

THE MASSACHUSETTS SHELLFISH INITIATIVE

www.MassShellfishInitiative.org



MSI GOAL

**Maximize the economic,
environmental, and social benefits
of Massachusetts' near shore
shellfish resources**



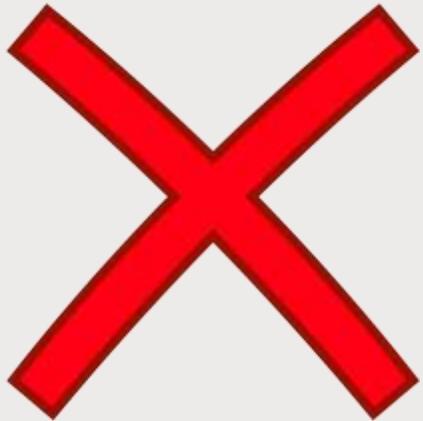
The MSI is meant to enhance opportunities for ALL stakeholders, including municipal programs, aquaculturists, wild commercial harvesters, recreational harvesters, and the restoration community.

What MSI is and what MSI isn't...



YES: Near shore State and Municipal regulated shellfish resources and resource areas; wild harvest and aquaculture.

- e.g. Oysters, Hard Clams (Quahogs), Softshell Clams (Steamers), Mussels, Bay Scallops, Razor Clams, Surf Clams



NO: Off shore Federal and State regulated shellfish resources.

- e.g. Sea Scallop



Initial Scoping and Survey

Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, Massachusetts Aquaculture Association, The Nature Conservancy and UMass Boston surveyed 389 shellfish stakeholders in 2017 to identify issues, concerns, interests, and commonalities, and to confirm broad support for the MSI concept.

Survey Results available
<https://tinyurl.com/2017MSIsurvey>

More than 50% of participants surveyed believed that a grassroots approach to creating a state-wide plan has the potential to...

- Increase shellfish resources in the Commonwealth
- Raise visibility and 'status' of shellfish for the broad benefits they contribute
- Increase credibility, cooperation, communication and coordination among stakeholders
- Leverage support from other sectors
- Update and provide for comprehensive management for shellfish resources

Other Survey Results

- 77% are concerned with water quality
- 71% support more funding for DMF to expand water quality monitoring
- 62% support expanded propagation programs
- 25% support additional field monitoring of shellfish disease, HAB, etc.
- 53% believe there should be more shellfish industry training
- 73% support expanding shellfish hatcheries in the state
- 50% support mentoring of newly appointed grant holders



More than 70% of the General Public Support

- Expanding shellfish resource for both harvest and restoration
- The use of shellfish to improve water quality
- More resources dedicated to opening more closed areas to shellfishing



MSI 2019-2020

Targeting two outcomes:



1. Build capacity for shellfish

- Increase stakeholder participation in management and community planning
- Improve stakeholder information sharing and collaboration among resource user groups

2. Develop a strategic state-wide plan and guidance

document for how the state and towns can balance growing demands for shellfish resources, including strategies and tactics that can be implemented in the first 5 years to make progress towards the MSI goal

MSI will hopefully...

- Provide the support and commitment across stakeholder groups that is needed to promote the environmental, economic, and cultural importance of shellfish
- Provide credibility to existing or future shellfish projects, to earn funding or community support
- Improve communications and relationships among stakeholder groups
- Provide stakeholder-driven recommendations for possible future shellfish policy, regulation or legislative changes
- Provide a framework for how to handle increasing shellfish supply in the state

MSI Task Force Responsibilities

- Shape and guide the MSI process
- Identify, appoint and oversee any MSI committees
- Convey MSI information and opportunities to participate to stakeholders, to ensure broad and equitable representation
- To the extent practicable, see that the MSI serves as a common resource for proposed and existing private, municipal and state shellfish related activities
- Refine and finalize strategic plan and recommendations
- Utilize networks and relationships to advance MSI goals and recommendations

