

Alternative Oyster Culture: First Steps



ALTERNATIVE OYSTER CULTURE (AOC) REFERS TO GROWING OYSTERS using on-bottom or off-bottom means—usually in some type of mesh container—other than directly on reefs or other water bottoms. Though often called ‘oyster farming’, Louisiana does not classify AOC under aquaculture regulations.

To begin the permitting process, you must have a traditional State of Louisiana oyster lease on a public water bottom or an agreement with a private coastal landowner for a *private water bottom; a Louisiana commercial fisherman license; and a current Louisiana oyster harvester license.

SITE SELECTION

Before applying for an Alternative Oyster Culture Permit, you must first obtain a Coastal Use Permit from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. For more information, call **800-267-4019** or visit LDNR’s website at <http://www.dnr.louisiana.gov/>.

Due to significant restrictions on new AOC permits, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) highly recommends that interested persons go through the pre-application process with LDWF and LDNR to confirm the area meets AOC regulations.

Contact LDWF, with your name and site number:

- In person at Oyster Lease Section, Suite 422, 2045 Lakeshore Drive, New Orleans, 70122;
- By phone at 504-765-0175; or
- By email at dkinsey@wlf.la.gov

After the Coastal Use Permit process LDWF will provide a standard oyster lease plat showing the lease boundary and the areas within the lease that are available for AOC permitting.



This pre-application is not required, but will avoid unnecessary expense in the application process.

For current details on applying for an Alternative Oyster Culture Permit, visit: <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/alternative-oyster-culture-permits>

*A valid private oyster lease is defined in Louisiana Revised Statutes 56:425.1(E) as in effect and properly recorded as of February 1, 2016.

PERMITTING

From the LDWF Oyster Lease Section, you must apply (in person) for an Alternative Oyster Culture Permit. Along with the permit application, you must provide:

- 1 A plat(s) (hard copy and digital file) showing the oyster lease, proposed AOC Permit area, and proposed AOC activities, facilities, and equipment.**
- 2 All other required local, state and federal permits, including:**
 - State coastal use permit (as mentioned above).
 - Federal obstruction to navigation section 10 and/or section 9 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
 - Clean Water Act section 404 fill permit, also from the Corps.
 - State water quality certification from Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), if necessary.
 - Any other permit or authorization that may be required by a state or federal agency.
- 3 A cost estimate from a licensed contractor to remove and properly dispose of all equipment, facilities, and other items sought to be permitted.**
- 4 Operation plan and hurricane plan.**
- 5 Application fee of \$100.**

Once an AOC Permit is issued, you must pay the first annual permit fee, which is \$2 per acre or fraction of an acre, per year, as well as a surety bond if you are located on a state lease, within 15 days of receiving the permit. If you are located on private property a surety bond is not required.

