

# The Three Bays Monitor

Vol. 9 - November 2001

## Red Tide: An Unwelcome Guest Pays a Visit

If, earlier this fall, you looked out at parts of North Bay and Prince Cove and saw red, your eyes did not deceive you. Between mid-September and early October, a menacing, rusty sheet choked the water column. The culprit: red tide, not the catastrophic varieties that have wreaked havoc on the biota in the ocean off New England and North Carolina, but a cause for concern nonetheless.

Our thanks go to our Vice President, Don Schwinn, who investigated the disturbing phenomenon. Don collected a sample and took it to the Red Tide Program of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The organism was identified as *cochlidium polykroides*, which has caused fish kills in Asia, Canada and Mexico, but only in fish farms where the animals could not escape the suffocating algae. It does not appear to be harmful to humans, and no fish kills were noted in our bays.

Don has been in contact with Dale Saad of the Town Health Department. He is also waiting to hear back from a world-renowned expert on red tide at WHOI on the cause of the bloom and what to expect in the future.

We will report when we have more information on this. In the meantime, those who want to learn more about red tide are encouraged to visit the website:

[www.whoi.edu/science/B/redtide/](http://www.whoi.edu/science/B/redtide/)

## Annual Giving Drive Underway

By now, most of you have received a request to support Three Bays Preservation, Inc. through our Annual Giving Drive. We ask you to consider the important accomplishments that your previous support has made possible: from the dredging that increases the water flow in our estuaries and has improved bird habitat, to the scientific work that has helped to pinpoint where many of our pollution problems have come from.

None of this work could have been done without you - as volunteers who collect water samples, and as generous donors who recognize the need for an organization that is dedicated exclusively to the protection of our beloved estuarine system.

Please consider a significant donation this year. Thank you.

## Make a Joyful Noise

We can often be found in Barnstable Town Hall, looking for support for our projects and conferring with officials who, like us, understand the need to protect our waterways.

Many members of Three Bays Preservation, Inc., though, have asked us how their voices can be heard.

Here are a few names and addresses (please call us if you live outside the local district; we'll be happy to help get you in touch with your local and state representatives).

William Delahunt  
Congressman  
146 Main Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601

Robert O'Leary  
State Senator  
Massachusetts State House  
Room 413E  
Boston, MA 02133

Demetrius Atsalis  
State Representative  
Massachusetts State House  
Room 167  
Boston, MA 02133

Town Councilors:  
Richard Barry  
Gary Blazis  
Carl Riedell  
Barnstable Town Hall  
367 Main Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601

We urge you to get in touch with these folks. Every issue seems to have its lobbyists. Three Bays Preservation, Inc. and you, our supporters, serve that role on behalf of Cotuit, West, and North bays. It is our responsibility to raise public awareness about water quality issues. After all, the bays belong to all of us, and our elected officials must understand this.

### **FLUPdate: In Other Words, How's the FLUPSY Doing?**

We know it's a burning question: How's FLUPSY? Before we answer, a little background is in order. Earlier this year, Three Bays Preservation, Inc. and the Town of Barnstable Natural Resources Program initiated an innovative shellfish propagation system in West Bay.

An acronym of Floating Upweller System, the FLUPSY pumps water into seed tanks attached to a pier. The young shellfish are provided with fresh nutrients and are able to grow in the absence of predators.

Natural Resources staff cultured approximately 400,000 quahog seeds in the FLUPSY from the end of July until mid-October. We are very pleased to report that the seeds grew magnificently. They were recently transferred to selected parts of the bay bottom and were covered with predator exclusion netting. Next summer and fall, the shellfish will be harvested and brought to other quahog beds in West Bay for public resource enhancement purposes.

A note to our shellfishermen friends: We fully expect to be invited to several dinners featuring our FLUPSY bred morsels.

### **Summer's Over... Let's Dredge!**

The off-season is upon us, and the Cape has quieted. All will not remain silent, however. A familiar hum will soon be heard in Cotuit Bay. For two weeks, dredging equipment will be busy doing work that is central to the mission of Three Bays Preservation, Inc.: increasing water flow - that is, flushing out pollutants - and helping our avian friends. This round of dredging - done in cooperation with Massachusetts Audubon, the Town of Barnstable, and the Town Harbormaster - will remove 6500 cubic yards of sand from the western end of Sampsons Island. The material will be deposited on another part of the island to improve bird habitat. Judging by the success we've had in attracting plovers and terns to other spots where we've brought sand, we expect to hear, once the machines have left, an even bigger orchestra of chirps and tweets.