

**PROJECT APPLICANT:** Town of Southampton - Environment Division

**PROJECT TITLE:** Sebonac Creek Inlet/Great Peconic Bay Oyster Reef

**PROJECT TYPE:** Aquatic Habitat Restoration

**SCALE:** Neighborhood/Watershed

**APPROACH:** Restoration

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Town of Southampton’s Environment Division is seeking funding to aid in the design and construction of a pilot oyster reef project located in the Great Peconic Bay. Preliminary designs have already been created which show approximately 275 linear feet of reef balls installed to the northeast side of the inlet and 125 linear feet of reef balls installed on the southwest side of the inlet. Each concrete reef ball will be filled with eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) spat and kept at Cornell Cooperative Extension’s (CCE) hatchery until they are settled. Once the oysters have become established, the reef balls will be transported from CCE hatchery to their final location near the inlet. Upon completion of the construction, CCE will monitor the reef balls for a period of five years. In addition, reflective navigational buoys will be placed near the reef balls to prevent boaters from entering the area and the reef will be designated a “marine sanctuary/ no-take zone.” Within this zone, the oysters will have a chance to establish their population, while increasing estuarine biodiversity and ensuring the protection of the reef long term.

Eastern oysters consume phytoplankton by filtering up to 50 gallons of water a day. Therefore, by increasing the number of oysters in the water that feed on macroalgae, the water quality will improve and there will be fewer incidence of harmful algal blooms (HABs). Another ecological benefit of the reef balls is a projected increase in sediment deposition which would enable eelgrass to establish on the leeward side of the reef.



**REQUESTED AMOUNT:** \$ 96,050