MEETING OF THE MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT PANEL
December 14, 2022
Via Zoom

Attendance:
Panel Members: Kalil Boghdan (chair), Mike Moss, Kevin Blinkoff, Patrick Paquette, and Mike Pierdinock.

Division of Marine Fisheries: Daniel McKiernan, Michael Armstrong, Kevin Creighton, Greg Skomal, John Boardman, Ross Kessler, Brad Chase, Stephanie Berkman, Dave Martins, Nichola Meserve, Julia Kaplan, Ben Gahagan, Matt Ayer and Jared Silva.

Office of Fishing and Boating Access: Doug Cameron

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Chairman Kalil Boghdan called the meeting to order and welcomed any comments. No comments were made. The draft agenda for December 14, 2022 was approved unanimously without revision (motion by Kevin Blinkoff, second by Mike Pierdinock). The draft minutes from the Panel's June 7, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously without revision (motion by Kevin Blinkoff, second by Patrick Paquette).

Project Updates

Mike Armstrong began his review of updates noting that he would only be covering certain projects and with the aim of not spoiling what would be covered at the usual spring meeting next year.

Diadromous Fish Project: Mike Armstrong discussed large watershed restoration projects that were advanced in 2021/2022 which involved removing some dams. He then moved on to discuss the fishway crew which had a slower 2021 and subsequently completed six jobs in 2022. He then reviewed management activities within the Diadromous Project. He discussed a stream maintenance policy which allows the DMF fishway crew to maintain fishways without having to do copious amounts of paperwork. Mike noted that a GIS data layer was completed which integrates fish passage survey data and the DMF diadromous fish restoration priority list. He stated that the data layer will be used by DEP and Mass DOT. Mike noted that DMF is in the process of updating a coastwide fish passage survey which was last done in 2000-2002. Mike then discussed the ASMFC River Herring SFMP which was approved with the additional of the Herring River (Harwich) and a five-year update for the Nemasket River (Middleborough/ Lakeville).

Mike then discussed fish passage improvements that took place in 2022. These improvements included Monument River, Indian Head River Dam, Black Pond Fishway, Red Brook Fishway, Weldon Rubble Dam, and Little River Fishway. Mike stated that DMF maintains 175 fishways across the state which all will need improvements at some point and expressed some concern over funding for the improvements.

Mike then discussed a USFWS/DMF agreement that will stock shad in the Taunton River for five years. He noted the Taunton River shad stocking is a joint monitoring effort between DMF and DFW. Over five million shad larvae were stocked in 2022, with cooperative monitoring by DMF and DFW.

Mike Armstrong closed his comments by introducing Stephanie Berkman who is a new hire in the Diadromous Program working in the New Bedford office on the monitoring, management, and restoration of diadromous fish.

Ben Gahagan reported on NOAA's very recent announcement of over $4M in funding for two Massachusetts fish passage projects (Ipswich and Parker River watershed, and Monatiquot River watershed).[1] He looks forward to updating the Panel on the projects in the coming years.

Public Access: Mike Armstrong moved on to discuss the Salem Willows Park Pier project and some delays that DMF has experienced related to the deterioration of the shoreside connection point for the pier. Improvements will be necessary but DMF's contribution is capped at $2 million. It is expected that the bid for construction will go out in early Spring.

Ross Kessler discussed the small grants awarded for FY2023. There were three small grants given this year. The grants included Barnstable Harbor Blish Point boat ramp repairs for $25,000. The second was for Cohasset Harbor Cartop launch floats for $18,000. The third was to fund updates to Newburyport Cashman Park pier for $13,000. Ross then explained there were three other towns that applied for small grants. Ross welcomed any questions.

Patrick Paquette asked that the slides with the awardees for the small grant be sent to panel members. Patrick Paquette expressed concern over sediment movement in the area of the Barnstable Harbor boat ramp which ultimately impacts boat ramp usage. Patrick also expressed concern over DMF being the primary funding source for the Barnstable Harbor boat ramp and hopes that some infrastructure money will also be used to revamp the boat ramp.

Information and Education: Mike Armstrong updated the Panel on the I & E program. Mike stated that Christine Cassidy has left the Division and DMF is in the process of hiring a new I&E person. He is hopeful that the new person will be on board early in the new year. Mike asked the Panel for input on any particular products they would like to see once the new hire is on board.

Patrick Paquette emphasized the importance to hire someone that has social media background. Patrick Paquette recommended the possibility of an intern and whether they could take some of the burden off social media responsibilities.

Mike Armstrong closed his comments by stating the recreational derby awards are back in person this year at the New England Boat Show on February 18.

Other Business

Dan McKiernan reviewed the actions taken by DMF to advance a proposal to revise the fee

[1] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/fish-passage-projects-recommended-funding

structure for recreational permits. He stated that due to the change in administrations there was no traction made but that he is hopeful the issue will be advanced under the new administration.

Kalil requested the PowerPoint used in this presentation be sent to Panel Members.

Adjourn

Kalil asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Patrick Paquette made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kevin Blinkoff, and there was no opposition.

Meeting Documents

- December 14, 2022 Draft Meeting Agenda
- June 7, 2022 Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Presentations

- 2022 Project Updates