

PCSGA



PACIFIC COAST SHELLFISH GROWERS ASSOCIATION

LONGLINES

Volume 21 No. 3
Summer 2018



SHELLFISH LOVERS CELEBRATE
20 YEARS OF SLURP!

PCSGA



PACIFIC COAST SHELLFISH GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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The PCSGA strives to ensure a healthy industry and environment for shellfish farming on the Pacific Coast.

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What the Tide Brought In

Notes from the Director

2018 has brought a few changes to the PCSGA. The most notable is that we have been settling into our new office. We're still in Olympia but have much more space, better windows and we are enjoying the first floor access. This has been a very good change. If you haven't been by to see us yet, please do.

Hopefully, you have noticed a big change in our collective discussions about the Army Corps and Nationwide Permit 48. For nearly 10 years, our discussions were focused on a slanted and confusing permitting process for growers in WA State. PCSGA spent significant time and resources meeting with agencies, wading through potential permit restrictions, and advocating for a reasonable, transparent process which allowed farmers to do what they love - grow the nation's best shellfish. I'm relieved that the 2017 NWP is complete in WA. Nearly all of our members have valid permits and we can remove this topic from the top of our agendas. I'm also happy to report that we're engaging with Army Corps in Oregon about implementing NWP48 and conversations are more productive, transparent, and much more pleasant. A welcome and refreshing change.

2018 also brought us a new Outreach and Project Coordinator. Please welcome Sara Grant to PCSGA! (see page 7 to learn more) Despite being a native of land-locked Illinois, Sara seems to have a bit of salt water in her veins. Coming to us from the Salish Sea Expeditions, she brings a great suite of experience and skills along with grace, enthusiasm, and a warm, friendly personality. The one thing missing from Sara's resume is time on shellfish farms, but we know you guys will help out with that. I suspect in no time we'll wonder how we functioned without her.

One more noteworthy change is that I'm reverting back to my maiden name. Later this summer you'll start seeing emails from Margaret Pilaro (margaretpilaro@pcsga.org). That's still me! Same "content-rich" messages, same spunk and spark, just a different name.

We're only half-way through the year and it's very likely that there's still much more change ahead. Amidst those changing times, things can get off-kilter, testing our limits and abilities. According to the fine words of modern philosopher, Dr. Seuss "Everything stinks until it is finished". Regardless of the change or challenge, supporting each other we'll make it through. Cue the aroma of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies.

Be well.

Margaret A. Pilaro



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Cover Photo: 3 Magnets Brewing Co. cooking paella with shellfish donated by our members at PCSGA's 20th Annual SLURP event at Fish Brewing Company in Olympia, WA.

Pearls from the Prez

"One of most powerful human needs is the need for meaning or significance. We all want to contribute to something that is bigger than ourselves." - Lee Colan (co-founder of The L Group)

How can we ensure our contributions are meaningful? If we want to make every minute count, how do we measure its success? My team was recently encouraged to read an article that posed these questions. It had me staring blankly at my screen and my immediate thought was, "Oh no, I can't always measure success! Maybe what I am doing is wasteful or misdirected." Thankfully, I went on to read the remainder of the article and by the end I felt a whole new emotion. That emotion was excitement.

The article stated that in order to create a compelling cause, or as we Americans often think - in order to make every minute count, we must be motivated by purpose. Purpose is not a physical list of things that can be done to complete a task, it is an emotional connection to your cause or aspiration. For me, my purpose is to create an environment where there is safe and accessible seafood to every human on the planet for generations to come. For a home builder it may appear that their purpose is to build a house. What happens when their purpose is instead "to make the American dream a reality"?

As we enjoy the sunnier skies and low daylight tides, might you find yourself asking what your purpose is? As much as it is to grow amazing, world class shellfish, is it also to make the world you occupy better? Do you have the ability to improve the life of an employee, the health of our ocean, the community in which you live? To live and act with purpose requires a conscience effort from within ourselves. When others witness our efforts, it might just be the spark of emotion that allows them to commit to a common cause and ignites productivity. Will you commit to finding your purpose?

"We know too well that what we are doing is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. But if the drop were not there the ocean would be missing something." - Mother Theresa



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Monthly Winners of Ecosystem Services Photo Contest!



APRIL: Weatherly Bates captures this photo of a dense seaweed forest that forms on their oyster longlines every spring in Alaska.



MAY: Ralph Riccio snaps this photo of a scale worm navigating the subtidal jungle of barnacles, mussels and caprellid shrimp on a FLUPSY bin in John Wayne Marina.



JUNE: Wesley Hull took this photo of oyster long lines which provide food for native fish, invertebrates, and birds, promoting a healthy and diverse ecosystem within Humboldt Bay.

