

# ReClam the Bay / Bay Notes

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The **Mystic Beach Living Shoreline** in Little Egg Harbor was completed this summer, with the large phase 2 installation taking place on August 15. More than 300 bags of oyster spat-on-shell from Beach Haven's and Cattus island Park's tanks were added to 100 from July, on rock jetties off Mystic Beach by a small army of our volunteers. The huge turnout brought this two-year project, also at Parker-town's Beach nearby, to a successful close, adding 1.12 million oysters to the Bay in this year alone.

The final buildout of the Mystic Beach installation was preceded by an interview of RCTB's Dom Tumas with ABC TV's "Action News Philadelphia" reporter, Charles Watson, on the project. It didn't make TV, but Dom told Watson about the full scope of the Little Egg Harbor projects; about why we deploy bags of cultch and spat-on-shell, and how those filter-feeders improve the Bay.

RCTB is now seeking new living shoreline projects for 2025-26.

## "Reports from the Bay" and our upweller captains

Here's what RCTB is seeing this season, from northern Barnegat Bay to Manahawkin Bay to Great Bay:

- Beach Haven: overwintered clams woke up early (and hungry!) this season, filling upwellers before any seed clams arrived. But it's been a fine growing season – oysters, too, with great spat set rates.
- Barnegat Light: growth has been solid, but also record levels of squirts that eat clam seed and babies, too.
- Island Beach SP: 2<sup>nd</sup> year with new upweller has excellent shellfish growth; 2<sup>nd</sup> year clams are huge, and definitely ready to enter the Bay, and visitor activity is translating to new workers/members!
- Mariner's Marina: new silo design (see image) has made cleaning, monitoring of clams and oysters easier and ergonomically safer. Similar to the Tuckerton design, they even hold more shellfish, and resurgent marshes, good tidal movement and substantial visitor numbers seem to have made many happy clams.
- Traders Cove: Once July's Hooper Island tank arrived, clams, oysters are growing; but like MYC tank, less than 2023. Still, great new team members from Jenkinson's!



## New study on trace metals in clams

RCTB, SBB & Stockton Univ sponsored research on bioaccumulation in Barnegat Bay clams



## New upweller at Normandy Beach is a day-camper hit!

RCTB installs upweller at new NBIA location, and summer staff training and learning programs engage pre-K thru 6<sup>th</sup> graders



## ReClam the Bay history project in full swing for 2025

Contributions and interviews from original members illustrate the great work over twenty years in Barnegat Bay

## Nick Guerriero - New research assesses potential bioaccumulation of trace metals in Hard Clams

In tandem with Stockton University, RCTB sponsored Nick through Save Barnegat Bay (SBB), on “Assessing Heavy Metal Toxicity in Shellfish Near High Boat Traffic Areas”. His groundbreaking research held significant implications for Barnegat Bay’s clam and oyster industry, and a very large turnout, both in-person and online, heard his August 20<sup>th</sup> presentation. Study findings show that despite high seasonal boat traffic and deposition of copper and zinc residues into waters during boat maintenance, Nick’s hard clam tissue samples showed minute trace levels some 225 times below FDA drinking water standards. He also noted surprisingly similar metal trace levels in clams, whether near marinas or in more isolated and pristine areas. His study will be made available at [reclamthebay.org](http://reclamthebay.org), once final university review is complete and it is published.



## SEAWILDING

Community-led Marine Habitat Restoration

RCTB had its first technical exchange videoconference with **SeaWilding**’s senior staff on September 11. This coastal regeneration group, located on Scotland’s Loch Craignish, is almost a mirror of RCTB and our activities, and does astounding levels of eelgrass meadow and cultchless oyster restoration in that region, with substantial community volunteer support. Their website is [www.seawilding.org](http://www.seawilding.org).

SeaWilding’s knowledge of eelgrass has been hard-earned from experimental trial, and we hope that they might benefit from Stockton’s Dr. Elizabeth Lacey, who has counseled RCTB. They monitor research and have dialogs with a variety of countries worldwide (Canada, Romania, US’s Chesapeake Bay) regarding harvesting and replanting techniques, which we hope will benefit our own eelgrass program. And they face similar restrictions in the UK on oyster planting to those RCTB deals with in NJ, but anticipate investigating our spat-on-shell techniques. We look forward to further partnering with and learning from these committed and talented environmentalists.



## New Upweller at Normandy Beach

Plans to install a new upweller at Traders Cove, and relocate theirs to Normandy Beach were completed in the nick of time for their summer day-camp start, but since then, that upweller program took off like a rocket! A very enthusiastic staff was trained quickly, and RCTB volunteers helped each week for this initial year. Rapid mastery of clam and oyster growth methods by their consistently large team, and the wonder in the eyes of the young campers learning about Barnegat Bay and its marine life were inspiring sights, week after week. The **Normandy Beach Improvement Association** (NBIA) has future hopes to get engineering and permitting approval for a living shoreline at a nearby bird sanctuary.



**RCTB’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual ClamBake Fundraiser will be October 8<sup>th</sup>, 4-7 pm at the Barnegat Oyster Collective, 483 East Bay Avenue in Barnegat. Tickets are \$55 ea and limited; details at the Store at [reclamthebay.org](http://reclamthebay.org). Come join us to finish the 2024 season!**

## Additional RCTB News. . . The Voyage of Sorcerer II, by J Craig Venter & D E Duncan

- A 2024 book published by Harvard University Press tells of an incredible 15-year adventure, traveling the earth’s seas in order to sample and map an immense portion of the oceans Biome. Lead by co-author Craig Venter, who headed the biotech team that sequenced the World’s first cell genome, these astounding voyages proved the richness of microbial life previously discounted. Written in an accessible manner for non- and “citizen” scientists, the tales are attention-grabbing, especially of the monumental importance of the seas’ phytoplankton on controlling the atmosphere and life – a terrific read!
- RCTB’s project to establish the **historical record of its first 20 years** took another significant leap forward on September 19, when members had the opportunity to interview three members present at its birth. Gef Flimlin, Cara Muscio, and Rick Bushnell sat for a two hour interview of “all things ReClam the Bay”, and provided the clearest recounting of RCTB’s origin and early years. Intended to be released both as a digital record and as a collectible printed volume ahead of our 20<sup>th</sup> year in 2025, the project’s story is a tribute to the many volunteers who make up the organization.

