State of Rhode Island
Coastal Resources Management Council
Oliver H. Stedman Government Center
4808 Tower Hill Road, Suite 3
Wakefield, RI 02879-1900

(401) 783-3370
Fax (401) 783-2069

PUBLIC NOTICE

File Number: 2014-07-067 Date: January 17, 2024

This office has under consideration the application of:

Oliver Dixon
4953 South County Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813

for a State of Rhode Island modification of Assent to add: ten lines of low-profile floating oyster bags, to the existing 2.5-acre aquaculture lease located in Point Judith Pond. Further details of the proposal can be found in the attached plans.

Project Location:	Point Judith Pond
City/Town:	Narragansett
Waterway:	Eastern Point Judith Pond

Plans of the proposed work can be found attached or requested at Cstaff1@crmc.ri.gov.

In accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (Chapter 42-35 of the Rhode Island General Laws) you may request a hearing on this matter.

You are advised that if you have good reason to enter protests against the proposed work it is your privilege to do so. It is expected that objectors will review the application and plans thoroughly, visit site of proposed work if necessary, to familiarize themselves with the conditions and cite what law or laws, if any, would in their opinion be violated by the work proposed.

If you desire to protest, you must attend the scheduled hearing and give sworn testimony. A notice of the time and place of such hearing will be furnished you as soon as possible after receipt of your request for hearing. If you desire to request a hearing, to receive consideration, it should be in writing (**with your correct mailing address**, **e-mail address and valid contact number**) and be received at this office on or before February 17, 2024 .

Please email your comments/hearing requests to: cstaff1@crmc.ri.gov; or mail via USPS to: Coastal Resources Management Council; O. S. Government Center, 4808 Tower Hill Road, Rm 116; Wakefield, RI 02879.

/lat

1. Name and mailing address of individual, firm, partnership, association, academic institution, municipality, or corporation who is principally responsible for the aquaculture operation or activity; if corporation, specify and include names of all owners/partners.

Oliver Dixon - Blue Acres Aquaculture
4853 S County Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813

2. CRMC file number for the facility; new applications will be assigned a file number by CRMC. Additionally, list any past CRMC file numbers related to the current application.

CRMC File No. 2014-07-067

3. DEM Aquaculture License number (applicable if products are offered for sale); new applicants will need to obtain the DEM aquaculture license after an aquaculture assent is issued.

DEM Aquaculture License No. AQUA22000152

4. Type of facility (e.g., commercial lease site, upweller, experimental site, research, commercial viability) and nature of operation (i.e methodology used such as floating gear, submerged cages, bottom gear ect.).

Commercial aquaculture lease site using submerged cages

5. Location of facility (include aerial or chart depicting exact location)

a. Adjacent town: Narragansett
b. Water body: Point Judith Pond
c. Lat/long coordinates and size of facility:
41.401667 N; 71.500278 W
41.401667 N; 71.499556 W
41.400111 N; 71.499556 W
41.400111 N; 71.500278 W

6. Identification of all species of shellfish grown at the facility. Acknowledgement that the applicant will follow Biosecurity Board seed protocols should be included.

The species grown at this location are eastern oysters (*crassostrea virginia*). All Biosecurity Board seed protocols will continue to be followed.

7. Description of types of structures, gear and methods used at the facility (e.g., rafts, pens, cages, tanks, upwellers, docks) and their locations on the site. Include a sketch/site plan that details a cross-section of structures as they appear in the water column including proximity to surface and bottom with a depth profile at mean low water and mean high water. Include maximum number of cages proposed and the size of the cages proposed

The purpose of this application is to implement low-profile floating gear on the current lease site, similar to adjacent farms. The low-profile gear keeps the visual aspect to a minimum while allowing an increase in production.

The addition of low-profile floating gear would not be a navigational hazard due to the farm's location in the cove of Ram Island. The lines will be spaced out 20 feet, allowing boats, kayaks, paddleboards, and other recreational users to continue to access the water. The farm depth ranges from 4-8 feet from low to high tide.

