Activity	Description
Timing	Floating culture activities are generally not tide-dependent and occur year-around.
Access	Floating culture areas are accessed by a work vessel. Work vessels that are used to transport farm crews, materials, and equipment to the farm site may be anchored on-site, at a dock, or stored upland when not in use. Work vessel operations depend on the type of work being performed at high tide and are described in relevant subsections below.
Bed Preparation and Enhancement	Bed preparation activities for floating culture areas are limited to anchor installation on-site. Divers may inspect sites to ensure that there are no potential underwater hazards.
Predator and Invasive Species Control	Predators can cause significant damage to floating culture crops. Suspending crops off the bottom helps to minimize predation pressure. Raft culture frequently uses nets to exclude predators such as scoters or other diving ducks. Predator exclusion nets may enclose the underwater features (e.g., lines) of rafts to prevent predators from foraging on the cultured shellfish during grow-out, and to catch any shellfish that fall from the raft. Nets may be used throughout the entire year or on a seasonal basis depending on local environmental conditions. Juvenile mussels may be dipped in fresh water every 2 weeks until they are approximately 10 millimeters to prevent predation from platyhelminths (flatworms). A work vessel with a crane lifts the frames holding the mussel lines and dips them into a tank filled with fresh water located on the work vessel's deck or a floating platform.
Seeding	Seed is "socked" onto grow-out lines. These grow-out lines are suspended from the raft structure and extend into the water. For approximately the first 4 weeks, after the lines are seeded, the raft may be covered with a shade cloth that protects the vulnerable seed from fouling. The mussels are periodically thinned and reseeded or "re-socked" to lower densities on the grow-out lines as each crop matures. The lines hang above the benthos within the photic zone. Lines are seeded, thinned, and re-socked by hand with immature mussels that require approximately 10 to 16 months to reach harvestable size.
Maintenance	Raft culture crops are accessed regularly to perform maintenance activities. Maintenance activities primarily involve thinning the crop, cleaning and replacing predator exclusion nets as needed, and monitoring the integrity of the anchoring system. Rafts are maintained regularly for their integrity and components are repaired or replaced as needed. Mussels may be thinned or left in place to grow up to full size. Anchors, ropes, and rafts are routinely inspected by farm crews to ensure that they remain secure and are repaired as needed. Divers conduct inspections below the rafts to ensure the benthos is free of farm debris.
Harvest	Floating raft culture crops are harvested when they reach market size, which may be between 9 months and 3 years of growth. Raft culture crops may be harvested in sequential years if there is a new crop to plant or may be completely harvested after a grow-out period. When

seed is ready to harvest from the grow-out lines, a submersible platform is towed into place adjacent to a line of rafts. The platform is then submerged (typically to a depth of 20 feet), though not allowed to rest on the bottom. Then, the raft to be harvested is slid out of line, and harvestable biomass (crops and other organisms attached to the grow-out lines) is cut off and dropped onto the platform. The platform is then hoisted to the surface using mechanical winches. Farm crews strip the crop and other epibiota off the lines. The lines are sorted from the crop for reuse or upland disposal and the crop is loaded into containers.