

Shellfish Advisory Council
Meeting Agenda
September 23, 2025, from 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Augusta or Virtual via [Microsoft Teams](#)

Call to order – **Mike Pinkham** **11:00-11:01**

Roll call – **William Fearn** **11:01-11:05**

William Fearn conducted the roll call, and the members who were in attendance are as follows:
Laurie Howell, Tora Johnson, Amanda Lyons, Joan McDonald, Marissa McMahan, Ronald Parritt, Mike Pinkham, Ray Trombley, Jeff Auger, Chris Cline, and Chris Warner

Adoption of minutes from last meeting – Mike Pinkham **11:05-11:06**

Motion: moved by Tora Johnson to adopt the minutes from the previous meeting

Seconded: Marissa McMahan

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously

Open ShAC positions – Mike Pinkham **11:06-11:10**

- Shellfish aquaculture lease holder (Eastern Maine position) - Graham Platner is stepping away due to his Senate candidacy. This position is now vacant. The council discusses options for seat fulfillment. Michael Pinkham suggests Johanna Fogg and Abby Barrows as possible candidates.

- Commercial shellfish license holder – Amanda Lyon’s term is ending. Amanda Lyons agreed to reach out to potential candidates, and Ron Parritt suggested Dan Curtis as a possible candidate.

Legislative Update – Deirdre Gilbert **11:10-11:25**

In preparation for the upcoming second legislative session, several representatives have requested input from the committee on pending legislative proposals. While the representatives were unable to attend the meeting, Deirdre Gilbert, DMR’s director of industry programs, presented the proposals on behalf of the representatives to gather feedback and report back.

One anticipated bill sponsored by Representative Tuell of Machias proposes offering a reduced-cost state-level shellfish harvesting license to all active-duty and honorably discharged veterans. The committee raised concerns about the lack of available data on the veteran status of current license holders, which limits the ability to estimate the potential financial impact on the shellfish fund. Additionally, members questioned whether the proposal might set a precedent for reduced fees across other commercial state licenses. Several members expressed opposition due to the financial unknowns and emphasized the importance of maintaining consistent license fee structures. Tora Johnson acknowledged the importance of access to the fishery in down east communities particularly for socially vulnerable populations and veterans but agreed that more data is needed to make an informed decision. Mike Pinkham noted that municipalities already have the authority to offer free or discounted licenses and referenced Steuben’s past policy of providing free licenses for veterans with built in conservation requirements during his tenure as shellfish warden.

Representative Strout of Harrington brought forward two additional constituent driven proposals. The first seeks to amend the existing municipal licensing formula for nonresident shellfish licenses. Currently a nonresident license is created for every 10% of resident licenses issued - the proposal recommends increasing the thresholds

to 20% of resident licenses before generating a nonresident license. The second proposal aims to limit individuals to one resident license and one non-resident license statewide, replacing the current allowance for multitown issued licenses.

These proposals were met with significant opposition from several committee members. Tora Johnson voiced strong disagreement, citing concerns for Down East communities, where similar restrictions have negatively affected access to the Passamaquoddy people. Joan McDonald highlighted potential negative impacts on tourism and seasonal residents. Laurie Howell emphasized that shellfish resources belong to all residents of Maine and noted that noncoastal residents already face limited accessibility. She added that shellfish availability varies by town and further restrictions on license access undermine equitable resource use. Ray Trombley opposed the change due to the migratory nature of clams, which are not confined to a single town. Chris Warner, a non-resident license holder, argued that successful participation in the fishery requires research and strategic planning and believes that this form of entrepreneurship should not be penalized.

Managing the fishery more precisely – Dan Devereaux

11:25-11:45

Dan Devereaux provided an overview of new local harvester reporting requirements and explained how the improved data collection supports more precise fishery management. Shellfish stock surveys combined with DMR landings and seed survey data will be used to assess and guide sustainable harvesting practices. Moving forward, monthly reporting will be required from local harvesters to support these efforts and enhance cumulative data-driven decision-making. Failure to report will result in an automatic license suspension after the notice is sent by the Town Clerk.

The group discussed the new requirements. Ray Trombley suggests alternatives to using Social Security numbers. Dan Devereaux explains that the last four SSN digits are believed to be needed for legal purposes, according to legal representation by the town. This would be the only way to offer anonymity on the findings. Confidentiality concerning FOIA was a driving factor. Laurie Howell is interested in comparing the Brunswick numbers to the state findings through DMR. Ray Trombley stated that diggers are unhappy about the new rule due to the use of Social Security numbers. Mike Pinkham suggests assigning each Cove a number to avoid the use of Social Security numbers altogether. Amanda Lyons asks how confidentiality will be maintained. Dan Devereaux states that no individual-specific information will be shared and is generalized within the software.

Chris Warner said he is impressed with the apprenticeship program the town of Brunswick provides for the students and youth and would like to see this mirrored in other municipalities. Suggestions were made that we should duplicate youth-based programs based on the in-depth structure of the town of Brunswick's program.

