



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: 2025-06-013 Date: July 14, 2025

This office has under consideration the application of:

Thomas Blank
100 Emmanuel Drive
Portsmouth, RI 02871

for a State of Rhode Island Assent to construct and maintain: a reconfiguration and modification of the two current aquaculture sites, CRMC#2004-09-146 and #2019-10-057, into one combined 6.33 acre site for the cultivation of eastern oysters using floating cages and re-oriented 90° to be perpendicular to the shoreline. No additional acreage or floating cages are requested beyond what is currently permitted between the two existing sites. See attached application for details.

Project Location:	Narragansett Bay - West Passage
Adjacent Town:	North Kingstown
Related File#s	Preliminary Determination #2025-03-056
Waterway:	South of Rome Point, North of Greene Point

Plans of the proposed work can be found attached to this notice 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 to 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 **August 14, 2025**.

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



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JUN 02 2025

COASTAL RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR ASSENT MODIFICATION

Assent/Permit Number: _____ (including extensions)
Expiration Date: 2025-06-03
Name of Assent Holder: Thomas Blanke
Location of Project: West Passage Narragansett Bay
City/Town: North Kingstown Plat: _____
Lot: _____

Name of Present Owner: Thomas Blanke
Mailing Address: 100 Emmanuel Drive
City/Town: Portsmouth RI State: Rhode Island
Zip: 02871
Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____
Abutters: _____

I hereby certify that the names and addresses of adjacent property owners whose property adjoins the project site are accurate and current as of the date of application. If said names and addresses are found to be not accurate and/or current, any subsequent Assent may become Null and Void. Signed: _____

Describe the proposed modification(s): Combine the two lease sites into one lease.

Reason: To reconfigure the site to accommodate all floating gear.

What state of construction is the project in: _____

Thomas Blanke

Owner Name (PRINT)

[Signature]

Owner's Signature (SIGN)

Note: The applicant acknowledges by evidence of their signature that they have reviewed the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Program, and have, where possible adhered to the policies and standards of the program. The applicant also acknowledges by evidence of their signature that to the best of their knowledge the information contained in the application is true and valid. The filing of false information can result in the Coastal Resources Management Council revoking State Assent. Applicant requires that as a condition to the granting of this assent, members of the CRMC or its staff shall be access to the applicant's property to make on-site inspections to insure compliance with the assent. This application is made under oath and subject to penalties of perjury. 5/00

Aquaculture Operations
Plan Form

Anyone conducting aquaculture operations in RI must comply with all applicable CRMC regulations (*Coastal Resources Management Program* §§ 1.3.1(A) and 1.3.1(K)) and DEM regulations, as set forth in "*Aquaculture of Marine Species in RI Waters*." Plans provided to the CRMC will be available for DEM review.

Modifications to the permit must follow the CRMC process for modification of assent. Separate, individual plans shall be developed and submitted for each aquaculture site/facility (i.e., one for each lease site, one for each upweller location, etc.); provided, however, that if lease sites are contiguous, or part of a single, unified operation, the overall site can be covered by a single plan. Operations Plans shall address each of the items listed below, as applicable, following the format set forth below.

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.

Name: Thomas D. Blank

If applicable, names of all owners/partners of corporation:

Street Address: 100 Emmanuel Drive

City/Town: Portsmouth

State: Rhode Island

Zip code: 02871



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 number: 2019-10-057, 2004-09-146

Previous CRMC file numbers:

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 number, if applicable: 24001519

4. Select the *type of facility*:

☐ Commercial lease site ☐ Upweller ☐ Experimental site ☐ Research ☐ Commercial Viability

5. Describe the *nature of your operation* (i.e methodology used such as floating gear, submerged cages, bottom gear, etc): floating gear

6. *Location of facility*

a. Adjacent towns: North Kingstown

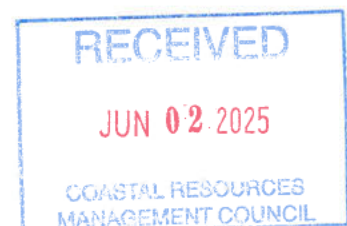
b. Water body: West Passage of Narragansett Bay

c. Lat/long coordinates: NW(41.540847-71.421881) NE(41.540847-71.418727)

