

Louisiana 2019 Flood Disaster Spend Plan

APPLICANT: Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)
DURATION: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2027
TITLE: Louisiana 2019 Flood Disaster Grant Application and Spend Plan

OBJECTIVE: Allocate and distribute disaster assistance funds to restore fisheries and related communities or prevent similar failures in the future and assist fishing communities affected by such failure

Introduction:

Based on days at or above flood stage at Baton Rouge, LA, the 2018-19 Mississippi River flood is the longest lasting flood on record since 1900 (when records became available), surpassing the flood of 1927 in duration. The extreme duration of high Mississippi River levels since December 2018 has necessitated unprecedented efforts by the U.S. Corps of Engineers to mitigate the threat of levee failures in Louisiana. Such efforts included the opening of the Bonnet Carré Spillway twice in 2019; first in late February and again in early May. The Bonnet Carré Spillway opened for an unprecedented total of 123 days in 2019. The extreme influx of freshwater greatly reduced salinity levels in the coastal waters of Louisiana and disrupted the delicate balance of estuarine productivity. Significant, prolonged flood events also occurred in local river systems from Alabama through Louisiana, impacting regions at least as far west as the Sabine River Basin in Louisiana. As a result, the 2019 flood event can be considered a statewide disaster with the most severe impacts occurring in the eastern half of Louisiana.

Harvester Impacts - Commercial and Charter

Significant negative impacts were identified in many major fisheries, including crustacean, molluscan and finfish fisheries. While primary impacts were identified in inshore fisheries, the offshore charter fishery was also impacted. Unless otherwise stated, all fisheries below are commercial fisheries, and losses are based on analyses of trip ticket landings.

Table 1. Identifiable dockside losses from various fisheries in Louisiana as a result of the 2019 flood event as reported in LDWF's fisheries disaster request in November of 2019.

Fishery	Loss
Blue Crab	\$3,528,170
Brown Shrimp	\$28,190,488
White Shrimp	\$33,066,118
Oysters	\$17,332,018
Black Drum	\$512,455
Charter (offshore fleet, based on LA Creel effort)	\$2,033,412
Menhaden	\$16,723,467
Total	\$101,386,128

Qualified losses were limited to current losses in revenue for the purposes of a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) fisheries disaster declaration (Table 1). At the time of this request, LDWF recognized that some fisheries would have resource losses and future dockside losses that did not qualify as actual losses at the time of application. LDWF considered these additional losses while developing this plan.

There were also localized impacts to some fisheries that did not rise to a state-level basis, or were mitigated (on a fishery-level basis, though not on a harvester-level basis) by increases in another part of the state. For example, summarized estimates of losses do not capture the reduced charter activity in western Louisiana as there was also an increase in central and eastern Louisiana.

It should also be noted that these are dockside (revenue) losses, and do not incorporate in any way additional costs associated with longer travel times, increased fuel costs, etc. that would be included in increased costs to those harvesters or charter boat operators.

Processor Impacts:

In late October and early November, 2019, LDWF conducted a survey of seafood processors to assess the economic effects of the 2019 flood event on the seafood processing sector. The questionnaire, modeled after one created for a similar effort by the Alabama Department of Marine Resources, contained eight questions soliciting information about the type of seafood processed, the sources of seafood, employment reductions, lost sales, and insured losses.

The survey sample consisted of 45 firms known to have processed shrimp, blue crab, oysters, and saltwater fish (other than menhaden) in Louisiana. The survey was conducted by telephone in October and November 2019 using telephone numbers from NOAA Fisheries surveys and LDWF data banks.

Depending upon the assumptions used, total lost sales estimates from survey results could range from \$41.1 million to \$81.1 million. A loss estimate of \$75.5 million might be most appropriate, based upon the low range of the estimates from the LDWF survey (\$18.7 million) and extrapolations to the non-respondents with available NOAA Fisheries survey sales estimates (\$48.2 million) and the remaining non-respondents (\$8.6 million).

Loss Calculation Methods:

Fishery losses are based on the changes in revenue (not landings) calculated in the 12-month period for which trip ticket data are available at the time of LDWF's disaster declaration request, compared to a baseline of recent historic revenue in a similar period (i.e. September through the following August). Data were excluded for some fisheries in recent years due to impacts from prior flood or other environmental impacts (e.g. harsh winter in 2013-14 impacted spotted seatrout, a major target of the charter fleet in 2014).

Approach:

LDWF will implement numerous objectives that are intended to meet the unique needs of a diverse range of impacted fisheries. These objectives will address a range of negative impacts associated with flood disasters and target fisheries and sectors that are most heavily impacted by flooding. LDWF recognizes that NOAA encourages the use of funds to strengthen the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of impacted fisheries to avoid similar failures in the future. LDWF considered these factors when determining which objectives to include in this application.

