

SOUND OUTLOOK

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
EXPLORING LONG ISLAND SOUND – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Commissioner's Agenda Offers Challenges and Opportunities for Long Island Sound

Over the past several months the Department has begun to outline the environmental challenges and opportunities facing Connecticut. Led by Commissioner Gina McCarthy, this effort has culminated in the development of four major environmental themes, outlined below, that will guide the agency as it works to expand resource protection efforts and improve the quality of life for residents of Connecticut. The four themes, developed with input from DEP staff and external constituents, will provide the framework by which the Department will continue to address its overarching environmental goals, including the restoration and protection of Long Island Sound.

The themes, or environmental agenda items, reflect DEP's diverse programmatic responsibilities, from recreation to environmental justice. While the themes are separate and distinct, many of their individual components are interrelated and will be pursued jointly. In brief, the Commissioner's themes are:

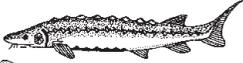
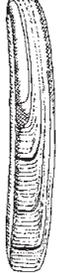
No Child Left Inside – This campaign will spread awareness to families across Connecticut, especially those in urban areas, of the many recreational opportunities available throughout the state. The campaign's goal is to connect families, and in particular children, to the outdoors and to educate them about the natural resources to be found in Connecticut's state parks and forests.

Making Doing the Right Thing the Path of Least Resistance – This initiative strives to achieve improved regulatory compliance, and to focus on environmental outcomes that can be measured, such as wetlands losses or gains. Components of this initiative include a strong enforcement program, enhanced managerial capacity, and environmental justice initiatives.

Pogo – "I have seen the Enemy and It is I" – This initiative targets environmental impacts associated with sources of pollution related to lifestyle and individual choice decisions. The Department will continue to address topics including recycling, climate change, mobile pollution sources such as cars and buses, and consumer choice. Staff will work to increase awareness of pollution prevention concepts such as product stewardship and energy efficiency, and how these efforts together can achieve greater resource protection.

Landscape Stewardship – This initiative will coordinate and focus DEP programs that affect land development. It will enable the Department to lead by example, and to encourage municipalities, land trusts, and others to make better land management decisions.

On the following pages, the Commissioner's four themes will be discussed in greater detail, accompanied by examples of related programs that are already underway to protect the Sound. For more information on these themes and programs, please contact Matthew Fritz at 860-424-4117 or by email at matt.fritz@po.state.ct.us.

			
		Inside	
		No Child Left Inside	2
		Making Doing the Right Thing the Path of Least Resistance	2
		Spotlighted Coastal Access	3
		Upcoming Events	3
		Long Island Sound Fund 2005 Grant Awards	4
		Sound Tips	4
		Pogo: "I Have Seen the Enemy and It is I"	5
		Landscape Stewardship	5
		Industry Update	6
		OCTOBER 2005	
		No. 20	
			

No Child Left Inside

Many of us remember summer vacations at the shore – feeling the sand and water between our toes, smelling the wonderful saltwater breeze, crabbing and fishing at the local dock. More than four decades ago, Rachel Carson wrote that experiencing nature is necessary for children’s physical, cognitive and emotional development. Yet, in 2004, Richard Louv wrote in his book *Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* that our children today are the first generation to be raised without meaningful contact with the natural world. What has happened? Why aren’t children wading in the water, getting stuck in the mud, or understanding why dragonflies are so absolutely amazing? Why don’t kids know what a salt marsh smells like or how to build a boat that won’t sink?

There are many reasons – we have become fearful of letting our children venture into the outdoors by themselves, more parents are working, and children are “plugged in” to television, CD’s and video games. Research indicates that we have to get our children “unplugged” and let them discover nature for themselves. Recently, while studying turtles at the Kellogg Environmental Center, one child remarked: “This is better than video games.” Who would have thought video games and turtles were in competition!

DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy’s Environmental Agenda recognizes how terribly important it is to get our kids “unplugged” and back outdoors. The Commissioner’s *No Child Left Inside* campaign will reach out to families across Connecticut and make them aware of the many recreational opportunities available in our State Parks and Forests. The *No Child Left Inside* initiative will work in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, the Department of Children and Families and other organizations to promote visits to state and local parks for outdoor activities and to build enthusiasm for continued natural-resource based recreation and education. Our children need to have fun in the outdoors. It is important to their health. It is important for their cognitive development. It is important for the development of our next generation of environmental stewards. For more information on DEP’s outreach and education programs, contact Diane Joy at 203-734-2513 or by email at diane.joy@po.state.ct.us.



Participants in DEP’s WILD Kid program, Osbornedale State Park, Derby.

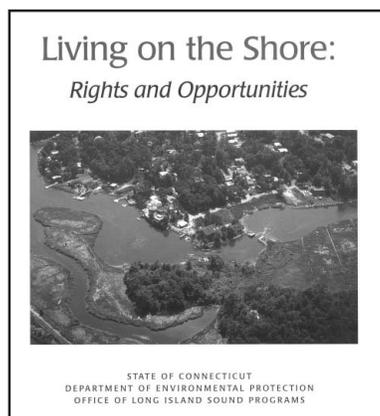
Making Doing the Right Thing the Path of Least Resistance

The Connecticut shoreline is subject to continually increasing development pressure, the impacts of which potentially affect the health of Long Island Sound and its associated waters and coastal resources. The DEP’s Office of Long Island Sound Programs (OLISP), which has responsibility for the state’s coastal management program, administers a number of specific permit authorities to help coastal property owners protect the Sound by “doing the right thing.” While individual permits for new or major projects are often necessary, OLISP also offers expedited reviews for Certificates of Permission authorizing minor repair activities,

seemingly complex regulatory requirements could dissuade some would-be-applicants from applying altogether.

OLISP understands this challenge and encourages applicants to talk or meet with staff prior to submitting an application. During these pre-application meetings staff will review the proposal with the applicant, identify the appropriate permit process, and explain the requirements and procedural steps involved. Staff may also provide preliminary guidance and design suggestions on an applicant’s proposal so that the proposal will be consistent with all regulatory policies before the application is submitted. These meetings typically enable the preparation of more complete applications, resulting in reduced review time, and can even save the applicant the cost of having to go back to the drawing board to revise the proposal later in the review process.

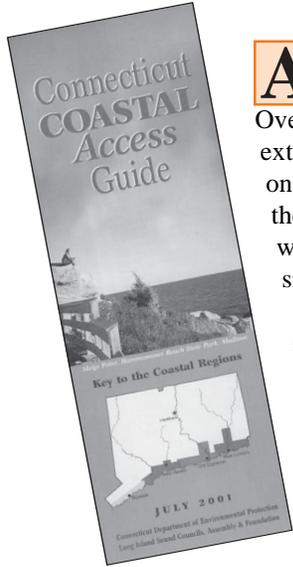
All applicants are urged to take advantage of a pre-application meeting before the submission of an application to OLISP so that they will have an early understanding of the regulatory process and policies pertinent to their proposal. This is a good example of how OLISP is furthering the Commissioner’s charge to make doing the right thing the path of least resistance. If you would like more information about OLISP’s coastal permitting program or would like to schedule a pre-application meeting, please contact Peter Francis, OLISP Permit Supervisor, at 860-424-3034 or by email at peter.francis@po.state.ct.us.



DEP publications help coastal property owners to understand coastal management policies.

and several General Permits for specific activities that have minimal environmental impact. However, determining the appropriate permit process and understanding the various permitting requirements can be confusing, especially for first-time applicants. Without some assistance from DEP, the

SPOTLIGHTED Coastal Access: Niantic Bay Overlook



Are you looking for a new way to enjoy Long Island Sound? Visit the recently completed Niantic Bay Overlook in the Niantic section of East Lyme. The Overlook extends for more than a mile along Railroad Beach (Site #193 on the *Connecticut Coastal Access Guide* map) from Hole-in-the-Wall Beach east to the Niantic River. The project, which was dedicated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony this past July 15, significantly increases the state's public access to the Sound.

