

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. The third round was 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.

Nine groups submitted and the USM Consortium was selected. They began their work in July. The second year of funding has already been provided by NOAA and will continue through 2021.

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 closed in April with ten submissions. Three projects were selected and one previous project was continued for a second year.

Marine Aquaculture Pilot Projects Small Grants Program (2020)

Due to the delay between getting funding from NOAA and the ability of the Commission's to make the funds available, the Gulf found itself against a very short timeline to get the 2020 funds allocated before the end of our 5-yr grant.

Another RFP was released already in August for 2020 with all pilot projects completed by May of 2021. \$600,000 was made available in the new round and a total of twelve proposals were received. They are currently in review.

QUESTIONS?