

December 18, 2013

Town of Chilmark
Board of Selectmen
PO Box 119
Chilmark, MA 02535-0119

Dear Selectmen:

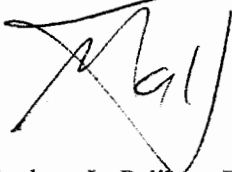
I'm writing to extend the thanks of The Nature Conservancy to the Town of Chilmark for its role in our cooperative 2013 oyster reef restoration project in the Tisbury Great Pond. The project, half in Chilmark and half in West Tisbury at the mouth of Town Cove, seeks to establish a permanent oyster bed in the pond. Once established, this oyster population will help improve water clarity, sequester nitrogen, provide benthic habitat for plants and animals (potentially including commercially important fish), and spawn more oysters into the pond to increase these benefits and help support the pond's traditional public oyster fishery.

The Conservancy was able to cover many of the costs for this year's shellfish work in the pond and handled the permitting and project design for the Town Cove project. But the project used methods developed previously by Chilmark, West Tisbury and the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group. And successful implementation depended on knowledge, equipment, and hard work supplied by the towns.

A number of town employees played a role in this effort. But we were especially grateful for the assistance of the Chilmark Shellfish Department and advisory committee, particularly that of town shellfish constable Isaiah Scheffer. Isaiah's organizational abilities, knowledge of shellfish and the Great Pond, and skill on the water were vital to the project and largely responsible for the success we've achieved to date. Chilmark's substantial shellfish resources could not be in better hands.

Thanks again to all who helped, and we look forward to continued cooperation with Chilmark in pursuit of a healthier Great Pond and enhanced shellfish populations.

Sincerely,



Matthew L. Pelikan, Restoration Ecologist
The Nature Conservancy/Massachusetts
18 Helen Ave.
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
(508) 693-6287, ext. 11

CC Chilmark Shellfish Department

