

Florida Aquaculture Interagency Coordinating Council Meeting – September 6, 2007

Notice of Meeting

The Florida **Aquaculture Interagency Coordinating Council** announces a public meeting to which all persons are invited.

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, September 6, 2007, 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Division of Aquaculture Conference Room, 1203 Governor's Square Boulevard, Fifth Floor, Tallahassee, FL 32301

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED: To discuss issues affecting the growth of aquaculture in Florida.

A copy of the agenda may be obtained by contacting: Kal Knickerbocker, 1203 Governor's Square Boulevard, Fifth Floor, Tallahassee, FL 32301, (850)488-4033.

Meeting Agenda

FLORIDA AQUACULTURE INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

Division of Aquaculture Conference Room
1203 Governor's Square Boulevard, Fifth Floor
Tallahassee, Florida
September 6, 2007
1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. MINUTES OF MEETING November 13, 2006
- III. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. Section 309 Coastal Zone Management Act Grant 2006/2007
- IV. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Agency Updates
 - B. ARC Project Proposals Update
 - C. AICC Annual Report
 - D. Other New Business
- V. NEXT MEETING
- VI. ADJOURN

Meeting Minutes

Draft Minutes Aquaculture Interagency Coordinating Council Division of Aquaculture Conference Room Tallahassee, Florida

September 6, 2007

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm.

Members Present

Mary Helen Blakeslee Office of Trade, Tourism and Economic Development (OTTED)
Chris Young Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
Sherman Wilhelm Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)

Members Absent

Lawrence Carter Florida A&M University
Ray Eubanks Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
Larry Robinson Florida Institute of Oceanography
Stephenie Bailenson Florida Department of Environmental Protection
James C. Cato Florida Sea Grant
Karl Havens University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS)

Guests

Larry Nall Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Uford Madden Florida A&M University
Paul Zajicek Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)
Kim Norgren Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)
Kal Knickerbocker Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)
Kay Young Florida Aquaculture Association
Craig Watson University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS)

II. Minutes of Previous Meetings.

The minutes of previous meetings held on November 13, 2006 were reviewed and one correction noted. Under Agency updates, the Tampa Bay Port Authority was changed to the Manatee County Port Authority. The minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum.

II. Old Business

A. Section 309 Coastal Zone Management Act Grant

The Division of Aquaculture conducted a series of 11 agency workshops, throughout the state, with the DEP Aquatic Preserve Staffs, FWC, and the WMDs to exchange information on aquaculture activities and BMP regulations. Additionally, four industry workshops were held to pass on recommendations from the agency workshops as it relates to the potential for aquaculture in near-shore waters.

Results from the agency workshops identified aquatic manager's perceptions of marine aquaculture, and reported that commercial shellfish culture added value to their preserves. Through the assessment process a commonality of interests was identified between preserve managers and farmers in maintaining water quality and concern for the environmental impacts of recreational users.

Aquatic preserve managers, interacting with land planning agencies on the potential effects of land use changes, were interested in partnering with the Division for water quality issues. Issues of concern include loss of shell fish equipment from lease sites, lease marker maintenance, and the use of genetically compatible stocks. Managers wanted to identify distribution and size of area leases of both live rock and clams.

Results from the workshops were compiled into an informative bulletin. Articles were published to address lease marker maintenance; managing clean-up contracts on shellfish equipment widely dispersed by hurricanes, and improvements in communication. Aquaculture lease program information and location maps were distributed to interested preserve managers.

B. New Business

A. Agency Updates

Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS):

DACS reported that the 2008-2009 Aquaculture Review Council recommended research projects funding request had been submitted to the Governor and Legislature. Eleven projects were ranked by the committee in order of priority for \$1.3 million. Copies of the recommended projects were provided to the AICC members

The water quality monitoring program in designated aquaculture use zones has resumed. Though it had been operational in 2002-2005, equipment had been lost during the hurricanes. Currently, through a new grant, there is funding for 2.5 years to maintain 5 real-time stations online.

The Best Management Practices (BMP) manual is in a constant state of upgrading and improvement. The updated manual, revised Jan 07, provided significant changes for marine net pen culture in Florida's off shore waters. Following the input from other agencies and environmental groups, these new BMP's provide guidelines for net pen culture.

A "Notice of Rule Development" for 5L-3 has been filed and published. The BMP manual will be upgraded with revisions to the materials disposal from retention ponds,

shade cloth/freeze protection plastic disposal, non-native nomenclature to match FWC rule changes, and development of a stock enhancement section.

The division's oyster reef restoration program has received federal funding to expand and increase reef restoration activities. Red tide has not been a problem this year.

