

## Governance, Coordination & Outreach Performance Progress Report

### Performance Progress Report

Grantee:	Southeast Conference
Project Title:	Governance, Coordination & Outreach
Project Number:	07-79-07899
Period covered by the report:	April 2024- September 2024
Reporting period end date:	September 30
Report Prepared by:	Chase Coleman, Project Coordinator

#### Narrative:

The Governance Body (GB), which meets quarterly under this component, met twice during this semi-annual project period. The meetings were held in Anchorage at the Koniag boardroom on April 15<sup>th</sup> and August 14<sup>th</sup>. The quarterly meetings provide a time and place for all members of the Governance Body to receive updates on the ever-growing production of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC). These meetings are about five hours long and cover all eight component projects under the AMC. Sub awardees and contractors from each project provide updates to the GB, with time allotted for discussion and feedback relating to reported activities. The GB meetings are open to the public, often attended by interested community and/or industry members in-person or virtually.

The Alaska Mariculture Alliance (AMA) continued hosting webinars and online roundtables wherein state and federal government agencies give a brief update on their orgs and then participate in Q&A with attendees.

The Mariculture Liaison Program is renewing contracts with sub-grantees. Spruce Root has decided not to continue their contract for the SE region, so we are publishing an RFP on October 15th and hope to have a new awardee in place by the end of the year. Keolani Booth will continue his role as our SEAK liaison until a new contract is put in place. We greatly appreciate Mr. Booth and EcoTrust's efforts to keep the outreach work going during the transition.

AMA staff had several opportunities to conduct outreach. Most notably was the film screening with WWF at 49th State Brewing and our attendance and trade show booth and Seagriculture USA 2024 in Ketchikan, AK.

Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC) –The Mariculture Director was busy with outreach efforts in their region. The mariculture director conducted a two-week outreach event that took place in August via the ferry system westward down the Aleutian Chain. SWAMC mariculture director also helped host, Kelp harvesting training and other local educational workshops.

Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) staff has been researching aspects of derisking entry into the mariculture industry, utilizing the "Global Aquaculture and Investment Guide" as a catalyst to draw from. The goal is to align aspects of the global guide to Alaska's Mariculture Industry and develop a similar guide to help inform those interested in participating or entering the industry. KPEDD has also continued identification of regional assets related to or potentially connected to mariculture, maintaining and cultivating partnerships by working to understand the

needs and priorities of participants or those interested in participating in industry; ensuring that sustainability components are top of mind when considering pursuance of projects or support; continuation of leadership and advocacy for the Kenai Peninsula Mariculture Industry and its further development.

Prince William Sound Economic Development District (PWSEDD) participated in August’s Governance Body meeting in Anchorage, as well as participated in bi-weekly AMA/EDD check-in meetings. PWSEDD has worked closely with regional entities who are interested in collaborating within the mariculture industry.

**Success Stories:**

The Alaska Mariculture Cluster completed a year of quarterly Governance Body meetings in Anchorage with coalition wide participation at each one.

The liaisons are finding their stride. Having a more established presence in the regions as boots-on-the-ground resources, along with building trust and relationship with community members has allowed the liaisons to be more effective, increasing the overall success of the grant’s various programs. Year two of contract negotiations is currently under way.

Outreach conducted by the EDDs and liaisons within their respective regions has resulted in some promising collaborations. The Prince William Sound Economic Development District (PWSEDD) began a business plan for a shared seafood / mariculture processing facility with private industry, nonprofits, and farmers in Cordova. The PWSEDD has worked closely with WildBlue Solutions in efforts to grow kelp year-round; develop a horticulture industry product using kelp; and recruit a start-up company to Prince William Sound that wants to establish a bio-refinery for creating a plastics alternative using seaweed and use the bio-plastics discarded fraction to produce a bio-stimulant fertilizer.

Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC) Mariculture Director hosted a Kodiak Kelp Festival; a three day festival in Kodiak, that included traditional knowledge and farmer information.

Southeast Conference is thrilled to have hired two amazing new staff members to continue the ever increasing workload of the BBBRC, especially as the AMC approaches the half-way point of the grant.

**Activity Summary:**

Activity	Description	Date Completed / Timeline Management
Governance Body	Two GB meetings conducted in Anchorage.	April 15 <sup>th</sup> and August 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
Underserved Community Liaisons	Regional liaisons have been out in their communities sharing information and receiving feedback on the AMC since this fall. They are building relationships and disseminating resources for the people in their regions.	Weekly meetings with liaisons happen every Friday and will continue throughout duration of the grant

Created Outreach materials	Outreach materials have been compiled by AMA and SEC into an external folder accessible to all liaisons for their communication needs	April 2024 – ongoing
Outreach meetings held in each of the 4 regions	Each region held at least one outreach meeting over the past quarter with the EDDs and the liaisons working together to create and host the event. There was a total of 22 meetings with community members statewide and 50 meetings with industry stakeholders.	April 2024- ongoing

**Next Steps:**

Activity	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts	Date to be Completed
Create outreach materials	Outreach materials created for all Tribal Liaisons to utilize in their respective regions.	July 2024-onward
Outreach meetings held in each of the 4 regions	Outreach meetings conducted and made available to community members interested in learning more about the mariculture industry in Alaska.	July 2024–onward
Implement the PR, Outreach plan	The final plan was delivered to AMA on July 15 <sup>th</sup> . The final plan was delivered to AMA on July 15 <sup>th</sup> . AMA Board of Directors is requesting a meeting with RTC to discuss how to best enact and how to coordinate/delegate among various groups already engaged in comms work related to mariculture. Some of the remaining funds from this project will go towards a meeting that convenes these entities for strategic planning re: comms moving forward.	Quarter 4 2024 – onward

**Project-specific Metrics:**

Metric	Target / Milestone in GAP (annual)	Progress Update
Governance Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GB membership established, including 4 regional tribal representatives</li> <li>GB structure documented</li> </ul>	Completed, 4 regional Tribal Representatives secured on GB. GB

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GB meets quarterly</li> <li>• Meeting minutes and materials posted on AMC website</li> <li>• Equity metrics and project updates provided to GB before each meeting</li> <li>• GB provides oversight on achievement of target of program impacts at 25% Alaska Native and 25% rural underserved communities</li> </ul>	structure established. GB quarterly meetings being held in Anchorage (next is October 30th)
EDD Regional Outreach & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with all interested regional mariculture businesses.</li> <li>• Respond to media and other inquiries as needed.</li> <li>• Incorporate mariculture outreach into organization's publications, planning, newsletters, etc.</li> <li>• Conduct at least 3 community meetings</li> </ul>	On track.  KP – 5 community events held throughout the peninsula SW- 15 community events
Number of underserved communities engaged	Regional liaisons have been hired and are implementing their work in their communities. Contracts are being renewed	On target. Communities engaged:
AMA Communications Plan and Implementation	Rising Tides Communication completed Public Relations and Communications Plan  Completed plan shared widely	Completed Q2 2024  Q3 2024

**Challenges and Mitigation:**

Leadership changes within organizations involved in the Governance Body led to new members being onboarded in April. In addition, staff turnover has made grant tracking slightly more strenuous.

