

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of numerous oyster shells. The shells are light-colored, ranging from off-white to light beige, with some showing darker, brownish-green spots or stains. They are piled together, creating a textured, layered appearance. The lighting is soft, highlighting the natural ridges and grooves 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**

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# 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

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# 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

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# 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

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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



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# 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.



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# 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.

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# 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

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# 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!

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# 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

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# 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**.

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# 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.

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# 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 oyster shells. The shells are light-colored, ranging from off-white to light beige, and show the characteristic concentric growth lines. They are piled together, creating a textured, layered appearance. The lighting is soft, highlighting the natural curves and imperfections 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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