Objectives were prioritized using a deliberative process that analyzed the following factors in no particular order:

- Economic losses within fisheries
- NOAA priorities
- LDWF priorities
- Stakeholder priorities
- Fishery resource / management needs
- Chance of success / level of benefit
- Financial feasibility / level of funding required for success

Table 2 includes a list of objectives selected for funding.

Table 2. Objectives Included in the Louisiana 2019 Flood Spend Plan

Equipment Modernization Grant
Public Seed Ground Cultch Plants
Alternative Oyster Culture Enhancement Grants
Research and Development of Low-salinity Tolerant Oysters
Commercial and Charter Vessel Access Grants
Habitat and Hydrologic Improvement Grants
Marine Aquaculture Grants

Detailed information on each objective, eligibility criteria, and timelines by objective can be found below. LDWF is aware that the final two objectives need additional details regarding the review process and selection criteria. LDWF would like to proceed immediately with the first five objectives and plan to submit additional details on the final two objectives at a later date.

Stakeholder Input:

Many stakeholders informally reached out to LDWF to provide their input. Early drafts of the plan were presented at various objective force meetings. To the extent possible, this input was incorporated into a draft for public comment. A formal request for stakeholder input was initially conducted for a 45-day period following a formal announcement and release of the draft spend plan. Public comment was extended beyond the original 45-day period until August 15, 2021. Public comment could be submitted via email or a form on the Department’s website. In addition to written public comment, public meetings were held at the request of stakeholders and included the following:

June 30, 2021 8:00pm – St. Bernard Parish Government – St. Bernard Parish Council room

July 20, 2021 5:00pm – Louisiana Shrimp Association – Belle Chasse Auditorium

July 27, 2021 1:00pm – Louisiana Shrimp Association – St. Mary Parish Council room

August 10, 2021 – 11:00am – Coastal Communities Consulting (CCC) – CCC office, Harvey

Comments received during the public comment period were considered and incorporated into the final version of the plan where appropriate.

Budget:

NOAA allocated a total of \$58,284,841 to Louisiana. Approximately, \$2,084,841 (3.5%) will be allocated to cover administrative costs incurred by LDWF associated with the plan. LDWF costs include pre-award spend plan development, program development, industry outreach and assistance, application processing, monitoring, general administrative costs. LDWF will allocate the remaining funds (\$56,200,000) to numerous objectives (Table 3).

Table 3. Funding Allocation by Objective

Objective	Allocation
Equipment Modernization Grant	\$23,950,000
Public Seed Ground Cultch Plants	\$4,000,000
Alternative Oyster Culture Enhancement Grants	\$3,000,000
Research and Development of Low-salinity Tolerant Oysters	\$5,000,000
Commercial and Charter Vessel Access Grants	\$4,000,000
Habitat and Hydrologic Improvement Grants	\$13,250,000
Marine Aquaculture Grants	\$3,000,000
Total	\$56,200,000

Objective 1: Equipment Modernization Grant

Overview:

The Equipment Modernization Grant is designed to revitalize the commercial fishing industry within the State of Louisiana by providing updated and modern equipment to commercial fishermen, vessel owners, seafood docks, processors and charter captains. The objective of this grant program is to increase the profitability, sustainability, and adaptability of Louisiana’s commercial fishing industry. Equipment meeting this objective could be a valuable resource in long-term recovery and resiliency of Louisiana’s fishing industry.

Participants in this grant program may be reimbursed up to \$30,000 for eligible expenses. Eligible expenses are any expense related to the commercial fishing industry such as equipment and repairs that meet one of the above listed equipment goals. Eligible expenses also include activities directed at helping the commercial fishing industry adapt to the changing coast in Louisiana. Such expenses include equipment upgrades that allow for increased travel times and distances, expenses associated with new fishing methods or entering an entirely new fishery, as well as elevation of equipment and facilities. These grants would ensure that funds are reinvested into the industry for specific purposes.

Schedule:

This schedule is tentative.

Month 1 – Program and application development begins.

Month 3 – Program outreach begins.

Month 5 – The grant application submission portal opens and remains open through the duration of the program or until the number of applications received is expected to exhaust the available funding.

Budget:

\$23,950,000 – 100% allocated to equipment reimbursement payments. The total amount of funds allocated to this objective will be available to all eligible fisheries and sectors.

Eligibility:*Applicant Eligibility:*

The program is open to all Louisiana resident docks, processing facilities, commercial fishing vessel owners, commercial fishermen, and charter captains 18 years of age or older that meet the below criteria and were engaged in a fishery impacted by the freshwater flooding event. If the applicant is a limited liability company, corporation, or partnership, the business must register and remain in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State.