Mushroom anchors will be installed from north to south in 10 lines across the lease site. Each line will be able to hold a maximum of 250 floating bags. Each bag will have 2 floats and a bridal connecting them to the long lines at each end.

8. Describe a plan for how the site will be built out, accessed, and maintained. Including the expected level of activity (seasonal, weekly, and/or daily).

The floating oyster bags will be assembled on land as we set lines and anchors on the lease site. Bags will then be transported to the farm in a few trips spanning about 2 months. The activity level will remain the same, as we will continue our weekly trips to the farm. Floating gear will alleviate any need for power washing on-site.

9. Description of the methods and equipment used to identify and mark site.

There will not be any changes to the 4 yellow corner buoys that mark the lease and state the CRMC assent number.

10. DEM Shellfish Harvesting Classification at site.

Shellfish Harvesting Classification: GA10

11. Description of practices and procedures used during the growth, harvest, storage, transportation, and sale of the cultured species. Including any offsite activities necessary for the operation.

The method of harvesting, storage, transportation, and sale of cultured species will remain the same. Floating bags will be used to hold seed oysters during the growth stage and market-sized oysters will continue to be harvested from bottom cages on the seafloor. The day-to-day husbandry of the farm will not be greatly affected. The essential farm tasks of organizing, lowering densities, and grading by size will continue. The addition of floating gear would allow us to minimize the size and number of vessels present on the water while allowing us to maintain the farm and also increase production.

12. For operations that will use floating gear:

a. Description of the mitigation or deterrent measures that will be used to minimize the potential pollution impact of birds and/or mammals.

To mitigate the potential pollution from birds, all oysters will continue to be harvested from bottom cages on the south side of the lease (ranging from 8 feet high tide to 6 feet low tide). Oysters will never be harvested directly from floating bags. Upward-facing zip ties will be

fastened on all floating gear to deter birds. Adjacent farms have been using this floating bag method without issues from bird pollution.

b. Description of a plan for re-submergence after air drying before harvest.

Please see the plan for re-submergence above. Proper re-submergence protocols will be followed.

13. Indicate the projected per unit area yield of harvestable product and the applicant's capability to carry out the proposed activities.

With this modification, the projected yield is 100,000 oysters per acre/year. Our current submerged gear system allows us to harvest around 25,000 oysters per acre/year, but our operational capacity is limited to our grow-out method.

One of the biggest challenges the farm faces is the intense fowling that occurs within the submerged gear. Due to the cumbersome nature of bottom cages, maintaining the farm has proved extremely labor-intensive. Each cage must be lifted to the surface, pulled onto the boat, stacked and organized, and left on board to dry to deter fowling. With floating cages, we could mitigate this process by flipping the cages in the water every few weeks during the normal course of work.

It is important to note that we will not be harvesting oysters from the surface of the water, that is simply where they will spend their grow-out stage. Once they are market size, we will move them to the deeper section on the south side of the farm, where we will stock them for harvest. This will allow us to continuously harvest market-sized oysters without the interference of airdrying.

14. Description of a plan for safety and security of equipment, including appropriate marking of equipment and lease area. Incorporate a storm preparedness and response plan that accounts for the safety and security of all aquaculture equipment and any measures that will be taken in the event of a significant storm or other adverse weather conditions impacting the site.

The perimeter of the farm will continue to be marked with highly visible yellow buoys with the CRMC assent number. The long lines will be held in place with 1,000 lb. mushroom anchors which are more than capable of handling the load of floating gear during significant weather. Throughout the season, we will visually asses the rating of all gear above the surface and below by diving.