MSI Task Force Composition

- Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
- Woods Hole Sea Grant
- Towns, represented by Chatham, Duxbury, Gloucester, New Bedford
- Mass. Shellfish Officers Association (constables)
- State agencies: Division of Marine Fisheries, Environmental Law Enforcement, Dept. Public Health, Mass. Environmental Policy Act Office, Coastal Zone Mgmt, Dept. Agriculture Resources, Dept. of Environmental Protection
- Senator Vinny deMacedo & Representative Sarah Peake
- The Nature Conservancy
- Mass. Aquaculture Association
- Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance

MSI Task Force

- First meeting was January 2, 2019
- Has not yet determined MSI objectives or narrowed down list of topics MSI will focus on
- Has not yet finalized the MSI process, but is committed to focusing on community and stakeholder input
- Determined that it needed more research and input on the current resources, challenges, and needs before proceeding
- Created an Assessment Committee to complete research and report back to the Task Force, comprised of stakeholders and their representatives.

MSI Assessment Committee

Responsible for developing a situational analysis that will be completed by April 3rd and include the following:

- Assessment of the capacity and status of state and town government and NGO support and programming for shellfish including but not limited to current staffing, labs, hatcheries, research, monitoring, education, outreach, town programs and economic impacts of shellfish in Mass.
- Assessment of the status of existing strategic goals related to Mass. shellfish, across state agencies, nonprofit organizations and municipalities
- Compilation of public input that has been collected through surveys and agency requests for public comment associated with shellfish in Mass., as well as informal feedback gathered by the committee

Immediate Timeline



January – March: Situational assessment: research and initial community outreach

April: Task Force Meeting #2, determine next steps for MSI process and identify MSI objectives. This will likely include the creation of additional committees comprised of stakeholders.

There will be ample opportunity for public input and comment over the next year. MSI hearings will follow the state's public meeting notice requirements.

What will MSI address?

- MSI is an opportunity for stakeholders to propose solutions and use MSI as a forum to discuss and refine proposals.
- MSI is not a regulatory body. It cannot change the regulations, but it will make recommendations to the state and towns based on public input and discussion.
- MSI hopes to balance growing demands among restoration, nitrogen mitigation, aquaculture, and wild harvest – can we discuss opposing views and find consensus and a path forward?
- The scope of MSI topics will be decided after reviewing the Assessment Committee's report.

TOPIC SELECTION WILL BE DRIVEN BY YOUR INPUT

POSSIBLE MSI topics that have been proposed by state and stakeholders

- Guidelines for restoration and nitrogen mitigation projects
- Education and outreach to increase community support for shellfish
- Solutions for softening oyster prices
- Identifying resources necessary to accommodate growing demands for monitoring, permitting, propagation, etc.
- DMF Massachusetts Aquaculture Permitting Plan (MAPP) and Special Review Procedure (SRP)
- Codifying existing aquaculture permit conditions into regulation
- Mass. Aqua. Assoc. proposal to allow for the sale of aquaculture leases

TOPIC SELECTION WILL BE DRIVEN BY YOUR INPUT

MSI is seeking the following from each town:

- List what your town considers the 3 most critical challenges related to shellfishing and your top 3 recommendations for how the MSI could improve your shellfish resources.
- Submit the names and contact information for any volunteers your town has identified that want to serve on an MSI committee as a representative of your town's shellfish stakeholders.
- If your town has additional input at this time, please contact MSI directly. Please note that there will be additional opportunities in the coming months for providing input on MSI recommendations.

Opportunities for All to Participate

- Provide your input, suggestions, concerns:
MassShellfishInitiative@gmail.com
- Sign up for MSI updates and meeting notices:
MassShellfishInitiative.org/participate
- Attend MSI public meetings and/or provide written comment
- Volunteer for an MSI Committee
- Questions? melissa@capecodfishermen.org



THANK YOU

