

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16-56-MMS
Aug. 5, 2016

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MDMR considering multiple sites for oyster aquaculture

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is considering multiple sites for off-bottom oyster aquaculture in order to reach the goal of producing 1 million sacks a year by 2025.

Executive Director Jamie Miller said one site was in Harrison County in the Bay of St. Louis. However, after listening to residents' concerns he decided to look at other places in the Mississippi Sound.

"We have identified several places where we believe oyster aquaculture will work, and one of those was 'between the bridges' in the Bay of St. Louis," Miller said. "However, after having a public hearing and meeting with some residents, we have decided not to pursue this site."

Off-bottom oyster farming is the culture of oysters in a mesh container, such as a basket, bag or cage. These containers are placed above the sea floor to grow oysters.

Oyster aquaculture can only be done in certain areas, Miller said. Agency officials have to consider such factors as water quality, salinity and accessibility.

Gov. Phil Bryant formed the Governor's Oyster Council on Restoration and Resiliency in February 2015. The three committees met until June of that year and made recommendations for increasing oyster production to revive an industry that was decimated by Hurricane Katrina, the BP Oil Spill and the opening of the Bonnet Carre Spillway.

"Most coastal states have aquaculture programs, including our neighbors in the Gulf - Alabama, Louisiana and Florida," Miller said. "We believe it can be successful in Mississippi also."

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