

MCVL Watermen and SC Sea Grant Workshop – October 22, 2021
9:00 – 11:00AM shrimpers, aqua culturists, near-shore fishers, off-shore fishers
1:00PM Training Center Planning Discussion

This workshop is focused on getting input from the watermen on the Two “Food from the Sea” projects that were funded by NOAA through Sea Grant. (These will be presented at the October 13 6PM public town meeting.)

Sea Grant is asking the watermen to come prepared to:

- Give feedback on the topics discussed below.
- A minimum of 2 watermen from each sector attend: shrimpers, aqua culturists, near-shore fishers (clammers, crabbers, oystermen) and off-shore fishers.
- Select 3 local watermen/industry professionals to travel to Rhode Island to see a seafood industry training facility.

1. ***Developing a Blueprint for a Southeast Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Training Center*** U.S. Department of Commerce – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR).

The purpose of the grant is to develop a training center feasibility study that would address fisheries workforce training needs in the Southeast region of the U.S. The feasibility study/ business plan will be the culminating product of a six-month study involving workshops and focus groups with South Carolina's commercial fishing sector and key representatives in McClellanville, as well as a learning exchange with an existing fisheries training center in Rhode Island.

This project will explore critical questions necessary to advance a training center, addressing subjects such as: the justification of a training center, based on costs and benefits; the organizational structure of a training center; identifying fishing and aquaculture industries benefiting most from training programs (ex. shrimp trawling, oyster mariculture, soft-shell crab shedding, charter fishing, etc.); determining key technical skills to be addressed through training (ex. business management, engineering and technology, navigation, shellfish culture techniques); and investigating scientific, managerial, and legal considerations.

2. ***A Next-Gen Seafood Industry: Framing a Career-Development Program for those Earning a Living off the Water.*** Organize focus groups with commercial fishing and aquaculture industry representatives from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia to solicit input on what is needed to build effective career development initiatives relevant to the region's commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.

The Sea Grant project team will convene a series of focus groups with industry members in each state to identify further needs for training. We will seek to identify, specifically, training topics that crosscut marine industry sectors such as, but not limited to: 1) seamanship, navigation, electronics, and safety; 2) vessel and engine care, maintenance, and repair; and 3) sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices. The focus group process will endeavor to elicit other training needs as identified by the community. We also will seek feedback relating to more process-oriented aspects of training delivery, concepts such as barriers to participating in workforce training, and opportunities for overlap and synergies across the needs of different types of fishers and harvesters, among others as identified by the project team and stakeholders. The project team will seek participation from a diverse mix of industry members with training needs.