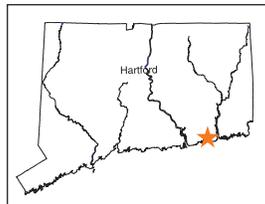
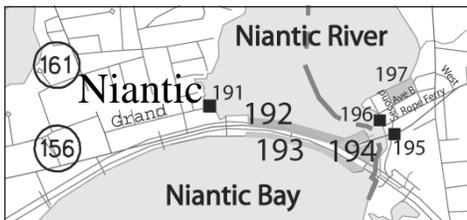
The project, which is fully handicapped-accessible, includes an elevated boardwalk with stairways descending to the beach. Benches incorporated into the walkway afford scenic views of Niantic Bay and Long Island Sound, while interpretive signs teach the reader about the history and ecology of the surrounding area. The beach and the Niantic River to the north are popular fishing, birding and picnic spots.

The Overlook, first proposed in 1994, was spearheaded by the East Lyme Public Trust Foundation. Project funding totaling more than \$9,800,000 was provided by the Foundation and by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Amtrak, Connecticut State Bond Commission, and many generous individuals. The DEP's Long Island Sound License Plate Program contributed \$25,000 for the interpretive signage.

Free parking for the Niantic Bay Overlook is available at the Hole-in-the-Wall south of the Route 156 in Niantic, where a pedestrian tunnel leads under the Amtrak rail line to the beach. Additional parking is available at the Railroad Beach parking lot on the north side of Route 156, where a walkway leads under the Amtrak bridge to the Overlook. The parking lot also serves both the Niantic River Walkway and Cini Memorial Park (Sites #192 and #194 on the *Access Guide* map). All of these sites may be reached by taking I-95 to Exit 74 and following Route 161 south to Niantic. The sites are described in detail, with maps and photographs, at the *Connecticut Coastal Access Guide* website, www.lisrc.uconn.edu/coastalaccess/index.asp.



DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy and local officials dedicate the Niantic Bay Overlook.



If you did not receive this issue of *Sound Outlook* in the mail and would like to be placed on the mailing list, please send your name and address to: *Sound Outlook*, Connecticut DEP, Office of Long Island Sound Programs, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127; or email your address to laurie.valente@po.state.ct.us.

LOOK OUT for upcoming events!!

DEP Environmental Educator Workshops
Call 203-734-2513 to register.

Long Island Sound in the Classroom

Tue. Oct. 18, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Hammonasset Beach State Park,
Madison

Teachers of Grades 3-8

Learn about salt marsh ecology, field sampling and species identification.

The following DEP programs may be scheduled at any time during the school year. Call Alberto Mimo at 203-734-2513 for more information.

High School Research Projects

The DEP Center for Environmental Research Education works with high school students to conduct research.

Salt Marsh Ecology

Students will conduct plant inventories at Hammonasset Beach State Park for use by DEP. Grades 9-12.

Connecticut Audubon Coastal Center
Milford Point, Milford, CT

Call 203-878-7440 for info and registration.

Early Morning Bird Walks

Wed., Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26, 7:30-8:30 AM

Search for migrants on the beaches, marshes and mudflats of Milford Point. Learn birding basics and identification.

Wildlife Porch Party (Family Program)

Sun., Oct. 15, 12:00-2:30 PM

Picnic on the porch of the Audubon Coastal Center, enjoy naturalist-led hikes for birds and marine life.

November: Harbor seals arrive in LIS from northern New England; winter flounder move into shallower water.

December: Bald eagles return to Connecticut for the winter. Call 1-800-368-8954 after December 8th for reservations at the Shepaug Eagle Observation Area.

January: LIS License Plate Request for Proposals will be mailed and posted on the DEP website. Contact Kate Hughes, DEP Office of Long Island Sound Programs, 860-424-3034 for more information.

Please be sure to check the Calendar of Events listed on DEP's website:
www.dep.state.ct.us

View past issues of *Sound Outlook* at
www.dep.state.ct.us/olispl/soundout/soundout.htm.

