



LONGLINES

Volume 24 No. 4

Fall 2021



**WE ARE HERE
TO HELP YOU THRIVE...**

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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Comments and questions about *Longlines* are invited.
Please email:
outreach@pcsga.org

What the Tide Brought In

Notes from the Director

Last month I found an odd-looking cone that had dropped from one of the fir trees. It looked just like a green baseball with distinct concentric lines. Some people call them “fire cones” but officially they are called Serotinous cones and are most common in wildfire-prone areas.

Just like regular cones they contain a bunch of seeds, but these special cones are constructed a bit differently. Serotinous cones are much harder and thicker than regular cones and are essentially glued shut with a strong resin. If I were a squirrel, I would undoubtedly think they were delicious – sticky, sweet on the outside, crunchy seeds in the inside - and if I found one, I would not share it! The cone remains on the tree until the seeds develop, which could take years. When a fire moves through, the resin melts allowing the seeds to release to establish new trees.

I had heard of these magical insurance policies for trees, but never actually seen one in person. Finding one offered me a wonderful reminder of how mother nature stacks the deck towards allowing species to survive even during the most stressful conditions. We’ve all been over stressed over the past nearly year, and most of us would much rather return to life pre-pandemic. However, just like the seeds of the fire cone, we will move past all of this and we will emerge renewed and ready to try new things.

PCSGA has managed to survive, as it has for nearly 100 years, with the sole purpose of helping all of you thrive. We have in place a few mechanisms to help us navigate unforeseen challenges, including the ones brought on by COVID. Over the course of the past 18 months, we have relied heavily upon those safety nets. We also received a bit of help from some most treasured partners and bumped into a little luck.

It’s time to put on our rose-colored glasses and plan for brighter days ahead. Over the next few months, the Board of Directors will set PCSGA’s course for 2022, including our budget. We plan on restoring many of the activities that were commonplace pre-pandemic. We are aiming to restart our beach clean-ups in the spring and are looking ahead to funding live meetings. We also have a few new exciting things up our sleeves. Please let us know how we can direct our activities in a way to provide you with the largest benefit! We’re ready to get back to work! Hope you’ll join us!

Be well.

Margaret A. Pilaro



While visiting Rhode Island in August, Margaret brought ECSGA’s Bob Rheault a thank you gift for the many ways he’s helped PCSGA.

Cover Photo: Photo credit goes to Linda Lentz with Chelsea Farms. This photo was taken in Eld Inlet in southern Puget Sound. In the foreground you see their crew harvesting clams by hand. Linda washed many bags this way and this method still works great!

Pearls from the Prez

The fog is here, both figuratively and literally, in most of our beautiful West Coast locations. Our early morning tromps to the farms and office are rattled with automatic high beams that don't realize they are making things worse. The brain fog sets in once you've arrived to your destination. Do you have your belongings - your keys, coffee, and that darn mask that is likely stuffed in your purse or pocket? With hands full you somehow manage to locate it and place it on your face. Beleaguered, you finally make it to work, ready to get after another day of doing what you love.

Maybe the above is just me. I adore the mornings I get to go for a walk on the beach first. Somehow this always clears my head from the drive and lets me briefly tune out the first round of emails that need my attention. That moment, when I can look out at the water, reminds me why I love what I do. That salty air is in my soul and gives me the strength to get after what has to be done.

Today's agenda is packed like every other; Army Corps committee meeting, budget reviews, ACOE permitting responses, Zoom meeting here, Web Ex meeting there, the list goes on. I know I am not alone with this feeling of keeping my head afloat, but I'm mentally exhausted after only accomplishing half of what needed to be completed. And yet duty calls! It's also Friday, which means my Senior son is playing in one of his final high school football games. So I dig deep, because I can't let those pesky screaming girls in the stands out scream this crazy football mom.

