

Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.
Via Zoom
***HSAB meeting are video-recorded**

Members present: Andy Lowell, Dave Fronzuto, Dave Bossi, Jim Sjolund, Peter Brace

Members Absent: Ginger Andrews

Marine Dept: Sheila Lucey

Natural Resources Dept:

Others: Tom Montgomery, JC Johnsen, Carl Sjolund, John Logan, Jan Jelleme, Carl Bendricksen, Chris Bell, Tucker Finerty, Samantha Dennette, Bruce Cowan

CALL TO ORDER

5:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Unanimously approved, 6-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of Oct. 17, 2023

Unanimously approved, 5-0 with Mr. Sjolund abstaining.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Lowell mentioned that Natural Resources Director (NRD) Jeff Carlson and Town Biologist Tara Riley could not attend the meeting.

The HSAB voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve the HSAB's FY23 report for the Town's annual report with the understanding that Mr. Brace finalize his first draft and that HSAB members could contact him with additions and edits this week.

MARINE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

General Marine Department report – Sheila Lucey

NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

General Natural Resources Department report – Tara Riley

Spat lines are in for the season. The final lines that were deployed on 9/21/23 were picked up yesterday 10/30/2023. Spat were collected in a few of the Head of Harbor sites indicating some late spawning activity in late September when surface temperatures were decreasing in Nantucket Harbor. Madaket had 3 spat in the Esther's Island area during this same time period but nothing notable compared to the N. Harbor sites.

Nantucket Harbor Scallop Seed

Seed Rescued from shore to date: Between the two strandings and NRD's proactive moving, a total of 10.6 million seed has been relocated to the lower harbor. If the seed were to survive to harvest, that would equate to 26,500 bushels.

The latest stranding was near the Wauwinet Inn with about 2.7 million rescued from the shallows, on shore, and under the eelgrass mats. NRD went an additional day following the clean-up and dredged up seed near the wauwinet dock that was vulnerable for stranding in the next wind event.

NRD has purchased more totes and fish baskets to help with strandings moving forward.

Plans to relocate seed from the NRD side continue indefinitely. Our focus continues to be on creating new spawning sanctuaries for next season, thinning out existing dense populations, and moving vulnerable seed away from shore. In addition, a preliminary meeting has taken place between Jeff and some NSA members to discuss various options available to have commercial

license holders continue moving seed once the commercial season starts. No details have been finalized.

There is still an enormous volume of seed in the quaise, wauwinet, and bass shoal area that would benefit to being thinned out and spread around. NRD would like to plan a mass move of the Bass shoal seed to Madaket Harbor. Currently we have triaged thinning out wauwinet first, quaise second, and Bass shoal third. Seed has been moved to areas in the lower harbor that have a lack of seed (using our survey results) or are known to be good growth areas. Areas so far include: 1st Bend, Hussey Shoal, Horseshed, Hulbert Ave, Quaise Basin, and second -third bend. Amounts of seed that has been moved is being recorded as well as the amount of seed that has stranded that is not a candidate for rescue.

Commercial Scallop Season

The season will open on Wednesday November 1st with approximately 80 active permits which totals \$20,000. The recreational season permit sales average around \$60,000 according to the police records.

Sediment Transport Study & Dredge Planning – update.

We are now about 6 months into the project and the completion date is this day next year, October 31, 2024. Since April the project has been researching previous dredging projects over the last 30 years (we have boxes from Dave Fronzuto that were an excellent source of previous info, and thanks to Dave for that!). Since May the team has been collecting tidal data from Madaket Harbor, Polpis Harbor and Nantucket Harbor using tidal water level meters. Over the summer, bathymetric surveys were also undertaken. Late in the summer sediment core samples were taken and analyzed, all with favorable results. Eelgrass delineations were also undertaken for all harbors. As an aside, we have added Tuckernuck to the Eelgrass delineations, though not the project as a whole. These data are still being analyzed and are currently planned to be published in due course.

All of the collected information is being put into a model to look at current and future sand movements in the harbor to undertake the sediment transport study and see where sand moves and estimated volumes. In later phases of the project this information will be used to understand the best locations for dredging channels and dredging frequency for optimum navigation channels.

Pond Openings

Sesesachacha Pond opened on 10/26/23....and closed on 10/28/23
Hummock Pond is set to open tomorrow on 11/1/23

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

OLD BUSINESS

Harbor watershed public information outreach ideas – Discussion

No discussion

Green crabs – Discussion

No discussion.

Harbors Action Plan Committee HSAB recommendations – Discussion

Mr. Fronzuto reported that he submitted the same three recommendations he's making to the HSAB to Nantucket & Madaket Harbors Action Plan Update Committee (N&MHAPUC).

Dumpster sticker distribution – Discussion

Mr. Lowell said he hoped to get the volunteer help of high school students to place the 1,000 stickers on all dumpsters around the island. He thanked the Nantucket Shellfish Association (NSA) for its help in producing the sticker.

