Mill Creek Replenished With Quahogs Ahead Of Shellfish Season

By JAMIE L. COSTA

Plastic stained against broken shells as gloved and hosted volun-
teeers used tools of Clams down the back of a trailer toward an ar-
ning shell.

Hooking the craters into the air, workers from the Sandwich Shellfish Department dragged them stacked high in the back of the shell, gathering into the mid-
dle of Mill Creek and dumping them overboard to filter to the mud.

With the help of the volunteers, the department scattered more than 120,000 clams into the creek within 20 minutes. Wedging the flow of the boat into the muddy shoreline, Assistant Director of Natural Resources Jodan Wright cycled the engine and commanded the crew on another successful day.

"I get an email from Josh about volunteers, and I wanted to know where our food came from, so I decided to volunteer," said one volunteer who showed up with his two tons of broken clams on his pants. Pitching in to help behind the trailer, the volunteer yelled at the clams, gazing down at the closed valves. "You could feel their fingers running along the back of their shells.

Jumping off the trailer hitch, the boys ran to the bridge of the Sandwich Boardwalk, joining several onlookers to watch the con-
ditioned layers the clams rise to the cove ahead of the harvest. Mr. Wright said.

"They will be tested ahead of harvesting to make sure the meat is not contaminated," said Sue Roussou of Sagamore, who has volunteered before and leads to the oyster bed year round.

Once the clams are deemed safe, shellfish license holders are invited to sift through the marsh for clams throughout the winter, taking with them up to one pick of quahogs a week.

"There is a waiting period between new and December when the clams are cleaned in the town," said Sue James said.

"It's very beneficial to the recreational season," he said. Over the course of four days, Mr. Wright and volunteers traveled to Tantum to pick up the clams which were hauled from a trawler in Fall River and, with the help of a gallery system, swung from the boat to a small dock where con-

During a research assessment and cleansing program that the town has participated in for the past 13 years, the contaminated clams, trawled and dredged out of polluted waters in Fall River, are purchased by the department. The department purchased the clams that harbor both licenses and depopulated in the clean waters of the creek to cleanse themselves of toxins ahead of the annual harvest. Mr. Wright said. After, they are cleaned in the town ahead of the oyster bed year round.

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