Louisiana TIG Draft Restoration Plan/ Environmental Assessment #5:

Living Coastal and Marine Resources – Marine Mammals and Oysters

Hatchery-based Oyster Restoration

PLAN DESCRIPTION

The *Draft Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment #5: Living Coastal and Marine Resources – Marine Mammals and Oysters* describes the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) oil spill restoration planning process, evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives, and identifies four preferred alternatives that would best help compensate the public for injuries to marine mammals and oysters caused by the DWH oil spill in the Louisiana restoration area. The oyster alternatives selected in the Draft RP/EA #5 would help restore living coastal and marine resources by enhancing oyster reef productivity.

Oyster recruitment *Credit: LDWF*

OYSTER RESTORATION TYPE

During and after the DWH oil spill, nearshore and subtidal oyster cover in the Gulf of Mexico was significantly reduced. An estimated 8.3 million adult-equivalent oysters were lost, and approximately 5.7 million oysters per year are still unable to settle because of the loss of oyster shell cover in reef habitats. The loss of oyster reef habitat has contributed to a lack of recruitment and recovery for oysters and has also contributed to shoreline erosion rates and wetland loss.

The *DWH Final Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* identifies the following techniques for oyster restoration:

- Restore or create oyster reefs through placement of cultch in nearshore and subtidal areas.
- Construct living shorelines.
- Enhance oyster reef productivity through spawning stock enhancement projects.
- Develop a network of oyster reef spawning reserves.

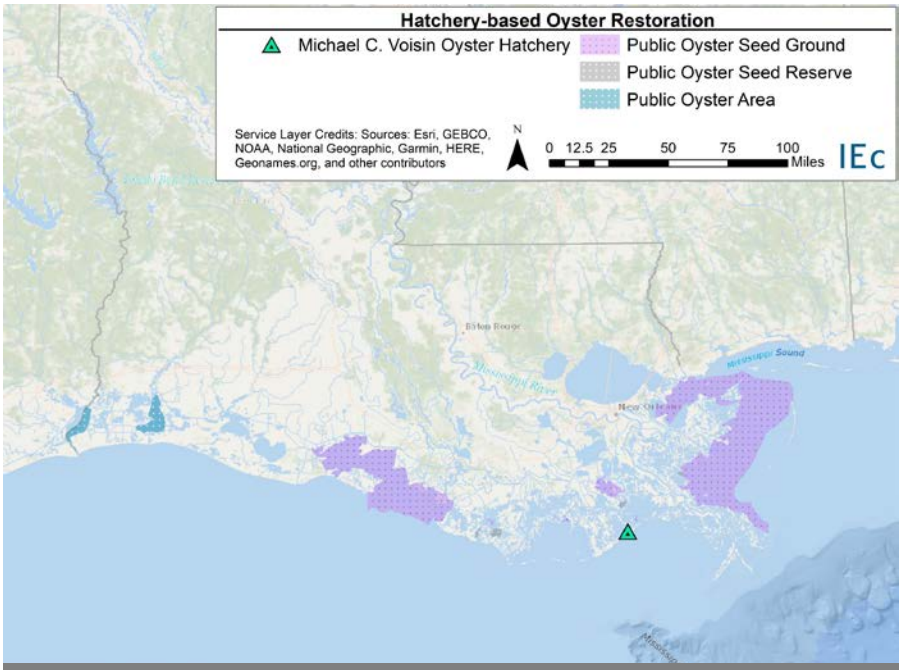
Hatchery-based Oyster Restoration

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group proposes the "Hatchery-based Oyster Restoration" project as a preferred alternative to help restore oysters. The objective of this alternative is to enhance Louisiana oyster reef productivity and spawning stock through hatchery production of oyster larvae, planting hatchery-raised oysters, and relocating oysters to restoration sites.

The alternative would provide funding to support ten years of operations at the Michael C. Voisin hatchery in Grand Isle, Louisiana and would provide oyster larvae and seed resources for water-based oyster culture and restoration. The hatchery would produce at least 500 million diploid oyster larvae per year for use in oyster restoration activities. Planting locations would vary based on oyster population needs and the amount and type of available spat, but placement would be on public oyster seed grounds or reservations with suitable oyster habitat.

Michael C. Voisin Hatchery facility *Credit: NOAA*



Hatchery-based oyster restoration areas

ESTIMATED COSTS

The estimated total project cost for the Hatchery-based Oyster Restoration project is $5.8 million. These funds are for operation, maintenance, implementation, monitoring, and other related project costs.

For additional information, contact:
Carolina Bourque, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
337-735-8726
cbourque@wlf.la.gov