- Applicants must possess a current resident LDWF commercial fisherman’s license, vessel license, charter captain’s license, or wholesale retail dealer license.
 - Only one application per license / vessel / facility is allowed.
 - Only one application per license account number / tax id number is allowed.
- Commercial fishermen and charter captains must have a certified endorsement on their license or be able to prove that more than 50% of their income comes from saltwater commercial fishing or charter activity.
 - The certified endorsement or 50% income requirement must be from at least one of the years 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021.
- Docks, processing facilities, or any other type of facility must be located in Louisiana to be eligible for this grant.
- Applicants must be an active saltwater fishery participant in the current year or the most recent season (if in a seasonal fishery).
- Applicants must have reported saltwater seafood sales on LDWF trip tickets in an impacted fishery in 2018 or 2019 and 2020 or 2021. If the applicant is not legally required to submit trip tickets, the applicant must show proof of business activity in required years using such records as bank statements or ledgers, quarterly tax payments, sales records, payroll records, tax records, and accounting records.
- Applicants who entered the fishery for the first time after 2019 are not eligible. Applicants who left the fishery after 2019 and did not return are not eligible.

Equipment Eligibility:

Equipment, repairs, modifications, or upgrades meeting any one of the below criteria will be considered eligible.

- Increases harvesting or processing efficiency
- Increases fuel efficiency
- Increases product quality and marketability
- Increases access to restricted / more regulated higher value markets

- Decreases environmental impacts
- Decreases maintenance and overhead burden
- Adapts to changing coast line and environmental impacts
- Allows for increased travel times and distances
- Expenses associated with new fishing methods or entering an entirely new fishery
- Elevation of equipment and facilities

New expenses and previously incurred expenses that occurred on or after September 1, 2019 will be eligible for reimbursement, provided it meets program requirements. Reimbursement for labor costs associated with professional installation of equipment is limited to 15% of the total cost of equipment not to exceed \$4,500.

All equipment must be new at the time of purchase.

Application:

The application process will be conducted electronically and will open upon program development completion and approval of the spend plan by NOAA. The application process will remain open through the duration of the program or until the number of applications received is expected to exhaust the available funding. The individual named on the license or a registered agent of the named business must complete the application. Business applicants must also be currently registered and in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State. Only one application per license / vessel / facility is allowed. Only one application per license account number / tax id number is allowed.

The application process is divided into two phases. During the initial phase, applicants will be required to provide identifying information, eligibility information, a description of the equipment / work requested, and the funding level of their choice. The following documents are required during the initial application process:

- Copy of photo id.
- For applicants not required to submit LDWF trip tickets, proof of business activity in the qualifying years is necessary. Examples of acceptable documentation include, but are not limited to, municipal permits, occupational licenses, quarterly tax payment records, sales or financial reports, and payroll reports.
- W-9 Form.
- Additional documentation may be requested if necessary (such as affidavit, bank statement, or signed check to verify receipt submitted).

Initial applications will be reviewed for eligibility and allocated funding in the order in which they are received according to the date and time of completion. Eligible applicants will be notified if their application has received funding and will be asked to complete their application by submitting detailed information about the equipment / work requested. The following documents are required during this second phase of the application process:

- Receipts/Quotes:
 - If applicant is seeking reimbursement for existing equipment, applicant must submit receipts dated on or after September 1, 2019.
 - Applicants seeking to purchase new equipment must submit quotes.
 - Receipts and quotes (including handwritten) must be on vendor letterhead, original, itemized, dated and legible.
 - Receipts/Quotes must be highlighted indicating those items for which applicant is requesting reimbursement.
- Manufacturer's equipment specification sheet (if available).

- Check Mailing Authorization Form (if applicable).
 - Can be requested from the department if payments need to be forwarded to a third party (such as a financial institution).
- Additional documentation may be requested if necessary (such as affidavit, bank statement, or signed check to verify receipt submitted).

The division of the application process into two phases ensures that applicants with previously incurred expenses and those seeking to request new equipment / work are given the same opportunity in the first come, first served application process.

Applicants may be required to complete a short survey related to flood impacts as part of the application process.

Validation and Monitoring:

Eligible entities will be required to agree to a validation process allowing LDWF or its contractors to review business and financial records related to claims made in the application. Such records can include bank statements or ledgers, quarterly tax payments, sales records, payroll records, and accounting records. If such records submitted with the application do not clearly document satisfactory eligibility criteria, LDWF may require additional documentation. All applications submitted by entities reporting trip ticket data will be validated against the LDWF trip ticket database for eligibility.

