

**Edgartown Shellfish Committee  
Tuesday, September 19, 2023, 4:30pm  
At the Edgartown Public Library**

Present: Nic Turner, Madeline Fisher, David Faber  
Shellfish Dept: Rob Morrison, Julie Pringle (Recorder)

The meeting of the Edgartown Shellfish Committee was called to order at 4:39pm.  
David Faber will serve as Acting Chair.

ELECT NEW COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Committee Chair election was postponed until the next Shellfish Committee meeting.

SHELLFISH PERMITS & AQUACULTURE LICENSES

None.

MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from 9/5/23.

*Motion placed on the floor by Nic to approve the 9/5/23 draft minutes. Madeline abstained from the vote, as she was not present at the 9/5/23 meeting. David seconds the motion, vote taken and passed, 2-0.*

HURRICANE LEE STORM PREP

Hurricane Lee was predicted to bring high winds and heavy rain to the Vineyard on 9/16. While the impacts were less than expected, Rob explained that the Shellfish Department had planned for the worst by hauling all the boats and the Katama upweller, ensuring the oyster farm rafts were secure, and planting quahogs from the rafts. Sixteen out of twenty quahog rafts were planted, while the remaining four were moved to a protected corner of Sengekontacket. The majority (about 75%) of the quahogs will be planted in Katama, while the rest will remain in Sengekontacket to be planted in the Family Area and by Felix Neck.

The Committee acknowledged the local news coverage of Ryan Smith preparing Signature Oyster Farm for the storm, which highlighted the challenges of oyster farming, explained the benefits of aquaculture, and provided good exposure of aquaculture to a broad audience.

Rob reported that the storm caused a massive wash-up of seed scallops on the South End of Cape Poge due to the strong northwest winds. A group of people including the Shellfish Group, Shellfish Departments from other towns, and Donnie Benefit from the Dredge Department were able to move approximately 200 fish totes full of seed scallops to deeper water. The salvage effort continued Monday and Tuesday. Some scallops were moved to Sengekontacket to hopefully boost the population there.

DEPARTMENT REPORT & PROPOGATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Rob reported that within the past week the Department's efforts have focused on storm prep and moving seed.

Rob reported that DMF has reclassified two growing areas in Edgartown Great Pond: Wintucket and Slough Coves are now under a seasonal closure. While these coves will be closed in the summer, the rest of the pond will remain open to shellfishing. Rob stated that this is a good compromise and a better

management strategy than closing the entire pond to shellfishing. The committee discussed the next Great Pond opening. If weather conditions allow, Rob is aiming to open the pond around the next full moon, September 29<sup>th</sup>.

### SET SCALLOP DATES

Commercial bay scallop season: Rob proposed that the season open October 30, 2023 through March 31, 2024, with a daily commercial limit of three level 10-gallon washbaskets, including shells. Commercial scallop harvest to take place between 7am-4pm Monday through Friday. All shellfishing regulations will apply.

*Motion placed on the floor by Nic to approve the commercial scallop season dates and make a recommendation to the Selectboard, seconded by Madeline. No further discussion, vote taken and unanimously approved (3-0).*

Recreational bay scallop season: Rob proposed that the season open October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024, with a weekly recreational limit of one level 10-gallon washbasket, including shells. All other recreational rules will apply, including shellfishing hours of 7am-5pm. Recreational family dragging will begin October 27, 2023.

*Motion placed on the floor by Nic to approve the recreational scallop season dates and make a recommendation to the Selectboard, seconded by Madeline. No further discussion, vote taken and unanimously approved (3-0).*

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Kennedy, representing the MV Beach Access Group (MVBAG), called in to the meeting to make a public comment regarding Over Sand Vehicle (OSV) beach access for scalloping in Cape Poge and the Gut. Chris explained that the Trustees have a new draft Beach Management Plan that contains several changes to historical beach access. The Trustees' interpretation of the Wetland Protection Act and their definition of tidelands restrict inside OSV trails north of the Jetties. If the new draft Beach Management Plan is approved by the Conservation Committee, it will effectively close OSV access for shellfishing in Cape Poge. Chris, on behalf of MVBAG, encouraged both Rob and the Committee to write letters voicing their opposition to the changes in OSV access in the new Beach Management Plan, and to attend the public hearing on September 27<sup>th</sup>. The Committee discussed these changes in beach access and expressed concern that the recreational scallop fishery in Cape Poge will be limited to those with a boat if OSV access is removed. The Committee decided to write a letter to the Conservation Commission promoting OSV access to historical shellfishing areas in Cape Poge. The Committee encouraged Rob to write an additional letter as the Shellfish Constable and attend the hearing.

The Committee will meet again on October 3rd, 2023 at the Edgartown Public Library.

At 5:35pm, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. No further discussion, vote taken and passed unanimously, 3-0.

Minutes submitted by Julie Pringle.