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September 2014 Report

The scallops from the first spawning at the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group have been seeded out into Lagoon Pond. The first batch of scallops did well with good survival and decent growth. We still have lines out by the Sailing Camp with scallops from the second spawning. There is also a line there with the MVSG "Sea Vegetable" trials

We have seeded out the soft-shell clams from the upweller in the harbor. Most of the seed has been planted in Lagoon Pond and some in section 7 in Sengekontacket Pond.

We have also brought in all the nursery rafts. Most of the rafts have been very good but a couple were disappointing. They had good growth and generally very good survival. We will get the rest of the rafts to the barn this week.

Next week I hope to start dragging for scallops to better judge the upcoming season. The Selectmen have adopted the Committee's recommended dates for opening bay scallop season:

- Recreational in Sengekontacket Pond and outside waters October 18
- Commercial in Sengekontacket Pond and outside waters October 27
- Recreational Lagoon Pond November 1
- Commercial Lagoon Pond November 3

On September 16th the Board of Selectmen made a courageous decision and approved an oyster aquaculture license to Dan and Greg Martino in the Outer Vineyard Haven Harbor. The business will operate under the name "Cottage City Oysters".

I met with The Oak Bluffs Water District and they will allow the cutting of standpipe in the Upper Lagoon Pond and the installation of a one way valve on the salt water side of the causeway road. According to the report on the pond by School of Marine Science and Technology; this will shrink a stratified salt water lens at the bottom of the Upper Lagoon Pond and prevent any additional salt water from entering the upper pond through the pipe as has been observed at some of the high tides. This simple action will improve the fresh water pond's ability to attenuate nitrogen prior to discharging in the Lagoon Pond itself. I will monitor the salinity at the discharge point to document the drop in salinity.

The drawbridge construction is on schedule. There are now mock ups of what the above water facades will look like on the driveway to where the tea house was. Some will actually be stones and in other areas it will be molded and stained cement.

The Town has received a draft revised application as drawn up by FEMA personnel. On reading through the paperwork there are a couple of serious issues. First the limitation on how much sand needs to be removed is grossly under estimated at only 3,927 cy. Secondly, they would require the Town to stockpile the sand on the north side of the jetty and on the northerly portion of the Little Bridge parking lot. It is still hoped that a signed contract will be in place within the next month. The contractor originally chosen will be awarded the work and can

hopefully mobilize to start the work in 1 or 2 weeks once the notice to proceed is issued. The time of year restrictions require the work to be completed by January 15, 2015.

I held a Farm Pond Restoration progress report/public comment meeting on September 17th in the down stairs meeting room in the Town Hall at six PM. There were representatives from MA Division of Ecological Restoration, NOAA Wetland Restoration, Fuss and O'Neil (consultant) and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

I have been talking with researchers from the US EPA Atlantic Ecology Division on a possible salt marsh restoration project for Sengekontacket Pond. The salt marsh plants and the ribbed mussels remove nitrogen from the water at the edge on the pond. There has not been much work done to quantify how much nitrogen is removed by salt marshes and the EPA is keen on trying to get those numbers. Representatives from EPA, Felix Neck, Friends of Sengekontacket, The Nature Conservancy and Edgartown Shellfish and I met on island and visited potential sites. The better candidate sites are in Edgartown and if a site at Felix Neck is chosen they will head up an educational outreach to the project. Whether the site ends up in our town or Edgartown it would be a benefit to the pond and at least help some to reduce the nitrogen levels entering the pond. Both Towns should support this effort. We are working on fleshing this idea out and in obtaining funds for the project.

The quarterly meeting of the Barrier Beach Task Force will be at 9:30 AM on September 25th in the County Building at the airport. Agenda items include closing one of the 4 vehicle access points to the pond and discussion of possible future dredging in the pond.

I am working on a power point presentation for the International Invasive Sea Squirt Conference in late October. I have been asked to present on how local towns, especially ones with shellfish departments, can benefit from partnering with researchers.

I have received confirmation to make a poster presentation at the 7th National Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration in November. The poster is on work that we are contributing to looking at density and distribution of sea squirts on eelgrass by latitude from New Jersey to Newfoundland. This is a project being done mostly by the EPA and WHOI and I am honored they asked me to present the poster at this conference.

Respectfully submitted,