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Photo and caption are due the 15th of every month!

Ocean Acidification: Blue Ribbon Panel Update

Bill Dewey
Taylor Shellfish Farms, Director of Public Affairs

Ocean acidification got a lot of attention a decade ago as the west coast industry learned it was the cause of crippling oyster seed shortages. While it remains the biggest threat to ocean health and the future of the shellfish industry, many shellfish growers may naively be thinking the problem has gone away because seed has been more available in recent years. It has not gone away. It continues to get worse and will for decades to come until we address the root cause of the problem, carbon pollution.



Photo credit: Bill Dewey via oainwa.org's Executive Summary

Fortunately for shellfish growers, policy makers, scientists and non-governmental organizations in Washington stepped up in a big way. Governor Gregoire appointed an Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) in 2011 that developed the first ever plan to address ocean acidification. The legislature has appropriated substantial funding in three biennia since to create and support the Washington Ocean Acidification Center at the University of Washington. The legislature also established the Marine Resources Advisory Council (MRAC) in Governor Inslee's office which continues the work of the BRP, ensuring the recommendations are implemented. I represent Puget Sound growers on MRAC and Dick Sheldon with Northern Oyster (with Marilyn Sheldon as his alternate) represents coastal growers.

MRAC, under the leadership of Chairwoman, Martha Kongsgaard, recently underwent a five-year review of the BRP report and recommendations. That review, released last December, documents all that has been accomplished since 2012 and can be found along with the original BRP report at www.oainwa.org. It includes updates or additions to the BRP's comprehensive strategy to account for emerging issues and new management needs, identifies efforts Washington will focus on in the next several years to continue progress, and renews Washington's commitment to maintaining strategic momentum in addressing the ongoing threat from our changing ocean chemistry.

On the national front an exciting new development is the launch of the Shellfish Growers Climate Coalition (see pages 8-9). This collaboration with The Nature Conservancy is using the story of how changing ocean chemistry is impacting our businesses to educate consumers and policy makers about the need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Check it out at nature.org/shellfish4climate and consider joining.

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State-of-the-art Ocean Chemistry Monitoring Comes to Humboldt Bay

Source: excerpt (e) California Current Acidification Network, May 28, 2018

On May 14, Oregon State University oceanographer Burke Hales joined California Sea Grant and Humboldt State University researchers to install his namesake invention, the “Burke-o-Lator,” at the Hog Island Oyster Company’s new hatchery on Humboldt Bay in northern California. It is the third such device to be set up in the state.

Unlike other oceanographic sensors that measure only acidity (pH), the Burke-o-Lator measures additional factors that can be used to determine the carbonate saturation state of seawater. Carbonate saturation state is a measure of how difficult it is to build and maintain shell—directly related to the growth and development of shellfish.

The new sensor will help fill a gap in a network of ocean monitoring stations from California to Alaska; the closest Burke-o-Lators are 300 miles north at the Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery on Netarts Bay, Oregon, and 200 miles to the south at Hog Island Oyster Company’s farm in Marshall, California on Tomales Bay. Once the new Burke-o-Lator is fully operational, the data will be made publicly available in real-time via the Central and Northern California Ocean Observing System (CeNCOOS) website.

“It’s really exciting to finally have a Burke-o-Lator monitoring Humboldt Bay. Humboldt Bay is a nexus of the human-caused environmental challenge of ocean acidification, the threat it poses to the sustainable cultivation of oysters, and the potential for healthy eelgrass ecosystems to reduce this threat,” says California Sea Grant Extension Specialist Joe

Tyburczy, who participated in the device installation as part of a project funded by the California Ocean Protection Council. Tyburczy led the development of this collaborative project with colleagues at Humboldt State University, Bodega Marine Laboratory, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Wiyot Tribe, and the Hog Island Oyster Company.

As part of the same project, Tyburczy and colleagues are deploying additional sensors in Humboldt Bay to learn more about the degree to which eelgrass reduces ocean acidification, and how much this may benefit juvenile oysters. They have also begun monitoring eelgrass at a number of sites throughout Humboldt Bay to detect changes in its abundance and distribution.

“Not only will this installation expand our capacity to monitor ocean acidification, it will also provide our students with technology and data streams that can improve their understanding of carbonate chemistry in seawater. This is often one of the most challenging topics to teach in the ocean chemistry classroom. In addition, students will get experience with state-of-the-art equipment that will become more common in water quality laboratories around the country. This will better position our graduates for success in the job market,” says Jeffrey Abell, a chemical oceanographer at Humboldt State University who is helping to lead the project.



