

THE MASSACHUSETTS SHELLFISH INITIATIVE (MSI)

www.MassShellfishInitiative.org



CAPE COD COMMERCIAL
FISHERMEN'S
ALLIANCE



- 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



Non-profit, member-driven organization established in 1996, balancing commercial and environmental interests.

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 future of Cape Cod's fisheries.

- Policy campaigns (advocacy) in federal and state fisheries
- Applied scientific research
- Economic development to support current and future fishermen
- Education & outreach to increase public support for maritime heritage



Why MSI?

- Shellfish is a critical piece of the Cape's Blue Economy
- 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
- 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.
- 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



- Science-based, non-confrontational, environmental non-profit organization with the mission:
“Conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.”
- MA TNC Ocean/Coastal Program Vision:
Increase production of sustainable seafood while supporting thriving coastal and ocean ecosystems and the communities that rely on them.
- Shellfish Restoration:
Tool for habitat enhancement and water quality improvement.
- MA TNC has supported towns:
Building oyster reefs, bay scallop restoration (broodstock spawner areas)



Why MSI?

- Forum for harvesters, growers, and restoration groups to be heard and work together for common goals.
- TNC via MSI is interested in:
 - Developing standardized practices for shellfish restoration.
 - Support municipalities in appropriate siting of restoration and other shellfish activities.
 - Identifying funding for restoration.
 - Identify and address permitting barriers to shellfish restoration.
 - Advance the science around aquaculture/marine environment interactions.



Massachusetts Aquaculture Association (MAA)

- Non-profit trade association established in 1986 for individuals, businesses and support organizations directly or indirectly associated with Massachusetts aquaculture.
- Purpose: promote continued development of shellfish and fish farming, and to improve conditions affecting aquaculture in Massachusetts.
- Goal: represent the interests of Massachusetts aquatic farmers
 - ✓ Promote a high quality aquaculture products,
 - ✓ Grow a thriving aquaculture industry,
 - ✓ Support, develop and transfer relevant technology
 - ✓ Maintain an effective network among industry, government, and researchers.
- MAA believes that strength between the aquaculture industry and local and state governments is essential.



Why MSI?

- MAA recognizes MSI as a forum and an opportunity to provide input as the state re-examines its approach to shellfish.
- As the principal trade association for MA aquaculture, which is predominantly shellfish farms, MAA must be at the table.
- MAA seeks dialogue with other resource user groups such as the wild harvesters and restoration projects to craft policy that works for all parties.
- MAA is concerned with tweaks to existing state policy and resource allocation that supports a strong foundation to protect the hard-won gains of the last twenty years and capitalize on what growers have learned on the journey to nearly 400 shellfish farmers.
- At \$28 million in landed value, farmed oysters now rank 3rd behind Sea Scallops and Lobster for all seafood landed in Massachusetts*





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>

MSI 2019-2020

Targeting two outcomes:



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.

MSI GOAL

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

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...

- 
- 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.



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 for MA?

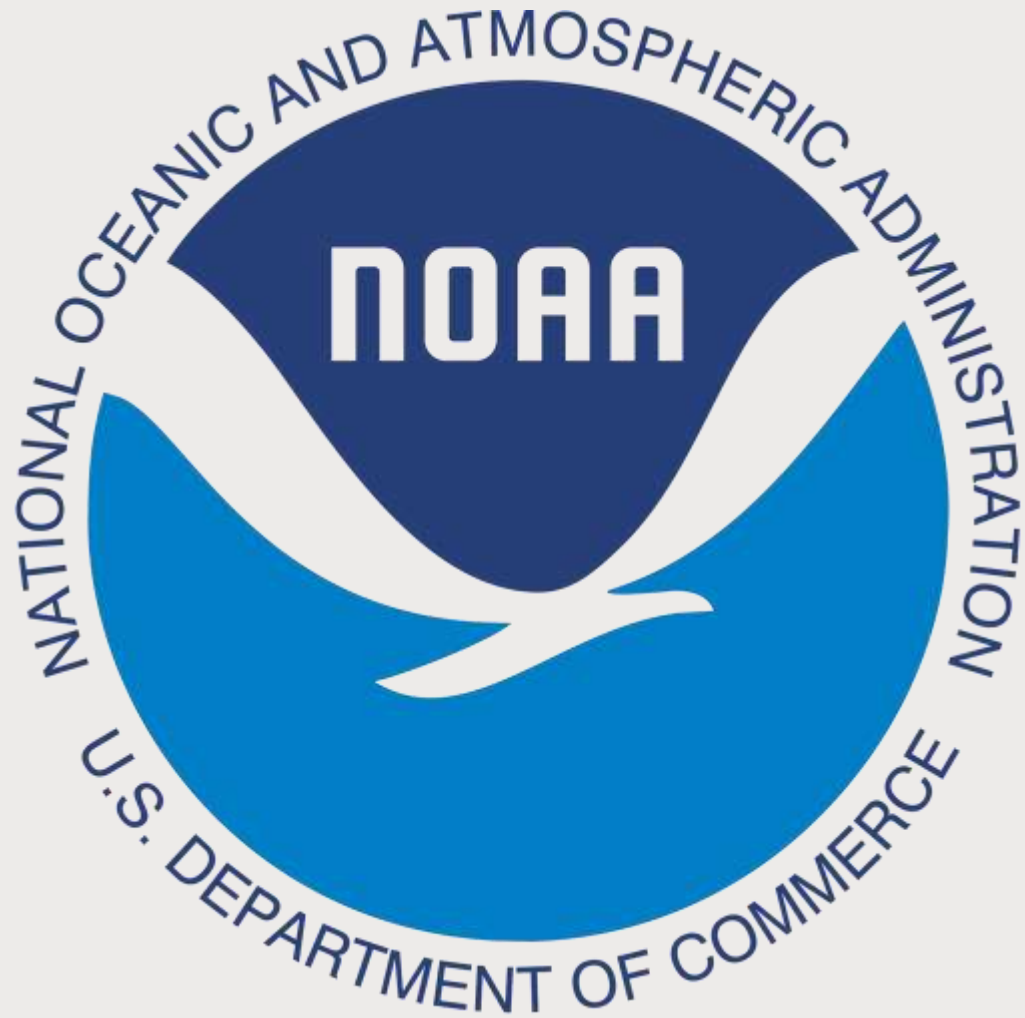
- Many towns have a wait list for residents interested in receiving a lease to start an aquaculture business.
- Towns are turning to shellfish to clean up estuaries and mitigate nitrogen problems.
- Increased demand for restoration sites to restore oyster reefs
- Increased demand for research/testing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





