



Department of Environmental Conservation

For Immediate Release: 10/13/2021

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DEC ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF SHELLFISH RESTORATION EFFORT AT SHINNECOCK BAY SANCTUARY

Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project Benefits Coastal Communities

1.5 Million Clams Stocked at Shinnecock Bay Sanctuary

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced the completion of shellfish stocking at Shinnecock Bay Sanctuary to help to restore critical marine environments, improve water quality, support the local fishing industry, and build stronger coastlines. A total of 1.5 million adult clams were stocked at the Sanctuary, which is part of the Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project (LISRP) that is benefitting Long Island's coastal communities.

"New York State is committed to working collaboratively with public and private partners to protect and restore our environment, water quality, and natural resources affected by our changing climate and human interaction," **said Commissioner Seggos**. "Today's milestone at the Shinnecock Bay Sanctuary demonstrates the State's sustained progress to enhance and restore New York's valuable marine environments. We are grateful to our partners for continuing this effort to enhance marine ecosystems while supporting New York's shellfish industry."

DEC oversees LISRP in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), Stony Brook University, municipalities, and volunteer organizations. The Shinnecock Bay Sanctuary was established on underwater lands regulated by the Southampton Town Trustees. This large-scale shellfish restoration initiative established five shellfish sanctuary sites to be stocked with juvenile and adult shellfish over several years to meet the target densities necessary to support maximum water quality benefits and shellfish enhancement.

Marine Program Director at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, Chris Pickerell said, "The team at CCE are thankful to have been part of this important project. The State's investment in this work, including funding a state-of-the-art shellfish hatchery in Southold, will have long-lasting and far-reaching impacts on shellfish restoration and water quality improvement across the marine district. We look forward to continuing to work with DEC and other partners on future efforts in the coming years as the momentum builds for this type of work."

Endowed Chair of Coastal Ecology and Conservation at Stony Brook University, Dr. Christopher Gobler said, "Building on the early success of Stony Brook University's School of

Marine and Atmospheric Sciences Shinnecock Bay Restoration Program to monitor and advance the health of Shinnecock Bay, we are proud to help continue that work with New York State in 2021. Working together in recent years we've seen hard clam densities in Shinnecock Bay increase dramatically, resulting in an increase in commercial landings of hard clams by 1,000 percent, vanishing brown tides and marine algal blooms, improved water clarity, and more than 100 acres of eelgrass have regrown in the bay. The additional 1.5 million hard clams planted as part of the Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project with State support will continue to help improve water quality and assure the long-term success of hard clam populations in Shinnecock Bay."

Southampton Town Trustee Scott Horowitz said, "I am proud that we were able to partner with DEC, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Stony Brook University, and all the stakeholders on this important project. The shellfish sanctuaries established by the Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project are critical investments in our marine environments that will provide renewed opportunities for generations to come. Clean water and sustainable shellfish stocks are critically important to support our way of life in the Town of Southampton and we look forward to continuing this work together to protect these special areas and the positive outcomes of enhancing shellfish populations in our bays."

DEC is working with Stony Brook University to monitor the sanctuaries for five years to determine shellfish survival and enhancement, as well as water quality improvement. The restoration project provides a unique opportunity to obtain biological and environmental information on shellfish growth, survival, and spawning success, and to monitor the effect on water quality, phytoplankton uptake, and filtration and nitrogen cycling and removal. The results of the project will guide and support future restoration efforts on Long Island.

Shinnecock Bay is the third LISRP sanctuary site to achieve its stocking target goal of 1.5 million adult clams. The Huntington Harbor Sanctuary completed its target in October 2020, and was stocked with 650,00 adult clams harvested from certified waters and approximately 15.1 million juvenile shellfish—7.2 million clams and 7.9 million spat-on-shell oysters—produced by the Suffolk County Cornell Cooperative Extension Shellfish Hatchery and town hatcheries in Islip and Brookhaven. The Bellport Bay sanctuary was completed in October 2019, and has received its target of 1.6 million adult clams. Adult clam stocking commenced in the South Oyster Bay sanctuary on Sept. 1, and is expected to meet its 1.5 million adult clam target by Nov. 1, 2022. The juvenile shellfish stocking target of 14 million spat-on-shell oysters was met in the Hempstead Bay Sanctuary. Adult stocking in the Hempstead Bay (Middle Bay) sanctuary will begin next year. A map of the Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project is [available here](#).

NOTE: Pictures of shellfish planting attached, courtesy of NYSDEC

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