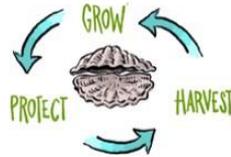


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# Massachusetts Shellfish Initiative Task Force Meeting

March 30, 2021 @ 1pm



MASSACHUSETTS  
SHELLFISH  
INITIATIVE

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

# Virtual Rules of Engagement

- Task Force members should remain muted unless actively speaking.
- All members of the public will be muted throughout the meeting.
- There will be ample time for questions and public comment.
- To participate in the public comment section of the agenda, you are required to use the raise hand function. This will create a queue for questions and comments. Julia will recognize individuals when it is their turn to speak. They will then be unmuted for the duration of their question or comment.
- Public commenters will be provided three (3) minutes. Follow-up comments will only be allowed after all other persons with hands raised have had an opportunity to speak.
- Participants must conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner. Individuals may be permanently muted or removed from the meeting based on their conduct.
- **The meeting will be recorded and posted to the MSI website**

# HOW TO: Zoom Functions

## To raise hand:

- Computer: Click Raise Hand in the Webinar Controls (may be in “Reactions”)
- Mobile Phone/Tablet: (zoom link): Tap More, then Raise Hand.
- Phone (dial in): dial \*9

## To mute/unmute:

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## Troubleshooting audio:

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# AGENDA

1. Introductions/Meeting Outcome: *Finalize and approve MSI Strategic Plan*
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Task Force members review their comments/feedback on final draft strategic plan and discuss any additional changes to the strategic plan document
4. Finalize and approve MSI Strategic Plan (unless a lot of additional changes needed)
5. Communications Plan to publicize and release the plan
6. Public Comment

# MSI Task Force Members

*\* = Strategic Plan Work Group*

Dan McKiernan, Deputy Director, Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries, Acting Chair \*

Paul Bagnall, President, Mass. Shellfish Officers Association \*

Matt Charette, Director, Woods Hole Sea Grant Program (Proxy: Josh Reitsma) \*

Michael DeVasto, Grower/Harvester, Wellfleet \*

Mark Ells, Town Manager, Barnstable

Lisa Engler, Director, Coastal Zone Management (Proxy: Todd Callahan) \*

Seth Garfield, President, Massachusetts Aquaculture Association (Proxy: Scott Soares) \*

Jill Goldsmith, Town Manager, Chatham

Tori Kim, Director, Mass. Environmental Policy Act Office (Proxy: Paige Czepiga)

John Lebeaux, Commissioner, Dept. of Agricultural Resources (Proxy: Sean Bowen) \*

Deb Markowitz, Mass. State Director, The Nature Conservancy (Proxy: Steve Kirk) \*

John Mitchell, Mayor, New Bedford (Proxy: George Krikorian)

Michael Moore, Dept. of Public Health

Lt. Col. Pat Moran, MA Environmental Police

Senator Susan Moran (Proxy: Maria Syrniotis)

Rob O'Leary, Mass Maritime

John Pappalardo, CEO, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance (Proxy: Melissa Sanderson) \*

Representative Sarah Peake

Rene Read, Town Manager, Duxbury

Sefatia Romeo Theken, Mayor, Gloucester (Proxy: Pete Seminara)

Dan Sieger, Exec. Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection (Proxy: Lisa Rhodes)

# MSI Steering Committee

Dan McKiernan, Deputy Director, Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries, Acting  
MSI Chair

Chris Schillaci, NOAA Fisheries:Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

Scott Soares, Massachusetts Aquaculture Association

Steve Kirk, The Nature Conservancy

Melissa Sanderson, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance

Jeff Kennedy, Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries

Sean McNally, PhD, UMass Boston

Rob O'Leary, Mass Maritime

# Creation of the MSI Strategic Plan

- Assessment Report (3 Assessment Committee meetings, responses from 41 coastal municipalities, 15 NGOs/academic institutions, 4 state agencies)
- Scoping Report (3 Scoping Committee meetings and 4 Public Scoping Meetings)
- 218 Public Comments on Scoping Report
- Strategies and Recommended Actions were developed by Strategic Plan Work Group (6 virtual meetings with public comment at each meeting), based on the Assessment Report and Scoping Report; Objectives and Goals came directly from Scoping Report
- 38 Public Comments on draft Strategic Plan

