

Maine Commercial
Fishing Safety Council

Janine Drouin, Chair

Rob Odlin, Vice Chair

Ann Backus, Secretary

Members:

Kris Boehmer

John Drouin

Zac Gower

Alan Knowlton

John McMillan

Parker Poole

Mark Murry, DMR staff

Jeff Nichols, DMR staff

Commercial Fishing Safety Council

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, December 17, 2025

Teams meeting

Present: Ann Backus, Janine Drouin, John Drouin, Zac Gower, Alan Knowlton, and DMR staff: Sgt. Mark Murry, Jeff Nichols

Excused Members: John McMillan, Kris Boehmer

Absent Members: Parker Poole, Rob Odlin

Marine Resources: no additional staff

Public: Liz Michaud (aunt of Tyler Michaud), founder of Green and White Hope; Brian Smith, USCG; Chris Payne, MLA; Josh Dyum, REDDE Marine

I. Welcome –Janine Drouin, Chair

A. Presentation of Minutes June 18, and September 17, 2025

The minutes of these two quarterly meetings were accepted.

II. Update from the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner

Mark reported that the Scallop Advisory Council is considering an apprentice program and that a public meeting would be

held early in 2026. The discussion will be around an apprentice program, not around a protocol of eligibility.

Mark also reported that the Commissioner will financially support a vendor booth at the 2026 Fishermen’s Forum. No insurance is needed as the DMR is self-insured. This announcement is in reply to our request to the Commissioner for support for the vendor booth.

The terms of the members of the CFSC that were up for renewal have been renewed for three years; all members asked to continue. Mark reported that Commissioner Wilson is impressed with the Council and wants it to “stay the course.”

III. Update on scallop/urchin harvester vacancy on the Council.

At its October 1 meeting, the Scallop/Urchin Advisory Council nominated Alan Knowlton, an urchin fisherman, as its representative on the CFSC. This fills the vacancy left by Curtis Haycock, and we now have all legislated “seats/roles” covered.

IV. FOAA Training Requirement for Council members

Jeff Nichols explained that the Freedom of Access Act ensures that the public has access to deliberations and decisions of any group of three people or more that meets under the auspices of the Maine State government. Jeff mentioned that all deliberations and policy decisions should be saved for Council meetings and not be discussed in emails. He advised Council members how to access the FAQs that constitute the training for the FOAA and asked us to complete the training and send the training certificate to him by January 22, 2026.

V. Discussion of 2025 Fishermen’s Forum Plans

A. Jeff announced he had submitted a request to the 2026 FF Planning Committee to enable us to have a vendor booth that would be financially supported by Commissioner Wilson/DMR.

B. The Council agreed to co-sponsor Liz Michaud’s 2026 FF Workshop entitled *When Every Second Counts: Orchestrating Harbor Response & Community Strengths in a Fishing Emergency*. Ann has agreed to moderate this session if it is chosen by the 2026 FF Planning Committee.

C. Ann reported she had submitted a 90-minute workshop for the 2026 FF titled *Improving Safety for Single-handed Fishermen*. She mentioned that the application included a panel made of one or both co-owners of REDDE Marine Safety talking about a kill switch and hopefully demonstrating the kill switch mounted on a boat that Forum attendees would view in the Samoset parking lot. Additionally, John McMillan has been in conversation with John Leavitt at Chase Leavitt & Co about providing a raffle item and a presentation on the use of Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs). Brian Smith has been asked to participate as well. Mark has agreed to be the moderator.

D. Ann reported she had submitted a request for the Quarterly Meeting of CFSC at 2026 FF.

VI. Discussion of the proposed CFSC sponsorship of the *Every Second Counts Workshop* developed by Liz Michaud for the 2026 FF.

A. Liz Michaud reported that she has talked with many people about making safety a key topic for 2026. She has planned a 90-minute workshop around the Community Guide for Orchestrating Community Preparedness which has been developed through collaboration with Northeast Center, Fishing Partnership Support Services, USCG, Marine Patrol and others. Using a grant from the Maine Sea Grant Program, the plan is to recruit two Maine

harbors to pilot the development of preparedness plans and the purchase of recovery equipment based on the Orchestration Guide. The grant will pay for meeting space and a stipend to individuals attending meetings. Liz also mentioned the possibility of fostering the design of a holster for PLBs.

VII. New Business

A. John McMillan mentioned that we should encourage fishermen to learn to swim.

B. Janine mentioned that we would like more advanced notice when items pertaining to fishing safety are going to show up in the Federal Register. With advanced notice we can be more proactive and provide a more timely response to emerging issues. She suggested that we have a standing item on the Quarterly agenda pertaining to Federal Register notices. Jeff suggested that if we want to respond to a Federal Register item that we would make a recommendation to the Commissioner and have him forward a response to a state or federal register request for input. Mark mentioned that the Commissioner could seek input from us on emerging issues. Jeff agreed to be on the look-out for fishing safety items we could weigh in on. It was also suggested that *Landings* is a useful resource for upcoming federal issues. Janine mentioned that we are “all have a seat on the Council for a reason” and should be looking for ways to contribute our knowledge and experience on issues of concern to the fishing community.

C. Chris Payne, a public guest from the MLA, invited us to talk with him about diving issues. His contact information is chris@mainelobstemmen.org.

D. Ann mentioned that when Kevin Staples presented to the Council on ropeless fishing he did not include mention of any safety issues. This was construed to mean that we should discuss the safety issues of ropeless fishing at a future meeting of the CFSC.

VIII. Next Meetings

The working group meetings were scheduled for January 14 and February 18 from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Teams. The next quarterly meeting would be March 6 or 7, during the 2026 Fishermen’s Forum.

IX. Adjournment

The Council meeting was adjourned at 6:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Backus, MS

Secretary, CFSC