

# Edible Shellfish in Little Lagoon

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The following document will outline the parameters within which edible shellfish, henceforth “SHELLFISH”, may be used inside Little Lagoon. Uses outlined in this document, and agreed upon by the partners, are henceforth referred to as the “PROJECT”. Uses outside of the parameters set forth by this document, or by parties not directly affiliated with the Project shall be considered independent of the Project, and will require additional consideration by regulatory agencies. No shellfish (naturally occurring or directly from the Project) may be consumed from Little Lagoon at any time for any reason. All shellfish must meet the following guidelines as agreed upon by the Project’s partners.

## 1. Shellfish Containment

Shellfish shall be contained in an apparatus (unit) which is agreed (by the Project) to provide suitable protection from predation, maximize growing conditions and be sufficiently secured so as to deter unauthorized access. The unit(s) shall be securely closed while deployed. The units shall be deployed below an existing pier. No units or shell are permitted outside the footprint of an existing pier. The recommended unit for the initial phase of the Project will be similar to the oyster garden style equipped with a cable tie or similar locking mechanism.

## 2. Shellfish Container Labeling

Each unit shall be labeled as a part of the Project. A consistent, appropriate labeling system shall be agreed upon by the partners of the Project.

## 3. Disposition of Shellfish Produced

At the conclusion of a season, shellfish shall be planted on a site specified by Alabama Marine Resources Division and Alabama Department of Public Health. Such sites will be closed for harvest for a sufficient time thereby insuring compliance with depuration regulations.

## 4. Relay of Shellfish

Prior to moving any shellfish, notification of relay must be made to and acknowledged by a) Alabama Marine Resources Division, b) The Alabama Department of Public Health. Notification of relay and transport of shellfish shall be conducted under the direction of the Project. Notification(s) shall include 1) the number of shellfish (determined by an approved estimation method) to be relayed, 2) the name and location of origin of the shellfish to be relayed 3) the type of shellfish to be relayed, 4) the destination of the shellfish to be relayed (supplied by the Project as directed by the Alabama Marine Resources Division), and 5) the expected date(s) of relay in coordination with the Alabama Marine Resources Division.

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## 5. Non Relay Related Shellfish Movement

No shellfish shall be removed from the units without approvals detailed in Section 4 above except:

1. To thin/lighten a growing unit by splitting into one or more additional approved units and returning all units to the water. Additional units must meet standards outlined in Sections 1 and 2 above.
2. Data collection (counting, measuring, etc.) or other educational purposes or demonstrations to be conducted with that site on a specific date. Following these events, shellfish shall be returned to the water, housed in an approved unit as outlined in Sections 1 and 2 above.
3. Cleaning/Predator Removal: Mud, algae, barnacles and other fouling organisms can adversely impact the function of a growing unit. Shellfish, particularly small, should be removed from a unit prior to aggressive cleaning (pressure washing, etc.). Predators (large blue and stone crabs, oyster drills, etc.) should be removed when found. It is permissible to open units to remove these predators. Following cleaning and/or predator removal, shellfish shall be returned to the water housed in an approved unit as outlined in Sections 1 and 2 above.
4. Data collection requiring sacrifice of individuals, including but not limited to disease studies, under the direct supervision of the Project partners and with prior notification of the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama Marine Resources Division.
5. Unauthorized Shellfish Movement includes but is not limited to theft and storm losses. Should an unauthorized movement occur, the site shall notify the Project of the loss, including the number of missing units, upon discovery. The Project shall then notify the Alabama Marine Resources Division of the event.

## 6. Site Certification

Each site participating in the Project shall be issued a location number and certificate by the Project. This certificate will identify the physical address as a participatory location of the Project. Certificates may be requested by and shall be provided to regulatory authorities should such identification be required. Naturally occurring shellfish at locations **without** such identification shall be considered independent of the Project and subject to the requirements of regulatory authorities without consideration of this document.

## 7. Supplies/Expenses

It will be up to the participants of the Project individually or collectively; in conjunction with or independent of the Project partners, to obtain the necessary supplies or funding to finance necessary supplies. Supplies include but are not limited to holding units, spat, cleaning related, etc.

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## **8. Violations of Program Parameters**

Individuals who participate in the Project have agreed to follow the parameters of this document. Violations of these terms may lead to disqualification of individuals or sites from future or continued participation. Reinstatement shall be at the discretion of the partners and with approval of regulatory agencies.

## **9. Expected Project Phases/Expansion**

The Project anticipates an expansion in scope to include **SEED** shellfish, whereby individual shellfish are intended for relay to a licensed commercial location at or prior to reaching a mandated average size (25mm for oysters). Prior to expansion, the Project will seek an approval for amending this document subject to the regulatory guidelines of the Alabama Department of Health and the Alabama Marine Resources Division.