



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts  
**Shellfish Department**  
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### May 2014 Report

We are very busy working on getting our gear out into the water for the coming season. We have crab traps and scallop spawning cages out in Lagoon Pond. We still need to get the cages filled with brood stock. We have started to get the nursery rafts scraped and painted. Jason has the new tidal upweller nearly complete. Our regular upweller raft is in the water and the trough and silos will be put in this week. Within the next couple of weeks I anticipate getting 250K oysters and the first 350K soft-shell seed. The Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group had a very good quahog spawn and we expect they will be large enough for us to take as early as the third week of June.

The Farm Pond restoration project is creeping forward. I met with Nils Wiberg (Fuss and O'Neil) Franz Inglefinger (MA Division of Ecological Restoration) and Robert Whritenour and agreed to have additional survey work done to be able to evaluate the cost comparison of raising parts of Cannonicus Ave and South Circuit Ave to the same elevation as Sea View Ave at the culvert. I want to get out of putting in a tide gate at the culvert. The tide gate would need to be substantial to have a chance of surviving Nor'easters and would impact the view from Farm Pond.

We were forced to cancel the quahog relay this year as the fishing boat we contracted with broke down and could not fish. He also had no open days during the relay window to reschedule. I plan on ordering additional quahog seed from a private hatchery with the budgeted funds for the relay.

We have received the final report on the Upper Lagoon Pond for increasing nitrogen removal before the nitrogen goes into Lagoon Pond itself. There are a couple of things we can do cheaply that will help a little. The report found that there was substantially more nitrogen coming out a smaller pipe than the herring run ladder. They found a stratified layer of salt water on the bottom of the deeper area of the pond. The muck on the bottom is releasing higher concentrations of nitrogen into the water than the rest of the pond. The smaller pipe through the causeway is connected to a 3 foot vertical pipe in the deep basin of the pond. It was put in several years ago to limit the saltwater intrusion into the fresh water pond. The report's low hanging fruit is to cut off the vertical pipe to about 18 inches and install a one way valve at the end of the pipe through the causeway to prevent salt water intrusion. Additionally to use the herring ladder as a kind of tide gate during expected storm water surges. Brad Chase (MA Division of Marine Fisheries) anadromous fish expert has been to the ladder and has changed the last couple of steps into the pond to allow additional boards to be put in at the last rung to also guard against salt water intrusion. As this is for a short duration for storms he does not see any significant impairment to the herring. I have discussed these simple options with the Water Superintendent, but still need to meet with the Water Commissioners. However these actions will only remove 1 Kg/day of nitrogen.

I have signed up to take a webinar to learn more about "Bio-Haven Floating Islands" as used for nitrogen mitigation. My current understanding is they work in fresh water but have not been proven in salt water. This may also have some application for the Upper Lagoon Pond.

Little Bridge Channel may not be done this year after all. The bid request packages were sent out, bids received, bids opened, but we did not get the final approval to use Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds at the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting as we had expected. The FEMA representative questioned all of Oak Bluffs tentatively approved projects eligibility. Additional supporting documents have been sent out. We asked and urged him make some sort of decision by the 21<sup>st</sup> so that the town can issue a notice to proceed to the contractor to be able to start on June first. If we are denied we will need to rebid the project.

This past winter we had the opportunity to have quahogs from Sengekontacket Pond have a nutritional and basic contaminant screening at no cost to us. The results came back that showed they are very clean of contaminants and have solid nutritional values. The detailed report is available from the Shellfish Department Office.

Respectfully submitted,