During the last year, the Department, also, facilitated a grant program distributing over \$3.6 million directly to 133 aquaculture farmers affected by Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, and Wilma. This year the Department will help distribute USDA funds to eligible catfish farmers for feed losses incurred during the disaster declarations which occurred from January 2005 through February 27, 2007.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP):

The aquatic preserves are currently revising the management plans. Public meetings at Terra Ceia and St Joe Bay have been completed and management plans for these areas are in a final writing stage. The next round of planning will include Port St Lucie, Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTMNERR), and Mosquito Lagoon, with local advisory committees providing input for adjustment to existing management plans. Subsequent NERR (National Estuarine Research Reserve) planning will include the Apalachicola and Rookery Bays. There will be about 4-5 aquatic preserve management plans evaluated each year for a period of ten years.

During fall 2007, the Apalachicola Research Reserve will begin breaking ground on an \$8 million building. The building is expected to be rated at least a "silver" on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System (LEED), as an energy efficient, certified building.

Oceans Council activities are continuing. They were funded last year for \$3.2 million though the current budget is uncertain due to possible budget cuts. Most of the funds will be directed towards designing a statewide monitoring network and research projects to provide uniform standards and data handling.

Also, a project on coral resilience is being coordinated with the Nature Conservancy to determine levels of genetic drift.

Office of Trade, Tourism and Economic Development (OTTED)

In south central Florida loans have been made available through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan with SBA for industries that had a drop in production from the drought. Aquaculturist may be eligible to apply for the loans as the SBA has recently been able to accommodate plant nurseries with loans, and this may apply to aquaculture operations.

The Governor has expressed an interest in supporting small business activities of various kinds, in particular those defined as non-employer firms, or self-employed, with contract workers.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC):

FWCC has three fish hatcheries. One freshwater hatchery was recently renovated in Webster. This was called the FBCC, Freshwater Bass Conservation Center, and has the primary duty of maintaining the Florida genetic strain of largemouth bass. The Florida Bass Center was officially opened April, 2006. The production ponds at the Center will be completed in 2007.

The Blackwater fish hatchery, a freshwater hatchery in Santa Rosa County, has had success with spawning Atlantic stripped bass. These hatchery managers have been integrating a genetic component into their stocking policies by matching up fish strains to the lake stocked.

Although, the FWCC had been investigating new locations for the Port Manatee marine hatchery, the Manatee County Port Authority has since changed its' plans and has renewed the FWCC lease.

In spring of 2006, the FWCC had a budget request to the Legislature to refurbish the facility and received \$2 million with the stipulation that the program go statewide. In response, a public-private partnership program was established to expand the FWCC program. FWCC hired FishPro, an aquatic resource engineering firm, to evaluate state land for sites and to cooperate with other groups in establishing a statewide network of marine fish hatcheries. As part of this effort, a partnership has been formed with Mote Marine and Harbor Branch Institute to develop intensive culture of red drum. Due to the cost of land available, the two fish hatcheries in this network will not be pond based. Additionally, the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, a nonprofit group, will assist in fund raising and help the FWCC to develop this venture by locating land and partnerships. Out of the \$2 million received, Mote Marine and HBOI will receive \$1.1 million which will be used develop intensive marine hatcheries and each will put up 10 acres, at their respective sites, to develop large scale facilities.

On the west coast of Florida there are two sites under consideration. One site, on Pine Island, is with a private owner, and one site is in Hillsborough County. Additionally, discussions are in process with other agencies such as the University of Miami, and the Florida Institute of Technology on the east coast, to develop a research relationship.

One of the keys to the program is following the analogy that a hatchery is the tip of the spear. The four main components that the initiative will address is HOPE: hatchery, outreach, partnerships, and education. The idea is to expand not only fish production and fish releases, but assist in other areas such as with invertebrates and wetland restoration.

University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Science Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences (IFAS):

Dr. Jeff Hill was hired as a non-native aquatic species and aquaculture faculty. Recently he returned from Malaysia with the World Wildlife fund to work with the International Tilapia association on issues associated with non-native Tilapia.

The most difficult situation in the University right now, especially in aquaculture, is funding. As a result of budget cuts and vetoes, several personnel positions were lost at the

Ruskin and Indian River facilities. In spite of this, the institute continues to do research in disease, drug labeling, and on non-native fish.

Also, of note, the University of Florida's Chair of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, Karl Havens, was selected as the interim director of Florida Sea Grant following a national search.

The World Aquaculture Society Annual Meeting will be held on Feb 9-12, 2008 in Orlando. It should draw 2,000-3,000 participants.

Sea Grant:

The Sea Grant work plan activities, provided by Chuck Adams, that relate to aquaculture were distributed and discussed. A copy is attached as a part of the meeting minutes.

- IV. The next meeting is TBD
Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Submitted by Kim Norgren