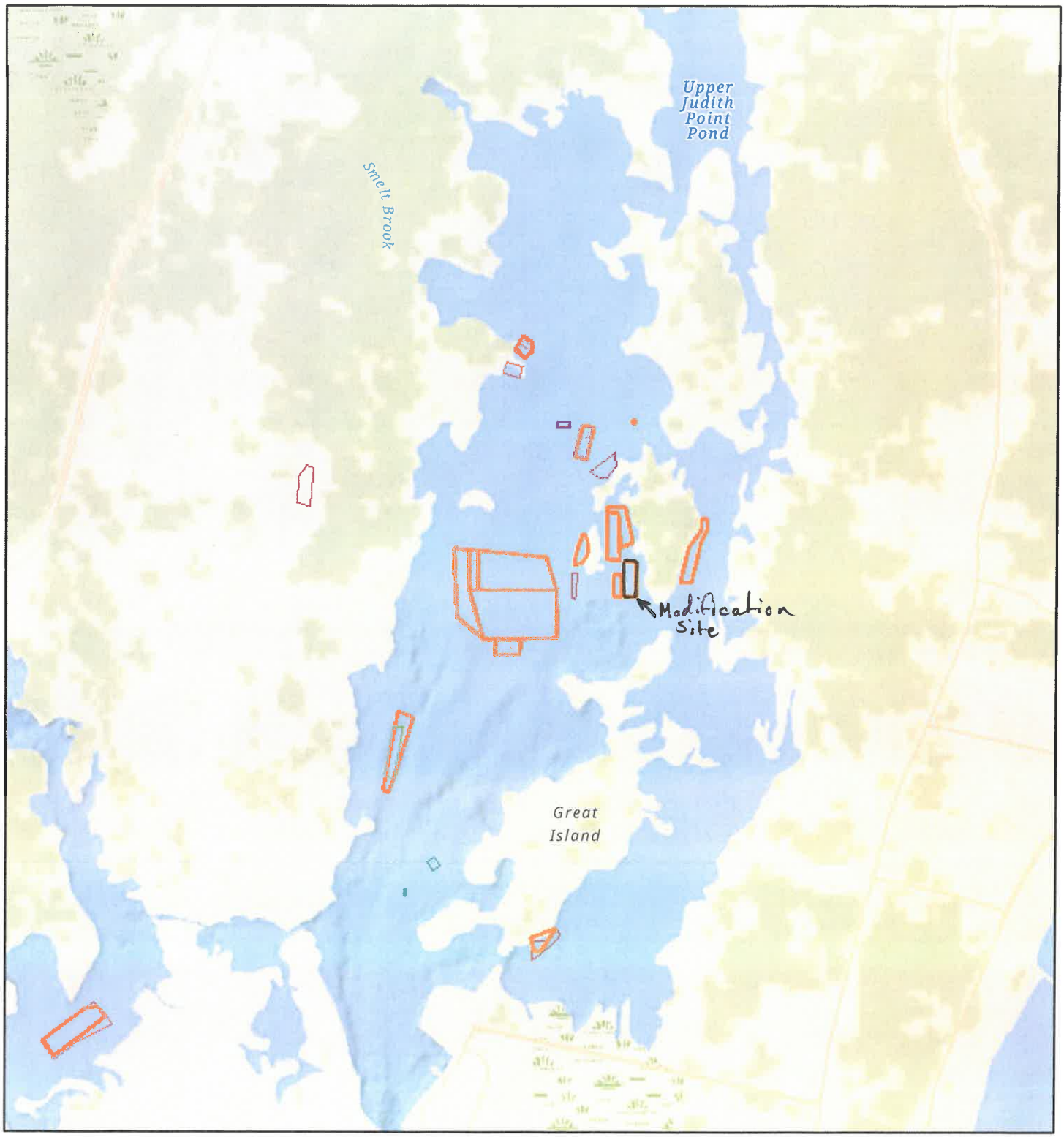
The floating gear we plan to implement allows for quick sinking below the surface in the event of severe weather. Each float will have a removable cap that can easily be filled before a storm. Sinking the gear will allow us to avoid damage to the gear and oysters, as well as make sure the gear doesn't stray from the lease site during significant storms.

15-17. All procedures for maintaining records will remain the same.