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Farmers' Corner

Written for you, by you - this is a place to share all the news from your farm. Celebrations, acquisitions, new ventures, the sky's the limit. Submit your news any time! Send to outreach@pcsga.org

Farm Tour: Taylor Shellfish & Chuckanut Shellfish



On May 21st the PCSGA board, staff, and guests enjoyed a fantastic tour of Taylor Shellfish and Chuckanut Shellfish farms on Samish Bay, WA. The tour was followed by dinner on the bay generously hosted by Taylor Shellfish. A huge shout out and thank you to Taylor Shellfish and to Chuckanut Shellfish for the wonderful tour and evening!



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PCSGA Welcomes

Sara Grant:

Outreach & Projects Coordinator

Having grown up in northern Illinois, I had lived in or near Chicago my entire life until I relocated to Washington last fall. I have found a welcoming and vibrant community in Olympia and am excited to call it home.

I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Environmental and Earth Science from Northeastern Illinois University. Since 2014, I have passionately worked as an environmental educator focusing on instilling conservation and stewardship practices to students through positive experiences with the natural world. Additionally, I was a volunteer canoe guide with Friends of the Chicago River where I advocated for the health and recreational use of the river with community members.



Most recently, I worked with Salish Sea Expeditions as their Program Coordinator onboard the 61-foot sailboat, *Carlyn*. During multi-day cruises, I was able to provide hands-on, inquiry-based marine science and sailing education to middle and high school students from various backgrounds.

Despite being new to this environment, I have quickly learned how important and impactful the shellfish industry is and I am eager to get my hands mucky.

I am thrilled to be a part of the PCSGA team! I look forward to engaging with members and advocating for the shellfish industry and the ecosystems in which they grow!

- Sara Grant

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Announcing The Shellfish Growers Climate Coalition

Source: (e) The Nature Conservancy

We are pleased to announce the formation of the Shellfish Growers Climate Coalition (SGCC), a partnership between shellfish growers on both the East Coast and the West Coast in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy. The Coalition is dedicated to engaging with food sector businesses, consumers, and policy makers to chart a course towards achieving climate action and securing a low carbon future.

WHY NOW?

The founding farmers of the SGCC recognize that climate change and carbon pollution pose a range of threats to their businesses and to food production more generally. Human impact on the Earth's climate system is well-documented, and it's happening right now.

How is carbon pollution costing us? Over a quarter of carbon dioxide emissions are absorbed by the oceans, changing the very chemical composition of the water. A decade ago the Pacific northwest shellfish industry experienced a crisis as production of oyster larvae failed in two of the major hatcheries and in the wild. Ocean chemistry altered by dissolved carbon dioxide (ocean acidification) was

identified as the culprit. At the same time, at least one hatchery in the Northeast was also severely impacted due to ocean acidification. In these hatcheries today, satisfactory larval production depends on monitoring water chemistry and buffering the incoming seawater to ensure that the proper conditions exist for shellfish larvae to grow their shells. And, some growers have located or increased hatchery capacity in less impacted locations to avoid the effects of ocean acidification.

Increasing global temperatures also affect the industry. Over the last decade, ensuring shellfish safety by controlling Vibrio bacteria has become more important and more expensive, and there is strong evidence linking increases in Vibrio abundance to increasing temperatures. Scientists increasingly are able to quantitatively attribute increased storm intensity to global warming caused by climate change. Storm damage from heightened winds and flooding, and storm tides exacerbated by rising sea levels significantly impact the industry. Increased runoff from stormwater can mean lower pH water, and harvest closures to ensure shellfish safety can

Continued on page 9

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prove costly. Fluctuation in salinity levels can result in excessive shellfish mortality, and flooding and storm damage can disrupt the transportation and sale of our products.

All of these impacts on shellfish farms add up to the need to take action to address climate change.

Members of the SGCC agree that:

- Human impact on the Earth's climate system is well documented, scientifically understood and profound.
- Taking action to address climate change is imperative to secure the viability of our businesses, our communities, and the natural resources they depend upon.
- Improving people's understanding of climate change and its impact on our businesses represent an important way to promote and enact climate policies that guide America to a low carbon future.

The SGCC is committed to shining a light on how climate change is already affecting food production in the United States, and using the stories of shellfish growers and other businesses endangered by climate change as a way to start a broader conversation about the urgent need for climate action. Consumers care about where their food comes from, and whether the foods they love will continue to be available to them. We want more policy makers to recognize that it is not just jobs and the communities they support at stake as a result of climate change, but whether or not we will be able to feed a growing human population.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Join:

The SGCC welcomes new business members. Climate change is a problem affects not only shellfish growers, but

wholesalers, restaurants and others in the food industry. Your company's participation in the Coalition is vital to demonstrate to the public and to lawmakers that our industry is deeply concerned not just about its prosperity, but its very survival, and that climate change is of concern not just to those who grow and consume shellfish, but everyone.

