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Welcome!

Alaska Opportunity Area Spatial Planning Workshop



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Agenda Review

- Early framing presentations to set the stage for group work
- Small group exploration of data layer topics via core questions
- Informal, anonymous polling with instant response technology
- Time permitting: small group report backs to the large group
- Highlight key takeaways as we conclude today's event



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Alaska Region AOA Spatial Planning Workshop

Overview and Purpose

*Alicia Bishop, NOAA Fisheries Alaska
Regional Aquaculture Coordinator*



NOAA ANC AOA Spatial Planning Workshop
February 26, 2024



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Today's Presenters

- **Alicia Bishop:** NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Aquaculture Coordinator



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- **Chris Schillaci:** NOS National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, Marine Ecologist, Coastal Aquaculture Siting and Sustainability



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Alaska AOA Spatial Planning Workshop

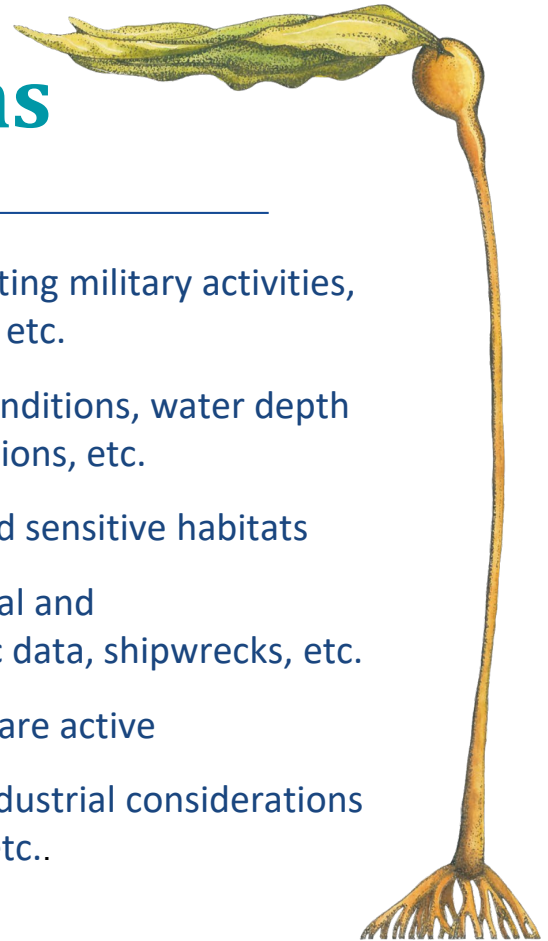
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), and the State of Alaska are jointly convening a day-long workshop to discuss the ongoing Aquaculture Opportunity Area (AOA) identification process in Alaska state waters.

Workshop Goals

- Learn about NOAA's spatial planning approach and discuss available spatial data within Alaska AOA study areas
- Document data gaps and help identify points of contact for additional data
- Increase transparency, local capacity, and resources to support aquaculture planning
- Further develop an engaged community to inform NOAA's AOA identification process in Alaska state waters

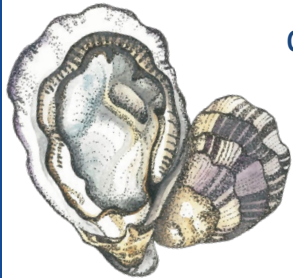
Workshop Sessions

1. **Boundaries:** state and federal boundaries, locations for existing military activities, area management plans, and designated parks and refuges, etc.
2. **Oceanographic Data:** meteorological and oceanographic conditions, water depth and slope (bathymetry), buoys and weather forecasting stations, etc.
3. **Natural Resources:** information about protected species and sensitive habitats
4. **Cultural and Social Resources:** cultural, subsistence, personal and traditional/historical uses of the environment, demographic data, shipwrecks, etc.
5. **Fisheries:** areas where both commercial and sport fisheries are active
6. **Industries and Navigation:** locations of vessel traffic, key industrial considerations (shipping lanes, pipelines, submarine cables), and outfalls, etc..



Core Data Questions

1. What are your concerns or questions about the data layers just presented?
1. Are you aware of any data that are missing from the list but available? If yes, what type of data and can you provide a point of contact from whom we could acquire that data?
1. What data gaps exist? In considering the list of identified data gaps in group discussion, what stands out as a high priority?





