

MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Town of Bar Harbor

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER – 4:05 p.m. Virtual meeting through zoom link available to the public

Present: Chris Petersen, Natalie Springuel, Fiona de Koning, Matt Gerald, Joanna Fogg
Guests: Heidi Leighton (MEDMR), Aliza Leit, Charlie Phippen (harbormaster, host of the zoom meeting).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES –May minutes were reviewed and approved 5-0.

Chris led the discussion and Fiona took minutes.

Business:

Town council meeting update. Chris presented the proposed changes in our ordinance to the Town Council. They listened and understood the proposal and approved that the changes could go to public hearing on July 21st. Then they would vote and accept the changes. The process would then be to forward the changed ordinance to Heidi after which a period of 30 days passes, and the ordinance will be in place before the September 1st deadline.

Clam survey work. Aliza Leit shared the results of her work on the clam population enhancement study in Bar Harbor that she is doing with Chris. Screened boxes (Beal boxes) were deployed at 6 sites. The first set went out May 15th everywhere except the Thomas Island site which went out on May 26th.

The second set were deployed June 9-11th. This protocol matches the previous year's study. Core sample for juvenile clam density, temperature, sediment pH, ocean pH, and salinity were measured at each site.

Alize present the data on background core data. Juvenile clams were not expected at high densities at any sites but Aliza found an average 1000 soft shell clams per square foot at Hadley Point. The size distribution indicated a possible late recruitment of around early Nov. 2019.

Quahogs (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) were only found in the blue hill bay site and there were not many. Some were more than one year old.

Next steps:

Compare 2020 core data with past years and any historical data and then monitor through the summer and fall this year.

October 28th is the planned date for removal of Beal boxes and we may need to help with counts of recruited clams.

The clam project budget was reviewed and justified. We are within our budget. The effects of the pandemic and social distancing requirements have affected student times worked. A motion to accept the budget was made and approved 5:0.

Conservation hours. David Dunton has obtained his conservation hours for the year (7 hours). There were no other commercial clam harvesters with all the required conservation hours.

Heidi explained that the town does not need to adhere to the two-week early purchase option of commercial licenses as our ordinance has changes and only one harvester has met the pre requirements.

Kiosk at Hadley Point. A suggestion was made to make an educational trifold public information brochure about clams and Charlie was asked to hang it on the Kiosk at Hadley Point on display.

Seed surveys. David Dunton walked the flats and saw how far the enormous clam seed recruitment at Hadley Point had covered. He found the following:

Sand Point- massive set

Hadley Point- massive set

Salisbury Cove- new seed

Emory Cove – no seed

Leland Cove- No seed.

This is not easy to explain but there may be benefit in looking at historical census data. Heidi said that the DMR was planning to take a look as well.

Possible clam seed transplants. We discussed whether we could save some of this recruited seed to use to restore populations of some flats, Emory Cove or Leland Pt. An Army Corps permit would be required if we protected them with netting. Some committee members are aquaculture lease owners with the option of helping store clam seed over winter on those leases. Discussions continued about seeding densities, survival rates and growth rates. More study is required. Heidi said that the clam seed will not grow if the recruitment density is too high and that harvesters can dig some in for better survival. Fiona mentioned that the same principle is used for sustainable seed harvest for mussels. Too dense a set only allows about 5 % to survive but if you move some and “thin it out” the survival rate is improved significantly.

Given the pandemic and time restrictions for all it was decided to leave the seed as it is for a year and see what survives.

Other business: We are looking for another committee member as there are positions vacant. Jen Crandall was asked but respectfully declined as she has committed to serve on the climate committee. John Avila was suggested, and Natalie would reach out to him.

Motion to adjourn at 5:27 pm