Growing Community Support for the Humboldt Bay Mariculture Pre-Permitting Project

Mike Wilson P.E.
Chair of the Board of Commissioners

Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District
Humboldt Bay Mariculture Industry

- Humboldt Bay is the Oyster Capital Of California (State Legislature)
- Oysters and Clams
Long-line Culture
Raft Culture
Floating Upwelling Systems
Rack and Bag
Current Mariculture Industry

- 325 Acres Cultured (4,000 Acres Certified by Department of Public Health)
- 56 Jobs
- Total Sales = $6 Million
- Payroll = $1.4 Million
- Arcata Oysterfest = $750,000 Annually
Shellfish
“Culture”
Background data

• Economic Development Study (HBHRCD), 2007
  – Of the seven economic clusters studied, mariculture was the only one that was “space limited”

• HSU study, 2009
  – Identified 2,647 acres of potential area for additional culture.
Figure 5. North Humboldt Bay Mariculture Feasibility Categories

Feasibility Categories
- Oyster Beds 2007
- Arcata WWTP Prohibited Area
- No Feasibility
- Very Low Feasibility Final
- Low Feasibility Final
- Medium Feasibility
- High Feasibility
- Very High Feasibility

Map by C. Carter-Duffin
Humboldt State University
HSU NR Pradkum Team Spring 2010

Sources for Data layers displayed or used in analysis:
- 2005 NAIP Imagery from HSU Data Files
- Oysters Beds, Surveyed Eelgrass from A. Wagshals at Humboldt Bay Harbor
- Conservation and Recreation Plan Potential Eelgrass and Fusinon DEM from W. D. Kershner
Community Benefits

• 50 acres (long-line culture) = 10 direct jobs.
• 2 rafts = 1 direct job.
• Lease revenue for participating local agencies (e.g., Humboldt Bay Harbor District).
• Locally grown, sustainable seafood sold at local businesses and farmer’s markets.
• “Humboldt Made” brand
Constraints

• Locations for additional farming not identified.
• Cost of permitting does not allow for expansion of mariculture industry by private entities.
• Existing operators have spent over $1,000,000 to permit existing mariculture operations.
• Past conflicts (low threshold for new conflict)
• Funding to engage in the process
Prioritized Approach

• Address known conflict before starting funding and permitting process.
  – Acknowledging power, influence and responsibility.

• Understanding common goals
  – Clean water
  – Environmental monitoring
  – Jobs and economy, New Fishermen’s Terminal
  – Culture, Oyster Festival (Arcata)

• Open and respectful dialogue about differences:
  – Habitat impacts
Environmental Research and Interest Groups and Agencies

• Humboldt Baykeeper
• Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)
• Audubon Society
• Sierra Club
• Humboldt Bay Stewards
• Humboldt Bay Institute
• Humboldt State University (various departments)
• Resource agency staff
Reach Out to Public and Business Community to Support Process

Speak in a language they understand.
• Pre-permitting and the “business park” model.
• Not permit streamlining, offering a product that is paid for.

Business community and at large public (e.g.)
• Shellfish growers (e.g.)
• Redwood Region Economic Development Commission
• Local governments
• North Coast Small Business Development Center
• Headwaters Fund
• Local rotaries and other clubs
• Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District
Current Status

- Project received $200,000 from Headwaters Fund
- Permit Application to be submitted this month for approximately 300 acres of culture.
  - If permitted will generate approximately 55 new jobs and $7 million in revenues.
  - ~$300,000 community investment.

- Greater Community Awareness
- Increased Communication
- New Partnerships
The next project... (preview)
National Marine Research and Innovation Park (NMRIP)
NMRIP Project Summary

• Conversion of a defunct pulp mill to a:
  – Public Multiuse Dock
  – Aquaculture Business Park
  – Renewable Energy Research and Innovation Center

• Assets include:
  – ~150 acres of industrial waterfront
  – 250,000 sqft of warehouse, shop space and offices
  – 30 million gpd ocean outfall (1.5 miles)
  – 30 million gpd freshwater source
  – 30 million gpd
  – High capacity gas and electrical connections.
NMRIP Project Summary

• Potential Energy Projects:
  – Biomass
  – Wind and Wave Energy
  – Osmotic Power

• Potential Aquaculture:
  – Shellfish Hatchery and Grow-out
  – Algae
  – Finfish

• Academic research (i.e. Oceanography, Fisheries, Energy)
Different circumstances dictate different process

- No current public ownership.
- Need financial “partners” for purchase.

- Currently outreach is public but focused on potential partners including:
  - Humboldt State University
  - Schatz Energy Research Laboratory
  - Humboldt Bay Municipal Water
  - Aquaculture Companies
  - Redwood Region Economic Development Commission
  - Headwaters Fund
Relationships and conversation built on pre-permitting process has been invaluable... however more outreach will be needed if this project moves forward.
Win-Win!

(hopefully)