

MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION

Draft Business Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2025

Kingston Town Hall

In attendance:

Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission: Raymond Kane, Chairman; Bill Doyle, Vice Chair; Bill Amaru; Tim Brady; Chris McGuire; Kalil Boghdan. Absent: Shelley Edmundson, Clerk; Arthur “Sooky” Sawyer

Division of Marine Fisheries: Daniel McKiernan, Director; Kevin Creighton, Assistant Director; Melanie Griffin; Bradlie Morgan; Jared Silva; Kelly Whitmore; Anna Webb; Dr. Forest Schenck

Massachusetts Environmental Police: Captain Robert Forsythe

Members of the Public: Beth Casoni, Sharl Heller

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Raymond Kane called the April 24, 2025, MFAC business meeting to order. The Chairman noted that he had encouraged DMF—to the extent practicable—to work to schedule virtual MFAC meetings only during the winter months and avoid marathon meetings with many action items.

REVIEW OF APRIL 2025 BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Chairman Kane asked if the April 2025 MFAC business meeting agenda needed to be adjusted. Jared Silva asked to remove ‘updates from Law Enforcement’ and ‘updates from Fish and Game’ since the Commissioner and Law Enforcement were not present at today’s meeting. The Chairman agreed. Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) Captain Robert Forsythe later arrived and provided the Massachusetts Environmental Police update.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH 2025 DRAFT BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Kane asked for edits to the March 2025 business meeting minutes. No requests were made. **The Chair called for a motion. Tim Brady moved to approve the draft March 2025 business meeting minutes. Bill Amaru seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously (5-0-1) with the Chairman abstaining.**

DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES: PERSONNEL, RECENT MEETINGS AND EVENTS, AND AGENCY ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

Director Dan McKiernan anticipated that the regulatory amendments approved by the MFAC at their March 2025 business meeting will go into effect on May 9.

With the upcoming horseshoe crab spawning season, Director McKiernan wrote to the Town of Wareham to ask them to refrain from grooming Swifts Beach during May and June when spawning is occurring given concerns that grooming machinery may disrupt spawning and harm eggs. Swifts Beach is an area where DMF's spawning surveys continue to show poor trends despite there being limited harvest. McKiernan anticipated Wareham would oblige, but described a misunderstanding whereby the town's website mistakenly portrayed DMF's ask as a mandate, which necessitated a follow-up clarifying call with town officials.

Bill Amaru remarked on healthy horseshoe crab spawning near Nauset Marsh and noted that the fishing restrictions during spawning have been a success. Chairman Kane noted that the enhanced presence of adult crabs on beaches now is likely attributable to the historic lunar spawning closures (implemented in 2010). Bill Amaru emphasized the importance of long-term monitoring, and the Director noted that DMF collaborates with NGOs to conduct surveys across the state. Chairman Ray Kane expressed interest in participating in a survey.

The Director stated that Commissioner Tom O'Shea drafted a letter to the US Secretary of Commerce urging NOAA Fisheries to finalize rule-making to open the commercial groundfish fishery on May 1 to prevent adverse impacts to the states groundfish fleet and seafood industry. The Director noted that DMF recently met with industry members and state representatives in Gloucester to discuss allowable catch limits, particularly the anticipated haddock quotas for Georges Bank. Chairman Kane, Bill Amaru, Melanie Griffin, and the Director discussed haddock size of maturity on Georges Bank and how the recent strong year classes may have contributed to stunted growth of individual fish and fish reaching maturity at a smaller than normal length. Griffin indicated she would provide Kane with the size-at-maturity information for Georges Bank haddock after the meeting.

