

Update on Ocean Era and Manna Fish Farms Projects in the Gulf of Mexico

Andrew Richard, Regional Aquaculture Coordinator

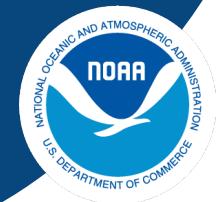
National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)

Southeast Regional Office, St. Petersburg, Florida

June 21, 2022

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting, Fort Myers, Florida

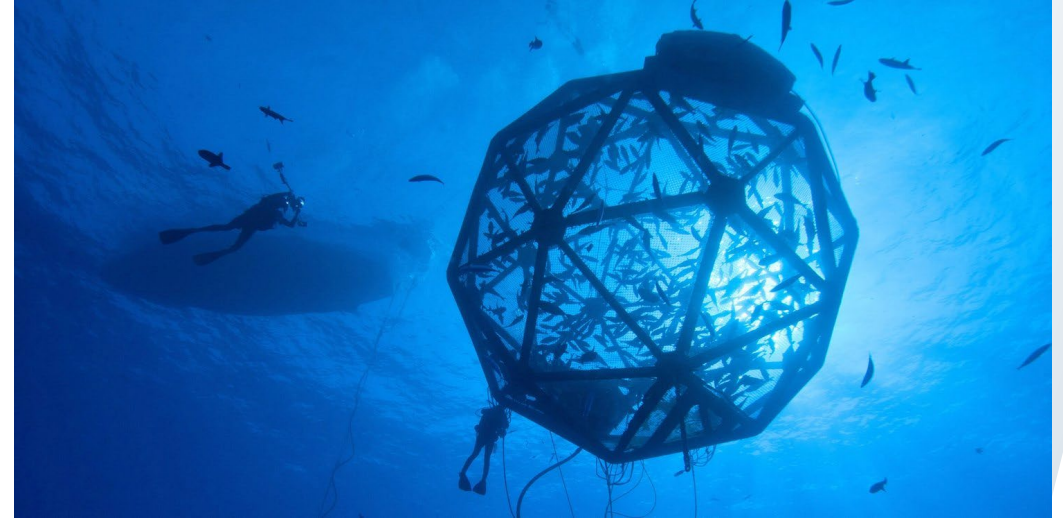
Habitat Protection and Restoration Committee



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Ocean Era/Velella Epsilon

- Project: Single submersible cage, finfish aquaculture pilot project
- Location: ~45 nmi SW of Sarasota, FL
- Species: Almaco jack (F1); 20,000 fish
- Duration: ~12 month trial; one production cycle
- 80,000 lbs of production
- Federal permits
 - U.S. Army Corps - Section 10
 - U.S. EPA - NPDES permit
- Applications submitted in Nov. 2018



NOAA
FISHERIES

Ocean Era/Velella Epsilon

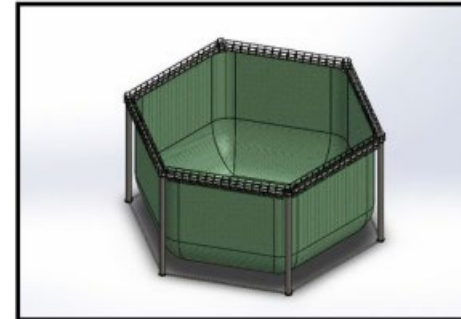
- Corps and EPA applications submitted in Nov. 2018
- September 2020 - EPA issued NPDES permit
- October 2020 - Permit was petitioned for review (x2) with EPA's Environmental Review Board (EAB)
 - Claims: Permit issuance violated CWA, NEPA, ESA and MMPA authorization was needed
- December 9, 2021 - EAB held oral arguments
- May 6, 2022 - EAB issued their decision finding:
 - Denying review in part, remanding permit in part
 - Remand: EPA must provide clarification
- **Next steps:** EPA working to remedy remand, U.S. Army Corps working to issue Section 10 permit



NOAA
FISHERIES

Manna Fish Farms, Inc.

