



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts
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January 2014 Report

There are a few commercial scallopers out most every day and still coming in with their limits. Additionally there are also a few recreational fishermen out each week as well.

We are working with the MA Division of Ecological Restoration to write and submit a proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Service's Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant program. We are requesting funding to correct the tidal restriction at Farm Pond. Part of the proposal is to raise the roadways on the back side of the pond to the same level as Sea View Ave to contain flooding. The larger culvert will allow the flood waters to drain quicker and reducing the duration of a flood event.

We have ordered some materials to begin the oyster project that is funded through Community Preservation Act (CPA). For this project we will be growing oysters in Sengekontacket Pond and creating a put and take oyster fishery. The oysters will provide additional mitigation of nitrogen in the pond. We will continue to monitor the nitrogen levels in the pond. This project may generate some additional revenue through the sale of more licenses.

In cooperation with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute we sponsored a CPA grant proposal to monitor the healthier eelgrass meadow near the mouth of the Lagoon for 4 years. The proposal was voted to be recommended for funding at the Annual Town Meeting in April. Again we will be working with Dr. Carman as we are in Farm Pond. The Lagoon monitoring is needed to be used as a control for the work being done in Farm Pond. This past summer we made some unusual observations in Farm Pond that we want to try to figure out how and why this occurred. In early summer there were relatively high concentrations of sea squirts on the eelgrass blades. Usually, the concentration increases over the summer and into early fall. This did not happen in Farm Pond to a point it was difficult to find sea squirts in our last round of sampling in the fall of 2013.

Dr. Carman, Danielle Ewart and I submitted a paper for publication for work we did winter 2012/13 challenging an aggressive colonial sea squirt's ability to reattach to eelgrass in cold waters. The experiment was conducted in Lagoon Pond. We documented that this species can reattach in cold water. This has implications as it means that colonies fragmented, even during the winter, can promote more colonies and the spread to un-colonized eelgrass.

After the FY15 budget review, my request to have the part time year round deputy position funded was not recommended and cut from the proposed budget that will go before the voters at the Annual Town Meeting.

The revised aquaculture regulations will be on the Board of Selectmen's agenda for their January 28th meeting.

We continue to work with the Middlesex Corporation to try to minimize the environmental impacts from building the new drawbridge. The Tisbury Constable and I met with Middlesex Corp and representatives from MA Department of Transportation and the independent environmental consultant earlier this month. The topic was the barges being grounded and the propwash holes they were creating. Middlesex Corp acknowledges this and understands they may need to do additional mitigation at the end of the project.

We are still dealing with permit issues for the Little Bridge Channel. We have made some progress particularly with the Army Corps of Engineers as on January 16th they issued an amendment to the permit that allows us to use an excavator. It also now requires us to notify the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe in addition to all the other notifications that are required. We have asked for permission to dig the channel out in June and stockpile the sand on the north side of the channel. The sand would then be transported to Pay or Inkwell Beach in the fall.

Respectfully submitted