Director McKiernan updated the MFAC on the seasonal presence of North Atlantic right whales around Massachusetts waters. The most recent aerial survey observed 97 whales in Cape Cod Bay. A disentanglement team was able to identify and partially remove large mesh gillnet gear from a four-year old male right whale—this whale was first observed entangled in December 2024 in federal waters south of Nantucket. This young male and several other whales were also observed around the eastern entrance to the Cape Cod Canal, which caused the waterway to be temporarily closed. The Director noted that today (April 24) is Right Whale Day in Massachusetts and the New

England Aquarium and New Bedford Whaling Museum were hosting events which DMF staff were attending. Lastly, DMF's Protected Species Team is scheduled to present on the development of a passive acoustic monitoring network at the May MFAC business meeting.

McKiernan discussed the Boston Seafood Expo, highlighting an encounter with a representative from a Massachusetts processor of Jonah crabs. The American lobster and Jonah crab fishery was "red listed" by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program largely due to right whale entanglement concerns. This listing negatively impacted the firm's market access. DMF views this red listing as inappropriate given the extent to which industry has taken action to minimize entanglement risk and provided a letter to the firm regarding the strict management of this fishery and its interactions with large whales. The representative indicated that this letter helped the firm regain markets. Dan intended to have a follow-up phone call with the Monterey Bay Aquarium about the factual basis for this listing.

DMF is scheduled to host its first-ever "Marine Quest" event on Saturday, June 14 at its Cat Cove facility in Salem. This is an outdoor public facing and family-oriented happening allowing for DMF staff and interested partners to engage with the public on marine science and fishing. The effort is being spearheaded by DMF Senior Biologist Gary Nelson. Gary previously worked for the marine fisheries agency in Florida where they would host similar annual events.

Chairman Ray Kane asked about the upcoming MFAC meeting schedule. Jared Silva stated the MFAC would meet again on May 29, but did not anticipate the need for a June or July meeting. Unless NOAA Fisheries finalizes the FY25 recreational cod and haddock limits, in which case DMF may need to schedule short virtual MFAC meeting to adopt complementary state rules.

Lastly, the Director introduced Bradlie Morgan. Bradlie recently started with DMF as a Policy Administration and Communications Specialist.

OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT: PERSONNEL, RECENT OPERATIONS, & MARINE FISHERY INCIDENTS

Captain Robert Forsythe provided comments for MEP. He began by providing a personnel update indicated that MEP currently has 103 officers and just made three recent hires to backfill positions vacated through retirements. Forsythe then discussed operations. MEP has fulfilled around 500 hours of right whale patrol since the beginning of 2025. Secretary Tepper joined a patrol on April 23rd. MEP is also in the process of obtaining new patrol vehicles. On marine fishery violations, a concerted effort has been made to look into lobster violations by draggers operating out of Provincetown. This resulted in a recent seizure of a large number of non-compliant lobsters. Forsythe then

highlighted MEP's appreciation for the recent horseshoe crab training that Jared Silva coordinated. He and Jared noted that DMF would work with MEP to develop similar trainings for a variety of fishery management topics.

McKiernan expressed his appreciation for the MEP taking action to address lobster violations in the mobile gear fishery noting this has been a "hot button" issue in recent years. However, Dan also recognized there are serious enforcement and compliance challenges related to this fishery given the various LCMA-specific size and v-notch standards. DMF recently met with the mobile gear fleet to discuss how best to simplify regulations without negatively impacting the fleet and intends to raise potential solutions with ASMFC, as it likely requires an addendum to the FMP.

Bill Amaru emphasized that most of the fleet is willing to and has worked within these regulations. He argued that the draggers are already restricted by the 100 lobsters per day limit, and with groundfish square mesh, they generally catch larger lobster. McKiernan noted that he was seeking to simplify the gauge and v-notch rules across LCMAs for the mobile gear fleet. Amaru expressed his support for such an initiative. Captain Forsythe noted that MEP would also appreciate more straightforward rules.

Chairman Kane, Kalil Boghdan, and Captain Forsythe discussed MEP personnel and the need for additional capacity. Director McKiernan noted that MEP was currently in the process of hiring a new Colonel and suggested the MFAC and DMF reach out to the new Colonel once they are onboard, invite them to an MFAC business meeting, and discuss how best for the MFAC to advocate for MEP to increase their capacity.

