



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

Shellfish Department

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Herring Warden

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The Division of Marine Fisheries is starting to implement the updated National Shellfish Sanitation Program. There will be a probable reclassification of all mooring fields with greater than 20 moorings to conditionally approved at best. These areas will be closed to shellfishing during boating season. I am working with the Oak Bluffs Harbormaster to consolidate some moorings and with DMF to keep as much shoreline open for shellfishing as possible.

Cottage City Oyster is starting the permitting process to expand their farm by 2 acres for a total of 4 acres, the maximum allowed by Oak Bluffs. The proposed site is between their current location and the Eastville jetty. Their initial plan is to study the bottom and the effects of aquaculture and macro algae culture gear on the ecosystem. Once this research phase is complete, they intend to expand their current farm and use the area for grow out operations.

A silver lining to the pandemic is most events have gone online making it possible for me to take part. I have attended meetings, trainings, hearings, discussions, and webinars on topics ranging from ocean acidification and cyanobacteria to nature based environmental solutions, environmental justice, building resilience through partnerships, and the connection of restoration and economy for local aquaculture. The National Shellfisheries Association conference and a grant writing workshop are on my calendar for next month.

Marissa has been doing well with gear preparations. In addition to regular daily duties she has been busy building new crab traps to target Blue crabs and more scallop spawning cages. Marissa is also working on a numbering system for Sengekontacket to help recreational permit holders to know which section they are in.

I have been in touch with the Personnel Department and plan to start the hiring process for a part time deputy around the end of this month.

The Conservation Commission met last month and denied the application for a new dock in Lagoon Pond. The Town's new Conservation Agent Elisabeth Peterman has started and I have reached out to introduce myself. I'm sure we will meet soon to discuss some of the projects that overlap our departments.

Friends of Sengekontacket have named me to their Advisory Board. They would like to reinstate their intern program, but are being appropriately cautious and waiting until the spring to determine if the program should be suspended for another season. The Lagoon Pond Association is working on a different model that may provide funding to the Town for a part time summer deputy to focus on Lagoon Pond. This is based on a successful model from Tisbury where Tisbury Waterways Inc. has donated funds for a Deputy to work primarily on Tashmoo pond on their propagation program and educating boaters on local regulations.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Fisher
Oak Bluffs Shellfish Constable