

At the Helm October 2010

It is always very satisfying to take a moment to look at a beach after a beach cleanup and September 18th was especially satisfying. The beach was in terrible shape we got there and when we left it was dramatically improved. We removed an amazing 9.11 tons of debris from 2.7 miles of Port Jefferson Harbor and Long Island Sound with the help of 56 volunteers. We literally filled two 30 yard roll-off dumpsters. The Town of Brookhaven and Suffolk County Parks Dept. really stepped up again by supplying the dumpsters, four wheel drive pickup trucks, a port-a-potti, a landing craft and some garbage bags. Students from the Stony Brook School, Mt. Sinai, Port Jefferson, Comsewogue School Districts and Stony Brook University – Sigma Beta Honor Society came out and really made a difference. We are planning another beach cleanup there on October 16th, please go to the events schedule on our website to get directions and details.

To date this season we have removed a total of 28.71 tons of debris from 8.7 miles of our local beaches with the help of 394 volunteers. Great job everyone! That gives us a total of 286.67 tons or 573,340 pounds of garbage removed from Long Island beaches to date. Now that is what I call – “Making a Difference” for our environment.

National Grid Foundation has notified us that they will again be sponsoring the Coastal Steward. We will be doing four beach cleanups for them. They are our largest sponsor and they continue to believe in our cause and very generous. Without their support and the support of all of our sponsors, donors, grants from Suffolk County and The Sounds Conservancy (QLF), the Town of Brookhaven, the villages of Port Jefferson and Belle Terre, Whole Foods and Estee Lauder, we could not continue to do the great things we do. A huge thank you goes out to all of them and the volunteers that make this organization the success that it is.

The Shellfish Restoration Program (SRP) has been going great this year. We have seen a lot of volunteers coming down to Mt. Sinai Harbor to lend a hand. Now is a critical time for the SRP, we have to get 180,000 oyster seed ready to over-winter and release about 25-30,000 more adult oysters. This program is really starting to show some good success. Both Port Jefferson and Mt. Sinai Harbors are loaded with spat (baby oysters) and nearly all of

them have the genetic marker (black stripes on the shell) that we use on our disease resistant oysters. We will be down at the Town of Brookhaven's Parks Dept. facility every Saturday until the end of October, so if any one wants to help out, we sure can use the help.

Our permit application to build a one acre oyster reef in Port Jefferson Harbor is being considered for a waiver on the remaining eight months of the three year finfish survey that the NYSDEC is requiring. All of the other requirements have either been submitted or are ready to submit. Congressman Tim Bishop who was able to get us the funding for the oyster reef has been trying to help get us the waiver. I would appreciate it if everyone could write to Peter Scully, Regional Director, Region 1, Bldg 40, SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11790-2356 and encourage him to grant the waiver so we can establish a self-sustaining population of disease resistant oysters in Port Jefferson Harbor. The following are some of the facts that should be mentioned in your letters:

- The application is for restoration
- We are only asking for one acre out of 1,600 acres
- The site is in the permanently closed area of Port Jefferson Harbor, therefore not a nuisance hazard
- Oyster reefs are 300 times more productive than barren bottom
- The number one species on an oyster reef, other than oysters is grass shrimp, which is the number one food source of winter flounder, which is the NYSDEC main concern.
- Other species will benefit from the oyster reef which will provide shelter and food for many species of fish.
- The NYSDEC region in NYC doe not even require a finfish survey and they have three restoration projects going on
- Oysters improve water quality by filtering water; an adult oyster can filter 50 gallons a day.
- We have the funding in place through a grant from Congressman Bishop, which is very difficult to get in these economic times.

If anyone has any questions about this project or anything else that the Coastal Steward is involved with, please call me, Dave Johnson, Director at 516 946-6560. Thank you and I hope to see you at our events.

