

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Kachemak Shellfish Mariculture Association****Federal Tax ID: 92-0148106****Project Title:****Project Type: Equipment and Materials**

Kachemak Shellfish Mariculture Association - Kachemak Shellfish Hatchery

State Funding Requested: \$50,000
Future Funding May Be Requested**House District: Kenai Areawide (28-30)****Brief Project Description:**

Completion of a pilot project designed to test the feasibility of culturing seed oysters or spat on the Homer Spit.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$300,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	(\$50,000)
Project Deficit:	\$250,000

Funding Details:

N/A

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

For the last two years the Kachemak Shellfish Growers Association (KSGA) has assisted the growers of the area, Kachemak Shellfish Mariculture Association (KSMA), a co-op formed to market and distribute mussels and oysters, in efforts to build an experimental nursery in a small section of the existing Kachemak Mariculture Center on the Homer Spit for raising local oyster seed. KSMA has great difficulty getting healthy seed oysters from hatcheries in the Lower 48 because of ocean acidification, among other factors.

Even though KSMA operates on a very frugal budget, in January of 2013 the process of "setting seed" was attempted by two coop employees at the Kachemak Mariculture Center. Staff had to monitor the bubbling algae beakers and tanks 7 days a week for 5 months straight to successfully set 1.3 million oyster seed. Experts in the field gave the experimental nursery only a 10% chance of success. However, thanks to the nutrient rich waters of Kachemak Bay and the dedication and expertise of Co-op staff the seed thrived at the Homer Spit facility. No other facility in Alaska has had this type of success.

KSMA members are hopeful that future sets will be successful, however additional funding is needed for the success of this project. KSMA has much of the equipment, including an expensive salt water well, but a bigger lab is needed. Any viable, successful seed will be sold first to growers in Kachemak Bay. Excess seed can easily be sold to other growers in the state who are anxious for a reliable supplier.

The benefit of a thriving oyster farming industry in Homer is huge. Oyster production in Kachemak Bay is currently in its 21st

year. Oysters have become a sparkling year-round addition to the seafood options available to residents and tourists in Homer. Every cooler of oysters delivered to the dock represents approximately \$150 to the grower. By the time the end user has received those oysters, the economic ripple effect becomes approximately \$725. Oysters clearly benefit the community and economy.

A local nursery can also provide a great learning lab for high school and university students, who currently have to travel to the hatchery in Seward for their studies (the Seward hatchery hatches opilio crab, however the waters of Resurrection Bay are less conducive to oyster seed). A course in mariculture could easily be developed in conjunction with aspects of oyster seed development, culturing and marketing.

Project Timeline:

FY15 and FY16

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Kachemak Shellfish Mariculture Association.

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No