The Nature Conservancy’s Engagement and Evolution in the Restoration and Recovery of Oyster Resources in the Gulf of Mexico
First, the old news....

- Globally, 85% of oyster reefs have been lost.
  - Gulf of Mexico represents a real opportunity for restoration.
Restoration to what, and for what purpose?

- Stock enhancement/production vs.
  - Ecosystem Services
    Or
  - Commodity vs.
    - Valued habitat
      Or
  - Hybrid
Mesh Bags

Hesco Delta Unit (type of gabion)

Oyster Mats

ReefBlks
Also restoration…

Courtesy MASGC
Charter of Collaboration
(LA Sea Grant, LDWF, Cameron Port Commission, TNC)

- Develop a comprehensive, integrated plan for oyster resources in Calcasieu Lake;
- Increase the coverage and ecosystem services of oyster as a habitat;
- Increase the production and opportunity for the commercial harvest of oysters;
- Raise awareness of the importance of oyster resources with local communities by providing education and outreach, and stewardship opportunities;
- Work with area business to garner support for projects aiming to restore and promote recovery of oyster resources.

Integrated Plan for Oyster Resources in Calcasieu Lake

- Cultch planting
- Shell retention program
- Reef building
- Brood stock areas
- Off-bottom culture (farming)
- Estuarine spatial planning
- Opportunities for seafood industry to have a broader role
- Partnerships and engagement
Where TNC has been catalyst

**FL** – Stakeholder engagement and planning in Pensacola; Garcon Point

**AL** – Helen Wood Park and other volunteer-driven projects

**MS** – Bay St. Louis (5-Star and GEBF), shell recycling, MSCFU engagement

**LA** – From ARRA to Calcasieu

**TX** - Large subtidal projects like Matagorda and Copano Bay

Where TNC has partnered/supported

- Supported regional shellfish initiative efforts lead by MASGC
- ORG
- Partnering with Pew on including connecting unmarketable product with restoration (similar to MASGC effort)
- Facilitating regional discussions at GOMA (2016) and GSMFC (2019)
Questions?

Complaints?