



# A BLUEPRINT FOR GEORGIA OYSTER AQUACULTURE

*2017-2022*



Marine Extension and  
Georgia Sea Grant  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



# Mission

To support **research**, **education**, and **outreach** activities that promote environmental and economic health in coastal Georgia by helping improve public resource policy, encouraging far-sighted economic and fisheries decisions, anticipating vulnerabilities to change and educating citizens to be wise stewards of the coastal environment.



# History of Georgia's Oyster Industry

- Up to the 1930s, Georgia led the country with 13 canneries
- Overharvesting and market changes led to decline
- Natural wild production results in clumped oysters



## Georgia's Clam Industry

**1995**

- \$64,973

**2014**

- \$991,000

This is a 15-fold increase in the value of the crop.

## Virginia's Oyster Industry

**2004**

- \$196,125

**2014**

- \$27.96 million



The goal of the **University of Georgia Oyster Hatchery** is to establish an aquaculture industry for single oysters that can be served on the half shell.



# Partners

- University of Georgia Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR)
- Georgia Department of Agriculture (GA DOA)



# UGA Oyster Hatchery



In 2016, the UGA Oyster Hatchery produced **500,000–750,000 spat**, or baby oysters, with an estimated **value of \$100,000–\$280,000**



At full capacity, the hatchery will produce **15 million oyster spat**, with a **\$3 million harvest value**



# Goals & Action Steps

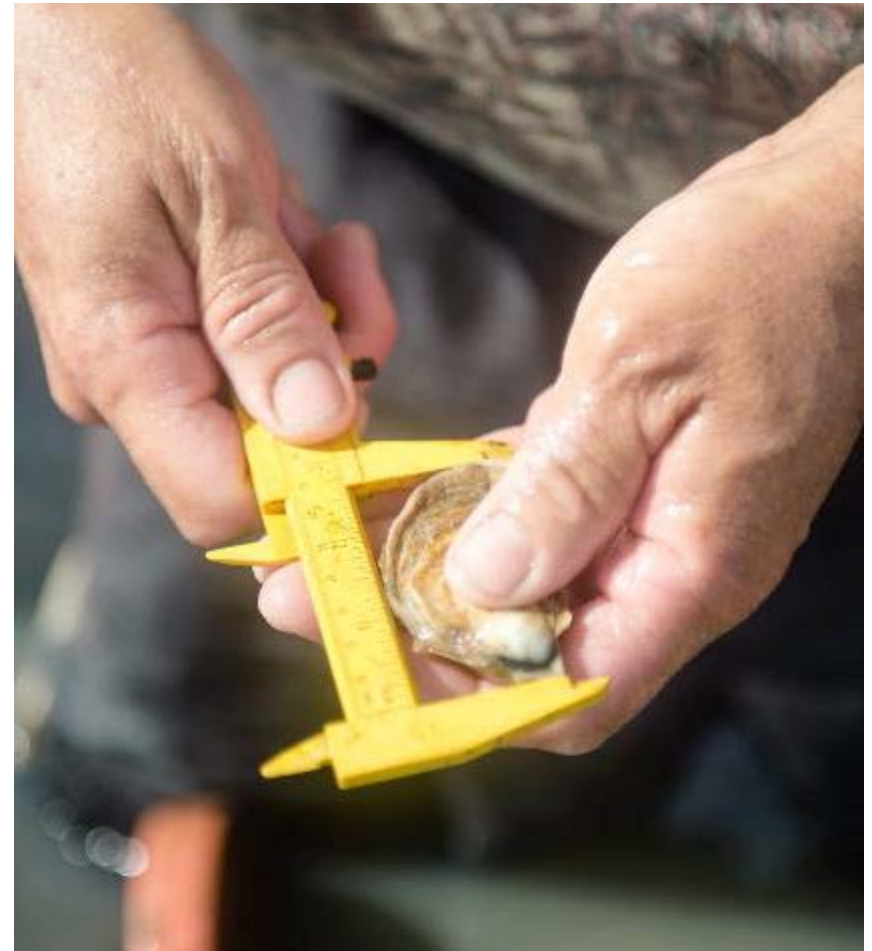
- **GOAL 1: Sustainably manage the UGA Oyster Hatchery to stimulate new industry.**
  - Hatchery manager needed to oversee spawning and setting of oyster larvae.
  - Aquaculture extension agent needed to conduct field studies and provide training to oyster growers.





