



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts  
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### June 2014 Report

We are busy with field work and putting equipment out for the season. All the scallop spawning cages now have brood stock scallops in them. We have 12 nursery rafts filled with sand ready for the quahog seed. We have started getting quahog seed from the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group already. The axial flow upweller is in the harbor and we have 250,000 seed oysters from Fisher Island Hatchery. Also in this upweller are 400,000 soft shell clams from Salem State College teaching hatchery. The new tidal flow upweller (built by Jason) became a larger project than expected due to the modifications from the original plans that Edgartown did as they built their upweller. Basically we had a conceptual drawing and not the "as built" plans. The new upweller will be put out in Sengekontacket Pond within the next few days. We have deployed the bay scallop spat collection bags into Lagoon Pond.

I attended a meeting at the Environmental Protection Agency's Atlantic Ecology Division lab in Narragansett, RI. All the investigative partners reviewed and discussed the early results this eelgrass/sea squirts research. . This is a project that is 100% funded by the EPA Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) program. The field work was done here on the island in 2012 and 2013. We have concluded, from the data to date, that the invasive sea squirts do indeed compete for the same food in direct competition to the bivalve shellfish. The feeding competition has been assumed but we think this is the first project that definitively shows this scientifically. The data also suggested that a native sea squirt species evolved to feed on other food and not in direct competition with the shellfish. The project was designed to look at the relationship of the sea squirts to the eelgrass; however the direction of the paper may be more about the competition between the shellfish and sea squirts. We will be preparing at least one manuscript for publication in a peer reviewed scientific journal

Another research project is the continuation of a latitudinal study documenting the sea squirts presence/absence and what obvious impacts they are having on the environment. The data from this project is one of "opportunistic sampling" meaning the data is already being collected for other funded projects. As this additional reporting requires so little time and commitment the project has garnered data from a very extensive area (New Jersey to Labrador). There are 2 sites in Oak Bluffs; Lagoon Pond and Farm Pond. The data is collected as part of the two Community Preservation Act funded projects in conjunction with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

I am proposing that the Town create a pilot project to allow the sale of non-residential shellfish licenses by a private merchant. This would allow the purchase of a license on the weekends and other times the Town Hall is closed (see proposal below).

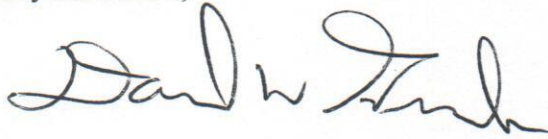
The water quality monitoring sample analysis this summer will be free through the Martha's Vineyard Commission's negotiation with another researcher with the National Sea

Shore on the Cape. They will run the analysis we need and we send them an additional water sample that they will be analyzing for pharmaceuticals.

As part of our outreach efforts I took this summer's Island Spirit guides out onto Sengekontacket Pond and talked them through the many facets of the pond and about both ours and Edgartown's municipal aquaculture programs. Guides from previous years said one the most asked questions were about the nursery rafts. I also recommended they include in their narration that the Town sells one week shellfish licenses.

A new publication "Northeastern U.S. Aquaculture Management Guide" has been released. The publication was funded by the Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This guide is intended as a manual for the identification and management of aquaculture production hazards. Adherence to these guidelines will help a new aquaculturist avoid pitfalls starting out and help an experienced grower to trouble shoot if they have problems on the farm. I served as a member of the focus group that reviewed the shellfish portion of the guide.

Respectfully submitted,



Pilot Project Proposal

Authorize sale of non-residential shellfish licenses at tackle shops in Oak Bluffs

Currently only the Oak Bluffs Selectmen's office issues shellfish licenses in town. All categories of shellfish licenses will still be issued by the Selectmen's office. Residential and commercial licenses will still only be issued by the Selectmen's office to ensure legal residential requirements are met. This proposal is to allow, as a pilot project, the sale of non-residential shellfish licenses to be sold at a private business. This project will be for the 2014 summer season only. An evaluation of the program will be made in the fall of 2014 to decide if the program had a mutual benefit for the Town and the merchant. This will allow someone to purchase non-resident shellfish licenses on the weekends and other times when the Town Hall is not open.

I have spoken to Steven Morris, owner of Dick's Bait and Tackle on New York Ave about participating in this trial. He is willing to sell licenses from his place of business at the price set by the current shellfish regulations and turn over all fees collected to the town. This money would be treated as if the Selectmen's office sold the license; Seventy five percent of funds will be deposited into the Shellfish Revolving Fund and 25% into general revenue. Our hope is that we will see an increase in the number of licenses sold. Mr. Morris's hope is he will sell more shellfishing gear.