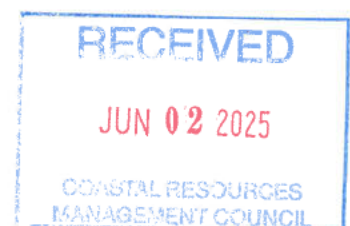
SW(41.539916-71.421795) SE(41.540012-71.418727)

d. Size of facility: 6.33 acres

e. Insert aerial image or chart showing exact location: See attached



7. Identify all species of shellfish grown at your facility: (C.V.) Oysters and Mussels
8. Do you acknowledge that you will follow Biosecurity Board seed protocols: Yes
9. Describe the types of structures, gear, and methods used and the locations of each on your site (e.g., rafts, pens, cages, tanks, upwellers, docks): floating cages as well as bottom dwelling cages along the southern edge to house market oysters for 5 day purge time.
 - a. Maximum number of cages proposed: 300 floating cages.
 - b. Size of cages proposed: 4 Bay Flow and Grow Oyster Cages
 - c. Insert image of 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: See attached.



10. Describe how the site will be ***built out, accessed, and maintained***. Including the expected level of activity (seasonal, weekly, and/or daily): All gear and oysters are brought out to the lease site by my work vessel that is moored at the Wickford Town Wharf. The gear is tended to throughout the entirety of the year. During the warmer months, gear is flipped over to be air dried bi-weekly. December through March while temperatures frequently dip below freezing, the gear and oysters are dried and handled less frequently.

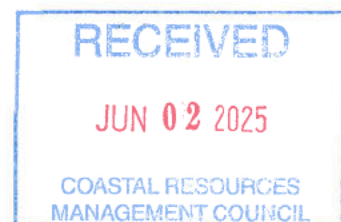
11. Describe the ***methods and equipment used to identify and mark the site***: Each corner marker consists of a 100lb or greater mushroom anchor on the sea floor with twenty five feet of rope going up to the surface. Attached to the rope on the surface is a large buoy that is identifiable by radar that includes the CRMC assent number in bold lettering. On the northern edge of the lease, all buoys including corner markers are the color green to help identify the established channel between my lease and the lease to the north. The buoys to the south including the southern corner markers are yellow to indicate caution to other boaters. All identifying markers will have approval of the Coastguard.



12. DEM ***Shellfish Harvesting Classification*** at site: Approved GA7

13. Describe the ***practices and procedures used*** during the growth, harvest, storage, transportation, and sale of the cultured species. Including any offsite activities necessary for the operation: Every spring, seed is purchased from a hatchery at a large enough size that can be brought out directly to the site and into the floating gear cages. These oysters will be handled routinely throughout the year until they are large enough for harvest. Most of these oysters will be ready to be sold in 18 months to 2 years after deployment on the site. Market sized oysters are separated out and counted on a weekly

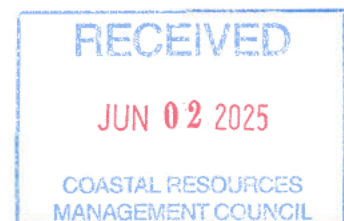
basis as needed. Each bag of oysters is transported to the Ocean State Shellfish Cooperative in a large cooler that resides in the bed of my truck. Each week's shipment is properly tagged per DEM regulation, and all Vibrio guidelines are followed.



14. For operations that will use floating gear

- a. Describe the mitigation or deterrent measures that will be used to minimize the potential pollution impact of birds and/or mammals: All cages will be fit with an appropriate bird deterrent. During the times of bird migration, all oysters that are sorted for harvest will be placed in bottom caged for at least 5 days to purge any possible bird pollutants. There will be records kept of these purged oysters in the daily operation log.
- b. Describe your plan for re-submergence after air drying before harvest: All oysters after air drying shall remain submerged for at least 5 days before harvest. All activity is logged in a daily operations planner.

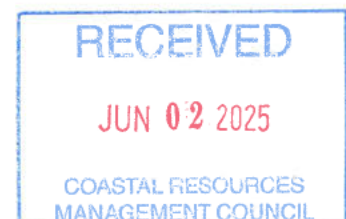
15. Indicate the ***projected per unit area yield*** of harvestable product and the ***applicant's capability*** to carry out the proposed activities: The projected yield of harvestable product is about 1,000,000 oysters per year. The vessel being used to carry out the day-to-day work has been purposely built to efficiently tend to, and harvest oysters. With fifteen years of oyster farming experience, I have become efficient enough to make this my full-time career.



