In 2017, The GSMFC funding six competitive projects for about $370,000. The grant opportunity is administered through our office but was provided by the NOAA Office of Aquaculture. The one year projects cover a variety of issues related to oyster aquaculture in the Gulf region.
• Advancing the Gulf of Mexico Shellfish Initiative (GoMexSI)
  • This project will provide a platform to avoid and/or resolve user conflicts related to oyster aquaculture, while also promoting coordination of off-bottom (and on-bottom) oyster aquaculture with other oyster restoration efforts

• Initiation of a Program to Produce Florida Tetraploid Founder Stocks for the Gulf Oyster Industry
  • This project is to initiate a program for producing patent-free Florida tetraploid founder stocks to meet the needs of the fast-growing oyster farming industry in the Gulf region
• **Development and Operation of a Mobile Oyster Spawning System**
  - This project intends to produce additional oyster larvae to meet the current and future needs of the developing off-bottom oyster farming industry in the area.

• **State of Alabama Oyster Aquaculture Permitting and Informational Website Development**
  - This project is to develop and maintain a comprehensive oyster aquaculture permitting and informational website to assist current and potential oyster aquaculture farmers with siting, permitting, coordination, and contact with regulatory agencies to increase efficiencies and to facilitate increased investment in oyster aquaculture in Alabama.
• Increasing Oyster Production in the Gulf of Mexico: Adopting High-Density Larval Culture at the Auburn University Shellfish Lab

  • This project addresses the challenge of current and future demand for oyster larvae and seed in the region by adopting high-density larval culture at the Auburn University Shellfish Laboratory.

At the March 2018 Commission meeting, we will dedicate the general session to having the six award recipients present their work.
The GSMFC is provided another $370,000 in funding for projects related to oyster aquaculture in the Gulf region through the NOAA Office of Aquaculture. In the first round (2017) we funded six projects which varied widely in their focus. The second round is virtually identical in priorities and focus, and is intended to further explore spatial planning and siting, regulatory constraints, and production challenges. The RFP was released about two weeks and ago and closes November 3rd. Projects will run for one year starting March 1, 2018.
The GSMFC, working with the NOAA Office of Aquaculture, will be providing about $400,000 in funding for competitive demonstration projects beginning in January 2018. We will be seeking proposals which include partnerships between the seafood industry and community partners to develop, validate and deploy economically and environmentally sustainable aquatic farming techniques and regional business practices in our region. The grants are single-year grants and are limited to the estuarine or marine waters in our region.
Each of the three regional Commissions will have a similar grant opportunity but each will have its own priorities appropriate for their respective regions.

The draft Gulf RFP will focus on the following:

**Priority 1. Develop commercial techniques that focus on advancing commercial aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico.** Projects may include:

- Hatchery work in support of shellfish, seaweed, or finfish aquaculture operations in state or federal waters.
- Academic and private collaboration to provide hatchery space for commercial rearing and production for aquaculture operations in state or federal waters.
- Development of gear and systems appropriate for marine aquaculture production in offshore waters.

**Priority 2. Create pilot projects which demonstrate the feasibility of permitting an offshore aquaculture operation in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.**
QUESTIONS?