

Home of Hoxie's Cove
Petite Oysters



Oyster Bluff Shellfish, LLC
Est. 2014

Tour where we grow Hoxie's Cove Petites



We would like to show you our oyster farm where we grow Hoxie's Cove petites in tideland adjacent to our forest land near Newport, Oregon.

Pictured in the center is Brian Arnold, the shellfish biologist, his wife Elise is at the right, and his father Mark is at the left.

(photo 2015)

Driving into the farm



We use a one-lane private forest road to access the farm and surrounding forest land.

This is a view at high tide from the south end of our oyster growing area. During low tide the mud flats are completely exposed.

Native oysters have been found growing in this area.



Arrived

Approximately 2 miles drive from the Wilder access gate, this is where we park and unload.



Hiking In

Footpath through the forest to the parking area.
We use snow sleds to haul oysters, equipment and the occasional toddler.



The workshop

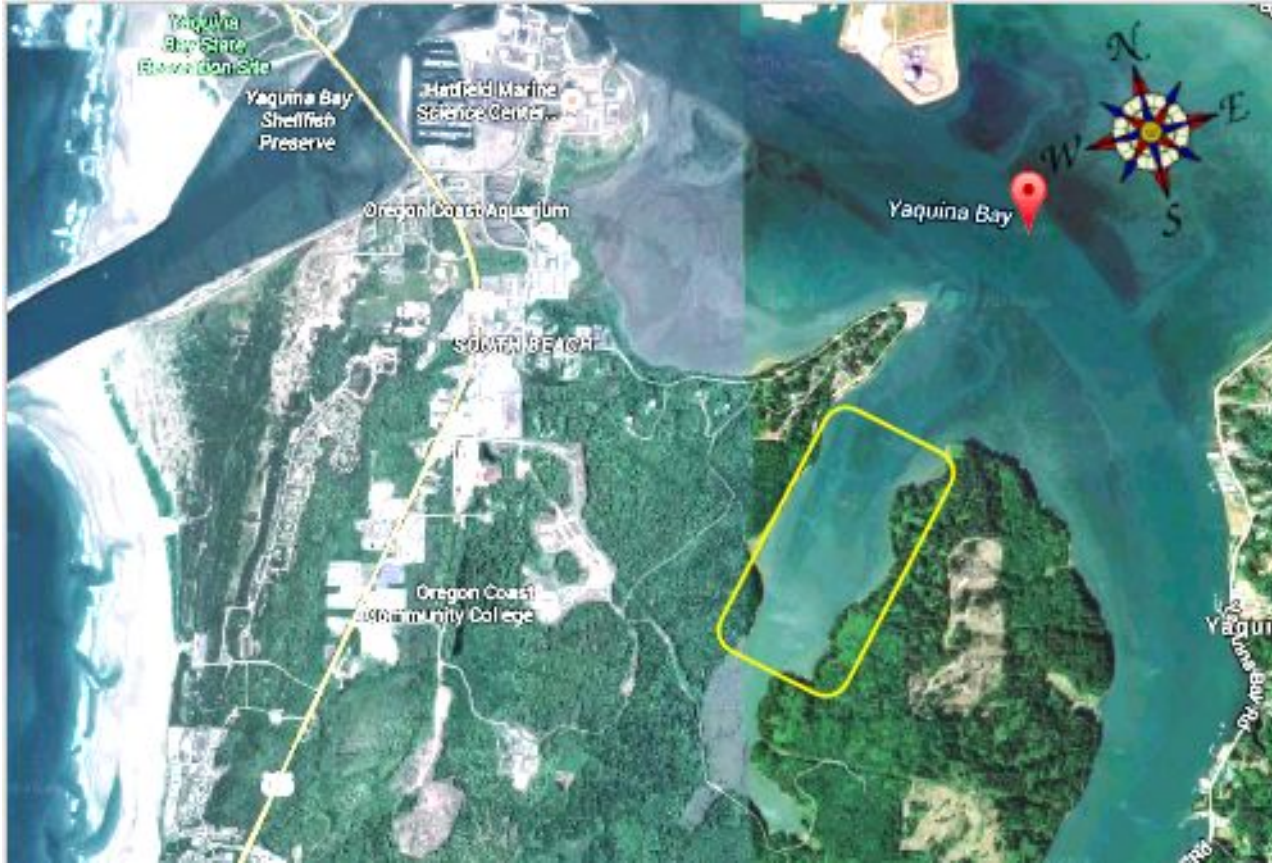


Built in 2016, this shed was completely constructed by family!

All building materials were carried or carted in on sleds.

It is located adjacent to the mudflats and dock area.

Jonny & Tara's Bar (pictured here) is always open, and serves as an all purpose table in the forest.



On the Map

The Yellow Square highlights our oyster farm growing area

The historical name for our location in King's Slough was Hoxie's Cove, hence the name...

Welcome to our Dock



The floats supporting the original, old wooden dock (pictured left) started to deteriorate. We replaced the dock and ramps with state-of-the-art materials made from marine grade aluminum. We obtained Army Corps of Engineers approval, and the major renovation was completed in 2017 (pictured right).

Out with the old, in with the new



Summer 2017

Some History



Brian began tending oysters in Oregon in 2009.

When spawned, oysters start as larvae. Pieces of shell are ground into tiny pieces, like fine sand, and put in tanks holding the larvae in salt water with algae for food.

Once larvae attach to a tiny fleck of shell, that is the start of the oyster “seed.” These oysters are about ½ inch →

We order our “oyster seed” from a hatchery which is located in Humbolt Bay, California. We purchase approximately 50,000 seeds each growing season.



