TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
CORPUS CHRISTI

Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust
Semi-Annual Progress Report

Restoring Oyster Reef Habitat in Mesquite Bay
Award # 020

Submitted by:
Jennifer B. Pollack, Ph.D.
Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies
Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi

Reporting Period: April 1 to September 30, 2024
Date of Submission: September 26, 2024

Submitted to:
Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust

MATAGORDA BAY MITIGATION TRUST

THE ISLAND UNIVERSITY

II. Description of tasks completed:

- We maintained communication with colleagues at TPWD regarding Mesquite Bay oyster reef permitting and construction and communicated directly with federal permitting staff to facilitate timely completion of Carlos Reef restoration within the TPWD funding deadline of May 31, 2024.
- Contractors selected by TPWD began reef construction on May 8, and completed the project on May 17, 2024.
- TPWD followed up with a side scan sonar survey to validate reef placement. In total, this restoration project includes approximately 70 acres of restored oyster reef in waters that are closed to harvest.

III. Status of tasks in progress:

- Post-construction monitoring of reef development is underway:
    - Initial monitoring of the newly constructed Carlos Reef restoration site took place on June 10, 2024. As anticipated with the maintenance restoration strategy, a combination of rocks and live oysters was observed in the area.
    - A follow-up monitoring event occurred on August 13, 2024.
    - Plans are underway for continued monitoring, which will take place in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.

IV. Plan for next reporting period:

- We will continue field sampling and process samples for detection of disease in tissues in the laboratory.
- We will digitize all resultant data and conduct data quality control measures to ensure data integrity.

V. Adherence to project timeline:

- To allow for continued observation of reef development, a one-year no-cost extension was requested and subsequently approved. We will complete field sampling, laboratory analyses, quality control, data analyses and report writing within this adjusted timeframe.