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Department of Commerce, Community,
Alaska Mariculture Task Force (MTF) Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2017

Attendees

Mariculture Task Force members attending: Jeff Hetrick, Eric Wyatt, Heather McCarty, Julie Decker, Sam Rabung, Micaela Fowler
Mike Stekoll joined for afternoon session
Kate Sullivan joined for afternoon session but was on and off the call

Members of the Public: Bobbi Hudson, Travis Smith DCRA, Charlotte Regula-Whitefield Sen Murkowski's office, Michelle Morris F&G, Tomi Marsh Oceans Alaska, Kimberly Striker DEC, Danielle Meeker Office of the Governor, Bill Hines NOAA fisheries
Kirsten Sheldon-Walker McDowell group joined for afternoon session

Materials distributed to task force members included: MTF Minutes, October 11, 2017 – DRAFT; Phase 2 – Final (McDowell Group), Advisory Committee Agendas/Minutes/Notes (see [MTF website](#)), Governor's Press Release regarding DCCED Transition, Bradners' Alaska Economic Report (excerpt), [SeafoodNews.com](#) article: "OceansAlaska Awarded Grant for Geoduck Seed", Outline of comp plan – draft (TBD), Carter Newell comments regarding overall goals, Administrative Order #280, Spreadsheet summary of AC recommendations, Diagram of Comprehensive Planning Process – Updated, NOAA In-Kind Match Form

10:07am Chair Julie Decker called meeting to order

Review and approve agenda
Heather McCarty motion to approve; Jeff Hetrick second; no objection

Review and approve minutes: October 11, 2017
Heather McCarty motion to approve; Sam Rabung second
Julie Decker suggested to add final minutes to the website. Linda Mattspm should change the draft minutes to final and resend to Julie Decker and Sam Rabung for posting on the website

Public introductions & comments

11:14am public comment opened
Linda Mattson suggested that a task force member make a motion to appoint JD as the chair
Julie recommended that it be discussed during the commissioner change portion
11:15am public comments closed

Old Business

Updates from Advisory Committee (AC) Chairs

- Heather McCarty provided an update for the final summary of the education subcommittee
- Jeff Hetrick investment and infrastructure- recommendation 1 SeaGrant interactive map tool was funded so that is positive movement forward

Legislation Update– none

- Jeff asked if there was going to be a concentrated effort to reach out to legislature on the legislation
- Julie answered that they are working with the legislature and especially Rep. Ortiz to speak to Sen. Finance people about the bills
- goal to work with people who have relationships with those in Sen. Finance to meet with them regarding the legislation
- Heather suggested to have a teleconference with those who might be interested in helping push the legislation forward
- Eric was curious to know how long it would take to implement if the legislation were to pass
- Sam said that it would take approximately six months to a year after if it were to pass in order to tweak regulations, put out to public comment, and other items that needed to be completed

Grant applications update

Julie mentioned allowing people to coordinate if they have submitted a pre-proposal or have anything that they coordinate with those around them for any grants that may be available

Requests for funds to support MTF (McCarty/Decker)

- Paul Deamus from NOAA said that they would try to get funding to support the MTF
- NOAA has not found anything on additional funding but they are still looking. They are pleased with the progress from the MTF and they are willing to look for funds to support the MTF
- Get F&G info 25:00 on recording
- Heather McCarty suggested that the Governor's Office lead the charge on getting funding for the MTF
- Bobbi Hudson reminded the group that they had a group in the Governors Office in Washington for their shellfish initiative
- Julie noted that timing is critical as we only have until March 2018 to get the report to the Governor's Office
- Julie reminded the group that the 50,000 that they would like to received is to finish what we started not to do anything extra- to finish finalizing the report, to facilitate travel, and other small items

Permit applications

- Sam provided an update- Fish and Game are still waiting for DNR to send the permits over to F&G

- They have been getting complaints that the permit applications are going slow; but are working on the applications as quickly as they come in- F&G process them in a few weeks which is relatively quickly
- Cynthia Pring-Ham continued the update on behalf of F&G
- DNR has issued one lease and F&G is following up on their operation permit
- The other applications are coming along but there is no count as some they are going through the various stages of the process. In the next couple of months, she estimates that the process will speed up.
- Julie will talk to Paula Cullenberg for funding and thoughts for SeaGrant to do the graphics for the plan