Long Island Sound Fund 2005 Grant Awards

On August 9, 2005, the DEP's Long Island Sound Fund awarded \$347,206.00 in grants for 18 projects to help preserve and protect Long Island Sound. The projects were selected through a competitive grant process. A partial list of approved projects includes:

Education and Outreach:

- A pilot summer program conducted by **Solar Youth, Inc.** in which eight inner-city New Haven youths will be trained to deliver hands-on watershed education to children throughout the city.
- A narrated, web-based, underwater tour of Long Island Sound by **UCONN** investigators, illustrating the diversity of organisms and habitats that can be observed beneath the surface.

Public Access:

- Construction by the **City of Milford** of a public access platform with benches, educational signs and a handicapped-accessible ramp to Stowe Beach.
- Installation by the **Sail Connecticut Access Program** of a handicapped accessible ramp at Pilot's Point Marina in Westbrook to provide safe access for disabled sailors participating in a specialized sailing program (see photo).



Disabled sailors enjoy Sail Connecticut Access Program

Research:

- A study by **Connecticut College** comparing microbial community structure and diversity in a restored salt marsh at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington to that in undisturbed marshes.
- Documentation by **Heritage Consultants, LLC** of the locations of shipwrecks in the Connecticut waters of Long Island Sound, and integration of this data into a GIS database.
- A survey by **UCONN** of salt marshes throughout Connecticut to document the geographic range of saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrow, a state listed species of special concern (see photo).

Habitat Restoration:

- Repairs and improvements by **Lyme Conservation Trust, Inc.** to an existing fishway at Moulson Pond, Lyme, to improve anadromous fish passage, and design of a fish diversion device to prevent fish from becoming impinged at an existing hydroelectric unit.

A complete list of 2005 approved projects can be found at www.dep.state.ct.us/olisp/licplate/projects.htm.



Juvenile saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrow, McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Westbrook.

The DEP looks forward to working with the successful applicants. Connecticut residents can support future projects by purchasing a Preserve the Sound license plate, acquiring a LIS Affinity credit card, or making a direct contribution to the Fund. LIS license plates can also be purchased as gifts.

To learn more about how to purchase your LIS license plate, call 1-800-CT-SOUND, or visit our website at www.dep.state.ct.us/olisp/licplate.htm. To obtain information about the program and its grant opportunities, contact the Long Island Sound Fund Coordinator, Kate Brown, at 860-424-3034, or by e-mail at kate.brown@po.state.ct.us.

Sound Tips

More LIS Funding Opportunities

Are you looking for funding for projects, programs or products to help protect and restore Long Island Sound and its watershed? There are a number of grant opportunities designed just for this purpose, in addition to DEP's "Preserve the Sound" License Plate Program, featured at left.

The Long Island Sound Study (LISS), through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, administers both the Small Grants Program and the Long Island Sound Futures Fund which together offer grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$75,000. The Small Grants Program provides funds for proposals to educate and involve the public in protecting the Sound. The Sound Futures Fund awards money for larger projects that restore and protect the health and living resources of the Sound. The goal of the Fund is to engage citizens who live near the Sound in community-based stewardship of the estuary. These and other grant opportunities are further described on the LISS "Grants at-a-Glance" web page – see www.longislandsoundstudy.net/grants.htm. Information on additional DEP grants programs can be found at www.dep.state.ct.us/business/grantprograms.htm.

The Connecticut Sea Grant College Program provides grants to researchers and educators at non-profit academic institutions, research laboratories, and outreach/education facilities. Grants are meant to support a broad range of applied research, education, and extension activities aimed at improving understanding, assessment, use, management, conservation, or restoration of marine and coastal resources. Grants typically range from \$30,000 to \$70,000 per year, awarded biennially. Requests for smaller grants, typically less than \$5,000, may be made at any time. See www.seagrant.uconn.edu/funding.htm for program information.

