

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
SHELLFISH COMMISSION
DRAFT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

On Wednesday August 29, 2012, members of the Fairfield Shellfish Commission met with Bureau of Aquaculture staff at 1:00 pm in the conference room at the Department of Agriculture/Bureau of Aquaculture offices, 190 Rogers Avenue, Milford, CT.

Members Present: Sanford Wakeman, Chairman; David Thornton; Robert Bilek

Also Present: David Carey, Director Bureau of Aquaculture; Kristin DeRosia-Banick, Analyst

The meeting started at 1:10 pm.

A map showing Fairfield's Shellfish Management Area and the current shellfish area designations was provided to the Shellfish Commission, as was a list of shellfishermen that work in the Fairfield area.

David Carey reviewed in detail the areas in and around Southport Harbor. The harbor now has the designation CRR (Conditionally Restricted Relay). This limits what can be done with the shellfish removed from the harbor. We discussed the movement of hard clams from one area to another, and the testing requirements for areas with different designations. In all cases when clams are moved, the water temperature must be 50 degrees or higher so the hard clams will dig in.

From an area designated CRR (such as Southport Harbor), clams can be relayed to an area designated RR (Restricted Relay) for a period of 6 months for depuration. Tests are required, and if satisfactory we can then relay the clams to our recreational beds at Sasco Beach designated CA (Conditionally Approved). We must then close these beds for two weeks and test again. If satisfactory, the beds are then opened in accordance with our MOU with the state, and recreational shellfishing can resume. Any 1" rainfall or bypass from the Bridgeport Treatment Plant would delay the opening.

From an area designated RR (Restricted Relay - such as Fairfield's Natural Beds off of Southport Beach), clams can be relayed directly to the recreational beds at Sasco Beach, but then the recreational beds must be closed for two weeks, tested, and if satisfactory opened in accordance with our MOU.

From another area designated CA (such as the commercial beds 919 and 920 in Fairfield's Shellfish Management Area, or other commercial beds in state controlled waters designated CA or A) clams can be relayed directly to the recreational beds at Sasco Beach. We would let the clams dig in for two days, and then the beds would be open in accordance with our MOU. There is no need to test these clams. We discussed some options, such as getting clams donated or buying them directly from the shellfisherman, or by doing a swap. The commercial shellfisherman could take shellfish from Fairfield's natural beds (which are in an RR area) and in return would give us clams from the shellfisherman's CA beds. If we do a swap we must get a count by bags of what is traded.

During any movement of clams, it was recommended that the Fairfield Shellfish Commission have an observer either on the commercial boat doing the work, or on a nearby boat to inspect what is done. The boat should be equipped to measure the ground covered and all clams collected should be counted by bushels to determine how much product is in the area. The Shellfish company must file for a permit with the Bureau of Aquaculture in advance of doing any work.

David Carey reviewed the Bridgeport Treatment Plant bypasses due to rainfall. The Bureau of Aquaculture has been testing when bypasses exceed 5 million, 10 million, 15 million and 20 million gallons of partially treated sewage, which is most of what is bypassed. They feel the bacteria count is acceptable at the higher levels due to the chlorine treatment, and have recommended a change to allow the recreational area to remain open at the higher levels of bypass. The sludge still enters the sound instead of coming out as a water. Bridgeport needs greater holding tank capacity so it can treat the waste at a later point in time after heavy rains.

As for testing, only Milford does the water and meat sample testing for shellfish open/closed status, with Hartford to be used as a backup only.

We requested that if the opportunity arises we would like to go out on a boat with the Bureau of Aquaculture staff to see how the residential and commercial samples are taken for testing. This might be possible if we arrange this in advance and we do not delay their schedule.

The meeting ended at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bilek