ACTION ITEMS

Refinement to Mechanized Bait Deployment Restriction Recommendation

At its March 2025 business meeting, the MFAC approved a DMF recommendation to prohibit the mechanized deployment of bait in rod and reel fisheries. Director McKiernan explained that DMF was now returning to the MFAC to refine this recommendation because it was insufficiently clear in two regards. First, the rule should apply to shore-based rod and reel fishing only. Second, mechanized deployment should have been better defined to clearly include motorized, remote-controlled, and compression propulsion devices. The recommended prohibition would continue to exclude other bait deployment means such as kites and kayaks, as well as the use of power reels given these retrieve baits.

Kalil Boghdan made a motion to adopt the Director's recommendation. Chris McGuire seconded the motion.

Jared Silva explained that he felt the March recommendation approved by the MFAC was too nebulous to be enacted as approved. First, it would apply to any rod and reel

fishing activity, which was overbroad, as the proposal was designed to more narrowly address shore-based fishing. Additionally, vessels can just be moved closer to aggregations of fish diminishing the need for mechanized bait deployment devices in this mode of fishing. Moreover, the recommendation was unclear as to whether compression propulsion devices (e.g., bait cannons) would be included. Prohibiting the use of bait cannons was consistent with the intention of the recommendation and DMF did not want vague language to encourage fishers to move from using one method (e.g., remote-controlled devices) to another (e.g., bait cannons) and instead preferred a stronger worded regulation.

Bill Amaru noted that he supported the recommendation at the March meeting, largely because it was coupled with shore-based shark fishing restrictions but felt the bait deployment restrictions were overregulating shore-based fishing.

For reasons similar to Amaru's, Tim Brady did not support the recommendation. Tim was also unfamiliar with bait cannons and was uncertain what DMF was aiming to regulate. Tim asked Captain Forsythe if MEP could speak to the issue from an enforcement perspective. Captain Forsythe stated he was similarly unfamiliar with these devices. However, Forsythe acknowledged that Jared Silva had reviewed this refinement with Lt. Bass who did not raise any concerns to MEP.

There was some discussion about the process to move this recommendation forward. It was determined that there should be an action to move the motion if there was no further deliberation. **Kalil moved the motion on board. Bill Doyle seconded moving the motion.** There was no further deliberation. **The Chair called the vote, and the motion passed (3-2-1) with the Chair abstaining.**

EMERGENCY RULE MAKING

Implementing Addendum 32 to the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan

In preparation for today's business meeting, DMF provided the MFAC with an extensive memorandum on Addendum XXXII. Director McKiernan noted that the ASMFC will vote on Addendum XXXII at their May meeting, and if approved, the gauge and escape vent rules in Addendum XXVII will be repealed from the FMP. Addendum XXXII would not repeal trap tag standardization rules for LCMA 1 and 3 and v-notch standardization rules among federal and state permit holders in the Outer Cape Cod LCMA (OCCLCMA).

While states can maintain stricter regulations than required by the FMP, DMF initiated emergency rule making to implement Addendum XXXII and rescind relevant state regulations prior to their scheduled implementation date to ensure Massachusetts fishers are not subject to more restrictive regulations than others fishing in the same

LCMA. DMF will host a virtual public hearing at 6PM on May 19th and will return to the MFAC with a final recommendation at their May 29th business meeting.

The Director then described the history of how the OCCLCMA diverged from LCMA 1 and why there were disparate v-notch standards in the OCCLCMA between state-only and federal permit holders.

