

Shellfish Advisory Panel

October 23, 2019; 4:30PM

URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Building, Hazard Conference Room
218 S Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02874

MEETING SUMMARY

RIMFC members: K. Eagan (Chair)

DEM: A. Gerber-Williams, C. McManus, J. McNamee, D. Erkan, K. Rodrigue, C. Hannus, A. Liberti, D. Borkman, S. Engborg;

RIDOH: C. White

CRMC: D. Beutel

SAP members: M. McGiveney, M. Sousa, G. Schey, B. Rheault, J. McDonald, K. Murgo, R. Pastore, E. Troiano;

Public: M. Wade, E. Everich, J. Scappatura, B. Pinsky, B. Eastman, D. Eagan, T. Richard, M. Kearns, J. King, D. Brown, J. Johnson, J. Boyd, O. Kelley;

1. Review of aquaculture applications sent to Public Notice:

- 2019-01-063, Richard and Pinheiro, West Passage: *D. Beutel* provided a brief overview of the proposal, which consists of a two-acre lease for oysters and sugar kelp near Rome Point. *D. Beutel* explained that a site assessment was performed on July 7, 2019, at which time there was no eelgrass or quahogs found. *R. Pastore* expressed concern about floating gear obstructing boat access and suggested that the site be moved further north of Rome Point. *M. McGiveney* stated that the RI Shellfishermen's Association do not have concerns over the proposed site location. *J. King* questioned whether there is a current aquaculture management plan for the bay, similar to the salt ponds – stating that issues of overcrowding, such as at Rome Point, could be better guided with such a document. **Motion made by *J. McDonald* to recommend no objection to the application; 2nd by *B. Rheault*. The motion failed 2-5 with 1 abstention from *M. McGiveney*.**
- 2019-07-003, Scappatura, Quonochontaug Pond: *D. Beutel* provided a brief overview of the proposal, which consists of expanding a current lease by 4.4 acres. The expanded site would be for bottom planted oysters only. CRMC received four objections from residents along Quonochontaug Pond with concerns raised about navigation. *D. Beutel* stated that CRMC has no concerns with navigation around the site and that if the expansion is to be approved the pond would be at 2.5% aquaculture use. *J. Scappatura* explained her need to expand and stated that she has no intentions of adding floating gear to the expanded area, when asked by *M. Sousa* whether she intends to make further changes to the site

operation in the future. *J. Scappatura* further stated that she uses 50% diploid and 50% triploid oysters on her lease so as to prevent cross breeding with potential wild populations. **Motion made by *M. McGiveney* to recommend no objection to the application; 2nd by *R. Pastore*. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of 8-0.**

2. Providence River re-classification presentation from the RIDEM Office of Water Resources.

C. Hannus presented an update on the status of the Providence River re-classification by the Office of Water Resources. Water quality and shellfish within the southern section (south of a line between Gaspee and Bullocks Point) of the Providence River (with the exception of Occupessatuxet Cove and the eastern shore from Bullocks Point to Nyatt Tower) meets requirements for managing waters as conditionally approved. Due to the impacts of waste water treatment facilities (WWTF), combined sewer overflows (CSO), and other pollution sources, the conditional area would be closed after a 24-hour rainfall of 0.5" or greater. Additionally, their analysis showed that should a loss of upstream WWTF failure an emergency closure would be necessary. *C. Hannus* further explained that poisonous and deleterious substances within shellfish samples from the lower Providence River were within FDA standards. The next steps were addressed, which included updating maps and descriptions, finalize the closure lines with the Division of Law Enforcement, documenting new descriptions and range markers, and coordinating with RIDOH for completion. *J. King* expressed concerns over metal concentrations in proposed area and potential associated risks. *J. King* also stated that larval supplies could be depleted once the Providence River is open to shellfishing and does not want to see the important brood stock for southern sections of the bay disappear.

3. Providence River shellfish management area presentation by the RIDEM Division of Marine Fisheries.

J. McNamee presented an updated version of the RIDEM Division of Marine Fisheries' quahog stock assessment model, which included data inputs from previous assessments and the most recent results. *J. McNamee* explained how the model would be used to inform a prospective Providence River Shellfish Management Plan by simulating various harvest scenarios for determining the best management practice for protecting sustainability of the resource. *J. King* suggested harvesting from the Providence River during winter months when quahogs filtering is reduced so as to minimize pollution absorption and consumption by consumers.

4. Shellfish transplants.

J. McNamee presented an update on the status of shellfish transplants stating that there is \$20,000 available for transplants with some of those monies being allowed for seed purchase. It was also proposed that a Providence River transplant in the spring of 2020 would be both beneficial for stock assessment and relocation of brood stock. *A. Gerber-Williams* explained that only Bristol Harbor is currently approved for transplants into and additional transplant locations must have proper documentation and testing performed prior to transplant. A request for preferred locations to transplant into was opened up for

discussion. *M. McGiveney* stated that \$30,000 would be a more accurate cost to perform a transplant. He also said that the MOU between RISA and RIDEM would need to be renewed. *M. McGiveney* along with others agreed that transplanting from the Providence River and into the Greenwich Bay spawner sanctuary would be their top selection.

6. Shellfish classification program updates and summary of Harmful Algae Bloom protocol and monitoring results by Office of Water Resources.

C. Hannus presented the Office of Water Resources Shellfish Program updates, which included reevaluating waste water treatment facilities (WWTF). The Warren WWTF during a loss of disinfection will cause an emergency closure. A Mount Hope Bay Fall River WWTF CSO bypass closure trigger was added to the Conditional Area Management Plan. Greenwich Bay now has an emergency closure due to loss of disinfection at the East Greenwich WWTF.

C. Hannus announced efforts to improve communication of closures. There will be a new shellfish list serve and web page status updates in addition to the current phone message updates.

D. Borkman of the Office of Water Resources presented updates on the HAB monitoring program with their partners at the Division of Marine Fisheries and Department of Health, which included information on their sampling stations, sample collection, and analysis. The FDA requires a HAB plan update from the shellfish program in 2020.

5. Present new tagging area maps and tagging labels.

A. Gerber-Williams presented proposed updates for designated tagging areas and their labels. Restructuring these areas is intended to reduce the total area closures during a HAB event, particularly in the West Passage (3W) and East Passage (4A). The proposed tagging area labels would also be changed to match the growing area designations by the Office of Water Resources. The new maps were previously agreed upon by the Office of Water Resources and the Division of Law Enforcement. Endorsement of the maps was implied with the exception of one modification, which was made a motion. **Motion made by *G. Schey* to recommend to DEM and the RIMFC to merge Greenwich Bay tagging areas 2A and 2B; 2nd by *M. McGiveney*. The vote passed 6-0.**

Prepared by: A. Gerber-Williams