

Seaweed Hub Regulations Work Group

Meeting #2: February 25, 2021

Hosts/Facilitators: Stephanie Otts and Catherine Janasie, National Sea Grant Law Center

Participants: Emanuel Hignutt, Josh Reitsma, Anoushka Concepcion, Chris Schillaci, David Palazzi, Eliza Harrison, Gregg Rivara, Jamie Bassett, Jennifer Bender, Mike Ciaramella, Read Porter, Rob Hudson, Suzie Flores, Stephen Kirk

Agenda:

- *Welcome and Attendee introductions*
- *Updates of NSGLC Activities since last call (Stephanie)*
 - *USDA “Aquaculture is Agriculture” presentation*
 - *Seaweed Food Safety Building Consensus project*
- *Recaps from other Seaweed Hub Workgroups (Cathy)*
- *NWP 55 for Seaweed (Cathy)*
- *Breakout Groups for SWOT Analysis of 2 priority topics (All)*
- *Next Steps*

Welcome and Introductions

- The meeting was recorded to assist with note-taking, but will not be made publicly available online. Work group members who were unable to participate in the call and wish to watch the recording may send an email to Catherine Janasie (cjanasie@olemiss.edu) to request access.

Updates of NSGLC Activities

- **USDA Aquaculture is Agriculture Presentation**
 - Stephanie Otts gave a presentation on behalf of the Seaweed Hub during the USDA’s “Aquaculture is Agriculture” Webinar on December 11. Presentation focused on sharing results of the Seaweed Hub needs assessment. 240 participants on Zoom during the presentation.
- **Seaweed Food Safety Building Consensus**
 - On November 17, the NSGLC hosted the third and final installment of its seaweed food safety webinar series. The November webinar featured a panel of industry members sharing their experiences regarding food safety regulations. A recording of the webinar is available for public viewing at: <http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/projects/regulatingseaweed/index.html>.

- The NSGLC’s workshop for state regulators will be held virtually March 8 - 19. The participants will be working to develop an FDA flowchart and individual state workflows, as well as identifying what type of guidance document would be most useful to move forward.
 - For state regulators on the call, still time register. Please send an email to Stephanie at sshowalt@olemiss.edu if you’d like more information.
- This project focuses primarily on seaweed being sold raw/minimally processed, because that’s where current federal framework doesn’t reach.

Recaps from other Seaweed Hub Workgroup (Cathy)

- Seaweed Hub participants are welcome to join more than one group if you have the time and interest.
 - Other groups are especially interested in state regulators.
- Processing/Post-Harvest (Facilitated by Antoinette Clemetson, aoc5@cornell.edu and Melissa Good, melissa.good@alaska.edu)
 - Met on Dec. 10th
 - Focused on two priorities:
 - Invest in feasibility study to recommend a framework to establish a Regional Processing Model that can be adapted by different states
 - Research product innovation by identifying existing and new processing technologies.
- Production (Facilitated by Meg Chadsey, mchadsey@uw.edu and Joshua Reitsma, jreitsma@barnstablecounty.org)
 - Met on Dec 15th
 - Identified 3 priorities:
 - Improve seed string supply
 - Improve guidance for farm selection and site design
 - Improve efficiency of gear and operations
- Marketing (Facilitated by Jaelyn Robidoux, jaelyn.robidoux@maine.edu and Gabriela Bradt, Gabriela.Bradt@unh.edu)
 - Met on Oct. 29
 - envisioning what an industry association might look like, and is considering developing outreach materials on product standards and grading, and/or promoting ecosystem services.

Overview of NWP 55 for Seaweed

- Trump Administration issued modified and new Nationwide Permits in January. New NWP 55 for seaweed mariculture.
 - Notes the potential for seaweed industry in the US

- Authorizes only structures and does not authorize any of the operational aspects of seaweed aquaculture activities.
- Allows for multitrophic activities
- NWP 55 does not authorize dredge/fill activities under Section 404 of the CWA- only structures under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act
- Prohibits the use of NWP 55 for the cultivation of a nonindigenous species unless that species has been previously cultivated in the waterbody.

Breakout Groups for SWOT Analysis of 2 Priorities

- During our November meeting, we narrowed our focus priority list to three topics: multiple jurisdictions/permitting efficiencies for lease sites, food safety hazards, and establishing markets/permitting around processing facilities.
 - No workgroup member volunteered for establishing markets/permitting for processing and this topic is being covered by another workgroup. Moving forward with just two priorities.
- Participants were divided into two groups to begin the process of developing a work plan for the two priorities. Each group took notes in a Google document that will be a “living” document that is continually built on throughout workgroup discussions.
 - Participants were asked to engage in a SWOT analysis and start thinking about actions to address identified opportunities and threats.
- Multiple Jurisdictions/Permitting Efficiencies for Lease Site (Moderator Stephanie Otts)
 - Breakout Group members - Read, Chris, Eliza, Rod, Gregg
 - See Google Document for notes from breakout group discussions: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xjLSixbiGg207xullm6Gt35vPSV5TQUhu54Lreq3SEw/edit?usp=sharing>
- Food Safety Hazards (Moderator Cathy Janasie)
 - To avoid overlap and duplication with the NSGLC food safety project, work group may wish to focus here on processed products. There are still federal gaps for processed products that states can address (e.g., modified requirements for smaller facilities).
 - See Google Document for notes of breakout group discussions: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EM1eonAB_QsRU84jQbiE_yZhy0nJjb-Qk3Ea_xuR5ZU/edit?usp=sharing
 - Breakout Group members- Anoushka, Manny, Jennifer, Mike, Jamie, Josh, Suzie, Zak

Next Steps

- After the call, Stephanie and Cathy will share links to both living documents. We encourage you to go to the other one to add your thoughts on an ongoing basis.
- Stephanie and Cathy will send emails every couple of weeks to remind members to look at the Working/Living documents for sub-groups.
- Work Group members will continue to develop the living documents.
- Stephanie and Cathy will schedule a check-in call about working/living documents 6 weeks after quarterly call (mid-way).