We are amazing beings. Amid a pandemic, we show up and do what has to be done. We make our way through the fog and find our version of the salty air to keep us motivated for what is waiting for us on Monday. And if by chance you are looking for a way to be more engaged and involved in what PCSGA is doing, please reach out. We have a new Board just getting started, with several new faces – and hopefully an end to this pandemic that will allow us to get back to celebrating our shellfish and the industry that we all love.

“There is something to be said for sitting still and letting things come clear, the way morning fog burns off the bay”
- George Witte



Miranda Ries
Pacific Seafood, Pacific Shellfish

MONTHLY ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!



August: Lisa Carleton-Long - Quilcene, WA
Midshipman love to use our Cultch seed bags and pallets out in the bay as their nursery. Parents seek refuge to set their eggs and the hatchlings have a safe environment to grow up in.

Wikipedia states: “Mating in midshipman fish depend on auditory communication. Male midshipman fish produce several different vocalizations while females only make grunts in non-breeding situations.” This is why I call them GRUNT FISH!

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Shellfish Farming, Processing and Distribution Included in USDA Pandemic Grants

Source: Laura Raymond, WSDA Regional Markets Program Manager

USDA Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program is open for applications now.

Applications close November 22.

Details and application are on the USDA website: <https://usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov/usda>

- The Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grant Program provides grants to food processors, distributors, farmers markets, and producers to respond to coronavirus.
- Small businesses and non-profits are eligible with a focus on:
 1. Small producers,
 2. Food processors and distributors that meet small business size standards, and
 3. Farmer's markets
- Funding requests may range from \$1,500 to \$20,000. Cost share/ matching funds are NOT required.
- Applicants must have a DUNS number. Links to how to obtain a DUNS number and a grant application hotline number are on the grant website.
- The grant covers costs incurred between Jan. 27, 2020 and December 31, 2021, including:

Workplace Safety: Implementing workplace safety measures to protect workers against COVID-19

Market Pivots: Implementing market pivots to protect workers against COVID-19

Retrofitting Facilities: Retrofitting facilities for worker and consumer safety to protect against COVID-19

Transportation: Providing additional transportation options to maintain social distancing and worker and consumer safety to protect against COVID-19

Worker Housing: Providing worker housing that protects workers against COVID-19

Medical: Providing health services to protect workers against COVID-19

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PCSGA Honors Paula Sylvia of The Port of San Diego as Princess of Tides for 2021

In recognition of Paula Sylvia's commitment and contribution to the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association:

It takes more than a policy expert to lead a major organization through the maze of establishing and permitting shellfish operations. Paula's expertise, collaborative spirit, and genuine appreciation of science, people, and marine resources has set a course that is leading to success.

Paula works under a tremendous number of constraints yet persists in a determined, thoughtful and environmentally responsible fashion. Her foresight and responsible diligence in addressing a known threat undoubtedly protected the rest of the West Coast industry from probable devastation. This fortuitous finding is due to Paula's well-planned and executed program. In addition to being a change-maker, she is a force for good in shellfish aquaculture.

Her contributions to the shellfish community are immeasurable. For these reasons, and more, we honor Paula Sylvia as our

2021 Princess of Tides



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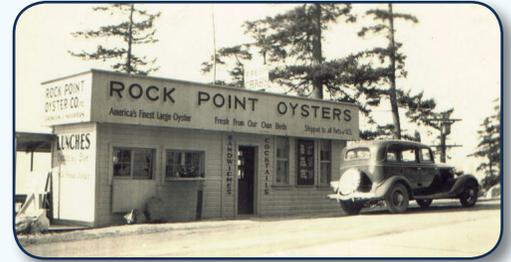
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Rock Point Oyster Company Celebrates 100 Years!

When we think of early oyster farmers on the West Coast, Rock Point Oyster Company and the Steele family immediately come to mind. Rock Point Oyster got its start in 1921 through the purchase of the Pearl Oyster Company by Earl Newell (E.N.) Steele and John Barnes. With this purchase, the partners inherited beds of Eastern oysters, and in 1924 began experimenting with a new oyster imported from Japan. Through the following years, the Japanese oyster (known today as the Pacific oyster) successfully thrived in the cool waters of the Puget Sound, and is now the most widely cultivated oyster in the Pacific Northwest.



