



**Alaska Mariculture Task Force (MTF) Meeting Minutes  
October 11, 2017**

**Attendees**

Mariculture Task Force members attending: Julie Decker, Sam Rabung, Micaela Fowler, Angel Drobnica, Mike Stekoll, Heather McCarty, Jeff Hetrick, Kate Sullivan, Eric Wyatt

Members of the Public: Tomi Marsh - OceansAlaska, Bobbi Hudson - Pacific Shellfish Institute, Cynthia Pring-Ham - Fish and Game, Johanna Harris - Division of Agriculture, Katrina Counihan - Alaska Sealife Center, Luke Knowles - Blue Evolution, Danielle Meeker - Lt. Governor's Office, Amanda Compton - DEC, Kirsten Sheldon-Walker - McDowell Group.

Materials distributed to task force members included: draft MTF minutes August 23, McDowell Group phase 2 draft, Advisory Committee Agendas, Minutes, and notes, Projections for Growth draft, *Potential effects of mussel farming on New Zealand's marine mammals & birds*, Diagram of the comprehensive planning process, NOAA In-kind match form.

**1:05pm Vice-Chair Julie Decker called meeting to order**

Agenda was reviewed: McDowell Group requested to move their portion of the agenda up on the agenda and move Mike Stekoll's report down to new business

Sam Rabung motioned to approve amended agenda, Micaela Fowler seconded

August 23 meeting minutes were reviewed and no changes were made

Sam Rabung motioned to approve the minutes; Eric Wyatt seconded the motion

No opposition. Motion approved.

**Public Introductions & Comment**

1:10pm public comment period opened

1:10pm public comment period closed

**Old Business**

**Update from Advisory Committee Chairs- None**

**Legislation Update- None**

**Grant Applications**

- Mike Stekoll provided an update on the ARPA-E grant: there were two proposals submitted and they were both approved but the organization requested that the budgets for the proposals be cut in half. The University of Alaska is lead on one of the two proposals.

ARPA-E has requested that they revise their scope of work. The project starts on January 1, 2018

- Eric Wyatt asked why the proposal was restricted to only sugar kelp. Mike Stekoll answered that it was easiest to grow for the project purposes.
- Kate Sullivan updated the group on the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research for their Sustainable Aquaculture call- they were invited to submit a full proposal. They are working with McDowell Group and Charlotte Regula-Whitefield and Alutiiq Pride to look into a feasibility analysis of sea cucumber aquaculture primarily with the goal of doing wild stock enhancement.
- Goal of project is to get a synthesis of the research done so far with a look towards a sustainable sea cucumber facility in the next five to ten years
- Heather McCarty updated the group on the pre-proposal submitted by AKCRRAB to determine economic cost and rewards to produced Alaska king crab in a culture environment. This proposal fulfills AKCRRAB's goal to transfer their technology from AKCRRAB to a viable user. They are working with Keith Criddle who is a professor of resource economics from the college of fisheries and ocean sciences, fisheries division in Juneau.
- The Department of Fish and Game genetics lab read AKCRRAB's strategic plan and have expressed interest in the genetic marking of crab
- Julie Decker updated the group on the AK Sea Grant's pre-proposal that was submitted for a seaweed demonstration concept in Ketchikan and Metlakatla and integrating workforce development ideas with the high schools and locals.
- AFDF submitted a pre-proposal for phase 2 of the mariculture comprehensive initiative
- Mike Stekoll asked about the timeline. They have 30 days from the date of submission. January 8, 2018 full proposals are due.

### **Requests for Funds to support MTF**

- Julie updated the group regarding the USDA program that they were researching that supplies \$50,000 to states to develop state aquaculture plans: the program has been created but no funds have ever been appropriated so there are no funds available
- Charlotte Regula-Whitefield from Senator Murkowski's office is working with a senator from New York regarding mariculture funding. They are not thinking this year but they are looking towards funding for next year.
- NOAA Grant- Julie has followed up with them and have not yet heard anything.
- Heather McCarty volunteered to follow up with the NOAA representative

### **Permit Applications**

- Cynthia Pring-Ham from F&G provided an updated- Fish & Game are still waiting for the Department of Natural Resources to process their applications for approval. Fish and Game have processed a few permits that do not need DNR approval they are on non-state land, but those are mostly small applications.
- The three applications that have been processed by Fish & Game are ones that are on non-State tidelands
  1. Hatchery in Kodiak
  2. Aquatic farm in the northern part of Kodiak that is on private lands
  3. Aquatic farm done for OceansAlaska

- DNR's extended wait time is due to the backlog caused by vacancies
- DNR is going through the applications in the date order that they arrive in their office
- Micaela Fowler updated the group regarding the DNR's insurance requirements and that they are working with DCCED's Division of Insurance's work to assist consumers with their general liability insurance on their lease lands.