Chairman Kane and Bill Amaru both expected that the state-only OCCLCMA fishers would oppose this action. These fishers feel singled out by this process given Addendum XXXII repeals other aspects of the addendum that would affect the lion's share of the commercial harvesters. Additionally, they have argued the v-notch standardization rule will have a substantial negative economic impact on them, many state-only permit holders gave up their federal permit to keep oversized and v-notched lobsters, the OCCLCMA fishery is subject to tight effort control rules that do not exist in LCMAs 1 and 3, and that there is a historic legal settlement addressing mandatory v-notch in OCCLCMA which is not being honored by the ASMFC in their development of Addenda XXVII and XXXII.

The Chairman then asked DMF to clarify two issues. First, there is a claim being made by OCCLCMA fishers that the v-notch standardization rule would decrease landings by 35%. Second, there are varying figures being used to describe the number of participants in the OCCLCMA fishery.

McKiernan stated that DMF sea sampling data shows that only 2-4% of the catch by the state-only OCCLCMA fishers is between the current $\frac{1}{4}$ " v-notch standard and the pending $\frac{1}{8}$ " v-notch standard and the 35% figure exaggerated the likely impact on landings. Anna Webb, DMF's Statistic Project Lead, noted that DMF issues 65 OCCLCMA permits. One-third of these permit holders hold a federal lobster trap permit and the other two-thirds are state-only. Of the state-only permit holders, only about 30 have been active. McKiernan added that there is a geographic divide among where these permit holders are homeported, with state-only permit holders primarily fishing out of Provincetown and Nauset and federal permit holders fishing out of Chatham and Harwich.

Kane suggested that DMF conduct additional sea sampling of large lobsters in the OCCLCMA before moving forward with these regulations. McKiernan noted DMF increased its sea sampling in the OCCLCMA in response to concerns raised by these fishers during the development of Addendum XXVII. Additionally, he did not intend to go out of compliance with the FMP.

Kane noted that many state-only permit holders surrendered their federal permits about 25-years ago so that they could retain v-notched and oversized lobsters. To this point, he questioned whether Massachusetts should request NOAA Fisheries consider giving

these affected fishers federal permits. Amaru supported this noting how warming waters around Cape Cod may force fishermen to fish deeper offshore waters. However, this may require vessel upgrades for some permit holders and the ability to fish larger vessels out of Nauset is challenging. McKiernan indicated this is something that could be raised to NOAA Fisheries.

Chairman Kane and Director McKiernan discussed the upcoming stock assessment for American lobster and how this may influence the conservation management strategies being developed in Maine and New Hampshire in response to their decisions to push non-compliance with Addendum XXVII.

Kalil Boghdan asked about the consequences if Addendum XXXII does not pass at the ASMFC. Director McKiernan indicated with certainty that the addendum would pass. However, if this were not to occur, then the ASMFC would likely find Maine and New Hampshire out-of-compliance with Addendum XXVII at the August meeting, as they would not have met the July 1 implementation deadline. The non-compliance finding would then be submitted to the US Secretary of Commerce for review and further action.

DISCUSSION ITEMS AND UPDATES

Decision on Commercial Striped Bass Management Proposal

Director McKiernan explained that DMF was not moving forward final recommendations on a commercial striped bass maximum size limit and gaffing prohibition, as taken out to public hearing this past winter. This decision was influenced by three factors. Under the FMP the adoption of a maximum size in Massachusetts would trigger quota adjustments and Board approval to ensure it the action was conservationally equivalent. The confounded rule-making, as the ASMFC process could not play out on a timeline that would allow DMF to adequately describe the likely change in quota for each of the various size limit options proposed. For this reason alone, Dan opined that he could not move forward a recommendation. Additionally, the public comment received highlighted that DMF needed to further consider and document the conservation benefit of adopting a maximum size limit. Lastly, any changes to commercial striped bass management measures should be considered within the framework of the pending ASMFC addendum to the FMP.

