Shellfish Conservation Meeting Minutes

APPROVED 5/18/17

DRAFT

February 23, 2017

Meeting called to order @ 4:10 with the following in attendance.

Cindy Gorham, Janis Petzel, Ken Smith, Crystal Fairfield, Jon Kerr, Keith Pendleton, Robert Bower

Absent Andrew Coombs

The committee welcomed two new committee members Janis Petzel and Ken Smith.

Old Business – Spinney Creek Depuration will not be looking at Islesboro as a site for possible depuration harvesting. Assessments indicate that there's not enough clams in closed areas to make the depuration harvest financially feasible.

New Business – Two Commercial and 200 noncommercial licenses will be allocated for the 2017 season. Members discussed the possibility of issuing Zero commercial licenses and keep the flats available for noncommercial digging only. Constable Fred Porter felt that the population of clams on the island is limited and that heavy digging by commercial digging should be carefully monitored. The committee identified the importance of commercial diggers meeting their conservation work requirements as stated in the ordinance. The comprehensive evaluation of a commercial diggers on the health of the flats prompted a discussion on the following activities, clam seeding or transplants and green crab predation. Fred Porter suggested we look at the harvesting green crabs commercially on Islesboro. Decreasing the numbers of green crabs would increase success of future clam seeding activities.

The committee agreed on a figure of $1000.00 for the 2017 budget. The money will be used for signs and if determined seed clams and protection netting. Ken Smith wanted to be sure we had the money available from recent shellfish harvesting violations for future expenses. Cindy said she would check with Janet on where the money is to go.

Fred Porter indicated that there is money for anyone who wanted to go to go through the training to become a deputy shellfish warden. It is a difficult job for one person to cover all the open and closed shell fishing areas on the island. Any help would be appreciated. Fred mentioned implementing a community cove monitoring program. This seemed like a good idea and more information on how other towns are implementing this would be helpful.

The committee would like to close the Hutchin's island area to commercial harvesting of shellfish. The area from Point Comfort Including Parkers Cove would remain open for noncommercial harvesting. It is unsure the procedure for closing an open area for commercial harvesting only and the Department of Marine Resources will need to be contacted on this request. The Mill Dam in Ryders Cove will remain closed until 2018. The committee expressed interest in applying the same commercial harvesting restrictions to this area. Jon Kerr will call Hannah Annis from the DMR to see if these changes can be made.

Cindy Gorham shared with the committee the information she received in attending a DMR municipal shellfish management workshop. Cindy has compiled an up to date binder of shellfish rules and regulations. She also will assist the committee in meeting the deadlines and disseminating important information as needed. We all thanked Cindy for her interest in the Shellfish Conservation Committee and the work she put forth in restructuring the program.

Meetings for the 2017 years are scheduled for – February 23, May 18, September 21 @ 4:00

Jon Kerr will complete the 2016 Annual Shellfish Review and email it to Cindy Gorham.