

**HARDSHELL CLAM FARMING IN GREENWICH COVE
GREENWICH SHELLFISH COMMISSION**

If you see a 60-foot barge-like boat with a strange apparatus on the front of it working in Greenwich Cove, don't panic. The boat is called the New Harvester and is being used to implement a program of the Greenwich Shellfish Commission designed to farm clam areas so as to optimize the hard shell clam population in the Cove. The project started in March 2002 and will continue this winter beginning November 1 in the area east and northeast of Greenwich Island. Owner, Ed Stilwagen, of Atlantic Clam Farms, has used this boat in Greenwich Cove several times to transplant hardshell clams closer to shore, within reach of recreational clammers, without cost to the Town.

The purpose of the project is to allow future clam sets to flourish and to improve the size mix of hard clams in the Cove. After consulting several clam farming companies including Talmadge Bros. of Norwalk and Atlantic Clam Farms Ltd. of Southold, Long Island, the Commission concluded that the thousands of 30-40 year old clams which blanket the cove like cobblestones, are preventing the establishment of new young clams in the area. This is because their siphoning action is so powerful that the large clams are sucking in the new clam larvae, or fertilized eggs, as well as most of the available plankton or food.

Apparently the clam's siphoning action is appreciated by others, because we have sold a large number of quahogs to the Eastern Long Island branch of Nature Conservancy. They put the clams in Peconic Bay to use them to keep the Bay clean and free of red tide. This is part of an ongoing program and study being conducted by SUNY at Stonybrook, L. I. and UCLA, which has apparently been successful. Some were also deposited in a clam nursery at Shelter Island.

Last year, the Commission was offered a trade by Ed Stilwagen, 2 million baby oysters for one million large clams. We accepted and subsequently early in the morning of July 2, 2003, the entire commission worked to place the oysters in good areas in the Cove. They are growing happily.

This year, 2004, The same conservation group plus Islip and Brookville have requested another million or so quahogs to help repopulate Great South Bay where the clams have been decimated due to overfishing and brown tides. On September 14, the Greenwich Shellfish Commission again approved the sale of clams to Ed Stilwagen to supply the above mentioned Conservancies. According to State Statutes, all moneys received by the Town's Shellfish Commission shall be used by the Commission "for the protection and propagation of shellfish". So the revenues from the sale will remain in the Shellfish Commission's coffers and may be used to replenish our beds with smaller clams and/or oysters. See "Oyster restoration Projects."

Continuing to improve the shellfish habitat in Greenwich Cove is the goal of the Greenwich Shellfish Commission.

Lucy Jinishian, Chairman
Dan Barrett, Vice-Chairman
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Michael Aurelia, Chief Warden

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