that snapper does have a set data on when the season will open unless the commission takes action.

Rodney Olander asked if the snapper season has to open by a certain date. Rodney Olander stated that shrimp season has to open by a certain data as well but can open earlier if recommended.

Lance Nacio stated that wanting statewide opening caused some areas to open when they were not ready and recommended opening specific zones only when they are ready.

Chris Schieble stated that proposing that idea would be a commission action. Chris Schieble stated that data sometimes shows different zones crossing over at different times. Chris Schieble stated that recommendations are made to hold back opening based on the crossover data and the commission makes their decision based on socioeconomic factors and the sampling data.

Lance Nacio asked why 80-100 count shrimp is used as a marketable criteria if 80-100 count never reaches a dollar a pound or even over 50 cents a pound. Lance Nacio stated that marketable should be something that the consumer wants and is willing to pay for.

David Williams stated that in a couple of years the market could be total different for 100 count shrimp.

Andrew Blanchard stated that 10-15 years ago he was one of the biggest buyers of 80-100 count because he had a market for it. Andrew Blanchard stated that a Louisiana chain purchased IQF shrimp and would sell 80,000 pounds of shrimp a week. Andrew Blanchard stated that back then it was a marketable product, but the chain closed and the market disappeared. Andrew Blanchard stated that if a new chain wanted 80-100 count shrimp then 80-100s will become profitable again.

A member of the audience asked if 80-100 is a marketable shrimp in this economy.

Kristen Baumer stated he does not think it is marketable currently. Kristen Baumer stated it is better to differentiate from imported shrimp by selling larger shrimp. Kristen Baumer stated that everything is marketable but the problem comes at what price the item is marketable at. Kristen Baumer stated that if consumers can buy 70-90 count shrimp at \$3.50, no one is going to buy 150 count shrimp at that same price. Kristen Baumer stated that the smaller shrimp are marketable just at a lower price. Kristen Baumer stated that the industry needs to differentiate from imports based on flavor profiles.

A member of the audience asked if every processor feels the same way about small shrimp.

Kristen Baumer stated he is giving his personal opinion, but some processors do sell 150-200 count shrimp. Kristen Baumer stated that imports have caused low prices on shrimp shifting the focus away from domestic shrimp and more on imports. Kristen Baumer stated that if a certain shrimp size has a lower price fishermen are not going to put their efforts into catching that size.

Alan Gibson stated that if the inshore season opened with a larger 60-80 count size requirement for shrimp it could delay the opening of the season if there is a weather event. Alan Gibson stated that the opening of the season should reflect the needs of various user groups in the shrimping industry.

Andrew Blanchard stated new markets are developed when there is abundance of a certain size of shrimp. Andrew Blanchard stated that a processor could develop a market for smaller shrimp.

A member of the audience stated it's easier to buy and sell shrimp than it is to collect it.

Andrew Blanchard stated that before shrimp imports in the 1970s processors were only order takers. Andrew Blanchard stated that processors had to transition into salesmen as the demand for domestic declined with a rise in imports. Andrew Blanchard stated that importers knew how to sell their product and outcompeted domestic shrimp.

Kristen Baumer stated it is harder to sell domestic shrimp because most retailers and restaurants focus on imports.

Andrew Blanchard stated that the US Supreme Court removed the tariff on imported shrimp, so the price of domestic shrimp will fall.

Kristen Baumer stated the Louisiana shrimping industry is still viable and there will still be a market for people who want to eat better quality domestic shrimp.

David Williams stated the importance of consumers knowing when they are eating Louisiana wild caught shrimp and not being misled by false advertising.

F. To Discuss Possible New Shrimp Sampling Techniques – STF, Andrew Blanchard

Chris Schieble stated that LDWF has employed the use of a new saltwater electrofishing gear to replace inshore seine sampling. Chris Schieble stated that electrofishing is more effective at sampling juvenile finfish compared to seine sampling. Chris Schieble stated that electrofishing sampling only takes 90 seconds and the efficiency of sampling allows for the return of live fish back to the water. Chris Schieble stated electrofishing sampling will begin in conjunction with 16 traditional seine locations in the Barataria Basin from July- June of 2026. Chris Schieble stated that sampling will continue in the Pontchartrain Basin and by 2027 sampling will be conducted to Terrebonne basin to establish a baseline. Chris Schieble stated that saltwater electrofishing had noticeable changes in CPU for spotted sea trout, striped mullet, red drum, sheepshead, black drum and flounder. Chris Schieble stated that sampling conducted in the Barataria Bay from July- October 2025 showed an increase in amount of shrimp caught compared to seine sampling conducted at the same time periods. Chris Schieble stated that one caveat of electrofishing is the inability to compare the sampling with 40 years' worth of seine sampling, but believes it is a more effective and sustainable way to examine stock assessments.

Rodney Olander asked if LDWF was going to replace troll sampling with electrofishing.

Chris Schieble stated that this technique would mainly replace seine sampling.

Rodney Olander asked how the process of electrofishing works for shrimp sampling.

Chris Schieble stated that electrofishing could work in the bay and the basin but would only sample about 6 feet deep from the surface.

Rodney Olander asked how big of area does it sample.

Chris Schieble stated that it samples about a 10 foot area.

Rodney Olander stated that trolling can cover a 1000 foot area. Rodney Olander asked if electrofishing is indicating better health of finfish populations.

Chris Schieble stated that is too soon to tell based on preliminary results.

Rodney Olander asked if electrofishing would be used for juvenile fish or for full grown fish as well.

