

Ad Hoc Aquaculture Advisory Committee

MEETING NOTES

**Thursday, March 27, 2014
Lincoln County Extension Office
Newport, Oregon**

Participants: Kathy Bridges, Mike Schaer, John Moehl, Gil Silvia, Dave Landkamer, Jim Johnson, Megan Mackey, Jerry Gardner.

Phone-in: Scott Patterson-ODF&W, Mary Camarata-DEQ. Martin Zone participated in the tour. Unable to participate: Jon Steinman-Pacific Seafood, Mark Wiegardt-Whiskey Creek Shellfish, Ron Barnes, and Cliff Bentz-Blue Den Ranch.

OSU Extension provided a seafood lunch prior to the meeting – Thank you Dave and staff!

1. Jerry Gardner distributed the following documents.
 - a) The Committee's Mandate & Description of Services
 - b) Pacific Seafood's memo regarding opportunities and roadblocks for Oregon aquaculture
 - c) Jim Johnson's "Oysters Are OK, Why Not Clams?"
2. Dave Landkamer presented a power point, co-authored by John Moehl, describing Oregon aquaculture and the opportunity it represents.

The group spent a significant amount of time discussion the mission and vision for the committee.

Mission – To promote and facilitate an innovative state-wide program to farm Oregon's waters that is environmentally friendly, socially sound and economically profitable.

Jerry Gardner suggested, "to help establish Oregon as a globally competitive supplier of quality aquaculture products."

There was general agreement with the triple bottom line approach featuring, environmental, social, and business aspects of the mission.

Vision – A forward-thinking safe and responsible aquaculture industry that puts Oregon on top of western states in the farming of fish, shellfish and other aquatic products.

Scott Patterson suggested, "A progressive, safe, and responsible agriculture model that positions Oregon to be globally competitive in the culture of fish, shellfish, and other aquatic foods."

Mike Schaer suggested the need to refer to the importance of engineering in the development of aquaculture facilities.

Jim Johnson pointed to three important needs: 1) research around issues that impact the regulation and development of aquaculture, 2) education of policy makers and the general public, and 3) legislation that facilitates the responsible development of aquaculture in Oregon. Mary Camarata expressed some reservation about the word "industry" and suggested the word "community." The "fish farming" might be changed to "raising" fish. "Aquatic food" may be better than using the term aquaculture. Mary felt it's important to include the traditional importance of aquaculture in any vision for Oregon's aquaculture sector.

Landkamer and Moehl will work to develop a mission and vision statement that takes the suggestions into account.

3. The group discussed the term "aquaculture industry" as it relates to private producers, suppliers, research & development organizations, and consumers. The "aquaculture community" could also include regulators, higher education, legislators, and the industry. It's important to distinguish between the various stakeholder groups while trying to increase the significance of the sector. Each group has different concerns and motivations.

4. The group discussed several "action" items. There was general agreement with the notion that the *status quo* is no longer acceptable. The State must seriously consider promoting and facilitating an aquaculture industry. There needs to be a "white paper" prepared that provides the following type of information.

John Moehl contributed points A, B and C.

- A. Need to set benchmarks - The present *ad hoc* program is sufficiently disorganized as to be unable to satisfactorily define a baseline. Applying best practices, targets have not been established for the major current crops. Necessary economic thresholds to justify public and private investment have not been projected. Growing an aquaculture industry requires the ability to honestly report on the status of this industry; such reporting not possible without the needed baseline and benchmarks.
- B. Need for innovation - Oregon offers many aquacultural challenges. The climate and the consumer are highly variable. Aquaculture offers many crops. One of the biggest challenges is to find those that fit best with local conditions. The State has taken up many agricultural enterprises that require innovation and thinking outside the box. Aquaculture is one such activity.
- C. Need for responsible development - There are many stakeholders. There are fragile and unique ecosystems. From the menu of aquacultural possibilities, it is necessary to select those that fit with the State's ecology. There is a need to plan industries that can offer acceptable financial and environmental risks, that can self-regulate and that can produce high quality products that meet consumers' expectations and pocketbooks. Aquaculture relies on common property and must be able to manage this base without eroding the resource or inserting social inequities.

Mary Camarata suggested that a "pilot study" should include issues identified by regulatory

agencies and how the aquaculture sector plans to deal with these issues. Mary also suggested that the group develop a website to inform interested parties about the group's activities. Gardner will see if the ODA's website can provide space.

5. Potential funding options were discussed. Among the organizations that might have funds available for an aquaculture initiative include: NOAA, Oregon Business, USDA Rural Development, the ODA and the Oregon Legislature. Private companies involved with aquaculture may also be a source of funds.

6. Johnson and Gardner suggested the Board of Agriculture could add their support to an aquaculture initiative that seeks to increase the significance of the sector or Oregon's agricultural economy. The Board will meet in Tillamook in June. It may be possible to have the Board visit an aquaculture business in that area.

7. Gil Silvia indicated that it is important to win the support of members of the Oregon Legislature including the Coastal Caucus. Sen. Arnie Roblan and Sen. Betsy Johnson are key legislators in the Senate and Rep. Deborah Boone in the House. An aquaculture initiative must be designed to feature both fresh-water and coastal opportunities. Such an initiative is not about introducing competition for wild salmon or harming wild fish habitat in any way. Raising and processing aquatic species for food is done in neighboring states and globally with great success. Oregon can take advantage of its abundant resources to do the same while creating jobs across the state.

8. Gil Silvia mentioned OSU's desire to expand the Hatfield Marine Science Center and OSU's aquatic offerings. He indicated that OSU's \$200 million effort, including 25 new FTE, could feature shellfish or aquaculture where shellfish programs would fall under a broader aquaculture umbrella. Gil prefers the latter. Gil suggested that the ODA could greatly help by driving efforts to increase the level of significance of aquaculture in Oregon. There needs to be a plan or "white paper" that better defines the opportunities and informs decision-makers about the potential benefits.

9. Jim Johnson called for planning as a means to identify the appropriate places to produce aquatic products. Mike Schaer felt that private companies can develop plans that are reviewed by state agencies. A system needs to be established that better handles water quality issues and other environmental issues. This would provide certainty to private companies seeking to invest in aquaculture.

10. There was general agreement regarding the importance of having a baseline or "core" document that puts in writing a consensual set of statements, functions/assumptions and outputs that serves as our touch-stone for moving forward. This document will be crafted from the combined inputs of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee members, modified as necessary, formally passed to the Director ODA then used as the basis for providing stakeholders with knowledge about aquaculture's potential in Oregon and what's needed to elevate aquaculture to its rightful place among the State's various agricultural segments.

11. Dave Landkamer suggested that the committee should consider a new name for the group. Several alternatives were proposed: AquaOR and Aquaculture Stewardship Council of

Oregon are possibilities. Landkamer will develop a short list for the committee to consider.

12. The Committee adjourned at 3:00pm and proceeded to [Oregon Oyster Farms, Inc.](#) for a tour. Oregon Oyster Farms is the oldest and largest oyster farm in Oregon. Founded in 1907, the farm has passed through a series of owners, but is still locally owned by Mr. Xin Liu. The farm is situated 7 miles up Yaquina Bay Road. The company leases 500 plus acres of beautiful wetlands and estuaries from the State of Oregon. The company works closely with Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery and sells its products in both foreign and domestic markets.