16. Describe your *plan for safety and security of equipment*, including appropriate marking of your equipment and lease area. Incorporate a *storm preparedness and response plan* that accounts for the safety and security of all aquaculture equipment:
- a. What measures will you take in the event of a significant storm or other adverse weather conditions impacting the site: The use of 200 lb mushroom anchors combined with the number of smaller and lighter 4 bay cages per line ensure security under most sea conditions. With the use of mushroom anchors vs screw in anchors, if a storm does manage to move the gear it can be pulled back into place using the work vessel once sea conditions in the area return to normal. Gear will be checked on the day of or following day of a major storm, depending on sea conditions.

18. Procedures for Maintaining Records

- a. For operations using seed acquired from **out-of-state**, describe your notification, disease certification, and labeling/tagging procedures: Per CRMC requirements, the Aquaculture coordinator will be notified at least 5 business days prior to intended delivery date of seed. Included in the notification will be a current disease test from the hatchery that includes all necessary information of the hatchery (license#, location of hatchery). All seed that enters the lease is recorded and logged in both paper logbook and excel sheet to accurately mark exact location in the lease.



- b. For upwellers/seed-growing facilities in prohibited waters, describe procedures, including frequency of grading, with particular reference to requirements that seed must be removed before it exceeds maximum "seed" size threshold (<32 mm for oysters, <20 mm for quahogs):
- c. For operations using seed from prohibited waters, or operations using shellfish obtained from a third party that originated as seed from prohibited waters, describe in detail your demarcation methods and record-keeping practices used at the lease site to ensure that animals have been cultured at least six (6) months in approved waters, prior to sale.
 - i. Describe your detailed record-keeping practices specifying date, source, average size, and

amount of seed: ii. Date and size and amount at purchase will be logged in a spreadsheet.

As seed is split down and handled, the spreadsheet will be updated keeping an accurate

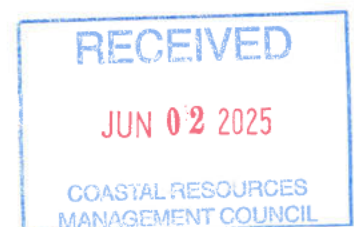
description of all the oysters throughout the gear.

Describe your protocols and associated record keeping for tracking product, e.g., use of

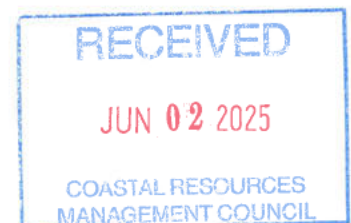
tagged/numbered cages and/or bags, use of marked trawls, and/or use of marked, segregated

portions of lease sites: iii. All activity is logged in a spreadsheet mimicking an aerial view of

the farm and updated daily.



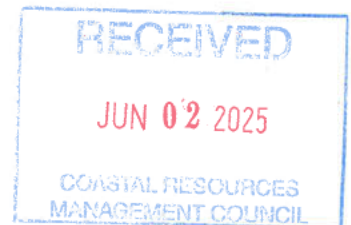
Describe your process for notifying the third party that seed came from prohibited waters, the date of that transfer, and the remaining time needed to maintain the animals in approved prior to sale: All seed purchased will have approval from Aquaculture Coordinator prior to deployment into the water.



Category B Tidal Aquaculture Form

Anyone conducting aquaculture operations in RI must comply with all applicable CRMC regulations (*Coastal Resources Management Program* §§ 1.3.1(A)(1) and 1.3.1(K)(3)(a)) and DEM regulations, as set forth in “*Aquaculture of Marine Species in RI Waters*.” Applications provided to the CRMC will be available for DEM review. Category B applications shall address each of the items listed below, as applicable, following the format set forth below.

1. Demonstrate the need for the proposed activity or alteration: The need for this modification is to combine the two leases into one continuous lease. To better utilize the combined acreage and fit my already approved 300 floating cages. The current 2.3 acres of approved floating gear is 90% occupied with 84 cages. More space is needed to efficiently utilize all 300 approved floating cages.
2. Demonstrate that all applicable local zoning ordinances, building codes, flood hazard standards, and all safety codes, fire codes, and environmental requirements have or will be met; local approvals are required for activities as specifically prescribed for nontidal portions of a project in Sections 1.3.1(B), 1.3.1(C), 1.3.1(F), 1.3.1(H), 1.3.1(I), 1.3.1(K), 1.3.1(M), 1.3.1(O) and 1.3.1(Q) of this part; for projects on state land, the state building official, for the purposes of this section, is the building official.



