Request for Bids and Application Procedures
Medway River Shellfish Leases – Intertidal Wild Harvest

The Medway River properties are located in Bryan County on the northwestern side of St. Catherine's Sound. The properties are composed of extensive intertidal mud flats and wild reefs that are visible at an average low tide. The water bottoms are mainly a mud/sand substrate conducive for wild hard clam (Mercenaria mercenaria) and wild oyster (Crassostrea virginica) harvest and husbandry.

This advertisement includes two (2) individual leases. The "Medway A" lease parcel contains approximately 51 acres, and the "Medway D" lease contains approximately 33 acres of usable intertidal water bottoms. Both are available for public competitive bid. The following steps detail the proper procedures for bidding on these lease areas.

1. **Using the map included, please rank the lease areas by preference in descending order. The name assigned to each lease should be referenced in the order in which you prefer the property. The minimum bid amount for the "Medway A" lease is $765 and the minimum bid amount for the "Medway D" lease is $495, but a higher bid may be submitted for either property. The individual who submits at least the minimum acceptable bid and the best management plan will be offered their first choice of property. The second highest scorer will be offered the remaining property. In the event that two submitted management plans are scored equally, bids will be used as a tiebreaker. The selected bidders will be offered the property for a 10 year term lease renewable upon terms and conditions set forth by the Department.**

2. **Sealed bid packages shall be submitted to the Department, and each bid shall be in the form of a refundable certified check or refundable cashier's check for each lease and made out to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. For the successful bidders, their bid will serve as the annual rent on the awarded property. All sealed bids must be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources by 4:30 p.m. on December 4, 2020.**

Mail or deliver sealed bids to:

Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Coastal Resources Division
One Conservation Way, Suite 300
Brunswick, GA 31520
Attn: Dominic Guadagnoli
Shellfish and Water Quality Program

3. **Sealed bids must be accompanied by a detailed management and business plan for the property. A lease will be awarded to the individuals that submit the best management plans. Representatives from the Department of Natural Resources who are not directly associated with the shellfish program but have knowledge regarding the shellfish fishery will evaluate the proposed management plans. A guideline for writing a management plan has been included. Annually, each prospective leaseholder will be required to plant and replenish the lease using approved cultch materials and techniques as prescribed in the attached Cultch Deployment Policy document. Each prospective leaseholder will be evaluated annually regarding the implementation and status of their proposed management plan timelines.**

4. **Management plans will be reviewed following the bid process and the Department shall announce which bidders it considers as most qualified and advantageous to the State. Funds submitted by the successful bidder will be applied towards the annual lease. Funds for all unsuccessful bidders shall be promptly returned upon completion of the selection process. The effective start date of the new leases will begin after the successful bidders have been notified and a formal lease contract has been signed by each applicant.**

Guidelines for writing a Shellfish Management Plan for Harvest and Cultivation of Wild Intertidal Shellfish Beds

The purpose of a management plan is to document your plans for shellfish management and harvest on the advertised lease area. The plan should include all of the components of your shellfish harvesting operation and the steps that you take to ensure that a quality product is cultivated for harvest. This includes both oysters and clams if you plan to harvest and cultivate both species. State leases are awarded based on a monetary bid and a well-designed management plan, so please be specific when describing your experience and plans. We recognize that plans contain confidential information and will only be shared with the evaluation team. The following are examples of the types of information to include in a management plan.