Rock Point Oyster's 1930's roadside stand on Chuckanut Drive in Sammamish Bay, WA

The Steele family have been pioneers and leaders in the shellfish industry for the past 100 years, and counting! They are actively engaged in marketing, policy, and legal matters critical to all growers in the shellfish industry. Early on, the U.S. Public Health Service adopted a cooperative certificate program with state health agencies. Rock Point Oyster Company has, to this day, the honor of holding Washington Department of Health Certificate Number 1.

The first association established to represent the interests of local oyster growers was the Olympia Oyster Growers Association. In 1912, E.N. Steele was named Secretary of the Oyster Growers Association, holding that office for 36 years. In 1930, the Pacific Coast Oyster Growers Association

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(PCOGA) was established to represent the broader interests of growers in Washington and neighboring states. E.N. Steele was named President of the newly formed PCOGA, holding office for 15 years, while also maintaining his office in the Olympia Oyster Growers Association.

In 1948, E.N.'s son, Richard (Dick) Steele began his tenure on PCOGA's Board of Directors. Dick, like his father, sat on the board for decades. In 1999, PCOGA was renamed Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association (PCSGA) to more accurately reflect the additional shellfish (mussels, clams and geoduck) the association currently represents. Dick Steele's son, Dave, has been an active PCSGA board member since 2007, serving as President, Member-At-Large, and most recently as Treasurer. In addition to serving on PCSGA's board, Dave also served on the board of the Puget Sound Shellfish Growers Legal Defense Fund, where he represented Puget Sound growers in treaty rights litigation for many years.

Today, Rock Point Oyster Company is run by Dave Steele (3rd generation), his son Lee Steele and daughter April Steele (4th generation), sister-in-law Lisa Carleton-Long, and Lisa's husband Brett. They manage five farms on Tarboo Bay, Dabob Bay, Quilcene Bay and Hood Canal in Washington. They raise a variety of shellfish, including Pacific and Kumamoto oysters, Manila clams, and Savory clams. The Steele family have expanded and upgraded their process throughout the years, but their quality and hard work remain a constant.

Cheers to 100 years!



Dave Steele at their Hood Canal farm hosting a tour with staff from Washington state agencies, non-profits, and WA Sea Grant.



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Port of San Diego and the Blue Economy

by: Rebecca Richards, Acacia Pacific Aquaculture

The Port of San Diego launched its Aquaculture and Blue Technology Program in 2015 under the leadership of the Board of Port Commissioners and through Program Director, Paula Sylvia, PCSGA's 2021 Tides Awards recipient. Paula's comprehensive background spans across management, research, innovative technology creation and husbandry in finfish and shellfish aquaculture. This includes 2.5 years with NOAA, and her present role leading all aspects of research, development and implementation of a new programmatic initiative to create environmental and economic opportunities for aquaculture in and around San Diego Bay.

Based in a concentrated area of world leading ocean science research and sustainable ocean activities, the Port recognizes significant growth opportunities and the need for a catalyst to explore new approaches to food security and environmental stewardship. Along with the growing demand for sustainable domestic seafood production, scalable aquaculture and the ecosystem services of shellfish and seaweed (carbon sequestration, water quality improvement, habitat enhancement, natural shoreline structure protection, etc.) present alternative and complementary business opportunities within the Port's sphere of influence. While blue tech, as the driver behind the development of maritime innovation technologies and industries, influences and encourages the Blue Economy model and its emerging markets.

