2007 ODFW Seaside Razor Clam Public Meeting Summary
Seaside Convention and Civic Center
April 23, 2007

Meeting convened at 6:00 pm.

Attendees: 63 people counted (sign-in list see Table 1)

Introductions: Matt Hunter, ODFW meeting convener: Introductions, meeting ground rules, acknowledgment of ODFW officials: Roy Elicker, Curt Melcher, Jon Englund

A PowerPoint presentation outlined the meeting goals/layout, razor clam life history, harvest data, commercial/sport background information. PowerPoint information was handed out to the attendees.

Options for Discussion:
1. Status Quo; no change to commercial or recreational fishery
2. Prohibit Commercial Harvest South of Tillamook Head in Clatsop Count; petition language from Cannon Beach citizen
3. Prohibit Commercial Harvest South of Tillamook Head
4. Other?

Public Comment:

John Eckhardt, commercial digger from S. Tillamook County
Comment: Supports option 1, thinks any change would just be catering to the people of Cannon Beach and that option 3 is “totally absurd”.

John (unknown last name), KAST radio,
Question: Why do people of Cannon Beach want commercial clamming stopped?
Response: Matt Hunter asks for comment by any supporters of the closure, no one responds. Matt mentions that in the petition some individuals are worried about over-harvest.

Allan Gann, commercial harvester, Warrenton (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)
Comments: Sixteen recreational people on the beach a day isn’t much effort to justify closing commercial harvest when there are many state parks in the area that are already designated for sport harvest only.
We need to utilize the resource because the clams are unlikely to live another year with or without harvest, these beaches haven’t had clams in 30 years and the last time they disappeared due to natural causes.
Everyone deserves a fair shot at the clams while they are there. Leave the rule status quo, and manage the resource for utilization.

John Hoff, Seaside
Comments: Razor clams have been a part of the coasts industry for a long time. He feels that prohibiting harvest south of Tillamook Head is just the first step to eliminating commercial digging coast-wide. He wants the resource to be managed for everyone.

Bernie Bjork, Alliance for Sustainable Fisheries on the Lower Columbia River
Comment: Supports status quo, no closures.

Jeff Rippet, commercial harvester
Comments: In the past years he has seen recreation underutilize the resource in Cannon Beach, thinks commercial/ sport competition shouldn’t be an issue. Razor clamming isn’t a big part of the Cannon Beach economy, it isn’t a driving factor behind their tourism industry.

Skip Bailey, commercial harvester (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)
Comment: Crab bait has to come from somewhere whether it is fish or clams. Why not use the best? 6oz of clams can turn into hundreds of pounds of crabs for market.

John Blisset, commercial harvester
Comment: No change to regulations. Supports option 1.

Mike Burger, sport digger, Cannon Beach
Comment: Wants to close the beach and let the clams have a chance.

Billy Davis, commercial harvester
Comment: Feels this issue is more about making Cannon Beach a private beach and has little to do with biology of clams.

Chuck Williamson, commercial harvester
Comment: These clams are an episodic population and we need to utilize the resource.

Mike Burger, sport digger, Cannon Beach
Question: What is the sub-tidal population; does it seed the tidal population?
Response: Matt, hard to study, obviously there is some seeding from sub-tidal, coast wide all clams are one genetic population.

Question: What about Washington? How do they manage there clams?
Response: Matt: Their management plan is different due to tribal allocation and legislative rules governing even-flow fisheries, however we have adopted the same stock assessment techniques.

Question: How much of Washington clams go to bait?
Response: Matt, quite a bit depending on market conditions. Only one harvest area is designated for non-treaty commercial harvest.

John Hoff, Seaside
Comment: Recovery is 20% higher from clams dug on Clatsop Beaches compared to those of Willapa Bay.

Peter Roscoe, sport digger (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)
Question: Why is there no testing south of Tillamook Head?
Response: Deb Cannon: Oregon’s Department of Agriculture (ODA) must comply with risk laws and meet minimal requirements for vibrio, fecal coliform and biotoxin testing. Right now, Clatsop beaches barely meet the requirement and clams still can’t be shipped across state borders. Clatsop
is relatively easy because the Necanicum River is the only non-point source of pollution where the rest of the coast’s beaches have many. The availability of clams for testing is also another major issue. Commercial diggers help out on Clatsop beaches but ODA samplers on the south coast often have a very hard time obtaining enough clams for a test.

**Question:** If testing isn’t being done aren’t the sports diggers at risk?

**Response:** Deb Cannon: We do routinely test sport harvest areas. However, requirements are different because we assume that all sport clams are being cooked and eaten relatively soon whereas commercial clams have to be good enough to be eaten raw. Right now we are unsure what the risks would be in Cannon Beach.

