

Oyster Restoration and Aquaculture Development Plan



Assessment of Past Oyster Management Approach and Results to Date

Funding

- More than \$40 million federal & state investment since 1994

Past Management Approach

- 75% of funds or more used for industry
- Restricted sanctuaries to unproductive areas
- Prohibited aquaculture in many areas

Population

- 1% of historic levels.

Habitat

- Declined 80% over the past 25 years

Harvest

- Declined 90% over the past 25 years

Harvesters

- Declined 75% over the past 25 years

Processors

- Declined 70% since 1974

Status Quo is Not Acceptable

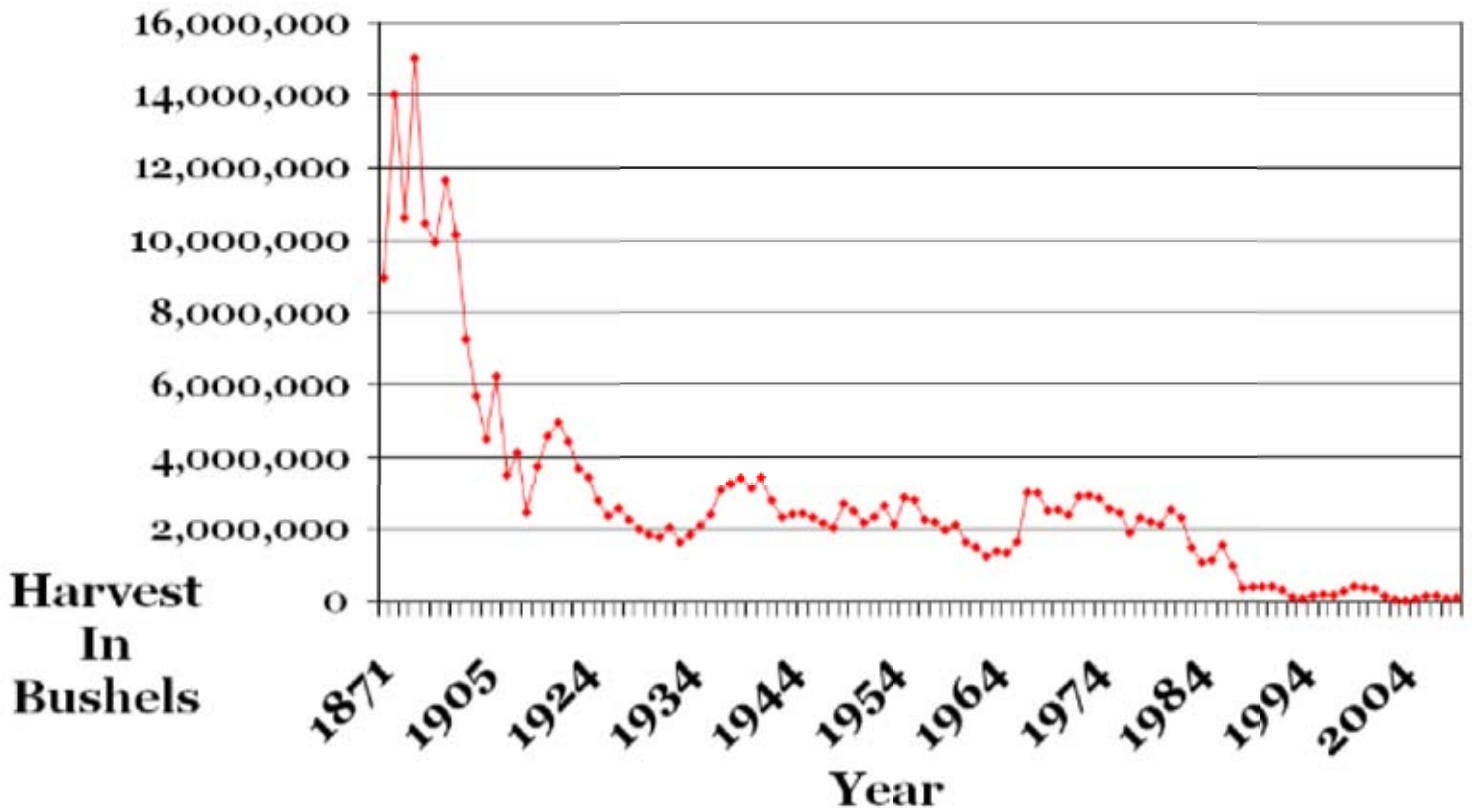
Maryland's Vision for Oysters

Establish an expanding and sustainable population of native oysters in significant portions of Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Establish a private aquaculture industry that emerges as a major economic contributor to the State of Maryland while maintaining a more targeted and scientifically managed wild oyster fishery.



