

ReClam the Bay / Bay Notes

Issue No. 1 / Summer 2023 / Volume I

Reclamthebay.org / 68 Main Street, Waretown, NJ 08758



Living Shoreline Programs take off!

RCTB is an all-volunteer educational organization with a mandate to teach the public about the critically important resources that make up our Barnegat Bay region. Raising shellfish has been the means by which our group demonstrates both the important function of these filter feeders in maintaining balance of our coastal environment, and the scientific underpinnings of that function.

However, a rapidly growing aspect of RCTB's program has been the installation of "living shorelines", where permanent oyster colonies

are constructed and nurtured as reefs for the dual purpose of protecting coastlines and improving the adjacent water quality. From an initial endeavor less than ten years ago, our organization has constructed and maintained five increasingly ambitious projects, helping develop the science that keeps improving the success of these coastal resiliency initiatives!

These efforts have gotten the attention of coastal communities and NJ DEP. Great things are planned for 2023-24!



Shellfish in the Classroom

Post-Covid, Reclam the Bay returns in a big way to elementary & HS classrooms across central NJ

Fellner, Nitche families bequeath gifts to RCTB

Honoring two RCTB greats, our organization has received generous grants for programs & research

New Upweller at Island Beach SP

A new tank and silo design is being evaluated at IBSP, as new upweller sites are planned



Shellfish in the Classroom

This spring, RCTB resumed the SITC program that had been sidelined by the Covid pandemic. Through multiple communities, schools and after-school programs, the RCTB educators reached more than 700 students, between 4th and 12th grades. Two programs were taught, focusing on the ecological benefits of Barnegat Bay's shellfish, including health, resiliency, and shoreline stability. A second class, targeted to older students, introduced some of the scientific equipment employed in measuring environmental conditions critical to raising healthy oysters. In addition to the instruction, RCTB provided the young oysters which students got to raise, along with aquariums and related equipment.



In 2021, ReClam the Bay lost two genuine giants who were part of the day-to-day foundation of this organization. **Louis "Lou" Fellner** and **Al "Father Clam" Nitche** were both dedicated to furthering RCTB's educational mission. Al began the Mordecai Island "living shoreline" partnerships, and initiated the spat tank that fed its construction. His relationships with MATES, NJ & Federal Fish & Wildlife agencies, and his pursuit of marine ecology science set the path that grew RCTB's present prominence. Lou similarly advanced our reputation, as a ubiquitous presence at fairs, festivals, and classrooms, and he was usually the first person into the bay when a repair was needed at an upweller.

Their families generously endowed funds to continue the work so important to each of these remarkable men. We miss their presence and great humor.



Franklin-98 Living Shoreline Project in Florida

Recognition of creating permanent oyster colonies on breakwater structures, in order to dissipate wave energy, appears to be taking place far beyond our own coastal region.

Max Lopp, vice president of RCTB, has reported that the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has funded more than 200 "living shoreline" projects since 1998, and has recently targeted an 11-mile stretch of Florida's Hwy 98, on the Gulf coast's St. George Sound for a coastal resiliency program labeled "**Franklin-98**" (in their Franklin County). This substantial project will involve creating 20 acres of planted oyster reefs, in addition to 30 acres of salt marshes to protect the "coastal identity and resources" of the region. This is a major initiative in an estuarine environment that RCTB will follow with considerable interest through its implementation, and afterward.



Additional News . . .

- As you take a stroll through the marina & park at **Traders Cove (TC)** in Brick, stop for a few minutes at the large **painted clam & garden** just east of the boat access ramp. In addition to our upweller at TC, RCTB in 2016 erected a 2-sided clam sculpture to further educate the public on the need for clean bay water. The clam was created by students of Brick High School & the Art Club of Brick Memorial High School. A "Bay Fact" can be found on this sculpture. Surrounding the "clam" is a native, garden-like planting. Plant material is labeled and maintained by volunteers of ReClam. Initial research on appropriate native, salt water tolerant plants & the gardens actual design was completed by a volunteer landscape architect. This project is sustained by funds given to RCTB from THE MYTH, a group of contributors dedicated to a healthy bay.
- A **brand new upweller** was installed at Island Beach State Park during early May, replacing a worn tank that has served to raise baby clams, oysters & bay scallops for over 15 years. Purchased from Hoopers Island Oyster Co. in Cambridge, MD, selection of this new upweller system came after a thorough review of several tank design options. The versatile new tank design included 12 silo inserts, & capability of operating in both RCTB's normal upweller mode as well as a "downweller" mode, which permits growing very young clam seed without them being carried by turbulent water flow out of the tank & into the Bay before they form protective shells! The upweller has garnered major attention from park visitors who learn about shellfish critical functions.