

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of several oysters. The oysters are piled together, showing their characteristic rough, layered shells in shades of light beige and off-white. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the shells.

OYSTER SOUTH: LESSONS FROM 'THE DIRTY DOZEN'

Bethany A. Walton, William C. Walton, Bryan T. Rackley

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

New Orleans, LA

Oyster South

In the Beginning ...

- Oyster South began as an informal coalition of oyster farmers, Extension agents, restaurateurs
 - Great group, but didn't have a framework to fundraise
- In 2016, we formalized into a 501 (c)(3) non-profit to support the Southern oyster farming community
 - Includes any growers, chefs, shuckers, distributors, gear suppliers, etc. who support that mission

Oyster South's Two Branches

- **Industry**

- Oyster farmers, chefs, shuckers, seafood dealers, marine extension agents, students, writers, photographers, filmmakers, artists, knifemakers, cookware, gear suppliers, etc.
- This has grown to over 200 members.

- **General Public**

- Oyster loving members of the general public.
- Have not developed this yet.

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What Do We Do?

- **Fundraising**
 - LANDLOCKED
 - Assist other efforts
- **Information Exchange**
 - Annual Symposium
 - Newsletter
 - Grant-funded efforts
- **General Promotion and Storytelling**
 - Media coverage



Photo: Bryan Rackley

Oyster South

LANDLOCKED

- In October 2017 + 2018, raised over \$20,000 each year
- Over 300 people attended each year
- 18+ oyster farmers and other chefs each year
- Ticketed event for the general public
- First year, all net proceeds donated to UGA to help shellfish farming move forward
- Second year, all net proceeds used for Need for Seed grant program for oyster hatcheries



Supported Other Events

Peat + Pearls

Hangout Oyster Festival

Shucked + Sauced

Panacea Oyster Festival



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Donations to Oyster South

- Fin and Fino
- Parleaux Beer Lab
- Panhandle Proud



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Information Exchange

- **Annual Symposium**
- **Quarterly Newsletter**
 - If you are a paid member, please make sure you are getting this!
- **Assisting various grant-funded projects**
 - Peer to Pier program
 - Turner Foundation hurdles to aquaculture



Peer to Pier Fellowship

- 17 National Sea Grant awards to growers across the south, with trips around the U.S., Thailand, Canada, and Australia
- Promoted by Oyster South, with additional funds provided to the program



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Brand Promotion

- Okra Magazine
- Garden & Gun
- Magazines
- Events
- TV Shows
- Chefs

- Oyster South routinely responds to various media inquiries
- Multiply social media impact of members



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Financial Structure

- All net proceeds from fundraising goes into grants. None of these funds used for operating expenses.
- Symposium intended to cover costs.
- Operating expenses solely supported by member dues, newsletter advertising, merchandise, and grants.



Need for Seed Grants

- Throughout the region, the growth of the industry has led to an increased demand for oyster hatchery production.
- This situation has been exacerbated by regulatory restrictions on seed movement coupled with impacts suffered by the industry in 2018 due to Hurricanes Florence and Michael.
- To address this issue, Oyster South has raised funds last year to support commercial oyster hatchery production that will provide seed to commercial oyster farms in the region.

Need for Seed Recipients 2019

- Lady's Island Oyster \$5000
- L3 Hatchery \$5000
- Millpoint Aquaculture \$5000
- Pensacola Bay Oyster Co. \$5000
- Triple N Oyster Farm \$2000

Symposia



- First symposium in Auburn, AL in 2017 with over 100 attendees, including over 50 oyster farmers
- Second symposium in Charleston, SC in 2018 with over 175 attendees (of which almost 100 were oyster farmers)
- This year was in Orange Beach, AL + we topped 235 + maxed out the room!

Symposium 2019 Speaker Support

- Ryan Belter
- Ryan Carnegie
- Andre Gallant
- Jennifer Kornegay
- Pete Malinowski
- JT Mckissack
- Diane Murphy
- Erin Byers Murray
- Matt Parker
- Caroline Rosen
- Julia Sullivan
- Becky Wasden
- Joe York

Symposium 2019 Speaker Support

- *Storyteller Panel*: Moderated by writers **Jennifer Kornegay** and **Erin Byers Murray**. GSMFC also funded travel for author **Andre Gallant** and filmmaker **Joe York** to participate.
- *The Importance (or Not) of Quality Panel Discussion*: Moderated by Bill Walton. GSMFC funded travel for grower **Ryan Belter** and wholesaler **J.T. Mckissack**.
- *Lessons From The Storms Panel Discussion and Three Minute Tech Talks*: GSMFC funded grower **Ryan Belter**.

Symposium 2019 Speaker Support

- *Rethinking How We Think About Seed Transfers.* **Ryan Carnegie**, Virginia Institute of Marine Science.
- *Oyster Farming As Restoration.* **Pete Malinowski**, Billion Oyster Project, New York.
- *Research Farm Network.* **Diane Murphy**, Cape Cod Cooperative Extension and Woods Hole Sea Grant.
- *Revenge of the Nerds: Effects of Debt Financing on Your Heavy, Sharp Rock Farm.* **Matt Parker**, University of Maryland.

Symposium 2019 Speaker Support

- *Lessons from Tales of the Cocktail.* **Caroline Rosen**, Tales of the Cocktail Foundation, New Orleans, LA.
- *An Educated Staff: The Importance of Server Training.* **Executive Chef Julia Sullivan**, Henrietta Red, Nashville, TN.
- *Finding Your Tribe.* **Becky Wasden**, Two Girls One Shuck, New Orleans, LA.

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The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of numerous oysters. The shells are light-colored, ranging from off-white to a pale tan, and show the characteristic concentric growth lines. Some shells are slightly open, revealing the inner surface. The oysters are piled together, creating a textured, layered appearance. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the natural texture of the shells.

Oyster South Symposium 2019 Speaker Support

- **Thank you to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission for the financial support!**

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Photo: Southold Bay Oysters

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