After equipment has been purchased and installed, an on-site inspection may be conducted before applicant receives funding. If applicant fails the first inspection, applicant will be notified by letter and given a deadline to rectify deficiencies, at which point the dock, processing facility, or vessel will be re-inspected. If the applicant fails the re-inspection, applicant will be notified by letter of ineligibility. LDWF will attempt to conduct an on-site inspection on a minimum of 20% of the applicants prior to funds disbursement.

Fund distribution:

Applicants will be reimbursed for their eligible expenses upon submission and approval of a final invoice. Applicants will be notified to submit receipts/invoices for purchased equipment by a designated date. If receipts/invoices are not submitted by this deadline, applicants may be disqualified. Final approval of funds disbursement may be subject to an on-site inspection.

A single individual and / or business entity may not be awarded more than one grant.

As required by Louisiana State law, all applicants will be checked against state records for delinquent tax bills and child support. Identified delinquencies will be deducted from the applicant's payment amount and the funds provided to appropriate government agencies.

Objective 2: Public Seed Ground Cultch Plants

Overview:

Louisiana public oyster areas have historically been used as a source of seed oysters for transplant to private oyster leases to be grown out to market size. Public oyster areas also yield a supply of market-size oysters which may be taken directly to market. LDWF manages public oyster areas to balance the economic opportunity of the fishery with the biological sustainability of the resource. Natural and man-made processes remove exposed shell mass from reefs on an annual basis. Replacing the lost habitat is

vitaly important because oyster larvae require clean, hard substrate on which to settle and grow. Cultch plants are included as an activity within the Louisiana Oyster Strategic Plan and have been used as a tool by LDWF for many years. This program will allow LDWF to continue this practice.

Schedule:

Month 1 – Begin site location process and develop bid specifications

Month 15 – Cultch plant deployment work to begin

Budget:

\$4,000,000 – Public seed ground cultch plants

Site Selection:

The LDWF oyster program has identified three potential locations for the deposition of cultch on Louisiana’s public oyster seed grounds. Sister Lake and Morgan Harbor will serve as the preferred locations receiving \$2 million in cultch material each. Three-mile Bay will serve as a back-up / alternate location. Use of this alternate location will depend upon the future success of near-by brood reefs in Petit Pass and West Karako Bay.

Both Sister Lake and Morgan Harbor are removed from freshwater influence and are unlikely to be impacted by future flood events. Sister Lake (Figure 1) has a proven history of oyster production and is easily accessible. Morgan Harbor (Figure 2) has less of a proven history but has shown a recent increase in CPUE and will have been recently surveyed (8,000 acres) prior to construction. It also is near private leases known to have survived the 2019 flood event. Three-mile Bay (Figure 2) area is in a location that is more susceptible to fresh water impacts, but has shown resiliency and has outperformed other sites in the area.

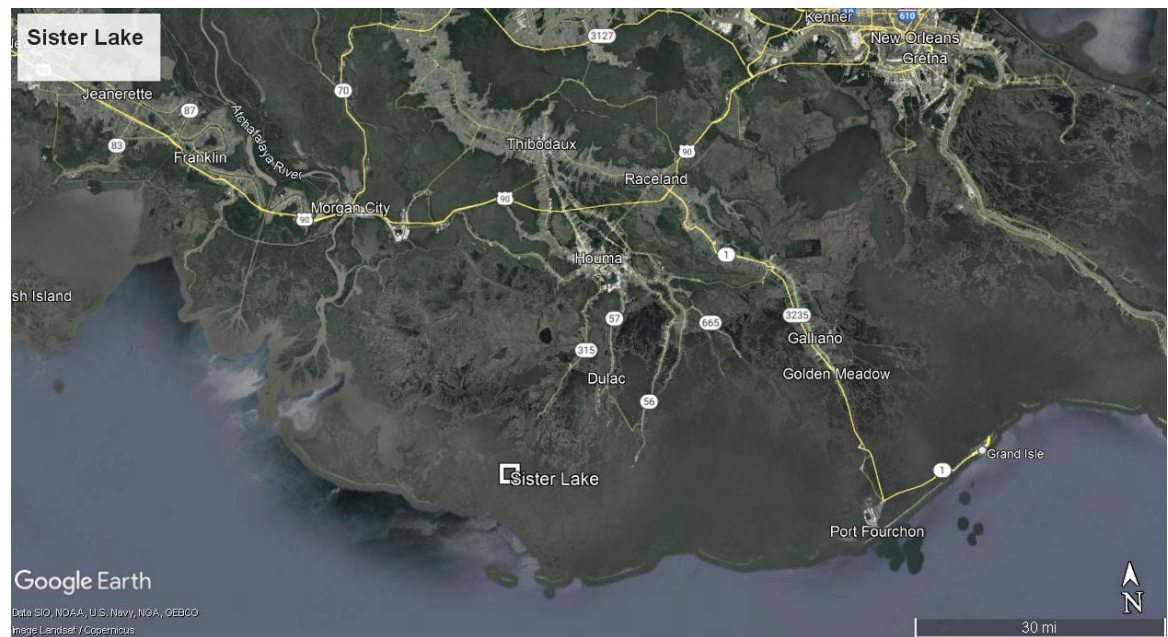


Figure 1. Sister Lake proposed cultch plant location.



