



OUR PARTNERS ON THE POND SERIES

TOWN OF NEW SHOREHAM SHELLFISH COMMISSION

History of Governance

The Town of New Shoreham's Shellfish Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Town Council. The commission acts in an advisory capacity to the council with member terms of three years. Many commissioners are motivated to serve on the commission for multiple terms over many years.

Shellfish management in the Town of New Shoreham is unique within Rhode Island, as it is the only municipality in the state with local control over its shellfishing. This unique arrangement came about in the 1980's through an agreement with the DEM. One result of local control is the issuing of recreational shellfish licenses. Elsewhere in the state licenses are not required for Rhode Island residents. These license fees support the work of the Commission and the Harbors Department in maintaining a healthy, viable shellfish resource for our residents and visitors. We owe a debt of gratitude to former commission members who fought to gain local control of our shellfish population, and who also supported a town pump-out program to improve water quality.

Education and Enforcement

The Shellfish Commission has dual roles of education and enforcement. Over the years the Commission has worked to expand its role in shellfish education. To that end it has improved its regulations brochure and created informational and invasive species handouts, all available in the Harbormaster's office. Likewise, the shellfish wardens role is to educate first, encouraging understanding and compliance with our regulations.

Initiatives

Every year market size quahogs are transplanted from mainland sources into the year round area. Typically more than 30,000 clams are placed on the flats!

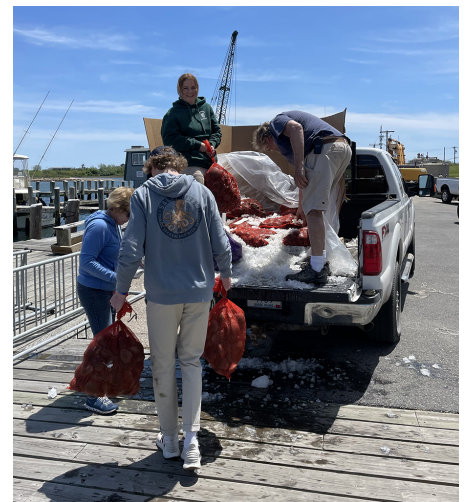
Our floating upweller system, or "FLUPSY," was originally conceived as a way of providing additional quahog seed to our pond, but has also been used for oyster seed, and this summer for soft-shell clam seed. Our population of soft-shells, a.k.a. steamers or piss clams, is too low to allow for harvesting. The Commission is studying the viability of future re-seeding efforts given past challenges and current levels of predation by native and invasive species. This study will feature screen-covered recruitment pots dug into the flats to access survivability and growth.

A big factor in soft-shell predation is believed to be the invasive green crab. Reduction of the green crab population through public education, trapping and utilization is another Commission initiative. These crabs make excellent stock, bait, and a component of compost, and should not be returned to the waters of the GSP.

OUR MISSION: To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Great Salt Pond, including its shorelines and wetlands, and to promote appropriate and productive uses of the Pond's resources by residents, visitors and local businesses.

FUNDING: Individual contributions, membership dues, special events, program grants. IRS 501(c)3 non-profit.

Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please consider becoming a member of The Committee for the Great Salt Pond. For information and details, visit our website at cgspblockisland.org.



Preparing to plant clams in the Great Salt Pond.



Staking recruitment plot.



Securing recruitment plot.