



***Massachusetts  
Shellfish Initiative***



# Massachusetts Shellfish Initiative

Overarching guidelines, goals, and/or a plan for the state to maximize the economic, environmental, and social benefits of Massachusetts' shellfish resources (shellfish, public land open to shellfishing, etc)

Provide guidance for how the state and towns should balance growing and competing demands for shellfish resources

Will be developed by you, the shellfish stakeholders: wild harvesters (commercial and recreational), aquaculturists, tribes, restoration community, town and state officials, concerned public

Brings existing and new shellfish projects together, to increase efficiency and effectiveness, leverage community support and funding, and achieve common goals

# Why do we need a MSI?

- Voluntary- not required
- Successful in other states:
  - Cleaned water to increase open areas (2400 acres in WA)
  - Restoring native shellfish beds, for commercial harvest
  - Attracted funding for cutting edge research to support industry growth
  - Improved relationships among user groups
  - Increased political and public support of shellfish activities
- Mass. lacks an updated common vision or goals for our shellfish resources (last effort in 1995, specific to aquaculture)

# National Shellfish Initiative



The goal of the initiative is to **increase populations of bivalve shellfish in our nation's coastal waters**—including oysters, clams, abalone, and mussels—through both sustainable commercial production and restoration activities.

# National Shellfish Initiative

Shellfish resources, either wild beds or the lands granted for aquaculture, are public resources that create many economic, social, and environmental benefits:

- Jobs
- Food
- Habitat
- Water quality
- Shoreline protection

# Why now?

Demand for shellfish resources is growing rapidly, with no plan or vision for how to overcome user conflicts and ensure the future of the industry

- Aquaculture: grown 430% since 2004
  - 331 permits, 1128 acres; demand for grants exceeds supply
- Increasing interest in non-commercial projects
  - User conflict over siting restoration efforts vs. commercial industry
  - Towns planting oysters as part of wastewater plan – where do those oysters end up when they are removed from the water?

# Why now?

- Increasing closures- norovirus, vibrio, harmful algal blooms
- Recent size limit changes pitting wild harvesters against aquaculturists
- Disparity from town to town
- Legislation introduced in 2016 that would fast track restoration permits, creating dangerous loopholes and a precedent for regulating via Beacon Hill instead of DMF's public process

# MSI – a Historic Opportunity

- United front to advance shellfish (political, funding, etc.)
- Increase shellfish resources in Mass.
- Publicity: raise ‘status’ of Mass. shellfish
- Increase credibility, cooperation, communication among user groups
- Leverage support from other sectors, including the greater community
- Update management, from the ground up

*“A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats”*



# Next Steps - Your Input

- What should MSI focus on? 4-8 big issues to start?
- What are the issues we should avoid including in MSI?
- Understand and identify issues, concerns, interests
- Process:
  - Survey: Collect and analyze data
  - Report Findings
  - Identify next steps for building the MSI – likely a steering committee that will take the findings, write a draft MSI Plan, followed by another round or three of public meetings to review and refine the plan.

# SPREAD THE WORD

Please **share** the MSI & Survey Link with your friends, neighbors, other shellfishermen, wholesalers, etc.

<https://tinyurl.com/MSIsurvey2017>

# Additional Thoughts to Share or Questions?

## Contact us

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# Massachusetts Aquaculture Association



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