Status of Oyster Population and Industry



The number of harvesters has declined from nearly 4,000 in 1990 to 651 in 2009/2010- only 389 of whom have reported any oyster harvest so far.

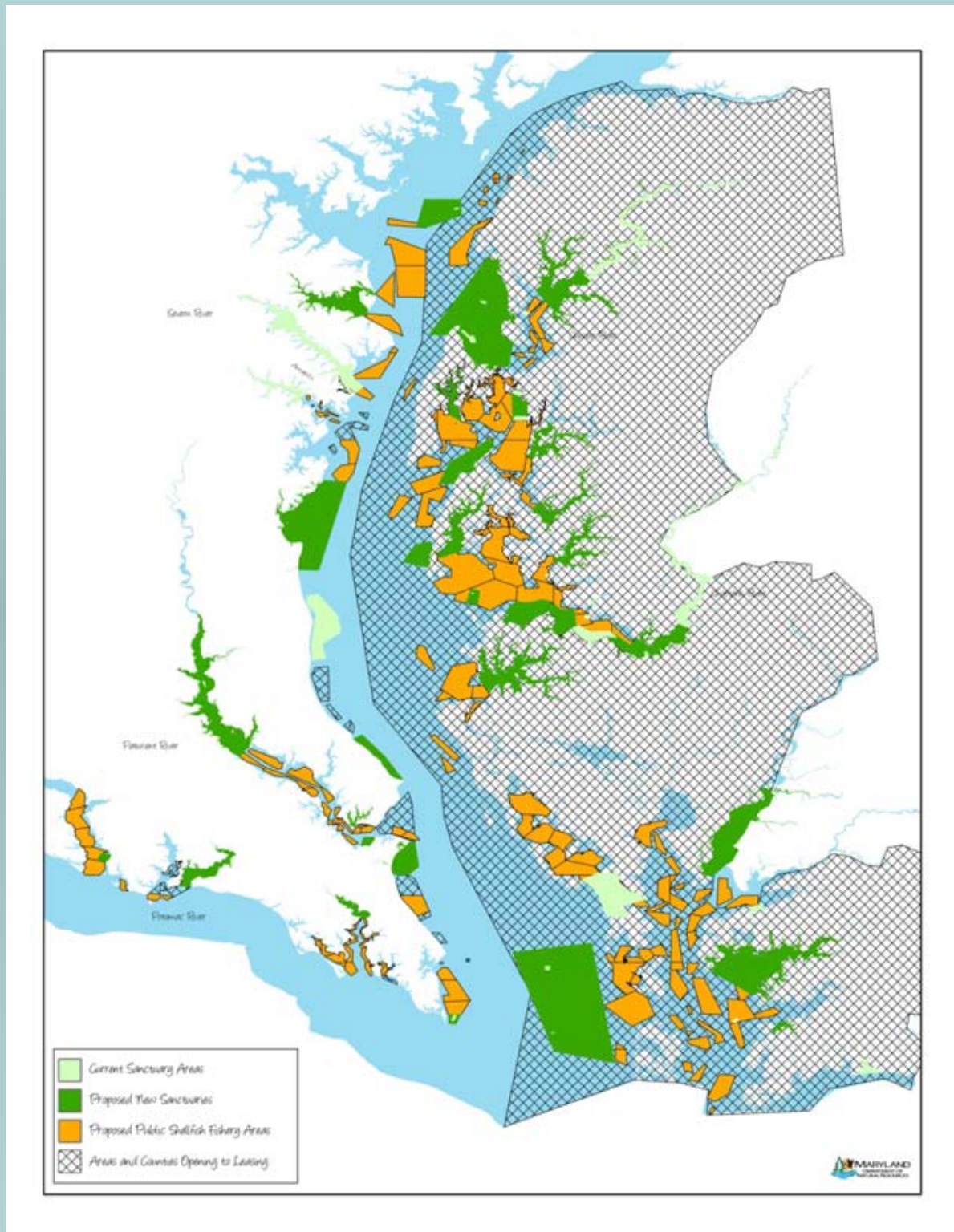
Oysters harvested from Chesapeake Bay decreased from over 2 million bushels/year in the 1980's to just over 100 thousand bushels in 2008-2009.

Overall adult abundance in 2008-2009 was approximately 3.5 billion oysters, 1% of the historic population.

