



## **GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JULY 22, 2019**

### **FY2019 Gulf of Mexico Regional Oyster Aquaculture Research Consortia Grant Awarded**

**Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida** – The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) is pleased to announce the 2019 Gulf of Mexico Oyster Consortia Grant administered by the GSMFC is awarded to a group including the University of Southern Mississippi - Thad Cochran Marine Aquaculture Center, the Auburn University Shellfish Lab - Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the University of Florida - Molluscan Shellfish Aquaculture Laboratory, and the Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi - Agrilife Research Mariculture Center. The project is entitled *Gulf of Mexico Oyster Genetics and Breeding Research Consortium: SALT (Selection of Aquaculture Lines with improved Traits) Project* and will implement a genetic selection programs for local stocks to improve production performance and develop disease or water quality resistant oyster stocks through the selective breeding program. The project is a five-year grant which totals \$840,000 in year one with subsequent year funding levels subject to Congressional appropriations.

The expansion of domestic aquaculture is a priority and NOAA remains committed to supporting cutting-edge science and research to grow sustainable aquaculture in the United States, and the GSMFC is an important partner in that effort. Congress directed NOAA to engage and partner with industry, academic institutions, and States to conduct collaborative research to address the challenges facing this growing industry. NOAA conducts environmental review for the actions proposed in this financial assistance award application. The GSMFC thanks all those who took the time to submit proposals and look forward to working with the Consortia's multiple investigators.

For more information, please contact Steve VanderKooy at the GSMFC office.

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The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) was established by an act of Congress (P.L. 81-66) in 1949 as a compact of the five Gulf States. Its charge is

To promote better utilization of the fisheries, marine, shell and anadromous, of the seaboard of the Gulf of Mexico, by the development of a joint program for the promotion and protection of such fisheries and the prevention of the physical waste of the fisheries from any cause.@

The GSMFC is composed of three members from each of the five Gulf States: the head of the marine resource agency of each state, a member of the state legislature, and a citizen appointed by the governor. The GSMFC is empowered to make recommendations to the governors and legislatures of the five Gulf States on action regarding programs helpful to the management of the fisheries. The states do not relinquish any of their rights or responsibilities in regulating their own fisheries by being members of the GSMFC. Recommendations to the states are based on scientific studies made by experts employed by state and federal resource agencies and advice from law enforcement officials and the commercial and recreational fishing industries. The GSMFC is also authorized to consult with and advise the proper administrative agencies of the member states regarding fishery conservation problems. In addition, the GSMFC advises the U.S. Congress and may testify on legislation and marine policies that affect the Gulf States. One of the most important functions of the GSMFC is to serve as a forum for the discussion of various problems, issues, and programs concerning marine management.