

# The Three Bays Monitor

Vol. 5 - February 2001

## The Envelope Please... Questionnaire Results are In

Many thanks to the nearly 100 people who responded to our Fall Questionnaire. Your observations and suggestions are most valuable; they help us evaluate what we've done and assist us in our plans for the future. Here are some highlights.

- 80 percent said they would modify their septic systems to remove nitrogen (if affordable).
- 67 percent said they would change their lawn fertilizer.
- In West Bay, 33 percent said water quality has improved (11 percent said it hasn't), but 39 percent said navigability has gotten worse.
- In North Bay, 21 percent said shellfish have declined, and 33 percent said finfish populations have gone down.
- In Cotuit Bay, 42 percent said water clarity has improved, and 33 percent said the algae problem has gotten better (while 17 percent said it has worsened).
- In Warren's Cove and Prince's Cove, while 22 percent said water clarity has gotten better (compared to 67 percent who haven't noticed any change), 44 percent said navigability has worsened.

Thanks for the comments, too:

Your progress is impressive and important to the entire community - not just those who live on/near the water..."

"Clearly improved navigability by dredging..."

"Affordability is, as you know, relative to cost and available money. To modify individual septic systems is doing nothing but applying a band-aid on a problem that needs a major operation. The longer the Cape waits, the more it will cost."

Since the vast majority of respondents are interested in hearing more on the subject of water quality in our area and methods to reduce nitrogen inputs, Three Bays Preservation, Inc. will be hosting a presentation in early Spring (date to be determined) to address these issues and answer your questions.

## A New Vice President, and No Recount is Necessary

Congratulations to Donald Schwinn, our newly named Vice President. Don has served on our Board of Directors for the past 1 ½ years and is Chairman of our Scientific & Technical Committee. He has 40 years experience in wastewater treatment, specializing in nitrogen control. We're grateful that he has agreed to take on this new, important role.

**Coming Soon: Another Monitor!**

Next month, we are planning to publish a special issue of the Three Bays Monitor. It will focus on the problem of excess nitrogen in our embayments, recommended solutions, and the role of the Three Bays Water Quality Monitoring Program. We hope the special issue will serve as an overview of the topics that will be discussed in greater detail at the Spring presentation. We will also update our readers and members on the DNA analysis that is currently underway to determine the sources of the fecal coliform that is showing up in alarming concentrations in our bays and estuaries.

## **Water Quality Progress Report**

The "Water Quality & Habitat Health of the Three Bays Estuarine System" progress report from the 1999 field season will be available in mid-February. Please call the Three Bays office at 508-420-0780 if you would like a copy of this report.

## **Dredging Continues**

Not that it went without a hitch, but our most recent round of dredging successfully transferred more than 15,000 cubic yards of sand in West Bay to Dead Neck. Funded by Three Bays Preservation and the Town of Barnstable, the January dredging is expected to improve water quality and navigability in the bay while further stabilizing the barrier beach.

The hitch? Well, for those who didn't know, West Bay used to be a peat bog. Unfortunately, the dredging equipment came across some 100 feet of cedar stumps and roots from the olden days. But the hard-working County dredge team was able to disentangle the machinery, and the delays ended up being minor.

The dredging generated some good publicity, both from newspapers and radio stations. The more we bring attention to our work, the more likely we are to forge partnerships that will help solve the bays' long-term problems.



*Freshly dredged sand is deposited on Dead Neck.*



*Dredging in action: West Bay sand stabilizes Dead Neck.*

### **Get Enough Mail?**

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