

**Wild Maine Mussel Fishery Improvement Project: WORKPLAN**

OBJECTIVE 1: Baseline stock status data is collected and a mechanism is established for maintaining data collection into the future.
OBJECTIVE 2: Harvest control rules are established that protect the long-term sustainability of the mussel fishery and those whose livelihoods depend on it.
OBJECTIVE 3: Assess the impacts of mussel harvest on the ecosystem, including habitat and other species.
OBJECTIVE 4: Establish a state-wide mussel fishery management plan with appropriate governance and community engagement to ensure long-term sustainability of the mussel fishery and access for local harvesters.

**OBJECTIVE 1: Baseline stock status data is collected and a mechanism is established for maintaining data collection into the future.**

ACTIONS	Tasks	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Determine specific needed data points for fishery-independent and fishery-dependent data collection and monitoring.	(1) Survey FIP participants and scientists from around the state. (2) Research mussel fisheries elsewhere in the world and local scallop fisheries to inform what data we might want. (3) Prioritize data needs/gaps and strategies for collecting the data now and in the future. Document in a report.	FIP staff (Kyle) with FIP participant contribution and review.	By end of August 2018
Determine relevant areas of the Maine coast, both intertidal and subtidal, where data collection should be focused.	Include in activity above.	Same as above.	By end of August 2018
Collect, aggregate, and analyze existing data maintained by industry (dealers and fishermen) and government.	(1) Survey FIP participants, other industry members (non-FIP participants who also have data), and DMR staff. (2) Document what is currently collected, what is required, and how the data can be improved. (3) Depending on what data is available for analysis, issue a request for quotes to qualified researchers and secure funding (depending on what is available in FIP budget).	Same as above.	Determine what data is there by end of July 2018; timeline for analysis TBD.
Conduct research on what drives the productivity and health of mussel beds in Maine.	Based on data gaps that the FIP work group prioritizes, secure funding for research.	Independent scientists to write proposals and conduct research, possibly collaboratively with industry.	TBD

**OBJECTIVE 2: Harvest control rules are established that protect the long-term viability of the mussel fishery and those whose livelihoods depend on it.**

ACTIONS:	Tasks	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Determine harvest rules that protect undersized mussels and habitats important to mussel and other species' productivity.	(1) Develop a summary of desired management measures based on scientific advice or data. (2) Lobby DMR for implementation and/or inclusion in a management plan.*	FIP staff to facilitate FIP participants in developing desired management measures; FIP staff to draft. FIP participants to lobby DMR re: implementation.	Present to DMR by June 2019
Determine a framework for harvest of seed mussels for bottom aquaculture purposes.	(1) Review existing frameworks from other parts of the world. (2) Draft a framework. (3) Lobby DMR for implementation and/or inclusion in a management plan.*	FIP staff to present existing research and options to the group. FIP staff to facilitate participants in developing. FIP participants lobby DMR for inclusion in a management plan proposal.	Review existing frameworks and complete draft by end of December 2018. Present to DMR by June 2019.
Determine a trigger for limiting licenses or harvest.	Develop recommended trigger(s) for implementation and/or inclusion in a management plan.*	FIP staff to facilitate development of a trigger(s) by the work group. FIP participants to lobby DMR for inclusion in a management plan.	Present to DMR by June 2019

**OBJECTIVE 3: Assess the impacts of mussel harvest on the ecosystem, including habitat and other species.**

ACTIONS:	Tasks	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Conduct research to determine the volume of non-target or discarded species caught (or lack thereof).	Develop a proposal to secure funding for conducting this research.	FIP staff or independent scientists to write proposals; scientists to conduct research, possibly in cooperation with industry. FIP participants to advocate the need for this research.	Complete by June 2019
Conduct research to determine habitat impacts of mussel dragging.	Research other studies that have been done on impacts of mussel dragging. Develop a proposal to secure funding for conducting this research locally.	FIP staff to research other studies and to write/submit proposals. Independent scientists to conduct research, possibly in cooperation with industry. FIP participants to advocate the need for this research.	Complete by June 2020

**OBJECTIVE 4: Establish a state-wide mussel fishery management plan with appropriate governance and community engagement to ensure long-term sustainability of the mussel fishery and access for local harvesters.**

ACTIONS:	Tasks	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Determine fishery specific long-term objectives for a mussel fishery management plan.	Draft management plan objectives for consideration by DMR. Objectives to be voted on by work group.	FIP staff to facilitate development of and agreement on objectives by FIP participants. FIP participants to take to DMR.	Complete by December 2019
Determine key components of mussel management, including harvest of both seed and mature mussels, based on scientific data.	Draft management plan components based on research and data gathered during activities above. Components to be voted on by work group.	FIP staff to facilitate development of and agreement on components by FIP participants. FIP participants take to DMR.	Complete by December 2019
Develop a mussel fishery management plan, inclusive of industry input and informed by scientific data.	Draft a mussel fishery management plan and host stakeholder meetings to get input.	FIP work group provides management plan recommendations to DMR. DMR facilitates management plan development process.	Complete by January 2021