Learn:

A big part of the SGCC's mission is education – visit our website and learn about climate change, ocean acidification, shellfish farms and most importantly, what you can do to help.

Support:

SGCC is grateful to all its members, and especially to its non-profit partner, The Nature Conservancy. You can support the work of the coalition by reaching out to Sally McGee of The Nature Conservancy. smcgee@tnc.org

Sally McGee will be presenting on the first day of PCSGA/NSA's 72nd Annual Shellfish Growers Conference & Tradeshow on September 18th.

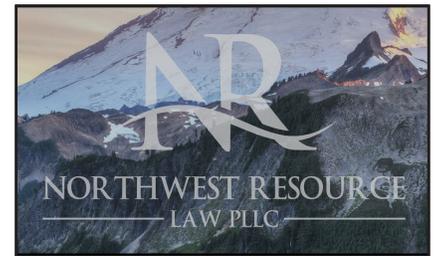



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Oyster Markets: What, Me Worry?

by: Robert Rheault
 ECSGA Executive Director

For decades I have been warning that increases in production could eventually lead to a collapse in market prices if we fail to invest in growing our markets. Well, I am starting to wonder if that day is finally approaching. While we have little in the way of good production data, my own survey of East Coast states tells me that we have doubled production in the past five years. During that time prices have remained stable or even inched up.

However, this trend probably won't last forever. It seems as if whenever we figure out how to grow something, we eventually see a collapse in price. It happened with salmon, catfish and tilapia. When we figured out how to grow clams back in the 1980s, overproduction caused the price to collapse by 30-50 percent. Hundreds of growers went out of business, and it took three decades for the price to recover. I predict that if we see a similar price decline for oysters, we will have hundreds of growers looking for a new line of work. Why should I worry when things appear to be going so well? Because I am old

enough to have some historical perspective. It used to be that we didn't sell much product in the summer. Markets were not well established and the myth that you should eat oysters only in months whose names include the letter "R" prevailed. Markets were also weak in the fall, despite the fact that oysters are in their prime at that time.

Several factors were at work here — the wild harvest opens in most states in October, and the Canadians and Cape Cod growers want to dump oysters before the ice sets in. On top of that, every grower is flush with lots of product, making the fall markets a nightmare.

We see small bumps in demand around the holidays, but markets don't really start to take off until Lent and Valentines Day, continuing to climb through the spring. By the time spring arrives, wild harvests are depleted, the Canadians are running out of their dry-stored product, and growers have picked through their crops two or three times so their mean size is

Continued on page 11

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Continued from page 10

getting smaller and smaller. By April we typically see a drop in the number of names on the wholesalers' lists.

For many years I had been known to say that spring was the time when supply was so tight you could put rocks in a box and name your price. If you were going to raise your prices, spring was the time to do it because the buyers couldn't argue. If you ran out of product before April, I would have told you that your price was too low — you were leaving money on the table.

But around a decade ago we noticed the summer markets really started picking up. Fall markets were strengthened a bit too, but we would still see demand plummet around the middle of October. Now we also see a glut of product from the new growers who are all looking to pay off years of bills as they rush to market with their first crops. Until very recently we would still see tight markets in spring, with everyone getting cold calls from wholesalers desperate for oysters.

But this year things are a bit different. I am seeing very strong supplies in May, with wholesalers still showing a variety of names on their supplier lists and restaurants pushing names I have never heard of. I suspect we are nearing a market top and we will see some downward price pressure in the fall when the new growers come on line with their product.

I asked a couple of friends what they've observed. Ben Lloyd of Pangea Shellfish in Boston said, "There is a huge amount of oysters in the pipeline. States are permitting more leases, and growers are increasing their production. Although North America's oyster consumption has increased dramatically over the past 15 years, it is bound to level off at some point. I fear a correction in price within a few years if markets aren't expanded."

On the other hand, Joe Lasprogata of Samuels and Son in Philadelphia is more optimistic. "Full speed ahead! There's a new grower every day pushing high-quality product and we are seeing lots of restaurants adding oysters to the menu to get folks in the door to drink," he said. I hope he's right.

While Gulf production has not recovered yet from the BP oil spill in 2010, in most parts of the country growth rates in production continue to exceed growth rates in markets. We're even starting to hear rumblings of overproduction on the West Coast, adding to my fears of impending market saturation.

