ANNAPOLIS YACHT CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

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Annapolis Yacht Club Works With NOAA's National Center For Coastal Ocean Science For New Study Of Chesapeake Bay Oysters

Annapolis, MD (July 7, 2015) — This summer, the Annapolis Yacht Club (AYC) is helping the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science with a new study being conducted as part of NOAA's Mussel Watch program. The goal of the study is to help scientists understand the distribution of current-use pesticides, pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and other chemicals associated with human activity that may bioaccumulate in oyster tissue.

"The Annapolis Yacht Club was strategically selected [not only] because of its location near the mouth of Spa Creek, [which is] a heavily urbanized tributary of the Severn River, [but] also, per the Marylanders Grow Oysters (MGO) program coordinators, AYC has been a strong advocate for water quality and oyster restoration in the Chesapeake, having hosted in several occasions, MGO cages. It was important for us to select people or entities who are already involved in such environmental issues," said Dr. Dennis Apeti, Ph.D., one of the scientists conducting the study.

With help from Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the study's organizers were able to identify three suitable survey areas for each of the four areas of the Chesapeake Bay that the study is being conducted: the Severn River representing an urban area, Patapsco River representing an industrial area, the lower Choptank River representing agricultural land-use, and the Rhode River representing undeveloped sites.

Dr. Apeti explained that the Mussel Watch program uses bivalves, such as oysters, to monitor organism health and the presence of more than 150 chemical pollutants at approximately 300 coastal locations nationwide; fourteen of which are located within the Chesapeake Bay. And with this new study's targeted locations, NOAA is hoping the study will help to better conduct a survey of contaminants of emerging concern (CECs).

This study and the individuals and organizations who have been willing to help are crucial towards helping to protect one of the Bay's best resources. "Oysters purify the Chesapeake Bay as they filter the water for their food. Oysters filter pollutants (such as sediment and nitrogen which cause problems to the Bay's waters) by consuming them or shaping them into small packets, which are deposited on the bottom where they're not harmful," according to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's website (www.cbf.org).

For the past three years, the Annapolis Yacht Club has been an avid supporter, spat (juvenile oysters) distributor, and participant in local oyster programs, including Marylanders Grow Oysters and Severn River Oyster Growers Association (SROGA).

AYC General Manager, Brian Asch, said, "With property on three sides of the Eastport Drawbridge Bridge, I believe we are stewards of Spa Creek who need to set the example for others to follow. If we want future generations to enjoy the Bay as we have, then we need to be part of the solution."

Annually in September, employees of AYC's Dockmaster's Office affix eighty to one-hundred cages onto the Club-owned docks. Each cage contains spat and recycled oyster shells donated by AYC members. With the exception of periodic fresh water rinsings and monitoring by Club staff, the spat are left to mature in their cages until late June, at which time they are taken to the oyster sanctuary located by the Route 450/Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard Bridge on the Severn River.

Oyster habitation programs and studies such as the one conducted by NOAA, are important to the Annapolis Yacht Club and its members, because they continually work towards giving back to the marine environment with which they use and honor as a yacht club. Their dedication to environment causes is also evident by their certification as a Maryland Clean Marina and membership with the Spa Creek Conservancy.

"Being a yacht club who relies on the Chesapeake Bay as an important resource, I believe it's critical for the Club to lead the oyster recovery efforts and I'm thrilled that the Club can continue to contribute to such an important environmental cause," stated Mr. Asch.

AYC helped to deploy the research cages on Wednesday, June 24 and each month, the cages will be rinsed with site water to clean off algae that has grown on the enclosures, while Dr. Apeti and fellow scientist, A.K. Leight, periodically sample the oysters for laboratory analysis. At the end of August, the cages will be removed from AYC's dock by Dr. Apeti and Mr. Leight and then, taken back to their lab for further analysis.

Results of the study will be made available to the volunteers, stakeholders, and public via NOAA's web portal at http://egisws02.nos.noaa.gov/nsandt/index.html#.

About Annapolis Yacht Club

AYC was founded in 1886 as an informal canoe club. Today, the Club's mission is to encourage and support a wide range of boating activities and to maintain facilities for the recreational and social use of its 2000 members. The Annapolis Yacht Club is a full service, year-round premier private yacht club that provides high-quality programs for its members. These include sailboat racing, cruising for sailors and power boaters, a vigorous junior sailing program, fun and educational winter activities, social events, and first class dining and banquet facilities. Visit annapolisyc.com to learn more about the Club.

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Accompanying photos.

Annapolis Yacht Club's M Dock on Spa Creek is the location of two oyster cages, each filled with fifty oysters to help with a two-month study conducted by NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science.

For the duration of the study conducted by NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, two cages filled with fifty market-sized oysters will be hanging from the Annapolis Yacht Club's M Dock on Spa Creek for a period of two-months.