



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

OCEAN RESOURCES POLICY
Chair: Curt Melcher (OR)
Vice-Chair: Robert Boyles (SC)

Tuesday, September 24th, 2019
10:00 am –12:00 pm
State Suite I/II

109th Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting

InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront Hotel
Saint Paul, MN

Agenda

- 10:00 am Call to Order/Introductions/Review Agenda – *Curt Melcher, OR*
- *Action: Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda/March 2019 minutes*
 - *Agenda – Robert B moved and Gary W 2nd – Approved*
 - *Minutes – Corrected with one minor name change – Robert B moved and Gary W 2nd – approved*
- 10:10 AFWA Strategic Plan Update – *Curt Melcher, OR*
- Questions to Consider:
- #1 – *What strategic objective, that is related to this committee’s work, would you like to see in AFWA’s next strategic plan?*
 - #2 – *How would you like to see the work of this committee reflected in the next Strategic Plan? What would you change from the current plan?*
- Note: AFWA’s current strategic plan is available at this [LINK](#)
- 10:15 Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: Update – *Grace Bottitta, ONMS*
- Grace has moved to recreation and tourism for NMS – Ocean Parks
 - Protect and conserve resources and co-manage two sanctuaries
 - Budget - \$51 million - \$1.5 million
 - Looking to connect people to their 13 sites
 - MOU with NOAA Fisheries, RBFF, industry on responsible recreation at sanctuaries right after shutdown

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- Policy actions
 - FL Keys National Marine Sanctuary Restoration Blueprint ready for comment
 - Jointly managed with FL
 - Status quo – Coral disease issues and hurricane
 - Close everything
 - Open everything
 - In between – Preferred option
 - 3800 sq miles and 60% co-managed with FL
 - Proposing non-regulatory and regulatory items
 - Mooring buoys and operators
 - Individual mgt zones – Complicated map output showing zones
 - Flower Garden Banks – Gulf of Mexico – Management plan upcoming
 - Monitor – Graveyard of the Atlantic – Expansions to area
 - New sanctuary – Mallows Bay – Potomac – NOAA ships and MD has fish/wildlife
 - WI – Lake MI – Restarting conversation
 - Lake Ontario – Looking for advisory council team – New one
- 10:30 NOAA/NMFS Updates - Heidi Lovett, NOAA/Chris Wright, NOAA (invited)
- Strategic Plan
 - Four enterprise areas
 - Four-year plan with limited focus areas as guided by the administration priorities
 - Three strategies
 - Increase comm and rec fisheries
 - Manage stocks of OY
 - Increase aquaculture
 - Assess priority stocks
 - Modernize fish info
 - Combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
 - Increase consumer US seafood confidence
 - Protect resources
 - Streamline permitting
 - Stabilize population
 - Min bycatch and entanglement
 - Address water mgt challenges
 - Excellence and Efficiency
 - Match workforce to needs
 - Infrastructure and facilities
 - Prioritize investments and analyze performance
 - Review regulations for economic growth
 - Innovate with technologies – Drones
 - Sections
 - Mission
 - Who they are
 - Challenges and Risks
 - Infrastructure

- Workload issues
 - Annual corporate priorities are in development
 - Milestones and metrics are in the guidance
- Update provided
- Budget – 38-40% of their budget goes out
 - Discussed in handout
 - FY2020 in process – House out and Senate markup soon
 - FY2019 - \$1.0 billion
 - FY2020 – President - \$843 Million, House mark – \$1.1 billion
 - Illegal catch got an increase in president’s budget
 - Showed Presidential cuts – Across the board – Aquaculture and Observer program had the largest
 - House – Aquaculture and Observer programs were cut but all others restored
 - Seattle and LaJolla labs are targeted for rehab
 - Reductions in at-sea days as a result of aging fleet
- JEA cut in President’s budget but not in House
- SK Grant Proposal – 156 asked for a full proposal
- NFWF
 - Fisheries innovative program and Electronic Monitoring R
 - Open in spring
 - Awards will be announced in Nov
- Aquaculture Grant Program - \$900K
 - Goes to Marine Fisheries Commission
 - \$450K annual
 - Broad program and goes through Sea Grant too
- Bycatch Reduction
 - Proposals done with announcement soon
 - FY20 is going out late this year
- NAS study on recreational data and in-season management

11:00 EPA Office of Research & Development: Ocean Acidification - *Bill Fisher, EPA*

- USEPA is now an AFWA member
- Coral Reef, Pacific Salmon items noted as key area
- CWA goes out three miles into offshore waters
 - Why not further as they are clearly navigable
- Have 11 labs with 1400 staff and equal number of contractors
- Broad responsibilities from Air & Energy to Water Resources
- Surface Water Quality
 - Characterize across US
 - National WQ Assessments – Probabilistic design with 1000 sites annually
 - Nitrogen and Hypoxia
 - Effects of watersheds on coastal waters
 - Nitrate analysis
 - Tradeoffs with costs of use
 - Ocean Acidification