The Director highlighted current management strategies and noted several concerns regarding the commercial striped bass fishery. McKiernan noted that while Bill Doyle and Bill Amaru have expressed reservations about the cost of permit acquisitions, others are concerned over the discrepancy between the number of commercial striped bass endorsement holders (~5,000) and the number of active fishers (~800) in this fishery. A common argument is that many obtain the permit to circumvent strict

recreational fishing limits, and this catch goes unreported. Rhode Island and Massachusetts are also the only two states on the coast with a commercial fishery and a point-of-sale tagging program. All other states have point-of-harvest tagging programs which are perceived as producing greater accountability. For Massachusetts to administer a point-of-harvest tagging program, DMF would have to substantially reduce the number of potential fishers, noting those states with these programs have limited entry fisheries with Individual Fishing Quotas. Lastly, some worry that suboptimal year classes could heavily impact the fishery moving forward and may result in substantial quota reductions in coming years and increased pressure to curtail commercial fishing for this species.

Bill Doyle raised the issue of permit fees noting the low cost of the striped bass endorsement may enable high levels of issuance. He suggested DMF consider the potential to raise the cost of the permit to deter folks who are not going to fish it from obtaining it and potentially offering rebates based on final participation in the fishery. He added this is a strategy some municipalities use with boat ramp access permits.

McKiernan noted that he was interested in reviewing permit fees adding that — except for a \$50 surcharge on lobster permits to support research — commercial permit fees have not changed since the 1990s. DMF also does not have the authority to unilaterally adjust fees, this is done through the Governor's Executive Office of Administration and Finance (ANF) and the current administration has an averse posture towards fee increases. Therefore, any increase would likely have to have broad support from the regulated community. Kevin Creighton, Assistant Director for DMF, added that fee changes could just narrowly recategorize and reprice the striped bass endorsement or could represent a restructuring of DMF's fee schedule at large.

Kalil asked for clarification on page two of the memorandum and what was meant by 'commercial discard length'. Director McKiernan noted that this refers to the release of all fish in the commercial fishery (e.g., undersized fish), not just dead discards.

Chairman Kane added that commercial fishermen are concerned that a daily catch limit of 15 with a 32 – 40-inch slot limit would harm their livelihoods because it would substantially reduce the weight of fish they would get paid on commercial fishing day. Kane opined that if DMF were to consider a maximum size limit in the future it should also consider a responsive trip limit adjustment to balance the ledger. The Director appreciated this comment and noted that Jared Silva had also heard from commercial anglers who preferred a straight quota cut in the name of additional conservation rather than a more complicated management program.

In conclusion, the Director thought it would be beneficial to convene the MFAC's Striped Bass Focus Group, as well as an ad-hoc industry advisory panel, to help navigate the various permitting and management questions moving forward. At present, the MFAC's

Striped Bass focus group consisted of Bill Doyle, Kalil Boghdan, and Ray Kane, but as MFAC membership changes this may need to evolve.

Federal Fishery Management

Melanie Griffin provided an overview of the January and April 2025 New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) meetings and an outline of the June NEFMC business meeting agenda.

On groundfish management, Melanie discussed (1) NEFMC-approved changes to recreational cod and haddock limits informed by NOAA Fisheries' bioeconomic model; and (2) the development and pending implementation of Amendment 25 and Framework 69 of the Multi-Species Groundfish FMP and Phase 2 of the Cod Transition Plan. Given concerns about low cod limits, DMF has initiated a federal Exempted Fishery Permit proposal that would allow closely monitored access to certain areas within spawning cod closures to target non-cod species.

Melanie discussed Atlantic sea herring management. The NEFMC approved specifications in September 2024, but implementation was delayed to resolve some uncertainty issues. This resulted in a coordinated review process between the NEFMC and the ASMFC to assist in finalizing catch limits for Fishing Year 2025 and 2026. The ASMFC will be able to use these finalized limits to develop effort controls for the inshore Gulf of Maine fishery (Area 1A) during this upcoming season.