Floating bag in drying position

Floating bag in growing position

Aquaculture Location Sketch



1/4/2024, 6:37:39 AM

1:36,112

0 0.23 0.45 0.9 mi

0 0.35 0.7 1.4 km

Floating Fish Trap

Aquaculture Sites

Approved

Expanded

PD App

PN App

Proposed

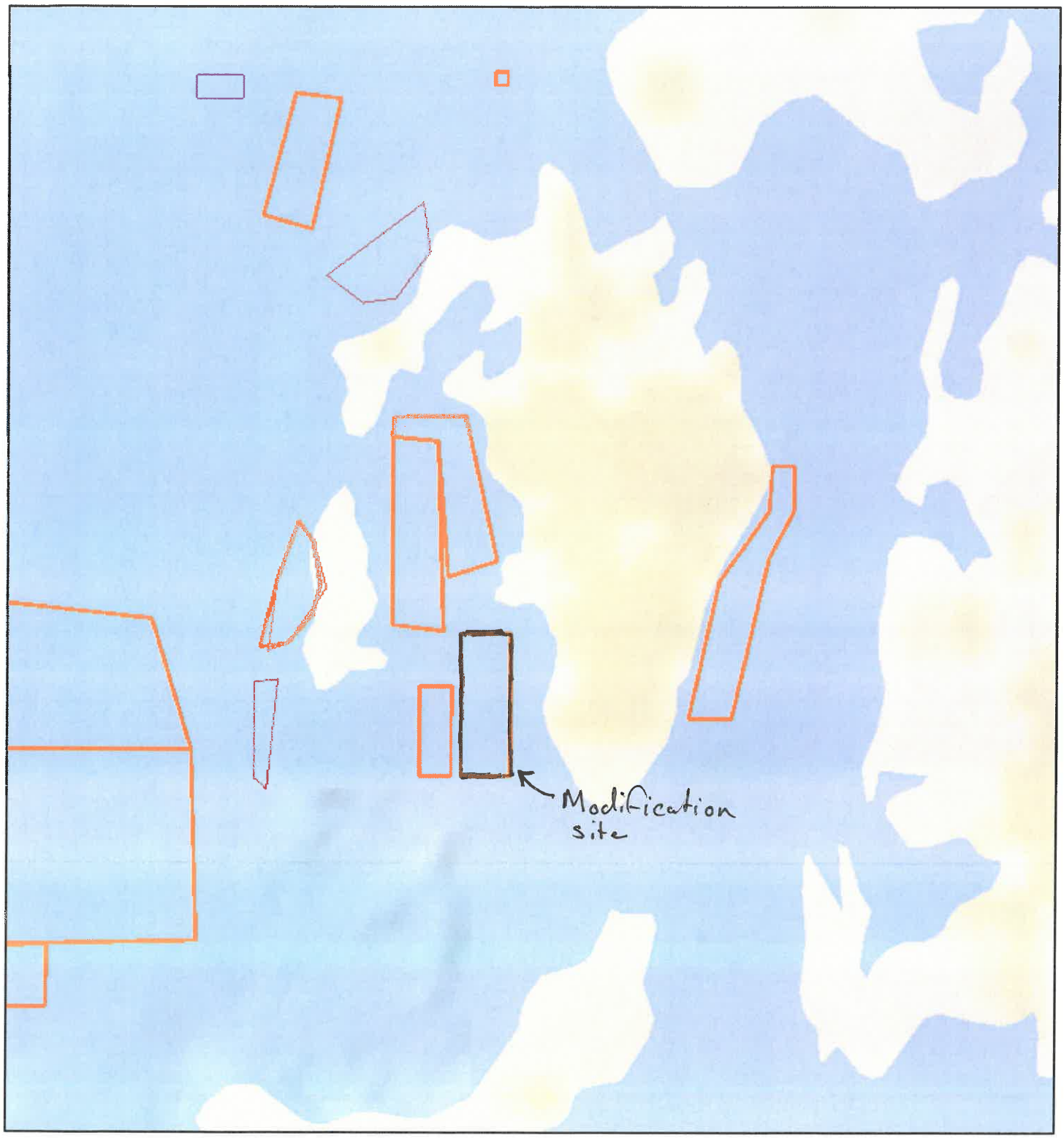
Withdrawn/Expired

NOAA NGDC, Esri, Garmin, NaturalVue, University of Rhode Island, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS, RI Division of Fish & Widlife / Marine Fisheries / Julia Livermore

