

**Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group
DRAFT Meeting Summary**



Date: April 15, 2020
Location: Webinar
Time: 4:00-5:30 PM

Attendees: Cody Gillis, Max Burtis, Randy Hamilton, Josie Carter, Natalie Moon, Caitlin Cleaver, Rep. Jay McCreight, Carissa Aoki, Sophia Miller, Paul Plummer, Marissa McMahan, Ari Leach, Dan Deveraux, Nate Orff, Susan Olcott, Judy Colby-George, Ivy Frignoca, anonymous caller, Jessica Joyce and Anne Hayden.

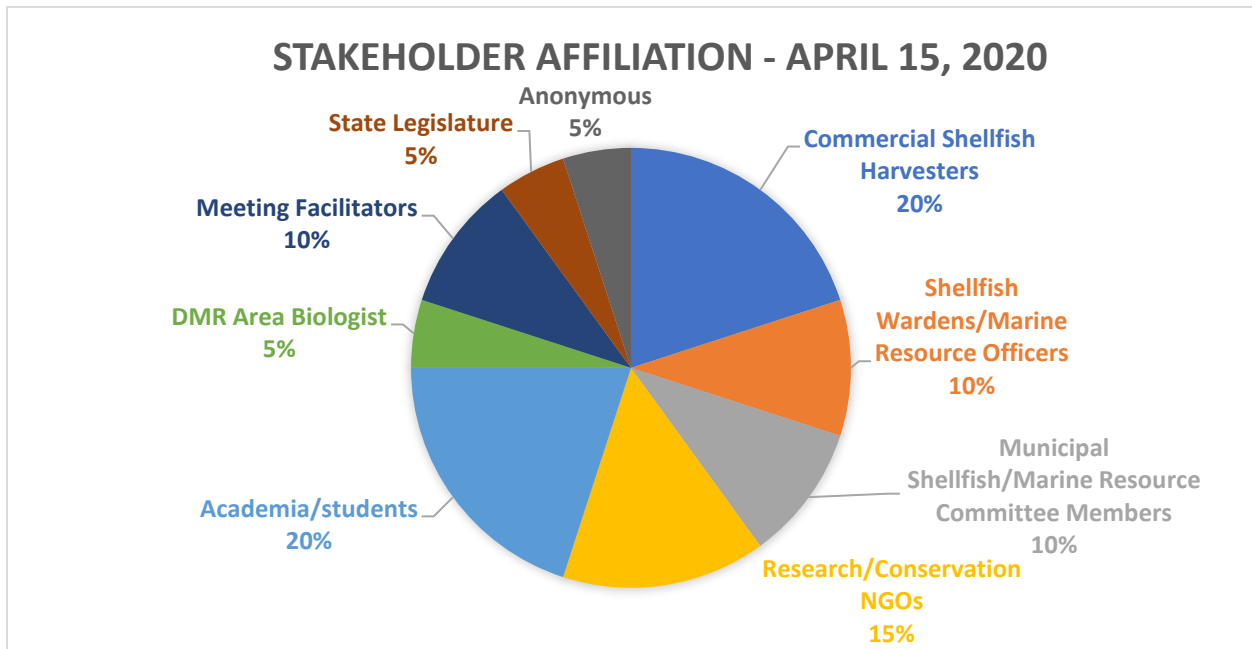


Figure 1 – Stakeholder Affiliation (n=20)

Welcome and agenda review

The meeting started with an acknowledgement that the fishing community is being significantly and adversely impacted by this pandemic. The facilitators held this webinar because of the importance of planning for the future management of this resource, even during a crisis when it is hard to focus on anything more than today. Also, hearing from towns about their needs will help the Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group (WG) understand how to support the shellfish community during these difficult times.

On that note, working with the Broad Reach Fund of the Maine Community Foundation, the WG was able to provide direct assistance to participating towns in Casco Bay. We distributed over 80 Hannaford gift cards to 76 harvesters in 9 towns (\$3,150) as well as several local food

pantries. Thank you to all the wardens, shellfish/marine resource committee chairs, and town clerks who helped make this happen, and to the Mid-Coast Hunger Prevention Program for distributing cards to license holders in Brunswick and Harpswell!