- Increased CO2 absorption
- Shellfish issues
- Coastal acidification – Partly watershed inputs and rest atmospheric
 - Algae growth and death increasing CO2
- High coastal production vs. offshore
- Normal is unclear
 - Conducting research across the food web – Shellfish issues with larval stages
 - Mitigating potential of seagrasses
 - EPA/600/R-17/483 – EPA Science Inventory has all papers too
- National Estuary Program
 - Nominated by governors, non-regulatory and stakeholder driven
 - 28 now with one in process
 - Partnerships
 - Monitoring pH funding with monitoring sensors
 - 9 currently monitoring sensors with issues with CaCO3 chem and instruments
 - Long Island Sound – Large area of hypoxia and pH flux – 200 sq miles - Urban
 - Tillamook Bay – Oceanic and tidal inputs – what drives pH
 - Coastal Bend TX – Stormwater input issues on carbonate
 - Santa Monica Bay – Upwelling analysis
 - Effects of Seagrass
 - Can mitigate and create issues – Wider fluctuation
 - Seagrass can elevate pH and aragonite saturation (shell building key)
 - Examining effects on shellfish industry with broad partners

11:15 Discussion on Offshore Aquaculture - All

- Summary of NOAA Aquaculture 101 Webinar – 20 participated and will be posted on website
 - State challenges and opportunities for engagement
 - Legislation – Streamlining permits in federal waters – Aqua Act last session but not reintroduced yet. Expect it to be reintroduced soon
 - Confusing definitions
 - Clear up issues
 - NOAA primary agency
 - Potential next steps for committee/state involvement
 - Position development by committee in future on bill
 - Heidi took notes for the agenda
 - NOAA hears from aquaculture businesses
 - Shellfish is acceptable generally but some issues on shrimp and pathogens
 - Finfish issues
 - Deepwater pens in HI waters
 - Company wants to do work in Gulf of Mexico – Awaiting USEPA permit

- Court Decision – NOAA authority and Council’s authority challenged
 - Across NOAA program – NOS and OAR-Sea Grant noted
- NH has a lot of aquaculture interest and conflict noted from riparians to existing fisheries
- MI noted their issues with a lack of knowledge about RAS and what maybe another push toward net pens in the Great Lakes, which is opposed by MI

11:35 Marine Legislation Update – *Devin DeMario, AFWA/All*

- RAWA reintroduced with 122 sponsors in House and now past last session
 - Tribal funds go through BIA and separate funding from state funds
 - 10% have to go to federally endangered species
 - 10% go to competitive grants on technologies for SGCN
 - Committee hearing soon
 - Senate still working on prime sponsor
 - Toolkit at state site
- Appropriation process seems the same as every year
 - 10 of 12 House bills passed
 - Senate is working on Interior and EPA along with Commerce, Justice and Science next week
 - Likely higher than President’s but lower than House
 - CR is likely – House passed and Senate likely
- Surface Transportation Bill passed Senate
 - DJ provisions are in bill
 - Joint agreement on asks put together to include increase funds for infrastructure
 - Admin improvements to USFWS and others
 - Paddlecraft issues noted
 - Access issue of motorized vs non-motorized

11:45 Discussion on Forage Fish Conservation Act (HR 2236) – *Devin DeMario, AFWA/All*

- Dingell bill passed out – A range of supporters – Maybe a hearing this fall and no Senate bill at this time
 - Federal waters – National definition in federal waters
 - No new fisheries
 - Access effects on ecosystems of forage fish extraction
 - Consensus difficult on this issue in AFWA
 - West coast states do not see a need but not opposed
 - Southern states concerned
 - Eastern state support
 - SC
 - Sent in letter
 - Issues with non-compliance
 - Key importance but concerned with resources to comply, particularly data requirements
 - Needs a provision to fix non-compliance standard vs. NOAA standard – Atlantic Coastal Act change

- NOAA – Also must put long-term fishery at risk
- OR
 - Forage fish management plan done – Manage for ecosystem services
 - See no need for bill but not opposed
 - Fish meal interaction between wild and aquaculture species is a key conflict
- NH
 - Major issues with Herring stocks
 - Overfishing for lobster bait and major expansion
 - 4-8 million pots baited twice per week
 - Cod, pollack and tuna require this forage
 - Large runs of mossbunker (menhaden) have moved north
 - Pair trawling is overfishing and breaking up schools
 - Major change in harvest from purse seines
 - Atlantic salmon rehab is being impaired by reductions
- Great Lakes experience noted that forage knowledge is critical to sportfisheries and Great Lakes salmonids crashed due to lack of knowledge
 - Critical need to manage this resource or fisheries collapse, with additional experience from NH noted
- Great Lakes also noted issues with frozen bait movement (a black hole) across the country and we need some common standards across the country
 - Huge amounts of baits heading to lobster fisheries in NE and concerns raised about fish health status of baits (Glen N)

11:55

Meeting wrap-up and adjourn – *Curt Melcher, OR*

Committee Charge:

Discuss, develop, and recommend Association positions related to:

- *Federal laws, regulations, and policies concerning marine ecosystems, habitats, fisheries and other resources, and related funding for such programs.*
- *Marine fisheries management programs, practices or considerations (e.g., Marine Recreational Information Program, catch shares) and emerging issues (e.g., climate change, coastal energy, marine aquaculture and marine spatial planning).*

DRAFT