

# MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES



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October 30, 2017

Michael Lee  
Aquaculture Manager  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
1141 Bayview Avenue Biloxi, MS 39530

Members of the Advanced CTE Excellence in Action selection committee:

As the Aquaculture Manager for the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources I am glad to give my full support for the Ocean Springs High School Aquaculture Program. Aquaculture provides a means for restoring and enhancing fish populations and support the global demand for seafood. Aquaculture supplies 50% of the seafood consumed worldwide and that number must continue to increase to meet growing demand. The MDMR is dedicated to channeling resources and support towards the Ocean Springs High School Aquaculture program for students to develop and learn sustainable aquaculture technologies. The program offers a unique opportunity for hands on training with wild populations that use our state waters. Marine aquaculture in Mississippi is emerging as one of the most beneficial ways to raise multiple species, including shellfish and finfish. The Gulf Coast provides one of the most productive areas in the world for aquiculture because of the favorable salinities and mild winters.

Current projects often involve partnerships among the high school, commercial companies, research institutions, universities and state governments. On behalf of the MDMR, we are committed to give full support to the students for the duration of the aquaculture program through resources, educational training, and any other forms of support needed. MDMR is dedicated to the education of young people in Mississippi about its coastal resources and career opportunities that will be available to them through further education.

Sincerely,

Michael Lee  
Aquaculture Manager  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Mississippi Career Technical Institute,

I am pleased to offer my support of your nomination for the Advance CTE Excellence in Action Award in recognition of the outstanding educational and career readiness programming intrinsic to your program. As the coordinator of Oyster Gardening Programs in Alabama and Mississippi, I know all too well the challenges facing our estuarine environments. Any advancement we can make in addressing these will serve to improve our ability to ensure healthy and productive marine environments for generations to come. A critical component of this advancement is education and outreach, the backbone of your efforts.

I am proud to be associated with the Ocean Springs High School program as it has blossomed into a leader amongst its peers. I strongly support your nomination and am fully confident you will continue to deliver timely and practical opportunities for your students that can be replicated throughout the region.



P.J. Waters  
Extension Aquatics Specialist  
The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium



To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to use this letter to extend my support for Bryan Butler and the Ocean Springs High School Aquaculture Program. I can think of no better program at this level for recognition with your CTE Excellence in Action Award. I have worked with Bryan and the program at OSHS for several years, and it always amazes me just how effort is put into making the program a great experience for the students. To see this at a high school level is amazing, as many universities have facilities and aquaculture programs that are not providing as much learning opportunity as this. At the OSHS facility, students have the ability to work with freshwater and saltwater fish, bivalves, crustaceans, and more. This variety of organisms is not seen regularly, and gives the students the opportunity to learn so much more than if they are exposed to a small system with a single species. At OSHS, the students have access to hands on learning through the large number of tanks. The program truly makes an effort to expose students to realistic conditions they would find working for an aquaculture program after graduating. In a program like this, they get the chance to learn about biology, agriculture, economics, and more. The students also get a chance to learn valuable on the job skills that are seldom learned at the high school level. The aquaculture industry as a whole in the United States suffers from a lack of trained workers, and an apathetic attitude from younger generations. Having programs like this to get kids interested in aquaculture will benefit not only themselves, but the entire industry as it continues to grow.

Sincerely,

Greg Trusso

Aquaculture Supply Business Director

Global Aquaculture Supply Co.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.**

SCHOOL OF OCEAN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY | GULF COAST RESEARCH LABORATORY  
703 East Beach Drive | Ocean Springs, MS 39564

11-2-2017

CTE Excellence in Action  
8484 Georgia Avenue  
Suite 320  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my privilege to write a letter of support for the Ocean Springs High School Aquaculture Program and the instructor, Bryan Butler. My role as Director of the University of Southern Mississippi's Marine Aquaculture Center has provided me the opportunity to partner with Bryan and his students on aquaculture and education projects. His work is beneficial to Mississippi's aquaculture programs and to his students.

In 2006, Bryan created the first high school aquaculture program in the state of Mississippi with the support of the Ocean Springs High School administration. He continued to grow the program from a one-year program focused on fresh water fish husbandry and system design to adding a second-year of working with marine finfish and oysters. With the program growing in students and the desire of students to continue the hands-on learning, he created a third-year program that allows students to shape their individual aquaculture projects and work outside the classroom with partners for workforce development. Students in the aquaculture program get the opportunity to take book knowledge and apply it to real world applications. This program continues to engage students in STEM education and provides them with workforce skills. He works with Universities, state and federal agencies, and industry partners to provide a robust program for his students.

I have had the opportunity to watch the aquaculture students tag and release finfish they raised as part of the state's spotted seatrout stock enhancement program and I am glad to see how the program hooks students on science. Bryan's dedication to the program and his students is commendable. Aquaculture requires a 7-day work week and someone on call when issues arise. Bryan continues to engage outside partners to help grow the program and provide students with excellent opportunities. It has been great to see the Ocean Springs High School administrators support of the program and the communities support through grants and awards.

I strongly recommend Bryan Butler and the Ocean Springs High School Aquaculture Program for the Advance CTE's annual Excellence in Action Award. Please do not hesitate to contact me (228-818-8026) for any further information regarding Bryan or the program.

Sincerely,

Kelly Lucas, Ph.D.  
*Director*  
*Thad Cochran Marine Aquaculture Center.*

Aquaculture featured on the pursuit channel

<https://youtu.be/2vw7XtVsk-4>

Ocean Springs Aquaculture featured on different media outlets

<http://www.wlox.com/story/28654467/ocean-springs-students-gets-hands-on-experience-in-fish-farming>

<http://www.sunherald.com/news/local/education/article57194033.html>

<http://www.wlox.com/story/28650327/ocean-springs-home-to-states-first-high-school-aquaculture-program>

<http://www.sunherald.com/news/local/education/article136955238.html>

<https://wxv25.com/2017/03/08/ocean-springs-students-release-2500-fish-waters/>

<http://www.wlox.com/story/31651258/ocean-springs-high-benefits-from-large-fish-donation>























