

**Edgartown Shellfish Committee**  
**Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 4:30pm**  
**Via Zoom**

Present: Ryan Smith, Nic Turner, David Faber, Madeline Fisher  
Absent: Christian Thornton  
Shellfish Dept. Rob Morrison, Warren Gaines  
Others: Recorder – Juliet Mulinare

The meeting of the Edgartown Shellfish Committee was called to order at 4:32pm.  
Ryan will serve as Acting Chair in Christian's absence.

SHELLFISH PERMITS

None.

DEPUTY REPORT

Warren said they received more scallops today, department boats have been moved to Katama and they are working on the rafts and getting gear ready for the summer season. He checked the oysters from last year and they look good; the scallop cages also look good. They are preparing for the next round of quahog seeds.

CONSTABLE REPORT

▪ SEA GRANT OYSTER BUYBACK PROGRAM

Rob stated that everything went smoothly with the buyback program. People were ready with their totes and the oysters were placed in Caleb's Pond. Overall it was an effective program for all.

▪ NEW DEPUTY HIRE

Rob received permission from HR and the Town Administrator to advertise for a new deputy to work 32 hrs or 4 days a week, year-round. Rob will advertise for three weeks in both papers. The Committee discussed the qualifications needed for eligibility. Rob said there are some desired skills but he would be willing to train people too.

▪ HERRING CREEK CLEANOUT

Rob is still talking with contractors about defining the scope of this work as there are many aspects at play. The feedback he has received is that phragmites are extremely difficult to remove; while there are many methods to remove them but to be effective, the root systems must be removed too. Rob stated that he is learning a lot through the process and there are a number of factors involved to get herring back in the creek. Nic asked when the last time there were herring in the creek. Rob said he's seen them go the opposite direction (leaving the Great Pond) when the pond is cut, but he has never seen them swimming towards the Great Pond. Rob will continue to work on this to get a better understanding of the larger scope.

▪ BUDGET UPDATE

Rob stated that the operating budget had gotten very low but he was approved for a line item transfer from the payroll fund to the operating fund in the amount of \$15,000. He has already purchased oyster seed so there is ~\$11k remaining, which will be sufficient for the rest of the fiscal year (ending June 30).

- EDGARTOWN GREAT POND HYDRAULIC CLAM HARVEST

Rob explained to the Committee that this is a method for harvesting steamers that was allowed last year. It's only an option for non-tidal ponds and it's the only way to get a substantial yield. The method can be detrimental to the ecosystem if it's over-used or conducted in an area with eel grass but there were no issues last year. Only one person utilized the opportunity last year so it has not been a problem to regulate. Rob said that if more people start to use this method they may have to reevaluate but for now, it provides another opportunity for people to harvest shellfish from the Great Pond, which he is in favor of. Last year, the Shellfish Committee allowed people to hydraulic harvest three days a week from June – September 1<sup>st</sup>. This year, Rob proposed to allow people to harvest five days a week (to provide more flexibility for the fisherman) Monday – Friday, 7am – 4pm.

The Committee agreed that if everything went well last year, the vulnerable areas continue to be restricted, and there are not too many people wanting to harvest with this method, that it should be allowed again this summer. The Committee discussed the health of the steamer population in the Great Pond – Rob said that although it's cyclical, it's currently relatively healthy in most areas according to a survey that was performed last year.

A motion was placed on the floor by David to accept the steamer season as outlined by Rob: June 1 – September 1, Monday – Friday from 7am – 4pm; Daily limit is 2 10 gallon wash buckets, no wet storage and no jetting near eel grass or oyster beds. Madeline seconds, no further discussion, approved unanimously 4-0. Rob will go to the Selectboard for approval.

#### MINUTES

Nic moved to approve the May 3, 2022 minutes, seconded by Madeline. No further discussion, vote taken and passed 4-0.

At 5:01pm, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. No discussion, unanimously approved, 4-0.

Minutes submitted by Juliet Mulinare.