



# News Release

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## Nearly \$1 Million for Projects to Improve the Health of Long Island Sound

*Funding for Habitat Restoration, Sound Stewardship & More Fish Among Initiatives*

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(Mystic, Conn. – Oct. 29, 2007) – Gathering together in Mystic, Conn., one of Long Island Sound's most environmentally significant coastal areas, top federal and state environmental officials announced 24 grants to local governments and community groups under the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. The \$917,650 will be leveraged by \$1.68 million raised by the recipients themselves towards the projects, providing a total of nearly \$2.8 million towards on-the-ground conservation in Connecticut and New York.

"These funds underscore EPA's commitment to a healthy Long Island Sound," said Robert Varney, regional administrator for EPA's New England regional office. "This funding will pay for important work, including restoring habitat, reducing polluted runoff and ultimately helping people to enjoy the Sound."

"The Long Island Sound Futures Fund exemplifies how we can protect and improve the environment through collaboration and sharing resources," said Alan J. Steinberg, EPA Region 2 Administrator. "We are working hard to improve water quality, foster stewardship and educate the public about conservation."

The *Sound Futures Fund* was initiated in 2005 by the Long Island Sound Study through EPA's Long Island Sound Office and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Now in its third year, the program has provided \$2.6 million to 72 projects in communities surrounding the Sound.

This year's grant program funded 15 grants in Connecticut and 9 grants in New York. Six grants were awarded for habitat restoration - particularly of native fisheries; six grants for planning and stewardship; 10 for education and outreach; and two for improving water quality.

Using the funding being announced today, groups will restore 24 acres of riparian forest and open 19.8 miles of streams for native fish. Fifty communities and more than 100 municipal officials and community leaders will develop a range of tools to deal with water pollution. More than 3,700 citizens will be engaged in creating awareness of and commitment to high-value natural resources right in their communities. Projects will educate 1,000 plus students from a variety of schools including urban and low-income districts about the environment close to home.

With grantee match of nearly \$11 million toward their projects, just under \$14 million in locally based conservation has been, in part, galvanized by the grant program. The projects in the first three years of the program will open up 33 river miles for fish passage, and restore 176 acres of critical fish and wildlife habitat including lakes, underwater grasses, woodlands, meadows, tidal wetlands, and park frontage.

The grant program pools funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 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. 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.

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"One of the greatest environmental challenges facing our communities is the protection and restoration of estuaries," said Michael Slattery, Regional Director, Eastern Partnership Office, 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 dedicated to working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats," said Marvin Moriarty, Northeast Regional Director. "Our involvement in the Long Island Sound Study's Futures Fund does exactly that. I cannot think of a better example of a broad array of partners working to improve the quality of life for humans and wildlife simultaneously."

"The Long Island Sound Study continues to provide funding for important projects that protect, preserve and restore natural habitats and provide educational opportunities for the public to learn about Long Island Sound," said Connecticut DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy. "These projects will help us to achieve our goals, and most importantly, will help to educate the next generation of environmental stewards about the tremendous marine and estuarine resources that make Long Island Sound such a special place."

"The Shell Marine Habitat Program is proud to participate in the Long Island Sound Study projects. Shell has a demonstrated commitment 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" commented Mary Margaret Hamilton, 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."

"New York State welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Long Island Sound Futures Fund," said New York State DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis. "These grants to restore habitat and fish passage, develop stewardship and watershed plans, support water quality monitoring, and promote public involvement, are all important additions to the cooperative efforts made by Long Island Sound partners to protect and restore this valuable natural resource. Since 1995, New York State has invested more than \$340 million for water quality improvement, habitat restoration, and open space acquisition in Long Island Sound. We are pleased that the Long Island Sound Futures Fund complements and supports this effort."

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.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a nonprofit established by Congress in 1984 to sustain, restore and enhance the Nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Since 1984, NFWF has awarded nearly 8,900 grants to over 3,000 organizations in the U.S. and abroad, and leveraged more than \$374 million in federal funds into more than \$1.2 billion for on-the-ground conservation.

More information:

- EPA information on Long Island Sound (<http://www.epa.gov/region1/eco/lis/index.html>)
- Long Island Sound Study and Futures Fund ( [www.longislandsoundstudy.net](http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net) )
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service information on Long Island Sound (<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/lirecovery.htm>)

**15 Grants in the State of Connecticut**

<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Award</b>
City of Stratford	Milford Point Restoration	75,000
Connecticut River Watershed Council	StanChem Dam Fishway	43,500
The Nature Conservancy	Saugatuck River Watershed Partnership	40,000
Avalonia Land Conservancy	Invasive Plant Control in Poquetanuck Cove	27,000
Audubon Connecticut	Conservation Strategies for the Great Meadows Area in Stratford and Bridgeport	35,000
Friends of the Hockanum River Linear Park of Vernon	Tankerhoosen Watershed Management Plan	47,000
Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.	Land Use Leadership Alliance for Connecticut Land Use Decision Makers	35,000
Town of Westport	Sherwood Mill Pond Restoration	28,400
Interdistrict Committee for Project Oceanology	Living By the Sound-Teaching Environmental Research (LoBSTER)	35,000
Sea Research Foundation, Inc.	Where the City Meets the Sea: the Long Island Sound Curricula Outreach Program	29,000
SoundWaters, Inc.	SoundHarbors	6,000
Riverfront Recapture, Inc.	Summer Youth Employment Program: "Science on the River"	6,000
Sea Research Foundation, Inc	National Estuary Day at Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration	6,000
The Montessori School	Long Island Sound Service Announcements: A Child's Perspective	1,000
City of New Haven: Parks, Recreation and Tree Dept	Lighthouse Point Park Fall Migration Festival	1,250

## 9 Grants in the State of New York

<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Award</b>
New York City Dept of Parks & Recreation	Restoration of the Headwaters of Alley Creek	150,000
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation	Fish Passage Construction at 182nd St Dam on the Bronx River	150,000
Audubon New York	Conservation Action Plans for Long Island Stewardship Sites	35,000
Friends of Flax Pond, Inc.	Habitat Monitoring in Flax Pond To Engage Management, Stewardship, and Education	35,000
Friends of the Bay, Inc.	Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Watershed Management Plan	55,000
Village of Sea Cliff	2007 Hempstead Harbor Water Quality Monitoring Program	30,500
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County	Sound Experiences: From Ship to Shore-II	35,000
American Littoral Society	Long Island Sound Component of the 2007 NY State Beach Cleanup	6,000
Long Island Seaport & Eco Center	Third Annual Family Day Celebrating National Estuaries Day	6,000