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**Gurney's Montauk Yacht Club, Concerned Citizens of Montauk, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Partner to Bring Shellfish Nursery to Lake Montauk**

Effort Is Part of Governor Cuomo's Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project

Montauk – Gurney's Montauk Yacht Club and Resort, Concerned Citizens of Montauk (CCOM), and Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program (CCE) today unveiled their two-year plan to grow-out four million clams in Lake Montauk. This Montauk partnership is part of Governor Cuomo's Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project (LISRP), designed to help restore Long Island's shellfish populations and water quality.

Two floating upweller nursery system (FLUPSY) units were installed at Gurney's Montauk Yacht Club on July 24th. FLUPSYs are used to grow-out shellfish in open water while protecting them from predation until they are large enough to survive on their own. These units provide increased water flow to ensure a constant food supply to promote accelerated growth. The clams, which have incredible water filtering capacity, will remain in the lake through the summer and early fall growing seasons, when CCE field technicians and CCOM staff will perform weekly maintenance on the units, ensuring the clams continue to thrive. Once the clams reach the size of approximately a quarter they will be transported to one of five Long Island sanctuary sites. In 2019, the process will repeat with more seed clams in the FLUPSYs and planting in the fall. It is estimated that each FLUPSY unit will accommodate 1 million clams per season. After this two-year project, there is potential to continue to grow-out shellfish at this site and seed in alternative locations in East Hampton and Montauk.

"We are honored to be involved in such a worthwhile cause," said George Filopoulos, President of Gurney's Resorts. "We hope not only to grow an impactful quantity of clams, which will allow Lake Montauk to thrive, but also to raise awareness within our boating community and resort guests on how everyone can help make a difference for years to come. I look forward to our first grow-out season, which will include our young guests as they are educated on the effects of shellfish and water quality as part of our new Gurney's Kids Club programming."

Laura Tooman, President of Concerned Citizens of Montauk, said, "CCOM is thrilled to be participating in this regional initiative to improve Long Island's water quality and shellfish populations. This Montauk installation signifies how powerful a public, private and

nongovernmental partnership can be in protecting and restoring our environmental integrity. We look forward to working with Cornell Cooperative Extension and Gurney's Montauk Yacht Club and Resort to deliver millions of water-filtering clams in the next two years, with additional promise for growing and seeding millions more in future years, right here in Montauk!"

In September 2017, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a \$10.4 million effort designed to improve water quality, help shellfish populations, and bolster the resiliency of coastal communities. Since then, Cornell Cooperative Extension's (CCE) Marine Program has been hard at work initiating efforts to produce over 150 million shellfish (clams and oysters) with the support of a \$5.25 million award as part of the New York State Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project (LISRP) funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Initial stages of the project have included construction of a new state-of-the-art hatchery to supplement the capacity of CCE's current shellfish hatchery operation at Cedar Beach County Park in Southold; working to identify suitable receiving areas to serve as shellfish sanctuary sites in Nassau and Suffolk; developing volunteer and community involvement opportunities; and producing the clams and oysters needed to meet the targeted restoration goals of the LISRP.

"We've received an outpouring of support from public and private dock and marina owners volunteering to serve as site hosts for our FLUPSYs. In total, we will be deploying 42 FLUPSY units this year, with at least another 30 slated for 2019," noted Chris Pickerell, CCE Marine Program Director.

More information on the Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project can be found at Lishellfishrestorationproject.org or by contacting CCE Marine Program Outreach Manager Kimberly Barbour at 631-461-5294 or kp237@cornell.edu.