

# MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

## Town of Bar Harbor

Minutes

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – 4:06 p.m.

Hadley Point, Outside (weather permitting)

Attendees: Chris Petersen-chair, Joanna Fogg- Vice chair, Matt Gerald, Scott Swann, John Avila, Natalie Springuel, Fiona de Koning.

Guests: Chris Wharff- shellfish warden, Massimo Hamilton- summer intern, Alex de Koning-hobo.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Minutes of June meeting: minutes approved unanimously.

Approval of minutes of July meeting: minutes approved unanimously  
(note: David Dunton added to attendee to meeting)

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. Election of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary

Chris Petersen agreed to serve as secretary for another term, with Matt Gerald agreeing to be Vice-Chair and John Avila as Secretary. The slate was approved unanimously.

Chris thanked Joanna Fogg and Fiona de Koning for their work as officers over the last year.

### OLD BUSINESS:

A. Ordinance change. Chris Petersen reported back that the town council had approved the changes to the ordinance the MRC recommended by adding Oysters and Quahogs. The Committee will continue its work on the surveys and report the findings back to the town as more is learned.

### NEW BUSINESS

A. Draft report on summer grant work..

The interns worked extraordinarily well and independently this year, for which the Committee thanked both Massimo Hamilton and Sophie Chivers. The final report is still being drafted but the “ take home message” can be summarized as follows.

1. The quahog densities are very similar to the past surveys; 2-3 per survey plot. There are lots of quahogs. The impression is of a slightly lower density closer to the center of Clark Cove, where the access for harvest is easiest, but there are good densities to be found at the sides and all the way to NW Cove.

It has been reported that there is a really good Quahog resource in Goose Cove

in Trenton, where it is very sloppy mud.

2. The harvester surveys were taken only at low tide and dominated by recreational harvesters. The harvest by estimated volume harvested was 1/3 commercial harvest and 2/3 recreational harvest.

3. Knowledge of the regulations by harvesters? Generally people were pretty knowledgeable about the regulations for soft shell clams and applied these rules to all shellfish species, rather than knowing the specifics for each individual species. There was little familiarity with harmful algal bloom information nor time /temperature recommendations.

Incidentally, the legal size for harvesting quahogs was met by accident by most harvesters – the 2 inch length (soft shelled clams legal requirement) virtually always gives a one inch hinge width for quahogs (their legal size requirement), so there was no indication of under size harvesting in quahogs.

4. Species harvested? Mostly quahogs were being harvested in Clarks Cove. There are areas of soft-shelled clam resources in western bay, both in Bar Harbor and in Trenton. At Hadley Point it was principally mussels being harvested. Very few individuals harvested oysters at Clark's Cove, which was a surprise to the committee as anecdotally several committee members knew of people who harvested oysters there. Massimo suggested that the oysters can be harvested at times other than low water so may not have been captured in this data set.

The summer intern project and the finished report will be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

**B. Microbial Source Tracking work.** This project is ongoing and part of the approach to work across clam committees, share information, and encourage collaborative resource management. Samples have been and will continue to be taken from NW Cove and Pirates Cove (in Mount Desert) and processed at the DMR water quality lab in Lamoine. After sampling is completed, a subset of samples will then be sent down to New Hampshire for analysis. This DNA analysis will hopefully give us insight into what species are causing the fecal contamination.

Upcoming dates of interest.

October 7th Hadley Point clam Survey 2:45pm. Chris encourages all and everyone to participate if able. The students from the COA enjoy the community engagement.

DMR facilitated listening sessions. After the success of the regional shellfish meetings last fall, DMR has decided to have annual regional meetings of shellfish committees, hosted by the local area biologists, to create opportunities for learning and sharing knowledge and perspectives between town clam committees and between Municipal and State resource management people. Our regional biologists, Heidi Leighton, is hosting a meeting in Machias, and Hannah Annis, who works with many nearby towns, will host one in Machias. The dates, times, locations are listed below.

- Eastern- hosted by Heidi - Tue, Oct 11 at 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM - [Pellon Center, Machias](#)
- Central – hosted by Hannah -Wed, Oct 12 at 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM - [Hutchinson Center, Belfast](#)

Chris will be attending the meeting in Machias and is happy to have others join. Natalie will try to attend the meeting in Belfast.

Acadia Science Symposium. Wednesday October 19, 8:45 – 4pm. Moore Auditorium on the Schoodic Institute Campus. This day-long symposium will be in-person and virtual via zoom. There will be talks on the marine ecology of Frenchman Bay as well as a talk on Otter Creek and attempts to understand the current threats to this embayment. The symposium website is linked [here](#).

Recruitment study – removing clam boxes and counting clams. Starting October 25<sup>th</sup> Chris and COA students will be removing recruitment boxes from 7 sites around the town, returning them to COA and sorting, counting, and measuring clams and crabs. Chris reminded us the COA has updated its policy for Covid and that the campus is open now for those who are vaccinated, so if any committee members would like to help count and measure, then, again, the help and support is appreciated. Chris will post specific times samples are being processed.

## PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD & FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chris started with a question about mussel recruitment in Frenchman Bay, Alex commented that mussel recruitment was high in the upper part of the Bay (Mt. Desert Narrows), especially around Jordan River. Chris had seen less recruitment on the COA dock this year. Chris mentioned that there was a strong declining trend in mussel abundance reported in publish papers for both Swan's island and the Gulf of Maine generally.

People also said they had seen a lot of seastars (*Asterias spp.*) this year as well. Eelgrass seems to be doing well this year, there is even a patch right at the landing at Hadley Point.

In terms of physical characteristics of the bay, Alex noted that there had been a strong thermocline at about 45' in the upper bay this year, and that temperatures again seemed to be warmer than many years.

For fish, pogies (Menhaden) have been seen in increasing numbers over the past several years, with this year being the highest. Until a few years ago, pogies had been gone from the bay for what we think were decades. Striped bass (stripers) were also seen in the bay in larger numbers that we have seen recently, both at the Bar Harbor Oyster Co. lease site near Thomas island, but stripers have also been caught at the town pier.

Harbor porpoises and seals have also been seen in the upper bay at higher numbers that people remember from recent years.

Although comb jellies (ctenophores) were observed in the spring, very few jellyfish were seen this year, and there also appeared to be less bioluminescence than in past year.

Surface water in the upper bay were very warm in the summer, warmer than in past years. Alex said there was a notable thermocline at a few meters down and the visibility there was much better.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 26, 2022 (the previous two Wednesdays are a MEDMR listening session and the Acadia Science Symposium)– and we will either meet at the Port Authority Building or at Hadley Point.

Meeting adjourned at 5:02 pm

Respectfully submitted by  
Fiona de Koning with expert editing from Sir Christopher Professor  
extraordinaire.