

Notes from MTF R&D&E AC phone conference meeting
September 22, 2017, 2:00 pm.

Present:, Ginny Eckert, Jeff Hetrick, Carter Newell, Cynthia Pring-Ham, Mike Stekoll, Eric Wyatt

Next Meeting: To be determined

Highlights are action items.

Discussion centered around the document Ideas for a Mariculture Research Center.

Ginny: Who is this document for?

Mike: It is for us first and we will present it to the MTF who, if they endorse it, will be part of the MTF report, including the McDowell report. (Kirstin is not present for this meeting)

Carter: described the Maine system for coordinating aquaculture research. The director of the Aquaculture Research Institute (ARI) convenes an annual aquaculture forum which most of the stakeholders attend. The output is a list of research priorities. The ARI is under the University of Maine. The ARI has an advisory board the purpose of the ARI is to provide leadership for coordinating aquaculture interests, facilities and assets. There also exists within the University of Maine the Center for Cooperative Aquaculture Research (<https://umaine.edu/cooperative-aquaculture/>) to address industry needs. In addition a third organization is the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center (MAIC) established by the Maine Legislature which facilitates innovative research and development projects. Although these 3 organizations attempt to coordinate with each other, Carter suggested that Alaska create only one main aquaculture center as it is difficult to coordinate disparate entities. He also emphasized (as did Jeff and Eric) the importance of having strong industry representation on advisory boards.

Ginny wanted to know how we would be able to get all the aquaculture players (OA, Alutiiq Pride, NOAA, UA etc.) to cooperate. It seems now that everyone competes rather than cooperate.

Mike: this is the task of the proposed MRC.

Carter: with respect to getting projects done initially, there is funding available for graduate students to do some summer research in aquaculture.

Jeff: the facility in Seward was created with state money with a similar purpose as the proposed MRC. But the University of Alaska made no effort to be a part of it. He likes Eric's idea of having various facilities throughout the state carry out needed research. We do not need a brick and mortar facility. He does not see the university running it, since there seems to be little commitment to mariculture research.

Carter: Thinks we could build mariculture research capacity in the university. A start would be for the director of the MRC to be involved in hands-on mariculture research.

Jeff: Feels the university does theoretical or basic research as opposed to the applied research needed by the industry. But to get the university involved would be good so the MTF should make a strong recommendation to have the university engaged in mariculture research. He also recommended that we reduce our communication to a few bullet points for easier understanding. And he suggested it would be good to have a diagram showing how the various mariculture entities would interact.

Mike: he will make a first draft of this.

Jeff: as a first step why not recommend to the MTF that the university designate a few faculty and others at the university to form a mariculture research committee as first step.

Carter: this committee could create a job description and search for an MRC director.

Mike: It may be difficult to find faculty not already overcommitted for this committee, but if the university creates a new position a search committee would be involve in creating the job description. The key to the MRC or any other coordinating entity is the director. It must be someone with mariculture research experience, good at proposal writing and have a lot of energy. And someone who has or can have good ties with the industry.

Ginny: we should advocate for 2 positions at the university: a director of the MRC and a MAPs agent for outreach to the industry. This would be the initial core of the MRC.

Everyone seemed to like this idea.

Carter: the university system should be able to generate entrepreneurs through its graduate programs.

Jeff: Again emphasize the importance of addressing industry needs. Gave WRAC as an example. (note: although WRAC indicates that Alaska is a member, there have been no Alaskan projects funded through WRAC).

Cynthia: it is important to get industry involved. How do we do it?

Carter: Alaska has been generating lists of industry priorities every 2 years and when the next list comes out, it is the same priorities for the most part. Nothing is actually done. So a listing of priorities without action is not productive. In Scotland (?) they pick issues to be solved and designate someone to be in charge of it. Then they support the research until the issue is solved and then go to the next issue.

Mike: will make edits and changes to the MRC document on Google Drive attempting to incorporate the suggestion made today and then send it to everyone. **Meanwhile it would be good if AC members could make suggestions or comments on the document.**

Eric: once again wants to emphasize the importance of industry input and the need for the MRC director to really understand the industry.

Carter: we should make a list of the facilities and expertise that exist in the university and the rest of Alaska that could support research in mariculture. Such as engineering, food science, economics in addition to science.

Mike: Ray Rolande at one point listed the facilities in the university that would be good for mariculture research. (Cynthia will try to find this document). **Mike will make a first attempt at this and add it to the MRC document.**

Mike asked **Carter to generate a first draft job description for an MRC director.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Submitted my M. Stekoll