

**A Newsletter from the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
Exploring Long Island Sound - Issues and Opportunities**

Connecticut's Coastal Management Program Turns 35!

Think back to 1980. Americans witnessed a "Miracle on Ice" as the U.S. Olympic Hockey Team beat the Soviet Union team in the semifinal game in Lake Placid, NY, going on to win the Gold Medal. Mount Saint Helens erupted in Washington State, devastating 229 square miles and several million dollars' worth of timber in the surrounding area. Ted Turner launched CNN, and Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States. And sadly, John Lennon was

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taken from us much too soon, just steps from his home at The Dakota in New York City.

These milestones all occurred the same year that another ground-breaking event took place: The Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) went into effect on January 1, 1980, setting a strong foundation for preserving and enhancing Long Island Sound and its coastal resources and protecting water-dependent uses along the shore. And while some might argue that the birth of the state's coastal management program pales in comparison to, say, the birth of Ryan Gossling or Channing Tatum that same year, its positive effect on Connecticut's coastal resources and water-dependent uses is perhaps more deserving of celebrity status.

Prior to 1980, Connecticut's coastal area had experienced extreme development pressure. Historic development patterns along the coast had filled countless acres of tidal wetlands; spewed tons of pollutants into Long Island Sound; threatened displacement of water-dependent uses; placed people in harm's way by encouraging high-density residential development in high-risk, storm-prone areas; and thwarted the public's ability to get to the Sound.

So it's no surprise that initially, the CCMA sought to avoid adverse impacts on coastal resources, prioritize the location of water-dependent uses at waterfront sites, minimize hazards to human life and coastal property from flooding and erosion, and improve and enhance public access to Long Island Sound, all while balancing environmental protection with economic growth. And in the 35 years since its adoption, the CCMA has continually evolved to address emerging coastal issues and concepts including sea level rise, nonpoint source pollution, and living shorelines.

Here are but a few of the many reasons to celebrate 35 years of Coastal Management in Connecticut.

An Integrated Framework of Coastal Protection

The establishment of the CCMA helped to integrate federal, state, and municipal regulatory programs so that each level of government applies the same standards during project review. At the state level, the coastal management program integrated the Structures, Dredging and Fill and the Tidal Wetlands regulatory programs into a single coordinated framework of environmental protection and resource management. This consolidation improved coordination between the permitting authorities with regard to coastal management and helped to revitalize what had been a disjointed and woefully understaffed program, and the resulting synergy from the coordinated application of all coastal regulatory authorities is a hallmark of the coastal management program and one of its particular strengths. The CCMA also gives towns the authority to plan for protection of their unique coastal resources and appropriate use and development of their waterfronts through municipal coastal plans and coastal site plan review.

Protection and Restoration of Coastal Habitats

The CCMA builds on the foundation laid by Connecticut's landmark 1969 Tidal Wetlands Act by establishing a statewide policy encouraging the restoration of degraded tidal wetlands. Thanks to the CCMA, Connecticut now has one of the most impressive restoration programs in the country, serving as a model for other restoration efforts nationwide. The coastal management program also works with other parts of DEEP and the Long Island Sound Study to restore other coastal habitats, benefiting populations of American shad, shortnose sturgeon, and other anadromous fish species in Connecticut (and the anglers who like to



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Sound Tips:

Celebrate the Coastal Management Program's 35th Anniversary by Protecting Long Island Sound

Did you know that the Friday before Memorial Day is "Long Island Sound Day"? Whether we escape to our boats or flock to the beach, there's no better way to ring in the summer season and celebrate the economic, recreational, and environmental values of the Sound. This year Long Island Sound Day falls on Friday May 22, 2015.

In light of the 35th anniversary of coastal management in

catch them!). Pervious pavers, naturally vegetated riparian areas, and rain gardens are encouraged instead of heavily fertilized lawns and impervious parking lots immediately adjacent to coastal waters and resources, thereby protecting water quality from nonpoint source pollution. Land uses that can alter water temperature or dissolved oxygen, or contribute suspended solids, nutrients, or pathogens to Long Island Sound must be designed to minimize these impacts and pollutants. Beaches and dunes that provide habitat and cover for piping plovers, least terns, sea turtles, and horseshoe crabs are provided a level of protection thanks to the CCMA.

