

**PECONIC ESTUARY PROGRAM**

**PROTOCOLS FOR HARVESTING AND  
TRANSPANTING EELGRASS IN THE  
PECONIC ESTUARY**

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**PREPARED FOR  
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH SERVICES**

**PREPARED BY EEA, *INC.***  
*In conjunction with*  
**East Hampton Town Natural Resources  
Department  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County  
Marine Program**

**Revised January, 1998**

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PROTOCOLS FOR HARVESTING AND  
TRANSPLANTING EELGRASS IN THE  
PECONIC ESTAURY

PREPARED BY  
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## EELGRASS HARVEST

### 1. DESCRIPTION

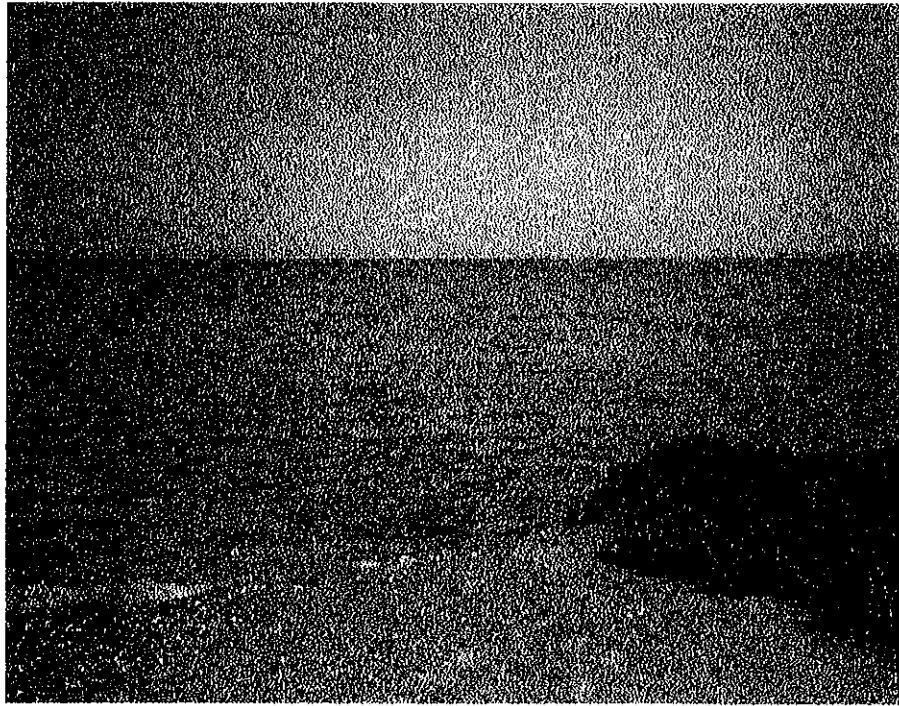
Eelgrass, (*Zostera marina*) should be harvested during mean low water prior to spreading of seed (optimal), immediately following first seed dispersal period, or during the fall prior to last seed dispersal period.

### 2. MATERIALS

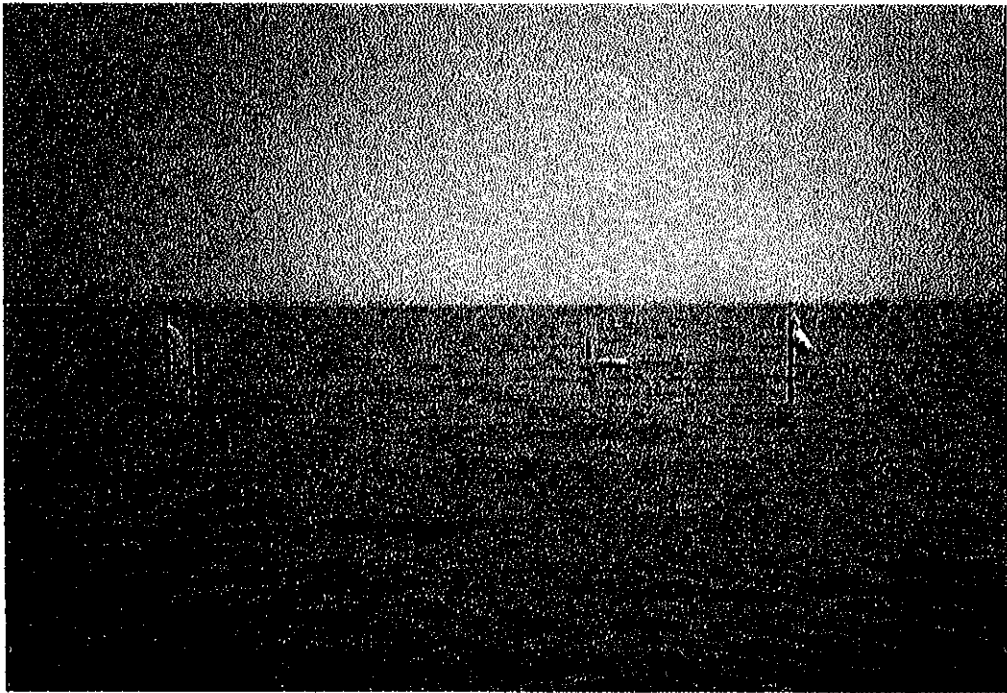
- A. Rounded, long- handled spade.
- B. Transplant materials (cooler, apple baskets, nursery flats, burlap bags).
- C. Plug materials (staples, paper, twist ties).