Figure 2. Three-mile Bay and Morgan Harbor cultch plant locations.

Monitoring:

LDWF has well established monitoring protocols to ensure contractors are placing the appropriate amount of material in the correct locations. Final surveys are required to make sure the material is in the permitted area and meets the approved depth requirements. Biological monitoring including dredge and square meter samples will be conducted for a minimum of two years post construction.

Cultch plant construction will follow the bidding and permitting processes described in Louisiana law.

Objective 3: Alternative Oyster Culture (AOC) Enhancement Grants

Overview:

This program is part of the Louisiana Oyster Strategic Plan and is designed to expand the adoption of alternative oyster culture (AOC) in Louisiana waters through grants for new and existing hatcheries, nurseries, and grow out operations. A major goal of this program is to provide grants to local entities wishing to establish new AOC parks in Louisiana coastal waters. Included in this work is the development and implementation of educational and outreach opportunities for the industry and general public.

Historically, Louisiana estuaries have had an adequate supply of oyster larvae to replenish reefs that were impacted by natural and anthropogenic events. However, this is no longer the case due to natural and man-made modifications to the estuaries. In order to adjust to changing coastal conditions, new techniques need to be initiated and/or expanded to assist the oyster industry in remaining sustainable into the future. One such technique is the use of AOC for providing marketable oysters. This technique allows for the cultivation of oysters while taking into account the possibility of natural and anthropogenic changes to an estuary. In Louisiana, the technique most often associated as AOC is that of “off-bottom” culture.

Encouraging alternative oyster culture techniques, such as off-bottom cage culture, could help reduce industry reliance on the public oyster areas of Louisiana and provide the oyster industry with options to successfully raise marketable oysters. Off-bottom culture of oysters can be done within floating or suspended containers that provide protection from predation and siltation as well as afford the operator the

ability to move to different growing areas in response to episodic events or longer-term changes in salinity. The State of Louisiana recognizes AOC as an initiative that can help diversify the oyster industry and add a level of sustainability as the industry adjusts to a changing coast.

LDWF will be working with Louisiana Sea Grant (LSG) to implement this program.

This program is supported by an additional \$2,000,000 funding provided by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA).

In an effort to minimize impediments for AOC farmers, LDWF will contract the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to establish monitoring stations within AOC designated areas. Sampling will be conducted as necessary to monitor water quality in order to efficiently open or restrict areas to harvest before, during, and following disaster events. Water quality monitoring will also be expanded in an effort to identify new areas for the expansion of AOC operations.

Schedule:

This program is currently being designed using another funding source. We expect that a fully developed program will be implemented by the time disaster funding is available.

Budget:

\$3,000,000 – Total

Eligibility:

Applicant Eligibility:

Any Louisiana resident or company initiating or currently operating, an oyster hatchery, oyster nursery, or AOC operation.

Any Louisiana local entity or authority initiating or currently operating an AOC park.

Must be at least 18 years old and a Louisiana resident or a corporation organized in Louisiana.

Must not have been convicted or plead guilty to a class 4 or greater oyster-related violation within prior three years.

Equipment Eligibility:

Equipment and supplies must meet standards currently used in the industry. Experimental or novelty equipment, salaries, fund disbursement, outboard motors, vehicles, or land are ineligible.

Application:

The application process will be handled through LSG utilizing a partnership with the Iberia Development Foundation (IDF). It will require the applicant to complete a paper application and participate in an interview with the programs Advisory Group and Selection Committee. Each application will then be run through an objective scoring system developed the Advisory Group and Selection Committee.

The Advisory Group will consist of members of the Louisiana Oyster Task Force (LOTF). The Selection Committee will be composed of two LOTF members, three LSG members, the Executive Director of IDF, and one at large member.

Monitoring:

Monitoring of this project will consist of regular contact with LSG, submission of invoices and reports, and review of grant award documentation. Grantees will be required to enter a contract with LSG and provide

regular reporting to demonstrate oyster product is being grown and cultivated. Grants will be terminated if the grantee does not meeting the requirements of the contract and must return any equipment and supplies purchased with grant funding.

