

**Summary of  
Meeting of the Taunton Bay Advisory Group  
6 PM Tuesday, January 20, 2009  
Sullivan Town Hall  
Facilitated by Sherman Hoyt  
University of Maine Cooperative Extension  
Summary Recording by Matthew Nixon  
NOAA Coastal Fellow**

**Advisors Present:** Steve Perrin, Lee Hudson, Antonio Blasi, Shep Erhart, and John Sowles

**Others:** Matt Nixon

**Old Business**

- **Updates on Website and Publicity**
  - The Group's website has been reorganized to reflect relevant documents with a sub-category for meeting summaries. Future additions include an aerial photograph and the Group's year in review report.
  - A short summary, found at the end of this document, was sent out to the Marine Dialogue listserv to facilitate communication of the proceedings of the group.
  - **Antonio:** Asked if we still would like to continue to run the Friends of Taunton Bay informational community meeting that was held last fall on Hancock's public access channel? Antonio is worried that it may seem outdated. Currently there are two Taunton Bay-related programs showing on Hancock's public access.
    - **John** suggested that we could record the Fisherman's Forum panel on Taunton Bay to replace the current broadcast.
    - **Antonio** noted that all recordings can be reviewed for approval before they are aired.
    - **Steve** sees that airing the group's proceedings would be useful as they are in essence "public meetings" and that advising the commissioner should be an open process.
    - The Group's consensus is that the first public airing should be done by way of filming the panel at the Fisherman's Forum and this will be broadcasted.
  - **Website:** The idea of a blog for the website was introduced and will be discussed at a later date.
  - **Lee** is interested in having the summary used for distribution to the Marine Dialogue Listserv sent out for review to the members of the Group before it is relayed to the public. Her main concern with the last summary was wording regarding tray allocation for urchin harvesters. Her point was that

dividing, which is what actually happened, is different than allocation. From her point of view, the Department violated the original TAC and the reasons should be clarified in the report. In the future, Matt will give the Advisory Group a week of review of the Public Summary for corrections.

- **Municipal Meetings**

- **John** spoke to all three towns and asked if they would like to invite him to their respective town meetings to update them on the Taunton Bay project and also allow him to make a case to be involved. John is planning on picking up where he left off last time which was a preliminary briefing on the Taunton Bay Management Plan to the Selectmen, and then continuing from there with what has happened since the briefing. His briefing will cover fisheries, water quality, land use, public access and other topics.
- Sullivan will be on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 5PM. He is awaiting word from Hancock and Franklin. There will be an update at the next meeting.

- **Report on Carrying Place Cove**

- **John** sent a letter to the CEO from the town of Hancock along with a map showing the area in question adjacent to Carrying Place Cove. The CEO promptly called John back. The CEO asked when DMR's samples had been taken, and said that within the last year he had identified a single family dwelling with a failed system and that has since been rectified. John agreed to resample the sites after the spring thaw .

- **Report on meeting on eelgrass research- Frank**

- Seth Barker and John met with Wendy Norden about her interest in doing eelgrass research in the bay. Wendy is interested in an eelgrass restoration project. Seth and John would like to support work to find out what caused the loss of eelgrass in the first place and why it comes back. Once the cause is known, restoration may be an option . Regardless, John supports the work.
- **John** suggested inviting Wendy Norden to come and give a presentation to the Group about her project. John will follow up with this.
- **John** expressed excitement in that fact that there are a number of people who are now interested in eelgrass research in the Taunton Bay.
- **Shep** met up with Seth Barker and got him involved in the biomass assessment project for Taunton Bay because of the great photo resources that Seth possesses.

- **Field work proposed for spring/summer 2009**

- **John** wants to shift emphasis from fisheries to some of the ecological components of the original plan that has not yet been accomplished. This would fulfill the comprehensive nature of the stated goals of the management

plan that includes protection of water quality, wildlife, and habitat, He is proposing to put in five days of field work on DMR's side with local to sample mudflat forage species.

- **Steve** said that there was a study done in Machias with the same goals (20 samples) and *Corophium* species were found in the samples.
- **Antonio** asked if sample results would be posted online. John said they can be. Antonio asked what the pros and cons of this were. John said online data in raw form can be taken many different ways and to avoid misinterpretation, data would benefit from some context and background information.
- **John** then elaborated on the field work idea. Shep asked if he wanted assistance and at what times during the year. John said yes, assistance would be welcomed, and a couple of times a year, specifically when shorebirds are returning. Steve had been interested in getting shorebird counts for the entire season daily and had called up Maine Audubon about how they get volunteers for their counts. John clarified by saying he wanted to get volunteers to assess infauna, not shorebird counts. Although counts would be valuable, with the resources at hand, John chose the most attainable.
  - The project setup would be a late July, a late August, and a late September survey for females, males and juveniles respectively.
  - **John** has discussed methods with Diane Hamilton (Canada).
  - **John** does have funding available for this project. Some student involvement could be utilized.
  - Steve asked if there was a chance of getting another organization with experience to do some of the work. To hire out professionally, each sample would cost between \$250 - \$400 per coffee can-sized sample.
  - **John's** reasoning behind this proposed work is that when the Taunton Bay project sunsets, he wants to have efforts towards all aspects of the project (which includes ecological work), not just a focus on dragging or fisheries.
- **John** then elaborated on a proposed project for chlorophyll and nutrients research to last from May – September on a bi-weekly basis.
- **John** will also follow up on eelgrass work as well. Steve asked John about working on a poster for a poster session at the upcoming eelgrass workshop in Portland. John suggested that a potential poster might display eelgrass observations and followed by observations with several different views and theories about eelgrass dieback. At the end of the poster, there could be several different hypotheses and the idea would be an attempt to raise awareness of the research opportunities available in Taunton Bay.
- **Shep** asked about the logistics of the nutrients project. John wants to create a “baseline” for comparison to measurable objectives in the management plan. This is how one can determine whether or not management is successful. John would train volunteers and give the necessary equipment for water quality samples.
- **Lee** suggested bringing up idea of recruiting volunteers at the Friends of Taunton Bay meetings as volunteers are always willing to do something, especially during the summer months.

