

# Alaska Fisheries Dev Foundation has project to build \$1 billion mariculture industry (Fish Radio)

SEAFOOD.COM NEWS [Fish Radio with Laine Welch] April 17, 2014

This is Fish Radio. I'm Laine Welch –Mariculture could double the value of Alaska's seafood industry. I'll tell you more after this

Federal grants are available to help "Made in America" companies compete with imports and save US jobs. Learn more at [www.nwtaac.org](http://www.nwtaac.org).

You can now download ASMI's quick guide to Alaska seafood on any mobile device. Cooking it, catching it, sustaining it – learn more at [www.alaskaseafood.org](http://www.alaskaseafood.org)

A new Alaska Mariculture Initiative will create a road map designed to grow a billion dollar industry within 30 years. That would about double the dockside value of all Alaska seafood landings combined. We hope to help Expedite development of the industry in Alaska.

"We see it as a real opportunity that has been kind of struggling in Alaska."

Julie Decker is director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. AFDF scored a \$210,000 grant from NOAA Fisheries for the Initiative as part of its expansion policy.

"One of the things we are doing is broadening the concept of mariculture. We're not just talking about shellfish farming or aquatic plants but also enhancement and restoration. So it's a three legged stool. When you start looking at the industry from that point of view it's a much broader impact it could have on the state, and you're also talking about different sets of stakeholders to involve."

Decker points out many parallels the mariculture initiative has with Alaska's salmon enhancement program. The state backed a \$100 million revolving loan fund so hatcheries could get built and operate for several years. That gave them time to develop tax and cost recovery programs to help pay back the long term loans.

"The state stepped up and capitalized. Now, we have hatcheries that have completely paid back those loans with interest and are producing statewide hundreds of millions of dollars worth of salmon every year. It helps people see conceptually that Alaska can do this. Alaska has done this and done it really well. And we developed something in rural Alaska in areas where it is very difficult to make businesses work."

Since 1988, only 28 growers are marketing shellfish primarily oysters with a value

of half a million dollars last year. Alaska has two shellfish hatcheries – Alutiiq Pride at Seward and OceansAlaska at Ketchikan.

"Stabilizing them at this infancy stage is really important because they produce the seed that everyone needs, and if there is no seed there is no industry."

The Initiative foresees Alaska grow outs will include geoducks, scallops, urchins, abalone, king crab and Dungeness and various plants. Starting this summer AFDF will begin harnessing support from stakeholders, including CDQ groups in Western Alaska.

I think there are things that can be grown out there – whether it's an enhancement program or private shellfish farming – there are things that can be done.

Learn more about Alaska mariculture this week at ComFish.

[www.comfishalaska.com](http://www.comfishalaska.com) and at our website – [www.alaskafishradio.com](http://www.alaskafishradio.com) Ocean Beauty has contributed over 10 million meals to the U.S. Food Bank network, and is committed to ending hunger in America. [www.oceanbeauty.com](http://www.oceanbeauty.com)

In Kodiak, I'm Laine Welch.

---

Michael Ramsingh

[Seafood.com News](http://Seafood.com News) 1-732-240-5330

Email comments to [michaelramsingh@seafood.com](mailto:michaelramsingh@seafood.com)

Copyright © 2014 Seafoodnews.com