**Press Engagements/Opportunities:**

Press Engagements/Opportunities		
Engagement / Opportunity	Short Description	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Governance Body Meeting	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage	10/30/24
Governance Body Meeting	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage	TBD- sometime Q4 2024
Alaska Mariculture Conference	The Alaska Mariculture Conference is a knowledge sharing conference of current statewide (some out of state) mariculture efforts. The conference focuses on addressing challenges within the mariculture industry, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, and	2/18/24-2/20/24

	emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices, innovation, research, and regulatory adaptability for long-term success.	

**Budget: Through 10/1**

Budget					
Total Project Amount (federal grant + match)	Federal Funding Spent:	Match Spent (cash):	Match Spent (in-kind):	Remaining (Federal)	% Total Project Cost Spent
\$3,552,709.00	\$457,980.57	\$337,889.32	\$-	\$1,594,728.44	22.40%

**Other:**

AMA & UAF/ASG have completed a contract that will provide an additional \$90K to the Alaska Mariculture Alliance's Mariculture Liaison and Outreach Program. This funding will primarily be used to maintain the liaison work KALI has been doing on Kodiak Island for another year. The contract runs 7/1/24 to 6/30/24.

## Workforce Development Performance Progress Report

### Performance Progress Report

Grantee:	Southeast Conference
Project Title:	Workforce Development
Project Number:	07-70-07900
Period covered by the report:	April 2024- September 2024
Reporting period end date:	September 30
Report Prepared by:	Chase Coleman, Project Coordinator

#### Narrative:

**UAA – Prince William Sound College** covered the end of the summer sessions and the beginning of the fall semester. A Small Engine Repair course was delivered in McGrath, representing the first of the travel-to-community maritime tech courses. Twelve students attended, one of which decided to continue her training by coming to PWSC for the semester-long Maritime Tech Occupation Endorsement Certificate (OEC). Under this maritime tech program, four students were funded through BBB to participate in this semester-long Maritime Tech OEC. In addition to the maritime tech courses, the summer period saw the last few weeks of the mariculture internships. There were two interns this summer, one with Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute (APMI) and one with PWSC. Both were incredibly successful. The intern at APMI finished the summer by presenting a poster created about a research project with them and was offered a paid position. The intern with PWSC, wrote a final technical report about her work and is continuing her education at the aquaculture semester at UAS. This semester, two BBB funded independent research students are completing projects to complete their Marine Natural Resources Tech OEC.

**UAS** students conducted sampling and monitored growth of kelp at two sites, one with bull kelp and one with sugar kelp. These sites were planted and continue to be maintained to help educate students and interested stakeholders to help advance the industry by experimenting with new techniques to grow bull kelp, as well as improving kelp culturing techniques increase capacity within their kelp seedbank. UAS is preparing to apply for a commercial hatchery permit that will enable them to provide seed line to farmers in the area and share harvest with community.

**University of Alaska Fairbanks- College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS)** is expanding its offerings of mariculture-oriented courses, beginning with foundational programs aimed at establishing a solid understanding of targeted farming groups. The Introduction to Seaweed Studies course has been specifically crafted for undergraduate students and is scheduled to kick off annually every fall, starting in 2024. Simultaneously, CFOS is committed to enhancing the abalone training and research hatchery at UAF, Juneau, as part of its broader efforts to diversify mariculture opportunities statewide. In addition, a second abalone-spawning training is scheduled from April 25th to 30th, 2025.

Center ICE and ABEC have completed 16% of 1:1 intellectual property consultation tasking. IP education sessions will be added to programming to fulfill 1:1 IP consultation tasking starting in Q4. Four participants are enrolled in the fall customer discovery programming and 10 UAF faculty, staff, and students are enrolled in an ideation studio that will be facilitated on 11/1/24 in Kodiak. The stakeholder mapping task is in progress, with advancements building an Airtable interface that incorporates Food For Climate League industry stakeholder data and existing UAF data.

#### Success Stories:

University of Alaska Anchorage – Prince William Sound: The small engine repair class in McGrath was a huge success. Twelve students were able to attend with help from BBB funding, one of which has decided to continue training and come to PWSC to join the Maritime Tech OEC, also with BBB funds. The instructor was interviewed on the local radio station and word has spread to other communities about the class, raising interest. The glidepath created by interns being placed within the mariculture industry is a huge success.

During this period, UAF was busy hosting well-attended events for their training program.

1. Insights from the Scottish seaweed industry tour. Webinar. July 11, 2024. 94 participants.
2. Kodiak Kelp Festival. Kodiak, AK. 300 participants (estimate)
3. Oyster Industry Knowledge Exchange Tour: Prince of Wales Island and Cordova to Homer, Alaska. Webinar. July 31, 2024. 66 participants

One of UAS’s current AK Aquaculture students, Jordan Hawkswell, interned at Blue Starr Oysters in Naukati Bay on Prince of Whales. She kindly shared a testimonial about her experience:

*“I’ve been interested in the ocean most of my life. My education and work experiences have lead me on a multitude of different ocean pathways, from marine tourism to ocean education to wild harvesting kelp. It has been within seafood and more specifically mariculture, that my interests in ocean sustainability, delicious food, and thriving coastal communities have come together. I love the way that oysters fit into that exact spot and as a result I have been drawn to oyster farming and mariculture for a long time. Having the opportunity to gain hands-on work experience in an oyster specific mariculture operation was a significant part of the reason I was interested in the UAS aquaculture semester. I was fortunate to be connected with Eric Wyatt, oyster farmer and owner of Blue Starr Oysters on Prince of Wales Island, where I was able to complete my required program internship hours and along the way, learn exactly what I was hoping to learn about oyster farming, and a whole lot more. Blue Starr Oysters recently relocated its farm to Jinhi Bay. The operation is steadily growing and beginning to serve a larger and more broad customer base. To support the growth of the farm, Eric acquired some exciting new equipment, including innovative Flip Farm floating lines and an automated sorting machine that were in the midst of being installed as I arrived to the farm. I really appreciated being able to see so much of what goes on in a dynamic and growing oyster operation. Eric showed me the old farm site, the new sites, the FLUPSY, and several ways one can grow oysters. We pulled bags of oysters from the beach, manually flipped floating bags, hauled stacks of baskets from rafts, tumbled and screened oyster seed, and deployed Flip Farm baskets. The opportunity to work with the FLUPSY and take part in all of the steps to grow an oyster from < 5 mm to a healthy market size was exactly what I was hoping to experience. Further, it felt like a pivotal time to be at the farm, witnessing the transition of Blue Starr settling into a new space and harnessing innovative new technology to grow the business. Incorporation of new technology into an existing farm system has its challenges, as does receiving said technology from 7,500 miles (12,000 km) away in New Zealand and setting it up on a remote floating farm off of Prince of Wales. I was able to get right in there to assist in the set up of the new baskets, lines, anchors, and the deployment, flipping, and harvesting machines, all of which had their setbacks and learning opportunities. After a few trials and errors, it was rewarding to see the first of the Flip Farm in action. I could see how a fully installed, operational Flip Farm will enhance the operations at Blue Starr Oysters in a hugely significant way, especially as the new farm site is renovated and updated. Seeing the ongoing innovation of mariculture is wonderful to see, as is the continuation of tried and true methods of cultivation. The demand for mariculture species is growing and there is a beautiful opportunity for this work to become more efficient and more accessible to those looking to enter the sector and make their living on the coast. My goal is to continue to be deeply involved in the growing mariculture sector, hopefully to have an oyster farm of my own one day. Gaining such relevant and positive experience with Eric was a real gift and has reaffirmed the decision to come to Alaska seeking this foundational education with UAS.”*

