



Alaska Mariculture Task Force (MTF) Meeting Minutes April 26, 2017

Attendees

Mariculture Task Force members attending: Julie Decker, Angel Drobnica, Sam Rabung, Jeff Hetrick, Paula Cullenberg, Mike Stekoll, Heather McCarty, Chris Whitehead, Micaela Fowler (delegate for Chris Hladick)

Members of the Public: Tamsen Peeples- Premium Oceanic, Kirsten Shelton-Walker, Jim Calvin, and Bob Koenitzer- McDowell Group, Charlotte Regula-Whitefield- Knauss Fellow at Senator Murkowski's office, Sherry Kline- Senator Murkowski's office, Tomi Marsh, Brian Holst- Juneau Economic Development Council, Bobbi Hudson- Pacific Shellfish Institute, Bill Hines- NOAA, Andy Varner- city manager for Sand Point, AK

Barbara Blake- Office of Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott

Cynthia Pring-ham, and Michelle Morris- Department of Fish and Game

Linda Mattson - Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

Materials distributed to task force members included: Agenda for April 26 meeting, minutes from March 14 meeting, AFDF Documentation form, McDowell Group, Draft of Chapter 1, Outline of Phase 2 by McDowell Group, advisory committee minutes, HB 76, Shellfish Enhancement bill, HB 128, MTF Planning diagram, Scotland Strategic Plan, NOAA Strategic Plan

9:00 Co-Chair Julie Decker called meeting to order

Julie Decker added items under new business

- 6b- NOAA plan- discuss recent NOAA interest in reducing the seafood trade deficit and what it might mean for aquaculture
- 6e- letter of support for Alaska Sea Grant project
- 6g- update by Sam Rabung on open application process is going for aquatic farm permits
- Sam Rabung motioned to approve the agenda as amended Heather McCarty seconded

March 14 meeting minutes were reviewed

- Sam Rabung requested that the dates of the 4/28 meeting be changed to reflect the actual MTF meeting date of 4/26
- Sam Rabung motioned to approved the minutes as amended (change dates to 4/28) Heather McCarty seconded

Public Introductions & Comment

Public Comments opened at 9:06am

Tamsen People's- Blue Evolution completed their first commercial harvest of commercial raised kelp at Trevor Sandy's farm off of Hump Island. They harvested about a thousand pounds of ribbon kelp. It was learning experience and they have two more harvests coming up in Kodiak
Public Comment closed at 9:07am

Old Business: McDowell Group Discussion

Jim Calvin began the presentation with a PowerPoint document to outline their work so far
Their plan for the month of May is to talk with the AC Chairs and figure out a plan to continue
The main discussion centered on how to make decisions going forward in the mariculture industry

Questions/Comments on Chapter 1

- Mike- p. 29 asked for a clarification on seaweed
- Sam- likes the look but he requested that they switch the years on page 7
- Julie requested that the Task force look at very carefully the sections that pertains to their industry
- Julie asked how McDowell is counting for infrastructure
- Heather asked about the economics of the non-profit hatchery model with benefits coming to both commercial and non-commercial arenas as in the salmon enhancement model. She mentioned that it would be nice to have a model from McDowell group on how to support a hatchery that's non profit and how does that fit in to the production needs of aquaculture
- Sam reminded the task force the McDowell group has a number of McDowell group studies on the PNP hatchery programs that are linked on the salmon hatchery portion of the ADF&G website for MTF members to reference.
- Julie suggested to break out farming and enhancement on the modeling portion of the chapter and the overlap would be in the hatcheries component and infrastructure portions.
- MTF members had a conversation about the mariculture stakeholders and funding mechanisms
 - Where will funding for mariculture come from- should we expect funding to come from non commercial stakeholders.
 - Sam stakeholder situation is the same across the board for salmon and fisheries enhancement programs. The Feds and state are different- there are different regions for salmon, they need to fit to be stakeholder driven
 - Heather- mentioned that we need to capture the need for funding (either state or federal)
 - Sam- requested that we include state support for the mariculture industry as a recommendation from the task force
 - Julie- mentioned that state support is key but we also should include private support
- Jeff- recommendations from the task force should be sent to the McDowell group
- McDowell recommended that they should take comments from the MTF any way that they want to submit
- Deadline 5/15 for MTF to submit comments to McDowell
- Linda Mattson will send a reminder
- Mike suggested that they include the scientific names of the species in parenthesis
- Heather- asked for chapter 1 to be sent to the task force in Word format
- McDowell will send out but requested that members only look at content to edit and not formatting

