

Gulf of Mexico Oyster Aquaculture Small Grants Program (2019)

The GSMFC was provided another \$480,000 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 and in the second round (2018) we funded seven.

The third round is virtually identical in priorities and focus, and is intended to further explore spatial planning and siting, regulatory constraints, and production challenges but in a consortia approach, leveraging multiple partners over a longer time span. The RFP was released in February with projects anticipated to begin August 1, 2019.

The RFP period ended last week Friday and a total of preproposals were received totaling \$, , in requests. The preproposals we be reviewed over the next three weeks and a few projects will be selected to request full proposals. Following an additional review, a combination of NOAA and Commission staff will make the final decisions for funding.

It is expected that the NOAA office of Aquaculture will continue funding off-bottom oyster projects in the future and the Commission is happy to continue to administer this valuable effort in the region.

Marine Aquaculture Pilot Projects Small Grants Program (2019)

The GSMFC, in conjunction with our sister Commissions and the NOAA Office of Aquaculture, an RFP was released on March 1, 2019 seeking pilot projects. In the Gulf, \$450K is available to fund demonstration projects ranging from offshore pen and cage culture, finfish and bivalve hatcheries in support of offshore, and startup enterprises for a variety of cultured products intent on moving forward with offshore aquaculture. The RFP closes April 15 and the proposals will undergo a review. Final decisions will be made and we anticipate these projects to begin July 1, 2019 and run for one year each.

QUESTIONS?