- **Wild Clam Harvest and Husbandry Techniques**
  - **Details describing experience and plans, photos along with captions may also be included**
- **Wild Oyster Harvest and Husbandry Techniques**
  - **Details describing experience and plans, photos along with captions may also be included**
- **Knowledge of cultch materials and deployment experience.**
  - **Photos along with captions of prior cultching experience may also be included**
- **List of Equipment (boats, coolers, etc.)**
  - **Photos along with captions of equipment may also be included**
- **Management of individuals working on the leasehold**
- **Steps to becoming a shellfish dealer**
  - **Describe plans on becoming a certified shellfish dealer**
  - **If currently certified, please provide details regarding your current HACCP plans, dealer tags, facility records, etc...**
- **Marketing and Shipping Plans**
  - **Describe future marketing and shipping plans**
  - **If currently certified, describe current marketing and shipping experience**
- **Knowledge of state and federal shellfish laws, regulations and required permits and plans for compliance.**
- **Any additional experience in the shellfish industry**
- **Fiscal Responsibility (rent, gear, signage etc.)**
- **Goals for the property**
  - **Details of how the property will be planted, harvested and replenished including annual goals and plans on a multi-year milestone chart.**

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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION
ONE CONSERVATION WAY • BRUNSWICK, GA 31520 • 912.264.7218
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MARK WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER

DOUG HAYMANS
DIRECTOR

CULTCH DEPLOYMENT POLICY

Statutory Authority: O.C.G.A. 27-4-196

This policy is to establish guidelines for cultching and planting activities on leased shellfish water bottoms in Georgia in accordance with O.C.G.A. §27-4-196. The Department must approve a Cultch Deployment Plan before any activities are performed on the lease. All Cultch Deployment Forms must be submitted annually by December 31st for Department review and approval. A Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) must also be submitted to and approved/acknowledged by the Army Corps of Engineers prior to cultch deployments. Signage or hazard markers may be required to mark cultch depending on the cultch material and relief from natural sediment bottoms. The approval by the Department and/or the Army Corps of Engineers may contain specific requirements for signage. Failure to adhere to this policy shall be treated as a breach in the contractual lease agreement and may result in the forfeit of rights and privileges as determined by the Department.

WILD HARVEST CULTCH REQUIREMENTS

All shellfish lease holders on **state-owned water bottoms** that participate in the wild harvest of oysters and clams are contractually obligated to meet minimum cultching requirements on each of their leases.

- For wild oyster harvest the leaseholder must place **on each lease** the equivalent of **at least 10 bushels of cultch per acre** of intertidal bottom **OR** the quantity of **cultch equivalent to at least 33 1/3 percent by volume** of the landings reported **from that lease** from the previous year, **whichever is greater.**
- For wild clam harvest on **state-owned water bottoms**, the leaseholder must annually replant seed clams no smaller than four (4) millimeters in width or transplant larger clams, in the amount of at least a two to one (2:1) ratio of planted clams to harvested clams from the previous year from that lease. If smaller seed clams are planted, additional cultch will be required to establish viable clam habitat and serve as a protective barrier from predators.

All shellfish lease holders on **privately-owned water bottoms** that participate in the wild harvest of oysters are obligated to meet minimum cultching requirements on each of their leases:

- Each leaseholder on privately-owned water bottoms is required to place the quantity of cultch equivalent to at least 33 1/3 percent by volume of the landings reported from that lease from the previous year.

ACHIEVING CULTCH REQUIREMENTS

There are several approved techniques to meet the required planting quotas that are covered in this policy. The Department must be notified **10 working days before** any cultching or planting activities occur on a lease to receive credit towards the cultch requirement and to ensure that staff is available to supervise the deployment. In some cases, cultch or planting site conditions may need to be assessed before the placement of cultch or planting occurs. CRD will notify the leaseholder if a pre-evaluation of the site is necessary with the approval of their Cultch Deployment Plan.

A U.S Bushel is equal to 1.25 cubic feet. One cubic yard of shell is equal to 27.1 U.S. Bushels. If you plan to use a cultch material not in the conversions below, CRD biologist must assess your cultch for volume and will assign a bushel credit value.

- Recycled Oyster Shell 60LBS = 1 BU.
- Recycled Clam Shell 75LBS = 1 BU.
- Recycled Scallop Shell 40LBS = 1 BU.
- 2 in. Fossil Stone (Marl) 90LBS = 1 BU.
- Wood Bundles 3'H x 10'L 1 BUN = 10 BU.
- Crab Trap (non-fishing) 1 Trap = 1 BU.

