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Innovasea helps secure grant to repurpose defunct Gulf of Mexico oil rig

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

The project would transform abandoned platform off Texas coast into working fish farm

U.S. offshore aquaculture technology company Innovasea this week secured a \$100,000 grant for the Gulf Offshore Research Institute (GORI), funds that will repurpose a defunct oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico.

The grant from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission – one of the United States' eight regional fishery management bodies – and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will finance the next phase of its proposal to transform Station Padre, a former oil platform 25 miles east of Padre Island, Texas, into a working fish farm. It was abandoned in 2015.

"We're grateful for this grant and are excited to put the funds to use proving the viability of platform-based aquaculture in the United States and elsewhere," said Kent Satterlee, executive director of [GORI](https://www.gulfoffshorererearch.com/) (<https://www.gulfoffshorererearch.com/>). "With the renewed push toward a low-carbon future, we believe offshore fish farming is the best way for the country to provide a sustainable, domestically-produced source of protein."



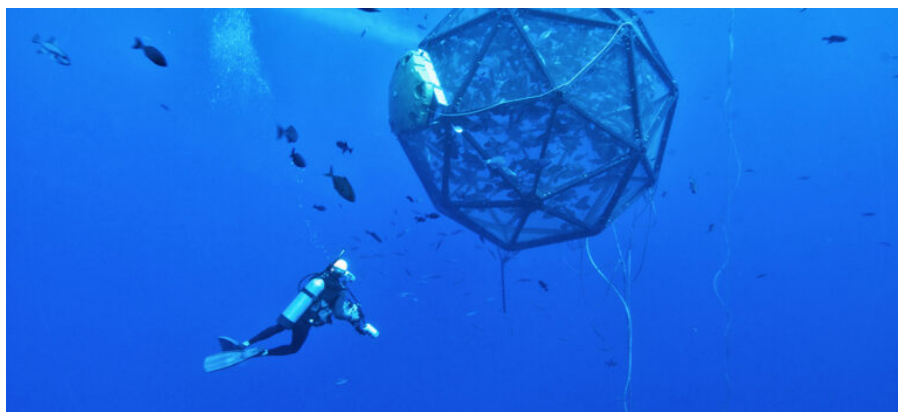
U.S. offshore aquaculture technology company says a \$100,000 federal grant will go toward repurposing a defunct oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico.

The grant will fund the preliminary design of a net pen system and an in-depth financial analysis of the project, both of which will be performed by Innovasea.



(<http://info.globalseafood.org/goal-2022-save-the-date>).

“This is a creative project that could potentially pave the way for the reuse of abandoned oil platforms and help spur offshore aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico,” said David Kelly, CEO of Innovasea. “Rather than spending millions of dollars to dismantle these pieces of ocean infrastructure – and disturb the ecosystems that have sprung up around them naturally in the process – it makes sense to explore productive new uses for them like offshore aquaculture.”



Offshore aquaculture offers a climate change solution, but can farms withstand severe weather events?

The success of open-ocean aquaculture depends on structures that can withstand extreme waves and harsh winds linked to climate change.



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The grant will also fund a study by the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science at the University of Miami and research into the various permits that will be required to proceed with the project. The rig sits in waters about 150 feet deep, which offers excellent visibility and is conducive to aquaculture.

There are about 1,800 abandoned oil rigs in the Gulf. Dismantling one can cost up to \$10 million, said Innovasea in a press release. Built by Shell in the 1980s, Station Padre is now owned by Peregrine Oil and Gas.

Follow the *Advocate* on Twitter @GSA_Advocate (https://twitter.com/GSA_Advocate).

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