**Activity Summary:**

Activity	Description	Date Completed / Timeline Management
UA Workforce Meetings	UAA, UAF, UAS continue to meet with the Workforce Alaska folks each month. This provides a time for the entities to come together and share their progress, successes and struggles with each other while allowing space to brainstorm solutions together.	Quarter 2 (April) – onward

UA Mariculture Workforce Development Plan	The Mariculture Workforce Development Plan has been created and is now available to the public to download (for free!) on the UA library system. Throughout the creation of the plan 82 rural community and Alaska Native people were engaged. The plan was released and circulated at the Mariculture Conference of Alaska in February 2024.	Completed
UAA Spring Mariculture Program	<p>UAA was able to accommodate 12 students for spring mariculture classes.</p> <p>Working with Native Village of Eyak (NVE) and Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute (APMI) on internship agreements (four students have shown interest)</p> <p>Students attended several local mariculture opportunities facilitated by partners; Alaska Blue Economy Center (ABEC) and Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC)</p>	<p>Quarter 1 (January) – Quarter 2 (June)</p> <p>Completed- ongoing throughout grant</p> <p>Quarter 3 (November)- Quarter 1 (March)</p>
UAS wet lab set up	The facility now offers filtered seawater systems that supply tumble culture tanks, holding tanks, and round ponds. This space allows us to demonstrate tumble culture for species like dulse and sea lettuce, as well as to experiment with other species, such as sea cucumbers, oysters, and mussels.	Completed on 9/20/24.

**Next Steps:**

Activity	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts	Date to be Completed
UAA traveling Marine Tech Courses	A Small Engine Repair course was delivered in McGrath, representing the first of the community maritime tech courses. Twelve students attended, one of which decided to continue her training by coming to PWSC for the semester-long Maritime Tech OEC.	Quarter 3 (September) 2024 – ongoing throughout the grant
UAA-Planning Mariculture Intern Program	Continue to discuss internships with APMI and NVE. Start to recruit interns for next cohort.	Quarter 2 (April) 2024- Quarter 4 (October) 2024



UAS Hiring of a mariculture faculty position	Expand capacity to execute program and bring on more students	Quarter 2 2024-ongoing until filled
UAF- Hiring MRTC Director	Add support to continue the work developing training materials, curriculum, safety models and other tools to be offered	Quarter 2 2024-ongoing until filled

**Project-specific Metrics:**

Metric	Target / Milestone in GAP	Progress Update
UAA- Students completing MNRT OEC	8 students completed OEC  8 students reviewing the program at $\geq 80\%$	Students are progressing through the courses. 15 students are enrolled, funded, and in good standing.
UAA- Recruit intern hosts	Recruiting volunteers to host interns, including private and tribal farmers.	ongoing throughout grant
UAF- Develop Curriculum	Introductory (university-level) course focused on seaweed ecology and physiology	Created Q4 2023.
UAF- Create a nursey training system for shellfish	Husbandry system for pinto abalone. Facility will be used as workshop/training station First abalone training session conducted in October 2023. Plans for engagement and additional training sessions under development. Upgrades to abalone nursery under development.	Created Q4 2023- ongoing throughout grant
UAF	Hired program lead- Megan Koch	Q4 2023
UAF- Education & Training: Hands-on nursery and hatchery training	Workshops for oyster hatchery training with industry stakeholders (existing farms)	12 -Total People engaged in hands-on hatchery training  5- Rural community and Alaska Natives engaged in hands on hatchery training  Additional workshops are planned
UAF- Seafood safety training for mariculture products	A position for Seafood Safety Specialist was created and advertised. Number of people	Ongoing until position is filled. 68 - Total People engaged in informal Food Safety education programs

	engaged in informal food safety education programs; number of rural community and Alaska Natives engaged in informal food safety education programs	56- Rural Community and Alaska Natives engaged in informal food safety education programs
UAF- Update Alaska Oyster & Seaweed farming manuals	Oyster farming manual previously published. Post graduate fellow was recruited and will be leading development of Seaweed Farming Manual.	Oyster Farming manual continuously updated. Seaweed Farming Manual development started in September 2023 and is ongoing. Engaged 16 Total people; 9 Rural community and Alaska Native people. Continual outreach will be conducted while updating. Surpassed goal of 10:5
UAS Develop training materials, curriculum, safety modules, & other tools	1 position created and hired- Content Creation Specialist, 1 position as a technician to assist on farm and in labs, and 2 consultants in hiring process to assist with course creation. UAS is currently working with industry experts to help create a shellfish hatchery course for our program. Teaching equipment continues to be purchased. Two low temp growth chambers are now in use as well as a fume hood and inverted microscope.	Ongoing

**Challenges and Mitigation:**

**Press Engagements/Opportunities:**

Press Engagements/Opportunities		
Engagement / Opportunity	Short Description	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Governance Body	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage	10/30/24
Alaska Mariculture Conference	The Alaska Mariculture Conference focus on addressing those challenges in the seaweed industry, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, and emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices, innovation, research, and	2/18/25-2/20/25

	regulatory adaptability for long term success.	

**Budget:**

Budget					
Total Project Amount (federal grant + match)	Federal Funding Spent:	Match Spent (cash):	Match Spent (in- kind):	Remaining (Federal)	% Total Project Cost Spent
\$10,467,144.53	\$619,610.73	\$57,886.07	\$-	\$8,664,280.64	6.47%

**Other:**

## Research and Development Performance Progress Report

### Performance Progress Report

Grantee:	Southeast Conference
Project Title:	Research and Development
Project Number:	07-79-07901
Period covered by the report:	April 2024- September 30 <sup>th</sup> 2024
Reporting period end date:	September 30 <sup>th</sup> 2024
Report Prepared by:	Chase Coleman, Project Coordinator

#### Narrative:

The Research and Development Component made major strides during this reporting period. Subrecipients including the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) continued progress on scope implementation, with major milestones achieved. The Southeast Conference (SEC) team maintained regular engagement with both ADF&G and AFDF during this reporting period and provided ongoing technical assistance and scope support. The team at AFDF underwent staffing changes during this reporting period requiring additional SEC support during their transition. SEC staff participated in AFDF's hiring process, helping secure new staff to carry on AFDF's BBBRC scope. SEC also accompanied ADF&G & AFDF staff at the first-ever [Seagriculture Conference](#) in Alaska, where BBBRC programs including the R&D component were featured. SEC has a new fellow this year who began research into carbon sequestration work in preparation for that project within the R&D component.