Fund distribution:

The funding process will be through a cost reimbursable process handled through LSG utilizing a partnership with the Iberia Development Foundation (IDF). Maximum award amounts will vary depending on the category of applicant (Park, Seed Nursery, Grow-out Farm, or Hatchery).

Objective 4: Research and Development of Low-salinity Tolerant Oysters

Overview:

Innovative solutions are needed to help the Louisiana oyster industry survive in the future. In recent years, oyster production has declined severely, influencing the entire oyster industry and related businesses. A major factor contributing to the decline of oyster production includes the decrease of salinity in areas that historically produced oysters. If increased fresh water is expected, the development of Eastern Oyster broodstock capable of survival, growth, and reproduction in low-salinity environments is essential. This effort is outlined as a goal in the Louisiana Oyster Strategic Plan.

Research suggests that low salinity survival of the Eastern Oyster is a genetic trait that is heritable and selectable in a breeding program (McCarthy et al. 2020). A research and development program dedicated to the development of a low-salinity strain of the Eastern Oyster is necessary and best accomplished through a research institution. Low salinity oysters will be characterized as an oyster that can withstand low salinities (below 5ppt) when water temperatures rise above 25°C for at least 60 days or more (Johnson and Kelly 2020, McCarty et al. 2020).

Goals of this program include:

- Identify and build a broodstock of oysters persisting in low salinity natural environments
- Use the developed broodstock to understand the genetic and phenotypic underpinnings of physiological tolerance and acclimation
- Selectively breed subsequent generations of oyster from these broodstock
- Deploy and track success of these oysters in estuarine environments through LA
- Engage the GOM oyster industry in understanding the role of these oysters in restoration and other commercial sectors.

LDWF will work with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) to implement this program. This program is supported by an additional \$5,000,000 in funding provided by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and \$4,000,000 in state funding. While the full proposal covers five years at a cost of \$25 million, the initial contract covers three years at a cost of \$14 million. Funding allocated under this spend plan will be used to cover costs associated with year two of this 3-year contract. Louisiana will provide the remaining funding for year three from a source yet to be determined.

Schedule:

This program is currently being designed using another funding source. We expect that a fully developed program will be implemented by the time disaster funding is available.

Budget:

\$5,000,000 – ULL research of low-salinity tolerant oysters

Monitoring:

Monitoring of this project will consist of regular contact with ULL, submission of invoices and reports, and production of deliverables.

Objective 5: Commercial and Charter Vessel Access Grants

Overview:

Flood events often restrict access for commercial fishing and charter vessels. Floodwaters prohibit the use of boat ramps, mooring docks, fuel docks and can make navigation dangerous as it increases the number of underwater obstructions. This grant program provides funding to public and private entities interested in constructing new facilities or making improvements to existing facilities. The additions and/or improvements will allow commercial fishing and charter vessels to operate during flood events.

A broad range of access facilities and associated amenities qualify for funding; however, they must provide benefits to commercial fishing and/or charter vessels during flood events and cannot restrict access to the public. Projects may include acquiring new land (if allowed within federal regulations) for facilities, building new facilities, or acquiring, renovating, or improving existing facilities to create or improve public access or improving the suitability of these waters for commercial or charter fishing during flood events. 'Facilities' include auxiliary structures necessary to ensure safe use of access areas.

Schedule:

The below schedule is tentative and dependent upon plan approval.

Month 1 – Program and application development begins.

Month 6 – The grant application submission portal opens and remains open through the duration of the program or until funds are exhausted.

Budget:

\$4,000,000

Grants cannot exceed \$500,000.

Eligibility:

Applicant Eligibility:

This program is available to any governmental entity, public entity, private organization or private company; however, the proposed project must be located in Louisiana. The applicant must own the property or have a lease/land control agreement with at least 20 years remaining post project completion. If the applicant is a limited liability company (LLC), corporation, or partnership, the business must register and remain in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State. The applicant is responsible for maintaining the project elements for a period of 20 years.

Project Eligibility:

- Projects must create or improve public access for and the resiliency of commercial fishers or charter fishers during flood events
- Project must be located in an area that was impacted by the 2019 Flood event
- Cannot restrict access to the public
- Projects may include acquiring new land (if allowed within federal regulations) for facilities; however, the project must also include the facility (i.e., land cannot be purchased for future development)
- Project may include building new facilities, or acquiring, renovating, or improving existing facilities
- 'Facilities' include auxiliary structures necessary to ensure safe use of access areas

Application:

Applicants must submit a PDF file via e-mail to XX@wlf.la.gov by XX, 2022 and include the following documentation:

- Project Title, Sponsor Name (i.e., applicant) and Contact Information
- Project Location Maps and Drawings
- Proof of Ownership (title or a lease/land control agreement with at least 20 years remaining post project completion)
- Project Statement
 - *NEED*: Explain why the project is necessary and how it will provide protection or resiliency against future flood events. This section should also include information regarding the fishing and boating pressure relative to the site or area.
 - *USE*: Number of vessels currently using your facility on a daily basis. Expected number of vessels using your facility on a daily bases after the proposed improvements are made.
 - *OBJECTIVES*: Identify specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives for the project.
 - *EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS*: Describe the expected results and benefits from accomplishing the objectives.
 - *APPROACH*: Describe the approach to meet the objectives including a timeline of significant milestones.
- Budget Narrative – Provide details regarding the allocation of funds for the project. (Note: planning costs are limited to no more than 10% of the construction budget)
- Resolution – A document approved by the governing entity of an organization or the owner(s) of a business authorizing a designated representative to apply and administer grant funds on behalf of the applicant. The document must include a 20- year agreement for the maintenance and operation of the project.

Project Evaluation and Selection:

The LDWF will form an evaluation committee consisting of five (5) members of the Office of Fisheries. The committee will evaluate applications to determine the most beneficial and cost effective projects. The committee will disqualify applications if they do not meet the eligibility requirements or do not include the project elements listed above. Each project will receive a score based on a set of criteria. The committee will rank projects based on the score and will assign funding starting with the highest ranked project and work down the list until all funding is obligated. If the committee assigns the same score to multiple projects, they will rank those projects by the funding request amount. The lowest funding request amount will be ranked the highest among the projects with matching scores. This tiebreaker is intended to

maximize the number of projects funded under this program. The LDWF will inform the applicants when they finalize project selections. If an applicant withdraws a project after the selection process, the committee will choose the next application in order of rank.

The LDWF will contact the applicant and then draft a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) for each project. Upon execution of the CEA, the sponsor can begin the project. Cost incurred prior to the CEA agreement are not eligible for reimbursement unless specifically authorized by LDWF. The project sponsor is responsible for administering the entire project, which includes securing a United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) '404 permit' or clearance, a Louisiana Coastal Use Permit and any other required permits. The sponsor is required to secure three (3) bids for construction and provide the bids to LDWF for review prior to awarding the contract.

The project sponsor is responsible for maintaining control of the property and maintaining the project for its intended purpose for a period of 20 years. The project shall be recorded on the property title through the Clerk of Court. If the project sponsor sells or transfers the property, the maintenance requirements remain with the property and are the responsibility of the new owner.

Monitoring:

The LDWF will determine if an on-site visit is necessary to evaluate the project location and applicability. The LDWF will make on-site inspections during the construction phase based on staff availability and will make a final inspection post construction.

Fund Distribution:

LDWF will provide financial assistance on a cost reimbursement basis for eligible expenses. Planning/design costs are limited to 10% of the construction budget.

Reimbursement requests must be submitted electronically to XX@wlf.la.gov and include the total reimbursement request along with copies of itemized invoices detailing the expenses. Requests must not be less than \$5,000. The LDWF will hold the final payment until the sponsor provides a Certificate of Substantial Completion, the Clear Lien Certificate and an on-site visit is completed.

Objective 6: Habitat and Hydrologic Improvement Grants

Overview:

Excessive freshwater input has negatively impacted some habitat and fisheries following flood events. Various construction projects (e.g., removal or alteration of water control structures, dredging, repair of lock systems) have been proposed by local governments and members of the fishing industry in an effort to minimize similar impacts in the future. This objective is designed to provide funding to implement construction projects that have been fully evaluated for effectiveness and/or to provide funding for feasibility studies to determine if a proposed project would provide protection from flood events in the future.

Each project must address how the improvement or adjustment will reduce the negative impacts of freshwater on commercial fisheries or related habitats during flood events. Construction projects must be supported by a feasibility study. Feasibility studies must provide recommendations regarding a specific hydrologic improvement or adjustment and/or provide information to determine the conditions under which certain hydrologic adjustments could be beneficial to commercial fisheries coast wide. Projects are limited to coastal areas that were impacted by the 2019 flood event.

Schedule:

TBD

Budget:

\$13,250,000 – amount per grant will be contingent on the number of applications and eligible projects.

Eligibility:Applicant Eligibility:

This program is available to any governmental entity, public entity, private organization or private company; however, the proposed project must be located in Louisiana. If the applicant is a limited liability company (LLC), corporation, or partnership, the business must register and remain in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State.

- The sponsor is required to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with LDWF.
- The sponsor is responsible for directly administering the project.
- Planning costs are limited to 10% of the construction budget.
- The sponsor is required to get 3 bids for the construction project and provide the bids to LDWF for review prior to awarding the contract.
- Maintenance and land control of infrastructure will be required by the landowner for a period of 20 years post project completion.