Next MTF Meeting- McDowell will bring recommendations from the AC's to discuss with the MTF as to where they are with opportunities and challenges and the holes still be filled

Old Business: Updates from Advisory Committee Chairs

Mike Stekoll: Research, Development, and Environmental Information- had a meeting on April 14

- They are working on their existing research and future needs document as well as their research priorities near term document
- They plan to have both documents completed by the next MTF meeting
- They are looking at the factors to address for the mariculture of any species which is a listing of all of the issues that exist from the beginning to the end of the process

Sam Rabung: Regulatory Issues- had meetings on March 13, 24, and April 24

- Recommendations and regulations suggestions in narrative format as well as the regulation format were submitted to the task force members
- Goal of AC- to scratch the surface to just provide recommendations and not dive to deep
- These are only recommendations and wanted to make sure that they were non binding as directives because they cannot force anyone to do any of the items on the list
- Mike asked what methods do the agencies have in place for agency personnel to "change their attitudes" with regards to regulations and regulatory issues
- Sam is working on a guide for Fish & Game to educate his staff on aquaculture as discretion can be used on regulations so that they can work cooperatively on issues
- Heather asked if the recommendation number 14 was industry wide or species specific
- Sam- they are looking for an industry perspective; industry could do it themselves but if they're mandated by legislation, they may have more incentive
- Heather- asked what the process was to amend a regulation
- Sam- all regulations, except commissioners regulations, go through the board of fish but every agency has their own process for regulations. For example, DNR and ADF&G work almost exclusively under state jurisdiction, while DEC is required to use federal jurisdiction so they have more processes to go through to amend a regulation.
- Julie suggested that the MTF should identify stakeholders who would submit a regulations proposal to the board of fish for the recommendations made by the AC
- Eric asked how to address recommendation #8 regarding workers compensation insurance
- Julie suggested that the MTF work with a larger group of stakeholders to discuss

Break

10:48am- meeting called back to order

Angel Drobnica & Jeff Hetrick: Investment & Infrastructure AC- AC Chairs had meeting 4/25 meeting scheduled week of 5/1 for full AC

- Will have their recommendations finalized at the next MTF meeting
- They want to emphasize that Alaska is open for business
- There are opportunities for funding and people need to be aware of them
- They plan to work with McDowell group on the next steps
- Heather asked for an expansion on recommendation #5- explore the potential to seed a private/ public revolving fund program
- Jeff responded that there are private aquaculture investors who are interested in investing and when the private sector commits resources, the public feels more supportive toward a project.
- Paula mentioned that Sea Grant has a proposal submitted that would address recommendation #1

Paula Cullenberg: Workforce Development AC- meeting on April 14

- they are working on their draft recommendations and their draft report
- Goal of their aquaculture specialist- to liaison between industry, research, and state government to advance the aquaculture industry
- Objectives of the Workforce Development AC
 1. To increase the profits and business success for the farmers that are already working
 2. Ensure that hatcheries and nurseries and farms have a skilled workforce to draw from
 3. Inform, recruit, and retain new entries into the industry
- The AC added two recommendations that were not on the handout
 1. To join industry career activities that are happening throughout the state
 2. To develop a good strong evaluation plan to track people into jobs so that there is a link between training opportunities and employment opportunities
- Sam suggested that Sea Grant partner with Future Farmers of America as aquaculture farming could fall under the agriculture industry. Paula will include it in the narrative for her AC

Heather McCarty: Public Education and Marketing AC

- Is looking forward to meeting with McDowell group to craft recommendations to the MTF
- She is drafting recommendations and will send them to the MTF when they are complete.
- She is looking into the differences between public education and marketing and how they translate into the McDowell group as well as what the split is between the two subjects. She believes that much of the marketing part of the AC will be covered in the McDowell group study and anticipates that they will be able to focus more on the public education portion in their recommendations
- Sam recommended that the AC work with ASMI on marketing recommendations
- Heather mentioned that there is a lot of overlap on public education which will be included in her recommendations