AOA Process Overview

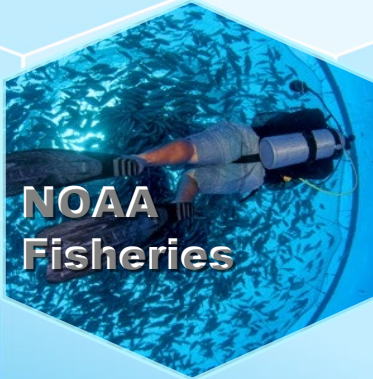


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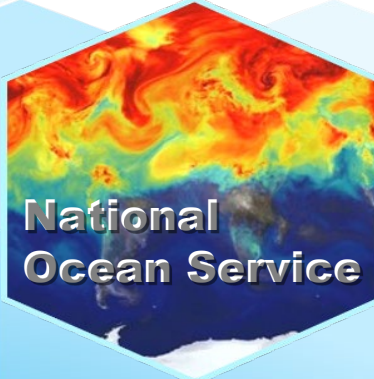


NOAA Aquaculture Program

These organizations partner across NOAA to advance sustainable aquaculture in the United States through policy, outreach, science, research, grants, and extension.



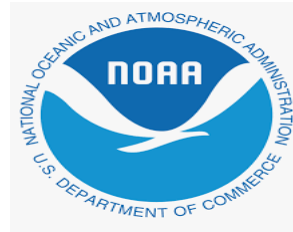
- Office of Aquaculture
- Regional Offices
- Science Centers



- National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science



- National Sea Grant College Program



AOA Interagency Working Group

- Composed of state and federal aquaculture regulatory agencies
 - **State:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Department of Natural Resources
 - **Federal:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA Fisheries

AOA Goals

- **Utilize a science-based approach to inform marine aquaculture planning**
- Meet the directives of Executive Order 13921
- Find areas that could be suitable for multiple future aquaculture projects
- Address interests and concerns regarding seaweed and invertebrate aquaculture siting
- Address the increasing demand for seafood
- Promote American seafood competitiveness, food security, economic growth while also sustaining and conserving marine resources



Key Points

- Multi-year planning process, not regulatory, no new NOAA authorities
- AOAs are *not* pre-permitted sites. Federal and state leasing and permit requirements remain the same
- In Alaska, AOAs will be sited in state waters and will support **seaweed** and **invertebrate** aquaculture (finfish farming is prohibited)
- Identification of AOA location(s) will not be made until end of NEPA process
- Aquaculture projects don't have to be located in an AOA



Credit: Mike Stekoll, University of Alaska

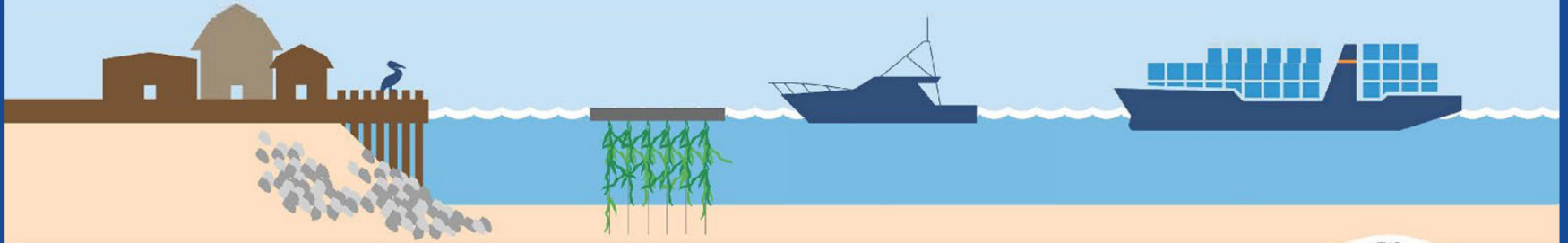


What is an Aquaculture Opportunity Area?

AOAs will expand economic opportunities in coastal and rural areas, and increase our nation's seafood security.

AOAs use the best available science to find appropriate spaces for sustainable aquaculture.

AOAs minimize interactions with other users, such as shipping, fishing, subsistence activities, and the military.