3. Describe the boundaries of the coastal waters and land area that is anticipated to be affected. The area to be affected is the southern area of the Rome Point cove.
4. Demonstrate that the alteration or activity will not result in significant impacts on erosion and/or deposition processes along the shore and in tidal waters: All floating cages will be at a minimum of 500 feet from the nearest shoreline per floating gear guidelines to minimize any shoreline disturbance.

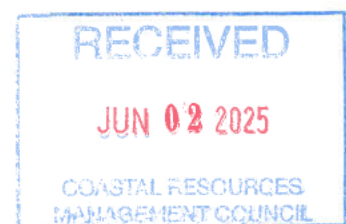
5. Demonstrate that the alteration or activity will not result in significant impacts on the abundance and diversity of plant and animal life: According to the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association, aquaculture operations including the proposed activity become temporary sanctuaries to juvenile fish and aquatic plant life supporting local biodiversity.
6. Demonstrate that the alteration will not unreasonably interfere with, impair, or significantly impact existing public access to, or use of, tidal waters and/or the shore: This proposed action is over 500 feet from shore minimizing impact to shoreline activities. Also, the change in orientation to the site results in a navigable channel to access the shoreline to the north and south of the proposed site.
7. Demonstrate that the alteration will not result in significant impacts to water circulation, flushing, turbidity, and sedimentation: Due to the openness of that area of the bay, no significant changes to circulation, flushing, or turbidity will occur.



8. Demonstrate that there will be no significant deterioration in the quality of the water in the immediate vicinity as defined by DEM: Due to the nature of oysters as they are efficient at filtering the water, the water quality in the immediate area will increase.

9. Demonstrate that the alteration or activity will not result in significant impacts to areas of historic and archaeological significance: The area is approved for shellfish harvesting by DEM and is not accessed by any archaeological site.

10. Demonstrate that the alteration or activity will not result in significant conflicts with water dependent uses and activities such as recreational boating, fishing, swimming, navigation, and commerce: The area proposed is not highly trafficked by recreational or commercial vessels. The proposed site is over 500 feet from shore to not interfere with swimming or recreational boating. The area is dead bottom with little to no commercially harvested species. With the change in orientation, there will be less hazards for boaters trying to access the shore. The proposed site is not located in an area that is highly trafficked by boaters, minimizing any navigational hazard.



11. Demonstrate that measures have been taken to minimize any adverse scenic impact: The cages currently used are 1/3 smaller than all other shelved floating cages in the area. With the smaller size they are less visually impactful. The system used along with these 4 bay cages keeps them from winding up on the beach due to the more robust material used vs other small profile gear. The change in orientation to the proposed site lessens visual impact by setting the gear perpendicular to the nearest shoreline.

Additional Category B Requirements:

1. Describe the location and size of the area proposed: Combining the two lease sites in the southern portion of the Rome Point cove and adjusting the orientation for a total of 6.3 acres.
2. Identify the species to be managed or cultivated within the permitted area and over which the applicant shall have exclusive right: Oysters and Blue Mussels.
3. Describe the method or manner of management or cultivation to be utilized, including whether the activities proposed are experimental, commercial, or for personal use: Floating cages for commercial aquaculture.



4. Provide such other information as may be necessary for the Council to determine

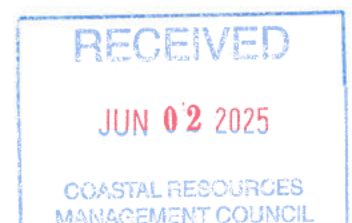
- a. The compatibility of the proposal with other existing and potential uses of the area and areas contiguous to it, including navigation, recreation, and fisheries: The area is not commonly used by recreational vessels or by vessels commercially fishing for other aquatic species. The already approved channel minimizes any impact to any vessel that may navigate the area.