To me the scary part is that many ECSGA members don't want to invest in marketing, which always comes up dead last when I poll them on their priorities. Everyone is selling everything they can grow (at least in the spring). Few growers have the resources to go out west and introduce "oyster virgins" to their first oyster, and there is no appetite for a generic oyster marketing campaign when everyone has their own brands.

I think we should be in college towns across the country introducing "oyster virgins," teens and foodies to the wonders of delicious, fresh, raw oysters. If we wait for the price collapse it will be too late. With the high cost of labor and tight margins in this industry, I doubt that many growers could tolerate even a 30-percent drop in price. If we don't work to boost our markets as we amp up production, we will have no one to blame but ourselves.

My best advice is to try to avoid competing on price. Find another quality to set your brand apart. Keep quality up and never drop your price. Once local markets are saturated you need to find new markets, and that takes time and money.

Never stop marketing!

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Washington Ag Chat on Facebook

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has launched a new Facebook group called *Washington Ag Chat*. This group was created to facilitate communication and information sharing among Washington State farmers, ranchers, and foresters. Anything related to agriculture can be shared in this group, except for commercial solicitations.



Photo credit: Washington Ag Chat

This group is maintained by the WSDA, but it is a public group that anyone can join and share posts. They ask that you follow three simple rules: be kind and courteous, no hate speech or bullying, and no promotion or spam.

Remembering a Friend: Don Dahman

By: Steve Bloomfield

Don was born on April 20, 1941 and was laid to rest on May 13, 2018. Don was married to Benny Williams and had seven children. He served in the Navy onboard the *Paul Revere* from 1962 through 1964. He returned home to finish high school and graduated from Quilcene High School in 1964. He worked for Buck Mountain Logging before he started working in the family shellfish business in 1966. Don took over management of Dahman Shellfish Co. in 1967, passionately advocating for the industry as a long-time member of PCSGA.

Don was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed fishing, hunting and operating heavy equipment. He disliked having to work with the equipment, but he did spend a lot of his time fixing and repairing the machinery. Don had a love of travelling and he made many trips to Europe, South East Asia and Mexico. He expressed a great passion for fishing for dorado, marlin and tuna during his visits to Mexico.

Don's family and friends will surely miss him.

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South Sound Spring Beach Cleanup

On April 12th, 2018 a force of about 100 volunteers scoured the shoreline of South Puget Sound for marine debris of all types. Debris was collected and transported by boat to one of two land-based sorting stations - Arcadia Boat Launch in Shelton and National Fish and Oyster in Nisqually.



For generations, shellfish farmers have played a critical stewardship role in protecting and restoring water quality and habitat. PCSGA, members and volunteers get together twice a year to do their share in cleaning up the shorelines by removing any debris they find. Any aquaculture debris that is salvagable is returned to its owner or reused by another farm. This helps to reduce the amount of aquaculture equipment that enters the landfills.

THANK YOU to all the PCSGA members and volunteers that help out year after year!

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PCSGA members can join the ECSGA ListServ for FREE!

Contact outreach@pcsga.org for more information



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SLURP 2018

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Calendar of Events

JULY

- 19: PCSGA Board Meeting
- 22: Geoduck Festival - Allyn Days – Allyn, WA

AUGUST

- 10-12: Charleston Seafood Beer & Wine Festival - Charleston, OR
- 19: National Oyster Day
- 21: PCSGA Board Meeting

SEPTEMBER

- 8: Brady's Oyster Feed - Aberdeen, WA
- 15: CoastSavers International Coastal Cleanup
- 17: Annual General Member Meeting - Blaine, WA
- 17: PCSGA Board Meeting - Blaine, WA
- 18-20: 72nd Shellfish Growers Annual Conference & Tradeshow**
- 21-22: Bellingham SeaFeast - Bellingham, WA

OCTOBER

- 5-7: Dungeness Crab & Seafood Festival, Port Angeles WA
- 6-7: OysterFest - Shelton, WA

PCSGA Fall Beach Cleanup, South Puget Sound WA (TBD)



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72nd Annual Shellfish Growers Conference & Tradeshow

September 18th - 20th, 2018

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Semiahmoo Resort
9565 Semiahmoo Pkwy
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Registration Dates:

Registration Opens: 06/15/2018
Registration Closed: 09/17/2018
Early Bird Cut-Off: 08/18/2018
Early Bird Cut-Off for Tradeshow: 08/01/2018



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The fund provides financial assistance to members of PCSGA for expenses related to education opportunities, experimental practices, and attending PCSGA events such as the Annual Conference or Walk the Hill.

Apply for funds at: www.pcsga.org

Please consider making a donation to the Grower Enrichment and Development Fund. Contact PCSGA for details.