### 3. EXECUTION

- A. location for harvesting eelgrass should be identified. The location should exhibit similar local sediment, water, and wave characteristics as the area chosen for transplantation.
- B. A rounded spade is used to harvest an area of eelgrass no larger than one square foot.
- C. Remove sods at three to five feet on center (OC) from the central portion of the existing eelgrass bed.
- D. Eelgrass will be planted by two different means:
  - 1- The entire sod is planted as a whole;
  - 2- The individual shoots of the sod are separated and planting units or plugs are made.
- E. Sods are harvested and placed into one of the transplanted containers.
- F. Sods removed for plugs are washed and individual shoots separated in groups of four to five shoots together and bundled with paper, ties with biodegradable twist-ties, anchored to 6-8 inch metal staples and placed into a transport container.
- G. All harvested material should be placed three to four feet below the water surface in transport containers until ready for transport.



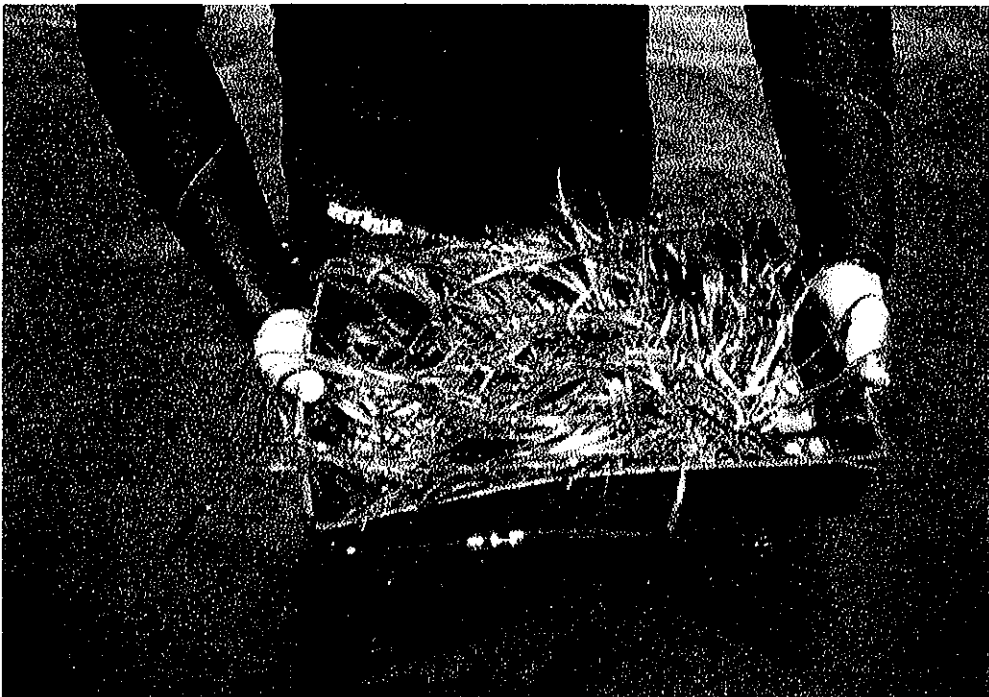
**Reconnaissance for harvest site**



**Staked location for harvesting**



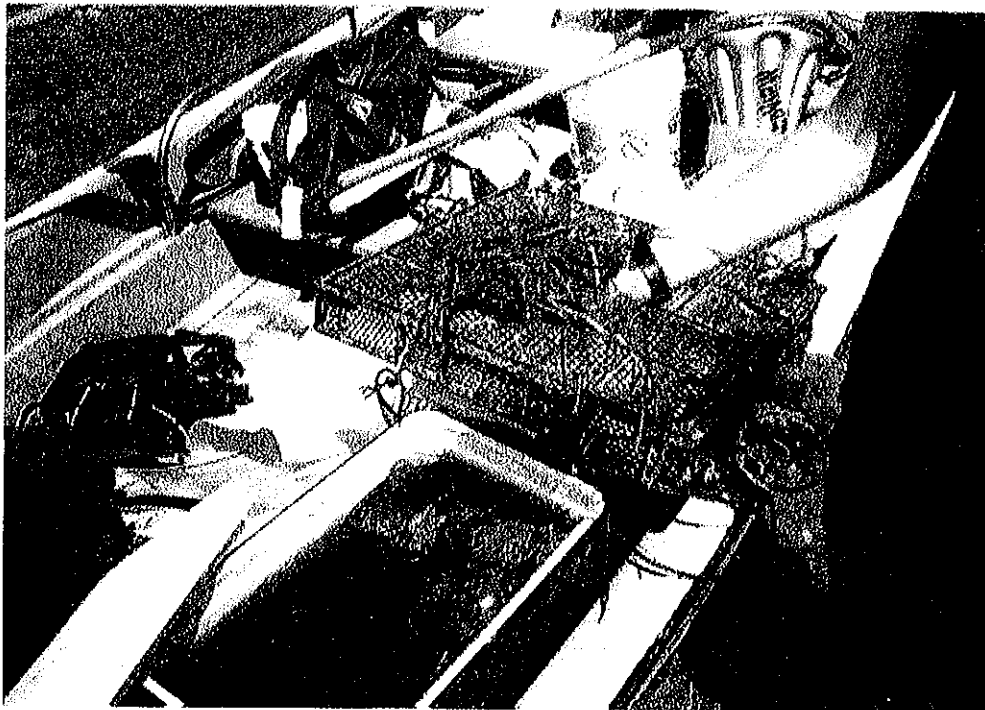
**Eelgrass transport after harvesting**



**Eelgrass transport after harvesting**



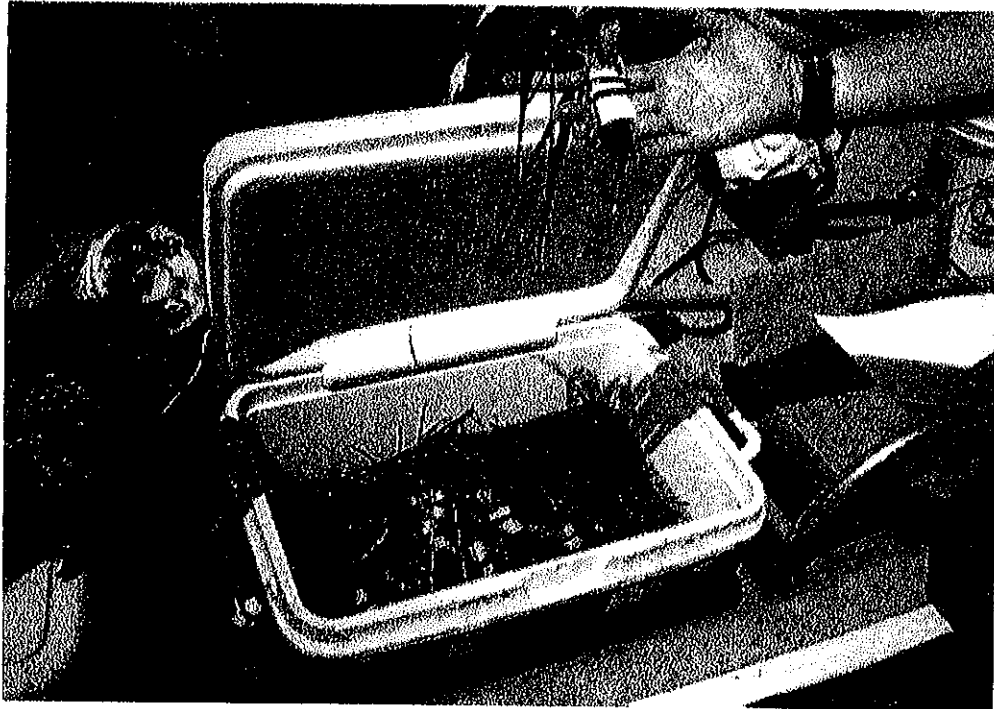
**Transport of eelgrass after harvesting**



