

Clam Industry Task Meeting – October 14, 2009

Notice of Meeting

The Clam Industry Task Force announces a public meeting to which all persons are invited.

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, October 14, 2009, 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Cedar Key Community Center, 809 6th Street, Cedar Key, FL 32625

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED: To discuss issues affecting the Florida clam industry.

A copy of the agenda may be obtained by contacting: Anne Cerwin at (850)488-4033.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this workshop/meeting is asked to advise the agency at least 3 days before the workshop/meeting by contacting: Anne Cerwin at (850)488-4033. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1(800)955-8771 (TDD) or 1(800)955-8770 (Voice).

For more information, you may contact: Mark Berrigan or Anne Cerwin at (850)488-4033.

Agenda

AGENDA **Clam Industry Task Force Meeting**

Date: October 14, 2009
Time: 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Location: Cedar Key Community Center
809 6th Street
Cedar Key, Florida 32625

- I. Welcome / Introductions
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Approval of Agenda
- IV. Clam Industry Issues
 - Working Waterfront Legislation
 - Property Designation for aqua-exemptions in Levy County
 - Lease re-location proposal for Cedar Key area
 - Vacant leases in Pine Island (SW Florida) – Outlook
 - Purging – problems and methods
 - Out-of-state seed imports
 - Disposal of cover netting / problems and concern
 - CARES Program for clam farmers
 - Issue Updates
 - FWCC Letters regarding Uniform Waterway Markers
 - FWCC SAL for Releases and Impacts on Clam Farming
 - Importation for Foreign Clams (Marketing)
- V. DACS Updates
 - Division of Marketing

- Division of Aquaculture
 - ISSC Issues
 - Positions
 - Rule Chapter 18-21 F.A.C. / Consent of Use
 - Division of Law Enforcement
- VI. Extension Updates
 - Regional Updates
 - Southeast Florida
 - New task force member for Southeast region
 - Southwest Florida
 - Suwannee Sound / Cedar Key
 - Alligator Harbor
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Next Meeting (Place, Date, Time, Topics)
- IX. Adjourn Clam Industry Task Force Meeting

Minutes

Minutes as Approved
 Clam Industry Task Force Meeting
 Cedar Key Community Center
 809 6th Street, Cedar Key, Florida 32625
 October 14, 2009

I. Welcome / Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 AM by Sue Colson who welcomed the task force members and guests and presided over the agenda and discussions.

Members and guests introduced themselves. The following persons were in attendance:

Members Present:

Ricky Cooke	Bill Lartz	Chris Topping
Dan Solano	Sue Colson	Mike Hodges
Tom McCrudden	Tony Heeb	Barry Hurt
Bill Leeming	Rick Viele	Steve Woodford
Rose Cantwell		

Ex Officio Members Present:

Leslie Sturmer	David Heil	Alan Peirce
Steve Geiger		

Guests:

Ewan Leighton
Hugh Thomas
Clayton Lewis
Brian Wright
Sherman James
John Falcone
Faith U.
Jesse Everidge
Ken Edmonds
Anthony Hinkle
Ken Zacharias

Chip Earl
Jessie Everidge
Curtis Hemmel
Chris Reynolds
Rick Crumpley
Jon Gill
Shaun Stevenson
Mary Duryea
Stephan Blue
Tim White
Linda Reynolds

Van Lewis
Ross Buck
Osborn Barker
Chuck Adams
Ann Bowens
Kat Cummins
Bobby Witt
Adele Griffin
Jeff F.
Eric Simone

II. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the June 3, 2009 Clam Industry Task Force meeting were approved and accepted without amendments.

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the October 14, 2009 meeting was amended to remove the Division of Marketing Update and accepted without objection.

Sue Colson requested that anyone requesting that items be included on future agendas should include their name so that the requestor can be identified on the agenda.

IV. Clam Industry Issues

A. Working Waterfront Legislation. Leslie Sturmer reported that legislation by Senator Dean to implement the Working Waterfront Constitutional Amendment failed last year but will be sponsored again this year. A minor revision to the legislation is needed to clarify that the bill includes all certified aquaculture facilities that are applicable under the constitution. Dan Solano, Chris Topping, and Leslie Sturmer agreed to meet with Senator Dean at his home office to support the bill with the needed revisions.

B. Property Designation for aqua-exemptions in Levy County. Task Force members discussed the pros and cons of seeking revisions to Florida's Greenbelt Tax Assessment and the possibility of working with the Dept of Revenue to change the agencies current interpretation so that it would include facilities that are not on the waterfront.

C. Lease Relocation Proposal for Cedar Key Area. Chris Topping provided a letter describing the proposal to relocate lease parcels L-717 through L-726 and L-735 through L-739 located in the Corrigan's Reef high-density lease area. He also provided a list of interested parties that support the relocation. David Heil stated that the relocation could

be pursued now that the revisions to Rule 18-21, F.A.C., are complete and said the Department would work on the project when they receive a letter of support from both the CITF and the Cedar Key Aquaculture Association.