Safety in the Shellfish Industry – Tora Johnson

11:45-12:05

Tora Johnson discussed safety concerns within the industry, including new initiatives such as the Down East Fishing Family Forum on October 16th at Woodlawn in Ellsworth. Information about this event is forthcoming. Attendees will have the opportunity to discuss safety concerns, health, well-being, and much more at this event. Additionally, an effort was led by Liz Michaud of Green and White Hope in honor of individuals who have lost their lives while fishing. The group is creating an emergency guide that effectively integrates law enforcement, volunteers, and various other additional resources that are available and easy to use.

MSCW Committee update – Michael Boucher

12:05-12:25

The initial meeting took place in Augusta, focusing on how towns go about reporting and dealing with repeat offenders. A solution to this issue has been left to individual towns. Oversight of this committee is needed to solve this problem. A proposal was made to create a unified tracking system that shellfish wardens can utilize to

track offenders across municipalities. Committee oversight is needed for the software selection and management guidelines for this system. Tracking these offenses will allow more accountability.

Another topic discussed was incorporating the recertification training of shellfish wardens into the Harbor Master Association meeting. Several individuals already have this overlap in responsibilities, and more professional and robust training is needed.

The group agreed that committee oversight of this software and strategy is needed. Incorporating training into the Harbor Masters Association meeting would also be beneficial. Amanda Lyons questioned whether this proposed system would provide the evidence/data needed by the ADA to pursue convictions. Michael Boucher believes this level of tracking could only help move cases forward. Tora Johnson states that reporting system disparities, variations within municipalities, and ordinances make it challenging for shellfish wardens to participate regionally. Mike Pinkham also believes that shellfish warden training is not robust enough, and this position makes a massive contribution to the community.

Manomet SLR (Sea Level Rise) Impact to Mudflats Update – Marissa McMahan

12:25-12:45

Marissa McMahan discusses sea level rise and coastal flooding impacts on mud flat habitat, shellfish resources, and harvester livelihoods. The goal for Harvesters is to gain predictability of aspects like low tide lines and other sea level rise impacts. Marissa presented the findings the group compiled utilizing data from these low-flying drones marking tides at mudflats and utilizing DMR Landings data. Drone imagery surveys the areas; interviews, mapping, compiling historical imagery, and additional data shows that flat access has been impacted. The 18.6-year planetary cycle for mean low water tides has maintained a new high. In the near term, we are on the descent of the planetary cycle, but the impacts are clear. Gaining an understanding of sediment is a major focus for understanding the impacts expected for mudflats.

Work plan

12:45-01:05

1. Shellfish Economic Study – GMRI

William Fearn states that they are close to a final product, and they requested to present to the ShAC at the Quarter 4 2025 or Quarter 1 2026 meetings based on the timing.

2. Priorities Review

No major updates this quarter

3. Modernizing Laws and Rules Governing Municipal Programs

The group may decide to turn this topic into a focus group when time permits.

4. Green Crab Composting Facilities

Marissa McMahan stated that the Green Crab Summit will take place on October 24th in Massachusetts. She plans to circulate details with the group and will give an update should she be able to attend the event.

5. Committees

a. Regional Shellfish Meeting – Tora Johnson

The subcommittee met yesterday and discussed renaming the Regional Shellfish Meetings to Regional Shellfish Listening Sessions instead. Using a multi-pronged approach, they would like to survey potential

attendees on the agenda and timing of the meetings. There needs to be an update based on progress made on the compiled list from the prior meeting. Amanda Lyons offered to assist.

b. Softshell Seed Stock – Marissa McMahan

No major updates this quarter. Marissa McMahan stated that her partner will be collecting Quahog data to lighten the load.

c. MSCW Training – Michael Boucher

Presented on this topic.

Public input

01:05-01:20

A member of the public stated that *“Maine does not assign a percentage of disability for a scallop and lobster non-commercial license; rather, it grants a waiver of fees for qualified disabled veterans with a 50% or greater service-connected disability who hold an honorable discharge. This benefit applies to both recreational lobster/crab and scallop licenses, waiving the fees and allowing for personal use of a maximum of five traps in the case of lobster.”*

Other business

01:20-01:35

William Fearn will be hosting a DMR table at the municipality meeting on October 8th. Marissa McMahan stated that Jessica Joyce reached out regarding topics for the Fisherman's Forum, Shellfish Focus Day from ShAC. Tora Johnson suggested harvester safety and municipal enforcement. Amanda Lyons suggested conservation survey resources and how to demo them. Predation was another topic discussed. This was Amanda Lyons's last meeting on the ShAC committee, and she offered her farewell and future assistance.

Adjourn

01:35-01:35

Motion: Joan McDonald moved to adjourn meeting

Seconded: Marissa McMahan

Vote: motion carried unanimously.