



A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

The Long Island Sound Office

of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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NEWS RELEASE

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Federal and State Officials Award Grants to Restore the Health and Living Resources of Long Island Sound

Oyster Bay, New York (September 15, 2006) – Gathering together at Oyster Bay, one of Long Island’s environmentally significant coastal areas, top federal and state environmental officials announced nearly \$900,000 in grant awards to 38 local community organizations and governments under the Long Island Sound Futures Fund (Sound Futures Fund). The new grant program pools funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shell Marine Habitat Program, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for projects to restore the health and living resources of Long Island Sound. The Sound Futures Fund is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The awards will be leveraged with an additional \$5.6 million raised by recipients themselves from other funding sources, bringing to \$6.5 million the total funding for local conservation projects.

Long Island Sound is an estuary that provides economic and recreational benefits to millions of people, while also providing natural habitats to more than 1,200 invertebrates, 170 species of fish, and dozens of species of migratory birds.

"Keeping the Sound in sound health should remain at the top of everyone’s agenda," said Alan J. Steinberg, EPA Regional Administrator for Region 2. "With nearly a million dollars in funds to be disbursed, we are delighted to provide the financial means to complete these valuable Futures Fund projects and help inspire a new generation to protect the wildlife and natural beauty of the Sound. Together we are working hard to protect endangered birds, improve the river passages, restore and protect shoreline habitats, and educate the public about conservation."

The Sound Futures Fund was initiated by the Long Island Sound Study through EPA’s Long Island Sound Office (LISO) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Projects from the first two years of the Sound Futures Fund will help achieve many of the goals laid out in the plan to restore and protect

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the Long Island Sound (Sound). The program has provided \$1.8 million to 51 projects in communities surrounding the Sound. With grantee match of \$9 million toward their projects, just under \$11 million in locally based conservation has been, in part, galvanized by the grant program. The projects in the first two years of the program will open up 13 river miles for fish passage, and restore 142 acres of critical fish and wildlife habitat including lakes, underwater grasses, woodlands, meadows, tidal wetlands, and park frontage.

The announcement of this year's Sound Futures Fund recipients was made at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay, New York. This year's grant program funded 20 grants in New York and 18 grants in Connecticut. Eight grants were awarded for habitat restoration and protection; nine grants for planning and stewardship; 16 for education and outreach; three to enrich fisheries; and two for water quality improvements. In addition to building the capacity of local organizations, this year groups will restore 42 acres of meadow, forest, eelgrass and wetlands. Local fisherman will conduct an assessment designed to open up three miles of stream for spawning populations of sea-run brook trout, alewife, American eel and rainbow smelt. There is also funding for redesign of a dam that will allow 800-1,000 native fish to migrate to high-quality spawning and nursery habitat. Fifty communities and more than 100 municipal officials and community leaders will develop a range of tools to deal with water pollution. More than 3,300 citizens will be engaged in such activities as: development of an interactive database of biodiversity in the Sound, restoration of a National Wildlife Refuge, and monitoring of endangered shorebirds on local beaches, as well as creating awareness of and commitment to high-value natural resources right in their communities. Three projects will educate 900 students from urban and low-income communities about the environment close to home by involving them in more than 30 community service projects. Two projects are based at aquariums on Long Island and Connecticut which offer the potential to reach thousands of visitors annually.

"One of the greatest environmental challenges facing our communities is the protection and restoration of estuaries," said Tom Kelsch, Director, Conservation Programs, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. "The funding awarded today represents the Foundation's continuing commitment, as well as the commitment of our federal and state partners, to further restoration efforts aimed at improving the overall health of the Long Island Sound."

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is once again proud to be a partner in the Long Island Sound Futures Fund Grant awards. From the North Fork, to the Bronx, to the Eightmile River, this year's projects reflect the diversity of partners conserving the Sound's fish and wildlife in urban and rural landscapes alike. Let's celebrate the successful grantees and continue our investment in a healthy estuary for the future, commented Dr. Richard O. Bennett, Deputy Director, Northeast Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

The Shell Marine Habitat Program is proud to participate in the Long Island Sound Study projects. Shell has a demonstrated committed to sustainable development and believes the LISS Futures Fund is an effective partnership among users of the Sound, local communities, conservation groups and academic institutions who share common goals in restoring and improving the estuarine environment. The Shell Marine Habitat Program is pleased to support projects that provide opportunities for hands on participation, education and scientific monitoring," said Froydis Cameron, Social Investment Manager, Shell Oil Company.

"The continued partnership between NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation demonstrates our joint commitment to restore fisheries habitat," said Timothy R.E. Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "The habitat restoration efforts that will

occur throughout Long Island Sound fit into our model of ecosystem-based management, and promote local stewardship of the habitats that sustain our nation's fishery resources.”

