

**REPORT REGARDING THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE AQUACULTURE  
TASK FORCE**



On February 7, 1995, the Director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, John Saunders, and the Director of the Missouri Department of Conservation, Jerry Presley, addressed a letter establishing the Missouri Task Force on Aquaculture.

As the leaders of the two agencies most directly concerned with and responsible for aquaculture in Missouri, they recognized that the future of aquaculture in both the public and private sectors hinged upon their collective ability to resolve issues and select effective approaches that give due consideration to overall public needs and values.

The desire of both agencies is focused by the critical recognition of the broader statutory or constitutional responsibilities of each department in conjunction with the more specific needs of the aquaculture industry.

Their vision included the development of a strategic plan that was constructed around creative dialogue and approaches to address future needs. A representative task force was selected from the major aquaculture stakeholders representing public government, university research, and the private sector.

The following individuals were appointed to serve on this Task Force:

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On March 14, 1995, an organizational meeting was held in Jefferson City, Missouri, to discuss the structure and charge of the Task Force. As a result of this introductory meeting, the Task Force agreed to conduct a retreat at Lake Ozark, Missouri, to engage in a concentrated effort to finalize the preliminary draft document.

## **RATIONALE I**

The Missouri Aquaculture Advisory Council (MMC) was formed in December 1981 in response to a cooperative agreement between the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Department of Agriculture and was charged with the development of an Aquaculture Plan for the State of Missouri. The Task Force found, upon examination, that this plan was 14 years old and in need of re-evaluation. Many of the original goals established in 1981 had been addressed and produced positive results for the aquaculture industry and strengthened communications between the public and private sector.

The Task Force expressed a need for the establishment of an entity whose composition reflected the current stakeholders within Missouri's aquaculture community, which would establish goals and objectives for the coordination of aquaculture interests in Missouri.

## **RECOMMENDATION I**

The Aquaculture Task Force recommends that the Missouri Aquaculture Advisory Council be redesignated as the Missouri Aquaculture Coordinating Council. It further recommends that the membership of this Council be structured as follows:

- A. Directors of the Missouri Departments of Conservation, Agriculture, Economic Development, and Natural Resources, and the Commissioners of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Coordinating Board for Higher Education.
- B. One representative each from the Missouri House of Representatives and Senate, who shall serve as ex-officio members.
- C. The Directors of the Departments of Conservation and Agriculture shall appoint four (4) members who represent active private sector aquaculture farmers.
- D. The Directors of the Department of Conservation and Agriculture shall also appoint two (2) members who represent suppliers of aquaculture products.

The purpose of the Coordinating Council shall be the coordination of public and private resources which enhances a viable economically sound aquaculture industry and protects wildlife resources in Missouri.

## **RATIONALE II**

Item 51, page 128, of the Wildlife Code of Missouri titled Waters of the State stipulates, "Waters of the State will include any waters which have been stocked by the State or which are subject to movement of fishes to and from waters of the State." The stipulated definition of waters of the State leaves room for a broad range of interpretation of its meaning and application. The latitude currently provided does not allow for clear application when natural disasters or other acts of nature incorporate the enforcement of this definition within the operational context of the private sector aquaculture industry.

## **RECOMMENDATION II**

The Task Force recommends that the Department of Conservation consider a review of the definition of "Waters of the State" to clarify its intent, which may unnecessarily restrict landowners. The Department of Conservation may consider the development of a memorandum of understanding which incorporates definitive parameters and guidelines regarding property rights of individuals. The Task Force also recommends that the Department of Conservation consider the development of a sunset clause which delineates the timeframe by which a landowner shall be bound to restrictions placed upon them as a term of acceptance of such aquatic stock.

## **RATIONALE III**

The need for collaborative research and development systems within the aquaculture community has been identified by the Task Force as a priority.

The areas of applied research, therapeutic drug development, and field testing and development are currently under-utilized. The specific development and upgrading of chemical additives and disease treatments techniques to address the potential hazard of diseases to the aquaculture community are at minimal levels of application.

The establishment of education programs which encourage the incorporation of curriculum involving aquaculture within secondary and vocational school courses of study is integral to the development of an informed and trained workforce for the industry. The creation of scientific and central data/information sources which provide the essential technological advancements and coordination of information sources will provide the foundation for the future development of productive treatments, genetic improvements within marketable species, protection for environmental concerns, and the coordination of data or information which facilitates productivity and growth within the industry.

## **RECOMMENDATION III**

The Task Force recommends the establishment of a statewide collaborative aquaculture research and development program to include the Departments of Agriculture, Conservation, Economic Development, and the University System of Missouri, which encourages the development of priority issues for the concentration of aquaculture research. Areas of priority should be applied research, therapeutic and medicinal drug development and research, field testing, and development.