### **Communications**

- Past/ future presentations: Mike Stekoll updated the task force on his Africa and Poland trips. The University is doing informal training sessions on mariculture
- AFDF did a presentation on mariculture at Southeast Conference. And the Symphony of Seafood will also be conducted at Pacific Marine Expo
- Mike Stekoll had interviews with the media regarding the ARPA-E grant
- Heather McCarty mentioned that NOAA staff has been in contact with AKCRRAB regarding their research

### **New Business**

#### **McDowell Group- Phase 2 progress**

Kirsten Shelton-Walker updated the group with regards to seven main conflicting issues. Other than those issues, all comments from the MTF have been incorporated into their Phase 2 document

Seven conflicting issues

1. Geoduck numbers are high- there is not much projected growth; McDowell group will cut back
2. Thirty year timeline seems a bit long
3. Recommendation to add sea cucumbers to the list of species that is being evaluated
  1. Sam Rabung supports but recommends that it be for enhancement not farming
  2. McDowell group requested guidance to get started on a goal for this species
  3. Kate Sullivan believes that sea cucumbers would be good to add but they are still working on preliminary numbers
  4. Sam Rabung asked McDowell group how to get to an estimated number when the numbers between juveniles and adults are very different. Will they survive?
  5. Kirsten recommended that sea cucumbers be included in the list of potential species but not fleshed out
4. The shellfish sanitation issue- how much of a hurdle is it with regards to industry growth.
  1. As of now, McDowell Group has it listed as a medium level. Should it be increased?
  2. Eric Wyatt recommended that for the near future, as it is a live market, sanitation should be marked as a high priority
  3. Kate Sullivan recommended that it be marked as critical due to the fact of the market disruption on shellfish if they are contaminated. She also suggested that other toxins be monitored for if the task force is going to recommend marketing shellfish internationally.
5. How to reduce repetition in chapter 2
  1. McDowell Group pulled repetitions but didn't find many
  2. Julie recommended that the McDowell group pull out the verbatim addendum
  3. Heather asked if the McDowell Group document was part of the comprehensive plan or if it was a separate document
  4. Kirsten believes that they could be two separate documents

5. Julie requested that the recommendations should be removed if this document is separated from the comprehensive plan
  6. Angel Drobnica supported this change as the Advisory Committee recommendations should be the meat of the comprehensive plan and should be removed from the McDowell report as an appendix
- Heather McCarty asked the group where they go from here to make progress on the final comprehensive plan
  - Kirsten explained that the McDowell Group's thought was that they finalize their document, hand it off to the MTF, and then stand by for further instructions.
  - The McDowell Group will do a final briefing paper after the MTF completes their work
  - Danielle with the Lieutenant Governor's office volunteered to get clarification from the Governor's Office regarding the directive to the task force to draft a plan. Do they draft the whole plan or just recommendations for a plan?

### **Recommendations for implementation of comprehensive plan**

- Julie Decker will send out the Scotland and the New Zealand section to the MTF so that they can have a refresher on what their plans look like
- The biggest issue will be to incorporate some of the overlapping issues from the McDowell Group report as well as address issues that will not appear at all
- Mike Stekoll stressed the importance for coming up with a target date to get the project finished.

### **Alaska Grown & WUSATA**

- Sam Rabung and Johanna Harris gave an update of programs that are available for aquatic farming
- Alaska Grown Program- mariculture would qualify for this program as it could help market mariculture. It is a very powerful tool that can be utilized by farmers.
- Julie asked Johanna with regards to the agriculture revolving loan fund if there was a clear answer on whether or not mariculture would qualify. Johanna told her that the board of agriculture has the final word and there is no way to know unless something comes in front of the board in the form of an application.
- WUSATA (Western United States Agriculture Trade Association)- program that is funded from foreign agriculture services. Division of Agriculture functions as the state lead for them.
- 6f discuss prioritization of recommendations from AC's
- Julie is still working on the master list of recommendations and would like to have a full day meeting to discuss prioritizations.
- Sam will check in with his AC to number their recommendations in order of priority and suggested that other AC's do the same.
- Julie's suggested that we have a 30,000 foot view with short, mid, and long term goals and in the short term, drill down into a detailed list as that is where the comprehensive work plan will come from.
- Julie will work out a date with the task force members for this meeting

### **Update to the Comprehensive Planning Diagram**

Change the September 1, 2017 column to Sept - Dec 2017

Add legislative hearings on bills to January 2018 column

**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**

- Julie Decker- draft spreadsheet of AC recommendations regarding the mariculture industry
- Julie Decker will get with MTF members for the next meeting date

**Next meeting dates:**

**Julie Decker will reach out to MTF members to identify dates that will work for everyone to attend the proposed all day meeting in November**

**4:26pm Meeting adjourned by Chair Julie Decker**