**Getting ready to prepare plugs**



**Prepared eelgrass plugs**



**Transportation of plugs**

## EELGRASS TRANSPLANTATION

### 1. DESCRIPTION

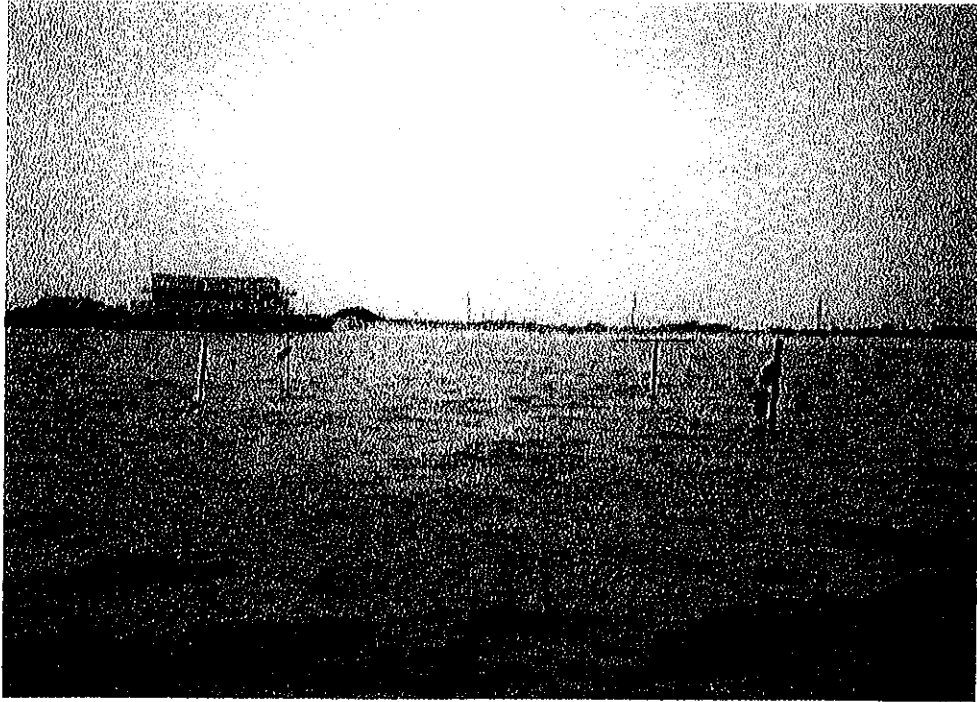
Eelgrass, (*Zostera marina*) should be transplanted immediately following harvesting to reduce stress.

### 2. MATERIALS

- A. Diving suit, tank, regulator, buoyancy compensator, weight belt, mask, and fins.
- B. Small hand shovel and/or spade for fine substrates.

### 3. EXECUTION

- A. Install eelgrass plugs 12-inches on center (OC).
- B. Install eelgrass sods at one foot OC or butt-ends together.
- C. Photograph transplanted area at first opportunity after sediment has settled from the water column.



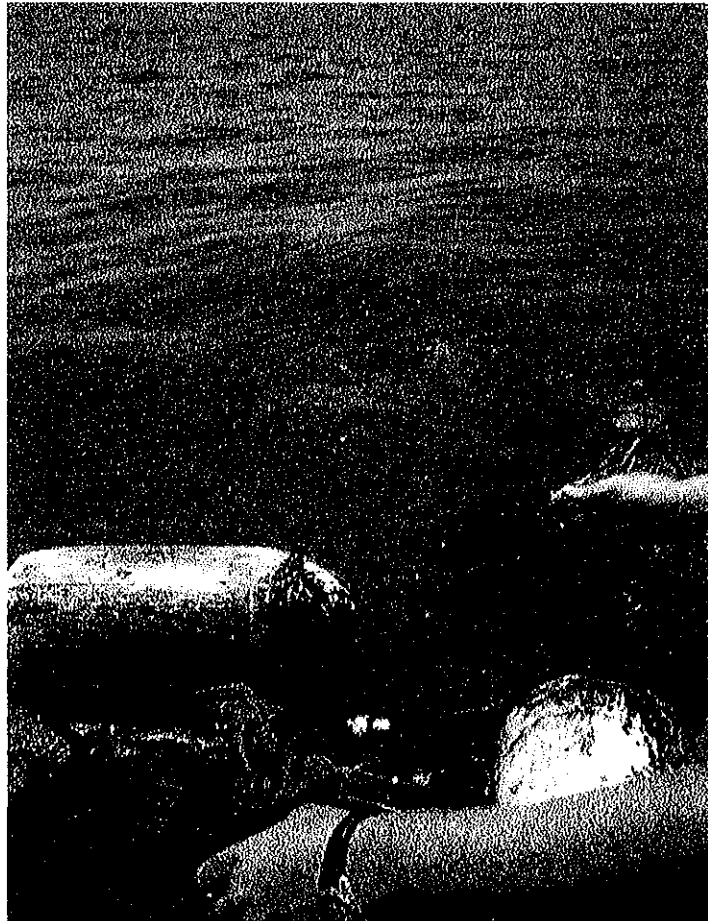
**Staked location for transplantation**



**Preparing for transplantation**



**Transplantation**



**Transplantation**



**Transport of harvested sod**



**Transport of harvested sod**