SEC also developed and posted the [Kelp Agricultural Product Development & Testing RFP](#) that seeks to receive proposals for agricultural product development and/or field trials involving Alaska kelp. Funded projects will conduct research and development projects that result in publicly available reports and data that advance an understanding of the most promising agricultural uses of Alaska kelp. The RFP is currently active with a closing date of 10/21/24. This RFP will accomplish scope originally tagged to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) who backed out of the BBBRC project due to staffing shortages and lack of capacity early on in the program.

#### Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G):

Progress during this period has been made by the ADF&G Gene Conservation Laboratory (GCL) on one of six (sub)projects listed in the AMC BBB Project #4 ADF&G Subaward Recipient GAP. DNA extraction and purification methods were performed prior to this reporting period. However, initial yields were insufficient for downstream applications. Ongoing optimization of extraction and purification protocols has resulted in substantial improvements in DNA quality, and continued testing was done in Q3. As a result, ADF&G finalized its extraction methods and anticipates proceeding with subsequent steps in early Q4. Opportunistic kelp tissue sample collection through the ADF&G permitting process and collaboration with local kelp farmers continued in Q3 2024. Prior to this reporting period, progress was made on evaluating needs and scoping high-performance computing cluster (HPC) options for the genomic analytical work through an ADF&G GCL-funded contract to Alaska-based Resource Data (RDI). During this reporting period, the design was finalized with the chosen vendor, procured the hardware, and started working on the installation. The final installation (provided by vendor) is scheduled for the start of Q4.

#### Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF):

AFDF continued to manage several projects while navigating staff transition. AFDF's commitment to the AMC BBBRC remains steadfast, which resulted in an aggressive hiring campaign with support

from SEC. AFDF was able to offer the position to an applicant from one of Southeast Alaska's remote communities (Haines). This new staff member will begin on-boarding in October, working closely with SEC staff in the training process.

Joint Innovation Project: The JIP Round 1 cohort is wrapping up their projects. *See attached update.* The second cohort, totaling \$1.34 million in funding, is comprised of hatcheries, nurseries, aquatic farmers, and processors. Each of their projects will fall under one of the following categories:

- Innovations in seaweed farming
- Innovations in processing (oysters or seaweed)
- Innovations in mooring system technology, design and/or deployment
- Boosting oyster growth at nurseries or farms
- Shellfish enhancement
- De-risking farming through site suitability analysis and/or monitoring

*See attachment for a summary of JIP Round 2 for more information.*

Seaweed Tissue Analysis:

Annual Conference: AFDF kicked off the Annual Mariculture Conference planning committee this summer, with the 2025 conference date set for February 18-20 in Sitka Alaska. The committee is currently developing a speaker list and agenda.

Derisking Investments in Aquatic Farming: AFDF developed and posted its [De-Risking Investments in Aquatic Farming RFP](#) in July. The RFP seeks proposals that “de-risk” investments in the Alaska mariculture industry by funding a modeling and/or data collection study to support the mariculture industry in selecting appropriate sites and right-sizing equipment. Findings and data from these projects will be compiled into reports and distributed to the public, ensuring benefits are available to all current or future industry participants, and the public in general. The RFP closed mid-August with 8 competitive proposals resulting in two awards with contracts in process.

## **Success Stories:**

### **ADF&G:**

Evaluation of needs and scoping of hardware options for building an on-premises HPC was completed in Q2 2024. In Q3 2024, ADF&G finalized its HPC system bill of materials and procured the required hardware. ADF&G is currently working on installation of the associated network and the remainder of the HPC is scheduled to be installed in early Q4 2024 (end of October).

ADF&G has continued to work with kelp farmers and other samplers to refine sampling and collection methods. This has led to increased collaborations and better methods for handling kelps in the field and in the laboratory. Additionally, this along with permit collections have allowed ADF&G to expand its library of available samples. ADF&G will be including some of these new collections in the project.

Additionally, a breakthrough in ADF&G's DNA extraction methods led to increased quality and quantity of DNA. ADF&G continued testing/optimization in Q3 2024 and determined a method that appears to work well for kelp. Prior to performing large-scale extractions and sequencing, ADF&G plans to extract and sequence a limited number of “test” individuals in Q4 2024. Initially focusing on a small batch will allow ADF&G to confirm its sample disinfection, extraction, and purification methods as viable in producing high-quality DNA required for this project. ADF&G will continue with large-scale extractions and sequencing after confirming quality.

**AFDF:** AFDF hired new staff member, Alex Huller, to take on AFDF’s mariculture work including the AMC BBBRC program!

**Activity Summary:**

Activity	Description	Date Completed / Timeline Management
Seaweed Tissue Analysis for chemistry and nutritional profiles	AFDF has secured the laboratory that will be analyzing samples for nutritional profiles. The samples were collected (wild and farmed) this past summer.	Q3 2024- ongoing
Joint Innovative Projects to accelerate development of applied technologies	15 Joint Innovation projects have been awarded; 7 focused on Processing, 2 focused on Bull Kelp Farming, 1 focused on mooring system technology, 3 focused on boosting the oyster growth at nurseries/farms, 2 focused on shellfish enhancement  J.I.P round 2 RFP closed and awarded – AFDF staff working on contracts.	Projects are underway and will be completed December 2024  Q3 2024- ongoing
Annual Conference	Planning has begun for Alaska Mariculture 2025	Q4 2024
Optimization of DNA extraction methods	DNA extraction methods research and optimization, increasing yield and quality.	Q2 -Q3 2024
Evaluation of HPC options	Finalized decision on plans for HPC and procured parts.	Q2-Q3 2024
Installation of HPC	Partially completed installation of HPC system. Remainder is scheduled for early Q4 or Q1 2025, depending on installer	Q2- Q3 2024

**Next Steps:**

Activity	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts	Date to be Completed
Seaweed Tissue Analysis Contractor	AFDF working with farmers for second season of seaweed tissue sample collections. Working with Celignis Limited Lab on updating testing.	Quarter 4 2024
Product Research and Development for seaweed agricultural fertilizer and feed	Award contracts after RFP closes mid-October.	Quarter 4 2024