Support for Water-dependent Uses and Urban Waterfront Revitalization

Protecting water-dependent uses is an integral part of the CCMA. Water-dependent uses are defined as those recreational, commercial, and industrial uses and facilities that require direct access to, or location in, marine or tidal waters. Examples of water-dependent uses include marinas, boatyards, and marine transportation facilities. The CCMA also defines general public access as a water-dependent use, which helps ensure that waterfront sites that are not well-suited for other types of water-dependent uses are still evaluated during the development process to determine whether or not they can provide uses like public access walkways and fishing piers. The CCMA also provides opportunities to work with many of our state's urban communities on redevelopment projects to reclaim their once-active waterfronts. Central to many of these efforts is the revitalization of developed shorefronts to accommodate active water-dependent uses such as waterborne commerce, commercial and recreational fishing, boating, and--you guessed it--public access.

Improved Management of Coastal Hazard Areas

The historic intensive development patterns along Connecticut's shoreline have oftentimes resulted in unsafe living conditions. For example, in some beachfront areas many homes had been constructed over the water, encroaching right into Long Island Sound. Although these lapses in good judgement might support extreme measures, the CCMA has never prohibited coastal development. Instead, the CCMA's goal for new development has always been to design and build away from coastal hazards, using elevation, appropriate setbacks, and the use of vegetated dunes and buffers to prevent the need for seawalls and other shoreline flood and erosion control structures. In fact, shoreline flood and erosion control structures were initially only allowed under certain circumstances to protect infrastructure (i.e., roads, sewage treatment plants, etc.), water-dependent uses, and inhabited residential structures built prior to the January 1, 1980 effective date of the CCMA. It wasn't until the [Coastal Omnibus Bill of 2012](#) was passed 32 years later that this standard was changed, and houses built after 1980 but before 1995 were then added to the list of uses for which erosion control structures may be allowed.

Expanding Public Access

One of the key goals of the coastal management program is improving public access to Connecticut's coast. Since the start of the program in 1980, the CCMA has provided the citizens of Connecticut with better access to the state's waterfront areas including the addition of 12.5 miles of coastal access, much of this obtained through the municipal coastal site plan review process. In addition, the [Connecticut Coastal Access Guide](#), developed with a grant from the Long Island Sound License Plate Fund, identifies more than 300 coastal sites where the public can enjoy diverse access opportunities. Please see the [Spotlighted Coastal Access article](#) in this issue for more details on how the CCMA has helped the public find their way on Connecticut's coast.

Here's to Another 35 Years

Connecticut, the best anniversary gift you can give to Long Island Sound is to adopt these small practices that will help you protect and appreciate the Sound the other 364 days of the year too:

- Get permits for work waterward of the [coastal jurisdiction line](#). You wouldn't remodel your kitchen *inside* your house without a permit, so chances are you'll need some kind of permit to work near the water or wetlands *outside* of your house. Contact your [friendly DEEP OLISP permit analyst](#) to see if you need a permit.
- If you see something, say something: Contact [OLISP](#) or your town's zoning enforcement officer if you see someone working along the shore.
- *And I wonder, still I wonder, who'll stop the rain?* You will, if you [plant a rain garden](#) or [install a rain barrel](#) on your property. Reducing the amount of rainwater running off your property will lend credence to a clear-water revival in Long Island Sound.
- Pick up after your dog, but don't throw it down the storm drain. Catch basins are not garbage cans, they are usually directly connected to rivers and streams. Better to bring your dog's business home to throw into the garbage or bury in the woods.

Upon reflection, 35 years is a relatively short amount of time to undo 200+ years of historic mismanagement. But we're off to a great start.

Who knows what the next 35 years holds? Conflicts from multiple users of Long Island Sound that will drive the need for coastal and marine spatial planning? Shoreline communities plagued by extreme precipitation, super-storms, and other adverse impacts associated with climate change? A bridge from Port Jefferson, Long Island to Milford as imagined by a fictitious President on *House of Cards*? Whatever emerging issues the future has in store for us, Connecticut's coastal management program will be there to tackle them all.