Sanctuary Designation Goals & Criteria

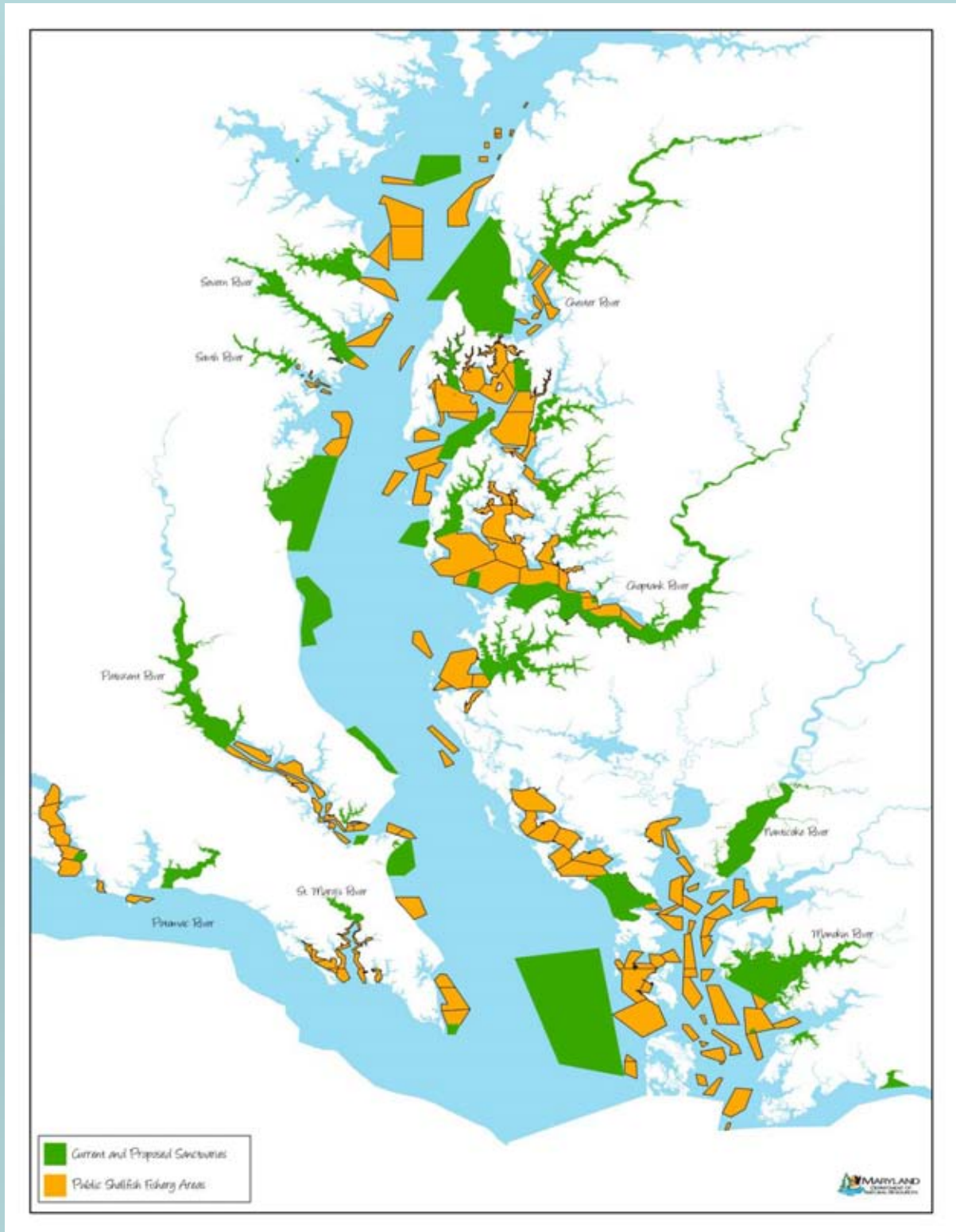
- Total sanctuary area be at least 25%
- Sanctuaries need to focus on currently productive areas
- Sanctuaries need to consist of large areas of interconnected bars
- Sanctuaries need to have broad geographic distribution across all salinity regimes

Proposed Areas Available for Aquaculture Leasing



Approximately 600,000 acres newly available for leasing (except for shellfish health closure areas, distance setbacks, shipping channels, etc.)

