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Alaska Mariculture Cluster awarded grants to advance Alaska's mariculture industry

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Award could grow the aquaculture industry to \$1.85 billion in 10 years

As part of the **Build Back Better Regional Challenge** (<https://eda.gov/arpa/build-back-better/>), the Alaska Mariculture Cluster has won nearly \$49 million in grants to support the local Alaska mariculture industry. This will enable shellfish and seaweed aquaculture to expand in the state. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster is one of 21 winners throughout the country that were chosen based on their ability to transform their region's economy.

"The Alaska Mariculture Cluster was chosen due to Alaska's existing mariculture labor force, abundant coastline for growing shellfish and seaweed and unique focus on Indigenous and rural representation," according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). "The region is well-positioned to meet domestic and international aquaculture needs but has lacked the initial capital investment. The grant will secure Alaska's future in mariculture development, furthering ingenuity and best practices in the industry."



The Alaska Mariculture Cluster is one of 21 winners throughout the country that were chosen based on their ability to transform their region's economy. Photo courtesy of NOAA.

The **Alaska Mariculture Cluster** (<https://www.alaskamariculturecluster.org/>) is part of the **Southeast Conference Coalition** (<https://www.seconference.org/>) – the state and federally-designated regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska. The Cluster will also partner with Sealaska, an Alaska Native Corporation representing more than 23,000 Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian stakeholders. The Cluster will distribute 50 percent of the award to underserved communities, with a quarter of the total funds going to Indigenous communities in Alaska.

“Mariculture provides an opportunity during new resource development to address the inequities [faced by many Alaska Native villages] by prioritizing tribal and Alaska Native leadership, ownership and participation in mariculture, as well as providing services such as training, financing, and other business development to support equitable opportunity,” wrote the **Alaska Mariculture Cluster Overarching Narrative** (<https://www.alaskamariculturecluster.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BBBRC-AMC-Overarching-Narrative.pdf>).



(<https://aquabounty.com/>).

Mariculture is currently a \$1.5 million industry in Alaska, but the award to the Southeast Conference could grow the industry to encompass more than \$1.85 billion in a decade. With more than 35,000 miles of coastline, NOAA said that Alaska is ideally situated for “unlimited opportunities” in aquaculture. This award will allow coastal industries the chance to foster mariculture growth throughout the region.

[Read more here \(https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/alaska-mariculture-cluster-wins-regional-challenge-grant-aquaculture\)](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/alaska-mariculture-cluster-wins-regional-challenge-grant-aquaculture).

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Author



RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD ADVOCATE

editor@globalseafood.org (<mailto:editor@globalseafood.org>).

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