

Councilman Panico Participates In Environmental Research to Seed the Forge River with Oysters to Improve Water Quality

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Farmingville, NY - Councilman Dan Panico spent the morning of June 28, 2012 assisting the Town of Brookhaven's Department of Environmental Protection with the planting of Oysters in the Forge River. This is part of Councilman Panico's directive to find various solutions to the water quality issues as it relates to the Forge River.

"It makes me very proud to support this wonderful program to find solutions to the water quality problems that we experience in the Forge River," commented Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico. "While these oyster floats will not do it alone, they provide needed information and data to help the effort. This research could provide the link to the potential seeding of millions of oysters in the Forge River as part of the larger effort to have a positive impact on water quality."

Oysters feed on floating microscopic algae by filtering them out of the overlying water. For this reason, increasing the abundance of oysters may be a way to reduce the abundance of algae that can lead to fish kills and diminished oxygen concentration and thus improve water quality.

The Forge River often experiences high algal concentrations so the Town is undertaking a pilot scale project that will add oysters to the Forge River to see if they can survive and how well they grow which will provide an indication if increasing oysters will be an effective water quality management tool.

The Town is deploying four rafts that will contain the oysters at two locations in the Forge River to see if location matters with respect to oyster survival and growth. Two rafts are located off the Town launching ramp and the other two are off Osprey Park; for comparison, two additional rafts are located on the north shore of the Town in Mt. Sinai Harbor which is known to be a good oyster habitat.

The oysters are placed in mesh bags that are suspended from the rafts so they are several inches beneath the water surface. Approximately 10,000 oysters that are little bigger than a quarter are placed in each raft. The oysters will be inspected every week to determine their growth and survival until the fall, at which time the survivors will be removed from the rafts and released.

For more information, please visit us at www.brookhaven.org and follow the links to Councilman Dan Panico's page.

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