



Spring 2020

LISS NEWS

## LISS Management Committee Agrees on Projects for Historic \$21.6 Million Budget



A striped sea robin cruises boulder habitat in search of small crustaceans and other invertebrate prey. The photo was taken Spring 2018 from the Kraken2 (K2) remotely operated vehicle cruise, operated from University of Connecticut's RV Connecticut.

Each spring the Long Island Sound Study Management Committee recommends a slate of projects to fund for the upcoming year based on the program's federally authorized budget.

This year's meeting in April, held online because of the coronavirus pandemic, was significant because Congress had provided LISS with \$21.6 million for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2020.

The \$7 million increase from the prior year for the program was the first budget for LISS over \$20 million, and it was a substantial increase from the average \$4.5 million budgets between 2011 and 2016.

The Long Island Sound Study uses the funds to implement the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan to restore and protect the Sound. The projects are intended to help achieve the CCMP goals.

The Management Committee endorsed work that includes:

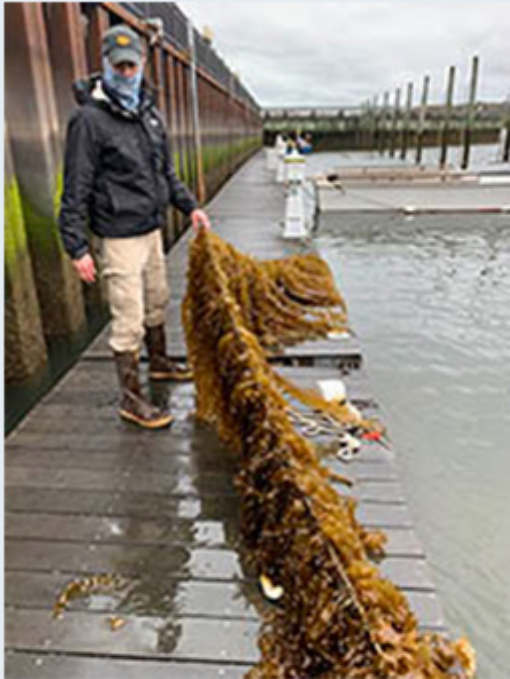
- modeling the impacts of nutrient pollution on water quality in Long Island Sound;
- enhancing water quality monitoring of the ecological health of the Sound and its harbors, bays, and tributaries;
- creating a working group to help coastal communities develop and implement sustainability and resiliency plans;
- restoring Flax Pond, which is part of the Stony Brook Harbor Stewardship Area in Long Island; restoring the 35-acre Leetes Island Marsh in Guilford, CT;
- removing the Dana Dam along the Norwalk River at Merwin Meadows Park to reconnect 17 miles of river passage to Long Island Sound;
- helping fund the Western Sound phase of mapping the Sound's seafloor to better understand underwater habitats and to help avoid conflicts between marine life and potential commercial projects such as pipelines; and
- increasing funding for the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, a grant program for communities and local organizations to receive financial support to participate in Long Island Sound restoration efforts.

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The full list of projects will be included in the Long Island Sound Study EPA annual work plan, which should be available in the summer. The current and previous work plans are available through the [LISS media center](#).

## Seaweed Bioextraction Projects Continue



Aaren Freeman, a marine biologist at Adelphi University, holds up sugar kelp at the Oyster Bay Marina in April. The kelp was harvested by Freeman from the Laurel Hollow seaweed farm site in Oyster Bay. Photo by David Berg.

The coronavirus outbreak has not stopped the implementation of three nutrient bioextraction projects, which got underway this winter with support from the Futures Fund and Long Island Sound Study. In December, sugar kelp, a seaweed that favors cold water conditions, were seeded on long lines and then anchored under the water at sites in Oyster Bay, Hempstead Bay, and Great South Bay in Long Island, and Greenwich Harbor in Connecticut. The kelp was harvested at all of the sites in April and May, and is being analyzed to determine how much nutrients and carbon were extracted from the Sound as a result of the harvesting.

