

At the Helm January 2010

The past two years have been very gratifying and they have also been a mixed blessing. Volunteer numbers continue to grow at an amazing rate. We had 35 beach cleanups which removed over 60 tons of debris from Long Island beaches with the help of more than 1,000 volunteers. We continue to expand our beach cleaning efforts throughout Long Island. We now clean beaches from Jones Beach to East Hampton on the south shore and from Flax Pond to Goldsmith's Inlet on the north shore.

The National Grid Foundation and Whole Foods blessed us with very generous donations. We have partnered with the Peconic Baykeeper, the Peconic Land Trust, our good friends at Operation Splash and many more great organizations, students and volunteers from all over the island. Our Adopt-A-Beach Program has joined forces with the towns of Brookhaven, Southold and East Hampton.

Our Shellfish Restoration Program continues to release oysters into Port Jefferson and Mt. Sinai Harbors. From what I have seen, virtually every young oyster in Port Jefferson Harbor is from the same strain that we have released. We know this because we use a strain of American oyster that is disease resistant and has black stripes which is a genetic marker.

The economy has affected our financial state. Therefore we have had to cut expenses and continue to look for new ways to get funding to operate. One of our new policies is to ask all volunteers to sign up for events on line and become a member. There will be a fiver dollar membership fee and in return members will receive a membership card that they will be able to use for community service credit and a pair of gloves. Memberships will allow us to off set program expenses.

We are always looking for individuals or groups who love the environment and want to help make a difference. There are lots of opportunities to help out, from an hour or so to joining our Board of Directors. If you are interested, please call me, Captain Dave at 516 946-6560 to be part of the solution.