Aquaculture Opportunity Areas show high potential for commercial aquaculture. A science and community-based approach to identifying these areas helps minimize interference with other enterprises, account for current fishing patterns, subsistence and cultural activities, and protect the ecosystem.



What is the Process?

- The AOA process is anticipated to take approximately four years.
 - 2 years suitability analysis
 - 2 years environmental review (NEPA)
- Some of the products of this process include: spatial analysis (Atlas) and environmental review (NEPA).
- The AOA identification process is public driven. Public input is essential in the design and location of AOAs.



NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

Alaska AOA Process Timeline

2023-2024

June 2023



Now: Feb 2024

Coming soon!

Alaska Next Steps:

Announce start of process to identify Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in Alaska

Engagement and data collection. Gather feedback on study area parameters

RFI in October 2023; Nov/Dec three listening sessions

Finalize study areas based on public input

NCCOS data collection and modeling for siting analysis

Spring 2024 Mapping Workshops

NCCOS draft Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas; peer review

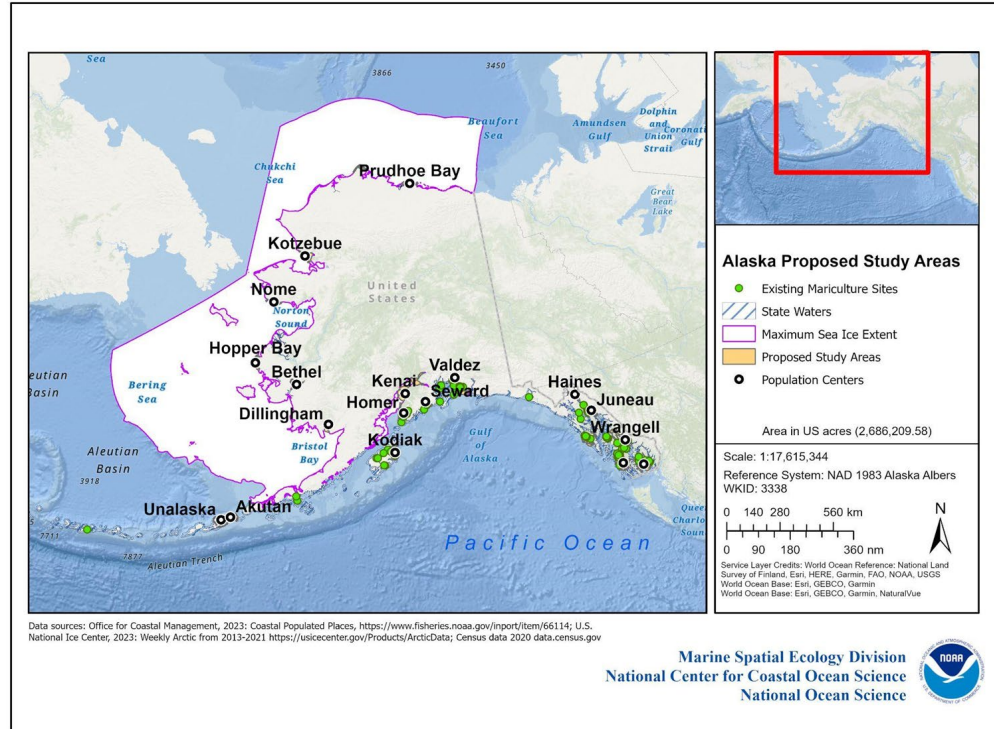
*Tasks and timeframes may shift due to resource restrictions or need



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Request for Information

- State waters within 25-mile radius of coastal population centers in Alaska (2010 census data)
- Waters that do not regularly experience significant sea ice cover (aggregate maximum sea ice extents between 2013-2021)
- Identified 16 Proposed Study Areas across Southeast, South Central and Southwest AK)