Communications / news: DCCED Commissioner, Bradners, seafoodnews.com

- Micaela updated the MTF on Commissioner Hladick's departure- he is no longer with DCCED as he is starting a new job at Region 10 at the EPA
- Mike Navarre is the new DCCED commissioner and plans to continue on the task force but maybe not be chair
 - Sam Rabung motioned to amend the agenda to address the issue of chairmanship; Jeff Hetrick seconded- no opposed
 - Jeff Hetrick spoke to the motion and asked if there was any requirement in the AO that the Commissioner of DCCED be the chairperson. None listed in the AO
 - Heather McCarty motioned to nominate Julie Decker as the chair of the MTF; Sam Rabung seconded- no opposed; motion passes
 - MF motioned to appoint Sam Rabung as the MTF vice chair; HM seconded- no opposed
 - The MTF looks forward to meeting Commissioner Navarre
- Tim Bradner will be contacting MTF members to get information as he is doing an article on mariculture
- Eric updated the group on the AK Shellfish Growers Association meeting DEC 7-9 in KTN; there is an increased awareness and interest in people attending. He suggested that maybe some legislatures or related industry representatives that might be interested in attending that the MTF encourage them to do so.
- Sam agreed with Eric's idea as in the past, Rep. Ortiz went two years ago and now he is sponsoring the two mariculture bills in the legislature
- The agenda has been posted online for people to view
- Heather asked if there was someone who was sending out invites and suggested that the legislature be added
- Bobbi Hudson said that there was an email list that the president was sending out invites but they just go to farmers
- Sam volunteered to post a link to the MTF task force page
- Abigail Tyman is the acting secretary and may provide some additional information; Eric will send Julie an email with her contact information
- KTN Shellfish festival is held at the same time- there is growing interest in holding that in 2018
- Jeff mentioned that the shellfish growers association host legislative events that might serve as a venue for the MTF to reach out to them

McDowell Group – Phase 2 - FINAL

- They included a 30 and a 50 year time frame but used it in a general fashion- they have sent Julie Decker a word version so the MTF can pull items from the report if they need to
- Feedback not needed as this is the final report- if there is a section that the MTF wants to highlight to include in the comprehensive plan, please let the drafting committee know
- Discussion regarding strategic plan report- do we do a report on the whole plan or just recommendations for a plan
- Danielle will confirm with the Governor's office
- Julie believes that the MTF should draft the plan not just recommendations
- The Department of Law reason for recommendations verbiage included in the AO- task force can make recommendations but the governor is not bound by those recommendations

11:45am the Task Force broke for working lunch (at 11:45am)

New Business

Review outline of comp plan (McCarty/Decker)

Julie went through the draft document that she and Heather McCarty drafted of the outline of the comprehensive plan

Goal- to organize the AC recommendations under the elements and identify gaps that might exist
Heather explained the breakdown of the recommendations and determined if there needed to be additions to the headings the the Advisory Groups had been divided into

Mike recommended to add an appendix E- work done to advance the mariculture industry in Alaska
The Governor's office will work to get a message from the Governor

The drafting committee will draft the message from the task force

List of task force members and their organizations they represent

Heather recommended to add endorsement messages from stakeholders that support the MTF's work

Sam motioned to use the example vision statement as the final vision statement; Heather McCarty seconded- no opposed

Sam motioned to use McDowell's heading "with strategic investment in overcoming current challenges, the Alaska mariculture industry could grow to a \$100 million industry in the next 20 years"; Eric Wyatt seconded- no opposed

Guiding principles of the plan

- The MTF will use Mike Stekoll's definition of mariculture in the definition. Definition- with respect mariculture is defined as enhancement of wild fisheries, aquatic farming, and restoration of invertebrates and aquatic plants; mariculture will not include finfish farming which is illegal in Alaska
- Coordination- we recognize that coordination at every level is important to advancing the mariculture industry
- Industry driven- Heather recommended that the drafting committee will do a couple of sentences to bring back to the group

- Heather noted that this has to do with the fact that the stakeholders in the industry should be out front driving this industry; not other entities imposing their will onto the industry
- Julie noted that the industry should help set the agenda as it gives them responsibility to drive the industry
- Compatibility with sustainability principles- Sam recommended to use the wording from the AO with slight tweaks to the word “reputation”
- Inclusion of Alaska Native community at every level- Sam suggested to make it a little more inclusive so that the task force be aware of the wording
- Micaela recommended that the MTF run this principle by Barbara Blake at the LG’s office to check the wording before we change it
- Eric reminded the task force that mariculture as an economic driver is more important to rural communities than urban centers and involvement might be more impacted by those coastal communities
- Heather recommended that the coastal communities and the native communities be two separate guiding principles and that if the task force recognizes them, it will go a long way to getting a mariculture program on its feet
- The need for economic focus in coastal communities mostly native
- The potential conflict between Alaska native lifestyles and what they envision mariculture to be doing
- Mike suggested that all the guiding principles be general
- Innovative approach- Julie would like to be creative with the industry to address the challenges that exist to make it grow. Not just research and development innovation but innovation at every level.
- Jeff suggested to re-word the item to state that there are challenges but we are determined to overcome challenges through innovative approaches and commitment