Updates on Legislation

- Reception seems positive from both sides in both the House and the Senate
- The thought is that maybe the House will pass the bills but that the Senate is working on other things

Communications

Discussion on press release regarding legislation

- Heather McCarty motioned, Eric Wyatt seconded to have a press release from the MTF on the status of the bills and to thank the people in the legislature worked on it
- Julie Decker and Heather McCarty will work to draft the press release and Micaela Fowler will assist on editing and messaging

Update on ARPA-E

May 15 final application is due- there is a large group working on this

- Goal from the perspective of the Alaska farmers is to focus on figuring out harvest efficiencies over the life of the project
- Mike Stekoll provided an updates on his role to work on ways to find strains that will be most useful and fast growing.
- Goal of the study is how to decrease cost and improve efficiency

New Business

Discussion: Scotland's Aquaculture Strategic Plan

- Eric pointed out that one of their recommendation that they made to have both a shellfish and a seaweed hatchery
- Heather suggested that the MTF dig into the recommendations and noted that their government plays a large role in the industry
- Eric- recommended that the MTF include a recommendation that ideas from government support not just large businesses but medium and small businesses as well

Discuss NOAA Marine Aquaculture Strategic Plan

- Heather asked about the timing for recommendations from this region to submit to NOAA
- Mike stressed that NOAA in Alaska is very open to aquaculture
- Paula stressed the importance of communicating with the federal delegation to encourage them to continue to support NOAA
- Bill Hines from NOAA mentioned that the state should have a comprehensive plan first and then work with NOAA to see how to support their plan
- Julie will check with the congressional delegation staff to check in to see what NOAA's timeline for this region to submit recommendations to the NOAA plan

Discuss Invitations for expert speakers for future Skype conferences

- Heather requested speakers that the task force reach out to representatives New Zealand and Scotland
- Mike recommended that the MTF reach out to other states like Washington to schedule a presentation
- Julie will work on scheduling and a tentative timeline of the end of September was suggested

Discuss diagram of comprehensive panning process

McDowell group changes 8/1

McDowell group update May MTF meeting

Sept, Oct- expert speakers to present to MTF (add to the schedule workshop bubble)

Update on Alaska Sea Grant NOAA grant applications

Paula updated the task force on the application

- Paula requested that the MTF draft a letter explaining what the task force does and how the objectives of the Sea Grant proposal are in response to the recommendations that are being developed by the task force so that the MTF can support the Sea Grant's proposals
- Heather McCarty motioned that the MTF authorize the chair and the co-chair of the MTF to draft a letter for Sea Grant's NOAA application; Mike Stekoll seconded
- Proposal is due May 9

Update on old NOAA facility in Juneau

Mike Stekoll updated the MTF on the NOAA facility

- The main building will go to the University of Alaska Southeast
- The rest of the buildings will go to the City of Juneau's Docks and Harbors
- The sciences program will move to the main building

Update on the open application process for aquatic farm permits

Sam Rabung updated the MTF on the application process for aquatic farm permits

- Open applications submissions ends at the end of April and go to DNR. ADF&G have been getting inquiries but they have to go through DNR before they go to ADF&G.
- Each application will be posted for public comment individually

Form to document MTF member time for in-kind match to NOAA Grant

- Form was passed around to the task force members to indicate their time worked

Next Steps and Homework

Linda Mattson and Julie Decker will get out a summary email to Task Force members

Advisory Committee chairs and MTF members should get recommendations on Chapter 1 to the McDowell Group by May 15

Julie Decker, Heather McCarty, and Micaela Fowler will work on the press release to thank the members of the legislature for their work on the bills

Julie Decker will draft a letter of support from the MTF on the Sea Grant NOAA application

Next meeting dates:

May 24, 2017 from 8:30am to 12:30pm

June 27, 2017 from 8:30am to 12:30pm

PLANNING PURPOSES: August 23, 2017

12:38pm Meeting adjourned by Co-Chair Decker