

MADE IN ALASKA

# MARICULTURE

ALASKA DIVISION of  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ALASKA  
DEPARTMENT of  
MILITARY AND  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

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Alaska Mariculture Task Force  
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 @ 9:00am-12:00pm AST

**DUE TO COVID-19: ONLINE MEETING ONLY**

**1) Roll call (Chair McCarty calls meeting to order at 9:04am AST)**

**MTF Members Present**

Heather McCarty – (Chair) CBSFA, Julie Decker – AFDF, Sam Rabung – ADFG, Jim Andersen – ADCCED (late), Eric Wyatt – Blue Starr Oyster Co./OceansAlaska/ASGA, Angel Drobnica – APICDA, Mike Stekoll - UAS/UAF. Ex-officio members: Andrew Miller – ADNR.

**2) Conflicts of Interest Declared**

*Records stand from previous meetings. No new conflicts of interest declared.*

**3) Review and approve agenda**

*Motion (Rabung/Decker) to approve agenda. Motion passes with no objections.*

**4) Review and approve minutes: Feb. 18 and March 26, 2021**

*Motion (Rabung/Decker) to approve Feb. 18, 2021 and March 26, 2021 minutes. Motion passes with no objections.*

**5) Public introductions & comments**

*Public comments held until pertinent agenda items.*

John Whissel – Native Village of Eyak, Riley Smith – AFDF, Jordan Hollarsmith – NOAA, Alicia Bishop – NOAA, Tommy Sheridan – AFDF Board/PWSAC Board, Karen Carey – Chancellor UAS, Kristen Cieciel, Schery Umanzor – UAF, Angie Bowers – UAS, Molly Zaleski – NOAA, Bobbi Hudson – PSI, Amy Kirkham – USFWS, Nick Mangini – Kodiak Kelp Co., Bryan Herczeg – USACE, Andrew Gregory – USACE, Flip Pryor – ADFG, Brian Holst – JEDC, Justina Hotch – Klukwan, Kristen Grunthal – ADFG, Hannah Wilson – ASG Fellow, Whitney Crittenden – Ketchikan, Charlotte Levy – Aleutians East Borough, Tomi Marsh – OceansAlaska, Willow Hetrick Moore – Chugach Regional Resource Commission, Connie XXX, Shawn Carey – NOAA., Nick Mangini, Alf Pryor, Bobbi Hudson.

**6) Updates by MTF members (20 mins):**

- a. AFDF updates (Decker) – PCSGA annual conference (Sept. 20-22); Ag Board vacancy

- Decker – PCSGA annual conference will be held virtually on Sept. 20-22. Governor's office notified MTF that there is a vacancy on the Agriculture Board. Currently no aquatic farmers represented on the Board – list of criteria states that you cannot serve on the Board if you have a pending loan or lease application under consideration. You can serve if it has been granted.
- b. Alaska Sea Grant updates (Eckert)
- May 17-20, ASG will be holding a virtual Shellfish and Seaweed Festival, register on the ASG [website](#). Chris Sannito, Melissa Good are working on developing methods for seaweed processing. Project underway titled, Developing Business Plans for Seaweed Aquaculture.
- c. NOAA updates (Bishop, Hollarsmith)
- Bishop – NOAA Office of Aquaculture will be holding an AOA update webinar on May 4, 11-11:30am AST. Register [here](#). Last week received review comments from the Office of Aquaculture on the Alaska AOA challenges and opportunities outline. Next month, the Aquaculture Permitting Portal will be in final design.
  - Hollarsmith – NOAA has been funded for two projects: One with Seagrove Kelp Co. to look at herring mitigation strategies; second project will address population genetic structure for kelp in SEAK. ASG fellow now working at the AFSC. Undergraduate at UW will be researching maps from 1915 of Alaska kelp beds to track changes.
- d. ASGA updates (Wyatt)
- Wyatt – last week, ASGA held an Alaska shellfish grower's roundtable. Current and potential new shellfish farmers all joined together. Sales have increased dramatically in the last few weeks. APHIS = FDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/home/>. Very important for "biosecurity" of U.S. mariculture products.
- e. Other updates – University conference (McCarty, Stekoll); ARPA request; comments to NOAA – “Making Fisheries, Aquaculture More Resilient to Climate Change” (McCarty); others.
- McCarty – upcoming conference hosted by Southeast Conference and JEDC in conjunction with UAF/UAS. Mariculture will be a major focus. Most likely in Juneau and in Spring 2022.
    - Stekoll – planning in the beginning stages.
  - Decker – ARPA request sent to the Governor's Office, Congressional Delegation, other committee members. Governor will be announcing how funds will be spent in the coming months. More discussion to come in May. \$51 million request: \$25 million to support the AMA/MRTC, \$25 million increase the MRLF, \$1 million to help support ASMI's marketing of mariculture products. Request mirrors some of the priorities in the Five-Year Action Plan.
  - McCarty – comments submitted to NOAA: “Making Fisheries, Aquaculture More Resilient to Climate Change”.