Kelp feeds on nutrients such as nitrogen. By growing and harvesting kelp, bioextraction projects can remove nutrients that could otherwise trigger summer algal blooms, which could lead to poor water quality. The kelp in these projects is also being studied for potential commercial uses such as fertilizer for local farms. Learn more about the projects and see photos in the [bioextraction section](#) of the Long Island Sound Study website.

## First Alewife Spotted on the Hutchinson River Since the 19th Century



The Pelham Lake Dam in Mount Vernon, NY.

Fishway projects have helped open up hundreds of river miles for migratory fish to swim from Long Island Sound into streams in Connecticut, Long Island, and the Bronx. Now a location in Westchester near the Bronx border is being studied for the County's first Long Island Sound site. While resource managers believe that it is highly likely that a fishway on the river would encourage migratory fish to swim upstream based on the outcomes of similar projects close by in Connecticut and the Bronx, monitoring this spring has provided an important signal to continue proceed: the first known recording of alewife at Pelham Lake since dams along the Hutchinson River were built in the 19th century. Read about it in [Sound Spotlight](#).

## Long Island Sound Study Celebrates 35 Years

In April, the Long Island Sound Study website featured an article in Sound Spotlight celebrating Long Island Sound Study's 35th anniversary and its connection to the environmental initiatives that launched the first Earth Day and the



Long Island Sound can be seen in the right corner from this photo taken by the International Space Station on Feb. 6, 2012. Photo courtesy of NASA.

founding of EPA 50 years ago. The Sound Spotlight feature includes a photo of the East Coast with Long Island Sound visible, taken by the International Space Station in 2012, and a look back to highlights of the program since its beginnings in 1985. Read about it on Sound Spotlight on the Long Island Sound Study [homepage](#) or [Sound Spotlight](#), and read EPA Long Island Sound Office Director Mark Tedesco's account of the anniversary in the Sound Stories [blog](#).

## New Nationwide Grant Program to Address Threats to Estuaries

A new nationally competitive grants program designed to support projects that address issues threatening the well-being of coastal and estuarine areas such as Long Island is seeking proposals for grants ranging between \$75,000 and \$250,000. The National Estuary Program Coastal Water Watersheds Grant Program is being administered by Restore America's Estuaries in cooperation with the US Environmental Protection Agency. Learn more about how to apply and what's eligible in the [news section](#) of the LISS website.



An aerial view of the Lower Connecticut River.

## Year in Review Issue Available as Download

The 2019 Year in Review issue of Sound Update is now available as a pdf download. Learn about some of the projects that were under way in 2019 to restore and protect Long Island Sound, including reopening river miles that have been blocked for fish passage for 325 years and a project that diverts urine from wastewater that could end up in the Connecticut River and Long Island, and then turns it into fertilizer for local farms. The report also highlights the projects funded through the Long



A map showing habitat restoration sites and coastal lands protected in 2019 from the Year in Review report. Map by Lucy Reading-Ikkanda.

Island Sound Futures Fund. Find the issue at the Long Island Sound Study [media center](#).

## New Sound Stories Blog

Long Island Sound Study's website in April relaunched with a new design and new features including Sound Stories, a blog post from people sharing their experiences in helping to restore and protect Long Island Sound. Our first Sound Story blog post was written by Katie O'Brien Clayton, a CTDEEP environmental analyst, describing what it's like to conduct water quality monitoring in the winter and why it's being done. Find it in [Sound Stories](#).

## Workshops Postponed

Social distancing guidelines during the coronavirus pandemic have resulted in the postponement of two Long Island Sound Study workshops that were scheduled for the spring: a Community-Based Social Marketing Workshop and a Tidal Wetlands Loss Workshop. Find out more about these workshops in the [news section](#).

## Gardening for Good is Online and Streaming

During the pandemic, media reports have highlighted a growing interest in gardening by those spending more time at home. Judy Preston, the Connecticut Outreach Coordinator for the Long Island Sound Study, has a new radio show that can help. In early March, Preston started "Gardening for Good," a radio show streaming on the iCRV internet radio station in the Connecticut River that strives to make connections between good gardening practices and protecting local streams and Long Island Sound. All shows are recorded with audio links available in the LISS [media center](#).

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