# Strategic Plan Overview

6 Objectives set by the Task Force

11 Goals from the Scoping Report

51 Recommended Actions

Rationale

Resources Needed

Lead & Participants

Timeline



# Recurring Themes

- Enhanced communication and coordination among local, state, federal agencies and stakeholders
- Formal Massachusetts Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) as venue for continued cooperation and communication between stakeholders and state and local government
- Most recommendations provide benefits for all shellfish stakeholders, with a focus on: commercial wild harvest, aquaculture, recreational harvest, and tribal

# Objective 1: Foster communication and coordination between community groups, local, state and federal managers and developing improved guidance.

Goal 1.1 Developing and strengthening means of communication between managers, regulators and community groups both within and across all levels of government.

- Formally constitute a MA Shellfish Advisory Panel that shall be inclusive of shellfish stakeholders so that it may provide a forum for all regulatory, economic and social aspects of MA nearshore shellfish resources.
- Regularly assess MSI strategic plan progress and initiate recommended actions, including outreach to lead and participating offices and entities.

# Objective 2: Building Public and Stakeholder Capacity to Support Shellfish Resources and Shellfish Fisheries

Goal 2.1 Improve how local and state shellfish managers communicate and engage with stakeholders.

- Communications plans with improved stakeholder engagement

Goal 2.2 Increase public support and awareness around the economic and ecological value of shellfish resources and shellfisheries.

- Financial support for projects that educate the public about the benefits of shellfish and the adverse impacts of coastal pollution

# Objective 3: Development of management, research, and industry resources

Goal 3.1 Strengthening state and local capacity to effectively manage shellfish resources and shellfish fisheries in the face of increasing management challenges.

- Increase resources (staff, equipment, labs) to expand monitoring and testing required for growing area classification, shellfish human health hazards, and shellfish disease
- Incentivize municipal shellfish program efficacy (patrol activities, reporting, resource assessments, BMPs)

# Objective 3: Development of management, research, and industry resources

Goal 3.2 Support for research focused on issues impacting shellfish resource health, public health, and shellfish production at the local, state and federal level.

- Identify, strengthen support for or establish grant programs and prioritize projects that address pollutants prior to making it into coastal waters
- Prioritize shellfish disease research/monitoring in state aquaculture center funding authorizations

# Objective 3: Development of management, research, and industry resources

Goal 3.3 Support for resources that promote industry development, communication, market opportunities, and resiliency.

- Provide shellfish grower and harvester education/training and incentives to implement best management practices
- Simplify state aquaculture licensing and permitting
- SAP to evaluate/recommend changes for direct to consumer sales
- Strengthen shellfish labelling for traceability to retail consumer
- Educate growers on species diversification opportunities
- Enhanced marketing for Massachusetts shellfish

## **Objective 4: Supporting and promoting balanced and sustainable economic opportunities around shellfish.**

Goal 4.1 Encourage economic opportunities around shellfish, but ensure they are managed in a way that is consistent with the character and interests of individual communities.

- Incentive program to encourage outcome-defined municipal shellfish management plans
- SAP working group to resolve issues re: consistency in licensing and permitting, including aquaculture license transferability
- SAP to serve as forum for stakeholder discussion on any future proposed changes that impact municipal control

## **Objective 4: Supporting and promoting balanced and sustainable economic opportunities around shellfish.**

Goal 4.2 Improve and refine existing state management strategies that increase sustainable economic opportunities around shellfish resources and shellfisheries while balancing shellfish sanitation concerns.

- Increase state and local patrol capacity, formalize patrol MOU's, support Constable trainings
- Unified MA stakeholder delegation to ISSC
- Prioritize data collection for insufficient datasets, i.e., recreational harvest number and shellfish population/stock assessments
- Develop shellfish training for municipal decision makers (BOS, CC, SAC)

# Objective 5: Supporting and promoting cultural and historical uses of shellfish.

Goal 5.1 Protect public access to coastal waters and habitat quality in support of cultural uses of shellfish resources.