Maps for demonstration only

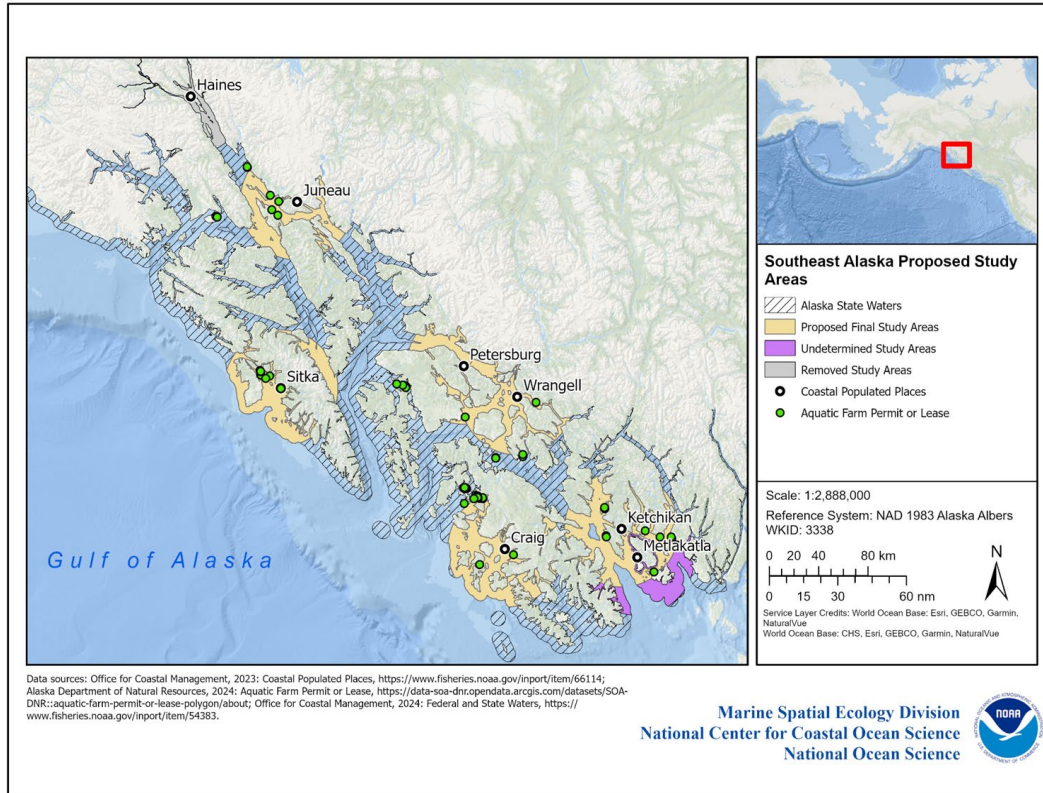


Final AOA Study Areas for Alaska

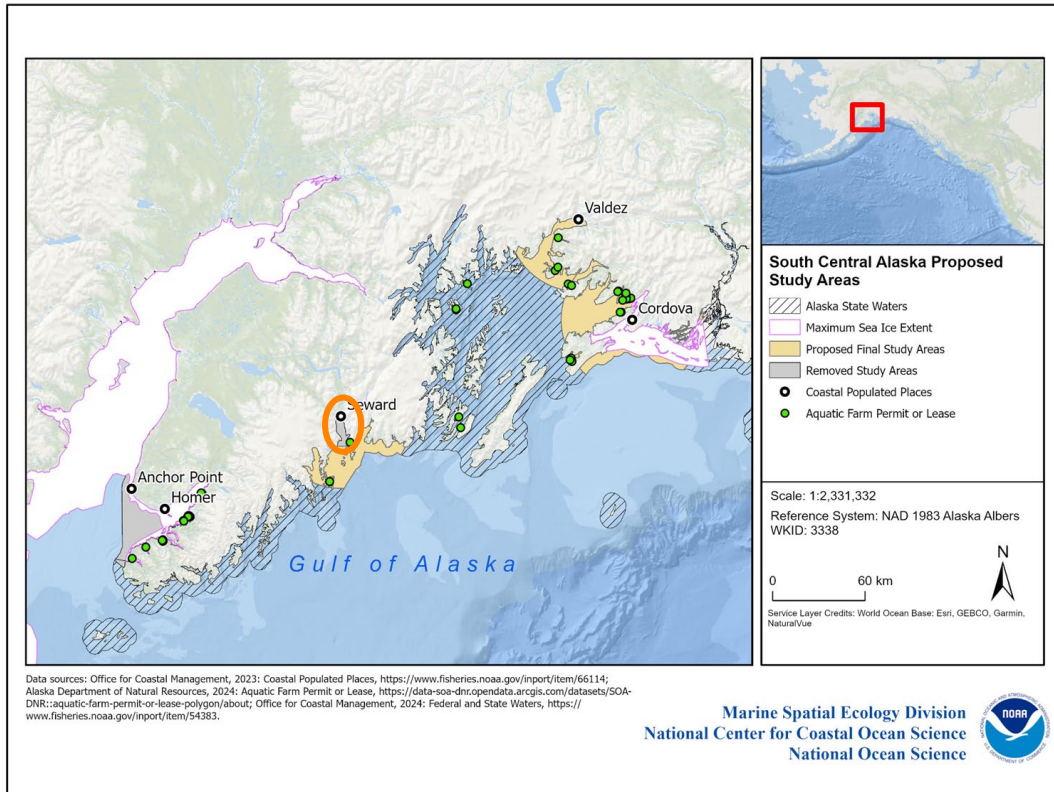


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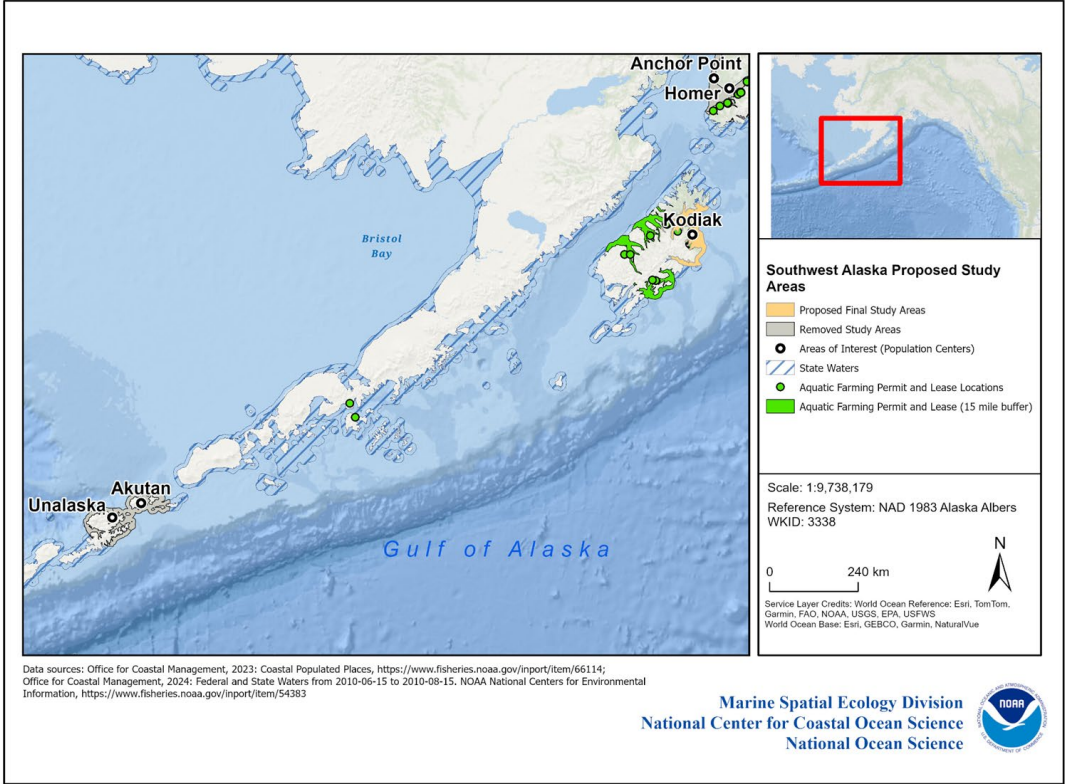
Southeast AOA Study



Southcentral AOA Study



Southwest AOA Study





Opportunities for Engagement



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Public Engagement Opportunities for AOA Identification

- **Request for Information and Listening Sessions**
- **Spatial Planning Workshops and Data Gathering**
- **Notice of Intent to Prepare NEPA and Listening Sessions**
- **Draft NEPA Review and Listening Sessions**

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act



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What's Next?



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Introduction to how we'll use Slido technology during today's workshop




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In just a few words, what's your professional relationship to aquaculture?

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Where are you coming to this workshop from?

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Audience Q&A Session

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Meet Your Neighbors



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