- b. *In addition, please provide the following necessary information as required in the 1000' Contiguous Area Map:*

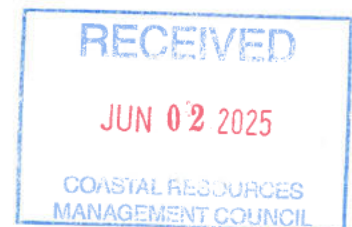
- *list of all property owners within 1000':*
- *list of all approved aquaculture leases within 1000': See attached.*

- *list of CRMC designated ROW(s) within 1000':*

- *CRMC water use types within 1000':* ○ *any shoreline(s) within 1000' which have been preserved for conservation, recreation and/or public access through easements, purchased by the state or municipality, or are owned by a land trust or state-recognized conservation organization:*



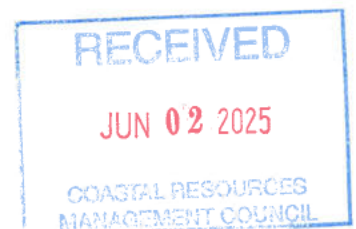
- c. The degree of exclusivity required for aquacultural activities on the proposed site. *(In support of this requirement and in accordance with 1.3.1(K)(b), the applicant must include a plan demonstrating reasonable public ingress and egress to and from the proposed site for traditional water activities such as boating, swimming, and fishing. The ingress/egress plan may be notated on a copy of the site plan or other map.*



The ingress/egress plan may be notated on a copy of the site plan or other map. You can insert that image here:

