



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CCOM's Floating Wetlands Tested for Nutrient Removal Capabilities

On Monday, November 14th, the Concerned Citizens of Montauk (CCOM) delivered floating wetland plant specimens to the Gobler Lab at the Stony Brook University Southampton Campus. The plant samples will be tested to determine their overall nutrient removal capacity.

In 2018, CCOM and Dr. Gobler joined forces to better monitor the harmful algal blooms in Fort Pond. Because of his extensive knowledge of harmful algal bloom and nutrient interactions, CCOM also chose to partner with Dr. Gobler this year on the plant analysis for the Fort Pond Floating Wetland Project (<https://www.preservemontauk.org/initiatives/water-quality/>)

2022 marks the second year of CCOM's floating wetland project. In May 2022, 7200 native plants were placed in floating mats with the goal of minimizing the risk of harmful algal blooms in Fort Pond. Algae thrive when there is an excess of nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus. As the native plants mature their roots grow, which enables them to take up nutrients as food. As such, native plants reduce the amount of food that is available for harmful algae and could potentially lessen the extent and severity of the harmful algal blooms that have plagued Fort Pond for years.

Besides nutrient removal capabilities, the wetland installations provide incredible habitats to fish, birds, and other animals. Several freshwater Bryozoa were found attached to the back of the mats. They look like gelatinous blobs, but their presence is a sign of a healthy ecosystem. Bryozoa can filter large amounts of algae from the water making their existence on the floating wetlands even more conducive to decreasing harmful algal blooms.

CCOM's floating wetlands are part of a multi-faceted comprehensive effort to monitor, study and improve Fort Ponds water quality. Other efforts include bacteria monitoring, harmful algal bloom monitoring and analysis, septic upgrade outreach, open space land acquisitions, and mitigating stormwater runoff.

For more information on the floating wetlands project and the other collective efforts to help save Fort Pond please visit www.preservemontauk.org



Lab Manager, Jennifer Goleski (left), CCOM president, Laura Tooman (center), and CCOM Program Specialist, Jaime LeDuc (right) holding floating wetland plant specimens in the Gobler Lab at the Stony Brook University Southampton Campus.

Photo Credit: Jaime LeDuc



A native plant removed from the floating wetland mats on Oct 22. The roots of the native plants grow under the water which enables them to take up nutrients (like nitrogen and phosphorus) as food, reducing what is available for harmful algae. The plant samples will be tested in the Gobler Lab to determine their overall nutrient removal capacity. *Photo Credit: Jaime LeDuc*



Several freshwater Bryozoa were found attached to the back of the floating wetland mats. They look like gelatinous blobs, but their presence is a sign of a healthy ecosystem. *Photo Credit: Jaime LeDuc*