

LATEST JOBS



Megan Sorby has started a new US RAS project. Photo: Megan Sorby

Pine Island Redfish CEO: new land-based project in Florida is fully permitted and in 'detailed design phases'

"This fish is a fantastic eating fish, and just like yellowtail in terms of a high-quality, high value species," the former Kingfish expert said of her new red drum RAS company.

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By [Rachel Sapin](#) 

Megan Sorby, most recently operations manager for Kingfish Maine, has chosen Florida as the location for her new land-based recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) project to grow red drum.

The company, now formally named Pine Island Redfish, will be located on Pine Island in Florida, where Sorby said aquaculture is already thriving.

"Florida first of all, is extremely aquaculture friendly," the Pine Island Redfish CEO told **IntraFish** for one reason out of several as to why she chose the island site in the state.

Pine Island Redfish acquired a nearly 150-acre property towards the southern part of the island after it reviewed state and federal permitting agencies, the company said. The site is secure and fully permitted, according to Sorby.

She said while she can't announce an opening date for her project yet, that the company is in "detailed design phases now," and is working on building strategic partnerships.

The company has private founding investors who remain unnamed but Sorby noted they are individuals who have been part of aquaculture space in their past in various forms. Sorby confirmed she is also a part owner in the project.

"It's a fantastic community to be in," she added, noting Robin Pearl's indoor shrimp farm is also located on Pine Island. "Many people and many stakeholders on the island are farmers themselves."

Prior farming activities on the property as well as the site's location and characteristics will allow for water efficient technologies and climate resilience strategies, according to the Sorby.

"In studying sites for this farm, we were directed to Pine Island, Florida as a home for both terrestrial agriculture as well as aquaculture," she said. "We looked at multiple locations and found a property that provides all the key elements for our project while most importantly working within Pine Island's desire to maintain its natural and undeveloped farm feel."

Prior to the project, for the past four years Sorby led Kingfish Maine as its operations manager. Together with her team in the United States and the Kingfish Company, Sorby helped secure the required permits for the Netherlands-based company to expand in the United States, build out a hatchery facility, and increase US broodstock.



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Red drum, known throughout the US Gulf Coast and Atlantic states, has been federally protected from commercial harvest since the 1980s. There's limited harvest of red drum in a few states as well as a valuable sport fishery, but its current market presence has been largely from imported farmed product, due to recent deep freezes in the southern United States, according to Sorby.

"This fish is a fantastic eating fish, and just like yellowtail in terms of a high-quality high value species," she said. "Why not bring RAS efficiency to that story? "