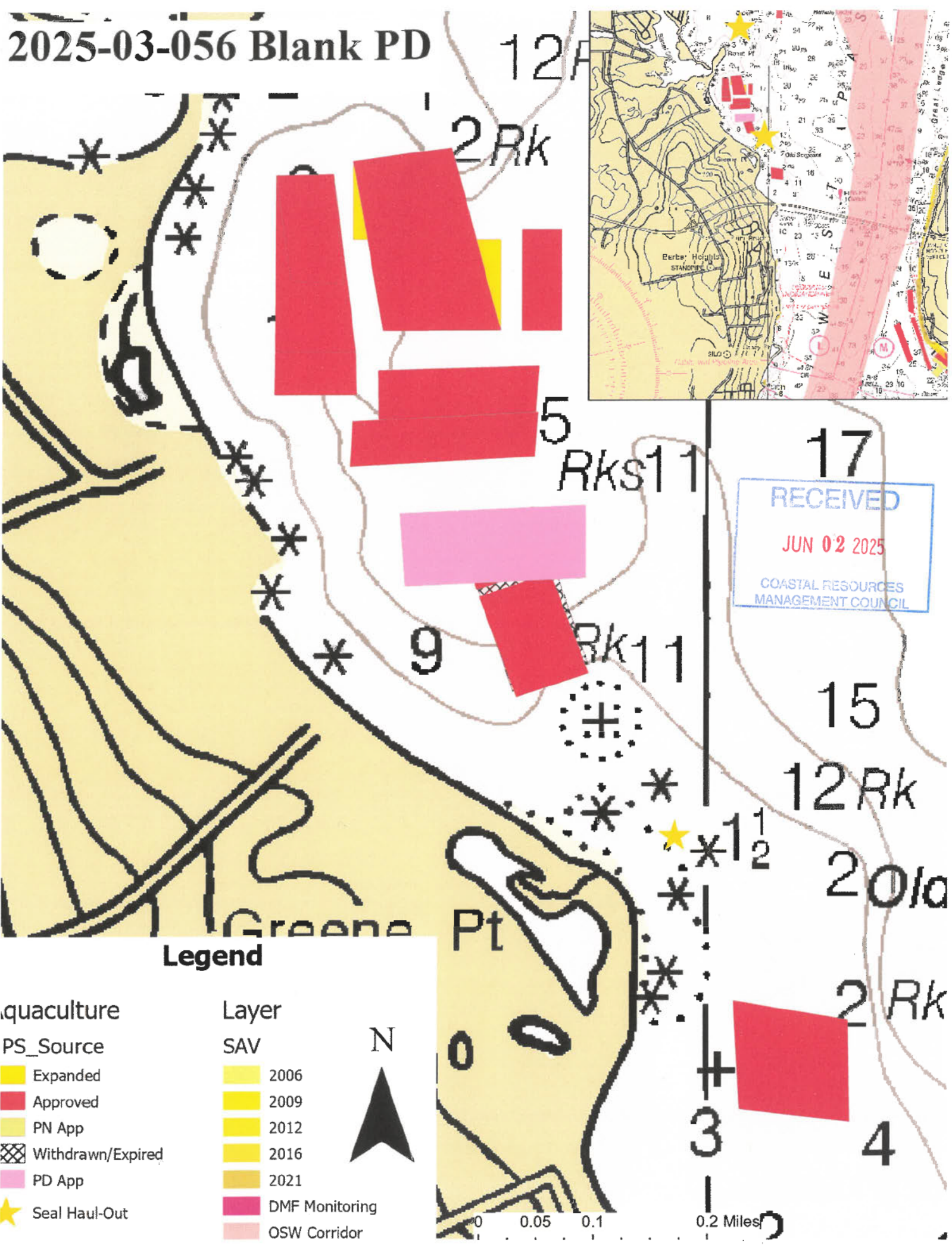


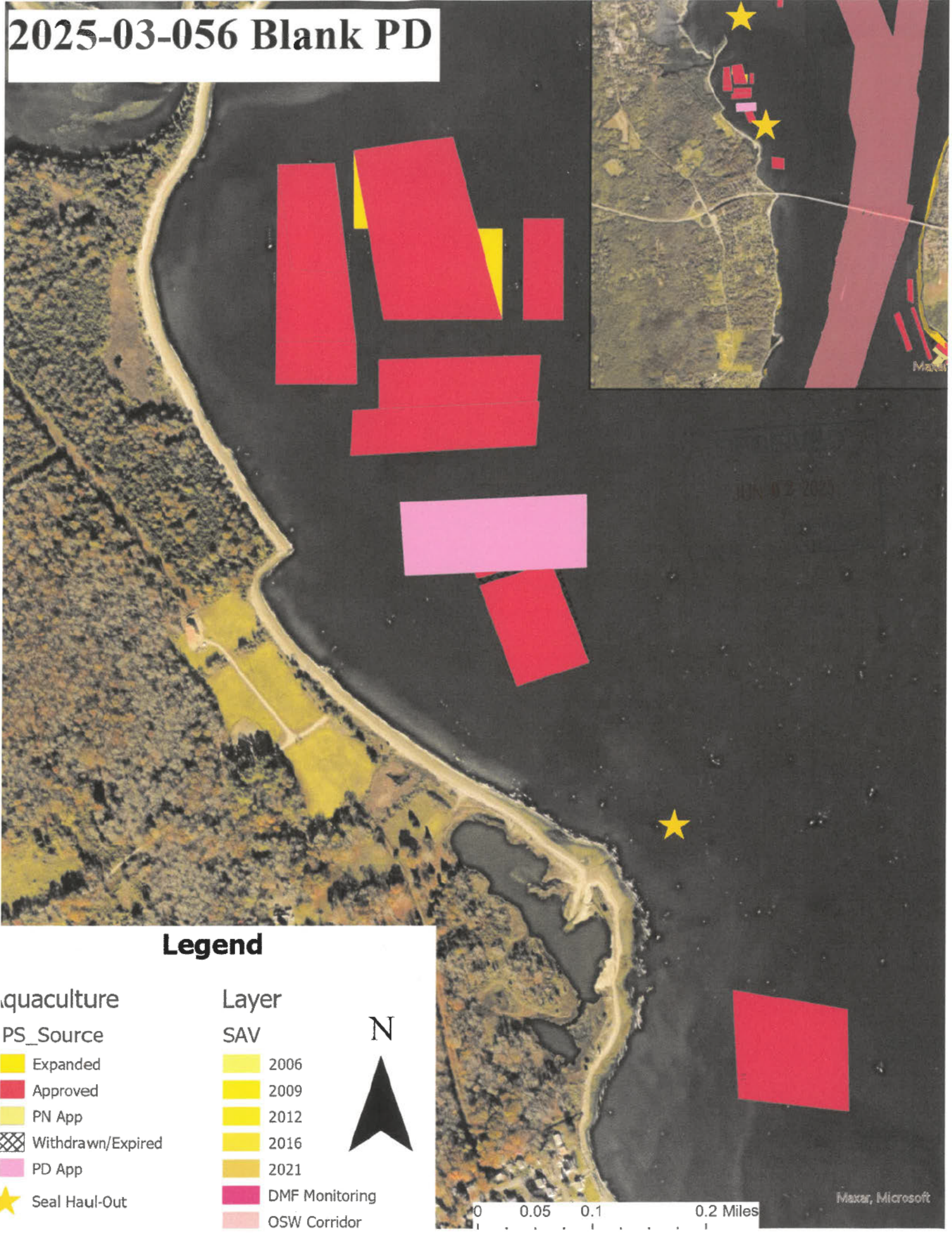
- d. The safety and security of equipment, including appropriate marking of the equipment and/or lease area: Each line of floating gear has one 200 lb mushroom anchor at each end with 50 ft of line before the first cage. Each line will have a maximum of 10 cages to keep the amount of drag during a storm to a minimum. Each cage is tied to the mainline by bridal attachment on either end of the cage ensuring its security on the mainline. All four corners of the site will be marked with the appropriate buoys and labeling of assent number in bold letters. The northern corner markers will be green to help indicate to boaters the channel between this site and the site directly to the north.
- e. The projected per unit area yield of harvestable product: Approximately 1,000,000 oysters can be potentially grown and harvested annually out of the proposed modification.
- f. The cumulative impact of a particular aquaculture proposal in an area, in addition to other aquaculture operations already in place. *(At minimum, applicants should consider the impact of any other aquaculture operation within 1000' of the proposed site.):* Because the proposed modification does not significantly increase the size or location of the current operation there will be no significant impact to other aquaculture operations in the area.
- g. The capability of the applicant to carry out the proposed activities: The vessel currently used for working both leases is purpose built for the gear proposed in this modification. I have owned and operated this oyster farm for the past 5 years as well as co-owning a second farm two years prior to that. Now owning just this farm, all of my focus and time on the water gets put into making this farm successful.