The Task Force also recommends the establishment of programs specifically addressing education, scientific concerns and research, and a centralized data/information system, which encourages the development of state, national, and international understanding of aquaculture issues and concerns and information.

## **RATIONALE IV**

The utilization of private sector aquaculture production facilities to provide stock to Missouri public fisheries programs would provide many benefits to the public sector's efforts to develop recreational opportunities for the citizens of our State.

The Department of Conservation currently provides the opportunity for private sector aquaculture facilities to engage in a contractual relationship for the delivery of fish stock to certain Department of Conservation program efforts. The private sector's desire to participate to a greater extent in this worthwhile contracting process is hampered by a lack of information regarding access to sources and procedures regarding the availability of contracts and the eligibility procedures for application.

Through effective contracting, the Department of Conservation could realize savings within existing hatchery and other fishery operations. These savings could be redirected toward other efforts that cannot be addressed by the private sector.

The development of collaborative relationships between the private and public sectors of the aquaculture community would enhance the potential for increased efficiency and a reduction in operating costs currently experienced by the state-operated facilities.

#### **RECOMMENDATION IV**

The Task Force recommends that the current public contracting program operated by the Missouri Department of Conservation be expanded to increase the collaborative effort between the private producers and public entities. The Task Force also recommends the expansion of information resources regarding the Department of Conservation's contracting process.

#### **RATIONALE V**

Market development is an integral component of a successful industrial effort.

Collective decision making which unifies the focus of governmental policy implementation is a deciding factor in the success of a state's industrial base. Strong and cohesive relationships with multiple levels of stakeholders fosters the maturity of value-added production procedures and provide clear definition of producer and market relationships. The expansion of new client markets ensures the growth and advancement of the private and public sector interests resulting in increased employment and enrichment opportunities for all Missourians.

#### **RECOMMENDATION V**

The Task Force recommends that the Directors of the Departments of Agriculture, Economic Development, Conservation, Research and Extension components of the University System of Missouri develop strong relationships with professional organizations, societies, and commodity associations that foster value added production that includes the creation and/or attraction of initial and secondary processing.

These relationships should also encourage increased marketing, clearer definition of producer and market relationships, and increased expansion of new retail consumer markets.

An increased awareness should be developed within the state financial community regarding resource allocation and increased investments in aquaculture.

## **BIOS**

**CURTIS HENDRICKS** is the coordinator of the Missouri Office of Rural Development in the Department of Economic Development. He has an M.S. in Community Development from the University of Missouri at Columbia and a B.S. in Mass Communications from Illinois State University. Prior to his eight years in state government, he served with U.S. Peace Corps, working with the Ministry of Agriculture in the Caribbean nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

**LAWRENCE B. CLEVELAND** is currently the Executive Vice President and Board member of Ozark Fisheries, Inc., of Stoutland, Missouri. Larry has received his BBA and MBA from Southern Methodist University of Dallas, Texas. He is a distinguished civic leader and businessman. Larry also serves as President of the Camden County Farm Bureau and Treasurer of the Missouri Fish Farmers Association. He has been elected to the Boards of the National Aquaculture Association and Ornamental Goldfish Growers Association. He has also had extensive experience in the mortgage banking and commercial real estate leasing and development business community.

**DR. CHARLES F. RABENI** has been a leader of the Missouri Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Missouri, since 1979. Dr. Rabeni holds a Ph.D. from the University of Maine (1977) and served from 1971 to 1979 on the Faculty of Unity College, Unity, Maine. He has 15 years of experience researching the ecology and restoration of Missouri streams and rivers.

**GARY D. NOVINGER** is Assistant Fisheries Division Chief for the Missouri Department of Conservation. Gary is in charge of the Department's Fisheries Research Section at the Fish and Wildlife Research Center in Columbia, Missouri. He holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in zoology from the University of Missouri at Columbia and has been an employee of the Department of Conservation for 22 years. Gary spent 14 years as a fisheries research biologist with the department studying management of fish communities in ponds, small lakes, and large reservoirs. He also served for three years as a supervisor of Fisheries Management Section staff and activities in the southern one-half of Missouri before taking his current position.

**CHUCK HICKS** has gained extensive private experience in the aquaculture field through his years as a fish farm production manager, work with the Missouri Department of Conservation, and currently as the Missouri Department of Agriculture's Aquaculture Specialist within the Market Development Division.

**JOHN MILLER** is currently serving as the representative of Commissioner Robert Bartman, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to the Missouri Aquaculture Advisory Council. He possesses B.S. and M.S. degrees from Southwest Missouri State University and has over 25-years of government service at the local, state, and federal levels. John currently serves as Director of Teacher Certification for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.