In 2016 the Port launched its Blue Economy Incubator (BEI) to partner with early stage companies in the aquaculture and blue

tech space as a vehicle for providing a place, assets, and support for ideas to be demonstrated and proven. Today, across the state with varying approaches and a common goal, a handful of ports and harbors play major support roles in aquaculture and the Blue Economy as they relate to social, economic and environmental initiatives for coastal communities while still being true to their legacy functions. The Port's BEI program offers pilot project facilitation, permit-ready infrastructure, land and water entitlements, market access, and strategic funding. According to their most recent data, the Port has selected nine projects to date including shellfish nursery operations and seaweed aquaculture (the first aquaculture in San Diego Bay), copper remediation technology, a drive-in Boatwash, a smart marina application, a marine debris removal vessel, bio-enhancing shoreline armoring technology, a new approach to soil remediation in marine environments, and a stormwater management technology solution. The Port's unique approach to pilot project facilitation has garnered them multiple Port-based Blue Economy awards and recognition by state and federal agencies, industry and academia for providing pathways for the sustainable development of aquaculture in the region.

For more information about the Port of San Diego's Blue Economy Incubator, go to:

<https://www.portofsandiego.org/waterfront-development/blue-economy>

Questions may be sent to: incubator@portofsandiego.org



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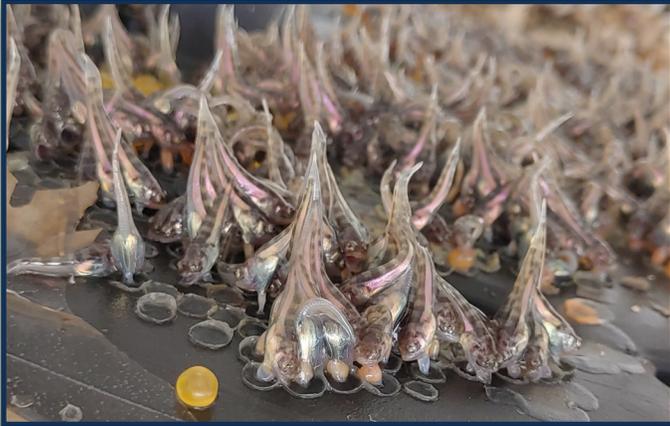
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**LISA CARLETON-LONG
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3RD PLACE: \$200

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Agriculture Mediation Program

by: Robert Rheault, ECSGA October 2021 Newsletter

As every reader of this publication is no doubt aware, lease applications seem to be getting more and more contentious. Many factors are contributing to this trend, including the increasing popularity of more-visible floating gear, a growing population of recreational boaters and what seems to be a general trend of people just getting more cantankerous.

All these contentious interactions could benefit from an independent mediator who is trained in helping folks to cool down and see things from the opposing side. As it turns out, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers free or low-cost mediation services to farmers in 42 states. It is certainly cheaper than hiring a lawyer, and according to one grower I have spoken to, far more satisfying.

Rhode Island Lease Conflict

Jules Opton-Himmel started Walrus and Carpenter Oysters with leases in Rhode Island's Charlestown Pond in 2009. He has a year-round crew of three that swells to 11 in peak season. In 2016 Jules began the process of seeking a couple of new leases in Narragansett Bay where he could deploy floating gear.

His application for a 6-acre site was denied because of potential interactions with diving ducks and hunters, but a

smaller 2-acre site nearby was approved for floating gear. Unfortunately, when waterfront homeowners noticed the gear they began to organize a campaign against the farm.

The lease opponents felt that the state regulatory agency, the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), had failed to provide adequate notice of the lease hearings, and contended that the picturesque views from their homes were being trashed by 2 acres of OysterGro® cages. When Jules tried to apply for a lease modification to add a few strings of kelp, the homeowners brought out the pitchforks and torches. There was some confusion about how many cages had been permitted on the site, and things started to get really ugly as the homeowners began to lawyer up and toss around accusations of poor regulations and criminal capitalism.

When Jules hired a lawyer the CRMC was forced to bring its own lawyers into the fray. Things were spiraling down fast when Jules learned about a group called the Rhode Island Agricultural Mediation Program, which provides free mediation services to farmers. He asked them to intervene, and after both sides agreed to leave their lawyers at home a meeting was set up.

