

Aquaculture Regulatory Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, 6th Floor World Trade and Convention Center
Halifax, Nova Scotia
December 13, 2017

Province of Nova Scotia:

Present:

Honourable Keith Colwell, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Frank Dunn, Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Mark MacPhail, Executive Assistant to the Minister
Bruce Osborne, Executive Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Bruce Hancock, Director of Aquaculture
Dr. Roland Cusack, Chief Aquatic Animal Health Veterinarian
Nathaniel Feindel, Manager of Aquaculture Development
Brennan Goreham, Manager of Licensing and Leasing
Heather Hughes, Director of Policy
Lynn Winfield, Licensing Coordinator

Committee Members:

Present:

Chief Terrance Paul, Membertou First Nation and Fisheries Portfolio Lead for the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs
Tom Smith, Executive Director, Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia
Bruce Morrison, Warden, Municipality of the County of Victoria
Carl Purcell, Nova Scotia Salmon Association and Chair of the Nova Scotia Salmon Traceability Advisory Committee
Paul Brudeski, AquaDelights Seafoods Limited
Lloyd Robicheau, Lobster harvester (LFA 32), Three Fathom Harbour
Janice Ryan, World Wildlife Federation
Jeffery Nickerson, Cooke Aquaculture

Regrets:

Dr. David Gray, Dean, Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture
Lisa Dahr, Manager, Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, Halifax Regional Municipality

Meeting Summary

Chief Paul (meeting chair) opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests.

Review of Previous Meeting Summaries

Committee Members approved the meeting summaries from November 23, 2016 and December 14, 2016. No changes were noted.

Committee Membership

Resignations were received from Mr. Raymond Plourde who has a new role with forestry at the Ecology Centre and Ms. Nelle Halse who is retiring from Cooke Aquaculture. Thanks was

extended to both committee members. Two new members were welcomed to the committee: Janice Ryan, World Wildlife Federation; and Jeff Nickerson, Cooke Aquaculture

Regulatory and Legislative Updates

Traceability Committee

Mr. Carl Purcell and Nathaniel Feindel provided an update on the work of the Traceability Committee. Discussion occurred regarding regulatory language, inclusion of Mi'kmaq representatives in the Committee's work, 3rd-party audits.

Draft Regulatory Changes

Brennan Goreham provided an overview of proposed legislative and regulatory changes that have arisen out of the operationalizing of the current framework. Many of the changes relate to language clarity or clarifying the intent of the original legislation and regulations.

Research and Development

Nathaniel Feindel provided an update on the 2017/2018 research and development projects. It was suggested that the Department create a website for Research and Development which would briefly outline the funds available, the application process, and a summary for the projects funded and the results.

Licensing and Leasing Decisions

Brennan Goreham provided an update on the Administrative Licensing Decisions made since January 2016. There have been 93 renewals, 12 assignments, 6 amendments, one new land-based site and 24 sites discontinued. This information is available on the NSDFA website. Discussion occurred regarding discontinued sites, site assignments, and how the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) process intersects with Aquaculture.

NSE Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement Update

Janet MacKinnon, Director, Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement, Nova Scotia Department of Environment, joined the meeting. Ms. MacKinnon provide updates on Conservation Officer training and inspection activities. Inspection activities have focused on introduction to the industry, site boundaries, site markings and farm management plans. There is one issue currently before the courts. There were 4 complaints received and 4 referrals from NSDFA. Further discussion focused on technology needs and limitations and biosecurity protocols. Warden Morrison thanked Ms. MacKinnon for NSE's handling of a specific issue in his region, and suggested NSE create an online presence outlining investigations and results.

NSDFA Staffing and Equipment

Bruce Hancock provided an update on NSDFA staffing and new equipment including: the new 32-foot boat with deck workspace, heated cabin, hydraulic arm and trailer; Current meters; Drop Camera; Remove Operated Vehicle (ROV); The fish health lab had a major refit and there were some new microscopes purchased for their use.

Performance Bonds

Brennan Goreham provided an overview of the requirement for a performance bond and what the bond could be used for. Tom Smith from the AANS advised that they have worked with an outside agency to offer members a group bond, at a reduced rate. He advised that there are currently 82 bonds in place through this process.

Site Utilization

Bruce Hancock outlined the site utilization approach of the Department; each site is reviewed on a yearly basis. Sites that are not being utilized could be re-assigned to other growers that would use them. The goal of site utilization is to get growers producing to the full potential of the site. Tom Smith, AANS expressed concerns with the reported value of the industry. He feels that reported numbers are falling short of what is actually produced by the growers and this has impacts on what funds are being offered to growers and what the value of the aquaculture industry is to the province.

North Shore Oyster Issues

Bruce Hancock advised that the North Shore has issues and that the previous report outlined the issues and what is being done in other areas; this report provided a good understanding. NSDFA are now in a position to begin the process of reviewing these sites. Some questions are - what is the required marking for a bottom gear site, what is aquaculture and what is commercial harvesting of the natural oyster beds, what is considered gear? This is going to be a process that will take some time as it will need to be done on a site by site basis. Site markings need to be discussed with Transport Canada and this conversation needs to start moving forward.

Containment Management

Bruce Hancock provided an update on containment management initiatives. NSDFA are currently looking at the possibility of hiring a contractor to assist NSDFA and industry to develop policies and guidelines for containment management. Minister Colwell expressed full support for this work.

Certificate of Health for Transfer

Roland Cusack reviewed the requirements of the Certificate of Health for Transfer program and the regulatory requirements related to this program. There was discussion on seeing this process merged with other related processes.

Farm Management Plans

Roland Cusack reviewed the Farm Management Plan (FMP) requirements and outlined the purpose of the FMP. FMP's are maintained on site and are documents that will need to be maintained and updated on a regular basis. NSDFA is currently in the process of ensuring that all growers have a FMP and are reviewing FMP's.

Adjournment

Chief Paul adjourned the meeting at 12:10PM