Baby Oysters



(Pictured above) Each bag has about 5,000 baby oysters, each about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.

(Pictured right) Mark holding a bag of new baby oysters.

We hang them in a stack of cages from a raft at our dock. There is almost continual water flow in the channel past the dock so there is plenty of algae and the baby oysters grow rapidly.



Tides & Mudflats

This photo taken at an intermediate tide level pictures our growing location. Seen here, our dock and a line of mesh bags holding oysters.

During low tides water remains in the channel surrounding the dock, and Kings Slough largely exposes its mudflats.

The water doesn't start to cover the mudflats near the dock until it gets to a 3-foot tide level. At our location, the water doesn't get close to shore until the tide level is about 5 1/2 feet.

Oyster farming is dependent on the tides, working hours are constantly changing with the tidal highs and lows.

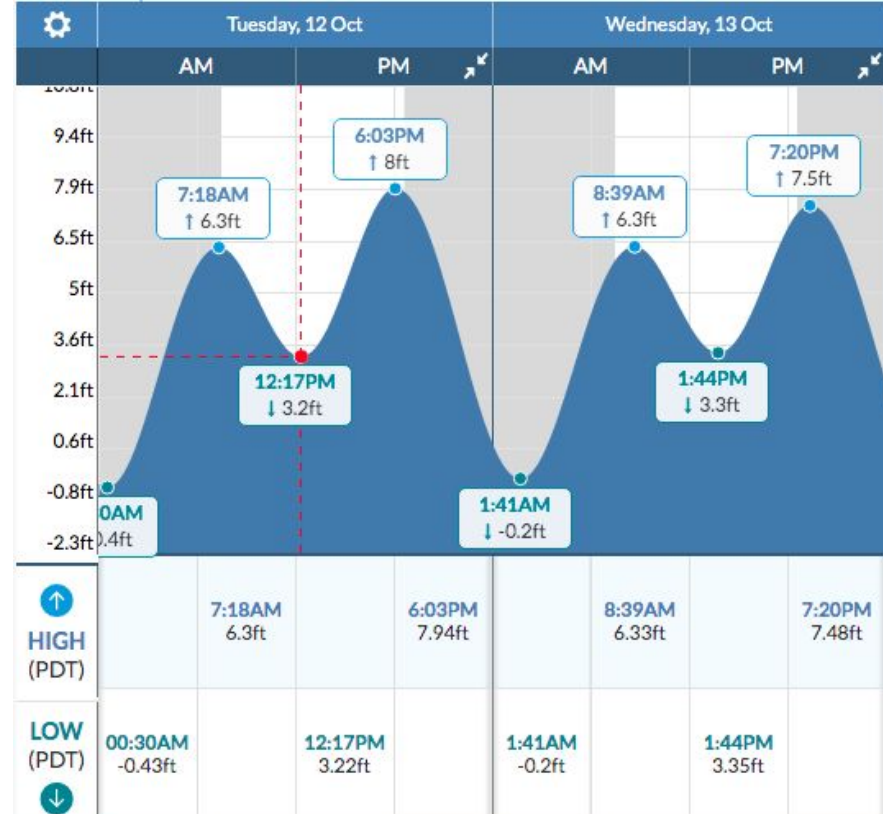


Low Tide & High Tide

To do our work, we keep track of the tide cycles. Every 24 hours, there are two low tides and two high tides. Throughout the year the high and low tide levels change.



Sample tide chart from Yaquina Bay, October 2021



High Tide



At high tide, the mesh bags on the lines are floating on the surface of the water.

It is a beautiful sight to see the oysters feasting on the continuous, gourmet supply of algae and other plankton in our nutrient-rich waters.

Growing Oysters Explained

When the oyster seed grows larger, but are not yet large enough to sell, we transfer them to larger mesh bags, called grow-out bags. Different oyster farms use different growing systems. We use tipping bags.

These bags are hung from lines with floats attached. At lower tide levels, the bags hang down from the lines but are still higher than the water level. When the tide comes in, the bags will float up to be on the surface of the water at higher tide levels.



Tipping Bags

Brian likes the tipping bag system. The oysters are under water part of the day. When under water, the oysters feed on algae.

When above water, the oysters clamp shut tightly and wait for the next high tide. The oysters have to work harder, and they grow more slowly than if they were under water all the time. But, they also grow tougher shells and stronger muscles. Oysters grown this way are easier to shuck, so they are good for the “half shell” market (restaurants and oyster bars).



Ready to Sell



Brian and Mark harvest oysters from the mud flats weekly.

To ready orders, we sort and count, placing the oysters in tubes that hang in the water channel.

We like to pull up the tubes to harvest on the incoming high tide. The oysters are cleanest coming out of the water at this time.



Final steps



After selecting oysters at the dock for harvest, we bring them on the footpath up the hill to our parking area in the forest. We also bring barrels of salt water from the dock on sleds to purge oysters after cleaning.

This is “approved” water for growing oysters. (Approval at our growing location is based on favorable water quality test result of water samples we submit to a government lab.)

Ready for market

We bring the oysters and approved water to a workshop where we wash the oysters.

Then we put the oysters in containers with approved salt water for an hour or longer so they can “purge out” any remaining sediment. This produces very clean oysters that are refrigerated until ready to deliver.



Family Owned & Operated



Pictured above 3 Generations



Arnold Family

Thanks for visiting!



When we don't have deadlines, there's the allure of the forest and estuary.

Sometimes you just want to sit on the dock and watch our world.

Hoxie's Cove Oysters

Oyster Bluff Shellfish, LLC

Newport, Oregon

The oyster is our world

