



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

Throgs Neck, New York (May 12, 2005) - Standing at scenic Maritime College where the East River meets the Long Island Sound, top federal and state environmental officials announced today nearly \$1 million in grant awards to 28 local community organizations and governments under the newly created 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, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Hudson River Foundation's New York City Environmental Fund for projects to restore the health and living resources of Long Island Sound. The awards will be leveraged with an additional \$1.9 million raised by recipients themselves from other funding sources, bringing to \$3 million the total funding for local conservation projects.

"This grant, under the Long Island Sound Futures Fund Program, is a perfect example of how the maximum opportunity to target environmental actions can be gained through the cooperation of agencies and the pooling of resources," said Acting EPA Regional Administrator, Kathleen C. Callahan. "EPA is pleased to support these 28 projects to restore and protect the health of this critical water body."

"These grants will restore habitat, improve public access, reduce polluted runoff, increase fish access to spawning areas, and educate citizens about the Sound," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator for EPA's New England regional office.

The projects will help achieve many of the goals laid out in the plan to restore and protect the Long Island Sound. The projects include: restoring eelgrass, an underwater plant that provides vital coastal habitat; helping a community develop a plan to control pollutant runoff from discharging into the Sound; and providing education experiences, such as field work, to disadvantaged youth from urban areas.

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The Futures Fund was initiated by the Long Island Sound Study through EPA's Long Island Sound Office (LISO) and is managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. A total of 28 grants were awarded to recipients in Connecticut and New York. Four grants were given for habitat restoration and protection; five grants for planning and stewardship; eight for education and outreach; four to enrich fisheries; two to improve public recreation and public access; three for water quality monitoring; and two to improve water quality. In addition to building the capacity of local organizations, the projects this first year will open up 10 river miles for fish passage, and restore more than 100 acres of critical fish and wildlife habitat including lakes, underwater grasses, tidal wetlands, and park frontage.

"We are very excited to award these grants to projects that engage local communities in the protection and restoration of local fish and wildlife habitats," said National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Executive Director John Berry. "Equally exciting is the commitment of \$1 million that will help engage communities at a large enough scale to conserve places that make the Sound an estuary of national significance."

"The continued partnership between NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation demonstrates our joint commitment to restore fisheries habitat," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under-secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "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."

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to be a partner in this new grant program to help to conserve the living resources of Long Island Sound," said Marvin Moriarity, Northeast Region Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Migratory birds, anadromous fish, and species of concern will benefit from the 28 new projects to be launched with this year's funding. I am especially proud of our Southern New England Coastal Program for its role in launching and supporting this grant partnership. I also want to acknowledge the bold commitment of the EPA Long Island Sound Office in support of these on-the-ground efforts. Combining the experience of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with the dedication of individuals, local organizations, and governments will mean new momentum to our partnerships to conserve the Sound."

"One of the greatest environmental challenges facing Connecticut and our neighbors is the protection and restoration of Long Island Sound," said Gina McCarthy, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. "The funding awarded today represents Connecticut's commitment, as well as the commitment of our federal and state partners, to further restoration efforts aimed at improving the overall health of the Sound. The projects supported by the Long Island Sound Futures Fund will not only benefit coastal communities, they will benefit communities throughout the watershed. More importantly, they not only provide direct resource protection, they educate the public and engage them in efforts they can undertake to restore this valuable resource."

"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, acting 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."

"This significant support from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund for communities and parks in Long Island City will accelerate the reconnection of urban residents with their waterfront, while increasing habitat for the shorebirds with whom we share the metropolitan region. The New York City Environmental Fund is pleased to be a partner with NFWF and the Futures Fund in these kinds of projects."

"The Natural Resources Conservation Service is pleased to participate in this critical funding endeavor for Long Island Sound with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation," said Margo L. Wallace, state conservationist for Connecticut. "Leveraging funds from multiple sources provides the opportunity for agencies to not only work together but to develop common visions of what the land needs from conservationists."

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.

The Long Island Sound Study, developed under the EPA's National Estuary Program, is a cooperative effort between the EPA and the states of Connecticut and New York to protect and restore the Sound and its ecosystem. In 1994, it created a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan to guide federal, state and local governments to improve water quality, restore and protect habitats, and reach out to the public to foster environmental stewardship.

For more information on the Sound Futures Fund and the Long Island Sound Study, including descriptions of the winning proposals, see www.longislandsoundstudy.net.

Grants in the State of New York

Long Island City/ Astoria Waterfront Catalyst Project	City Parks Foundation	\$35,000
Hempstead Harbor Cove Wetland Restoration	Town of North Hempstead	\$75,000
Sound Practices for West Meadow	Ward Melville Heritage Meadow	\$15,000
Long Island Sound Eelgrass Restoration Project	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County	\$60,000
Demonstrate & Educate concerning the advantages of Using Native Plants & Pervious Paths	Town of Mamaroneck	\$20,000
Great Pond Wetland Preservation & Restoration	Peconic Land Trust	\$40,000
Flint Park Waterfront Environmental Area	Village of Larchmont	\$25,000
Habitat Monitoring in Flax Pond	Friends of Flax Pond	\$20,000
Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor's Citizens Water Monitoring Program	Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor	\$30,000
Mitigation of Playland Parking Lot Stormwater Effluent	Edith G Read Natural Park & Wildlife Sanctuary	\$36,400

Grants in the State of Connecticut

Land Use Leadership Alliance for CT Land Use Decision Makers	Eastern Connecticut Resources Conservation & Development	\$40,000
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Saugatuck Watershed Partnership	Connecticut Nature Conservancy	\$25,000
New Haven Harbor Watershed Environmental Monitoring Program	The Sound School Regional Vocational Center	\$25,000
Project Limulus: Ecology & Conservation of the American Horseshoe Crab*	Sacred Heart University	\$30,000
Science Education in Action Linking Students and the Sound	Interdistrict Committee for Project Oceanology	\$35,000
Citywide Steward Program	Solar Youth, Inc	\$20,000
Ingham Hill Pond Improvements & Fishway	Old Saybrook Land Trust	\$75,000
Moulson Pond Fishway Repairs	Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc	\$45,500
Mianus River Pond Fish Way Access Walk	Town of Greenwich	\$40,000
Branford Fishway	Branford Land Trust, Inc	\$60,000
Barn Island Wildlife Management Area Marsh Overlook	Connecticut DEP, Bureau of Natural Resources	\$25,000
Habitats: Nature's Classroom	Friends of Sherwood Island State Park, Inc.	\$20,000
State of the Watershed Assessment for the Tankerhoosen River Watershed	Friends of the Hockanum River Linear Park of Vernon, Inc.	\$25,000
Stormwater Control Demonstration Project	City of Norwalk, CT	\$35,000
<i>* project will have New York and Connecticut components</i>		