

**Shellfish Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Agenda**  
**March 12, 2025, from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM**  
**DMR Augusta Room 118 or Virtual via [Microsoft Teams](#)**

**Call to order – Jessica Joyce** **09:30-09:31**

The meeting was called to order by Jessica Joyce.

**Roll call – William Fearn** **09:31-09:35**

All members were present with the exception of David Wilson, who was unable to attend the meeting.

**Adoption of minutes from last meeting – Jessica Joyce** **09:35-09:40**

The minutes from the previous meeting were adopted without any comments or revisions.

**Seat nominations/expiring members – Jessica Joyce** **09:40-09:55**

**1. Jessica Joyce 4/23/25, completed 2 full terms (Public Member)**

Seat 1 nomination – Tora Johnson nominated by Jessica Joyce, a motion was made by Lewis Pinkham and seconded by Amanda Lyons. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Lewis Pinkham 4/23/25, completed 2 full terms (Municipal Wastewater)**

Seat 2 nomination – Lewis Pinkham will reach out to a possible interested party from eastern Maine. DMR staff will reach out to someone in western Maine.

**3. Jordan Kramer 4/23/25, 1 term available (Shellfish Aquaculture)**

Seat 3 nomination – Council members will reach out to possible interested parties including Graham Platner, Tom Hassett and Max Burtis.

**4. Jeff Auger 4/23/25, 1 term available (Shellfish Aquaculture)**

Jeff Auger will accept a second term.

**Nearshore Marine Resources Supervisor Ben Wahle – Kohl Kanwit** **09:55-10:05**

Kohl Kanwit introduced Ben Wahle as the new Nearshore Marine Resources Supervisor. Ben Wahle provided a brief overview of his background and expressed his enthusiasm to collaborate with the council and municipalities.

**Legislative Update (LD 64, LD 401 and LD 144) – Kohl Kanwit and Jessica Joyce** **10:05-10:25**

Kohl Kanwit provided updates on the following legislative bills:

- ME LD 64 – An Act to Eliminate the Cultchless American Oyster Growers License

- ME LD 144 – An Act to Create a Limited Retail Seafood Harvester Certificate
- ME LD 401 – An Act to Support the Removal of Overboard Discharge Systems

The Council discussed these bills in detail. Additionally, a new bill, LR2020, was presented. This bill aims to incentivize harvester walk-in access to the mudflats through private waterfront property through offering a tax reduction. Lewis Pinkham compared its verbiage to that of the homestead exemption. During the discussion, Jordan Kramer inquired whether there would be a public notification about the bill. Jessica Joyce clarified that it would be accessible only to licensed shellfish harvesters. Mike Pinkham raised concerns about individuals potentially exploiting the tax credit without proper oversight. Jessica Joyce explained that the bill requires assessment and proof qualification that would involve local enforcement, including harbor masters and/or shellfish wardens. This initiative is seen as a way to preserve access to Maine's second-largest fishery from a loss of access through private property.

**Public Comment:**

A question was raised regarding whether this bill would affect aquaculture intertidal leases. Kohl Kanwit responded that the bill does not impact aquaculture leases.

**Regional Shellfish Meetings recap and future – William Fearn**

**10:25-10:40**

William Fearn discussed the future of the Regional Municipal Shellfish Management Meetings. The possibility of combining these meetings with the Shellfish Advisory Council (ShAC) meetings on an annual basis was previously introduced and remains open for discussion. Several suggestions were made by committee members. Lewis Pinkham expressed a preference for maintaining the current structure, while Kohl Kanwit noted that holding ShAC-hosted sessions could potentially increase attendance and foster more intertown discussions. Jessica Joyce expressed hope for greater participation and engagement levels. Mike Pinkham suggested requesting topics from diggers to increase engagement.

Mike Pinkham made a motion to form a committee to explore this matter further, which was seconded by Joan McDonald. Volunteers for the committee will include Ben Wahle, William Fearn, Tora Johnson, and Krista Tripp. The Committee purpose is: Evaluate the process for developing the Regional Shellfish Meetings.

**PFAS and Shellfish Risk – Tora Johnson and Bryant Lewis**

**10:40-11:00**

Bryant Lewis discussed the DMR's PFAS testing protocol. Tora Johnson, the new Council nominee, highlighted concerns regarding a clay capped landfill in the Machias region that was retested for PFAS contamination. Water intrusion near the tidal field has raised concerns, and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is assessing the landfill for potential solutions. This situation has increased awareness of other potentially problematic locations. DEP has shown a willingness to continue reviewing the issue, and further coordination will be necessary. Both rainfall and tidal changes will affect the situation.