Town Sharing

Harpswell: They are focused on installing an upweller and are struggling to get the out-of-state materials at this time. The goal is to get everything ready so they can start the project once things open up. They have a pending order in to get 500,000 juvenile quahogs, and are hoping system will be in the water by late May, early June.

Scarborough: Their last in-person meeting was cancelled due to low attendance. They had scheduled a project for May 5th to deploy recruitment boxes, but that is now tentative. Their license lottery has been postponed indefinitely until next year. Scarborough had three resident commercial licenses available, which is the most they have had in a few years.

Freeport: They suspended conservation activities planned for this spring, although are moving forward with at least one research project (recruitment boxes). New licenses and renewals are being processed by mail.

Yarmouth: They held an online meeting on April 13th. At this time, it's uncertain what Town Council will decide on Thursday (4/16) with respect to licensing and keeping the same structure or changing it. All other activities, including shellfish surveys are on hold. They were planning to hire someone to conduct expansive shoreline surveying and water quality testing over the summer, which is also currently on hold.

Brunswick: They are currently trying to start their quahog seed grow out project, which is funded by Broad Reach and Bowdoin. April 15 was the deadline to pick up 2020 shellfish licenses, although the town is allowing payments in installments, with the final payment due June 15th. They are planning to put out recruitment boxes in April. They are hoping to run some upcoming projects with fewer people so they can still take place this spring (installing an upweller and a shoring up conservation project at Wharton point- berms to hold back erosion). Brunswick is also planning to review the municipal code of ordinances related to shellfish, including the student license program, and has organized a working group to look into this starting in next few weeks.

Currently, the market is very limited. Some dealers are still selling and trying to get consumers to come by and get the word out.

No representatives were present at this meeting from Chebeague, Cumberland, West Bath, or Phippsburg, although Chebeague and Phippsburg are represented on the Steering Committee.

Updates on WG Initiatives

Jessica provided updates on the following focus areas:

1. Developing guidance and best practices for managing multiple shellfish species in municipal programs/ordinances.
 - Students from Bates College will present on their research and interviews on this topic, and their final report will be posted on the WG webpage. Ultimately, we will develop a guidance document based on their recommendations and other outreach.
2. Creating resources to inform town council members on the ecology, management, and economic importance of the shellfish resource.
 - An outline of the outreach materials has been drafted, and Anne will be working with the group from the January meeting to develop the content for the presentation and any handouts. A draft of the presentation and materials will be distributed to the WG in the coming months.
3. Developing resources on shellfish conservation projects and monitoring protocols that directly benefit the shellfish resource/habitat.
 - Before the pandemic, we made significant progress to test the floating spat bag design suggested by harvesters in Harpswell, including engaging scientists and interns. This research will be put on hold until 2021, given limited resources available to deploy and monitor the spat bags this spring/summer as a result of COVID-19.
 - Work is underway on the quahog restoration guidance document, which will compile methodology and other information on reseeding, transplanting and growing out quahog seed, highlighting case studies in Brunswick and Georgetown.
 - We are preparing a synthesis on existing literature around milky ribbon worms, and will distribute it in the coming months.
 - Recycling clam gloves and other fishing debris in the intertidal – We researched Terracycle, and unfortunately they are not currently accepting ‘beach debris’ or hard plastics/fishing gear. A member of the WG in Brunswick is exploring other options.
4. Creating a dynamic database of municipal conservation activities, ordinance discussions, and contact information for shellfish/marine resource committees.
 - We submitted two grant proposals to fund the development of this database in a phased approach: Phase 1 – needs assessment with municipalities, 2 – building out the database, and 3 – populating database with new and existing data. We plan to coordinate these efforts with the WG as well as hire interns.