Develop and Finalize Carbon Sequestration research plan	Prioritizing other areas of the grant and waiting for the nascent ocean carbon field to better understand viable carbon sequestration pathways.	Q4 2024-ongoing
Seaweed Carbon Sequestration-Post RFP	Once contract is secured, important work can begin on understanding the opportunity related to carbon sequestration in Alaska and ground-truthing impacts	Q4 2024-ongoing
GT-seq panel development for sugar kelp	Completion of DNA extraction	2025
GT-seq panel development for ribbon and bull kelp	Completion of DNA extraction	2025
Whole genome sequencing to identify markers under selection and screen populations (sugar kelp)	Completion of DNA extraction.	2025
	Internal preparation of documents required for solicitation of bids for 2x150bp Illumina DNA sequencing of whole genome resequencing libraries	Q4 2024

**Project-specific Metrics:**

Metric	Target / Milestone in GAP	Progress Update
Seaweed Tissue Analysis for chemistry and nutritional profiles	Develop RFP, hire contractor, gather samples and preform analysis	On track. Samples and analysis to be finished by December 2024.
Product research and development for seaweed fertilizer and feed	Develop RFP, hire contractor to preform product research and development.	On track. RFP closes October 22 <sup>nd</sup> . Awards will be made in Q4 2024.
Joint Innovation Projects to accelerate development of applied technologies	J.I.P. Round 1 research projects conducted and finalized.	Slightly behind. Some JIP 1 projects slightly behind but are quickly catching up. Projects will be presented at the 2025 Annual Mariculture Conference.
	J.I.P. Round 2 projects selected, contracts signed.	RFP closed and was awarded. The 18-month project period will end in January 2026.
De-Risk Investments in Aquatic Farming	Identify key parameters of modeling, engineering and site characterization for	Back on track – RFP posted, notices of intent sent out, and contracts for two awardees are in development.

	RFPs. Write & issue RFP for modeling & gear/engineering implications; select contractor	
Annual Mariculture Conference	Annual Conference planning committee organizing 2025 conference.	The planning committee began meeting again in July 2024.
Seaweed genetic diversity analysis	DNA extraction and analysis methods developed; staff trained; lab operating.	On track. Homogenizer has been installed. Lab techs have been trained; extraction began in February 2024 with methods adjusted to improve results.

**Challenges and Mitigation:**

AFDF: AFDF lost staff that had been leading its mariculture initiatives, including the AMC BBBRC work. However, AFDF’s Executive Director worked closely with SEC staff to interview and hire a new employee. SEC will provide substantial training and onboarding of AFDF’s new hire who will be leading the AMC BBBRC work on behalf of AFDF.

ADF&G:

1) An initial DNA extraction and purification protocol was finalized in Q4 2023. Large-scale DNA extraction, Illumina sequencing provider solicitation, and WGR library preparation for sequencing was expected to begin after staff wet lab training in Q1 2024. However, during high-throughput training ramp-up, we encountered inconsistencies in DNA extraction quantity and quality. While the causes remain unknown, we have been actively working to address the issue(s). Recently, changes in extraction techniques have proven successful in producing the required quality and quantity of DNA. Testing was finalized in Q3 2024, and a small batch of samples will be extracted and sequenced in Q4 2024. After reviewing data from the batch and confirming acceptable quality, large-scale DNA extraction and purification is expected to take place in Q1 2025. The purpose of the small batch test is two-fold; the first is to confirm the viability of the extraction method for larger-scale use (i.e., lab test) and second is to confirm quality and quantity of sequence output prior to implementing large-scale sequencing.

2) The GCL experienced delays in pursuing the on-premises HPC build included in the project proposal. State of Alaska OIT personnel turnover, lack of experience with HPCs, and focus on cloud computing were core to the issue. Despite these challenges, the GCL actively pursued a single-source scoping agreement with an on-premises computing solutions provider. GCL received and assessed three vendor quotes and options for high-performance compute environments in Q2/Q3 2024. We worked with a chosen vendor to finalize the bill of materials for the HPC system and procured all parts in Q3 2024. We began installing our portion of the system in Q3 2024 and expect complete the installation by Oct 17. The remainder of the system is scheduled to be installed by the vendor the week of October 22nd, but during final parts checks, missing cables were identified. These cables have been ordered but may be on backorder until December 2024/January 2025. As a result, we’ve scheduled a tentative backup installation date for Q1 2025.



**Press Engagements/Opportunities:**

Press Engagements/Opportunities		
<b>Engagement / Opportunity</b>	<b>Short Description</b>	<b>Date (MM/DD/YYYY)</b>
Governance Body	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage	10/30/24
Annual Mariculture Conference	2025 Annual Mariculture Conference will be in Sitka!	2/18/25-2/20/25

**Budget:**

Budget					
<b>Total Project Amount (federal grant + match)</b>	<b>Federal Funding Spent:</b>	<b>Match Spent (cash):</b>	<b>Match Spent (in- kind):</b>	<b>Remaining (Federal)</b>	<b>% Total Project Cost Spent</b>
\$9,521,501	\$969,415.29	\$316,800.24		\$8,552,085.71	13.5%

## Marketing Performance Progress Report

### Performance Progress Report

Grantee:	Southeast Conference
Project Title:	Marketing
Project Number:	07-79-07902
Period covered by the report:	March 2024- September 2024
Reporting period end date:	September 30
Report Prepared by:	Chase Coleman, Project Coordinator

#### Narrative:

The market research contractor Food for Climate League (FCL) has held market stakeholder meetings to provide market research services to advance the goal of unlocking industry growth potential through increased demand for Alaska kelp and oyster products sold into food-related markets. FCL's initial market research, [which was shared on the AMC website in July](#), developed a Research Agenda that contextualizes Alaska's kelp and oyster markets and identifies industry stakeholders, target consumer segments, product narratives and applications, and consumption barriers and motivators.

FCL followed up with substantive market research, including a consumer segmentation study and a "go to market" analysis for foodservice and consumer packaged goods (CPG). This work was presented on October 17, 2024 to the AMC's Marketing Stakeholder Committee, which meets every few months to track and inform FCL's work, as well as other AMC research and market development projects. FCL's future workload is reserved for additional market research consultations as needed and marketing program recommendations. SEC plans to put out an RFP for marketing programs in late Fall 2024 and this research helps inform our strategy and approach.

Barnacle Foods is providing research to SEC staff in support of developing actionable strategies for California Proposition 65 exclusions for products made from Alaska kelp. Barnacle helped develop AMC's [Request for Proposals #2024-03](#) titled Scientific Consulting Services Related to Heavy Metals and Kelp. GSI Environmental was chosen as the winning bidder and, pending signing of a contract, will develop a plan to evaluate the naturally occurring background levels of lead and cadmium in farmed kelp in Alaska. Barnacle is assisting SEC in managing this work as well as providing other related consulting services and advice to SEC.

#### Success Stories:

The marketing stakeholder group managed to attract several stakeholders with sustained participation throughout the winter providing FCL with ample input for their work.