Other on-going NEFMC priorities were discussed. In an effort to manage species and habitat more effectively, the Essential Habitat Review—a joint five-year review at the England and Mid-Atlantic Council—will be updated to include revised life history information for a variety of FMPs. Similarly, the NEFMC's revised Risk Policy will consider seven weighted and scored factors to determine risk for a given stock. The NEFMC is also interested in developing more management flexibility across various FMPs, but there is substantial uncertainty as to how this will play out. The On-Demand Working Group continued to meet and discuss challenges relevant to on-demand gear and a joint NEMFC and MAFMC omnibus framework was initiated to revise surface gear marking requirements across all FMPs to allow for potential use of on-demand gear. The NEFMC also discussed persistent concerns regarding how declining federal surveys and port sampling efforts are affecting fisheries science and how these issues may be more acute given expected cuts to NOAA Fisheries capacities. In response, NEFMC sent a letter to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center to voice these issues. Melanie expected these concerns will also be discussed in more depth at the upcoming Northeast Regional Coordinating Council meeting, which Director McKiernan will attend. Lastly, the NEMFC discussed the recent Executive Order on Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness, which directed the Secretary of Commerce to reduce regulatory burden on fisheries, modernize elements of the industry, and increase

participation. The actual impacts of this Executive Order on the NEFMC, the Council process, and NOAA Fisheries are still largely unknown.

Chairman Kane, Bill Amaru, and Melanie Griffin discussed the potential for enhanced flexibility in federal fisheries management, how it may play out in practicality and process, and whether it would actually help address catch limit utilization issues.

Amaru questioned whether the recreational cod fishery in the Gulf of Maine would approach its sub-ACL and if improved management flexibility could result in more liberal limits for fishers. Melanie explained that the bioeconomic model used to develop recreational limits for this fishery indicated the recommended limits would result in the sub-ACL being achieved without being exceeded. Further, Melanie explained that it was unlikely that recreational limits could be manipulated in-season given the limitations of using MRIP data in real time. Tim Brady added that all federally permitted charter boats fishing for cod and haddock are required to fill out vessel trip reports and record what is caught and released by species. Kalil Boghdan noted that the bioeconomic model also considers cod caught and released incidental to targeting other species (e.g., haddock) and the release mortality associated with this catch.

Amaru noted the challenges fishermen had at gaining access to certain scallop beds in the past and was hopeful that improved federal management processes could eliminate some of this red tape. He also recognized there are unique challenges related to accessing the Northern Edge. Bill thanked DMF advocating to NOAA Fisheries the importance of implementing final rules for the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) sea scallop season to ensure the full quota for this fishery could be accessed. Bill also spoke to the success of the NGOM fishery this year.

McKiernan, McGuire, Griffin, and Kane discussed challenges related to the development of scientific information to inform fishery management plans and reductions in capacities at NOAA Fisheries. McKiernan noted that DMF has emphasized the importance of robust survey work and port sampling. While NOAA's port sampling efforts have been in decline, DMF is investigating ways to fill the data gaps created.

Massachusetts Commercial Fisheries Commission

Director McKiernan reminded the MFAC that the Commercial Fisheries Commission (CFC) is a public body created by legislation three years ago in response to concerns raised by the industry over the impacts of offshore energy development of fisheries. The public body is chaired by the Directors of DMF and the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and includes a representative from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the New Bedford Port Authority, the University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science and Technology, and 12 different organizations representing commercial fishing interests. The enabling statute identifies

two primary purposes for this public body: (1) develop and recommend strategies, methods, and tools to promote sustainability of the state's commercial fishing industry, and (2) to address the responsible development of offshore wind projects' impacts on fisheries.

Director McKiernan hoped this group will bridge communication from the commercial fishing industry to the Governor and Legislature without wading into the jurisdiction of various other public bodies, such as the MFAC. The Director then listed several different subjects he expects the CFC will be able to deliver on. This includes: (1) improved seafood marketing through advocacy for more funds to DMF's Seafood Marketing Program and fishing representation on the Food Policy Council; (2) industry training; (3) improved port infrastructure and working waterfronts; (4) improved port assessments; (5) developing positions on offshore wind (e.g., mitigation, boulder movement); and (6) contributions to various state projects and plans (e.g., MA Ocean Plan, DFG's Biodiversity Plan).

