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Law School News

RWU Law Marine Programs Included in \$1.2M Aquaculture Research Grant

Major National Sea Grant initiative will directly engage RWU Law students in helping Rhode Island's shellfish industry



A Rhode Island shellfish

farm. Image Credit: On the Water, LLC
October 7, 2019 Michael M. Bowden

BRISTOL, R.I., October 7, 2019 – The Marine Affairs Institute at Roger Williams University School of Law and Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program, housed at the law school, has been included in a \$1.2 million award to promote the growth of Southern New England shellfish aquaculture, as part of a major National Sea Grant initiative.

The program aims to promote collaborative aquaculture projects in the region using “new science-based tools and information,” while also engaging “the public, press and decision makers about the social, economic and environmental effects of the industry.”

“We are excited to be a part of this effort by the National Sea Grant program to advance sustainable aquaculture in the United States,” said Julia Wyman, director of the Marine Affairs

Institute at Roger Williams and Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to work with multiple partners in New England to best inform the growth of Southern New England shellfish aquaculture.”

Wyman noted that RWU Law students will directly benefit from the award.

“We’ll be able to hire several law students to work on this project through our Rhode Island Sea Grant Law Fellow Program,” she said. “We look forward to providing sound legal and policy research to complement the scientific and economic research related to shellfish aquaculture.”

These students will become integral parts of this research, gaining first-hand experience in how governing laws impact the industry.

“This project will engage our students directly in helping Rhode Island shellfish businesses understand how legal requirements apply to them and in helping regulators modernize the rules governing this growing industry in the region,” explained Read Porter, senior staff attorney for the Marine Affairs Institute and Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program. “This hands-on work will let the Law Fellows make a direct and tangible impact on the world while they’re also developing their legal skills—a win-win for them and for our stakeholders.”

The funding is part of a \$16 million package of awards announced by National Sea Grant in September. The awards will collectively fund 42 research projects nationwide aimed at advancing sustainable aquaculture in the United States. All awards require a 50 percent match of non-federal funds. RWU Law’s proposal was one of 42 projects chosen from among 136 proposals requesting more than \$52 million in federal funds.

The project will be led by Connecticut Sea Grant and the University of Connecticut. In addition to RWU Law, partners include Rhode Island Sea Grant and the University of Rhode Island; Woods Hole Sea Grant; the New England Aquarium; the UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR); the National Marine Fisheries Service office in Milford, Conn.; Clark University and the George Perkins Marsh Institute.