#### Activity Summary:

Activity	Description	Date Completed / Timeline Management
Market research on seaweed and shellfish	Food for Climate League conducted interviews with 30+ mariculture industry individuals while looking for comparisons and differences between the Alaska mariculture scene and other mariculture industries around the country and the world.	Completed

Formation of marketing steering committee and consultation	The Market stakeholder committee formed last reporting period and has held meetings throughout the summer with over 20 stakeholders in attendance at each meeting.	Q2 and Q3 of 2024- ongoing
Prop 65 Research	Issue Strategy, Sampling Design, Analysis and Reporting RFP	Q2 2024

**Next Steps:**

Activity	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts	Date to be Completed
Market research on seaweed and shellfish	Task 2 (conduct market research) began in the spring of 2024	Quarter 2 (April) 2024 – Quarter 4 (October) 2024
Complete market research	Market research Task 2 deliverables completed	Quarter 4 (October) 2024
Market development and brand plan	Conduct interviews to gather industry input on marketing plan priorities	Quarter 2 2024
	Issue RFP for market development plan	Quarter 3 2024
	Market development plan completed and shared widely	Quarter 3 2023-ongoing

**Project-specific Metrics:**

Metric	Target / Milestone in GAP	Progress Update
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Market Research on seaweed and shellfish	Food for Climate league Task 1 deliverables	Completed January 2024
	Food for Climate League Task 2 deliverables	Start in April 2024
Market development and brand planning	Draft/issue RFP	TBD May 2024
	Sign on Contractor	TBD Summer 2024
	Begin Work	TBD Summer 2024
Marketing Program Implementation	Draft/issue RFP	The marketing program implementation and market development and brand planning will be put into one RFP that will have a contract throughout the grant period.
	Sign on Contractor	
	Begin Work	

**Challenges and Mitigation:**

There is minimal industry experience with developing and testing products in the marketplace – leading to a wide variety of perspectives and ideas about what directions are most promising. Focusing on consumable product assessment during the initial market research process has helped to mitigate the challenges linked to looking in the various directions that mariculture could be used. Once the consumable product assessment portion of market research is covered, other areas of market research will continue.

**Press Engagements/Opportunities:**

Press Engagements/Opportunities		
Engagement / Opportunity	Short Description	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Governance Body	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage	10/30/24
Alaska Mariculture Conference	The Alaska Mariculture Conference focuses on addressing those challenges in the seaweed industry, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, and emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices, innovation, research, and regulatory adaptability for long-term success.	2/18/25-2/20/25

**Budget:**

Budget					
Total Project Amount (federal grant + match)	Federal Funding Spent:	Match Spent (cash):	Match Spent (in- kind):	Remaining (Federal)	% Total Project Cost Spent
\$1,207,500	\$250,473	\$-	\$-	\$957,027	20.74

**Other:**

# Green Energy Performance Progress Report

## Performance Progress Report

Grantee:	Southeast Conference
Project Title:	Green Energy
Project Number:	07-79-07903
Period covered by the report:	March 2024- October 2024
Reporting period end date:	September 30
Report Prepared by:	Chase Coleman, Project Coordinator

### Narrative:

The Green Energy component, being administered through a subaward to the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) with a contract through an RFP process awarded to a University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF) is on track. UAF has created the [Green Energy in Mariculture](#) (GEM) program. The first quarter of 2024 (January-March) was spent spreading the word about their project and gathering farm sites around the state that are interested in providing baseline data this harvest season and implementing alternative energy sources next harvest season.

The contractor will accomplish the overall goal of building a foundation for the industry that maximizes investment in local and renewable energy resources through the following three components: establishing a baseline that quantifies current energy use patterns (happening now), creating a green energy plan that provides a sustainable energy development pathway for mariculture (spring 2025-2026)), and a best practice guide for future energy audits and efficiency work (Fall 2026).

### Success Stories:

UAF team is in the process of creating an online portal for farmers to volunteer their farms for the green energy component effort.

### Activity Summary:

Activity	Description	Date Completed / Timeline Management
Develop a long-term Green Energy Plan for Alaska's Mariculture Industry	Monitoring contractor progress monthly through AFDF and UAF team meetings	Monthly throughout the end of grant period
Collect Baseline data measurements of how energy is currently being used in the industry and generating an analysis with recommendations for renewable energy alternatives	Create online platform for farmers to easily volunteer for study	Completed
	Select sites to utilize in baseline data collection during this harvest season	Completed

**Next Steps:**

Activity	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts	Date to be Completed
Monitor progress on contract	Provide support to contractor selected throughout the process.	Quarter 2 2023-ongoing
Collect baseline data	Baseline data collection to happen during spring harvest season	Quarter 2 2024
Provide recommendations for renewables at sites measured	Recommendations for alternative energy sources will be given in the fall of 2024 so farmers can prepare/situate a new system prior to the next harvest season	Quarter 4 (October-December) 2024

**Project-specific Metrics:**

Metric	Target / Milestone in GAP	Progress Update
Develop a long-term Green Energy Plan for Alaska's Mariculture Industry	UAF team set up online platform for farmers to easily volunteer for the green energy project	Completed January 2024
	Sites have been selected to collect baseline data	Completed March 2024
Energy Use Data Collection and Best Practices Guide	Data collection began during harvest season spring 2024	Q2 and Q3 2024
	Alternative energy source recommendations provided to farmers	Q4 2024
	Alternative energy sources implemented	Q2 2024 – Q2 2025
	Best Practices Guide created and disseminated	Q4 2025- Q3 2026

**Challenges and Mitigation:**

N/A

**Additional Data Collection:** [This information is being aggregated and reported to the EDA through quarterly surveys completed by Southeast Conference.]

**Other:**

[Please include here any other information you would like to share with Southeast Conference and any specific support you would like to see from SEC]

**Press Engagements/Opportunities:**

Press Engagements/Opportunities		
Engagement / Opportunity	Short Description	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Governance Body	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage	10/30/24
Alaska Mariculture Conference	The Alaska Mariculture Conference focuses on addressing those challenges in the seaweed industry, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, and emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices, innovation, research, and regulatory adaptability for long-term success.	2/18/25-2/20/25

**Budget:**

Budget					
Total Project Amount (federal grant + match)	Federal Funding Spent:	Match Spent (cash):	Match Spent (in-kind):	Remaining (Federal)	% Total Project Cost Spent
\$681,413.49	\$63,898.88	\$-	\$-	\$617,514.61	9%

**Other:**



## Equipment and Technology Performance Progress Report

### Performance Progress Report

Grantee:	Southeast Conference
Project Title:	Equipment and Technology
Project Number:	07-79-07904
Period covered by the report:	March 2024- September 2024
Reporting period end date:	September 30
Report Prepared by:	Chase Coleman, Project Coordinator

#### Narrative:

##### ADEC

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) completed a budget revision to include the funding needed for their equipment purchase (moved from SEC to ADEC) and is in the process of acquiring all equipment needed to improve/test new methods of their toxin testing. ADEC plans to begin utilizing the new equipment this spring as samples are submitted to the lab. ADEC has filled all positions to support their work validating a new method for toxin testing for Alaska mariculture.

