

2003 Long Island Sound Agreement

On Dec. 4, 2002, officials from New York, Connecticut, and the federal government signed the Long Island Sound 2003 agreement. The agreement builds upon the goals of the 1994 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan by adding 30 new goals and targets to restore Long Island Sound.



2003 Agreement Signed. Commissioner Arthur J. Rocque of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and Commissioner Erin Crotty of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation sign the 2003 Long Island Sound Agreement at the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk. Also signing the document were Robert W. Varney, Administrator of the New England Region of the US Environmental Protection Agency, and Jane M. Kenny, administrator of EPA Region II, which includes New York.

Goals and Targets of the 2003 Long Island Sound Agreement

I. HYPOXIA – Eliminate the adverse impacts of hypoxia resulting from human activities.

1. By 2014, achieve a 58.5 percent reduction in the total enriched load of nitrogen to Long Island Sound from point and nonpoint sources within the New York and Connecticut portions of the watershed, as defined by the December 2000 document – A Total Maximum Daily Load Analysis to Achieve Water Quality Standards for Dissolved Oxygen in Long Island Sound.
2. By 2003, establish Phase IV nitrogen reduction agreements to address atmospheric deposition and watershed management for portions of the Long Island Sound watershed outside of New York and Connecticut.

II. PATHOGENS – Increase the area for shellfish harvesting and eliminate bathing beach closures while maintaining protection of human health.

1. By 2003, nominate vessel no-discharge areas for the Pawcatuck and Mystic Rivers in Connecticut and for all the Long Island Sound embayments in New York. By 2005, nominate vessel no-discharge areas in two additional areas in Connecticut.
2. By 2010, decrease the acreage closed year-round to shellfishing due to pathogen indicators by 10 percent compared to 2000 levels.
3. By 2010, minimize chronic bathing beach closures in Long Island Sound due to pathogen indicators, with a goal of eliminating all chronic closures (closed for at least three days per year for at least three of the last five years).

III. TOXIC SUBSTANCES – Eliminate toxicity or bioaccumulation impacts on living resources by reducing contaminant inputs and cleaning up contaminated sites, and manage risk to humans from seafood consumption.

1. By 2004, EPA, in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers, will complete the Environmental Impact Statement for the designation of dredged material disposal sites in central and western Long Island Sound and, by 2008, will complete the EIS for designation of dredged material disposal sites in eastern Long Island Sound.
2. By 2003, update the Long Island Sound Contaminants of Concern list after considering National Coastal Assessment monitoring results and other sources of data. By 2005, evaluate current contaminant monitoring and control programs and identify strategies to address priority issues.

3. By 2003, New York and Connecticut will meet to jointly review their approaches for Long Island Sound fish consumption advisories and to discuss a process to achieve the goal of consistent fish consumption advisories for Long Island Sound.

IV. LIVING RESOURCES AND THEIR HABITATS – Assure a healthy ecosystem with balanced and diverse populations of indigenous plants and animals, maintain or increase the abundance and distribution of harvestable species, and restore the ecological functions of degraded and lost habitats.

1. By 2003, complete the mapping of eelgrass in the Long Island Sound area to determine trends. Continue to promote investigations and research into determining the impacts of nitrogen upon the degradation of aquatic habitats (i.e., loss of eelgrass, increases in macroalgae and benthic algae) in shallow embayments and bays in Long Island Sound.

2. By 2005, characterize the scope and rate of tidal wetland losses in the Sound and promote research that will determine to what degree accelerated sea level rise, sediment supply disruptions, or other factors are responsible for the loss of habitat that is critical to the Sound's birds, finfish, and overall productivity.

3. By 2004, complete research and monitoring studies into the causes of the lobster mortality event in Long Island Sound and identify any management measures that could be implemented to prevent future mortality.

4. By 2003, identify critical issues (in addition to those in actions IV. 1-3) related to the management and conservation of living resources (such as fish and birds) and their habitats, and develop strategies to improve conditions, as appropriate.

5. By 2003, produce a list of the invasive species of concern in Long Island Sound.

6. Restore at least 2000 acres of habitat and 100 river miles for fish passage during the ten-year period from 1998 to 2008 and monitor these sites to confirm restoration progress over time.

7. By 2004, identify sites of outstanding and exemplary scientific, educational, or biological value.

V. OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC ACCESS – Assure continued public access to Long Island Sound for aesthetic, recreational, cultural, and historical purposes and continue to identify and acquire open spaces that are essential for the ecological health and balance of the Sound.

1. Continue state land protection initiatives to acquire ecologically and recreationally significant properties along the coast and increase public access opportunities to shoreline locations.

2. By 2003, identify a coordinated strategy for developing a Long Island Sound Stewardship System that:

a. promotes conservation of open space, landscapes, and ecosystems;

b. improves access to the Sound;

c. establishes a listing of existing open space properties and prioritizes property types for natural resource conservation and natural resource-based outdoor recreation;

d. incorporates the sites of outstanding and exemplary scientific, educational, or biological value identified by Action IV. 7; and

e. promotes federal, state, local, and private funding for open space projects.

VI. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT – Assure a viable Long Island Sound watershed that supports vibrant and healthy aquatic life, and minimizes the negative effects of erosion, sedimentation, and flooding on the Sound and its tributaries and embayments.

1. By 2010, Connecticut and New York will work toward a goal of having 50 percent of their respective areas in the watershed developing or implementing watershed restoration strategies.

3. By 2004, Connecticut and New York will assess the amount of riparian forest buffer in their portions of the watershed using available land use/land cover data. Through watershed planning efforts, the states will encourage the establishment of targets to expand the percentage of riverine miles with forested buffers.

VII. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – Promote an informed and educated constituency involved in community decisions affecting the ecological health of Long Island Sound and its living resources.

1. Continue to report every two years on the health of Long Island Sound through ecological indicators, including measures of living resources, water quality, landscape changes, and community involvement.

2. Continue to support efforts to develop and establish Long Island Sound curricula for primary and secondary schools through grant programs such as the LISS Small Grants Program.

3. Through the use of initiatives such as Project WET, Project SEARCH, the Long Island Sound License Plate Program, and the LISS Small Grants Program, offer Long Island Sound field and learning experiences to as many school children as possible, with a goal of reaching 50 percent of the school children within the Connecticut and New York portions of the watershed by 2010.

4. By 2004, develop a public awareness campaign to help control the introduction, spread, and impact of invasive species.

5. Expand the Citizen Advisory Committee to involve more constituencies and continue its role in evaluating CCMP implementation and supporting public awareness of Long Island Sound.

VIII. PARTNERSHIPS – Support the LISS Management Conference partnership in communicating and coordinating action to restore and protect the Sound among federal, state, interstate, and local governments, educational institutions, private nonprofit organizations, the regulated community, and the public.

1. Continue federal and state support and continue to build partnerships at all levels to implement the CCMP for Long Island Sound and to effect the specific elements in this Agreement.

2. In 2002, provide support to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and Citizen Advisory Committee to enhance their role in building and expanding partnerships.

3. Continue support for the EPA Long Island Sound Office at a level necessary to coordinate and achieve the goals in this Agreement.

4. By 2005, reconvene to assess progress toward meeting the CCMP goals and the targets in this Agreement and consider any additional actions necessary.

To read about progress with the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, see our [Long Island Sound Indicators](#) and [Sound Health](#) report.