Applicant

NOAA NGDC, Esri, Garmin, NaturalVue | RI Division of Fish & Widlife / Marine Fisheries / Julia Livermore | Esri Community Maps Contributors, University of Rhode Island, Esri, TomTom, Garmin,

Aquaculture Location Sketch



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0 0.07 0.15 0.3 km

Floating Fish Trap

Aquaculture Sites

Approved

Expanded

PD App

PN App

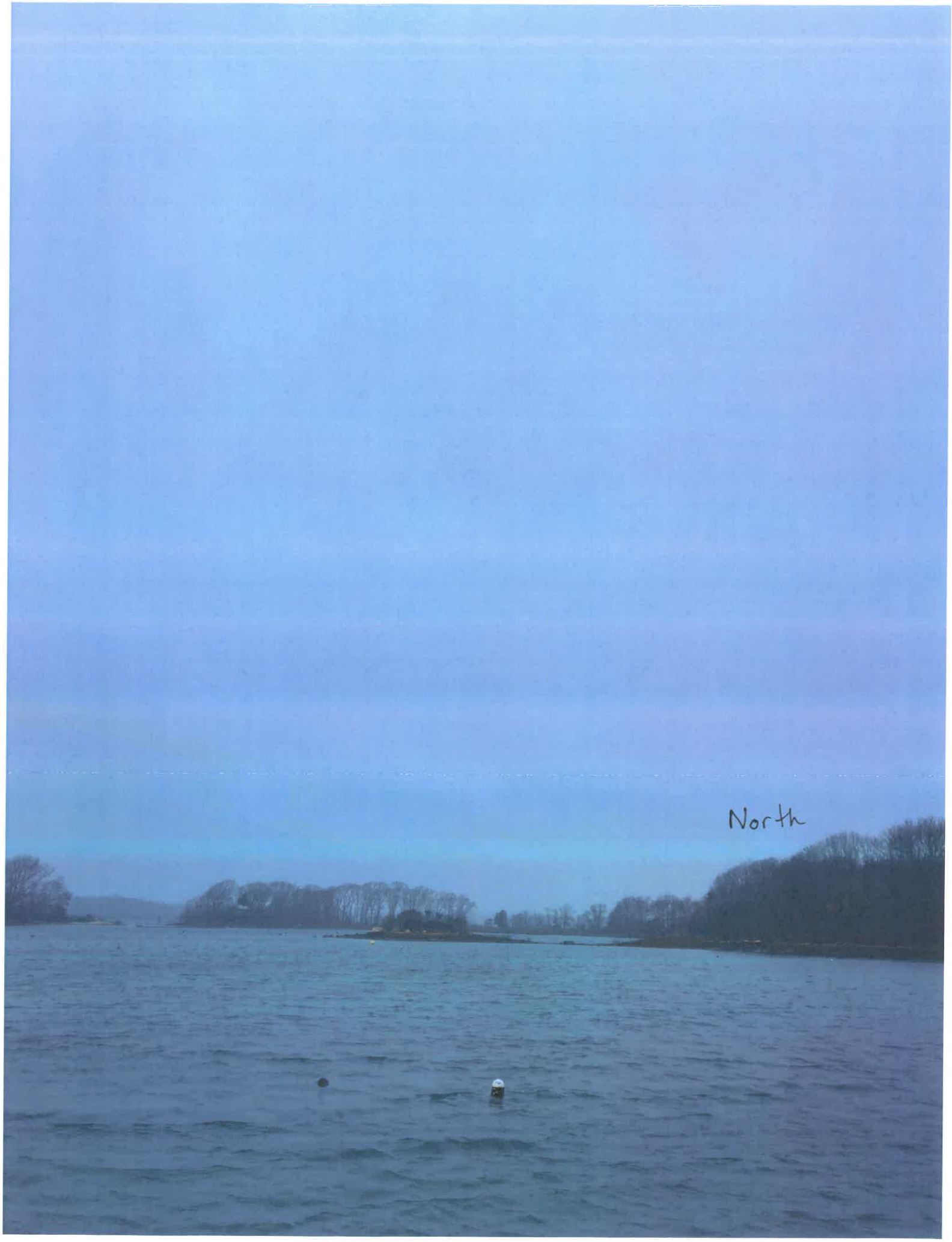
Proposed

Withdrawn/Expired

NOAA NGDC, Esri, Garmin, NaturalVue, RI Division of Fish & Widlife / Marine Fisheries / Julia Livermore, Esri Community Maps Contributors, University of Rhode Island, MassGIS, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