CULTCHING TECHNIQUES

Shell Cultch

Shell used for cultching may include oyster, clam, whelk, mussel, scallop and any other shell species native to Georgia. Green shell coming from out of state sources must be cured before use and must be placed on land for a minimum of six (6) months before use. Shell may be deployed using a variety of methods including scattering loose shell on to suitable bottom and bagging with approved materials and placing bags on untreated pallets on the bottom. The scarcity of shell may restrict this method and the lease holder is encouraged to develop recycling strategies with customers who purchase shell stock to ensure future access to shell. **Shell Cultch can count up to 100% of the annual cultch requirement.**

Alternative Cultch

Due to limited sources and the high cost of available shell cultch, the Department will grant credit for the use of alternative cultch materials. Examples of materials that have been approved and used include untreated wood (tree limbs, pallets, and wooden stakes), bamboo, vinyl coated wire (non-fishing crab traps), non-galvanized wire, PVC (spat sticks), crushed aggregate (gravel, limestone, etc.) and Bio-concrete (oyster reef balls, oyster restorations tiles, etc.). Requests for approval of other alternative cultch materials not listed in this policy must be submitted in writing and may be approved by the Department. A Cultch Deployment Plan with specific details of how the material will be configured and used must be approved by the department **before** any credit will be granted for the use of alternative cultch material. A CRD biologist must assess your alternative cultch for volume and will assign a bushel credit value. **Alternative cultch can count up to 100% of the annual cultch requirement.**

Rake-Down or Breaking Clusters

Rake-Down of oyster beds is a method of breaking down clusters of small or unmarketable oysters and placing the oysters in the lower intertidal zone. Research has shown that oysters thrive and are most productive along the lower portions of the intertidal slope. This activity generally creates a reduction in the numbers of animals per square meter which results in accelerated growth of marketable oysters and promotes new growth for the oyster bed. **Before** this technique can be used CRD biologist must complete a pre-evaluation of the beds considered and be present during the rake-down process. A cultch credit amount will be given during the pre-evaluation process. **Rake-Down can only be up to 50% of the annual cultch requirement.**

