

**Summary of  
Meeting of the Taunton Bay Advisory Group  
6 PM Tuesday March 17th  
Franklin Town Hall  
Facilitated by Sherman Hoyt**

Advisors present: Antonio Blasi, Frank Dorsey, Shep Erhart, Lee Hudson, Steve Perrin, and John Sowles

Shep opened the meeting by outlining the agenda.

John recapped the Fishermans Forum presentation and panel discussion. At it, John gave an overview of the project. Sherm Hoyt talked about the fisherman participation and stewardship. Slade Moore presented the important ecological elements. Lee Hudson and James West shared their perspective on how the project has gone and how it has affected them. And Representative Rob Eaton finished off by talking about how this project, or parts of it, might help legislators and managers as they confront issues elsewhere along the coast. Matt Nixon taped the proceedings and John will convert it to DVD format to share with those not attending. Antonio will also try to run it on Hancock's community access channel and <<http://www.hancockcabletv.com/>>.

Frank asked what the negative and positive responses to the presentation were. John shared that fishermen do not like this. It is yet another constraint among many that costs them in dollars and freedom. On the positive side, John said that there was enthusiasm over the fact that we are actually trying, as opposed to talking about, to manage marine resources in an ecologically sustainable way that considers local communities.

Steve thought the most positive part of the presentation was Representative Rob Eaton's description of this being the way of our future.

Lee was worried we focus too much on the positive. In her mind, the most positive aspect of the presentation was that the audience got to see what we and fishermen are dealing with. Steve was not sure that fishermen were listening but encouraged further conversations with all users of the bay. Lee thinks they've listened. There seemed to be disagreement over that point but most all agreed that we do need to continue reaching out to fishermen through meetings and other forms such as fisherman participation in the science. We also need to point out on misinformation on the spot.

Lee passed out the 2007 Mission statement with the November 10<sup>th</sup> proposed amendment. There was consensus that implementation needed to be added as part of the mission, not just creation. After some back and forth, the group realized they were not going to resolve it that night and did not want to spend time on it. Steve also noted that Slade and Lee were to resolve three items and report back to the group with recommendations. Since that has not been done, Lee will work with Slade and email the group. Once the mission statement is refined, John will post it on the webpage.

Regarding the 2009 summer fieldwork, John asked who we can tap for resources for three projects; water quality sampling, mudflat infauna, and eelgrass research.

Water Quality – John’s very cursory work done in the 1990s can be expanded into a time series. The work consists of Secchi disk readings, and nutrient and chlorophyll samples, May into September. We can invite fishermen to work with us.

Infauna - Frank offered to work with John to come up with a statistically valid infauna sample design, one that can be repeated in the future and can be used to assess change over time. John will consult with Steve for a clear objective statement on this. Will Ambrose and Brian Beal were mentioned as possible researchers and we will consider drawing on methods already developed in Canada. There was interest in photographing worming and clammer activities to see the extent of mud being turned over and depth. Questions such as “are Corophium killed when mud is turned?” could be answered.

Eelgrass – Wendy Norden has some funding to begin work on Taunton Bay eelgrass. We do not know the specifics of her project but Frank suggested that we invite Wendy to the April meeting. Steve asked if his aerial photos are useful and John replied that while they may not be GIS quality that allows one to accurately measure area, they are useful in indicating change in eelgrass distribution.

To correct an error he created at a previous meeting, John explained that the Taunton Bay sunset date is December 2010, not January 2010. Nevertheless, he urged advisors to think ahead to alternative systems of management; perhaps a permit system or some local authoritative body. Lee did not think that a local entity would be possible, but maybe use the group as an intermediary to balance opinions for the DMR. Steve thought that local people could easily be involved in identifying constraints, concerns, and documenting presence of resources. Then the DMR could use that information as a basis for fisheries decisions. Steve thought that we would need wider membership, e.g. from Frenchmans Bay, Jordan and Skillings Rivers to help augment the diversity. We also need municipal involvement. Steve mentioned that the East Penobscot Bay Alliance film that followed the Taunton Bay panel discussion at the Fisherman’s Forum showed a great example of how to do it. There needs to be trust from State that the group is responsible.

John stated he continues to put together DMR’s and his perspective on this project. Frank requested that everyone email John their thoughts on what we have done well and what can we do better. Lee liked format used by the Aquaculture Task Force where the report concluded with individual comments. We will put this on the agenda for next meeting.

John recapped his meeting with the Sullivan Selectmen. Three selectmen were present and asked some good questions. John made the point that we would like more communication with the town and that as we work into other issues like water quality and access, there will need to be more exchange. Frank reported on the Sullivan dock situation, that the Frenchman Bay Conservancy pledged \$100k. At the Sullivan public meeting, most were in favor but some were concerned about kayakers getting swept by

the current and the proliferation of jet skis. However, in the end, the vote was unanimously (35ish) in favor. The project is in two stages, feasibility then construction. With funding still an issue, the project is a year or two away at least.

John updated the group on the fishery harvest levels. The urchin harvest remained within the original 240 trays. Lee pointed out that despite the bay being reopened, there was not a line of boats in the bay harvesting mussels.

Steve reported that Joe Porada has requested a 2 acre experimental lease for hardclam (quahogs) and called Steve to learn about the issues. Steve thought that if the group would like more information perhaps Porada could come to the May meeting. Steve also expressed interest in hearing more about Brian Beal's clam growth study done 2006 and 2007 in which he apparently found the slowest growth in Maine. He suggested that we invite Brian to the July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Frank reported that he'd received Sue Schaller's 2008 report and she recorded 39 crabs that she had tagged in 2001. Only 1 was female. Are the females molting and coming back untagged? She has had two tagged molted shells returned. Sue has funding to buy tags for 2009. Frank also mentioned that a David Smith of the US Geological Survey will be using Taunton Bay data for an ASFMC (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission) population survey.

Antonio reported that Hancock is going to be digitized tax maps with zoning layers. So far, zones are same as before but this information may be useful to the group.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 21<sup>st</sup> with Sherman returning as facilitator.