Aquaculture on Sovereignty Submerged Land Leases

Sovereignty submerged land leases are lands owned by the State of Florida which are leased by aquaculturists for the commercial cultivation of native shellfish. Located throughout the state, aquaculture use zones are blocks of lease parcels arranged in a grid pattern. In general, each parcel is approximately two acres in size.

All aquaculture leases are uniformly marked according to the U.S. Coast Guard Private Aids to Navigation requirements.

- Water activities, such as swimming, boating and fishing are allowed on aquaculture leases as long as gear is not damaged.
- Each aquaculture use zone has easements which can be used by the general public for navigating through the lease areas.
- No shellfish harvesting is permitted within 25 feet of a lease boundary or in easements.
- Markers, gear and shellfish within each lease are private property. Harvesting commercial shellfish or theft of private agriculture property is a third degree felony and may result in fines or imprisonment.

The boundaries of each individual lease is marked with either a parcel post (2 inch PVC pole with orange reflective tape) or a parcel buoy. Each lease will have a post or buoy designating the four parcel corners. All lease markers contain a corner direction (NE, NW, SE, SW) and the specific parcel number.

The boundary of each aquaculture use zone or individual lease parcel are marked with 3 foot x 3 foot diamond, yellow signs called 'corner markers.' When floating gear is present on the lease, these corner markers are also required to have a flashing marine lantern to ensure visibility in low-light conditions.
Types of Aquaculture Leases in Florida

**Bottom Leases** allow the use of the bottom six inches of the water column. These leases are primarily used for clam aquaculture in Florida. Clam are stocked into bags that are oriented in rows and anchored to the bottom to prevent escape.

**Water Column Leases** allow the use of the entire water column and often contain floating or submerged cages or baskets. These leases are primarily used for oyster aquaculture in Florida.

For more information about shellfish aquaculture leases visit: [FreshFromFlorida.com/Business-Services/Aquaculture/Aquaculture-Submerged-Land-Leasing](https://www.FreshFromFlorida.com/Business-Services/Aquaculture/Aquaculture-Submerged-Land-Leasing)

Navigational charts for Florida’s aquaculture use zones may be downloaded at: [Charts.NOAA.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nmc.shtml](https://charts.noaa.gov/interactivecatalog/nmc.shtml)