**To:** Municipal Shellfish Management Programs

**From:** DMR Shellfish Advisory Council

**Re:** List of recommendations from shellfish workshops held in spring of 2022

May XX, 2023

Introduction - TBD

This list includes all the recommendations that have some level of municipal involvement, whether it is solely a town responsibility or a partnership between the state, town, and other organizations. There are nine categories the recommendations are organized under. Some of the recommendations have since been addressed or are currently in progress.

*For each recommendation, we should also include other information from the summary table or provide the spreadsheet.*

Shore Access

1. Developing a similar program to IF&W “Hunter Access Program” (i.e., book that reviews relevant laws) to share with harvesters upon receiving their state license, or to share with municipal shellfish committees
2. Create a pamphlet for potential coastal landowners that includes language on promoting harvester access
3. Create tax break incentives (or more effectively advertise them) for landowners providing harvester access
4. Create standard language for municipal comprehensive planning that includes preserving harvester access
5. Provide services to [riparian] landowners in exchange for access
6. Municipal planning committees (in collaboration with shellfish committees) should develop recommendations for shore access, including parking
7. Provide educational opportunities for realtors
8. Highlight the importance of shore access to local land trusts
9. Increase availability and use of DMR coastal grants, including working waterfront grants
10. Incentivize/increase easements on private property to provide more shore access
11. Inventory shore access points including walk-in locations

Licensing

1. Creating new pricing for different types of licenses based on age, where seniors (free), juniors (free), 17-18 (cost less), 18-65 (cost the most)
2. Allow for more flexibility in terms of proof of residency, including vehicle registration, utility bills, IDs, etc. (*This comment may also be interpreted as increasing flexibility to meet town residency requirements*.)
3. Raise fees (through revising state statute and ordinances) for non-residents to help cover warden salary.
4. Allow any non-resident child (younger than 16) to dig without buying a municipal license.
5. Improve municipal license accessibility
6. Prioritize areas for commercial diggers, and then determine areas that could be opened for non-residents without impacting commercial harvester livelihoods and be limited to a bushel, or similar amount, or alternatively limited to seasonal access.
7. Restrict the amount of non-resident municipal licenses held by one individual on a statewide level
8. Open additional licenses [or reduced fee licenses] in exchange for conservation time.
9. Standardize residency requirements
10. Improve communication with municipal license holders
11. Set license numbers based on assessed resource
12. Evaluate the pros/cons of municipal licensing
13. Use student licensing to increase fishery participation

Conservation

1. Encourage/increase participation in conservation activities especially by harvesters
2. Track predator abundance
3. Evaluation of wild seed transplant activities
4. Use brushing to increase seed sets
5. Plan and evaluate conservation activities
6. Provide an assessment of the effectiveness of conservation activities
7. Increase/support quahog seeding efforts
8. Develop new supply streams to increase hatchery seed capacity for conservation projects
9. Re-evaluate, or describe municipal aquaculture leasing responsibility more in terms of liability associated with individual towns

Shellfish Management

1. Evaluate the content of annual shellfish management review reports
2. Strengthen and support the roles of municipal wardens in shellfish programs
3. Improve landings data
4. Define shellfish committee structure
5. Prioritize issues/projects for municipal shellfish program
6. Towns should consider how minimum and maximum size limits would support the local resource
7. Improve planning for resource management

Technical Assistance

1. Increase direct communication between shellfish committees and DMR
2. Increase communication on social media (e.g., Facebook, etc) to keep harvesters informed
3. Public relations effort to help citizens view shellfish fisheries as part of the community v. "other"
4. Increase regional cooperation in informal ways
5. Develop handouts for recreational diggers
6. Increase shellfish education in local school curriculums

Data and Information

1. Provide more environmental information on factors such as nutrient levels, temperatures, salinity, river flow measurements, etc. This data can be collected (using standard protocols) from increased measurements during current water quality testing, or providing funds for municipalities to take similar biological measurements.
2. Provide model language for comprehensive plans
3. DMR should conduct statewide stock assessments on a regular basis and share the information with municipal shellfish programs.
4. Increase stock assessment efforts by towns

Enhancing Effectiveness of Shellfish Committees

1. Allowing shellfish conservation committees to work more directly with the state (rather than going through town councils/boards of selectmen).
2. Increase harvester participation **at** shellfish committee meetings
3. Increase harvester participation **on** shellfish committees
4. Providing resources and training for shellfish committees to learn key skills for running productive meetings
5. Encourage committee participation from younger harvesters.
6. Educating shellfish conservation committees on the responsibilities of managing the resource and introducing them to the information and tools to achieve this.
7. Develop leadership in municipal shellfish programs

Water Quality

1. Improve coordination between DMR water quality sampling and town efforts
2. Improve coordination with municipal officials to solve pollution problems
3. Plan community efforts to improve water quality
4. Conduct shoreline clean-ups
5. Incentivize landowners to maintain septic systems and remove overboard discharges
6. Educate up-river towns of pollution impacts downstream
7. Consider the impacts of contaminants like PFAS from industrial sites on shellfish flats
8. Towns can conduct independent shoreline sanitation surveys, water testing, and pollution tracking.
9. Training citizens, including harvesters, landowners, and municipal officials, to recognize pollutions sources
10. Educate citizens, municipal officials, etc. about wildlife and domestic animal waste
11. Clarity around who to contact/involve regarding pollution issues
12. Increase involvement of local Code Enforcement Officers (CEOs) in pollution/water quality issues
13. Establish priority system for reopening flats
14. Establish guidelines around lab results (especially water quality)

Enforcement

1. Clarify roles between DMR MPOs and municipal wardens