

**ISSC 2013 Biennial Meeting
January 25 – January 31, 2014 – San Antonio, Texas
Committee Report**

Committee Name : Shellfish Restoration
Chairperson: Debbie Rouse
Date of Meeting: January 26, 2014 **Approved By:** Debbie Rouse
Recorder: Michael Bott

Committee Members Present:

Debbie Rouse	William Beatty	Michael Bott
AJ Erskine	Steve Fleetwood	Scott Gordon
William Hastback	Randy Hatch	Ben Stagg
Bill Taylor	Gregg Goblick	

Committee Members Absent:

Lisa Halili	Shannon Jenkins	Jeff Kennedy
Gordon LeBlanc	Joe Migliore	Angela Ruple
Bob Woolrich	Joel Hansel	Paul Comar
Bill Kramer		

Charges

Charge 1: Review restoration information that could impact shellfish sanitation and the NSSP

Findings:

Representatives from Delaware, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Mississippi, and Virginia expressed concerns about restoration projects that impact shellfish sanitation and the National Shellfish Sanitation Program in their individual state reports.

All of the participating members expressed the impacts on shellfish sanitation and the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) was the push towards increased aquaculture operations and the popularity of shellfish gardening. The increase in aquaculture and shellfish gardening brings the issue of monitoring, enforcement engagement and patrol frequency to prevent the occurrence of shellfish grown in prohibited or restricted classified shellfish growing areas being placed into commerce. All participants in the discussion concurred that many shellfish gardeners are unaware of commercial requirements, that aquacultured product and oyster gardening in prohibited or restricted classified shellfish growing areas might harm the shellfish industry with an increase in shellfish borne illnesses. In both shellfish gardening and aquaculture operations, appropriate patrol and monitoring could be limited due to the lack of proper funding not directed to patrol man power, lack of enforcement capabilities, and patrol frequency. A common thread expressed in the discussion was the key to protecting public health was education of shellfish gardening participants and aquaculture operationally personell.

The postive impacts expressed by industry and regulators was the fact that planting oysters does give communities a challenge to improve water quality. With record harvests in the State of Virginia, the Virginia Legislature has appropriated 2 million dollars for shell planting in 2014. The proposed restoration project in the Lynnhaven River will not only use oysters, but the reintroduction of bay scallops and will restore SAV. The City of Virginia Beach will be able to meet their Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) by the reduction of nitrogen. Virgina raised the concern that since these oysters will not be removed from the watershed, there will be no net impact on nitrogen loading and that the current best locations for these restoration efforts, as identified by the Army

Corp, would require the removal of grounds from private leases. This places the Virginia in a situation of being viewed as either anti-restoration if they do not move forward with the project or as an act of government confiscating private leases.

Mississippi also raised concerns that shellfish growth and survival, including current stocks and future restoration efforts, are highly impacted by the control of freshwater inputs into marine systems. The most significant impacts can be identified by the movement of spat sets and oyster stocks during wet and dry seasons. During dry years, ideal salinity conditions often exist further up river, where oysters are more likely to be impacted by pollution sources.

Conclusions:

The challenges of shellfish restoration information does impact shellfish sanitation and the NSSP. Industry representatives, state and federal regulators prefer restoration activities to be facilitated in shellfish growing waters classified in an open status. Unapproved, restricted or unapproved shellfish growing waters would require increased enforcement or sufficient patrol to decrease the fear that uncertified product does not reach the consumer.

Utilizing and facilitating partnerships increases restoration efforts and helps reach our goal of fostering and improving the sanitation of shellfish in this country and to encourage restoration of shellfish growing areas.

Recommendations:

Unapproved shellfish growing waters would require more patrol frequency of restoration projects and better educational components are needed to inform shellfish gardeners and protect public health.

Charge 2: Identify proactive efforts in which Conference involvement would encourage restoration of shellfish growing areas

Findings:

Support of educational conferences, such as the International Conference of Shellfish Restoration, provide an opportunity to distribute pertinent information to restoration specialists identifying the need to protect unapproved shellfish produced in oyster gardening and larger restoration efforts from entering commerce.

Conclusions:

It is important for the ISSC to support shellfish restoration conferences to promote shellfish restoration in a way that minimizes risk to the shellfish industry.

Recommendations:

Motion was carried to request that the Executive Board provide \$1000.00 sponsorship of the 2014 International Conference on Shellfish Restoration in Charleston, South Carolina in December of 2014.

Motion carried to request the Best Management Practices (BMP's) document be available on the ISSC website as an educational document.