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View from the Rivers Edge – December 2023

There is a sense of real excitement when I look back at this past year and look ahead to 2024.

Yarmouth voters approved \$207 Million dollars to fund a wastewater treatment plant, ensuring our next generation, will enjoy a Bass River that is safe and beautiful. In addition, The Towns of Yarmouth and Dennis, through our CPC grant applications, again supported the Upper Bass River Headwaters Restoration Project. Now four years into this project, it includes replacement of the undersized North Dennis Rd. culvert with a 60' bridge, restoring 57.2 acres of retired cranberry bogs and reestablishing the historic fish habitat at the end of Mill Pond. I really can't say **THANK YOU** enough to these forward-thinking residents of Yarmouth and Dennis.

A wonderful new event of 2023 included former board member Liz Gail Hayden's three days of scientific and historic immersion for about 300 7th graders from Dennis-Yarmouth Intermediate School on West Dennis Beach. It was a great event for everyone, and we are thankful to Betsy Pontius, and all the science teachers at for making this inaugural event such a success. We already have our dates set for 2024!

As we planned for 2024, we realized education needed to be a larger part of our mission. We wondered how do we share the beauty and all the challenges facing our river? The answer was a boat. In an extraordinary gesture, **Freedom Boat Club of Boston & Cape Cod** owner Matthew Carrick donated precisely what we needed, and **Bass River Marina** partnered with additional support. Incredible! I believe this will take Friends of Bass River to another level. Stand by for details.

We have also (hopefully) added another extremely important piece of the water quality puzzle to our project list this year. Many of you know Crowell Pond (I know it as Run Pond) across from Bass River Beach. This pond has easily the worst algal bloom and odor source tied to Bass River. In partnership with the engineering firm Tighe & Bond, Yarmouth CPC approved our application to study and develop a solution to this problem. I am hopeful Yarmouth voters, at spring town meeting, approve another piece of our vision for Bass River.

If you were able to attend our annual symposium in October, you may be holding your breath driving over the Route 28 bridge. Videographer Thomas Milkey captured many images showing the bridges' dreadful condition that are truly breathtaking!



Second generation commercial fisherman Joel Bois surprised everyone when he shared a relatively new to the river invasive known as the Chesapeake Boring sponge. This invasive species kills shellfish and overwhelms fishing areas. Horrible news we will look to understand going forward.



Dennis and Yarmouth Shellfish Constables Jordan Halloran and Casaundra Healy provided details of the Oyster and Quahog upweller programs on the river. I believe they convinced everyone in attendance our shellfish are in very good hands.

We also had good news regarding the number one question I am asked each year. “When will the river be dredged?” Yarmouth DNR assistant director Dave Condon had a one-word answer: Monday! If you have driven near the mouth of the river you can see the results. Thank you!

Finally, a massive thank you to our dedicated water testing team members for their extraordinary commitment. From May thru September, they test Bass River Water every week. Our partner, The Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies’, sampling analysis will be complete in early 2024. We will share the results in our spring newsletter.

Personally, I begin my 5th year as Executive Director on January 6th. I am very proud of what has been accomplished and very excited to continue the pursuit of our goal to protect Bass River and for what it means to all of us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Bishop".

Rick Bishop
Executive Director

Pontoon Boat Update

Our new pontoon boat arrived at Bass River Marina this week - a 21' Bennington SX. We are already scheduling water testing trips, river tours, and other excursions for Summer 2024 – stay tuned!

Once again – a million thanks to the **Freedom Boat Club of Greater Boston and Cape Cod** for their generous donation. They have 6 locations here on Cape Cod including Bass River Marina. Members also have access to over 400 locations across the US and the globe.

Thank you also to **Bass River Marina** for their commitment to assisting us with berth space, storage & maintenance.



North Dennis Road Bridge Update

Always great to share good news with our supporters! The North Dennis Road bridge, commonly known as (Crab Creek) is perhaps the most important component of our upper Bass River headwaters restoration project. The current 6' wide culvert is the pinch point preventing water flow into Mill Pond – the unhealthiest part of Bass River. Some may recall the MEP report calling for a 70% reduction in nitrogen in this part of the River!

Project engineers Tighe & Bond are proposing a 60' wide bridge replacement for the undersized culvert which will dramatically increase flow and reduce residence time in the pond - which will significantly improve water quality.

We have three major project milestones to report.

1. This fall NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Services) granted our project, through the Town of Yarmouth, \$600,000. to fund the final design of the bridge.
2. The Town of Dennis CPC and Dennis voters funded the permitting of the structure.
3. Finally, in partnership with APCC there has been an application to NOAA that will fund construction.

Significant progress is happening! Please stay tuned.



DID YOU MISS THE SYMPOSIUM?

THE VIDEO IS LIVE!

Catch up on what you missed.
Fast forward to a specific section.
Forward to a friend.

Check out our channel on



<https://www.youtube.com/@friendsofbassriver8350>

Common Invertebrate Pests of Bass River

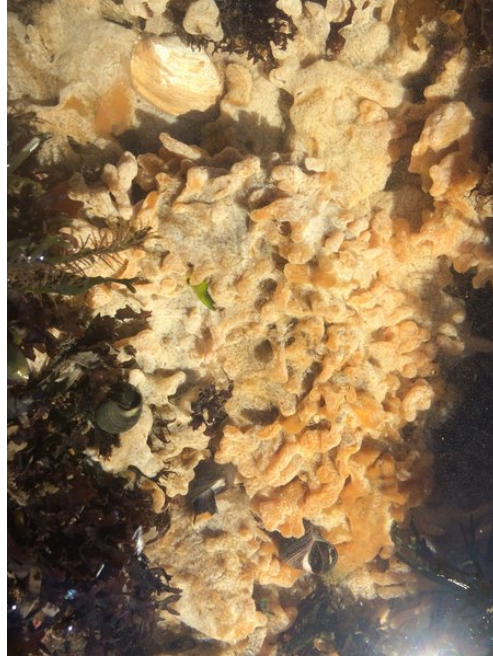
Boring Sponges



Cliona Celata

The boring sponge *Cliona Celata* is not named for its disposition but rather its habit of secreting acid used to dissolve holes in shellfish, which it uses to anchor itself. A colony of individual invertebrates - their community can grow up to 12" - they are filter feeders, also known as the Sulphur Sponge – for their bright yellow to orange color. This sponge is common in waters from Florida to Nova Scotia but considered a threat to commercial shellfish propagation when present in our estuaries. Studies show that increasing ocean acidification due to rising temperatures will not only affect the health of shellfish, but the resulting decreased pH levels may also stimulate increased boring by these invertebrates.

White Crust



Didemnum spp

A colonial tunicate worm (not the kind off the Mayflower) or sea squirt. *Didemnum* can be found in crusty mats on rocks & is more prevalent on the river hanging from docks in its ropey form. Color ranges from white/Cream to pink or yellow. In areas where the mats are expansive, they can cover the siphons of burrowing bivalves and prevent other animals from spawning on the seabed.



2nd Annual First Light with DCLT

Start 2024 off right – outside! – for the year's first light. Join the Dennis Conservation Land Trust and the Friends of Bass River at West Dennis Beach for the first sunrise of 2024. Walk along the barrier beach for views of Nantucket Sound and Bass River while learning about the natural and cultural history of the area. The 1-mile walk will start at 6:45 AM and proceed along flat, sandy substrate. Registration is limited. Email info@DennisConservationLandTrust.org for more info.

During this time of seasonal giving please consider a tax-deductible donation to FOBR. Thank You!

www.friendsofbassriver.org or scan the QR Code:

