

Nova Scotia Aquaculture Regulatory Advisory Committee
Wednesday, July 7th, 1:00-3:00PM Virtual

Attendees:

Minister Keith Colwell, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Shauna Williams, Executive Assistant to the Minister
Bruce Hancock, Executive Director of Aquaculture
Paul Budreski, Shellfish Farmer
Deputy Minister, Loretta Robichaud
Aaron MacMullin, Senior Corporate Policy Strategist
Stewart Lamont, Tangier Lobster LTD.
Dr. Shawn Robinson, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Bruce Morrison, Warden of Victoria County
Carla Buchan, Director of Aquaculture
Jessica Feindel, Manager of Operations
Joel Corcoran, Nova Scotia Environment
Amanda Swim, Aquatic Animal Health
David Gray, Chair of Science Advisory
Heather Hughes, Executive Director of Policy and Corporate Services
Charlene LeBlanc, Community Development Officer
Carl Purcell, Chair of Traceability Committee??
Jeff Nickerson, Cooke Aquaculture
Tom Smith, Aquaculture Association
Councillor Carol Ann Potter, Bear River First Nation **Regrets:**

Chief Terrance Paul, Membertou First Nation

Welcome and Introduction of New Committee Members

Minister Colwell introduced two new members of the committee: Stewart Lamont of Tangier Lobster LTD. and Councillor Carol Ann Potter of Bear River First Nation.

Stewart Lamont introduced himself. Happy to be a part of the committee. Has personal reservations over open net aquaculture, however, supportive of close containment and land-based aquaculture in the province. Hoping to make a useful contribution to the group.

Executive Director of Aquaculture, Mr. Hancock introduced the other committee members and Departmental staff present for the meeting.

Approval of Meeting Summary from the May 5, 2021 Meeting

Committee approved the previous meeting summary.

Mr. Aaron MacMullin, Senior Corporate Policy Strategist Presented on: Creating the Conditions for Sustainable Aquaculture: A Look Back Five Years

Mr. MacMullin delivered the presentation *Creating the Conditions for Sustainable Aquaculture: A Look Back Five Years*. Aaron shared information on some of the significant developments over the past number of years.

Mr. MacMullin discussed how much has changed by way of legislation, regulations, and attitudes in aquaculture in Nova Scotia. He discussed the changes that have taken place since the launch of the Aquaculture Strategy in 2012 to the legislative and regulatory changes in 2015, spurred by the Independent Panel in 2014, which resulted in an overhaul of the aquaculture regulations in the province.

An overview of the new legislative and regulatory changes was presented on including licensing and leasing, farm management plans, as well as investments in infrastructure and increased transparency for both the public and industry.

A video demonstrating the new regulatory process was presented to the committee, which not only displayed the extent of regulatory and legislative changes, but also confirmed how good regulations, transparency and communications with communities can foster community relationships that helps to build public trust.

Mr. MacMullin informed the committee that there is a great deal to cover by way case studies, videos, and next steps for the five-year comprehensive review mandated in the committees Terms of Reference, which was discussed at the past meeting.

Mrs. Charlene LeBlanc of the Municipality of the District of Argyle: Case Study Presentation on the Aquaculture Development Area (ADA) in the Municipality of the District of Argyle.

Mrs. Leblanc provided the committee with details on the project background for the ADA which was spurred from a need for business growth and tourism. In 2016, the concept of building a “business park on the sea” was born. The municipality recognized the large asset it had in the ocean and felt there was opportunity for sustainable economic growth in both aquaculture and tourism.

Aquaculture was identified as a potential economic driver and shortly after a partnership between the Municipality and Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture was struck.

Mr. MacMullin noted that the two levels of government entered into a three-year agreement way of an MOU in January of 2020 to identify areas with potential for environmentally sustainable aquaculture. The agreement is the first of its kind in Nova Scotia and the first example in Canada of this approach to aquaculture development and stressed the importance of community partnerships.

The Municipality of Argyle worked with the province on the idea of an ADA for the area. Under the agreement, the province will work with the municipality to research and identify potential development areas while considering the environment, other marine users and opportunities for shellfish and marine plant aquaculture sites.

Mrs. Leblanc discussed the factors that were considered when determining site selection including: potential impact on fishers, navigation, indigenous involvement, proximity to homes, among other factors.

Mrs. Leblanc also shared an overview of the Steering Committee that was struck by the Department, the Municipality, and the Centre for Marine Applied Research. The Steering Committee sets goals for the ADA, provides scientific data, and plays an administrative function for the ADA.

Mrs. Leblanc informed the committee that the Steering Committee is committed to meeting with various stakeholders. First and foremost, the Steering Committee met with LFA 34 lobster fishers, including the two lobster associations. Other stakeholder engagement included: le village Historique Acadien de NS, recreational boaters, South West Biosphere Reserve, the NS Bird society, and our neighboring municipalities.. The Steering Committee also presented to TREPA (Tusket River env P Association), YASTA, WREN, and the NS Bird Society. Mrs. Leblanc noted that at last count, the Steering Committee had engagement with over 100 people.

Mr. Leblanc stressed the importance of stakeholder engagement; honest and respectful dialogue, and the sharing of information is critical to have a successful ADA.

Mrs. Leblanc ended by informing the committee that there is excitement around this ADA, and she looks forward to updating the committee on future developments.

Manager of Operations Jessica Feindel: Case Study Presentation on Bayswater Beach

Mrs. Feindel provided the committee with an overview of study results from Bayswater Beach which was a joint project conducted by, Dr. Ian Spooner (Acadia University); the Centre for Marine Applied Research; Queen's University facility for isotope research

(QFIR) laboratory in Kingston, Ontario; Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Aquaculture Management; Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Aquaculture Science; Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry, and Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change.

As a background for the committee members, Mrs. Feindel informed the committee the project was undertaken after concerns were raised from a citizen in February of 2020, surrounding black sediment discovered on the beach.

Mrs. Feindel walked the committee members through the various sampling methodologies that were undertaken during this project.

Mrs. Feindel discussed the core conclusions of the project and encouraged committee members interested in the project can access the full report titled: *Investigating Concerns of Marine Finfish Aquaculture Impacts at Bayswater Beach Provincial Park, NS* on the Department's website.

Dr. Shawn Robinson of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada: Case Study Presentation on Salmon Farm Lobster/Crab interactions in Eastern Canada Fisheries

Dr. Robinson provided the committee with an overview of the general objectives of the study which included:

- a) Evaluate variation in lobster/crab use between habitat types (i.e., # below vs. beyond salmon farms)
- b) Evaluate lobster/crab movement and fidelity to salmon farms relative to natural areas (NB).
- c) Evaluate uptake of salmon farm-derived material by lobsters/crabs (i.e., below vs beyond salmon farms).
- d) Evaluate lobster/crab movement and fidelity to salmon farms relative to natural areas (NS).
- e) Evaluate any changes in the internal microbiome of lobsters/crabs.

Dr. Robinson summarized the scientific data resulting from the study and provided a summary of the work so far which included:

- a) Farms impacted lobster distribution at Coffin Island when fish/cages present.
- b) Lobster show less fidelity to farms relative to crabs.
- c) Crabs usually more abundant in farm sites (NB/NS) ;(sex-specific differences).
- d) Weather may affect lobster/crab distributions.
- e) Might be yearly differences in microbiomes, but no significant differences yet among sites.
- f) Liverpool is a very dynamic area for flushing in comparison to the Bay of Fundy.

Dr. Robinson informed the committee that data is still being analyzed and the plan for 2021 is to continue to collect data and share it with interested parties.

Executive Director of Policy, Heather Hughes: Introduction to the Comprehensive Regulatory Review Process

Mrs. Hughes followed up on the discussion from the previous committee regarding the Departments commitment to a five-year comprehensive review which is mandated in the Committees Terms of Reference. Mrs. Hughes stated the review will be spread out over three meetings to demonstrate the scope of the regulatory and legislative changes over the past number of years.

Mrs. Hughes informed the committee that there will be three meetings in which departmental staff will walk through the legislative and regulatory changes that have been put in place. The committee will have the opportunity to share any questions, concerns, or opportunities they may see. A “What We Heard Report” will be drafted for committee members and shared with the public by way of the Department’s website.

Concluding Remarks & Adjournment

- a) Minister Colwell thanked presenters for a very thorough discussion of where we were and where we are today.
- b) The next meeting will take place soon.