Applicant


Find address or place
Modification Site
0.2mi
41.402631 -71.500595 Degrees


North

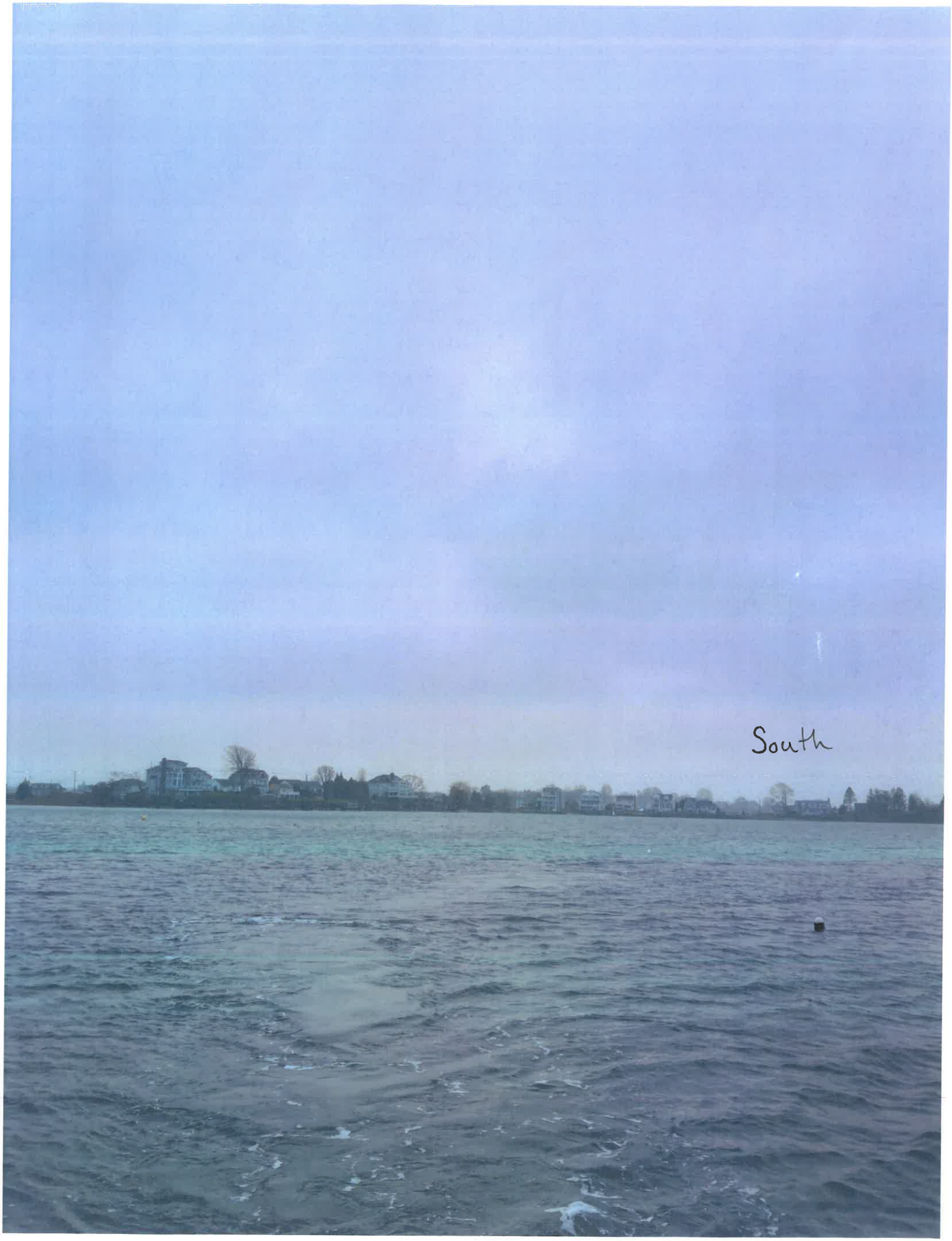
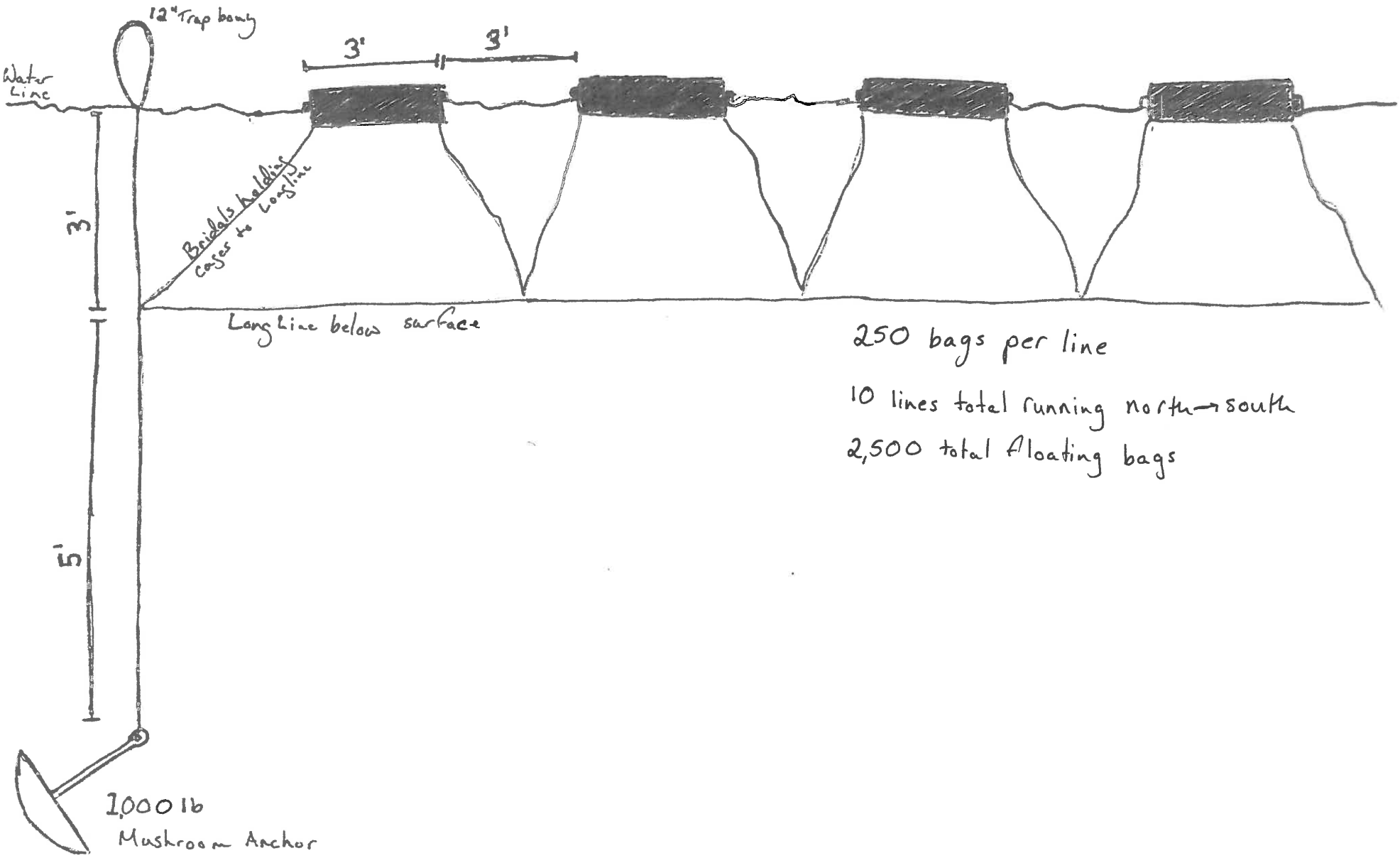