##### Hatch Accelerator Fund – Contractor

Hatch Accelerator Fund Management LLC, who is contracted for mariculture equipment consulting and analysis, helped the SEC staff facilitate the first of three equipment RFPs. Hatch assists SEC with evaluating equipment procurement proposals from entities seeking AMC funding for mariculture operations, including processing, nursery, and hatchery development. In July, Southeast Conference awarded eight organizations equipment funding in this first round, totaling around \$2.25 million. Subsequent equipment funding RFPs will be issued in November 2024 and November 2025, with roughly a third of the equipment funding awarded in each round.

##### SEC managed Contracts

Nine projects are being contracted through an RFP process to conduct feasibility studies that further the Alaska Mariculture Cluster's goal of increasing regional processing capacity for mariculture products in Alaska. Feasibility studies can address a variety of topics, including supply/demand assessment, assessment of existing or underutilized infrastructure, architectural/engineering services to support capital and operations cost estimation, financial feasibility studies, and/or operations planning. Projects must be working toward the operation, construction, or renovation/expansion of mariculture processing, handling, and/or storage facilities in Alaska. These contracts are in the process of being finalized and have started this spring/summer. The 12-month projects taking place around all 4 regions of the state should have results available after the 2025 harvest season, if not before.

##### SEC managed Contracts

Five projects have been contracted through an RFP process to investigate other mariculture species. The projects will be focused on innovation related to other species of interest for cultivation (not including Pacific Oysters, bull kelp, sugar kelp, or ribbon kelp). Proposals around the cultivation of black seaweed were prohibited. These research and development projects are sought to advance our understanding of key questions related to the viability of "other mariculture species" for commercial, restoration, and/or enhancement uses, including enhancement of subsistence resources. The 18-month projects will be starting this spring. Another round of Other Mariculture Species Contracts will be awarded through an RFP process in year 3 of the grant.

**Success Stories:**

Hatch also created the [Alaska Mariculture Insights Platform](#) (currently in beta testing), which presents seaweed and oyster production insights broken down into the different supply chain stages. It aims to benefit a wide audience - including local operators, private and public investors, and government entities – and foster collaboration, information sharing, and partnerships within the industry to support the development of a viable and sustainable mariculture industry in Alaska.

SEC is in the process of finalizing subawards for our new cohort of sub awardee’s through the equipment and Technology component.

**Activity Summary:**

Activity	Description	Date Completed / Timeline Management
Explore/validate new methods and equipment for toxin testing in Alaska mariculture	ADEC purchased all equipment needed for the new methods of toxin testing.	Quarter 4 (October-December) of 2023
	Hiring necessary employees to implement methods in the testing lab	Quarter 3 & 4 2024
Equipment procurement	The SEC and ADEC teams were able to work with EDA to get all procurement needs sorted out and finalized for ADEC to be the owners of toxin testing equipment. Equipment has been purchased and installed	Quarter 2 2024
Feasibility study RFP	Contracts negotiated with SEC, legal teams, and signed	Completed
Other Mariculture Species RFP	RFP processed and scored	Completed
	Contracts negotiated and signed	Completed
Equipment RFP/ subaward	Proposals processed and scored	Completed
	Subaward agreements finalized	Quarter 3 & 4 2024

**Project Specific Metrics:**

Activity	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts	Date to be Completed
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Feasibility study project contracts awarded	9 projects began in the spring of 2024, the 12-month projects will be checking in with SEC staff throughout the life of the contract and will have results in the spring of 2025	Quarter 2 (April-June) 2024 – Quarter 2 (April-June) 2025
Other Mariculture Species research and development contracts awarded	5 projects began in the spring of 2024, the 18-month projects will be checking in with SEC staff throughout the life of the contract and will have results to share by the end of the calendar year 2025.	Quarter 2 (April-June) 2024 – Quarter 4 (October-December) 2025
Explore/validate new methods and equipment for toxin testing for Alaska Mariculture	Install toxin testing equipment and complete implementation and validation plans	Quarter 2 (April-June) 2024- Quarter 4 (December) 2024

**Next Steps:**

Metric	Target / Milestone in GAP	Progress Update
Equip existing facilities, hatcheries, and nurseries with modern equipment; conduct pre-investment and feasibility analysis	Contractor secured to conduct pre-investment analysis & feasibility studies; application process for pre-investment analysis and feasibility studies developed and published; 3 analyses conducted and equipment placed	Quarter 4 2024
Develop methods for developing and farming new species, including multiple shellfish species in varying levels of commercial viability	Projects are underway	Q2 2024 – ongoing
Explore/validate new methods and equipment for toxin testing for Alaska mariculture (DEC)	Exploring new methods  Validate new methods (this committee only meets every two years, ambitious goal to be prepared for the next meeting in 2025)	Q3 2024- Q3 2026  Q4 2027
DEC staff training for new testing methods	RBA Training, if travel request approved by Gov. Chief of Staff	Q4 2024

**Challenges and Mitigation:**

Getting products shipped to Alaska in a timely manner is difficult, especially when the products are large pieces of equipment. ADEC received a couple of broken pieces in their shipments and had to wait for them to be resent, which postponed the installation and ultimately the start of new testing methods. They now have all the equipment accounted for and will begin testing with this harvest season (spring 2024). ADEC is working with SEC to ensure all documentation is provided in order to receive reimbursement.

Having so many detailed and unique project proposals for multiple RFPs come in at once has made the contract writing process take longer than anticipated. SEC is close to having a streamlined system in place to help avoid this delay with future projects.

**Press Engagements/Opportunities:**

Press Engagements/Opportunities		
Engagement / Opportunity	Short Description	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Governance Body	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage	10/30/24
Alaska Mariculture Conference	The Alaska Mariculture Conference focuses on addressing those challenges in the seaweed industry, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, and emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices, innovation, research, and regulatory adaptability for long-term success.	2/18/24-2/20/24

**Budget:**

Budget					
Total Project Amount (federal grant + match)	Federal Funding Spent:	Match Spent (cash):	Match Spent (in-kind):	Remaining (federal)	% Total Project Cost Spent
\$26,284,856	\$1,219,070	\$6,000,000	\$203,715	\$14,670,926	27.46%

**Other:**

## SEC Grant Management Performance Progress Report

### Performance Progress Report

Grantee:	Southeast Conference
Project Title:	SEC Grant Management
Project Number:	07-79-07899
Period covered by the report:	April 2024- September 2024
Reporting period end date:	September 30
Report Prepared by:	Chase Coleman, Project Coordinator

#### Narrative:

As the AMC's lead entity, SEC is responsible for the AMC's [Grant Administration](#), which includes compiling grant reports, accounting oversight, contract compliance, financial reporting, and tracking progress on projects and outcomes. SEC staff work with the Governance Body, coalition members, subaward recipients, and contractors to ensure project goals, timelines and deliverables are being met and successes communicated more widely. SEC also travels to conferences and work with stakeholders and sub-award recipients in all four Economic Development Districts.