The CFC met for the first time on April 8th and is scheduled to meet again on June 27 (a short, virtual meeting to review CZM's ResilientCoasts Plan is scheduled for June 4). McKiernan hoped the Legislature would provide funding for DMF to hire the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to help administer this public body until it sunsets in 2028. Dan felt CBI was uniquely situated to monitor and administer this public body given their work to facilitate the Fisheries and Habitat Working Groups on Offshore Wind.

Chris McGuire asked how often the group meets. McKiernan stated the body is required by law to meet four times annually and produce an annual report to the legislature.

PRESENTATION ON DMF'S EEL GRASS RESTORATION WORK

Dr. Forest Schenck presented on eelgrass trends and restoration in Massachusetts. Current restoration strategies in Massachusetts include vegetative transplants, seeding, and conservation moorings. Vegetative transplanting is the status quo in the state but is up to 24% successful long-term. Forest then explained that seed-based restoration can be a potential way to scale up effort and cover significantly greater area; however, addressing underlying issues harming eelgrass is crucial to truly restore habitat.

Kalil asked about what was driving the low rate of success for restoration. Forest responded that the primary stressors on eel grass are environmental (e.g., water quality and climate change) and this also impacts restoration success.

Chairman Kane wondered if failed restoration near Boston could be impacted by the MWRA outfall pipe. Forest responded that the outfall pipe is likely too far from the restoration sites to have an impact.

Bill Amaru and Ray Kane asked about potential collaborations with the Center for Coastal Studies and SMAST. Forest noted that DMF has collaborated with the Center for Coastal Studies but added that enhanced collaboration is a priority in the restoration community.

Amaru and Kane then asked about differences in success across short distances and the state. Forest responded that the state's dynamic shoreline creates significant differences in water quality and temperature across short distances, and there is still much uncertainty about where restoration will be most successful.

Chris McGuire agreed that seed-based restoration can be an effective way to expand operations. Schneck and McGuire then discussed seed-based restoration efforts along Virginia's Eastern Shore.

McGuire posed whether aquaculture can positively impact eelgrass by improving water quality and how DMF's work with shellfish restoration may intersect with eelgrass restoration. Director McKiernan noted that this work is all housed within DMF's Habitat Program allowing for internal collaboration. Forest noted that ecological dynamics are nuanced.

Bill Doyle added that WHOI Sea Grant and DMF work on projects on his farm to examine how eelgrass and aquaculture can coexist, noting that storm velocity is important to understand sediment impacts.

OTHER BUSINESS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharl Heller of the Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance in Plymouth petitioned DMF and the MFAC to close Duxbury, Kingston, and Plymouth Bays to all horseshoe crab harvest thereby creating a refuge for the local population. She provided printed materials to the MFAC and DMF in support of the petition. DMF will review the petition and respond at an upcoming MFAC business meeting.

Beth Casoni, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, thanked Bob Glenn and Jared Silva for attending a recent delegates meeting to discuss gear marking rules and other management issues. She expressed concern about Addendum XXXII and the likelihood that New Hampshire and Maine are able to develop management strategies moving forward and urged the MFAC to not support a trap reduction if it is proposed through the interstate process. She also thanked the MFAC and Chairman Kane for advocating that state-only OCCLCMA permit holders. She also thanked law enforcement for their efforts addressing non-compliance with lobster management rules among mobile gear fishers landing in Provincetown and Bill Doyle for suggesting increased permit fees. Lastly, Beth discussed ongoing gear conflicts between scallopers and fixed gear fishers in Massachusetts Bay and sought a means to

address this, including a potential notice regarding where highfliers are mandated and where no such mandate exists.

ADJOURN

There were no further questions or comments. **The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn. Tim Brady moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Bill Doyle.** The meeting was adjourned.