

INTERVIEWS WITH OYSTER GROWERS IN TILLAMOOK BAY
WITH RESPECT TO DAMAGE TO OYSTERS BY BREAK THROUGH.
THE BAYOCEAN SPIT. FEB. 11, 1953. KDW

At about 1200 hours Feb. 11, 1953 inspected the area of the break-through from the south side of the gap. A spit has formed extending in towards the bay a distance of 575 paces (about 1500') from the seaward high water line, so that a lagoon is formed by the spit and the shore west of Pitcher Point (Biggs Point). As far as could be seen from the south side of the break through, there is only one small island about 500 yards from the south side, the remaining distance to the north side of the break-through being an unbroken expanse of water at high tide.

INTERVIEWS:

Mr. Foland (one of the partners in Tillamook Oyster Co.) Oyster land destroyed through action of the break-thru amounts to 3 claims destroyed plus one partially destroyed. This land was valued by Mr. Foland at \$500/acre. This land was reported to produce marketable oysters in 2 years, as opposed to $2\frac{1}{2}$ years further upbay. An estimated 25,000 bushels of oysters were covered by sand when the breakthru occurred. Of this, 800 bushels were seed and the remainder 24,200 bushels were harvestable oysters. (Note: these might be valued at \$2/bushel on the beds). Thus loss by the Tillamook Oyster Co. at present amounts to a total of \$123,400.

In the event that a dike is not constructed Mr. Foland stated that they would be forced out of business. The value of their entire holdings and equipment in Tillamook Bay were valued at \$394,500, and in addition there would be the value of the oysters presently on the beds. The total acreage either owned directly by the company or members of the families amounts to 725 acres and the plant is valued at \$32,000. In the event the dike goes in, the loss will amount the present damage of \$123,400.

At present the Tillamook Oyster Co. has an order in for 400 cases of seed oysters from Japan, however, if a dike is to be built this order will be increased by an additional 300-600 cases.

Most of their seed in the past has come from Japan but at irregular intervals they get some from Willapa Bay where they lease

about a mile ~~of beach(?)~~ by the Naselle River Bridge. In 1950 they obtained about 4000 bushels of seed from Willapa. This seed gave returns of about 1:4, however the original cost was only about \$0.50 per bushel as opposed to about \$3.00/bushel for Japanese seed. Oysters in Tillamook Bay appeared to fatten as usual this year and at present are in good condition.

Mr. Foland stated that they are having quite a bit of trouble with trash collecting on the beds making it difficult to harvest the oysters, and it also causes some mortality. This trash upon inspection seems to be bits of bark, possibly some sawdust, twigs, and so forth. Mr. Foland thinks this debris comes down river and is ~~a direct result of the logging, and booming and sawmill operation in the area.~~

INTERVIEW WITH EARL OLSON

Mr. Olson owns claim # 35, comprising 50 acres which he valued at \$1000/ acre. This is his only claim in Tillamook Bay and was his main source of income. This claim is now covered with sand to a maximum depth of one foot. The oysters and oyster seed which were on the claim prior to the were not salvaged and the loss was estimated by Mr. Olson at 10,000 bushels at a value on the beds of \$2.00 per bushel or \$20,000. Thus Mr. Olson puts his total loss at approximately \$70,000. It was claimed by Mr. Olson that marketable oysters could be grown in 18 months on the claim. In 1950 he planted 800-1000 bushels of seed oysters from Willapa Bay, 1951 50 cases (100 bushels) of Japanese seed, and 1952 150 cases (300 bushels) of Japanese seed. Most of this seed was planted at the rate of 20 cases (40 bushels) per acre.

In the event that the dike is constructed along the proposed line, Mr. Olson thinks he might salvage about one-half his claim, or about 25 acres. If the dike does not go through his loss will be

Earl Olson Interview (con't.)

the \$70,000 stated above plus some undetermined amount for his home opening plant, if he is not able to obtain another claim in Tillamook Bay.

Mr. Olson stated that there had been a natural set of Japanese oysters in Tillamook Bay in the vicinity of Pitcher Point in 1947, and that he collected some of the seed and put on his claim.