Elements of the Plan

- Establish an industry-driven, multi-stakeholder coordinating entity
- Heather suggested to have a bottom up approach instead of a top down approach to bring more people to the table to accomplish a common goal
- Eric asked if this entity will hold a political or non-political role
- Mike recommends that it be created by the governor so that it would transcend administrations and have the governor appoint the chairperson so that it exists and is legitimized
- Micaela cautioned that there are implications to forming boards that are political- used the Alaska Tourism Marketing Board as an example
- Jeff suggested that commerce be the lead for the mariculture industry in Alaska to streamline for promoting and maybe change the view
- Julie- what is realistic in what we ask people to do for us. Does it make sense to move in the direction of establishing an agency in statute?
- Eric suggested to look at other places to see how they operate; and to have an entity that is not within the state system
- Mike supports having a government presence in the entity so that the state has a stake in growing the industry

- Jeff wants to know what the implementation plan is after the task force is done- wants this task force to be the beginning of the forward progress and not to stop meeting after the group is disbanded
- Micaela recommended that external governance is the best way to keep forward momentum regardless of changes in government; there is no reason why state agencies can't be involved
- Jeff requested that the MTF ask the governor to continue to support the implementation of the comprehensive plan and the continuation of the task force

Support hatchery infrastructure

- Mike used Japan's and South Africa's models to illustrate the different types of hatcheries and recommended that it be moved down the list of priorities
- We have three existing entities that are all slightly different- how to we support them but leave the door open for new hatcheries to come on line
- Sam recommended that entities put into their plan to develop more seed to support the hatchery
- Eric highlighted the importance of supporting the small businesses that want to grow in the industry to not be shut out by the large businesses.
- Julie stressed the importance of not going backwards in finding assets to support the mariculture industry. Not a shoestring budget but to empower business to focus on what they need to produce and not to worry about keeping the lights on
- Eric reminded members that it is important to find new collateral to support hatcheries because the criteria for loans funds from the state constantly changes- to ensure small and medium industry access to seed
- Sam suggested that it be rephrased to say something like support seed production and funding mechanisms to capture that it is both.

Align laws and regulations with industry needs

- Heather recommended to use the list identified by the Regulatory issues AC
- Micaela updated the group on the DNR/ DOI requirement- there is nothing in their requirements is necessary so Ed King from DNR is open to specific people that the MTF knows that has applications that are being held up because of the general liability insurance issue send those names to Micaela and she will follow up. The PNI insurance is the one that is recommended that they have.
- Julie will take the Regulatory issues AC number 1 priorities with some combinations to add them to the list under this number

Establish a mariculture research center at the University of Alaska

- If they are not listed in order of priority, then use letters to distinguish between them
- Eric stated that the essential part is the director and not the location and to change the wording of the point
- Should this list be in order of priority- no
- Mike will pull out the items that the AC would like to highlight for this section and then the full list of AC recommendations will be in the appendix
- Encourage investment through new and existing sources for mariculture priorities
- Heather recommends to combine numbers 2 and 5

- Jeff recommended against it as money for seed and infrastructure should be separate from investment in the mariculture industry
- Julie mentioned that a subsidy is a short term solution and in the long term, industry should assess themselves to pay for it
- Heather asked what items from the AC should be under this point
- Julie suggested that alignment of the existing resources should be deployed in a more effective way to support mariculture
- One of the hurdles of the industry is the economy of sale which will help if we bring in a larger producer to help- do we need to encourage outside companies to come to Alaska to invest

Heather suggested a 10 minute break

Recognize and counter opposition to mariculture and aquaculture

- Heather explained that this is part of an advocacy type approach and is important to delineate what those concerns are and to address them very specifically. Who will do that?
- Sam suggested that rather than saying “counter” to say “address”

Improve public understanding and support for mariculture

- This point was added as it is different from the idea of research as it is more education focused.

Promote Alaska Native participation and success in mariculture

- Sam reminded the group that mariculture is an economic activity and a good driver of the economy is in coastal communities which are often populated by native people
- Jeff recommended to use the word “partnering” with regards to the native community
- Cynthia suggested “foster partnerships” with the Alaska Native
- Julie will connect with Barbara Blake on this point as this group of people has access to funds that the general public does not have access to and should be considered as an economic driver to mariculture
- Mike suggested that maybe ANSEP help with mariculture and including it into their curriculum

Support mariculture workforce development

- Integrate the workforce and development AC recommendations into this bullet point
- Eric commented that hands on training is essential and face to face interaction is so much more effective than videos or other methods of training
- There are blocks of time when many shareholders meet together that training sessions could be offered at those events

Maintain environmental integrity; monitor and mitigate/ adapt to environmental changes

- Heather mentioned that there should be a set of guidelines that are developed to help the industry be mindful of environmental integrity in mariculture
- Jeff mentioned that maintaining environmental integrity is different than monitor and mitigating the environmental changes and that they maybe should be separated

