



**Soy Aquaculture Alliance (SAA)
FY2024 Research Program
Social license in Offshore Aquaculture**

Contract Number: Contract_44211_Aquaculture Social License_FY2024_Final

Amount of Award: \$99,988.00

Project Title: Phase II Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Engagement for Offshore Aquaculture Opportunities for South Florida

Recipient: Gulfstream Aquaculture, LLC

Award Period: 01/01/2024 thru 12/31/2024

Period Covered by this Report: 05/18/2024 through 07/12/24

Summary of Progress and Expenditures to Date:

Reporting Period Work Accomplishments:

The summary of work accomplishments that follow, were derived from the 07/12/24 CFI Report 3 to, and supplemented by, Gulfstream Aquaculture (Dennis Peters). To ensure attendance and engagement at each CAP meeting from local businesses and community leaders, additional outreach was implemented to identify and secure a few new individuals. The team has experienced some attendance challenges and lack of engagement from a couple of original participants. Three new individuals were secured to participate in future CAP meetings. One individual owns and operates a grocery store; another owns and operates a boutique hotel; and the third individual is from the local university with interest and expertise in aquaculture.

The June 20th CAP meeting featured SME, Sebastian Belle, Executive Director, Maine Aquaculture Association (MAA), addressing the topic of balancing aquaculture development with commercial fishing, recreational fishing, and tourism.

Key points that Sebastian Belle shared with the group included:

- U.S. seafood imports exceeded exports by \$20.3 billion in 2023
 - <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=108472>
- Fish farms in other countries do not have to comply with the environmental and labor regulations and reporting requirements that we have in the U.S.
- Food safety is another consideration as less than 2% of imports are inspected upon entry into the U.S.
- Lessons-learned in Maine concerning the aquaculture and fishery industries:
 - Each needs to work together, not in competition against one another
 - MAA assisted the farmers to reach out to commercial fishermen and subsequently formed a “working waterfront association:”
 - The goal is to preserve the working waterfront which is mutually beneficial to each industry
 - Aquaculture development has been inspired through Aquaculture 101 training where 350 people participated

- where 60% have since started their own farm, including a cadre of young people
- Seven new processing facilities in the last year have been started and/or established
- MAA has demonstrated that commercial and recreational fishing can work together, as commercial farms lead to great fishing as
 - Fish farms serve as fish aggregating (or aggregation) device (FAD), and
- MAA learned that engaging with the tourism industry is important, as all of the Maine farms are within view of the coastline
- MAA partnered with tourism to create (among many examples) the Maine Oyster Trail, in partnership with the Office of Tourism
 - It helps promote aquaculture while engaging tourists
 - <https://maineoystertrail.com/>
- MAA also partnered with the Inn Keepers and Restaurant Association
 - <https://www.hospitalitymaine.com/page/AboutUsNew>
- Partnerships have been key in helping MAA maintain and develop the aquaculture industry in Maine

Next Reporting Period Work Objectives:

The next CAP meeting is scheduled for August 15th, 2024, and the featured speaker will be Kimberly L. Morgan, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Extension Economist from the Southwest Florida Research and Extension Center (SWFREC), University of Florida. She will provide her perspective and experience on “Coastal Communities Workforce Economics” which will focus on the Labor/Housing/Salaries issues (i.e., labor force sources/transportation; housing onsite/offsite; salaries competitive/subsidized) associated with new businesses preparing to establish and operate in otherwise, already very developed coastal communities.

Reporting Period Expenditures:

The expenditures across the proposal subcategories are provided in a subsequent Gulfstream Aquaculture invoice to SAA.

No issues are currently anticipated. As such, Gulfstream Aquaculture will continue to coordinate closely with CFI staff to ensure overall project schedule milestones and objectives are on track with the originally proposed activities and expenditures for the successful completion of the project.

Prepared By: 
Signature of Principal Investigator

07/16/2024
Date