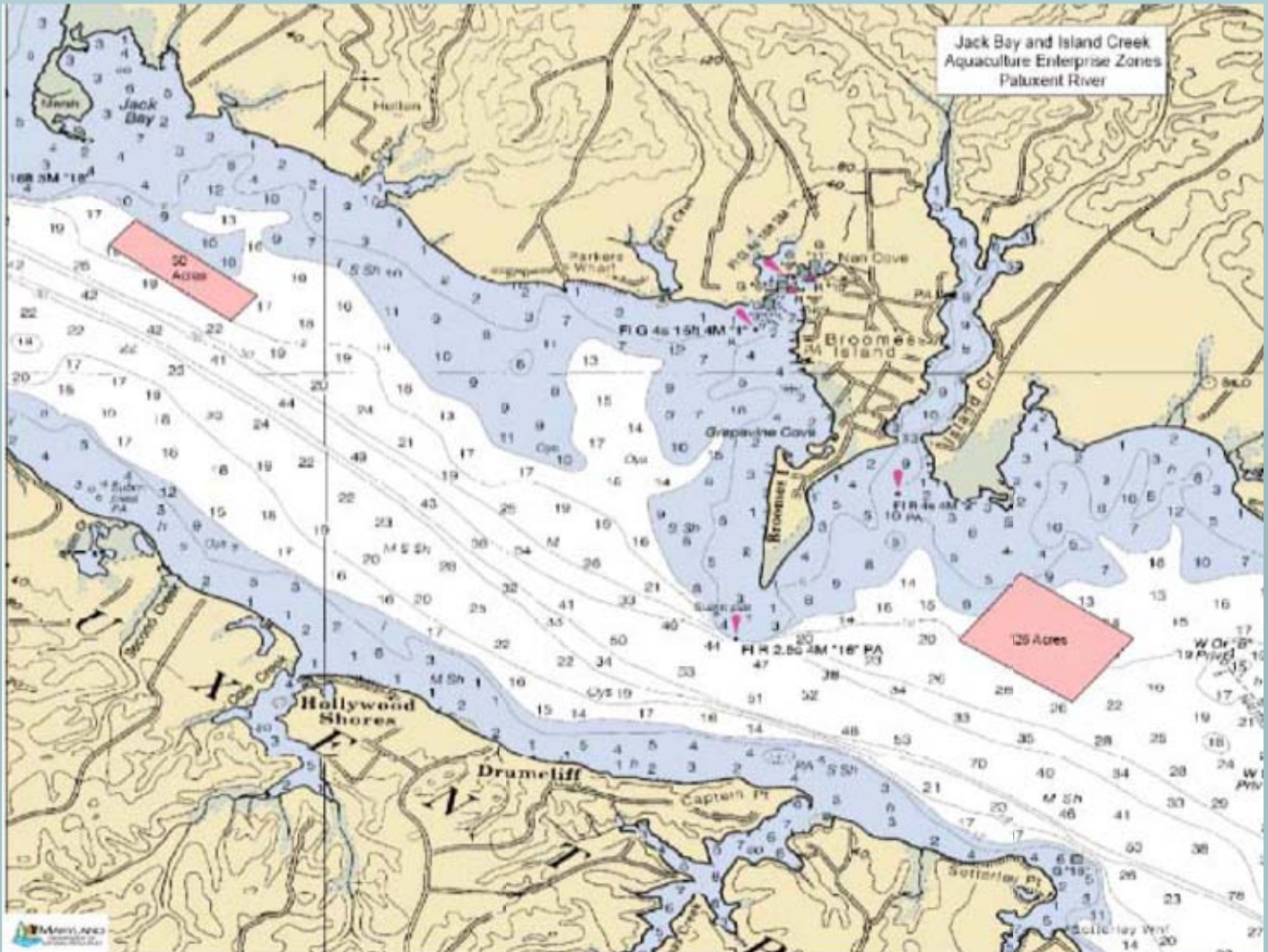
Proposed Public Shellfish Fishery Areas



Aquaculture leases are not be allowed in public shellfish fishery areas. This proposal would maintain 167,720 acres of natural oyster bars for the wild oyster fishery, including 75% of the existing quality oyster habitats.

