

Florida Aquaculture Interagency Coordinating Council Meeting – October 21, 2008

Notice of Meeting

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

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, October 21, 2008, 10:30 a.m.

PLACE: Division of Aquaculture, Conference Room, 1203 Governor's Square Boulevard, 5th 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: Kim Norgren, 1203 Governor's Square Boulevard, 5th Floor, Tallahassee, FL 32301, (850)488-4033.

Meeting Agenda

FLORIDA AQUACULTURE INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

**Division of Aquaculture
1203 Governor Square Blvd., Fifth Floor
Tallahassee, Florida**

October 21, 2008
10:30 a.m.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. MINUTES OF MEETING September 6, 2007
- III. OLD BUSINESS
- IV. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Introduction of New Members
 - B. Agency Updates
 - C. ARC Project Proposals Update
 - D. Florida Aquaculture Plan
 - E. AICC Annual Report
 - F. Other New Business

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. NEXT MEETING

VII. ADJOURN

Meeting Minutes

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

October 21, 2008

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 am.

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)
Lee Edmiston	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Barbara Lenczenski	Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

Members Absent

Larry Robinson	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Karl Havens	Florida Sea Grant
Lawrence Carter	Florida A&M University
James C. Cato	Florida Sea Grant

Guests

Diane Scholz	Office of Trade, Tourism and Economic Development (OTTED)
Kim Norgren	Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)
Kal Knickerbocker	Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS)
Craig Watson	University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS)
Chuck Adams	Florida Sea Grant

II. Minutes of Previous Meetings.

The minutes of previous meetings held on September 6, 2007 were reviewed and two corrections noted. Under FWCC Agency update, the Port Manatee marine hatchery was changed to the "future hatchery" and the phrase "renewed the FWCC lease" was removed. The minutes were approved.

III Old Business

A. *Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)*

DACS reported that ten Aquaculture Review Council recommended research projects for 2008-2009 were under contract with the current Legislative budget for \$1.3 million. A list of the projects was distributed to the council members. It was noted that the quarterly reports for these projects were now available for review on the Division of Aquacultures' website.

IV New Business

A. *New AICC Members*

New members to the AICC board were introduced

- Lee Edmiston, the new director of CAMA, will represent the Division of Environmental Planning.
- Barbara Lenczewski from Rural and Natural resource Planning will represent the Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
- Tom Frazier, represented by Craig Watson, is the new associate director of the Fish and Aquatic Science Program (FSRC), and will represent IFAS
- Karl Haven, represented by Chuck Adams, is the new Sea Grant director
- Mary Blakeslee introduced Diane Scholz as her replacement for Office of Trade, Tourism and Economic Development (OTTED)

B. *Agency Updates*

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC):

It was reported that the FWCC was one year into The Florida Marine Fisheries Enhancement Initiative (FMFEI), originally known as the Hatchery Network Initiative. This multi-year, multi-partner program is in the process of developing twelve potential hatchery sites through out the state to create a network of Marine Enhancement Centers (MECs) or Eco-centers. Though at present, the centers are primarily known for their fish propagation, the goal is to develop marine enhancement centers as areas for habitat restoration, outreach/Education, and as Designation Centers. These centers are being designed to provide public access points for resource interaction through fishing, boating, kayaking, tours, and wet land visitation. As recreational fisheries are a \$6 billion industry, through this interaction they hope to generate public awareness of the importance and value of the resource.

The Initiative is composed of four principle groups - fish propagation, finance, eco-system restoration, and education/out-reach. Additional information concerning this Initiative can be found at their website <http://fmfei.org/>

Additionally, during the past year, working with Mote Marine Laboratory and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, the hatcheries were able to intensively raise red drum with 70% survival. Fish Pro, also known as HDR, is an aquatic resource engineering firm that has been working with FWCC to determine site suitability for the fingerling production ponds. It is anticipated that the red drum fingerlings will be raised in ponds for the next five years, with the long term goal of transitioning into intensive systems.