- Clear guidance on aquaculture permitting requirements with consideration for protecting public access and wild harvest
- Increased research dollars for social and natural science related to shellfish resources and resource use
- Expansion of programs to improve water quality and reduce coastal pollution
- Incentivize nature-based solutions to stormwater and wastewater mgmt that limits negative impact to shellfish resources
- Tribal, recreational, and wild harvest representation on SAP

# Objective 6: Ensure ecologically sound management/ enhancement of shellfish resources & coastal ecosystems

Goal 6.1 Ensuring shellfish and coastal restoration efforts are designed to consider animal health and management implications, and do not result in adverse economic impacts to existing industry

- EEA working group for 208 shellfish: BMPs, evaluation of cumulative economic impacts, limit negative impact on commercial shellfish markets
- Seed source approval and pathology testing for propagation programs and restoration efforts
- Develop metrics to account for nutrient remediation provided by private shellfish aquaculture, propagation and harvest, and shellfish habitat restoration

# Objective 6: Ensure ecologically sound management/ enhancement of shellfish resources & coastal ecosystems

Goal 6.2 Greater support for shellfish and coastal restoration efforts by developing minimum standards and further best practice guidance, examine and revise as needed restrictions on restoration activities in contaminated waters, and a requirement that restoration efforts demonstrate balance between shellfish fisheries interests and public health

- Explore how to allow for shellfish restoration in contaminated waters
- Review of and increased funding for grant projects to prevent coastal pollution

# Task Force Outstanding Concerns

1. SAP details
  - a. Task Force should review SAP legislative/enabling language before finalizing SP/signing off (see attached)
  - b. Confirm SAP role is advisory only (SAP not able to implement)
  - c. Both wild harvest SAP seats should be non-dealer
  - d. At least one aquaculture SAP seat should be a small business - one or two person operations.
  - e. The first goal of the SAP should be to prioritize the Recommended Actions as outlined in the strategic plan.
  - f. SAP meetings should have virtual attendance option, even after we return to in-person meetings
2. Concern over “consistency” and impacts on Home Rule in recommendation 3.3: Work with stakeholders, regulatory agencies and organizations to develop clear guidance, consistency on, and simplification of state aquaculture licensing and permitting requirements.
3. We may want to consider further re-wording to clarify that this is about consistency across state agencies, not municipalities.
4. Confirm lead(s) for 3.1
5. Question in 6.1 summary: Can 208 quahogs be grown in floating bags?

# Reconstituted Shellfish Advisory Panel (Invited agencies and appointments)

Invited Agencies shall include:

- Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries or a designee;
- Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture Resources or a designee;
- Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection or a designee;
- Department of Public Health's Food Protection Program or a designee;
- Director of the Office of Coastal Zone Management or a designee;
- Executive Director of Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs or a designee,
- Two members of the General Court's joint committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture or their designees,

.....and up to 15 persons appointed by the director with due regard for coastal geographic distribution and stakeholder representation...

# Reconstituted Shellfish Advisory Panel (Appointments)

Of the appointments at least:

- one shall be a representative of federal Sea Grant programs within the Commonwealth;
- two shall be permitted seafood dealers involved in the wholesale or retail sale of shellfish;
- one shall be permitted and involved in a state managed wild harvest shellfish fishery;
- two shall be permitted and involved with municipally managed wild harvest of shellfish;
- three shall be permitted and involved with commercial shellfish aquaculture;
- one shall be permitted and involved with the recreational harvest of shellfish;
- two shall be active municipal shellfish constables nominated by MSOA;
- one shall be a member of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission;
- and one shall be a representative from a non-governmental organization involved with shellfish conservation.

# Strategic Plan Finalization

Any other outstanding issues/concerns?

- a. From Task Force Members
- b. From Public Attendees



# Strategic Plan Finalization

Any objectives to approving the document with the changes discussed during today's meeting?

# Communications Plan

## Goal

Raise General Public's Awareness:

- MSI milestone of strategic plan development
- Importance of, opportunities and challenges of shellfish resources and management
- How to continue to engage (SAP)

## Strategies

- Press Release
- Press Conference
- Op-Ed
- Webinar?

# Public Comment

- Remember to raise your hand and wait to be called on before unmuting
- Please identify yourself

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