Chris Schieble stated that electrofishing covers a larger range of different size fish than the seine.

A member of audience asked if electrofishing would produce better outcomes for shrimp sampling.

Chris Schieble stated that the intentions of electrofishing is not to replace troll sampling. Chris Schieble stated that shocking could help in determining juvenile shrimp stocks against the edge of marshes.

Andrew Blanchard stated that this new technology has the potential to help shrimp sampling off of the coast of Louisiana. Andrew Blanchard stated that Louisiana is the only state with this type of saltwater electrofishing. Andrew Blanchard stated other states might adopt this technology if it is successful in Louisiana.

Chris Schieble stated that Mississippi scientist have witnessed the sampling and express interest in replacing their gill netting.

A member of audience asked about the exact wattage used to shock fish.

Chris Schieble stated that 284,000 watts of DC power is put into the water. Chris Schieble stated that that if it set too high it could kill the fish.

Rodney Olander asked how much sampling LDWF does in a year.

Konner Lockfield stated inshore uses a 16 foot trawl for inshore sampling and a 20 foot trawl for offshore sampling with sampling being conducted 8 times a year offshore. Konner Lockfield stated that sampling does not take place in the summer because historically there is no concern of reaching the 100 count of shrimp. Konner Lockfield stated inshore sampling is done 17 times a year around historical season openings.

Rodney Olander stated that he would like to see sampling conducted every week or possibly twice a week a month up to the season opening. Rodney Olander stated that the fall opening only went off of one data set.

Christian Winslow stated the reason for a lack in the data sets was the calling of a special meeting which impeded the way normal sampling was done. Christian Winslow stated that offshore sampling is done 8 times a year, but at 39 different sampling station across the coast. Christian Winslow stated for inshore there are about 100 stations sampled 17 times a year. Christian Winslow stated sampling could take a week to get all the sampling done in each basin. Christian Winslow stated that the current sampling times are strategically placed to best manage resources.

Rodney Olander asked when inshore sampling started.

Konner Lockfield stated samples were taken in February and they will sample again at the end of March.

Rodney Olander asked how the taskforce can increase the amount of sampling done to have a better understanding of shrimp counts.

Konner Lockfield stated that they have historical data on the first week of March.

Rodney Olander stated that times are changing and the shrimp season could open sooner than expected.

Christian Winslow stated that interior marsh trawl samples can extend into April with warmer weather.

Konner Lockfield stated that sampling in the second week of March would have to reduce the amount of sampling done later.

Rodney Olander stated that if sampling starts at the end of March they will not have the option to open the season early if a high water event occurs.

Chris Schieble stated that sampling is federally funded and no tax money from Louisiana is used in funding of this sampling.

Rodney Olander asked how we could get more funding for more sampling.

Christian Winslow stated that all the staff responsible for shrimp sampling is also responsible for other types of species sampling. Christian Winslow stated that they are maximizing the efficiency of the staff get as much sampling and monitoring done in the right times of the year.

Chris Schieble stated that an increase in federal funding would require an increase in all the states funded by that grant.

Rodney Olander stated that Louisiana is a leading supplier of seafood and should receive the biggest amount of funding.

Konner Lockfield stated that he does not see a way to increase the sampling with the resources they currently have, but can be flexible on when they sample. Konner Lockfield stated that they could sample in the middle of March but it would have to come out of another area and they would at least like to sample once a month for the full year. Konner Lockfield stated removing the October sampling to be used at a different time such as the second week of March.

Rodney Olander asked when the season opens does LDWF continue to sample.

Konner Lockfield stated they do and they sample twice in May and at the end of June. Konner Lockfield stated that inshore sampling it spread out and offshore sampling happens at the end of March which is flexible in the case of warmer winters.

Rodney Olander asked when sampling was done on a month basis.

Konner Lockfield stated that one sample is done in March and two samples in April, May, June, and July. Konner Lockfield stated that sampling continues for once a month until December when it is done two times. Konner Lockfield stated that sampling is done more often closer to opening and closings and only once in the middle of seasons.

Andrew Blanchard asked if electrofishing corresponds with the 17 inshore samplings.

Chris Schieble stated they are sampling 16 station a month in the Barataria Basin.

Andrew Blanchard stated that electrofishing could improve sampling efficiency when the technology is approved to be used.

IX. Public Comment

A member of the audience asked if legislation could be passed to require everybody involved in the task force to be present at the meeting.

Kristen Baumer stated that before the task force meets and has a quorum to make sure all the representatives of their respective agencies will be in attendance.

Alan Gibson stated that a representative from the Department of Health, LDWF legal, and the governor's office should have been present at this meeting.

Rodney Olander stated the governor's representative did email the task force to let them know he could not make it today.

Kristen Baumer stated if it is easier to have the meeting in Baton Rouge to ensure attendance then they should have the meetings there. Kristen Baumer stated if members of the task force cannot make the scheduled meeting then the meeting should be rescheduled.

A member of the audience stated that if the correct people were present at the task force meetings more problems could be addressed such as an unnecessary early closer of the shrimp season.

Rodney Olander asked about the statues on the hurricane grant.

Sonya Self stated that she did not have any updates and is waiting on the approval from NOAA.

Rodney Olander asked for a list of the openings on the task force.

X. Set Next Meeting

The next Shrimp Task Force meeting was set for Wednesday, May 6th, 2026 for 1:00 pm at the LDWF headquarters located at 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA.

XI. Adjourn

Rodney Olander motioned to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Lance Nacio. Motion Carries.