



2023

Taylor Shellfish Farms + Sakari Farms

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Recommended Citation

Potvin, Rosalie, "Taylor Shellfish Farms + Sakari Farms" (2023). *College of the Environment Internship Reports*. 102.

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COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Internship Title: Taylor Shellfish Farms + Sakari Farms

Student Name: Rosalie Potvin

Internship Dates: March 6, 2023 (Taylor Shellfish Farms) + January 1, 2023 (Sakari Farms)

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STUDENT SIGNATURE *Rosalie Potvin*

DATE: March 7, 2023

Rosalie M.Potvin

Internship Report

Winter 2023

Over the quarter, I have worked diligently to complete 150 hours to meet this internship requirement. My work has been comprised mostly (~140 hours) at Taylor Shellfish Farms where I would work up to 6 days a week during the low tide to harvest, plant, and transplant clams and oysters. My time at Taylor Shellfish Farms introduced me to a sustainable form aquaculture as I split my time between Clam and Oyster Crews. This job, while extremely labor intensive, was a very enjoyable experience, as I got to work outside (though at night and in sometimes inclement weather) and alongside a unique team.

Clam Crew spent most of their time and shifts harvesting Manila clams. At first, I did not realize the scale in which we would be harvesting clams, but I learned quickly on the first day that in order to accommodate shellfish orders across the nation, we would be harvesting a LOT of clams. The area where clams are planted is set up like a farm on land, with rows and rows of clams planted alongside each other in the sediment, and there is mesh netting laying on top of these rows to easily distinguish and protect them. Harvesting clams was a mechanical process where a machine would slowly move down a row with a fork-like protrusion, digging and sorting the clams where they would eventually move up the machine and to a person who would shove them into bags. By the end of the night, we would harvest as many bundles as we could while the water was low, usually around 20-30 bundles where each bundle was made up of 25 individual bags of clams.

After a while, I found that working on Clam Crew seemed to be bit monotonous, and while Oyster Crew was more labor intensive, it was a nice change of pace if I worked multiple days in a row on Clam Crew. Oyster Crew partook in a wider variety of duties, including planting oyster seed, harvesting them, and transplanting them. Oyster seeds are inoculated on shells of former oysters, so when we plant them, they come on long lines of rope with oyster shells (and the seeds attached to the shells) attached every couple of inches. Oysters are also planted in rows, but in a different area than the clams. After removing the oyster seed from the bags that they are transported in, we attach the lines to pieces of PVC pipes sticking out of the ground for the length of the row which I would estimate to be about 50-75 meters. The oysters stay on those long lines for a couple of years until they are ready to be harvested.

There were a couple ways that oysters were harvested. We cut the long lines into foot long sections and put them in large cages, we handpicked oysters at certain locations, and we also used forks and rakes to collect them in buckets. Sometimes, oyster seed drifts off into clam beds, nets, and beaches where they can build up and either compete with growing clams, or damage and become stuck in nets. In these cases, the oysters, usually smaller than the size of your palm, must be collected and transplanted elsewhere. When this happens, Oyster Crew will use rakes and forks to collect them and clear the area.

This aquaculture operation is one of the largest shellfish producers in the country, so I thought it was interesting that I worked with the same 15-20 people. However, even though the crews were small, they were mighty, and I now better understand the first step of the process behind the commercial production of shellfish. Working on the beaches during low tide also exposed me to a wide variety of different animals like sea cucumbers, sculpins, and various kinds of native crabs. One of my coworkers talked to me about the invasive European Green

Crab, which they haven't seen a lot of at the farm in Bow. We talked about how to identify them and how they are different from our friends, the Dungeness crab and the "hairy" shore crab.

I'm very thankful for my time at Taylor Shellfish Farms, as it was such a unique experience that introduced me to a different facet of the environment. During my time at Western, this opportunity exposed me more to a marine ecosystem than any of the classes I've taken. My time at Taylor ends at the end of the month, though I am planning on returning in the Fall, schedule permitting.

The other portion of my internship experience (about ten hours) consisted of some remote work for an indigenous farmer in Bend, Oregon. Sakari Farms owner, Spring Alaska, supplied me with a couple projects, including a year in Review poster, mind map, and an American Indian Association (AIM) circle. The Year in Review poster outlined their 2022 season including the projects that they completed, the grants that were received, camps that they hosted, and food grown and donated. The AIM circle and mind map focused on goals, values, and projects planned for 2023.

This was a fun project to work on because not only are indigenous farmers super important in providing food security and food sovereignty to native communities, but traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) motivates regenerative agriculture and important ecological relationships in ecosystems. Bend, Oregon has been facing droughts during these last couple of summers due to climate change, and a lot of the upcoming projects on Sakari Farms have been planned to accommodate water shortages. Overall, it was very humbling to work with Spring and help her organize this online portfolio because she and her team are doing very important work in the farming and indigenous communities.