South

Diagram 3

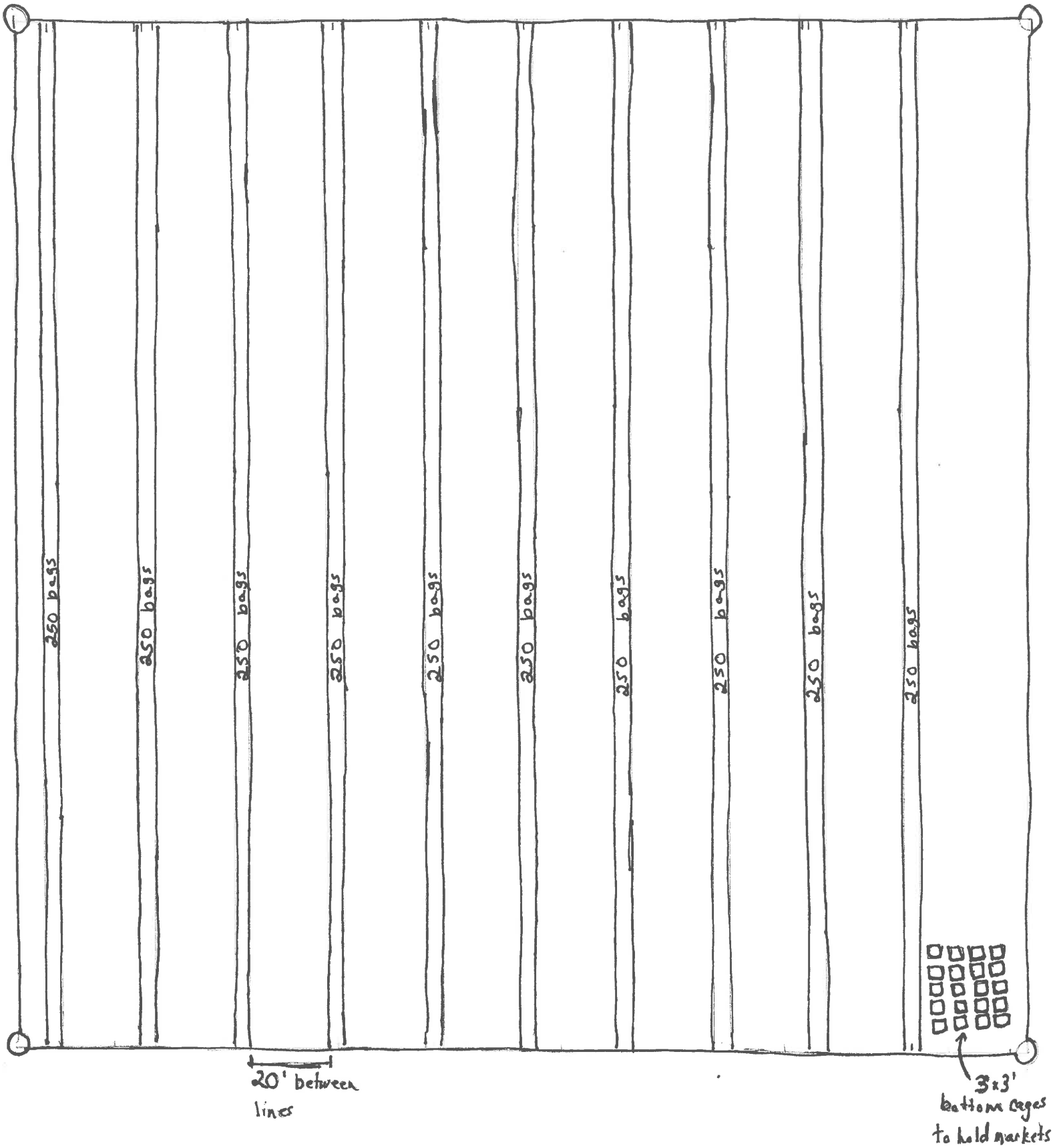


250 bags per line

10 lines total running north → south

2,500 total floating bags

North


250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
250 bags
20' between lines
3x3' bottom cages to hold markets

South