

# **THE MASSACHUSETTS SHELLFISH INITIATIVE (MSI)**

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**[www.MassShellfishInitiative.org](http://www.MassShellfishInitiative.org)**

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**CAPE COD COMMERCIAL**  
**FISHERMEN'S**  
**ALLIANCE**



Mission: Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance is fishermen, community members, public officials and scientists working together to build creative strategies, advocate for improved marine policies, protect the ocean ecosystem, and ensure the viability and future of Cape Cod's fisheries

- Member of the MSI Task Force
- Member of the MSI Steering Committee and the MSI Assessment Committee
- Investor in ARC Hatchery (2 board seats)
- Industry members include wild shellfish harvesters and aquaculturists, along with a diversity of federal and state fisheries and gear types
- Staff appointments to NEFMC, ASMFC, Mass. Fisheries Commission
- CEO sits on board of Blue Economy Foundation
- Owns and leases groundfish & scallop quota at discounted rates to maintain Cape Cod access

## Fishermen's Alliance is involved in MSI because we believe:

- Shellfish is a critical piece of the Cape's Blue Economy that should be celebrated and supported (wild and farmed, commercial and recreational)
- Wild harvest of shellfish is at the core of the Cape's maritime traditions and should not be jeopardized for the sake of increased aquaculture
- Predicted aquaculture growth (i.e., New Bedford) and the towns' use of shellfish to mitigate nitrogen has the potential to hurt shellfish markets if not done in a thoughtful way

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Small Boats. Big Ideas.

- Recent growth of the shellfish industry (and any future growth) requires corresponding resources at state and town level to support water quality monitoring, constables, enforcement, shellfish research, etc.

## Fishermen's Alliance is involved in MSI because we believe:

- There should be input from shellfish harvesters to create guidelines for future oyster reef restoration and nitrogen mitigation projects
- The shellfish community would benefit from public outreach activities to raise shellfish awareness and support across the state
- Bringing opposing sides together for discussion is the best way to identify and advance solutions to common problems
- Sharing solutions among towns prevents re-inventing the wheel

- Fishermen's Alliance does NOT yet have policy positions related to nearshore shellfish.
- Fishermen's Alliance has NOT taken a position on MAA's proposed legislation to allow the transfer/sale of aquaculture leases.

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# MSI 2019-2020

Targeting two outcomes:

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## 1. Build capacity for shellfish

- Increase participation in management and community planning
- Improve information sharing and collaboration among growers, diggers, state, towns, and restoration advocates.

## 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 improve shellfish resources.

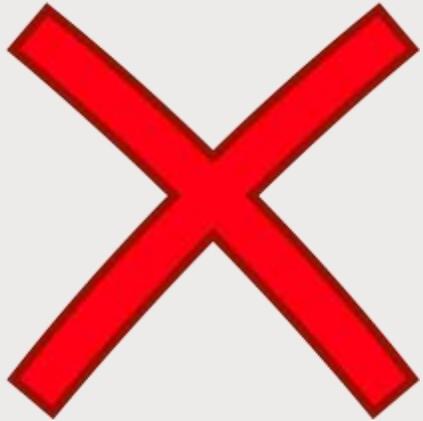
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# What MSI is and what MSI isn't...



**YES**: Near shore State and Town regulated shellfish resources and resource areas; wild harvest, habitat restoration, aquaculture.

- e.g. Oysters, Quahogs, Steamers, Mussels, Bay Scallops, Razor Clams, Surf Clams



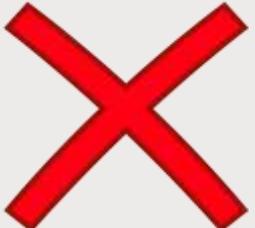
**NO**: Off shore Federal and State regulated shellfish resources.

- e.g. Sea Scallop

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

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- MSI is an opportunity for user groups to come together to have discussions, propose and refine solutions.
  - 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?

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- **MSI is NOT a regulatory body.** It cannot change the regulations, but it might make recommendations to the state and towns if that is the result of public input and discussion.