**Keith Chandler,** sport digger (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)

**Question:** If we shut down clamming in Cannon Beach would it have an impact?

**Response:** Matt: Probably not. It seems to be a very short lived population due to the volatility of the beach, also the average size of harvested clams in this area is 112 mm (4 ½ inches) with very few smaller or larger clams, indicating no recruitment. To put it in perspective, more clams are wasted by the recreational fishery on Clatsop beach every year than the total harvest on Cannon Beach.

**Question:** What is the difference in sand?

**Response:** Matt: The diameter is coarser than what we see on Long Beach and Clatsop Beach. As stated before, there is an optimal range that clams prefer.

**Susan Glarum,** Cannon Beach

**Question:** What about size limits. Is it true that commercials return some clams, why not sports?

**Response:** Matt: Yes, commercial harvesters have a minimum size of 3 and ¾ inches. Commercial diggers generally have more experience than most sport diggers; they are limited to harvesting with shovels only and have strict rules pertaining to the return of undersized clams. While commercial return is market driven, sport return is driven by the desire to high grade and take home trophy clams.

**John Hartill,** processor (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)

**Comment:** Supports option 1.

**Eric Huddleston,** commercial harvester

**Comment:** He has been digging in this area since he was 14 years old and continues to do so in the spirit of tradition. He believes that the commercial diggers in this area are true stewards of the resource. He says that if you could prove to him that commercial harvesting was damaging the resource than he and others would support change.

**Eric Williamson,** commercial harvester

**Comment:** He thought there would be a lot more people at the meeting and was disappointed that more citizens of Cannon Beach didn’t show up because he feels that if they were educated on the matter they would have a different opinion of commercial harvest in this area.

**Susan Glarum,** Cannon Beach

**Comment:** She has changed her mind about the proposed rule change. She feels that commercial digging doesn’t have adverse effects on the clam population.

**Unidentified Public**

**Question:** Do commercials dig at night?
Response:  Matt: Yes, depending on the tides.

Matt Hunter, Any final questions or comments? Thanks for coming. Meeting ended at 7:20 p.m.
Meeting convened at 6:00 pm.

**Attendees:** 11 people counted (sign-in list see Table 2)

**Matt Hunter,** ODFW meeting convener: Introductions, ground rules

PowerPoint Presentation (copies for attendees)

**Options for Discussion:**
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**Public Comment:**

**John Eckhardt,** commercial harvester
**Comment:** Given the life cycle of the razor clam and the motives of the Cannon Beach citizens, he proposes to accept option 1, and make use of the resource.

**Al Gann,** commercial harvester (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)
**Comment:** It is rare to have clams on Cannon beach the last time he dug there was in 1977, 78’ and 79’ before that was in 1948, 49’ and 50’. He went there because Clatsop Beach was closed and in the 3 months time of digging there saw only 15-20 other people digging. He believes that the resource was underutilized 30 years ago and sees the same thing happening today. He also wants to assure the people of Newport that they will not be bothered by commercial diggers, there are not enough calms to make digging profitable and if at such time there is sport/commercial competition won’t be an issue.

**Bob Jacobson,** recreational digger (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)
**Comment:** He moved here in 1967 and has been digging clams for 40 years, says commercial harvesting has never been an issue here even during the good years, he supports option 1.

**Skip Bailey,** commercial harvester (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)
**Comment:** Supports option 1 thinks that publishing the issue may cause more of a problem than commercial harvesting.

**Question:** Is there anyone in the audience that is concerned about the clamming?
**Response:** Matt: It seemed as if most people at the previous meeting were there for educational purposes rather than voicing an opinion.

**Deb Cannon,** Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
**Question:** Is there some confusion about use of dye on clams in Cannon Beach?
**Response:** Matt: Possibly, but what spurred the petition in Cannon Beach was commercial harvest.
Skip Bailey, (ODFW Razor Clam Advisor)
Comment: People are friendly in the harvest area until they see you are a commercial harvester. This is especially true when they see you dye the clams for bait.

Matt Hunter, ODFW
Comment: These user conflicts are often a result of harvester limits.

John Eckhardt
Comment: People are more sympathetic of commercial harvest when they are educated.

Reporter
Question: What should I make sure not to leave out in the article?
Response: Eckhardt, education about the issue.

End of Meeting 6:45 p.m.

Table 1. 2007 ODFW Seaside Razor Clam Sign-in Sheet, Seaside Convention and Civic Center, April 23, 2007.

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Table 2. 2007 ODFW Newport Razor Clam Sign-in Sheet, Englund Marine Supply, April 26, 2007.

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