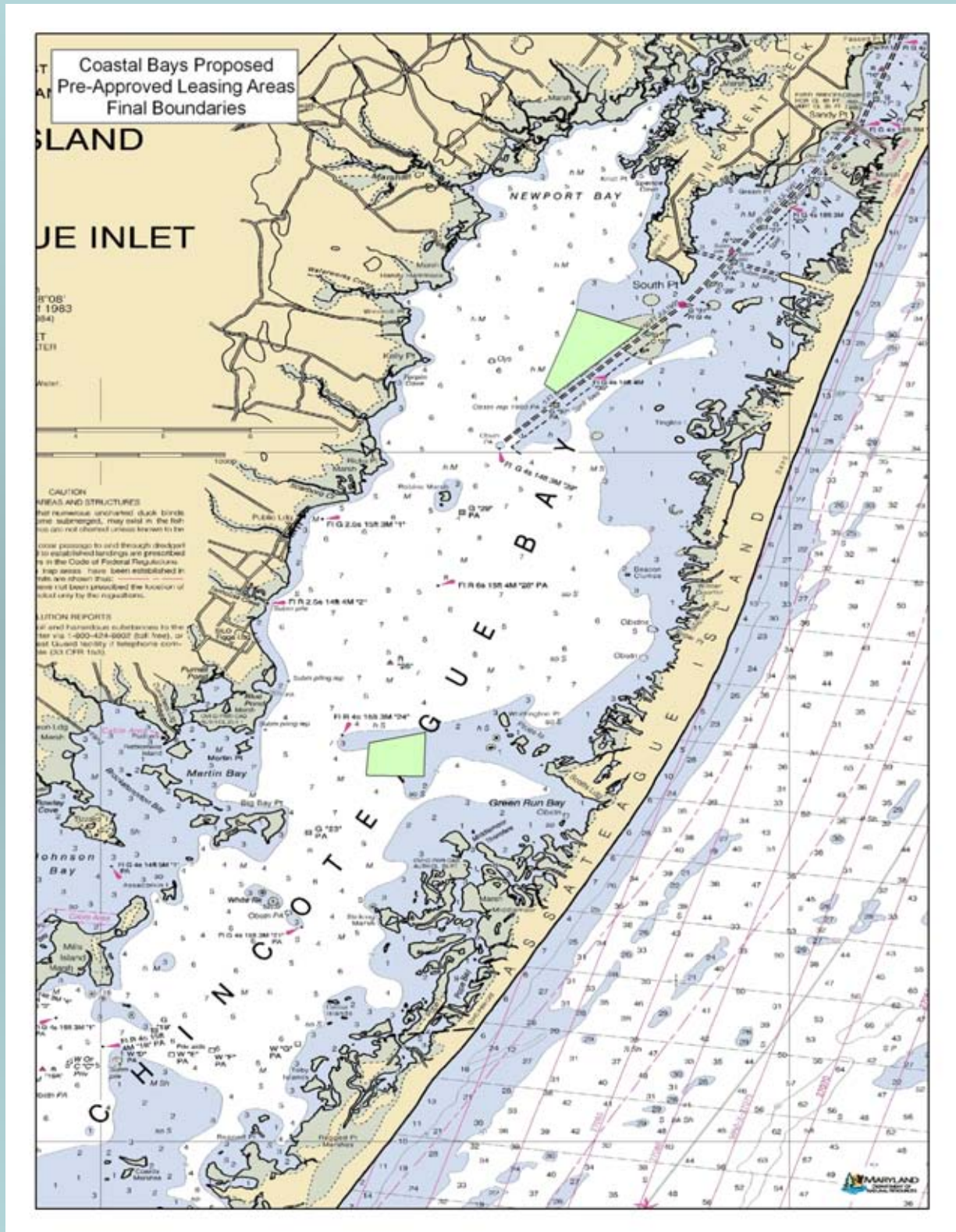
Aquaculture Enterprise Zones

Pre-approved aquaculture lease areas.



The pink shaded areas above are the first Aquaculture Enterprise Zones. They are near Broome's Island on the Patuxent River. Regulations to establish these areas became effective in October of 2009. Permits are pending, and these areas should be available for leasing in 2010.

MD Coastal Bays Proposed Aquaculture Leasing Map



Leasing will be allowed throughout Chincoteague Bay except within SAV beds and the Assateague Island National Seashore boundary.

Maryland Oyster Restoration & Aquaculture Development Plan- Timeline

Jan 2003 - Environmental Impact Statement Initiated

Sept 2007 - Oyster Advisory Commission Formed

Sept 2008 – Aquaculture Coordinating Council Submits Shellfish Aquaculture Report to Governor O’Malley

Feb 2009 - Oyster Advisory Commission Issues Legislative Report

May 2009 - Governor O’Malley signs Aquaculture Lease Law

June 2009 - Environmental Impact Statement Completed

Dec 2009 - Governor O’Malley Announces Proposed Oyster Restoration and Aquaculture Development Plan

Dec 2009 – May 2010 – DNR Conducts Extensive Public Participation Process, 2010 Legislative Debate and DNR Consultation with Key Stakeholder Groups

Maryland Oyster Restoration & Aquaculture Development Plan- Regulatory Timeline

May 21 – Governor Announcement, Maps and
Regulatory Summary Posted Online

May 27 – Regulations Submitted to AELR

July 2 – Regulations Published in MD Register

July 2 – Aug. 16 - Public Comment Period &
Public Hearings

Sept. 6 – Proposed Effective Date of
Regulations