

**Summary of
Meeting of the Taunton Bay Advisory Group
6 PM Tuesday, September 16th 2008
Hancock TBE Center
Facilitated by Sherman Hoyt
University of Maine Cooperative Extension
Summary Recording by Matthew Nixon
NOAA Coastal Fellow**

Present: Steve Perrin, Frank Dorsey, Lee Hudson, Mike Briggs, Doug Kimmel, Antonio Blasi, Slade Moore, and John Sowles.

Updates On Fisheries

John Sowles:

- 8 For, 1 Against, 5 Abstentions Regarding the harvest plan
- 1 Against because of TAC on urchins
- John elaborated by saying even DMR has concerns over TAC's because of upkeep
- Bay is open to mussel harvesting, urchin, *but may not open to scallops if the proposed scallop closures are approved*
- Mussel Harvesters have permission to go in, but can't because of flood closures, and poor meat quality in the upper bay will delay harvest there.

Research Agenda Items

- **Eelgrass** – Proposal by Deborah McNaught and W. Norden: *Creating an eelgrass sanctuary and restoration strategy for Taunton Bay*
- Proposal needs to get historical data.
- Mr. Perrin emphasized the need for interfacing TBAG and academic results and findings.
- A Condition of support would be perhaps to get final report within set time frame on data.
- Proposal to have the researchers (McNaught) come to the next meeting.
- Everyone should send Frank an email about what they want to hear from next proposals, and if she *needs* to come in, she will, if not, never mind.
- What is the proposed location for the study?

Water Quality – Too expensive currently to do full-fledged water quality monitoring project.

- DEP project on water classification – John clarified by saying classification does not necessarily indicate water quality is being attained but rather is a management goal to protect existing and designated uses, including water quality.

- Matt suggested keeping in contact with my old boss at EPA regarding the WQ project
- Primarily storm event sampling would be involved
- Currently there is no proof of offsite contamination, could be onsite...
- Potential for towns to kick in money for WQ monitoring, write a letter to the towns asking if they would consider contributing money.
- John wants to do study of characterization of bay and identification of potential threats.
- For Letter: author may mention practices of Code Enforcement Officer
- Potential to get flushing and water circulation issues covered under this as well.

Shellfish – to date, towns have not been interested in three town ordinance. Maybe ask again? Harvesters were interested, but lack of support from the towns may have discouraged future involvement.

- Perhaps some form of top down management other than the state (municipal or county) would work
- Counties might be a useful way to manage shellfish (Antonio will follow up on this) Will contact Hancock County Commission
- Three town ordinance initiative might be model for other areas to manage shellfish (1 regional initiative on St George River with Thomaston, etc), could this ordinance serve as a model for Taunton Bay?
- Need to get shellfish digger and municipal representation on advisory group.
- Potential to have shellfish harvesters come forward with an ordinance? Would provide protection against outsiders, perhaps incentives, reopen some of the flats.
- Good way of engaging major fishing industry with advisory group.
- John will get draft ordinances from Hannah.

Access Issues – restricted access is how the bay has been kept uncrowded

- No all tide access in upper bay
- When there is a red tide closing, too many cars in too few spots at few spots of access
- Must be revisited

Worms – Steve commented that there are more sandpipers around than in past ten years.

Shorebirds – Steve goes out two days every week to count shorebirds and doesn't think his counting method works. Thinks someone needs to dedicate time every day to count and then do the same next year to identify any difference in numbers.

- Maybe done with remote T.V. camera.
- Steve is interested in the forage base and how worm-harvesting effects forage base.
- Studies on this relationship are scarce. If we identify significant benthic changes that effect shorebirds, then maybe we can identify certain management practices instead of just closing off "15 acres" to protect shorebirds.

- Effects are always in flux so there is no particular way to identify effects barring a call for research proposals.
- Would Maine Audubon be interested in partnering on a proposal?
- If research database gets compiled, could potentially pull in researchers to do studies, maybe come up with a list for researchers.

Procedures for Public Participation during Meetings

- Deferred to next meeting in October
- Harvesters may have knowledge of particular meeting policies and know when restricted to talk, but other guests do not have this knowledge of procedure and feel they can talk whenever. This may discourage harvesters. Need to stick to current policy: at the beginning and end of meeting is the time to talk.
- Is there too much representation by some, is the group truly representative, should we have some internal policy on keeping a few people from dominating the conversation?

Decision Making by the Advisory Group

- Need to formalize the decision making process so we know when we have made a decision.
- John got all perspectives at the last time the group had to make decisions and feels no changes need to be made as this is a transition period between when we made a many decisions and now we need to decide where we want to go. More of a brainstorming session.
- Sherm says, if we need a call for a decision, Speak Up, don't be "wishy washy".
- Everyone must be polled as we cannot say "the group agreed" but we can say, the group is moving in this direction as certain members may not necessarily agree with everyone.
- The best way to document potential decisions in the meeting summaries is, "*the group discussed...*", so as not to imply full consensus, unless otherwise noted.

Mission Statement

- Steve feels that "Stewardship" should be placed within the mission statement.
- **General** consensus is that the mission statement should be revisited.

Panel Presentation on September 25th

- John offered a phone call/conference call might be sufficient as it was 8:45 PM
- Mike feels it should be 10 minutes at most
- Mike wants to have a public meeting to explain to everyone what we are doing to the bay.
- Antonio has access to public access on cable TV for advertising.
- Place ads in stores
- John is putting together a non-member list for emails to people not on the advisory council.
- Keep track of what we did and what response we got
- DMR and FOTB sponsor this panel discussion.

- Frank offered to review a draft of John's presentation.

Adjourn

- The group acknowledged that we may be "putting off a lot of stuff" for next meeting.
- Sherm announced that his funding to facilitate will run out this spring. Ron Beard can train facilitators at the Hancock county center. He feels it might be time to facilitate from within the group.
- Urchin meeting will be the day after tomorrow looking at variety of urchin management options.
- Sherm is traveling on his own budget now and has been for quite some time.

Assignments:

Frank – Eelgrass

Antonio – Tri-Town Ordinance

John – Water Quality

John, Steve, Slade – Shorebirds

Lee – Follow up on gear work for shellfish and harvesting research in general