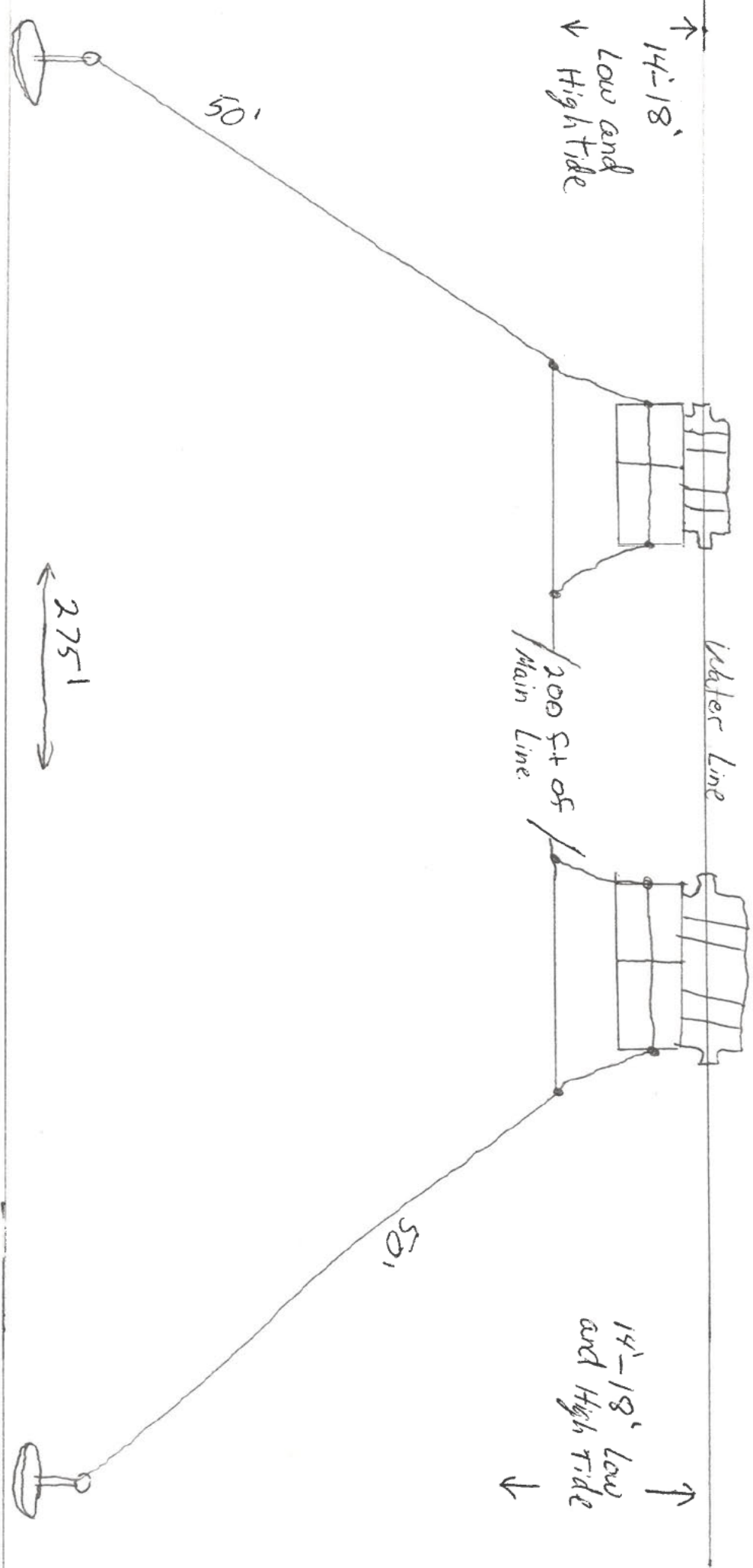


- h. The impact of the proposed activities on the scenic qualities of the area: More floating gear will always have an impact on the overall scenery. The proposed cages to be used are 2/3 the size of the cages used by the other farmers in the area resulting in less visual impact per acre than other farms. With the smaller footprint in the water, these cages allow the gear to be more resistant to being moved during storms which prevents them from washing up on the beach and causing not only an eye sore but a loss in product.



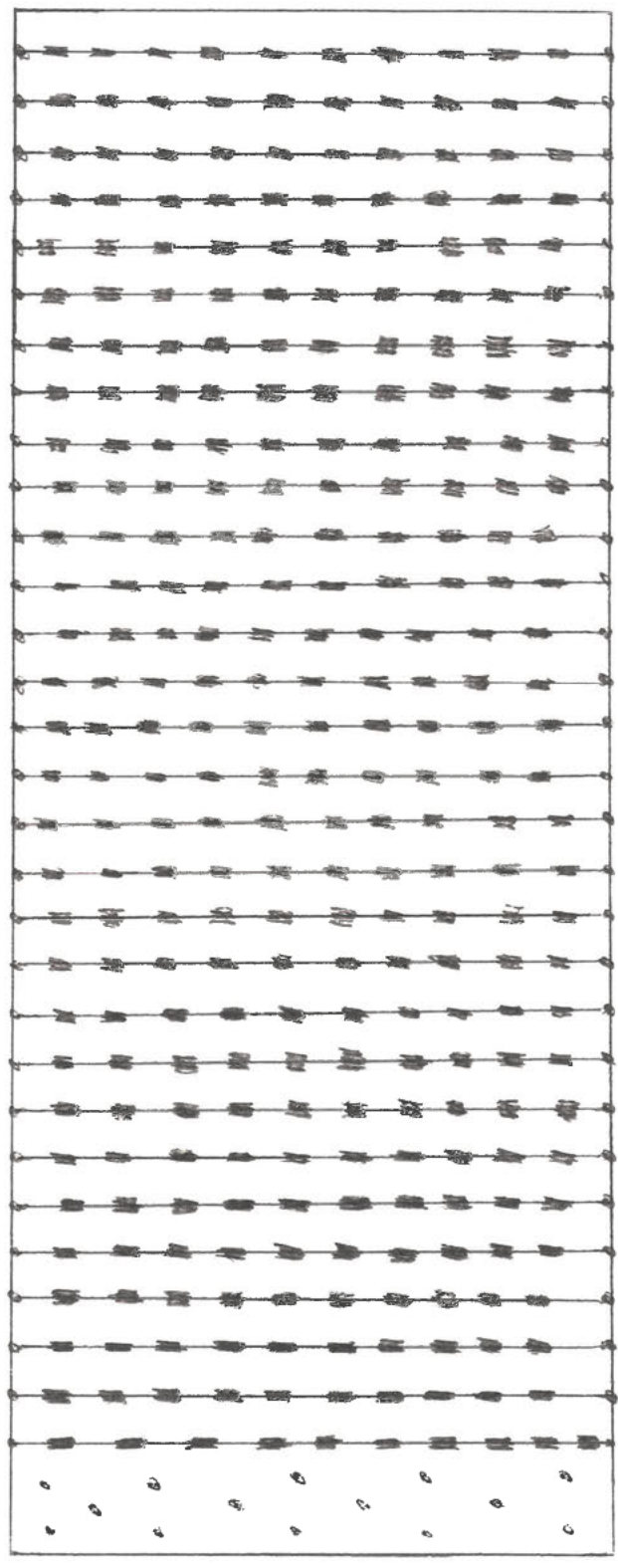






(41.540944 - 71.418727)

(41.540847 - 71.421881)



(41.540012 - 71.418727)

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30 rows of 10 cages
in each floating gear line.

Bottom cages on the
western edge.

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COASTAL RECREATION
MANAGEMENT DIVISION