If a project is selected, the local sponsor is responsible for acquiring United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) '404 permit' or clearance, a Louisiana Coastal Use Permit and any other required permits.

Funding will not be provided for costs incurred prior to the execution date of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement unless specifically authorized by LDWF.

Application:

Projects will be evaluated to determine the most beneficial and cost effective projects. Financial assistance is provided on a cost reimbursement basis.

The application process will occur online and will require the following documentation:

- Project Location Maps and Drawings (construction projects)
- Proof of Ownership (construction projects - title or lease/land control agreement with at least 20 years remaining post project completion)
- Project Statement (all projects)
 - *NEED*: Explain why the project is necessary and how it will provide protection against future flood events. This section should also include information regarding the fishing and boating pressure relative to the site or area.
 - *OBJECTIVES*: Identify specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives to be accomplished during the project period.
 - *EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS*: Describe the expected results and benefits from accomplishing the objectives.
 - *APPROACH*: Describe the approach to be used in meeting the objectives including a timeline of significant milestones.
- Budget Narrative – Provide details regarding the allocation of funds for the project.

- Resolution - An adopted resolution, by the local governmental entity authorizing that a designated representative has the authority to apply and administer grant funds on behalf of the applicant and stating that the local governmental entity is willing to enter into a 20- year agreement for the maintenance and operation of the project.

Monitoring:

Construction Projects: LDWF will conduct a site visit with the local sponsor to evaluate the project location and applicability. On-site inspections will be made during construction based on staff availability and a final inspection will be made post construction.

Feasibility Studies: LDWF will review all feasibility reports. The final report must be reviewed and approved by LDWF.

Fund distribution:

Financial assistance is provided on a cost reimbursement basis.

Construction Projects: LDWF will conduct a final inspection for all construction projects prior to approval and final reimbursement.

Feasibility Studies: The final report must be reviewed and approved by LDWF prior to approval and final reimbursement.

Objective 7: Marine Aquaculture Grants

Overview:

According to the NOAA 2018 Fisheries of the United States report, one billion pounds of wild seafood was landed in Louisiana, placing it second in the national ranking. Wild caught seafood is a major contributor to the Louisiana economy and is expected to remain so in the foreseeable future. However, there is increasing interest in marine aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico and Louisiana must be prepared to manage new methods of seafood production.

This grant program is designed to encourage and establish new forms of aquaculture in Louisiana. Funding will be provided to public or private entities interested in pursuing marine aquaculture on land or in territorial waters. This program will promote the diversification of seafood production. New forms of aquaculture will provide economic opportunities that will strengthen the sustainability and resiliency of the Louisiana seafood industry.

Funding will be provided for pilot projects that attempt to establish or establish new marine aquaculture operations. Aquaculture operations include hatcheries, nurseries, grow out facilities, development of aquaculture parks or zones, or other related operations reviewed and accepted by LDWF. Any aquaculture activity related to oysters will not be eligible under this objective (see Objective 3).

Schedule:

Month 7 – Program and application development begins.

Month 13 – The grant application submission portal opens and remains open through the duration of the program or until funds are exhausted.

Budget:

\$3,000,000

Eligibility:**Applicant Eligibility:**

This program is available to any governmental entity, public entity, private organization or private company; however, the proposed project must be located in Louisiana. If the applicant is a limited liability company (LLC), corporation, or partnership, the business must register and remain in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State.

- The applicant is required to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with LDWF.
- The applicant is responsible for directly administering the project.

If a project is selected, the applicant is responsible for acquiring United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) '404 permit' or clearance, a Louisiana Coastal Use Permit and any other required permits.

Funding will not be provided for costs incurred prior to the execution date of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement unless specifically authorized by LDWF.

Application:

Projects will be evaluated to determine the most beneficial and cost effective projects. Financial assistance is provided on a cost reimbursement basis.

The application process will occur online and will require the following documentation:

- Project Location Maps and Drawings
- Proof of Ownership
- Project Statement
 - *OBJECTIVES*: Identify specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives to be accomplished during the project period.
 - *EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS*: Describe the expected results and benefits from accomplishing the objectives.
 - *APPROACH*: Describe the approach to be used in meeting the objectives including a timeline of significant milestones.
- Budget Narrative – Provide details regarding the allocation of funds for the project.

Monitoring:

Monitoring will be dependent on the type of work being done, however, all projects will be monitored through regular communication with the grantee and progress reports.

Construction Projects: LDWF will conduct a site visit with the applicant to evaluate the project location and applicability. On-site inspections will be made during construction based on staff availability and a final inspection will be made post construction.

Fund distribution:

Financial assistance is provided on a cost reimbursement basis.