- **Updates on fisheries activity**
  - **Mussels** – There has been no known activity above the bridge related to mussels. There have been approximately two trips below the bridge. The total catch was about 700 bushels. One lobster and one piece of kelp were captured as by catch below the bridge. Both were released alive.
    - Great Eastern closing did not impact the harvesters in a direct fashion. Sherm asked if there would be any harvesting above the bridge before the spring. Lee said if she could find a market then yes.
  - **Urchins** – The tally as of last Friday (1/16/09) was 156 Trays total (halfway through the season). The price is currently at .50 cents per bushel as finding a buyer is difficult. A couple of the new fishermen who wanted an endorsement at the second allocation meeting have not fished and likely will not do so.
    - **John** has the names of fishermen who will be doing a stock assessment which will be occurring after the season.
  - **Scallops** – No one has reported fishing for scallops by any means.
  - **Misc** –
    - Tickets have been issued to a handful of urchiners for different reasons.
      - Just outside the falls there were six boats dragging for urchins. This may be a result of highlighting all of the conservation efforts in Taunton Bay as fishermen may be coming to take advantage of “spillover”. Sherm does not believe this theory as fishermen tend to go where they know the fish are. John hopes to talk to some of the harvesters to figure out why they were there.
      - **Shep** asked if urchin landings were good above the bridge. Lee said yes, it was decent. Shep commented on several studies that had been done related to spillover that showed that the effect may be true when fishing near a protected or managed area.
      - The spillover issue is indicative of a larger issue about making a living where you live. There are two different systems occurring at the same time and one may not lend itself to the other. John added that any time one draws a line, it creates a problem.
      - **Sherm** added that the Urchin Harvesters Council is considering using similar management methods for Zone One as are now in place in Taunton Bay.
      - **Lee** is concerned with having her resource taken from her by non-participants when she has spent much time and effort trying to protect it.
      - Additional meetings on how management restrictions went will be disseminated at meetings after the assessment to hear from the fishermen’s point of view.

**New Business:**

- **California workshop report – Sherm Hoyt**

- This was a great opportunity to go out and speak to the successes of the Taunton Bay Management Group. The audience that he spoke with was very interested in what he had to say. The take-home message was that there is nothing like Taunton Bay going on out in California.
  - Maine and California have vastly different management issues in that Maine has a large commercial fishing population to manage in comparison to California's smaller population and California has a very large recreational fishery as opposed to Maine's.
  - The other take-home message was that there are several examples of fishermen collecting good scientific data and that in Australia there is an initiative that fishermen *must* do scientific stock assessment in order to enter the fishery. Lee added that this is already being pursued pertaining to the urchin industry in Taunton Bay.
  - California also passed a law in 1999 at the state level that *all* fisheries will be managed sustainably. This is not attainable in California as of this time.
  - Lastly, the urchin and abalone divers are using GPS trackers that clip onto dive suits to download a GPS track of where they are fishing. This cannot be forced on fishermen but can be given to fishermen who volunteer and allows for small-scale data collection.
- **Fishermen's Forum seminar – John and Sherm**
    - **Lee** has volunteered to attend. The forum will take place at 9:00 AM on a Saturday morning at the Samoset Resort in Rockport. John will pay mileage for any volunteers. The forum is the commercial industry's chance to get together. John asked for volunteers for the panel to at least answer questions or make a five minute presentation on how the management efforts have affected them.
    - **Sherm** added that it's an opportunity to review what the Group has done and what has worked and what hasn't worked.
    - The bottom line is; John would like a more diverse panel. Shep said he might show up. Steve will also look into it.
- **Fisheries "end of season" meetings with harvesters**
    - These will take place after the assessments. These meetings will be better if done one at a time.
- **Thoughts on "Life After TBMA"- John**
    - The current initiative sunsets on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The purpose of this discussion is to review and make recommendations for the future. John sees at least several options including a complete closure once again, institutionalize something based on what we've learned, , or dissolve the initiative altogether.

- **John** wants everyone to think about this as there is only a year left.
- **Sherm** asked if there was a follow up meeting for harvesters. John was not sure. He said that the harvesters were planning on doing it themselves. Lee asked if because of the minimal harvesters this year if reassessment would be necessary. John said not at this point.

- **Adjournment:**

- Items for the next meeting include revisiting field work study proposals, finalizing the Fisherman's Forum plans, and scheduling Wendy Norden for an update on her grant.
- **Steve** asked about new names for potential advisors. John said that the pitch to the town officials for Group involvement would be vital as filling this hole is the biggest task.
- **Sherm** will not be here as facilitator on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. He suggested going to the Hancock extension to get trained or finding local people. John asked if the town meetings were facilitated. Antonio said they are moderated by an appointed citizen.
- **Shep** said he would be interested in how it goes in March when Sherm is not here. Sherm asked if there was someone willing to take over the duties of facilitator for March. Shep volunteered. He also said he liked the idea of sharing the role on a rotating basis. Sherm said he's going to talk to Ron Beard about how Cooperative Extension trainees may be charging high fees and how this is not conducive to smaller meetings.
- The next meeting will be March 17<sup>th</sup>, location to be determined.