WHY NOW for MA?

- Rapid growth of shellfish industry
 - 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
-



NATIONAL SHELLFISH INITIATIVE

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

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

2017 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



2017 Survey Results

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

- 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

Matthew Beaton, Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Co-Chair

Matt Charette, Director, Woods Hole Sea Grant Program, Co-Chair

Lt. Col. Anthony Adbdal-Khabir, Director, Environmental Law Enforcement

Paul Bagnall, President, Mass. Shellfish Officers Association

Monica Bharel, Commissioner, Dept. of Public Health

Deirdre Buckley, Director, Mass. Environmental Policy Act Office

Senator Vinny deMacedo

Lisa Engler, Director, Coastal Zone Management

Jill Goldsmith, Town Manager Chatham

Les Hemmila, President, Massachusetts Aquaculture Association

Wayne Klockner, Mass. State Director, The Nature Conservancy

John Lebeaux, Commissioner, Dept. of Agricultural Resources

John Mitchell, Mayor New Bedford

John Pappalardo, CEO, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance

Representative Sarah Peake

David Pierce, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries

Rene Read, Town Manager Duxbury

Sefatia Romeo Theken, Mayor Gloucester

Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

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 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 Steering Committee

Responsible for organizing meetings, taking direction from Task Force, and working with chairs to maintain momentum between Task Force meetings.

Task Force members were asked to volunteer at the Jan 2nd meeting

Members:

- Chris Schillaci, DMF
- Melissa Sanderson, CCCFA
- Chris Sherman, MAA
- Steve Kirk, TNC

Supported by MSI Consulting Coordinator Scott Soares and UMass Boston PhD candidate Sean McNally

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

MSI Assessment Committee

Jeff Kennedy - Mass DMF and Committee
Chair

Brent Valli - Wellfleet

Chris Manulla - Wellfleet Deputy Shellfish
Constable

Daniel Morton - Wellfleet, Wild Harvester

Diane Murphy - Cape Cod Cooperative
Extension & Woods Hole Sea Grant

Ed Anthes-Washburn - New Bedford Port
Authority

Ginny Parker - Wellfleet Citizen

Lindsey Williams - MIT Sea Grant

Liz Lewis - Barnstable Shellfish
Propagation Specialist

Mark Begley - Barnstable Shellfish Grower

Melissa Sanderson - Cape Cod
Commercial Fishermen's Alliance

Michele Insley - Wellfleet SPAT

Nancy Civetta - Wellfleet Shellfish
Constable

Nathan Davis - Orleans Shellfish &
Waterways Committee, wild harvester

Renee Gagne - Chatham Shellfish
Constable

Ron Bergstrom - Cape Cod
Commissioner, Chatham Wild Harvester

Steve Kirk - The Nature Conservancy

Suzanne (Phil) Phillips - Harvester,
Orleans Shellfish & Waterways Committee,
Chatham Deputy Shellfish Constable

Todd Callaghan - Mass. Coastal Zone
Mmgt

Immediate Timeline



January – April: Situational assessment:

- Research and initial community outreach
 - Survey towns through constables and shellfish committees/boards
 - Survey all commercial harvesters suggested – at later date
- 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



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/meetings.html

www.massshellfishinitiative.org/resources.html

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

- Guidelines for restoration and nitrogen mitigation projects
- Education and outreach to increase community support for shellfish
- Solutions for maintaining/increasing demand for Mass. shellfish
- Reducing interagency regulatory conflicts
- Maintaining healthy ecosystems while allowing growth
- Identifying resources necessary to accommodate growing demands for monitoring, permitting, propagation, shoreside infrastructure, dredging, etc. (i.e. funds for SEMAC, DMF, towns)
- Real-time monitoring of pre-emptive storm closures, to limit economic impact
- 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...

- 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:

- 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 (once ready)
- 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

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



THANK YOU



QUESTIONS?

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Chris Sherman

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