Currently, harvested red drum fingerlings are brought indoors where they are put through a type of quarantine process. It is a pilot system, they are graded, fresh water dipped, conditioned and finally stocked at 11 parts per 1000 in an intensive system. Spotted Sea Trout, another cyanide species, is also being evaluated for a similar process. The focus has been on the viable production of healthy, recreational fish to be released at seasonally appropriate times. Additionally, efforts are being put forth to maintain the genetic and watershed integrity of the fish stocks, as well as to include program evaluations through pre and post stocking assessments.

One of the sites being evaluated for a new hatchery is at a South Florida Water Management District location, with approximately 45 acres of land, for possible development. However, it will be 2-3 years before the hatchery will be able to move from their current location.

Recently in Tampa Bay, three sizes of red drum (1-1 1/2 inch, 2 1/2 - 4 inches, 6 -8 inches) were raised and released into the river. Releases were timed to coordinate with the juvenile phase that would be present in the river, at that time. For example, Phase I (the smallest) were released in fall, the Phase II were released in spring, while the Phase III were released in summertime. Recapture rates were then examined the following year. There are still fish being recaptured after four years hence. Initially juveniles are tracked in the river, subsequently tracked in the estuary and finally, as they move out into deeper waters, through a fin clip program via anglers. Recapture studies have shown that juveniles released at larger sizes had 6 times better recapture rate than the smaller sizes. However, using the current rearing systems, the cost of rearing larger fish is also greater. It is anticipated that through the intensive rearing techniques being developed this cost should go down.

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

At present, significant budget deficient issues within the University system and in IFAS, in particular, lead to a restructuring of the academic departments. Karl Havens, previously the Chair of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, became the new director of the Florida Sea Grant program. With this vacancy, the Department of Aquatic Sciences merged into the School of Forest Resources and Conservation. Now, within that school there are three programs. These include Forestry, Geomatics, and Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences with three Associate Directors. Tom K. Frazer was appointed as the Associate Director to the Fisheries and Aquatic Science program.

Although no other faculty positions were affected several personnel positions were lost. This included staff in the diagnostic lab at the Ruskin facility.

In spite of this, the institute continues to do research into new species, disease, and drug labeling. IFAS is currently working with two drugs that are on the Federal indexing list. These will be the first two federally indexed drugs. As any medication or chemical used on fish must obtain FDA approval few products have been available. Congress had passed the MUMMS Act (Minor Use Minor Species Act) and IFAS has been chosen to serve on the expert panel. This is not a strict approval but rather an allowance for US producers to purchase these chemicals over the counter for use on fish.

The Indian River facility, under Dr. Courtney Ohs, has been coming together. However, due the budget cuts, he has limited personnel and funds with which to operate.

The extension programs are going well and there is excitement over the new DACS project recently funded. It will be a broad reaching project and will include faculty from Gainesville and Indian River, along with extension faculty from Sea Grant, Miami-Dade County, the Hillsborough Community College, and from Ruskin.

Sea Grant:

A report was distributed summarizing the aquaculture activities carried out by the Florida Sea Grant College Program. The report outlined the dollar amounts dedicated to research and extension efforts, as well as listing ongoing activities. Some of the projects funded through Sea

Grant included the evaluations of both diet and production of marine ornamental fish larvae, heat stress tolerance of triploid clams and diversification of the clam industry.

The clam industry diversification study shows great promise. This study is an effort to demonstrate to the clam farmers other species that could be produced using the existing technology and markets. In particular, the Sunray Venus clams appear to be quite successful. Using the same hatchery process as hard clams, the soft bag system, similar grow-out lengths were attained. Therefore with the same technology, the cost of production should also remain consistent as hard clam production. Market acceptance is the next hurdle. The plan is to follow a marketing assessment component similar to the one used for bay scallops 10 years ago.