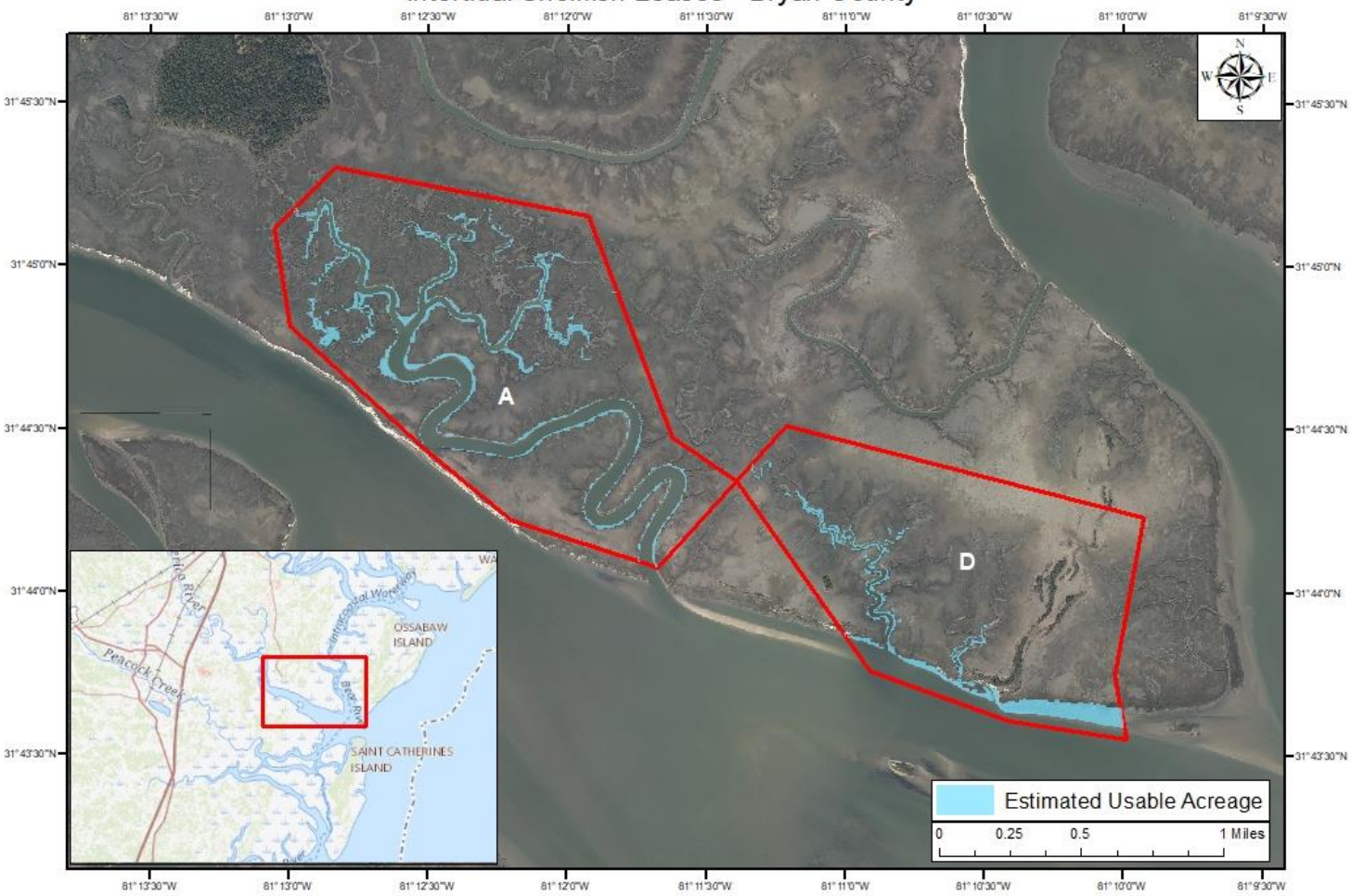
Clam Seed Planting

Clam seed no smaller than 4mm in width should be planted in areas with a protective overburden. To create an area of protective overburden, the bottom may be planted with oyster shell, seed oysters, gravel, limestone aggregate, etc. to a depth of approximately 3 ½" inches. The protective overburden creates a habitat for the seeded clams to provide protection from predators and enhance survival. This technique is best accomplished during January and February, a period of limited predator activity. CRD will need to validate an area of protective overburden **before** clam seed can be planted. Any seed purchased must come from an approved in-state or out of state source and follow the CRD Seed Importation Policy. **Clam seed planting must meet 100% of the annual cultch requirement.**

Request to Reduce Cultch Requirement

A lease holder can apply for a reduction in the annual cultch requirement. A request for cultch reduction must be submitted **in writing** to CRD. CRD will evaluate the request using current sound principles of wildlife research and resource management and determine if the reduction is warranted and continues to meet sustainable yields for the property. Some percentage of the cultch requirement must be met every year, even in events of major oyster mortalities or other natural catastrophic events.

Intertidal Shellfish Leases - Bryan County



Service Layer Credits: USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line data; USFS Road Data; Natural Earth Data; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit; and NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, U.S. Coastal Relief Model. Data refreshed May, 2020.
Disclaimer: This map is produced by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for purpose of providing visual aid and illustrative context. This map is not for determination of any official legal extents, boundaries, or any other legal determinations. Do not use this map for navigational purposes. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented herein, the Coastal Resources Division does not guarantee that this map is error-free."

Lease	Estimated Usable Acreage
A	51
D	33