## 7) Workgroup Updates (15 mins):

- a. Legislative Workgroup (McCarty, Rabung, Drobnica, Decker, Hetrick) – Update on mariculture bills (SB 64 / HB 41; HB 115) (McCarty, Decker)
  - Decker – SB 64 / HB 41. Senate Finance Committee amended SB 64, removing the ASMI marketing component. It was passed forward and will be awaiting a Senate floor vote. HB 41 was also amended – ASMI’s portion remains in the bill, however, now includes sunset clause in 2025, which puts industry on notice that an assessment mechanism must be in place to continue marketing after 2025. Shellfish enhancement portion of bill seems to remain intact. HB 115 – DNR renewal process revisions (streamlining), reporting requirements, allows tourism & education activities at farms without additional fees – the bill has a chance to pass this session.
- b. Regulatory Workgroup (Rabung, McCarty, Wyatt, Decker, Sullivan, Stryker) – none
- c. AQUAA Act Workgroup (Decker, McCarty, Rabung, Pryor, Eckert, Bishop) – none
- d. AMA Workgroup (McCarty, Decker, Smith, Wyatt, Sheridan, Scheer, Marsh) – old business
- e. Alaska Native Mariculture Development Workgroup (Douville, McCarty, Decker, Rabung, Marsh, Wyatt, J. Andersen, Gallegos, Andersen, Whissel, Hetrick-Price, Hayden, Lindoff, Booth, Medicine Crow, Blake, Edenshaw) – none

## 8) Old Business (15 mins):

- a. EVOS TC proposal – status report (Eckert)
  - Eckert – submitted on March 29. Expect to hear back in June, if invited, most likely will be asked to make revisions and resubmit in August. There is much coordination with farmers by ASG and AFDF; Total is \$25 million project over 10 years.
- b. AMA Workgroup report – MRTC coordination & implementation, membership application, timeline (McCarty, Decker)
  - McCarty – AMA workgroup had a meeting with Ginny and Melissa regarding coordination between the AMA and MRTC. As these entities evolve and the mission evolves.
  - Eckert – revised the MRTC Whitepaper [here](#). MRTC mission to build partnerships and leverage resources to facilitate and coordinate training, research and dissemination across disciplines (e.g. biology, engineering, economics, marketing, food sciences, etc.) for better success of industry and community development and to improve mariculture management.
    - Will be included in the draft AMA implementation plan. MRTC activities will be inclusive, will be administrated within the University with Alaska Sea Grant. ASG is a coordination between the University and NOAA. Mariculture Specialist has partial funding for upcoming fiscal year (25%).

- McCarty – list of potential AMA members has been drafted, membership application has been drafted, AMA 2-page glossy in development. Will be completed and membership drive will begin by mid-May.

***Task: MTF will review MRTC Whitepaper and send suggestions to Eckert by April 30.***

***Task: AMA workgroup will send potential membership list to MTF for recommendations prior to membership drive.***

**9) New Business (60 mins):**

a. Final Report to the Governor – review draft (McCarty)

- McCarty – extension was requested from the Governor’s Office and granted – new due date of May 15.
- McCarty/Decker –Need to include an economic overview or progress status in report. We need input from the MTF on the Message from the MTF and content/appendices. May need to include an executive summary.
- Eckert/Stekoll – both the MRTC Whitepaper and Implementation Plan should be included.
- Wyatt – mariculture workforce development is a critical future need. We need more interested mariculture farmers. Training, outreach and education imperative.
- Decker – future needs section largely draws from Plan. Important for entire MTF to give feedback on new needs and challenges or ones that should be highlighted more from the Plan.

***Task: entire MTF will review relevant portions of the final report and email suggestions to Decker/McCarty by April 30.***

b. Army Corps of Engineers – presentation RE Nationwide General Permits (Andrew Gregory, Bryan Herczeg)

- Bishop – would be great to widely circulate this information to new and potential farmers. Can you speak to the potential to implement a regional general permit for Alaska?
- Herczeg – Nationwide General Permits (NGPs) are a rapid permitting process (45-60 days). Two different versions exist for aquatic farming/mariculture: #48 – for commercial shellfish mariculture activities, #55 – for seaweed and shellfish mariculture activities (also IMTA, or multiple species). Effective permitting tool, USACE is simply verifying that the activities are authorized. There was once a regional general permit in Alaska. If there are Alaska-centric needs not addressed in the NGPs, then USACE could explore developing one for Alaska. Need to hear from stakeholders and state agencies.
- Wyatt – can an applicant challenge a condition of a NGP (i.e. no construction in winter because of humpback whale interaction)?

- Gregory – you are able to request a permit modification or reconsideration. Requests will be reviewed before granted. Contact information below.
  - Andrew Gregory: 907-753-2791, [andrew.w.gregory@usace.army.mil](mailto:andrew.w.gregory@usace.army.mil)
  - Bryan Herczeg: 907-753-2772, [bryan.a.herczeg@usace.army.mil](mailto:bryan.a.herczeg@usace.army.mil)

**10) Tentative topics for next meeting (5 mins)**

- a. Legislative Workgroup report
- b. Final Report to the Governor
- c. AMA Workgroup report
- d. Alaska Native Mariculture Development Workgroup report
- e. 2021 Aquatic Farm Lease Applications
- f. USACE Q&A

**11) Set next meeting date and time – (5 mins)**

***Next MTF meetings scheduled for May 21 9:00am-12:00pm AST and June 25 9:00am-12:00pm AST.***

**12) Closing Comments & Adjournment (5 mins)**

***Meeting adjourned at 11:56am AST.***