

York Shellfish Commission
February 7th, 2024
2:00pm Wheeler Rm, YPL

Members Present: Peter Jones, Mike Masi, Brad Hunter, David Webber

Non-members Present: Forrest Brenske (Harbormaster/Shellfish Warden), Ari Leach (DMR Biologist)

1) Introduce Ari Leach, DMR – Marine Resources Scientist

- a. a. Need Shellfish Management Plan from commission. Chapter 7 requirement. This is a living document and can be edited at any time. This document should describe how we will plan our efforts, measure our goals, etc. The Management plan expands on the annual review. Due by the end of 2024. Typically just a one pager, Ari has samples that she will provide.
- b. b. Review of open, restricted, and conditionally approved areas and the recent changes. Sewall's Bridge to just west of the Brickyard has been reclassified as Open/Approved. We need to manage this area the same as Braveboat Harbor.
- c. c. Ask Eric Sroka for any questions about water quality and shoreline surveys.
- d. d. Suggested performing a survey to determine the resource.
 - i. i. Can be supported by DMR scientists

e.

f.

g.

2) Discuss shellfish ordinance amendments

- a. a. Need to have our senior license defined in our ordinance. At what age will someone be considered a senior?
- b. b. We can only manage the species that are in our ordinance. Suggested to add american oysters, belon oysters, razor clams, surf clams.
- c. c. Discussion of non-resident licenses. Kittery does not allow individuals from out-of-state to obtain a non-resident license forcing all New Hampshire diggers to come to York for a license. We need clarification on whether or not non-resident licenses can be allocated to individuals from out-of-state.
- d. d. Current ordinance states digging can begin on October 1st for areas classified as "Approved". The only flats in an "Approved" area are those in Braveboat Harbor. Digging will be allowed on the York side of Braveboat Harbor beginning October 1st, 2023 as is permitted in the ordinance.
 - i. i. Commission suggests a change to the current ordinance that would allow for digging in Braveboat from December 1st-April 30th.
 - 1. 1. This change would be consistent with the conditionally approved areas in the York River as well as the Kittery digging season. It would allow for ease of enforcement in Braveboat Harbor.
 - ii. ii. It would also be a beneficial conservation measure for a limited resource in Braveboat Harbor.
- e. e. Commission suggests including information about minimum size for

quahogs in Item 7. MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE OF SOFTSHELL CLAMS.

- i. i. Suggested Change: 7. MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE OF CLAMS: It is unlawful for any person to possess soft-shell clams within the Town of York, York County, which are less than two (2) inches in the longest diameter except as provided by subsection B of this section. It is unlawful for any person to possess hard clams (quahog) within the Town of York, York County, which are less than one (1) inches in hinge width except as provided by subsection B of this section.
- f. f. The Shellfish Commission would like to suggest to the Harbor Board a change to Section 3. Harbor Use Regulations, Item F. Fishing Equipment to allow for the setting of Green Crab traps in the river. The ordinance currently allows for eel pots and hand held gear to be used in the York River Channel. Green Crab traps are very similar to eel traps in terms of size and materials used.
- g. g. Ari mentioned that we can remove the composition of the board from the ordinance. We do not see this not an issue in town.
- h. h. Remaining question for Ari Leach: Would commercial harvest of Belons be allowed under our current ordinance.

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3. 3) Discuss season opening date

a. a. Season opening date for 2024 will be the same as this year.

i. i. Opening BBH and Sewall's Bridge to Rams Head- October 1st-April 30th

ii. ii. Opening of York Harbor from Dec. 1st-April 30th.

b.

c. 4) Open forum

d. Discussion of York River Wild and Scenic Grants Program. There is some interest in applying for this grant program to support a resource survey.

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f. 5) Next meeting will be scheduled as needed if it is determined that there is a desire to apply for the York River Wild and Scenic Grants Program and to finalize suggested ordinance changes.

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h. 6) Adjournment

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