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Everyone went into the meeting expecting the worst. No one shook hands or even made eye contact as each side presented their views, and the mediator tried to ensure that personal attacks were avoided. It took several, two- to three-hour sessions, but slowly the level of acrimony came down. Everyone was forced to listen to what the others had to say, and while the two sides didn't agree on everything, they were able to negotiate a mutually acceptable compromise. Each side recognized that they had lots of misunderstandings about the other, and they stopped hating on each other and started working on solutions. The homeowners who participated eventually were able to bring along others in the community who had also become wrapped up in the fight.

The homeowners came to recognize that much of their beef was actually about the process—they felt that they had not been given adequate notice and that their voices were not being heard. So they asked that representatives from the CRMC attend the next meeting to allow them to vent about the process.

Eventually everyone felt they had been heard, and the two sides negotiated a solution that involved moving the farm a half-mile to the north, where Jules was able to get a larger lease, achieving the full buildout he had initially envisioned. Now the homeowners say hi when they see him and call him up if they have any concerns. Jules has a new-found respect for the folks he had once written off.

The process may not have been fast, but then contentious lease applications never move quickly. State Aquaculture Coordinator Dave Beutel was pleased that the two sides were able to break the impasse because he stopped getting weekly calls from irate homeowners. He noted that the process toned down the level of animosity and forced the two sides to listen to each other. The CRMC is now modifying its protocols for notifying abutters, and the outcome looks like a win-win for all involved.

All this came as a big surprise to me. I had never heard of this free service, and it seems like a marvelous opportunity for growers to explore before involving lawyers and letting things get really ugly and expensive. I wish I had known about mediation when I was struggling to get a lease, before 600 letters of objection landed in my file!

Visit [agriculturemediation.org](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/agricultural-mediation-program-factsheet.pdf) for more info about low- or no-cost USDA-funded mediation services for farmers.



More information on the program and directory of the available services by state can be found here:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/agricultural-mediation-program-factsheet.pdf>

At last month's PCSGA Conference & Tradeshow, we were honored to have 11 Tradeshow vendors join us in our Tradeshow Spotlight. Each Spotlight segment highlights the products and services each Allied member offers. The Spotlights, averaging 7 minutes in length, were recorded and uploaded to our YouTube channel for public viewing.

*PCSGA extends a special **THANK YOU** to George Voyzdayev with PureBiomass for volunteering to edit the Tradeshow videos!*

Please take a moment to check out the videos here: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOAEjssa8bwq6vfscat9RrRD6ef2U2VEn>

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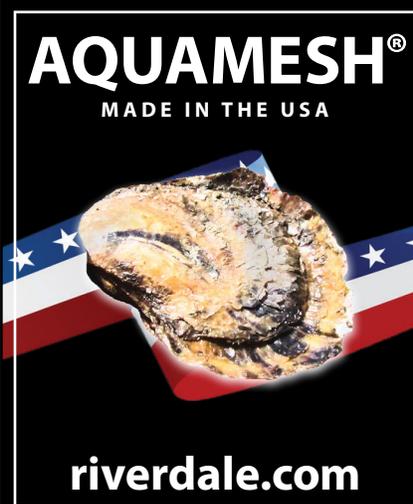


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Maine Aquaculture Association Releases Nation's First Aquaculture Occupational Standards

By: Afton Vigue, Maine Aquaculture Association

Date: October 19, 2021

The Maine Aquaculture Association has released the first [Maine Aquaculture Occupational Standards](#), which specify the current workforce skills and training needs of Maine's aquaculture sector. Altogether, four standards have been released, focusing on occupations related to (1) [Marine Shellfish and Sea Vegetables](#); (2) [Marine Finfish](#); (3) [Land-Based RAS](#); and (4) [Land-Based Shellfish Hatcheries](#). A supplementary document, the [Maine Shellfish Aquaculture Career Pathways Map](#), designed to provide an overview of the most common job types, entry points, and career pathway opportunities in Maine's shellfish aquaculture sector today, has been included in the release as well.