“Governor George Pataki and the Department of Environmental Conservation are committed to improving water quality, restoring habitat, increasing stewardship and providing additional access to the Long Island Sound, said Denise M. Sheehan, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. “We are proud to be a partner in helping the Long Island Sound Futures Fund support projects that will be instrumental in protecting and enhancing the Sound for the benefit of this and future generations.”

A list of funded projects is attached. For more information on the Sound Futures Fund and the Long Island Sound Study, including descriptions of the winning proposals, see www.longislandsoundstudy.net.

20 Grants in the State of New York

Project	Organization	Amount
Native Successional Forest Restoration (restoration project -R)	Edith G. Read Natural Park and Wildlife Sanctuary	\$35,000
Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Watershed Fish Passage Assessment Project (fisheries project -F)	Trout Unlimited, Long Island Chapter	\$32,000
Long Island Sound Eelgrass Restoration: Phase II (R)	Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Marine Program	\$50,000
Bronx River Restoration and Stormwater Retrofit (R)	Bronx River Alliance	\$73,000
Marine Mammals, Sea Turtles and Citizen Scientists (stewardship project -S)	The Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation	\$28,000
Great Pond Wetland Preservation & Restoration II (R)	Peconic Land Trust	\$22,000
Hempstead Harbor Cove Wetland Restoration III & IV (R)	Town of North Hempstead	\$27,000
Conservation of Beach Nesting Birds of Eastern Long Island (S)	New York Audubon	\$35,000
Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative Nissequogue River Watershed Project (S)	Regional Plan Association	\$50,000
Oyster Bay Harbor/Cold Spring Harbor Water Quality Monitoring Program Upgrade and Expansion (water quality project -WQ)	Friends of the Bay	\$36,000
West Shore Road Stormwater Demonstration Project (WQ)	Nassau County Soil & Water Control District	\$15,000
Rocking the Boat and Water Education Program (education and outreach project - E/O)	Rocking the Boat	\$35,000
Shellfish Restoration Program (F)	Coastal Steward	\$5,000
A Citizen Scientist Program Using Seabirds as Sentinels of Ecosystem Health in Long Island Sound (S)	Wildlife Trust	\$5,000
Little Neck Bay/Long Island Sound Estuary Festival (E/O)	Alley Pond Environmental Center	\$5,000
Long Island Sound Component of the 2006 New York State Beach Cleanup (E/O)	America Littoral Society	\$5,000
No Discharge Zone Information and Education Program (E/O)	Town of Oyster Bay	\$5,000
Interpretive Signage for the Harbor Island Salt Marsh Restoration Site (E/O)	Westchester County Department of Planning	\$5,000
Kips Bay National Estuary Day Celebration (E/O)	Center for Marine Research and Education	\$5,000
MicroMagic (E/O)	Schooner, Inc.	\$4,900

18 Grants in the State of Connecticut

Project	Organization	Amount
Glastonbury Riverfront Park – Drainage Channel Restoration (r)	Town of Glastonbury	\$50,000
Sherwood Mill Pond Restoration (r)	Town of Westport	\$19,000
Moulson Pond Fishway Improvements Diversion Device (f)	Lyme Land Conservation Trust	\$75,000
Calf Island Invasives Control (r)	Calf Island Conservancy	\$10,000

Long Island Sound Biodiversity Project (E/O)	The Maritime Aquarium	\$38,000
Saugatuck Watershed Partnership (planning project –P)	The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter	\$46,000
Mattabeset River Regional Basin Analysis (P)	Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District	\$13,000
The Ground-Truthing Project: Community Based Land Protection in the Lower Connecticut River Region (P)	Tidewater Institute, Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency	\$36,000
Solar Youth Summer 2006 (E/O)	Solar Youth	\$35,000
Outdoor Classroom at Hole-in-the-Wall (E/O)	Town of East Lyme	\$35,000
Land Use Leadership Alliance for Connecticut Land Use Decision Makers (P)	Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development District	\$40,000
Sea Turtle Stranding Outreach in Connecticut (S)	Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration	\$4,900
Discouragement of Waterfowl Feeding in Coastal Connecticut Towns (E/O)	Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection	\$1,200
Connecticut Shoreline Cleanup Program (E/O)	Connecticut Fund for the Environment	\$5,000
Horseshoe Crab Ecology (E/O)	SoundWaters	\$4,900
Summer Youth Employment Program, Science on the River (F)	Riverfront Recapture	\$3,900
Westville Manor Steward Team (E/O)	Solar Youth	\$4,000
A Public Radio Series on Long Island Sound's Conservation Success Stories and Important Environmental Issues (E/O)	Friends of WFCR	\$5,000