



As I ate the oysters, ... and as I drank their cold liquor from each shell and washed it down with the crisp taste of the wine, I lost the empty feeling and began to be happy, and to make plans.
—Ernest Hemingway

Wellfleet Shellfish Promotion and Tasting (SPAT) Backgrounder

What's in a name?

SPAT stands for “Shellfish Promotion and Tasting.” The name also honors the oyster, which begins as a free-swimming larva called spat.

What do we do?

SPAT is a Wellfleet, Mass.-based tax-exempt, non-profit organization devoted to fostering greater understanding of the town's shellfishing industry. The organization promotes knowledge and interest in Wellfleet's shellfishery by educating the community about the history and traditions of shellfishing. Through events and educational programs on shellfishing and environmental issues, SPAT celebrates and spreads the word about the town's famous oysters and clams, its deep-rooted shellfishing traditions and its love of the arts. Proceeds support the annual OysterFest, as well as SPAT's educational mission, including a high-school scholarship program and community grants.

Who do we reach?

SPAT's main event is the Wellfleet OysterFest, a fun and educational family festival, held each year the weekend after Columbus Day in Wellfleet, Mass. The event attracts people of all ages —locals and visitors alike — for two days of celebration and education about the town's oysters and clams.

What do we teach?

SPAT is dedicated to helping people learn about the relationship between a healthy environment and the preservation of shellfishing traditions, as well as the creation of new shellfishing technologies. Its events and educational programs help people learn about local traditions and modern-day shellfishing practices in Wellfleet. Its goal is to inspire appreciation of the lifecycle of cultivating, harvesting, selling and preparing these local delicacies.

Who do we help?

Each year, SPAT grants educational awards as financial aid to Wellfleet residents or others who are pursuing careers in shellfishing or to those whose creative or educational contributions will increase awareness of Wellfleet's shellfishery, an important part of our community life.

How did we begin?

The first Wellfleet OysterFest in 2001 was an impromptu event, but it awakened a tremendous amount of community spirit and interest in spreading the word about the delicious fruits of Wellfleet's waters. It also made clear to the community the importance of educating the public about the strenuous and careful work that goes into getting great shellfish to America's tables. Within a year, a group of volunteers chartered the organization (SPAT) and made community education its primary goal, while ensuring the future of the festival.

Thanks to the generosity of our community!

SPAT carries out its work thanks to the year-round efforts of an all-volunteer board and a group of active committee volunteers. Dozens of community members help by volunteering at the OysterFest. The event is made possible by the support and donations of many generous businesses and shellfishermen and women. SPAT has received support in the form of a generous grant from SEMAC (Southeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center). Energetic help from the Town of Wellfleet also contributes enormously to the success of the OysterFest. Contributions to SPAT are tax-deductible.

Visit www.wellfleetoysterfest.org to learn more, make a donation or join the volunteer effort.

Wellfleet Shellfish Promotion and Tasting (SPAT) • P. O. Box 2156 • Wellfleet, MA 02667 • 508.349.3499
Media Contact: Michele Insley, SPAT Manager • T: 508.360.7227 • E: michele@wellfleetoysterfest.org