



Restoring the Sound's Coastal Habitats



Concrete reefballs at Stratford Point in Connecticut disrupt wave energy, helping to prevent the shoreline from eroding, while protecting recently-planted saltmarsh grasses. Credit: Dr. Jennifer Mattei/Sacred Heart University.

A VITAL RESOURCE

Long Island Sound, like other estuaries, contain some of the most productive habitats on earth. But pollution, development, and other impacts have resulted in nearly one-third of its tidal wetlands lost since the 1880s. LISS has been helping to reverse course with an ambitious program to restore tidal wetlands and 11 other priority habitats, including: beaches and dunes, coastal forests, coastal grasslands, eelgrass meadows, and shellfish beds.

Program Achievements:

- ▶ In 2018 reached, two years ahead of schedule, a goal to restore 350 acres of coastal habitat from 2015-2020.
- ▶ Restored 2,001 acres of habitat since 1998, including 1,065 acres of tidal wetlands.
- ▶ Conducts Surface Elevation Table (SET) monitoring to track tidal wetland elevation and accretion to see if wetlands are keeping pace with sea level rise.

THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY (LISS), through its partners, is working on restoring habitats that: help provide food and shelter for wildlife; protect our shorelines as a buffer to stormy seas and sea level rise; and ensure clean waters in our bays and harbors and Long Island Sound by filtering pollution.

Learn more at:
LISSstudy.net

SPOTLIGHT: SUNKEN MEADOW PARK'S RESILIENCY PROJECT

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy caused devastation throughout much of the mid-Atlantic seaboard of the United States. Despite all of Hurricane Sandy's negative impacts on our area there was one beneficial outcome to report. Hurricane Sandy's storm surge helped to remove a manmade earthen berm at the mouth of Sunken Meadow Creek at Sunken Meadow State Park in Kings Park, NY. The berm, built in the 1950s during park infrastructure development, had essentially cut off tidal flow from the Long Island Sound to the creek resulting in poor water quality and habitat within the ecosystem. Hurricane Sandy's breach of the berm restored tidal flow to the creek for the first time in over 60 years and



Volunteers join a New York State Parks employee in planting salt marsh grasses at Sunken Meadow State Park. Credit: Save the Sound.

created the possibility for tidal wetland restoration within the waterway.

Luckily, Save the Sound, NYS State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service were already working on designs in 2012 for breaching and restoring the creek. In 2014, the partners developed a restoration plan for the creek, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded funding to Save the Sound to strengthen the park's resiliency. The project included tidal wetland restoration, fish passage feasibility studies, an 18-acre

parking lot green infrastructure retrofit, and education and outreach. To date, the project has restored four acres of tidal wetland habitat in the creek. Over 100 volunteers have assisted with the restoration work with further planting opportunities available in 2019.

LISS Habitat Restoration and Protection Database



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2018 RESTORATION HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ 2-acre tidal wetland, Sunken Meadow State Park, Kings Park, NY
- ▶ 12-acre coastal forest, Mamaroneck, NY
- ▶ 7-acre freshwater wetland, Greenwich, CT

CONNECT WITH US

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