

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, March 7, 2026

In-person meeting, Samoset Resort, Fishermen's Forum 2026

Present: Ann Backus, Kris Boehmer, Janine Drouin, John Drouin, John McMillan, Parker Poole, and DMR staff: Sgt. Mark Murry, Jeff Nichols

Excused Members: None

Absent Members: Zac Gower, Rob Odlin, Alan Knowlton

Marine Resources: no additional staff

Public: Liz Michaud (aunt of Tyler Michaud), founder of Green and White Hope; Josh Dyum, REDDE Marine; Don Wagner, McMillan Offshore; Maine Rep. Allison Hepler; Joyce D.N. Jones, Civilian Fishing Vessel Examiner; Beth Nelsen and Melissa Williams, NOAA Observers (NEFOP).

I. Welcome –Janine Drouin, Chair

A. Presentation of Minutes December 17, 2025

The minutes of the December quarterly meeting were accepted.

II. Update and discussion of safety issues related to ropeless fishing (aka on demand fishing)- Janine and Ann

Mark pointed out that on-demand fishing is voluntary not mandated. Lobstermen who wish to fish in areas closed because of whale regulations will need to deploy on-demand gear.

Parker mentioned that lobster boats will need to have acoustic pingers and the gear trap with a CO₂ canister, a polyball and transponder.

Janine and Tom Dyum mentioned safety issues such as gear conflict (setting gear on top of other's gear) and, depending on how the gear is rigged, the possibility

of entanglement between the transponder and the last trap. Josh asked if there have been any near misses of lobstermen caught in vertical line.

After Jeff mentioned that no research has been focused on safety standards (for on-demand gear) related to MOB, the discussion turned to the idea of CFSC hosting a targeted near-miss survey among traditional fishermen to establish a baseline against which we could compare an eventual survey of on demand fishers.

Beth, a fisheries observer said that, of the lobster boats she has been an observer on, 50% were on demand, and that she “has not seen too many safety concerns.”

Tom Duym suggested that we reverse engineer the gear safety issue and host workshops in safety to encourage public support for on-demand fishing.

Kris: I move that we survey lobster license holders for the past five years regarding their entanglements and how they dealt with the rope entanglement, i.e., how they got back into the boat and how they used trap line available to them to help recover from an entanglement.

Parker seconded the motion.

III. Update on the recent discussions held by the Scallop Advisory Council pertaining to the proposed scallop apprentice program – Jeff Nichols re report from Melissa Smith)

The SAC discussed having potential applicants for a scallop license identify a sponsor. If chosen, the applicant would complete an apprentice program that would include fish management, dragging procedures, deck rigging, stability and 15 days fishing with the sponsor. The sponsor would go through the same training program and must hold a commercial scallop license or be a crew on a scallop boat. This would require rulemaking and a public hearing.

Kris mentioned stability as a major issue; Tom asked if there were 15 days available within a scallop season; John Drouin suggested changing the date of the lottery from October to January to allow for time to rig and get up to speed under a new license. Parker agreed that rigging cannot be done in the cold and at the last minute. It was suggested that the mentors would need to take a 10-hour stability course and Josh suggested using AMSEA as a resource.

John McMillan moved that we send a memo to SAC recommending with cc to Commissioner Wilson, 1) that the lottery date be changed; and 2) that the apprenticeship program be extended in time (15 hours not enough). This motion Parker seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

After Josh mentioned that First Aid and CPR training be included, Ann moved that First Aid and CPR training be added to the scallop apprenticeship training. The motion was second and was approved unanimously.

IV. Update on electric boats and preparedness needed in harbors and on docks to assure general and fire safety. Parker Poole

Parker mentioned that when the lithium-ion batteries in electric boats fail, they fail “catastrophically.” There is a runaway reaction: as lithium burns, gases are released (including oxygen) which then result in an explosion. Water will not extinguish a lithium-based fire. There is a significant risk that the infrastructure of a harbor/port could be badly crippled by a lithium-ion fire.

Kris mentioned that we do not have any experience with this risk. The discussion concluded with Parker saying we need to “keep this on our radar” and with Janine’s comment that we cannot support (endorse) electric boat use at this time.

V. Nominating Committee: Kris and Parker agreed to be the nominating committee. Voting for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary will take place at the June quarterly meeting.

VI. New Business

A. Restructuring of the Council membership: Janine mentioned that the original CFSC had 16 members, whereas we have currently have (by law) nine. She suggested that it might be easier to get a quorum if we had more members. Mark reminded us that a new structure including expertise needed and public members would need to be put forward to the Maine state legislature. Jeff mentioned that an alternative strategy would be to have ad hoc sub committees made up of CFSC members and non-voting members of the public and fishing industry representatives. No action was taken at this meeting.

B. Liz mentioned that we should bring back onto the agenda the topic of how to fund the newly established Safety Fund and how to solicit ideas re what items DMR and the industry need to improve safety, rescue, and recovery.

C. The conversion of fishing vessels was mentioned as a topic for future meetings.

VII. Next Meetings

A. Monthly workshop meetings were scheduled for April 22, 2026, 7:00-8:00 pm (virtual via Teams) and May 13 or 20, 2026, 7:00-8:00 pm (virtual via Teams)

B. Next Quarterly meeting, June 17, 2026 (virtual via Teams)

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Backus, MS

Secretary, CFSC