Four restaurants (Cedar Key, Apalachicola, Bronson, and Gainesville) in Florida have agreed to participate in the consumer acceptance evaluation. Product will be delivered to these restaurants, four Thursdays in a row, for them to include on their menus. Follow up surveys will be conducted on the patrons at the restaurants. Initial response from the chiefs has been encouraging as the product lends to many culinary treatments and has an appealing “pink” color, like shrimp, upon cooking. Given the acceptance of the product, it will be necessary to determine the industry direction with the Sunray Venus clams and therefore an interesting project to follow.

Working with Mote Marine, pompano fingerlings were evaluated for the cost of production utilizing the budget generation system they had designed.

At the request of the hard clam industry, a follow up study to the 2000 hard clam survey is being completed and funded through DACS. In the earlier study, FAS surveyed growers while Sea Grant interviewed the certified shellfish dealers that had handled hard clams in 1999. Interestingly, the numbers of clams the dealers had bought matched up exactly with the FAS survey. The results showed about a \$34 million economic state impact. The current survey has shown over 183 million clams have been produced, a sizable increase over the last survey, resulting in \$48 million economic impact. As a result of these studies, the clam industry has shown that it continues to grow and is an economic value to the communities where located.

Another recently completed study evaluated shrimp culture as a means for citrus growers to diversify their revenue and risk. Evaluating the potential investment from a risk management standpoint a number of variables such as potential hurricane loss, national weather service data, budgets from citrus production sector and budgets from the shrimp production were compared. The results showed that the revenue return would not be economically viable for the citrus growers.

Finally, one industry of interest appears to be underdeveloped. This would be the marine bait industry which seems to be a sleeping giant. If recreational fishing is going to continue, and the state is going to be supporting it, then the marine fin fish bait industry is, thus far, an under developed industry.

Office of Trade, Tourism and Economic Development (OTTED)

As a reminder, OTTED is the lead agency for the state level emergency support function for business and industry. Therefore, one activity during any type of disaster event for the OTTED, is to gather input from the various industries and business groups throughout the state. Following recent events, it was learned that one area in which there appears to be a weak network for acquiring information, quickly, is the aquaculture industry.

This was identified when rumors of problems in the aquaculture industry circulated, following a disaster event, but verification of the specific problems were difficult. Although OTTED has a number of different organizations such as the Economic Development Organization, Tourism

Development Organization, and Work Force Organization to draw on for information, the local aquaculture operations tend not to be members of these groups and thus fall between the cracks of the networks. At present there is no immediate solution to the situation, rather the communication problem is being presented to the group for input. Possibly, one thing to establish would be to determine a contact list for a working system to assess the situation.

Through a discussion of possible contacts, it was suggested that the FSA, Farm service agency may provide OTTED the best contact information, as aquaculture falls under their disaster programs. The clam farmers have insurance through RMA, which is tracked by FSA. If there is a disaster farmers report their losses to FSA. Therefore, establishing a contact with the FSA headquarters in Gainesville may facilitate information gathering based on the actual damage being reported. Since they are a federal agency and deal with the industries "real" money losses they may be able to validate or negate any rumors.

Development of these contacts would help to improve the impact numbers associated with disasters, as well as to communicate the resources that may be available.

Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA):

A review of some of the programs that DCA currently has in operation was presented as follows:

- 1) The Water Fronts program is gearing up in the Florida Community Trusts.
- 2) A continuing water fronts program is still part of on-going state planning.
- 3) Plan Review continues and is the regulator part of community planning which deals with coastal issues on a daily basis.
- 4) RASIC , a rural planning network, is a new effort to hook up North-Central Florida areas of regional economic concern with each other to facilitate communication and networking on planning and resource issues. One meeting is planned for Madison County.
- 5) Water supply planning involves coordination of plans for water supply usage with DEP and the Water Management District. Currently meetings are being held to formulate 10 year water supply facilities plans for accommodating not only direct water source, but alternative sources and conservation. Adequate water supply planning may be important to aquaculture facilities.
- 6) Power plant siting is another program where issues concerning plant output and in-put sites are evaluated for impact to the fauna. This may be a concern for aquaculture facilities.
- 7) Another coordinated project underway, with the Department of Health and DEP, addresses water quality issues with respect to county septic tanks, such as in Wakulla and waste disposal sites.
- 8) The Springs Initiative is a program working closely with counties on ground water and other types of resources.
- 9) Areas of critical state concern, such as the Everglades, the Florida Keys and the Green Swamp area are, also, closely monitored by the DCA through comp plan evaluations and permitting. With respect to aquaculture type issues for planning and development there may be interaction.
- 10) Finally, there is a GIS program in DCA. The map of harvesting sites and significant areas received at this meeting will be submitted to the plan reviewers as a resource.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP):

DEP projects currently in operation were briefly discussed and included joint projects in Crystal River, the Aquatic Reserves, and in the Apalachicola Bay. In addition, DEP is in the process of putting together the involvement they have all over the state, including the Keys and aquatic preserves. Additional information concerning these projects are listed in the report. ??

Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (DACS):

The ARC projects, previously mentioned, are under contract and in the process of being completed. There were no projects the previous year (2007-2008).

Through the certification program and best management practices over 1000 operations have been certified. DACS compliance staff makes two visits per year to each operation. Interestingly, there has been a surge of interest and new development in the marine aquarium trade. In particular, quite a few coral producers have been certified. These are typically very small operations that are internet trade based. This has been of concern as coral is highly regulated and the operations require certification. Although live rock continues to be grown there were not any new certificates issued. Live rock production at some Federal Lease sites has been indicated as a concern by NOAA .

Following the publication of the BMP's additional changes have been noted and are being collected. These primarily involve issues that are not critical and primarily involve disposal of debris, retention ponds and health.

Shellfish operations have been steady with the exception of a new shellfish harvesting area in Wakulla County just beyond the mouth of the St Marks River. The proposed site will be opened to oyster harvesting and is composed of 9,375 total acres with 4,111 acres conditionally approved. In December there will be a workshop to establish rules for this sites management. It is anticipated that by March 1, 2009 the 38th commercial oyster harvesting area will be in operation.

Shell continues to be planted to mitigate and enhance oyster bars. Plantings occur continually and have been made in Pensacola, Escambia bay, West Bay, and Apalachicola Bay. The material being planted is composed of fossil shell. The project is being done under a NOAA grant for the Gulf State Fisheries Commission to mitigate from the hurricanes. This mitigation project will probably go on for the next 3-4 years. In the process DACS has worked with DEP, on the green shores project (what is this), and with a shell buying program in Cedar Key.

Commercial leases have remained steady, though some interest has been shown for new leases in Cedar Key, at the lower part of Levee County.

There is an on going a contract on the east coast to clean up storm debris in the Indian River. The contractor is currently working from Cape Canaveral south towards Vero Beach

AICC members were provided copies of the 2008-2009 Florida Aquaculture Plan. It was reviewed and submitted by the Aquaculture Review Council (ARC) to the Commissioner. The plan not only meets the statute requirements but also serves as a guidance document. For researchers interested in submitting ARC research proposals the plan identifies priority areas of work. The RFP to be published in January will be for projects to be completed during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Generally, the proposal process follows the Sea Grant model. Initially a 2 to 3 page pre-proposal is submitted in February and, following a review by the ARC council, those selected submit a full proposal in May. In June, researchers are invited to give a short presentation on their project. Following this review, the council member's grade and rank the proposals to be sent, in order of priority, to the Commissioner for inclusion in the budget to the Legislature. A list was distributed of the four proposals recently forwarded to the legislature to be considered for funding in the next session.

- The next meeting is TBD
- IV. Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 pm.
Submitted by Kim Norgren