Mike Hodges motioned that the Task Force develop criteria to show that a lease area has changed and is no longer commercially viable. These criteria would be used to determine if an area is eligible for relocation. The motion received a second and was passed. Curt Hemmel suggested that Florida provide larger leases and more flexibility using Virginia as a model to help the industry remain competitive.

D. Vacant Leases in Pine Island (SW Florida) – Outlook. David Heil reported that there are approximately 22 leases available and asked if there is still interest in those leases. Tony Heeb reported that there is interest and that FDACS needs to establish a process for those who have expressed interest to get a lease. Leslie Sturmer suggested using a list process similar to that which has been used in the Cedar Key region in the past.

E. Purging – Problems and Methods. There was no discussion.

F. Out of State Seed Imports. Tom McCrudden reported that problems exist for in-state hatcheries and stated that it is important for Florida's growers to support our in-state hatcheries. Curt Hemmel stated that he would support a moratorium or ban on seed imports. Chris Topping and Mike Hodges stated that there are times when Florida growers need to purchase seed from out of state hatcheries. Rick Cooke motioned that we work to remove barriers and allow more Florida seed to be sold out of state rather than create additional trade restrictions. Sue Colson agreed that trade restrictions are harmful to the overall industry and suggested that the problem be addressed through additional marketing and promotion. After further discussion the motion received a second and was passed.

G. Disposal of Cover Netting / Problems and Concerns. Sue Colson and Leslie Sturmer reported on recent successful efforts to collect and properly dispose of old netting.

H. CARES Program for Clam Farmers. Hugh Thomas (FDACS, Office of Agricultural Water Policy) provided information on the Suwannee River Partnership and the CARES Program which was created to recognize agricultural producers who are in full compliance with established Best Management Practices. Mr. Thomas encouraged the clam industry to participate and offered his assistance to those who are interested. Sue Colson, Leslie Sturmer stated that participation in CARES is an opportunity to educate the public. Ricky Cooke motioned that he would work with Dan Solano, Chris Topping and Leslie Sturmer to develop CARES participation criteria. The motion was second and passed.

I. FWCC Letters Regarding Uniform Waterway Markers. No additional letters have been received and a motion was passed to thank Sherman Wilhelm and FDACS for their efforts to get this issue resolved.

- J. FWCC Special Activity Licenses (SALs) for Releases and Impacts on Clam Farming.
- K. Importation for Foreign Clams (Marketing). There was no discussion.

V. DACS Updates

- A. Division of Marketing. Sue Colson distributed copies of recent news articles and press releases related to marketing activities by the Bureau of Seafood and Aquaculture Marketing.
- B. Division of Aquaculture. David Heil reported that the ISSC meeting in New Hampshire starts on October 17, 2009. Florida will be well represented by FDACS, oyster harvesters and processors, the Department of Health, and the University of Florida. Significant regulatory changes to address *Vibrio vulnificus* illnesses are expected to directly affect oyster harvesters and processors. FDACS anticipates that we will initiate rule development workshops directly following the meeting and changes implemented will become effective on May 1, 2010. Ricky Cooke suggested that the CITF be directly represented in future meetings and a motion was passed to hold future fund raisers to support a CITF representative at those meetings.

David Heil also reported that FDACS promoted Dan Cavins to the Environmental Administrator position and that efforts are underway to fill the vacated ESIII position and a Lab Helper position. David further reported that needed revisions to Rule 18-21, F.A.C. were finally passed and this is a monumental achievement after many years of effort to get that accomplished.

- C. Division of Law Enforcement. Sherman James reported no significant problems.

VI. Extension and Regional Updates.

A. Extension Updates. Leslie Sturmer reported that the World Wildlife Fund has developed “Bivalve Aquaculture – Draft Standards for Certification” and that the comment period ends on November 30, 2009. Leslie also provided information on the Virginia Aquaculture Conference in November; a SRAC project involving shellfish; and two half-day educational seminars to be provided by Victor Garrido which will be scheduled in Apalachicola (oysters) and Cedar Key (clams). Sue Colson volunteered that the Cedar Key Clam Growers would host the clam seminar. Leslie added that directly following the Task Force meeting, IFAS will provide an educational workshop to present the results of ongoing clam research projects.

B. Regional Updates.

1. Steven Woodford was nominated and approved as the new representative of the Southeast Florida Region to replace Charles Sembler. He reported that production is picking up due to cooler temperatures and some water quality improvements have been made by the SJRWMD projects to address freshwater and nutrient issues.

2. Tony Heeb reported that sales continue to be slow in Southwest Florida and there have been no major changes in production.

3. In the Cedar Key region several members reported that the region is still suffering from an extensive clam die-off, but sales are beginning to pick up and should get a boost with the upcoming Seafood Festival.

4. Bill Lartz reported that many growers in Alligator Harbor experienced a 30% die-off during August and September. The larger clams seemed to be much more affected than the smaller clams.

VII. Public Comment.

The Dirty Jobs episode filmed in Alligator Harbor will be shown between December and March.

There were no other comments provided.

VIII. Next Meeting (Place, Time, Topics).

The next meeting will be held in Pine Island during the month of January

IX. Adjourn Clam Industry Task Force Meeting.

Sue Colson thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 1:00 P.M.