Purchase of an LIS License Plate supports the LIS Fund



As of July 31, 2005:

- Plates sold: 128,856
- Funds raised: Over \$4.7 million
- Projects funded: 283

The LIS Fund supports projects in the areas of education, public access to the shoreline, habitat restoration, and research.

The Long Island Sound Resource Center (LISRC) updated its web site, www.lisrc.uconn.edu. The revised site includes a module on the geology of Long Island Sound. Users may search for information at various levels, from simple overviews down to original scientific data. Much of the data can be downloaded. Visitors may also view thematic maps or use an interactive map to search for data. This is a prototype for other modules that LISRC plans to develop in its effort to provide "one stop shopping" for LIS information.

Pogo: “I have seen the Enemy and It is I”

DEP’s “I have seen the Enemy and It is I” initiative acknowledges that the choices we make daily – the cars we drive, how we get to work, the products we buy, how we dispose of household waste and electronics, the power sources we choose – impact our lives and our planet. Our consumer habits and lifestyles rely heavily on energy derived from fossil fuel, which contributes to climate change as evidenced by increases in global atmospheric temperatures. One of the key focus areas of this initiative is climate change. The Department is working with all sectors to broaden understanding of the impacts of global climate change and the simple actions we can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Annual average temperatures related to such emissions are projected to increase 6°-10° F in New England over the next century. The implications of such changes are particularly significant for Long Island Sound: sea level rise; more intense storms; wetland loss; increased damage to coastal infrastructure and habitats from storm damage, flooding, and erosion; expanded vector-borne diseases; salt water intrusion into fresh water sources; species shifts and losses; and stresses on fishing grounds.

State agencies and private sector interests in Connecticut have committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (see www.ctclimatechange.com). *What can you do to address global climate change?*

- **SWITCH TO CLEAN ENERGY** Customers of Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) and United Illuminating (UI) can purchase clean energy from wind power, small-scale hydroelectric power, and landfill gas. Find out how at www.ctcleanenergyoptions.com.
- **CLEAN UP YOUR COMMUTE** Transportation contributes about 40% of Connecticut’s greenhouse gas emissions. Try some cleaner options: Bike to work - www.wecyclect.org/btw.htm or take a bus, train or vanpool - www.ctrides.com.
- **BUY AN ENERGY EFFICIENT VEHICLE** Hybrid cars rated at 40 mpg or greater are exempt from Connecticut sales or use tax - see www.ct.gov/drs/cwp/view.asp?Q=284656&A=1436. Before you buy your next car, check out “greener cars” at www.greencarclub.org.
- **CUT ENERGY USE AND COSTS AT HOME** Buy Energy Star appliances and compact fluorescent lights, weatherize your home, and improve the efficiencies of your heating and cooling systems. Information is available for CL&P customers at www.cl-p.com/clmres/indexclmres.asp and for UI customers at www.uinet.com/your_home/index.asp.
- **INSTALL SOLAR PANELS** The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund provides incentives for the installation of solar panels on residences - see www.ctcleanenergy.com/renewable/solar_tech.html.
- **RECYCLE** Contact your town public works department to find out how you can recycle, compost and prevent waste. For information on recycling, see www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/recycle/ctrecycles.htm.

To learn about other ways to help prevent climate change, including **BUYING LOCALLY GROWN FOOD** and **REDUCING FERTILIZER USE**, contact Lynn Stoddard at 860-424-3236 or by email at lynn.stoddard@po.state.ct.us.

Landscape Stewardship

It is clear that we must be good stewards of our state’s landscape, including our shoreline, if we wish to preserve our coastal resources for the enjoyment of future generations. We need to conserve open space, maintain the biodiversity of our environment, and protect sensitive habitats such as river corridors and ridgetops. We must protect streamflow, minimize water diversions, and prevent wetland losses. We must expand coastal public access.

