
BAYWATCH

Volume 10 Issue 1

JANUARY 2007

CITIZENS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WAQUOIT BAY CPWB

An update on Mashpee's shellfish initiatives . . .

By Hank Bode

Mashpee's Shellfish Constable, Rick York, directs the town's shellfish programs. Rick is a self motivated, intense researcher *cum practitioner* who often works well into the night and on days off to assure the programs move forward.

After playing telephone tag with Rick, we finally met by chance at Little River Boat Yard. As Shellfish Constable, Rick has a small (10'x15') office/lab/repair depot/store room/ etc. at the adjacent town land. I shadowed Rick for the next 30 minutes asking questions I thought would be of interest to CPWB members. Rick was downloading water quality measurements consistent with WBNERR's normal practice which allows cross referencing of information. He also mentioned that he stays in contact with scientists at WBNERR and Woods Hole. Scott Gallagher of WHOI is testing his new sophisticated automated system which samples, classifies and counts larvae of many local species in our surrounding salt water. The results from samples are shown on a large panel display that includes item counts; on a split screen is a magnified picture of the sample being processed. The Mashpee Shellfish Dept's water quality monitoring program was demonstrated in the summer of 2005 when monitoring equipment determined oxygen depletion in the early morning hours was the cause of a fish kill in the Mashpee River. Dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll data showed that a thick algae bloom had consumed the oxygen at night. Oysters survived because they can tolerate short periods without oxygen.

As many readers of the CPWB Newsletter are aware, Mashpee has maintained an active quahog and scallop seeding program for years. Purchased seeds are grown in two upweller tanks to larger sizes at the town land on Little River and then transferred to trays in the estuary until they are large enough to be planted in the

fall. The tanks are about the size of a thick queen-sized bed. Water from Little River is circulated in generous volumes through the beds of seeds. In the past year, they started with 1 million quahogs and a like number of scallops the size of sand. By the fall most of the quahogs grew to sizes larger than ½ inch, and scallops to about 1 inch. The seeds are planted in areas with good sandy bottom, but most of the scallops are released into Waquoit Bay because they do not survive well in other areas. The family shellfishing area in Popponesset Bay lacked shellfish prior to the start of quahog seeding in the year 2000. Quahog seeds from the propagation program are successful because they are grown to a large enough size before planting so that they are not swept away by strong tidal currents. For those of us who occasionally dig (I use my feet) quahogs in Waquoit Bay, the reasonably generous population is proof of success of the program. Commercial fishermen also benefit.

Scallops, on the other hand have been a challenge. The loss of eel grass means a loss of protection to the adolescent scallops. In 2006 it's been estimated that less than 50 bushels were harvested. (I recall a time in the late fifties when the visible bottom of the Bay seemed to be layered with scallops in the fall.) The propagation program is critical for shellfish such as scallops. We need to seed every year to maintain the fishery, because the scallop populations do not sustain themselves in the wild. About 50 bushels of scallops were harvested in Waquoit Bay from October through December 2005.

The results of recent oyster seeding program have been very encouraging. Primarily focused on Mashpee River, an estimated 100,000 oysters were harvested recreationally in 2006. Grown from disease-free oyster spat is set on pieces of clam shell in mesh bags in a hatchery then planted in the Mashpee River and Hamblin Pond. Oysters are not only an enjoyable food; they also remove meaningful amounts of nitrogen from the water. Each oyster harvested from the Mashpee River contains an average of one-half

gram of nitrogen. There were 50 kilograms of nitrogen removed from the Mashpee River with the first harvest of oysters in Mashpee in 20 years. Rick's goal to harvest one million oysters from the Mashpee River in a few years would remove about 500 kilograms of nitrogen annually which is 10% of the target for nitrogen reduction in the Mashpee River set in the Massachusetts Estuaries Project report on Popponesset Bay. If successful, the program would be expanded in Waquoit also. Americorps Cape Cod volunteers provide valuable labor in the propagation program. Reducing nitrogen after an accumulation from many years is just one step in the complicated task of restoring the ecological balance to the Mashpee River.

For more information on the oyster program please refer to *Mashpee's 2005 Annual Report* available at www.ci.mashpee.ma.us under departments / shellfish, and to Brian Kehrl's article in the September 8, 2006 *Mashpee Enterprise*. At WBNERR pick up the pamphlet *Why Do We Worry About Our Coastal Waters* available for further explanation of excess nitrogen on nearshore waters and how our community can work towards an improved environment for our estuary reserve.

First Annual Reserve Cup Regatta

By Don Lunn

The Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR) held its First Annual Reserve Cup Regatta on Wednesday, July 18th, 2006. The Regatta included a series of four races on a course set in Waquoit Bay. This regatta was open to novice sailors of Optimist Dinghy prams. Nineteen racers from four yacht clubs on Cape Cod participated in the day's events.

The Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay (CPWB) and the Waquoit Bay Yacht Club (WBYC) sponsored, organized, and ran the Regatta for the Reserve. WBYC processed the invitations and applications for the event and handled the race management. Brendan Annette, Director of the Reserve, was the starter for the first race. The racers and staff were provided a lunch on Washburn Island by WBYC parents at the noon break. After lunch, members of the WBNERR staff ran a creature feature

event where the sailors found and identified water creatures from the bay. Other WBNERR staff were on hand all day to give tours of the Visitor Center. The CPWB volunteers helped host the racers and their families and put on a barbeque for the awards banquet under the tent at the Visitor Center at day's end. Four trophies were given to the top sailors and one trophy to the best sportsman.

The purpose of the regatta was to have these sailors and boaters see that the waters that they sail in are in fact, their playground, and that sailors should be concerned with the health of these waters and understand the issues that affect them. The goal of the regatta was to instill this thought with the sailors and their families and hope they bring it home to their own playgrounds.

This partnership of environmentally concerned organizations and a yacht club is quite unique. The three partners hope to make this an annual event. They expect to extend invitations to young sailors from Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The Annual Raffle 2006 finds a new home.

By Toni Grady

The proceeds from our 2006 raffle sales nearly surpassed the record setting level of 2005. We made great strides in promoting CPWB to the community!

Dedicated members of CPWB sold tickets at Mahoney's Garden Center, and Kenyon's Market in rain, wind and shine. They promoted CPWB's presence on the Cape by passing out our new brochure and membership forms as well as selling raffle tickets. Our thanks to all of our members who participated and to Mahoney's and Kenyon's for their continuing support.

For the first time, the Raffle drawings were held at the WBNERR Annual Watershed Block Party on August 8th. This was so well received that future drawings will be held at this event.

Important WBNERR News:

Brendan Annett has been appointed the new Reserve Manager. He has been the Reserve's Stewardship Coordinator since 2002. Brendan feel the changes at Waquoit Bay continues to be from nitrogen loading resulting from the way our communities dispose of wastewater, use fertilizer and burn fuel. He will write a regular column for WBNERR's Tidal Exchange newsletter.

CPWB recognized Christine Gault for her 16 years of leadership at WBNERR with the gift of a painting of her choice. Christine chose to have artist Allan Whiting of Martha's Vineyard paint the view from South Cape Beach looking to Sage Lot Pond and Waquoit Bay. The painting was shown at the November meeting of CPWB. We all agreed Allan captured the beauty of the reserve through the colors used in the painting.



Christine and Allan Whiting capturing the view towards Waquoit Bay this fall

WANT ADS

New and exciting ideas for the 2007 Raffle. Please join us in this planning during the winter. Call Toni Grady at 508-548-9457.

Regatta planning and/or volunteer for July 18th, 2007 Annual Reserve Cup Regatta. Call Don Lunn 508-540-4893.

Volunteer to assist with the June mailing of the CPWB newsletter. Requires time to adhere labels and stamps. Call Maureen Jankauskas 508-477-9463

Assist with Washburn Island clean-up. Call Jayne Abbott 508-540-1948

Renew your membership CPWB Dues Notice is attached for your convenience.

Our membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th. Please check to see if your membership is current. CPWB dues notice is included to assist members.

Your \$10.00 membership fee supports educational programs. Is your neighbor a member? We are working to grow our membership, the CPWB brochure with application is available at WBNERR.

Please mark your calendar to attend the CPWB Steering Committee meeting.

Meetings are held every other month on the first Monday at 7:00pm at the reserve. For the first half of 2007 meeting dates are: January 8th, March 5th and May 7th.

RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP: (Please make checks payable to CPWB, P.O. Box 3021, Waquoit, MA 02536))

☐ \$ 10.00 Membership

☐ \$ _____ Contribution

Names: _____

Address: _____

Summer Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address _____

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CITIZENS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WAQUOIT BAY CPWB

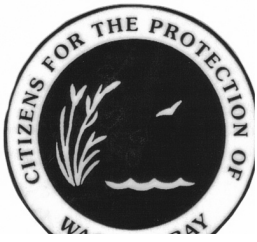
JANUARY 2007 NEWSLETTER

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First Annual Reserve Cup Regatta

Are you a member? For \$10.00 you can be a member and receive our newsletters.

**Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay CPWB
P.O. BOX 3021
WAQUOIT, MA 02536**



CPWB Membership Annual Dues and Contribution

I want to be a member of Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay CPWB, to protect our Coastal Ponds.

*Please make checks payable to **CPWB***

Enclosed is my contribution:

☐ \$ 10.00 Membership

☐ \$ _____ Contribution

Name: _____

Summer Address: _____

Summer Phone: _____

Winter Address: _____

Winter Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

I would like to volunteer:

Washburn Island clean-up ☐ *June* ☐ *September*

Poster Contest for 3rd Grade ☐ *Spring project!*

Summer Raffle ☐ *A few hours of your time*

Steering Committee ☐ *The committee meets every other month at WBNERR.*

Your contribution to "Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay" CPWB is Tax Deductible.

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