Starfish in Tillamook Bay do not present too much of a problem to the oyster growers.

Mud Shrimp are somewhat of a problem as they pump quantities of mud and sand to the surface and it settles on the beds, smothering the oysters.

Mr. Olson stated that returns from seed from Willapa Bay would run 4:1 while returns from Jap seed would run 25-50:1.

RAY THOMAS (Mgr. Handley claims in Tillamook Bay)

Mr. Thomas stated that the oysters on two claims, the Ruth Beals claim and the Alice Foster claim, have been destroyed by being covered with sand and that the oysters on the W.G. Foster claim are partially salvageable. This represents 100 acres destroyed and another 50 acres on the verge of being destroyed. Mr. Thomas valued this land at \$500-\$1000 per acre (\$750 used for calculations) making a land value of \$75,000 for the lost areas. Mr. Thomas estimated that there were 12,000 gallons of oysters (shucked meats) on the above claims, from plantings of 650 cases (1300 bushels) of seed, some of which may be salvaged. This represents the present harvestable crop. The total estimated loss on these claims was estimated at 32,000 gallons, or an additional 20,000 gallons added to the above figure of 12,000 gallons. (At a figure of \$2/gallon on the beds this would give a present loss of \$24,000 dollars and a total loss of \$64,000 for oysters alone).

Thus at present, if none of the oysters are salvaged, the loss on the claims managed by Mr. Thomas is \$99,000, and if none of the claims are saved the loss will amount to \$139,000 for land and oysters.

In the event that a dike is built on the proposed line Mr. Thomas thought that about a claim and a half (75 acres) would be salvaged. If no dike is constructed the total loss is the above figure of \$139,000.

During the past few years approximately 300 cases (600 bushels) of seed were planted on these claims. Mr. Thomas stated that the carrying capacity of the land was around 600 cases (1200 bushels) per year. According to these figures production on these grounds could be doubled. (This might amount to 12,000 gallons, or bushels, of oysters per year instead of about 6,000)

Mr. Thomas stated that ~~at~~ 18 months after planting the oysters had grown to where they produced 40% of size 10-12 and approximately equal quantities of 12-15 and 15-18 grade oysters, i.e. 30% of each of the latter two grades.

Mr. Thomas does not break the clusters of oysters as he considers the mortality too high. Instead he practices "thinning" to reduce the population density.

Judging by the length of some of their markers, Mr. Thomas thinks as much as 10' (ten feet) of sand has washed over the claims.

Mr. Thomas offered to take the biologists out on the oyster beds whenever arrangements could be made.

MR. ROBOSKY

Mr. Robosky stated that he has lost about 250 acres of oyster ground in Tillamook Bay due to the break-thru of the Bayocean spit. He valued this land at from \$50 to \$500 dollars per acre. (I was unable to determine his idea of the total loss, so estimated it

\$275 per acre for the 250 acres or \$68,750.) He further stated ~~that~~ he lost approximately 2,000 bushels of oysters (at \$2/ bushel this equals \$4,000). Thus at present his total loss is about \$72,750 for land and oysters.

If a dike is constructed along the proposed line his land loss will be cut to about 100-150 acres (if 125 acres at \$275/acre = \$34,375) He estimated his potential operation (if unaffected by State Sanitary Authority) at 50,000 - 60,000 bushels/year. Loss of the ground if dike is constructed (125 acres) should then curtail about a quarter of his production since he owns 600 acres in Tillamook Bay. His yearly production would then be about 40,000 bushels instead of 50,000.

He considers that marketable oysters can be raised on the grounds in Tillamook Bay in 18 - 24 months.

Obtained a sample of Kumamoto~~s~~ oysters from him. He said they were 3 year old oysters. These oysters probably were from the vicinity of the south end of claim #27, Biggs Cove Oyster Farms.

See attached ~~chart~~ for claims owned (or claimed to be owned) by Mr. Robosky.

Mr. Robosky is quite bitter about the action of the State Sanitary board in condemning the grounds in Tillamook Bay as not fit to raise oysters. Thinks it was aimed at putting him out of business.