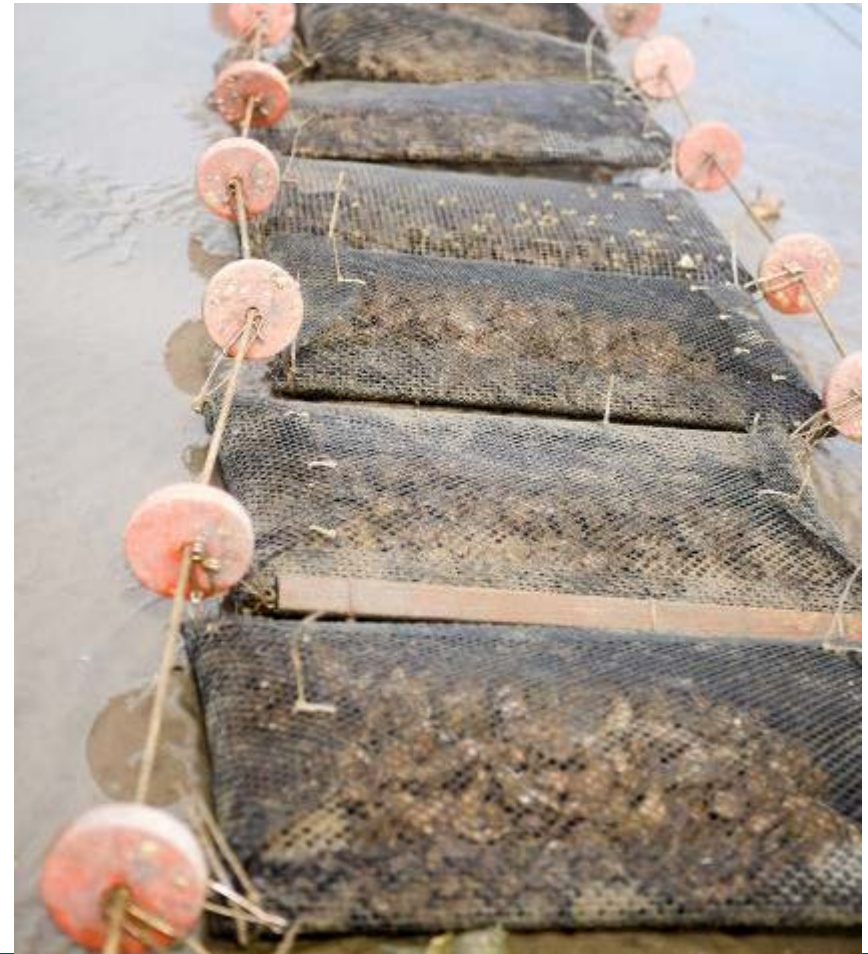
## Goals & Action Steps

- **GOAL 2: Increase commercial leasing of shellfish growing areas and document suitable areas for growing commercial oysters.**
  - GA DNR aims to increase number of permitted shellfish growers from 10 to 50 over next six years.
  - Spatially depict best growing locations, based on habitat type and water quality.



## Goals & Action Steps

- **GOAL 3: Protect water quality in shellfish growing areas.**
  - GA DNR will need to expand monthly water quality-testing program to support classification of growing area waters and new lease areas.



# Goals & Action Steps

- **GOAL 4: Ensure the safety of oyster products.**
  - GA DOA will need to hire more standardized shellfish inspectors to certify and inspect new shellfish processing facilities.
  - GA DNR's Law Enforcement Division will need additional officer support to protect valuable commercial oysters in new permitted lease areas.



## Goals & Action Steps

- GOAL 5: Provide education and training to shellfish growers.
  - UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant will develop oyster aquaculture training program to provide growers with finance and business skills needed to access capital from banks or federal sources.



## Goals & Action Steps

- **GOAL 6: Establish a privately-run commercial hatchery.**
  - Create a budget and prospectus to prove profitability and viability of a private commercial oyster hatchery.
  - Demonstrate state support for additional infrastructure that industry growth will require.



# Goals & Action Steps

- **GOAL 7: Establish methods for growers to access start-up capital for new oyster aquaculture businesses.**
  - Work with UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development to develop enterprise budgets and feasibility analyses for new growers entering the market.
  - Identify low interest loan opportunities available through USDA and other sources.



## Funding Needs

- \$150,000 for UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant
- \$150,000 for Georgia DNR Coastal Resources Division

Other expected needs as the industry grows:

- Funding for the Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division
- Funding for Georgia Department of Agriculture inspectors
- Funding for the UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development
- Funding to establish an oyster aquaculture training and certification program

# Initial Feedback

## Grower Concerns

- Regional seed sourcing
- Triploids
- Summer harvest

## Other Stakeholders

- Backlog of leases requested
- Financial data and risk of starting a hatchery







## Become a Friend

Join our Friends group and support our efforts to increase public awareness and understanding of coastal ecosystems and provide educational experiences that instill curiosity and wonder in adults and children alike.

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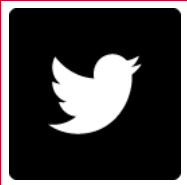


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