HEALTH OF THE HARBORS

NEW BUSINESS

Regulation revisions related to scallop seed strandings and relocation, and recommendations to Select Board - Discussion

Mr. Lowell this agenda item arose and how he and others got it onto this agenda.

Mr. Anderson thanked the scallopers who attended this meeting and for helping with seed relocation this fall.

Mr. Cowan noted how fortunate Nantucket was to have so much bay scallop seed in the harbors and said it's much easier to move seed when it's in the water. He added that with thin eelgrass and strong winds combined with loads of seed between Quaise to Polpis Harbor channel and east of Pocomo Point to Wauwinet he fears more strandings of seed if it isn't moved ASAP. Mr. Cowan said he and Mr. Sjolund (Carl) initiated a discussion with Mr. Carlson on how to proceed.

Mr. Jelleme asked if there was a design for a liner to go inside dredges so they could hold the seed. Mr. Cowan said oyster cage mesh was being used.

Mr. Sjolund (Carl) said seed moved after Hurricane Lee was the smallest stranded seed he'd seen but he added that the seed are growing, so they'd be larger and therefore stay in dredges better. He said the huge amount seed in Nantucket Harbor right now has never been seen before.

Mr. Lowell suggested dredging from right off the beach to get the seed in shallow water. He noted that NSA paying commercial scallopers to move seed discovered in Madaket Harbor in the spring of 2022 helped compensate fishermen well for their help but that he shouldn't expect the NSA to carry the whole financial load nor should scallopers be expected to move seed voluntarily without compensation.

Ms. Dennette of the NSA said it's important to distinguish between the two issues at hand; seed management and seed stranding. She explained that the NSA can help with seed management such as the moving of seed, but seed strandings are for the NRD to handle. Mr. Lowell noted that the NSA paid \$500/boat for the seed moving in Madaket in 2022.

Mr. Denette added that during this relocation effort, the NSA tracked where seed was moved and by which scallopers.

Mr. Montgomery of the Fishermen's Council, a subcommittee of the NSA, said the fishermen marked locations where they moved the seed to in Madaket Harbor with buoys and GPS in 2022. He added that the NSA can't afford to be the only entity paying scallopers to move seed. He said there needs to be another source of funding for seed moves.

Mr. Lowell suggested seed moving funds come from the ferry embarkation fee. Mr. Fronzuto explained what the embarkation fee is and what it's supposed to be used for. To date, the money collected has always been used to pay for traffic flow management at ferry docks by summer specials. Mr. Fronzuto said it would be a challenge to try to use embarkation fee to fund seed relocation.

Mr. Jelleme asked if coupons for extra bushels could work again.

Mr. Johnsen said the Town ended the coupon program because how complicated it became. Mr. Jelleme said there doesn't seem to be any evidence of seed moved to other locations in the harbor, no new abundance of adult scallops.

Ms. Denette said the NRD found scallop numbers going up all around Madaket Harbor but not one area spiking well above the other areas. Mr. Jelleme added that divers have seen a lot of adult scallops in Third Bend, presumably as a result of previous seed relocations to this part of Nantucket Harbor.

Mr. Sjolund (Jim) stressed that the Town needed to help compensate scallopers as well as the NSA. Mr. Lowell asked for a coupon explanation from Mr. Johnsen.

Mr. Johnsen said accountability of who had how many coupons and who used them to take additional bushes was extremely difficult to track.

Mr. Fronzuto said the coupon payment method might be more manageable with fewer scallopers in the fishery. He then asked scallopers what the season is going to be like.

Mr. Cowan said it was difficult to tell until the season gets going.

Mr. Fronzuto suggested a delayed start to the season by a week so the fleet could help the Town move seed. Ms. Denette said she was against this idea and was more in support of compensating scallopers for moving seed. Mr. Johnsen suggested that scallopers could move seed on Friday, Nov. 3 and then get to scallop on Saturday. Mr. Montgomery said the NSA previously had this idea. Mr. Logan suggested scallopers move seed while they're out on the water and after they'd dredged their five bushels. He noted that some scallopers have weekend jobs. Mr. Sjolund (Carl) said there are a lot of scallopers who won't help out, but he stressed that 100 percent need to help move seed when needed. He said payment for moving seed should be a last resort and that those who won't help should be penalized, he added. Mr. Brace said that scallopers who complain about low bushel totals for a given season should be reminded how the NSA helps scallopers with moving seed and how this translates into more scallops.

Mr. Sjolund (Carl) suggested that when seed needs to be moved, Mr. Johnsen put out the red flag at the Town Pier signaling no scalloping on a given day, that those scallopers who help move seed could be compensated and those who don't would lose a day of scalloping. He added that the 1,200 or so recreational scallopers do the most to protect the scallop fishery. Mr. Montgomery clarified that these recreational scallopers constituted a large portion of its members whose contributions help pay commercial scallopers to move seed when needed. Mr. Lowell strongly agreed with Sjolund (Carl) and Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Brace said instead of penalizing those scallopers who don't show up to move seed, that paying those who do should be enough to change the minds of

those not helping. Mr. Johnsen said some of the scallopers won't take the money, that they could care less.

Mr. Sjolund (Jim) suggested that the annual commercial shellfish permit fee be raised from \$250 to \$750 and that \$500 of that fee be returned after the permit holder puts in one day of seed moving.

Mr. Fronzuto asked, given everything that had been said, what the group wanted to do. He added that Mr. Carlson's and Ms. Riley's input is vital to formulating a plan. Ms. Denette said a combined effort of the NSA and the Town could get seed moving done quicker. She added that the NSA can pay scallopers to move seed when needed with guidance from Ms. Riley while the NRD works out a long-term seed management and stranding rescue protocol.

Mr. Logan suggested deducting fishing days from those scallopers for the next season who don't help move seed during the current season. Mr. Johnsen said it would only work if seed-moving hours was the measurement. He added that it could become a requirement to put in a minimum number of hours of seed-moving.

Mr. Sjolund (Jim) suggested closing the fishery on Friday, Nov. 3 and get scallopers to move seed. Mr. Cowan said Mr. Johnsen's idea sounded like the new scalloper apprenticeship program.

Mr. Lowell asked the other members of the public to identify themselves. Mr. Sjolund (Jim) asked if closing the fishery on Friday and paying scallopers \$500 would work, how it could be done and if anyone had any issues with this idea. Mr. Johnsen said he's authorized to close the fishery and that Select Board isn't needed to authorize his actions. Mr. Brace said social media posts and other public announcements of payment for moving seed on Friday should get unwilling scallopers out onto the water. Mr.

Fronzuto said he liked Mr. Sjolund's (Jim) idea, asking for how many hours. Mr. Sjolund (Jim) said five hours, \$500 per boat.

Mr. Cowan said Friday works best because the buyers have less demand on Fridays and the boat price might get a bump up, but he admitted this will be complicated. Ms. Denette said that in general she's not a fan of closures but that because this an emergency, she would support it. Ms. Denette said the Select Board doesn't have

to have a say in a fishery closure. Mr. Johnsen said the closer doesn't have to be posted in the newspaper. Mr. Brace recommended having the closure on Nov. 10 to give the NSA and the Town the time to get the word out to island scallop industry and give scallopers at least a week to fish before shutting the fishery down for a day rather than rushing to close the fishery for one day two days into the season. Mr. Montgomery agreed with Mr. Brace. Mr. Sjolund (Carl) reiterated several times that payment should be a last resort 100 percent participation was a must. Mr. Brace explained that getting that 100 percent participation is very challenging and that due this emergency situation, no one should expect it to happen. Mr. Johnsen suggested closing the fishery for Nov. 10 and not paying scallopers who help move seed. Mr. Jelleme said that Mr. Sjolund's (Jim) permit idea should be pursued. Mr. Froznuto suggested denying permits to those scallopers who didn't put in their required seed-moving hours during the previous season. Mr. Brace noted that right now it's an emergency to move seed, so Mr. Sjolund's (Jim) idea could work. But, when there isn't any seed to move in a given year, scallopers wouldn't have the chance to get their money back. Mr. Bendricksen suggested scallopers take a photo of the extra box awarded for helping move seed as a record for Mr. Johnsen to see. Mr. Johnsen agreed that this would work. Ms. Denette said the HSAB needed to return the conversation to the current seed-moving emergency. Mr. Brace said Ms. Denette needed to call Mr. Carlson and Ms. Riley in the morning for help on proceeding. Ms. Denette said the scallopers need to be compensated for helping move the seed and that the NSA doesn't need the approval of the Town to this. She agreed that doing the closure on Nov. 10 would give everyone time to prepare for the closure. Mr. Montgomery agreed. Mr. Brace said it was crucial to this effort that the NSA message be right. Mr. Fronzuto said it was simple; move seed on Nov. 10 and get paid, but you can't fish that day.

Mr. Brace also recommended alerting the newspapers and other news media outlets. Mr. Brace suggested that Ms. Denette announce the closure during the Public Comment section of the next Select Board meeting. The HSAB and those in attendance seemed to agree with this idea. Mt. Lowell said he'd attend the next Select Board meeting. Mr. Sjolund (Carl) said everyone should watch the weather for whatever day the closure is planned for.

Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee – Update

Mr. Brace reported that the CRAC is working on a six-month, weekly social media posting campaign.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

ADJOURN

Unanimously approved, 5-0, at 7:04 p.m.

YOUTUBE LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2oEONjHwZU&list=PL49sKqpy7VAj6nJnAlrlKlxWm6VQTfuXg&index=1>

Future Meetings:

Nov. 21 and Dec. 5

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Secretary

