

**Suffolk County  
Aquaculture Lease Program Advisory Committee**

**MEETING SUMMARY  
21 September 2005**

**Suffolk County  
Aquaculture Lease Program Advisory Committee**

Location: Cornell Cooperative Extension - Kermit W. Graf Building, Riverhead

Start/End: 4:00pm / 6:00pm

Attending: *Members*

J. Aldred, D. Barnes, E. Bausman, T. Biegert, E. Cohen, G. Colvin, M. Deering, W. Grothe, T. Isles, D. Lessard, J. McMahon, G. Rivara, K. Rivara, J. Semlear

*Staff*

L. Bavaro, D. Davies, L. Fischer, J. Kohn, M. Mulé, R. Verbarq, C. Einemann

*Other*

J. Gergela, M. Craig

Meeting called to order by Chairman Thomas Isles who then summarized the June 29, 2005 ALPAC meeting. Following Thomas Isles' introduction, Karen Rivara gave the group an update on the status of listing the Eastern Oyster as a threatened or endangered species. As of now it looks like the Oyster will be listed as threatened but a final decision will not be made until January 11, 2006. Until that date, any oyster population and/or landings data should be sent to NMFS for consideration. Currently, Senator Schumer and Congressman Bishop both oppose the listing. However if the species is listed, it is Ms. Rivara opinion that there will be no need for the County's aquaculture leasing program due to detrimental impacts of listing on oyster markets.

- Joseph Gergela (Long Island Farm Bureau)
  - Stated that he does not envision a listing of the Eastern Oyster and urges ALPAC to proceed as scheduled.
  - Stated that with the Gulf of Mexico's shellfish beds destroyed by hurricane Katrina there is a greater demand for oyster production from other areas.
  
- Jon Semlear (Southampton) to Karen Rivara (East End Marine Farmers Assoc.)

- Who has signed on to this petition?

Response: Karen Rivara

- The petition is an individual initiative and the environmental groups that we have spoken to have not signed on.

- Gordon Colvin (NYSDEC)
  - Eastern Oyster listing petition was intended for a distinct mid-Atlantic population segment, however, the Endangered Species Act does not allow this type of distinction for invertebrates.

DeWitt Davies then presented a summary of the aquaculture lease program Request for Proposals (RFP): draft section III technical services. The floor was then open for discussion to solicit any comments, questions or concerns regarding the scope of services section of the aquaculture program RFP.

Copies of presentation and all handouts can be obtained from the Suffolk County Department of Planning upon request.

- ALPAC membership list (9/21/05)
- ALPAC 6/29/05 meeting summary
- Scope of services subcommittee 9/8/05 meeting summary
- RFP Scope of Services power point presentation

## **Discussion**

- Edwin Cohen (SCDPW)
  - Voiced concern over how to advertise the RFP, who the County will be sending this RFP to and how the County will go about choosing a consultant.

Response: Thomas Isles (Chairman – S.C. Dept of Planning)

- The RFP will be advertised by the County.
- The County will then choose an applicant who presents a clear and demonstrated competency to do the work.

- Joseph Gergela (Long Island Farm Bureau)
  - Will there be one chosen consultant, several chosen consultants to specialize in individual tasks or one chosen entity and their subcontractors?

Response: Thomas Isles (Chairman – S.C. Dept of Planning)

- Ideally there will be one prime consultant, and if necessary, County approved subcontractors to the prime consultant.

- Jon Semlear (Southampton)

- How are responses to RFP going to be evaluated?

Response: Thomas Isles (Chairman – S.C. Dept of Planning)

- There is a County process that must be followed with an evaluation committee consisting of S.C. Purchasing Office, the County Executive Office and S.C. Dept of Planning. The process can be customized to fit this project.

- Stated that it is critical that the right consultant conduct the work because often times the work done is too general and does not address the intricacies of the problem.

- John Aldred (East Hampton Town Shellfish Hatchery)

- Is EIS required or is that to be determined?

Response: DeWitt Davies (S.C. Dept of Planning)

- Assume that a full EIS is required for the generic leasing program. This programmatic review will not consider individual lease applications.

- Edwin Cohen (SCDPW)

- Voiced concern regarding RFP being too detailed and leading a respondent in a particular direction.

- Gordon Colvin (NYSDEC)

- Are we expecting the respondent to come up with a way of determining and defining subjective criteria or is the information going to be provided to them?

Response: DeWitt Davies (S.C. Dept of Planning)

- Respondents should use results of available research, such as those provided by PEP, as well as stakeholder input to propose/suggest subjective criteria.

- Laura Bavaro (SCDHS/PEP)

- Stated that research reports are available online at [www.peconicestuary.org](http://www.peconicestuary.org).

- Stated that submerged aquatic vegetation was mapped in 1994 and 2000 and is available in GIS format.
- Joseph Gergela (Long Island Farm Bureau) to Gordon Colvin (NYSDEC)
  - Considering the finite and subjective criteria in the law, is there adequate area in the estuary to create a successful aquaculture lease program?

Response: Gordon Colvin (NYSDEC)

- Yes, there is area available for a viable aquaculture industry.
- Voiced concern regarding constituencies sabotaging the process by providing unreliable data and information.
- Stated that he would like to see science-based legitimate reasons for excluding potential areas from the leasing process.
- John Aldred (East Hampton Town Shellfish Hatchery)
  - Stated that this must be seen by the public as a fair process.
  - Stated that it is important to communicate with the local level on every step (i.e. press releases, encouragement of public participation)
  - Stated that there ARE subjective criteria that must be addressed not just those that can be based on science.
- Karen Rivara (East End Marine Farmers Assoc.)
  - Stated that with respect to stakeholder conflicts, the highest and best use of the estuary should be considered.
- Edward Bausman (Shelter Island)
  - Stated concern over marking plots with buoys and the “eye sore issue.”
  - Brought up issue of using GPS coordinates instead of buoys or markers.
- DeWitt Davies (SC Dept of Planning)
  - Requested suggestions for the names of firms that should be added to the RFP distribution list.

Response: Laura Bavaro (SCDHS/PEP)

- Indicated that she would send a list of firms that had worked with the Peconic Estuary Program.

Edwin Cohen (SCDPW)

- Stated that SCDPW can provide a list of possible contractors.

## **Additional Member and Public Comment**

- Michael Craig (Aquaculture Industry)
  - Stated that the aquaculture leasing program jurisdictional boundary on the cover of the presentation is different than that used for the Peconic Estuary Program submerged aquatic vegetation mapping project.

Response: DeWitt Davies (S.C. Dept of Planning)

- The two boundaries are in fact different. The aquaculture leasing program jurisdictional boundary extends from the easterly point of Plum Island to Goff Point at the entrance to Napeague Harbor.

After opening to public comment, John Aldred requested that Suffolk County advertise the RFP in local east end papers. Thomas Isles stated that he will speak to Suffolk County Purchasing Office and address that issue, as well as proceed with completing the RFP.