Presentations

State, municipal, and tribal approaches to managing multiple shellfish species: case studies from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland, and Washington – *Natalie Moon, Josie Carter, and Sophia Miller, Bates College*

- Objective: Through research and interviews with other states, develop a comprehensive inventory of methods being used to manage and conserve shellfish.
- Categories include: licensing, reporting, surveying, monitoring, conservation and overall governance structures. Figure 2 provides an overview of ideas for municipalities to consider in these categories.
 1. Refer to the presentation slides and final report for more information on their findings (available on www.tidalbayconsulting.com/cbrswg under the April webinar heading).

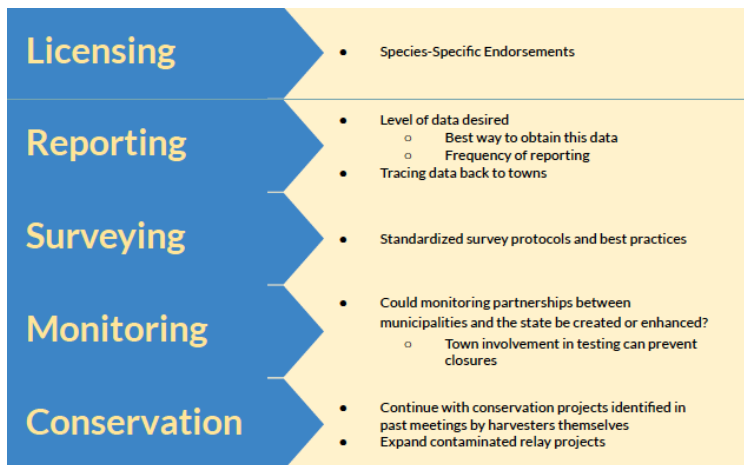


Figure 2. Shellfish Management Practices to Consider

Overview of the [Maine Climate Council](#) and feedback on the draft strategies of the Coastal and Marine Working Group – *Ivy Frignoca, Friends of Casco Bay*

- The Coastal and Marine Working Group is one of six working groups under the Maine Climate Council, which is focused on **mitigation** efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases and **adaptation** to anticipate the effects of climate change and act to prevent or minimize harm or take advantage of opportunities.
- The *Monitoring Subcommittee* of the Coastal and Marine Working Group developed the following draft recommendations that they will seek stakeholder feedback on this spring and summer to finalize and incorporate to the Climate Council this fall:
 1. Track coastal and ocean impacts through mapping, monitoring and modeling.
 2. Develop a Maine coastal and marine information exchange.
 3. Create a Maine marine business council.
 4. Ensure climate ready infrastructure on the working waterfront.
 5. Climate-adaptive planning and management using nature-based solutions.
 6. Blue carbon optimization.

- There is also a Fisheries and Aquaculture Subcommittee, and while their strategies had not yet been drafted at the time of this meeting, they are now available on Google Docs:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QgQD17Dps5o_wspsTBdp92ftjjgSVvMm
- There will be other opportunities for public input on these draft recommendations in May. FMI: <https://www.maine.gov/future/initiatives/climate/climate-council/coastal>

Announcements

- Direct marketing resources for shellfish:
https://www.gmri.org/sites/default/files/resource/maine_fishermen_guide_to_direct_sales_gmri_2018.pdf
- Financial relief programs under the Federal CARES Act – available to harvesters:
<https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options>
- State unemployment – available to self-employed (as of 5/1/20):
<https://www.maine.gov/unemployment/>
- Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association - Webinar recording on financial resources for fishermen (as well as other resources):
<https://www.maineoastfishermen.org/covidresources>

Next Steps

- Meeting summary will be emailed and posted online, as well as a recording of the webinar.
- Email Jessica@tidalbayconsulting.com or AHayden@manomet.org with ideas for shared equipment purchases.
- Spring/summer 2020 field work site visit opportunities are TBD based on social distancing guidance from the state. We will email the dates/locations of these activities as they become available. Stipends are available for harvesters who participate (\$75-\$150), in addition to conservation points, where applicable.
- Fall 2020 – WG meetings will start up again (hopefully in person)!