The occupational standards, completed in collaboration with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Educate Maine, and with support from FocusMaine, are intended to: (1) present education and training providers with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the specific technical skills and knowledge that are critical for the most common careers in each sector; (2) standardize workforce training in the state; and (3) establish an industry-led process to align training with workforce needs as the industry, and workforce needs, evolve.

Sebastian Belle, executive director of the Maine Aquaculture Association, noted, "Based on a strong collaboration between the farmers and the educational community, these standards will help ensure that Maine aquaculture businesses have the skills and training needed to compete in a global market."

The 2020 Maine Aquaculture Workforce Development Strategy identified occupational standards to inform and standardize aquaculture training as a pillar of its recommendations. These

standards, which are built on top of the findings included in the workforce development strategy, are based on extensive one-on-one interviews with aquaculture businesses and educational institutions across Maine. "The development of these first-of-their-kind standards shows once again that Maine's sea farmers are leading the nation in the emergence of a competitive and sustainable domestic aquaculture sector," said Belle. The Maine Aquaculture Association (est. 1978), which has over a 25-year track record of developing operating standards and best management practices, is a non-profit trade association that advocates for Maine's aquatic farmers (including shellfish, finfish, and sea vegetable producers) at the state, federal, and international levels. For more information about the association please visit maineaqua.org

For information about training programs for careers in aquaculture, please contact the following institutions; Mid-Coast School of Technology, Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology, Presque Isle Regional Career and Technical Center, Maine Ocean School, Washington County Community College, Southern Maine Community College, Aquaculture Research Institute, Unity College, College of the Atlantic, Maine Maritime Academy, University of Maine, and University of New England. Although none of the currently offered programs fully meet the occupational standards, all of the institutions are working to bring their programs into alignment with the new standards.

Read this article here: <https://www.wiscassetnewspaper.com/article/maine-aquaculture-association-releases-nation-s-first-aquaculture-occupational-standa/153139>



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NAA Creates Aquaculture Classifieds

The National Aquaculture Association (NAA) has started a Facebook group, *Aquaculture Classifieds*, where current aquaculture farmers, professionals, students, start-ups, and those wanting to get into aquaculture can post job openings, sell used equipment, ask questions, and connect with the rest of the community!

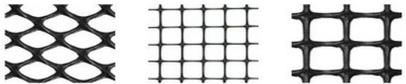
The group can be found at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1395861150853720/>

You can also find it by searching for Aquaculture Classifieds on Facebook.

You do not have to be an NAA member to join; however, they do ask that you answer the questions to join, as well as read and adhere to the group rules.

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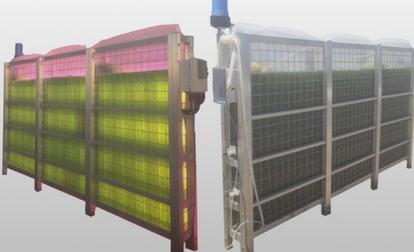
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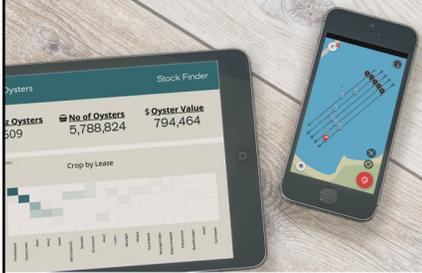
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Tributes Paid to “Foster Father” of WA’s Aquaculture Industry

Tributes have been paid to one of Washington state’s true aquaculture stalwarts, Dan Swecker, who passed away on 1 September, following a brief illness.

Source: The Fish Site
September 16, 2021

Swecker, a military veteran who earned a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and 25 Air Medals for his valour as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, was executive director of the Washington Fish Growers Association (WFGA), an organisation he helped launch to promote fish farming in the state.