- Project: proposed (12) net pen system, finfish aquaculture operation, commercial scale
- Location: ~23 nmi SE of Pensacola, FL
- Species: Red drum (F1)
- ~3.9M lbs of annual production (at full scale operation)
- Federal permits
 - U.S. Army Corps - Section 10
 - U.S. EPA - NPDES permit



NOAA
FISHERIES

Manna Fish Farms, Inc.

- USACE and EPA applications submitted in April 2022
- EPA deemed application complete in May 2022
- Anticipated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
 - If an EIS, NMFS would be lead federal agency for NEPA
 - Cooperating agencies: EPA and USACE
- NEPA determination will be made in near future
- Public scoping likely to take place in the fall
- Cooperating agencies: EPA and USACE



NOAA
FISHERIES

Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) Demonstration Project

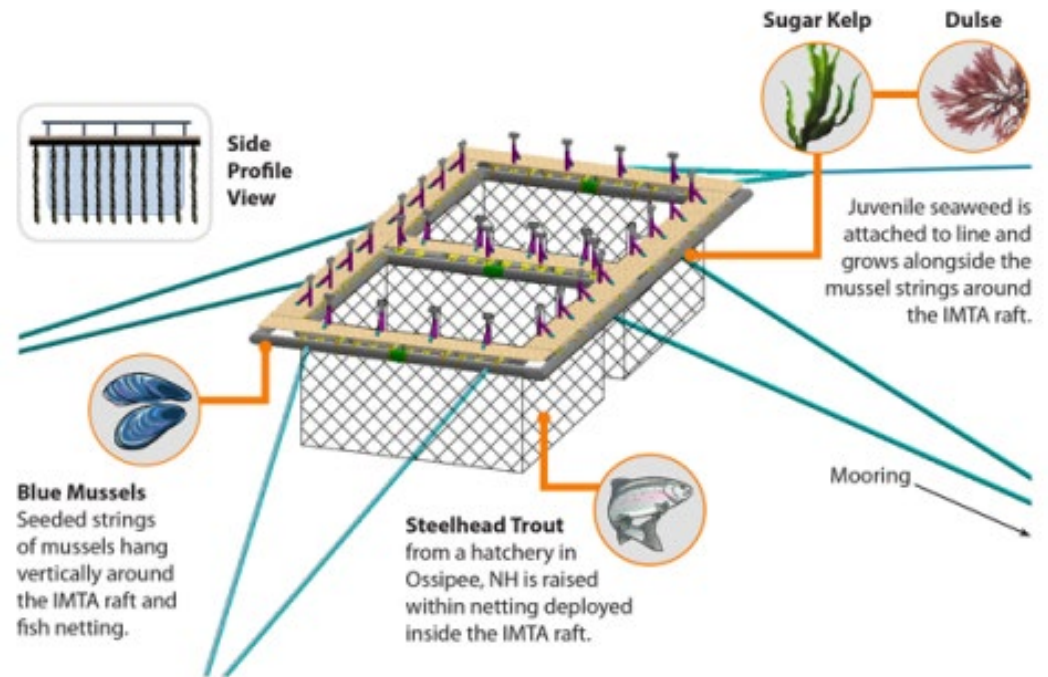
- Gulf State Marine Fisheries Commission IMTA RFP (Fall 2021)
 - Yr. 1 award ~\$1.80m
 - Native species of finfish, bivalve mollusks, and macroalgae
 - Focus on research, training, and education
 - involve students, fishermen, and farmers
 - Inform the industry, regulators and the public on IMTA methods and systems in warm water environments.
 - State waters of Gulf of Mexico
 - Explore economic viability



Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) Demonstration Project

- Dauphin Island Sea Lab - awarded funding
 - Partnership with: University of Southern Mississippi, University of New Hampshire, MS/AL Sea Grant and MS and AL Aquariums
- Multiyear project
- AquaFort IMTA system
- Project planning meetings in early phases
- Working with NCCOS on preliminary siting
 - Site: state waters of MS/AL
- Stakeholder outreach planned this summer

Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) Demonstration Project



NOAA
FISHERIES



Andrew Richard
Regional Aquaculture Coordinator
NOAA Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office

andrew.richard@noaa.gov

(727) 551-5709



NOAA
FISHERIES