**Status of Shellfish Seed Stock in Maine – ShAC Discussion**

**11:00-11:15**

Jessica Joyce opened the floor for a discussion regarding the status of seed stock for municipal stock enhancement activities. Chris Warner proposed a reseeded effort aligned with landings reports to conserve the clam seed population, suggesting the potential need for a hatchery program. Amanda

Lyons noted that the Lubec region faces the opposite issue. Chris Warner emphasized the need to incentivize hatcheries, and Marissa McMahan agreed, stating that it is critical to better understand stock enhancement. The collection of data to understand these needs is essential. Amanda Lyons pointed out that sediment in their region acts as a barrier to protect seed from green crab predators.

Jessica Joyce motioned to form a committee to address these issues, with the motion seconded by Chris Warner. The motion passed without opposition. Jeff Auger, Chris Warner, Mike Pinkham and Marissa McMahan volunteered to join the committee. The Committee purpose is: Explore the availability of seed stock for municipal enhancement activities.

### **Green Crab composting facilities - ShAC Discussion**

**11:15-11:25**

Amanda Lyons discussed the challenges of green crab predation in soft-shell clam populations, emphasizing that the effectiveness of any mitigation efforts depends on the location. The issue of reseeded remains unresolved until a solution for controlling green crab populations is found. Transportation costs from Down East also present a challenge for getting a reasonable return on harvesting green crabs.

A motion was made to add this item (Green Crabs) to the work plan, and was unanimously accepted.

### **Work plan**

**11:25-11:45**

#### **1. Shellfish Focus Day – Jessica Joyce**

Jessica Joyce discussed the update from the recent session at the Maine Fisherman's Forum.

#### **2. Shellfish Economic Study – GMRI**

Kanea Takunaga presented a market analysis conducted by GMRI, showing that the softshell clam market has become less predictable, while Northern quahogs have become more stable. Additional analysis is being conducted to assess the impact of land privatization, particularly in real estate transactions, environmental considerations, and how global trends affect the market.

### **Priorities Review**

Jessica Joyce led a review of the committee's priorities for 2025. Due to the departure of the Chair and Vice Chair, it was decided to postpone reprioritization until the new Chair and Vice Chair are elected. This agenda item will be revisited at the next meeting.

### **Modernizing Laws and Rules Governing Municipal Programs**

Discussion centered on the need to modernize laws and rules, particularly regarding softshell clams. Kohl Kanwit suggested that a committee may be required in the future to address these concerns, although for now, this item can remain on the work plan. Jessica Joyce supported this process and Lewis Pinkham expressed interest in joining such a committee when it forms.

#### **3. Committees**

**Retail Rules Committee Jordan Kramer**

Jordan Kramer states that they have concluded their recommendations, and the committee can be disbanded.

**a. Water Quality (Committee Update) – Jessica Joyce**

Jessica Joyce reported that the committee has completed its recommendations and can now be disbanded.

**b. Increasing/incentivizing shore access through private property – Jessica Joyce**

Jessica Joyce reported that work on this issue is ongoing with pending legislation and collaboration with Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Landowner Relations Program.

**c. MSCW Training – William Fearn**

William Fearn provided a brief update on ongoing training efforts.

**Public input – Open floor****11:45-12:00**

A member of the public requested the survey results from the shellfish survey conducted in Surry. Katie Miller of DMR announced that the softshell clam landings report is ready for review, and a quahog report will be available at the next meeting. This report has been simplified to assist with municipal management.

**Other business****12:00-12:15**

Bryant Lewis discussed possibly ending the shellfish closure hotline, proposing that this topic be added to the next meeting's agenda. The hotline has been ineffective in providing updates for multiple closures which has led to confusion. A motion was made to add this topic to the agenda, which was unanimously accepted.

Kohl Kanwit acknowledged the retirement of the Commissioner and the appointment of Carl Wilson as the new Commissioner.

**2025 Officer Positions – Jessica Joyce****12:15-12:30**

Jessica Joyce requested Chair and Vice Chair nominations, and Mike Pinkham and Joan McDonald were nominated but no decisions were made. Lewis Pinkham wanted to acknowledge that the Chair is an automatic addition to the DMR Special Advisory committee.

**Adjourn****12:30-12:45**