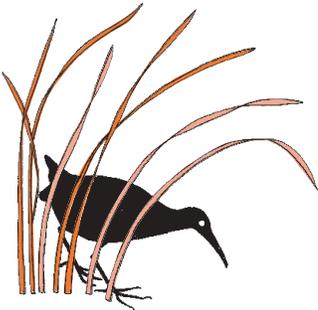
Examples exist at both the state and local levels of programs through which these goals can be accomplished. The DEP Office of Long Island Sound Programs is conducting the CLAM (Coastal Land Assessment Methodology) project, a coastal land conservation planning tool to identify large unprotected parcels with significant conservation value. One hundred sixty undeveloped parcels larger than 25 acres with significant coastal resource value have been identified within Connecticut’s coastal boundary. Key selection criteria included parcel size, presence of coastal resources such as coastal waters or tidal wetlands, and proximity to protected open space. These parcels are being further assessed to determine ownership and conservation priority. DEP will work with land trusts and municipal commissions to identify possible conservation

opportunities for some of these properties. Project partners will develop acquisition strategies in cooperation with willing sellers, while other conservation mechanisms may be pursued by municipal land use and conservation agencies. At the municipal level, the Town of Guilford Conservation Commission’s Natural Resource Inventory Committee, in January 2005, published a Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment (NRIA). The NRIA establishes an information base that will enable Guilford officials and land use agencies to make informed decisions regarding development, conservation, and natural resource management issues. The document includes Geographic Information System (GIS) coverages of geology and soils, coastal features and fresh-water resources, uplands and agriculture, scenic resources and open space, and significant natural and recreational resources. The NRIA will help to assess the relative importance of natural resources, identify stresses and threats to their health and integrity, and provide benchmarks against which future changes can be measured. These types of complementary programs can enable state and local resource managers to protect both our vital landscapes and the economic well-being of our citizens. For information about these programs, contact Dave Kozak at 860-424-3034 or by email at dave.kozak@po.state.ct.us.



Connecticut Department of
Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD CT
PERMIT NO. 2884



Industry Update --Vocational Aquaculture Resources

President John F. Kennedy once said ‘*Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.*’ The dream for Long Island Sound is a healthy ecosystem that benefits from the wise stewardship of people living near the Sound and in its watershed, and from businesses that are both economically strong and environmentally conscious.

Among the resources available in educating the next generation of workers in business and industry around the Sound are the two Regional Vocational Aquaculture Centers established in Connecticut, the **Bridgeport Aquaculture School** and the **Sound School** in New Haven. These schools provide curriculum and opportunities in aquaculture and in marine technology and trades. Both schools are regional, providing a marine vocational high school experience to students from eighteen Connecticut towns. A common goal of the schools entails instilling in students the ability to develop critical thinking skills concerning society’s relationship with the aquatic environment and to apply scientific and ecological principles to everyday life.

With technical and science related classrooms and aquaculture laboratories, students prepare for careers in and near aquatic environments, from boat repair specialist to marine biologist, and from commercial fisher to pollution control engineer. Each school has research vessels and workboats giving students hands-on learning experiences in vessel navigation, commercial fishing techniques and environmental research. All of these experiences serve to remind students of our connection to the sea. As President Kennedy also said ‘*All of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea — whether it is to sail or to watch it — we are going back from whence we came.*’ For more information about the aquaculture schools see www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Career/index.htm, www.soundschool.com and bridgeport.ct.schoolwebpages.com/education/school/school.php?sectionid=349.

Visit the DEP website at www.dep.state.ct.us

Published by The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Long Island Sound Programs and Bureau of Water Management.

Editor: Tom Ouellette; Illustrations by Tom Ouellette; Contributing Editor: Mark Parker; Layout: Caryn Furbush; Contributors: Kate Brown, Peter Francis, Matthew Fritz, Diane Joy, Lynn Stoddard. Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper using vegetable-based ink.

Financial assistance for **Sound Outlook** was provided by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, administered by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Financial assistance was also provided by the federal Environmental Protection Agency under the National Estuary Program.



The Department of Environmental Protection is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer, providing programs and services in a fair and impartial manner. In conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, DEP makes every effort to provide equally effective services for persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities needing auxiliary aids or services, or for more information by voice or TTY/TDD, call 860-424-3000.