From 1993 to 2013, Swecker also served in the Washington State Senate, representing the people of the 20 th District. He was vice-chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee and served on the Natural Resources & Parks and Ways & Means Committees.

After retiring from WFGA in January 2019, he became a senior advisor to the Northwest Aquaculture Alliance (NWA), where he was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award in December 2019 for his tireless advocacy of the aquaculture industry. In addition to testifying on many contentious issues, Swecker authored numerous opinion pieces about the need for the voice of science in the debate about aquaculture.

“Dan Swecker viewed aquaculture as both a job creator and as a way to produce local seafood that people could afford, and tirelessly fought to streamline the permitting process,” noted former WFGA lobbyist, Jim Zimmerman. “In his 26-year tenure at WFGA, Dan advocated for streamlined permitting for both freshwater and marine aquaculture, as well as a more rational approach to governance of an industry that was expanding in other countries but lagging in the United States.

“Dan once joked that fish farming took more courage than it took to earn the Bronze Star and Purple Heart,” recalls industry consultant and former president of Stolt Sea Farm Washington, Dr John Forster. “Against all odds, Dan and his wife, Debby, started their own intensive salmon farming operation in Rochester (WA), which was a very impressive operation, given the level of development in the aquaculture industry at that time,”

“Everyone who worked with and learned from Dan Swecker knew him to be a man of his word—highly ethical and absolutely generous and kind.”

Former Washington Farmed Salmon Commission executive director, Pete Granger, concurs, remembering Dan Swecker as “a true gentleman,” who, in his dual role as state senator and WFGA leader, “was imperturbable in the face of critical issues and unfair criticism of the industry.” According to Granger, Swecker “never got discouraged during these contentious times. He was such a steady influence on all the salmon farmers.”

Bill Dewey, director of public affairs for Taylor Shellfish Farms, described Dan Swecker as “an aquaculture visionary, a true gentleman and effective statesman”. He noted that, while Dan was “a fish farmer at heart, he always had the success of the entire aquaculture industry on his mind”. For example, Dewey pointed out, “When the legislature eliminated funding for the State Aquaculture Coordinator, Dan stepped up to fill the position on a volunteer basis. If there was legislation Dan

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thought might harm or help shellfish growers, I could always count on a call from Dan to give me a heads-up,” he said.

Industry leader Kevin Bright, who currently serves on the NWAA board of directors, and who served for many years on the WFGA Board, recalls Swecker as being “a diplomat who could bridge gaps and reach across the aisle”.

Bright, currently the permit coordinator for Cooke Aquaculture Pacific, said he was fortunate to have worked in the past with both Dan Swecker and Jim Zimmerman on initiatives that included streamlining the permitting process for fish farming to changing cumbersome and outdated regulations.

“We always referred to Dan Swecker as the ‘foster father for our industry’ because of his tireless efforts in the state legislature to help this fledgling industry grow and succeed,” Bright said.

Bright recalls attending meetings in Olympia in the '90s with then-Senator Swecker: “He knew how things worked in Olympia. I wanted to grow fish and not be involved in politics. Dan wanted to grow fish, too, but realized he needed to get into politics to help make aquaculture happen in Washington state.”

Zimmerman remarked that one of Dan Swecker’s most effective lobbying efforts was the orchestration of a salmon barbeque - where, armed with grills and high-quality farmed salmon from WFGA members, “Dan would put on his chef’s apron and cook salmon the way it should be cooked.”

Zimmerman added, “Dan was a true gentleman and statesman who served his country, his community, and the State of Washington with utmost respect.”



Photo credit: The Fish Site

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- 15: Ecosystem Services Photo Contest Submission Due
- 20: PCSGA Board Meeting - via Zoom

November

- 15: Ecosystem Services Photo Contest Submission Due
- 16: PCSGA Board Meeting - via Zoom

December

- 15: Ecosystem Services Photo Contest Submission Due
- 14: PCSGA Board Meeting - via Zoom

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