- Heather mentioned that it could be either a public relations issue or an environmental issue- how do you show that you're being responsible with the resource?
- Eric- if there was some type of promotional video that shows how mariculture is helping the environment that may be one way to educate is to visually demonstrate that it is actually positive in terms of habitat
- Heather wants to be sure that we check the sustainability box but the industry has to show with a certification program that they are doing things right. It may belong in the public relations section and not the environmental section.
- Eric suggests to expand the first portion of the phrase to explain that it is integrated into mariculture
- Sam suggested to have a references section maybe as an appendices
- Cynthia informed the group that there was an environmental code of practice that the Alaska Shellfish Growers developed for the industry and it's been in draft form and that it may be something to finalize to have a credential that has the associations name on it- she will send it on to Julie for reference
- How do you mitigate environmental changes? Does it need to be a separate bullet?
- Mike spoke to his time in South Africa- the growers were out in the ocean and the ocean temperature was getting too high so they moved it inside to mitigate the environmental changes
- Eric noted that yes, it is important, but does it rise to the level of an element?
- Decision made to strike it and integrate the information into other elements that have already been listed

Promote market development for mariculture products

- ASMI works with Alaska Grown
- WUSATA is somewhat limited
- Heather is going to go through the McDowell Group report to see what they say about marketing
- Heather reminded the group that some people think that there should be a separate marketing organization for shellfish and other mariculture products. If there was a coordinating group, that might be one of the focuses of such a group.
- Sam mentioned that ASMI would have to change many of their logos to reflect any changes if mariculture is tucked into them
- Julie believes that ASMI and Alaska Grown have done some marketing of mariculture and that it is not a high priority item at the moment

Heather recommended that the task force sort out who the responsible parties should be for completing the recommendations- she recommended that the drafting committee separate them out and then bring them back to the task force

Eric asked what the final plan is going to look like- Heather spoke to the New Zealand model as to what our plan would look like

Julie recommended to prioritize the important items and who is going to do them- she doesn't believe that all of the AC recommendations should be listed with an entity that is responsible for them

Eric reminded the group that we have a lot of things that need to be done but not how to do it- we need to communicate the importance of this industry so that it can grow. The solution isn't inflexible and can be adapted to new goals as the industry grows.

Sam recommended that the MTF present options for the implementation of the plan

Julie asked the MTF consider putting the top three elements at the top and then the others toward the bottom that are necessary but not essential

Eric suggested that the mariculture resource center should be moved to number 3 in order of importance with deference given to the public as they comment on the draft report

Sam agreed, mariculture resource center moved

Heather suggested that No. 1 be more general- coordinated implementation is on the mind of the MTF and they can provide the coordinating step with the long term goal of forming the entity that can implement the plan. The MTF can provide that link to keep work going on the plan

Mike stressed the importance of this being an actionable item- it can't just sit on the shelf and be another report from another committee

Eric suggested that the MTF indicate that industry representatives is more than just interested parties and to have a certain level of detail that isn't set in stone but gives something for industry to look at

Updates to diagram of comprehensive planning process

- Goal of Dec 1 Drafting Committee- come out of that meeting with a draft of the plan
- Heather suggested to have a MTF meeting after the drafting committee meeting to approve the document that has come out of the drafting committee, recommended the 18 to the 20 of December
- Sam suggested to have the draft approved before ASGA and to present it to ASGA in an informal way (maybe a PowerPoint) to get input from the stakeholders there
- Mid to late January- get public outreach started for official public comments
- Eric asked how the comments would be assimilated
- Julie recommended that the comments should be written down so that the MTF can deduce how best to address the comments
- Sam recommended that the MTF review the comments and take them with a grain of salt to be sure they are helpful to the report
- February- additional work to finalize the report
- Jeff recommended that the report include messages of endorsement from the entities that are represented on the task force to give credibility to the report and the work done by the task force

Heather Draft plan dates

Dec 1 drafting committee drafts plan

Dec 8 draft plan to MTF and ASGA

Mid Dec to beginning of Jan- send draft report out for public comment

Jan 8 week- MTF meeting to sign off on public comment for draft report

Mid Jan- Mid Feb Officially release public rough draft and get more public comment

Mid Feb- prepare summary of public comments and do approval of final draft

Eric asked what are we expecting from the public comments that come in?

Sam noted that it's required but we don't necessarily have to incorporate the public comments into the final plan

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

Drafting Committee meets December 1

- Drafting committee should have work done by January MTF Meeting
- Jeff Hetrick volunteered to participate in the drafting committee
- Drafting Committee will send report to MTF to review

Next meeting dates:

- Week of January 8 or 22- meeting to review final report
- Julie will do a poll for MTF members to find availability for next meeting

4:57pm Meeting adjourned by Chair Julie Decker