

## COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR MARCH 21, 2016

**7. OCEAN SPORTFISHING****Today's Item**Information Direction 

Identify and discuss possible amendments to ocean sportfish regulations scheduled for action in 2016.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions**

- **Today's MRC vetting** Mar 21, 2016; MRC, Los Alamitos
- Notice hearing Aug 24-25, 2016; Folsom
- Discussion hearing Oct 19-20, 2016; Crescent City
- Adoption hearing Dec 7-8, 2016; San Diego

**Background**

This is an annual opportunity to discuss possible changes to ocean sport fishing regulations for the subsequent season. Any proposals that the MRC would like to recommend be included in a rulemaking package would need to advance to FGC in April for inclusion at the FGC notice hearing in August.

Currently DFW is proposing one amendment to sport fishing regulations beyond the federal fishery conformance packages already scheduled. The proposed change is to adjust the seasonal boundary for recreational razor clam fishing at Clam Beach, Humboldt County (§ 29.45, Title 14, CCR). The current boundary is defined by Strawberry Creek. The natural channel of Strawberry Creek has migrated southward far beyond the originally-intended boundary and this migration has impacted public access to clamming grounds.

**Significant Public Comments**

Humboldt County leaders, including retired Humboldt County supervisor Jimmy Smith, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, and Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Inc., have repeatedly requested DFW to rectify the situation (See example in Exhibit 1).

**Recommendation**

Recommend FGC support for the DFW-proposed change to the clamming boundary at Strawberry Creek. Discuss any additional proposals for the 2016 rulemaking and, if necessary, request public petitioners to complete the required FGC form for petitions for rulemaking change.

**Exhibits**

1. [Letter from Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to DFW, Nov 3, 2015](#)

**Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)**



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

825 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET

EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501-1153 PHONE (707) 476-2390 FAX (707) 445-7299

November 3, 2015

Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Marine Region  
Peter Kalvass, Senior Environmental Scientist  
32330 North Harbor Dr.  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Subject: Request for Clamming Boundary Line Adjustment at  
Clam Beach (Little River Beach)

Dear Mr. Kalvass:

The purpose of this letter is to request consideration of an adjustment to the seasonal boundary line for clamming at Clam Beach (Little River Beach) Humboldt County. Clam Beach is an important and valued asset for coastal access, recreation, and natural resources. Clam Beach hosts a significant population of Pacific razor clams which are harvested under the Ocean Sport Fish regulations. The present rules divide the clamming grounds into north and south beaches with Strawberry Creek defined as the middle management boundary. Clamming on the north beach (between Strawberry Creek and Little River) is open during odd-numbered years and clamming on the south beach (between Strawberry Creek and the Mad River) is open during even-numbered years.

Utilizing Strawberry Creek as the central boundary for alternating seasonal closures worked well when the creek discharged into the ocean west of Humboldt County's south parking lot and campground. For decades, this alignment effectively divided Clam Beach into more or less equivalent areas. However, starting in the mid-1990's, Strawberry Creek began migrating southward along the beach before discharging into the ocean.

In recent years and to date, the creek's confluence with the ocean has moved more than a half mile south of its historical location. This configuration creates a substantial imbalance with a large northern area and a much smaller southern area. In addition, the distance between the parking lot and the southern area creates an access hardship for seniors and people with mobility challenges who would like to pursue clams.

Before he retired, Humboldt County Supervisor Jimmy Smith, in consultation with 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Ryan Sundberg, contacted you to discuss boundary adjustments. Jimmy Smith followed up on your suggestion to communicate the issue to the area California Department of Fish and Wildlife's enforcement branch. Those subsequent conversations were very beneficial and led to discussion of a multi-county (Humboldt-Del Norte) option; one which could close all

clamming on those two county's beaches one year and open them the following year (a comprehensive management approach). We very much appreciate those detailed communications. However, given the high level of public input on this issue and the complexity of two counties with separate beaches and diverse constituencies, we are respectfully requesting to remedy the current situation with just a minor boundary change.

Our preferred option would involve adjusting the seasonal boundary line at Clam Beach to a defined location due west of the County's south parking lot. This proposed change is consistent with historical management intent and in our opinion, the least controversial. The County would install the appropriate signage if our request is approved.

We ask that you consider this proposal and propose the next step. One option is that the County could initiate and submit a proposal for the Fish & Game Commission. Another option is that Fish & Wildlife staff could incorporate the proposal into another rule package or some other submittal to the Commission. We ask that you consider the most expedited route to make this change, because next year (2016) will bring clamming back to the south beach area.

Our staff contact is Hank Seemann with the Public Works Department (707-445-7741 or [hseemann@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:hseemann@co.humboldt.ca.us)).

Sincerely,



Estelle Fennell, Chair  
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

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