

October 5, 2015

Board of Selectmen
Town of Chilmark
401 Middle Road
Chilmark, MA 02535

Dear Board of Selectmen:

I, Chilmark's Shellfish Constable, am writing to request additional funding and hours for the position of Assistant Shellfish Constable. Attached to this letter I have broken down the current rate of both the laborer and assistant constable positions and what I am requesting for my department. Eliminating the laborer position and creating a year round assistant constable can be seen on the attached spreadsheet. This request was supported by the Shellfish Advisory Committee during our September 30th meeting.

The assistant constable position is currently part of the Shellfish Department and has been limited as part time seasonal employment. The extra help has been extremely important to keep up with shellfish propagation over the last few years. Unfortunately I have noticed that I could use more help with almost all parts of my department. There are increasing burdens placed on my department by the Division of Marine Fisheries for both Vibrio Compliance Monitoring and Water Testing that were not my responsibility a few years ago. Additionally we have several new aquaculture verdures and several more coming that will require more attention from my department. During family shell fishing there are gaps in law enforcement (weekends) that I feel should not be happening. For example, after monitoring the commercial scallop fishermen during the week, I check the pond a few times per weekend which both interrupts my off time and leaves the pond with far too little supervision.

I have been hesitant to expand the propagation program any further because it would require more gear, when I can barely get the equipment that I am currently using out of the water before winter with no assistance. To add to that burden, equipment at the end of the year is much more challenging due to biofouling which adds significant weight.

If your board decides to support this request for this year round position this what the Town of Chilmark will get in return:

- Better and more accurate reporting of harvest statistics
- Better reporting of propagation program statistics
- More time to construct equipment that will last longer and require less replacement, as well as refurbishing/repurposing old equipment
- Full compliance with Vibrio Monitoring per Mass State Requirements
- Maintenance of important days of seed care do to State water sampling
- Expanded propagation program to keep up with hatchery seed distribution, increased seed size at release and propagation of additional species (steamers)
- Enhanced care of scallop seed in the fall and winter with potential increased survival
- Coverage by law enforcement during Shellfish Constable vacations and weekends
- Increase in habitat restoration of eelgrass in Nashaquitsa
- Increase in predator control, including eider duck chasing to protect seed
- Institute Canadian goose control measures such as addling
- Better overall function of the shellfish department.

I as a Chilmark employee swore to act in the best interest of the town and I feel that this is what my department needs to become better functioning in order to both protect and enhance the shellfish resource of Chilmark.

Sincerely,

Isaiah L. Scheffer Chilmark Shellfish Constable