



**WHITEHALL
BAY**
CONSERVANCY



SEPTEMBER, 2016

Hello Oyster Gardeners!

Welcome to the start of another oyster growing season. As a result of your efforts the Whitehall Bay Conservancy this year contributed **85 bushels of viable oysters to the Severn River oyster bar.** Now in its sixth year, the Severn River oyster bar is thriving and helping to make the Severn River and the Chesapeake Bay cleaner and healthier.

On September 8, 2016 a group of volunteers met at Whitehall Marina to prepare 120 bags of spat for delivery to participating gardeners. A very big thank you to Don Carren who engaged Captain Brian Walton and mate Rick on board Easy Lovin' for a busy trip delivering spat in and around Whitehall Creek. In addition, thank you's must also go to Paul Aubin, Bob Murphy, Monty Schumpert and Kevin Keelty for doing the work of preparing the spat bags and the making deliveries! Finally, we could not have done the work this week if John White had not generously offered the use of parking and docking facilities at Whitehall Marina. **Thanks to you all!**

You will be receiving infrequent but important emails reminding you of the few maintenance tasks necessary to maintain the health of your oyster spat.

Please refer to the following for the very short list of to-dos and additional information about our program. If you have any questions concerning any aspect of this wonderful program, please feel free to contact me by phone.

Lana Keelty
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Here is how it works!

Late Summer (Sept/Oct) High Not Dry

Spat is delivered to your WBC Captain who will hang it in bags off their pier. Pick up your spat for the number of cages you have. One bag fills 3 cages. At this time, oysters grow best in the upper water column where food and oxygen are plentiful, but they must stay wet. Growers will be provided yellow marker signs to put on their piers indicating they are oyster growers.



Fall: Change Your Clock Lower at the Dock

Lower the cages until the oysters are just above the river bottom and will be covered with water even during extreme low tides or storms. Oysters become dormant and can remain healthy even if entirely encased in ice. But, they will die if exposed to freezing air temperatures or buried in sediment.

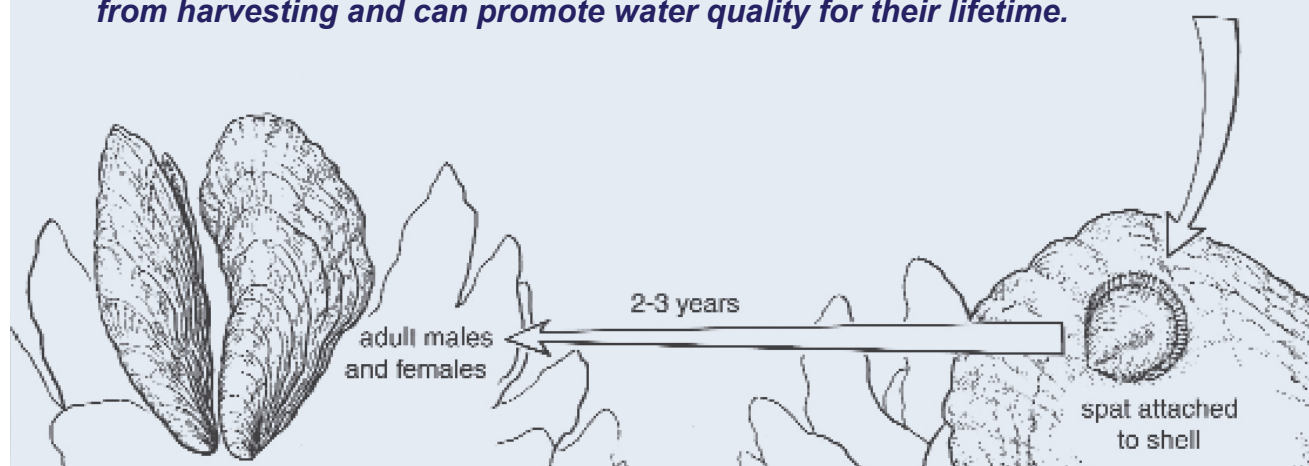
Spring Back Up at the Dock

Raise the cages up to about one foot below the low water level once the risk of freezing air temperatures has passed.

Early Summer (May/June) Up & Out

FREE PICKUP! Whitehall Bay Conservancy will be sending you newsletters throughout the year for reminders and instructions.

WBC delivers oyster shells early Fall that have spat attached to the outside shell. You can help nurture the spat to grow by hanging the cages off your pier. When the oysters are picked up in the Spring by WBC, they will be placed on a sanctuary reef in the Severn River where they will be protected from harvesting and can promote water quality for their lifetime.



Why oyster growing?

Oyster Gardening is important to the health of our waterways because oysters act as natural filters. A mature oyster can filter as many as 50 gallons per day!

What is WBC?

In 2010, fifty people signed up in your community from the creeks off of Whitehall Bay. Don Carren started and directed WBC. They placed 110 cages off docks in your community has raised 4,000 oysters. Right now Whitehall Bay Conservancy has many new members and over 300 oyster cages in our creeks!!! Lana Keelty has begun directing the program starting this Fall. Don continues to provide his expert experience and knowledge to the program and he still helps deliver spat.

Is it a lot of work?

NO. We deliver the spat to your Captains' pier for you to fill your cages free of charge and pick them up when they are mature and ready to place into the oyster reef for a greater bigger cause. All you have to do is shake them and rinse them lightly with a hose in the cage when they are going to be picked up. See the following instructions.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR OYSTER CAGES

IT'S EASY!

Oysters require water flow to survive and grow. Take a few simple actions during the warmer months to keep the cage mesh open and free of fouling organism.

Shake

To discourage growth of barnacles and algae, clean once a week by simply pulling the cage up and down in the water column several times.

Rattle

If the cage becomes fouled, brush the bars to remove build up and rinse with a hose.

Roll

Gently redistribute the oysters after cleaning to prevent oysters from growing shell around the mesh of the cage.

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WHITEHALL CREEK, MINNOW CREEK, RIDEOUT CREEK, MILL CREEK, BURLEY CREEK, MERIDITH CREEK