## **MSI GOAL**

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



**The MSI is meant to enhance shellfish opportunities for all user groups, including town programs, aquaculturists, wild commercial harvesters, recreational harvesters, and the restoration community.**



# WHY NOW for MA?

- Increased demand for more monitoring due to increased frequency in closures
  - Norovirus
  - Vibrio
  - Harmful algal blooms
- Complex and sometimes redundant permitting (DMF proposed MAPP and SRP)
- State & federal legislative initiatives (e.g. Wicker's AQUAA Act, several state Acts)

# WHY NOW?

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- Many towns have a wait list for residents interested in receiving a lease to start an aquaculture business.
- Towns are turning to shellfish to clean up estuaries and mitigate nitrogen problems.
- Increased demand for restoration sites to restore oyster reefs
- Increased demand for research  
Neoplasia, QPX, Vibrio, ocean acidification





# WHY NOW?

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- Reports of decreasing oyster prices and predicted increase in supply
  - Growing perception of wild harvesters vs. shellfish farmers vs. reef restoration vs. town nitrogen mitigation
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# NATIONAL SHELLFISH INITIATIVE

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Voluntary national initiative introduced in 2011 to **increase populations of bivalve shellfish in our nation's coastal waters**—including oysters, clams, abalone, and mussels—through both sustainable commercial production and restoration activities.

8 Shellfish Initiatives across the country

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# Initial Scoping and Survey

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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.

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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...**

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- 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

# 2017 Survey Results

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- 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



# 2017 Survey Results

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## More than 70% of the General Public Support (n=72)

- 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 Task Force Responsibilities

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- Shape and guide the MSI process
- Identify, appoint and oversee any MSI committees
- Convey MSI information and opportunities to participate to shellfish community, to ensure broad and equitable representation
- To the extent practicable, see that the MSI serves as a common resource for proposed and existing private, town 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

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- 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

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- 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 shellfish community 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 Task Force appointees and volunteers
- Created a Steering Committee to organize meetings and take direction from Task Force

# MSI Assessment Committee

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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

# MSI Assessment Committee

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Brent Valli

Chris Manulla

Daniel Morton

Diane Murphy

Ed Anthes-Washburn

Ginny Parker

Jeff Kennedy

Lindsey Williams

Liz Lewis

Mark Begley

Melissa Sanderson

Michele Insley

Nancy Civetta

Nathan Davis

Renee Gagne

Ron Bergstrom

Steve Kirk

Suzanne (Phil) Phillips

Todd Callaghan

\*as of 2/9/2019

# Immediate Timeline

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## **January – March:** Situational assessment:

- Research and initial community outreach
  - Survey towns through constables and shellfish committees/boards
- Provide data back to Task Force

## **April:** Task Force Meeting #2 – Draft agenda

- Review Assessment Committee results
- Determine next steps for MSI process
- Draft MSI objectives
- Create additional committee(s) comprised of stakeholders

# Immediate Timeline

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## After April:

- Process will be defined by the Task Force
- There will be ample opportunity for public conversation, input and comment over the next year.

MSI is not a gov't entity and is not bound by open meeting law.

In the interest of transparency, MSI public hearings will follow the state's public meeting notification and minutes requirements.

MSI calendar and documents are available online:

[www.massshellfishinitiative.org/msi-meetings-calendar.html](http://www.massshellfishinitiative.org/msi-meetings-calendar.html)

# Examples of what MSI has heard proposed by the state, towns, shellfishermen, NGOs, & public

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- Guidelines for restoration and nitrogen mitigation projects
- Education and outreach to increase community support for shellfish
- Solutions for softening oyster prices
- Reducing interagency regulatory conflicts
- Maintaining healthy ecosystems while allowing growth
- Identifying resources necessary to accommodate growing demands for monitoring, permitting, propagation, etc. (i.e. funds for SEMAC, DMF)
- Codifying existing aquaculture permit conditions into regulation
- DMF Massachusetts Aquaculture Permitting Plan (MAPP) and Special Review Procedure (SRP)
- Mass. Aqua. Assoc. proposal to allow for statewide continuity of transferability of shellfish leases

FINAL MSI TOPIC SELECTION WILL BE DRIVEN BY YOUR INPUT

# MSI will hopefully...

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

# Requested from each town:

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- Share what your town considers:
  - top 3 most critical challenges related to shellfishing
  - top 3 recommendations for how the MSI could improve your shellfish resources.
- Fill out Assessment Committee Survey
- If your town chooses to identify volunteers that want to serve on an MSI committee as a representative of your town, please submit their names and contact information.
- 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 formal input on MSI recommendations.

# Opportunities for All to Participate

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- Sign up for MSI updates and meeting notices:  
[MassShellfishInitiative.org/participate](https://MassShellfishInitiative.org/participate)
- Attend MSI public meetings, provide written comment
- Volunteer for an MSI Committee
- Provide your input, suggestions, concerns to:  
[MassShellfishInitiative@gmail.com](mailto:MassShellfishInitiative@gmail.com)
- Questions? [melissa@capecodfishermen.org](mailto:melissa@capecodfishermen.org)  
508-945-2432 x103



THANK YOU