In order to ensure the AMC is attaining its desired goals, SEC contracted with Ecotrust to evaluate grant performance, create effective metrics, measure the impacts against these metrics, and provide recommendations for improvement throughout the entirety of the grant. Ecotrust presented their Theory of Change, Indicators, and Evaluation Plan at the April 2024 Governance Body meeting. This initial work is being repackaged for external publication on the AMC website.

In 2024 and for subsequent years, Ecotrust will continue to evaluate the progress of the AMC toward the Outcomes specified in the Theory of Change, Indicators, equity measures, and targets identified in their initial work. Ecotrust incorporate new evaluation tools, including economic multiplier analysis, small sample surveys, focus groups, expert interviews, participant observation listening sessions, and document review.

This reporting period saw a significant increase in reimbursement processing as subaward recipients' projects are in full swing. Monthly component and individual project check-in meetings have continued. These meetings continue to be valuable for both SEC and the sub awardees to get questions answered, verification when needed, and have a consistent set time to collaborate with others working within the same project component.

SEC continues to work with subaward recipients to streamline and update their internal budgeting processes to ensure timely reimbursements, resulting in increased capacity within those organizations for the long-term.

#### Success Stories:

SEC also [launched a new website](#) that has a more friendly user interface, improved tools for engaging with AMC opportunities, and a better framework for storytelling. Staff are working on even

more improved to be released in the coming months, including new project-tracking features that will provide even more detail and transparency into AMC grant's work.

Since the last reporting period, SEC or subaward recipients have issued six (6) RFPs:

1. [Seaweed Tissue Analysis](#)
2. [Scientific Consulting Services Related to Heavy Metals and Kelp](#)
3. [De-Risking Investments in Aquatic Farming](#)
4. [Kelp Agricultural Product Development & Testing](#)
5. [Other Mariculture Species Research & Development RFP #2](#)
6. [Southeast Alaska Mariculture Liaison](#).

SEC hired two Project Coordinators to help handle the workload of the AMC grant. One coordinator is primarily focused on AMC's sub award projects, and the other on SEC's contractor projects. Each will coordinate with AMC partners on project development and provide oversight to ensure project goals and deliverables are being met, along with other tasks.

**Activity Summary:**

Activity	Description	Date Completed / Timeline Management
Website development and maintenance	Project information/images gathered, updated and maintained quarterly	Quarter 2 (April) 2023-ongoing
IT support and maintenance	SEC staff supported by IT contractors	Quarter 2 (April) 2023-ongoing
Legal support and review	15+ contracts negotiated and signed for multiple component projects	Quarter 2 (April) 2024-ongoing
Auditing and oversight	1 <sup>st</sup> federal audit conducted fall of 2023  monthly desk audits of sub awardees continue to be conducted when reimbursement requests are received	Quarter 3 (October) 2023-Quarter 4 (December) 2023  Quarter 3 (October) 2023 – ongoing
Accounting oversight and grant financial reporting	sub reimbursement processed monthly  finances reviewed and recorded monthly	Quarter 2 (April) 2023-ongoing Quarter 3 (April) 2023-ongoing

**Next Steps:**

Activity	Benefits/Outcome/Impacts	Date to be Completed
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Website refinement and maintenance	The Project Manager II hired is consistently refining the AMC website and communications strategy. Project information/images/opportunities gathered, updated and maintained quarterly.	Quarter 3 (July) 2024 /Quarter 4 (October) 2024-ongoing
IT support and maintenance	SEC staff supported by IT contractors	Quarter 2 (April) 2024- ongoing
Legal support and review	security and conveyance agreements developed, reviewed and in place for equipment grant purchases	Quarter 2 (April) 2024- ongoing
Auditing and oversight	Procurement standards and grant compliance audited monthly	Quarter 2(April) 2024 /Quarter 4 (October) 2024-ongoing
Accounting oversight and grant financial reporting	Sub reimbursement processed monthly  Finances reviewed and recorded monthly  Semi-annual reports submitted	Quarter 2 (April) 2024 - Quarter 4 (October) 2024-ongoing  Quarter 2 (April) 2024 – Quarter 4 (October) 2024-ongoing  Quarter 2 (April) 2024/ Quarter 4 (October) 2024
Onboarding of equipment program (round 1) sub awardees	These sub awardee’s will be able to purchase equipment for their respective regions with the administrative help of SEC.	Quarter 4 2024

**Project-specific Metrics:**

Metric	Target / Milestone in GAP	Progress Update
Website development and maintenance	Website dedicated to AMC BBBRC project developed and maintained	<a href="http://www.alaskamariculturecluster.org">www.alaskamariculturecluster.org</a> is being maintained and updated on a bi-weekly basis or as needed
IT support and maintenance	IT support for onboarding new staff – ongoing support	New staff email, Microsoft suite, laptops etc. set up and maintained
Legal support and review	Legal support for RFPs and other	Revolving Loan Fund documents reviewed, negotiated, and signed. RFPs being issued and contracts being awarded.

Auditing and oversight	Audit compliance	Federal Audit conducted in October-December.
Grant project review and analysis	Ecotrust Contract in place and underway	Ecotrust conducted initial assessment interviews with all Sub awardees. Theory of Change Outcome Maps created for all component projects. Conversations with key mariculture players ongoing
Accounting oversight and grant financial reporting	Accounting service secured; Sub reimbursement processed quarterly; Finances reviewed and recorded quarterly; Semi annual reports submitted to EDA	Accounting services secured and financial reporting ongoing. Grant Technician assisting in the review of subaward reimbursements to ensure accuracy and compliance.

**Challenges and Mitigation:**

With all of the various programs up and running there is a high level of activity and good stories to be told. Being able to synthesize and share updates on project progress has become a challenge. We are looking forward to our new hire (project manager II) to help tackle this issue. The SEC team is also working to refine processes in contract development and management as more RFPs go out and are awarded.

**Press Engagements/Opportunities:**

Press Engagements/Opportunities		
Engagement / Opportunity	Short Description	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Governance Body	Quarterly meeting of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Governance Body in Anchorage.	10/30/24
Alaska Mariculture Conference	The Alaska Mariculture Conference focus on addressing those challenges in the seaweed industry, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, and emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices, innovation, research, and regulatory adaptability for long-term success.	2/18/25-2/18/25

**Budget:**



Budget					
Total Project Amount (federal grant + match)	Federal Funding Spent:	Match Spent (cash):	Match Spent (in- kind):	Remaining (federal)	% Total Project Cost Spent
\$2,533,323.00	\$960,377.84	\$-	\$-	\$1,572,945.16	37.91%

Other: