

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ATLANTIC COAST SECTION OF THE
NEW JERSEY SHELLFISHERIES COUNCIL
Monday, April 21, 2025
6:00 PM

Meeting was held at the Nacote Creek Research Station
(360 N New York Road, Port Republic NJ 08241)

ROLL CALL: Chairman: Walter L. Johnson III (Ocean County)
 Vice-Chairman: George Mathis Jr. (Burlington County)
 Councilman: Paul T. Felder (Cape May County)
 Councilman: Edward W. Gaine (Atlantic County)
 Councilman: Vacant (Monmouth County)

DEP Representatives: Joseph Cimino, Marine Resources Administration
 Jeff Normant, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries
 Megan Swain, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries
 Scott Stueber, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries
 Richard DiVaccaro, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries
 Victor Poretti, Division of Water Monitoring, Standards and Pesticide Control

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 13:1B-30 et. seq), a notice of this meeting was posted with the Secretary of State's Office, State House, Trenton, NJ and sent to the Atlantic City Press and NJ Advanced Media news outlets. This meeting will be recorded.

1. Total Revenue for March 2025 \$ 779.80
 Shellfisheries Law Enforcement Fund \$ 122.00
2. Presentation of February 10, 2025 and March 17, 2025 minutes for approval.

The February 10, 2025 meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Mr. Mathis and seconded by Mr. Felder. The March 17, 2025, meeting minutes were approved on a motion both by Mr. Mathis and seconded by Mr. Felder.

3. Notification of Change in Corporate Entity

Previous Agent	New Agent	Corporation	LOT	SEC	ACRES/FT	LOCATION	MAP
Donald Otto	Nathaniel Bellwoar	Jersey Pearl Oyster Farm, LLC	235	A	2.00	Ludlam Bay	1
Donald Otto	Nathaniel Bellwoar	Jersey Pearl Oyster Farm, LLC	2516	B	2.24	Scull Bay	27

4. Application for Consideration

APPLICANT	LOT	SEC	ACRES/FT	LOCATION	MAP	Species	Proposed Activity
Todd Kostka	2504	B	2.02	Scull Bay	27	Hard Clam	Traditional On-Bottom Planting

Mr. Kostka was present at the meeting and fulfilled the requirement to attend one of two meetings pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-24.6, and the decision on the application will be made by the Council at the next meeting.

5. Application for Consideration – Temporary

APPLICANT	LOT	SEC	ACRES/FT	LOCATION	MAP	Species	Proposed Activity
Matthew Gregg	TBD	C	2.00	Barnegat Bay (Off Sunset Beach)	N/A	Oysters	Grow-out of Oysters from Suspended Area Floating Cages/Bags, Bottom Cages
Scott Lennox	TBD	C	2.00	Barnegat Bay (Off Sunset Beach)	N/A	Oysters	Grow-out of Oysters from Suspended Area Floating Cages/Bags, Bottom Cages
Lucky Mother Shuckers LLC (Daniel Grace)	TBD	A	2.00	Ludlam Bay	1	Oysters	Grow-out of Oysters from Suspended Area Floating Cages/Bags, Bottom Cages

Messrs. Gregg and Lennox were present at the meeting and fulfilled the requirement to attend one of two meetings pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-24.6, Mr. Grace was not present at the meeting. The decision on the application will be made by the Council at the next meeting.

Three out of the seven eligible leaseholders applied for the temporary leases. Bureau staff contacted leaseholders that were using structure and had been working under the UAO to see if they were interested in applying to keep the process moving. The Council has approved the concept of short-term temporary leases, but the DEP Commissioner has not made a decision yet about whether the Department will support the temporary leases. Staff stated that by accepting an application in no way meant that the lease would ultimately be approved.

Biological surveys at both Barnegat Bay and Ludlam Bay would be performed prior to the next meeting and a report would be provided to the Council. The survey in Barnegat Bay would also include a full submerged aquatic vegetation survey.

The Council decided that the deadline to apply for a conditional temporary lease was May 16, 2025 on a motion by Mr. Mathis and seconded by Mr. Gaine. The Bureau would contact eligible leaseholders to inform them of the deadline.

6. Applications for Transfer

LESSEE	APPLICANT	LOT	SEC	ACRES/FT	LOCATION	MAP	Species	Proposed Activity
Michael Snyder	Joseph McGee	2946	B	1.40	Shelter Island Channel	28	Hard Clam	Traditional On-Bottom Planting

The transfer from Mr. Snyder to Mr. McGee was approved on a motion by Mr. Gaine and seconded by Mr. Felder.

7. Old Business

Hard Clam Management Plan Committee

The committee was planning to meet in May, but a date was not yet established. Almost all seats on the committee have been filled apart from one wild harvester and one recreational harvester.

Regulatory Committee

The Regulatory Committee meeting was scheduled to meet on April 29th, 2025. Ms. Swain informed the Council that a final Committee report was being finalized and needed to be sent to the Committee and then presented to Council by the May or June meeting.

Legislative Update

The Council was informed of Bill #S4273, which modified the definition of aquaculture throughout state law to include construction of facilities and appurtenant structures. No additional comments to the Bill were made.

Future Growing Water Classification Impacts

Mr. Johnson requested that the Council develop a plan in the event water classification downgrades could impact clam culture in addition to oyster culture. This stemmed from Mr. Luke Williams' impacted lease in Ludlam Bay due to the closure. At the time there was no clam product on the lease, therefore not eligible for the current conditional temporary lease. Mr. Normant said that he did not believe the Department would go through the process of temporary leases again. The purpose of the temporary leases was an effort to allow impacted product to purge in Approved water prior to going to market since the leaseholders claimed they did not have a place to go. To clarify, this was not for the placement of new seed and was only for the transfer of already deployed gear and product.

Mr. Williams voiced his displeasure with not being included in the temporary leases. He emphasized that all leaseholders impacted should receive assistance when a lease becomes unusable due to extenuating circumstances regardless of whether there was product on it, or not.

Mr. Normant acknowledged Mr. Williams' points but reminded Mr. Williams and the Council of the purpose of the temporary leases as the impacted leaseholders requested assistance as they had no other leases in Ludlam Bay or near the vicinity of High Bar Harbor to place the impacted product in order to get it to market. To have available grounds to be able to support growers with potential classification downgrades impacts in the future, both lease utilization and allocation would need to be addressed first. This has been a well-known and longstanding issue. It was determined that this would be revisited by the Council and appropriate Committees to discuss further.

8. New Business

Scull Bay Hydrographic Surveys

Mr. DiVaccaro informed the Council that the Bureau completed hydrographic surveys in Scull Bay (64 corners). It was noted that the next areas to be surveyed were Shelter Island Channel, Great Sound, and Middle Island.

Financial Disclosure

Mr. Normant reminded the Council that Financial Disclosure statements were due May 15th, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Mathis and seconded by Mr. Felder

9. Date time and place of next meeting:

DATE: May 19, 2025
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Nacote Creek Research Station, Port Republic

Public Attendees (In-Person)	Public Attendees (Virtual)	Other DEP Attendees (Virtual)
Bill Avery Dale Parsons	Matt Gregg Scott Lennox Luke Williams Todd Kostka Jennifer Resciniti Matthew Mattusky Tommy Burke Michael Whiteside Chris Carroll Jordan LoPinto Steve Fleetwood Steve Fleetwood, Jr. Amanda Wenczel-Arians	Brian Scott, NJFW Marine Enforcement Nina Colagiovanni, BMHS Michael Auriemma, BMHS Michael Lindner, BMHS Lisa DiElmo, BMWM Liia Carpenter, BMHS Natalie Dragos, BMHS Alissa Wilson, BMHS Jenny Tomko, BMHS Lauren Strazzeri, BMHS Celia Dahl, BMWM