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Connecticut's Coastal Management Program Receives Rave Review

Regular readers of *Sound Outlook* may recall that Connecticut's Coastal Management Program was under federal review at this time last year as required by [Section 312 of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act \(16 U.S.C. § 1458\)](#) (please see the [February 2014 issue of Sound Outlook](#)). The review spanned the time frame from September 2006 through May 2014.

Well, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management has completed their review, and their findings in the recently issued the [Final Draft of Connecticut's Section 312 Review](#) are spectacular.

The evaluators found that Connecticut's coastal management program was adhering to the programmatic requirements of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act, and noted a number of accomplishments within the three focus areas of Ocean Planning, Coastal Resilience, and Permitting:

- Developing and completing Phase I of a seafloor mapping project for priority areas in Long Island Sound;
- Supporting municipalities in enhancing climate resilience through technical assistance and leveraging resources;
- Working with partners to restore coastal habitats and protect coastal lands; and
- Undertaking multiple permit streamlining efforts and creating a culture of continuous improvement in coastal permit processing.

The evaluators also specified recommendations to improve the program in these same focus areas. The reports suggests that the coastal management program:

- Continue to support ocean planning efforts at regional and Long Island Sound scales; and
- Continue to support climate resilience by incorporating it into coastal planning and permitting processes.

During the review process, NOAA evaluators recognized some of the challenges facing the coastal management program, including the loss of 25% of our staff during the review period and ongoing pressures to facilitate shoreline armoring. In spite of these setbacks, the report praises Office of Long Island Sound Programs staff members who are described as informed and knowledgeable, dedicated, smart, hardworking, highly responsive, having an extraordinary level of availability, and having good relationships with businesses, environmental

- Participate in a [beach clean-up](#). You can join a larger, organized effort, or merely pick up some trash when you're visiting the beach or some other [coastal access site](#).
- Think outside the seawall: Consider a [dune](#), a [waterside vegetated buffer](#), or other [living shoreline](#) instead of a hard structure to protect your property against erosion.

A Blue Plan for Long Island Sound?

Who's afraid of Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP)? Not Governor Malloy! [The Governor recently announced his support for CMSP by endorsing the concept of a "Blue Plan" for Long Island Sound.](#)

As highlighted in the [February 2012 issue of Sound Outlook](#), CMSP gives coastal states the ability to determine in advance how offshore waters should be used, rather than reacting and responding to multiple conflicting uses on a case-by-case, permit-by-permit basis. A Blue Plan could help Connecticut identify priority areas within Long Island Sound for certain uses, including navigation, habitat protection, and energy facility siting. Without a Blue Plan, Connecticut could remain vulnerable to use conflicts, habitat loss, and inappropriate energy development.

The Governor supports development of a Blue Plan to help ensure that Connecticut has a coordinated strategy for the potential future use of Long Island Sound. The ability to reduce conflicts among the Sound's various users and resources will bolster the strides already made by the Connecticut Coastal Management Act. By endorsing a Blue Plan this year, the Governor has given Connecticut's coastal management program a meaningful and very useful 35th anniversary gift.

organizations, municipal communities, federal agencies, and other parts of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. A rave review, indeed.

If you have any questions about the Section 312 Review Process or the results of the review, please contact [David Blatt](#) at 860.424.3610.

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Look Out For
Upcoming Events!

Long Island Sound Study
(LISS)
[Committee Meetings](#)

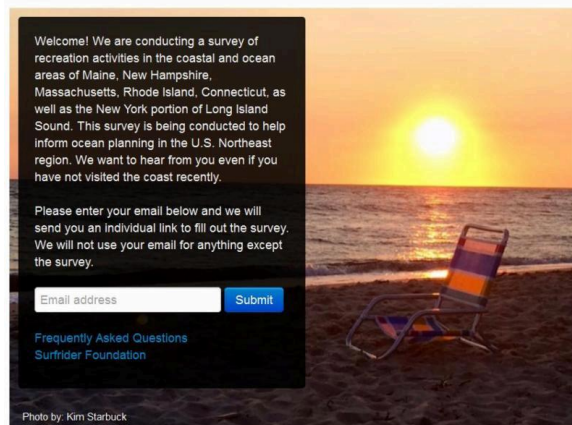
Please be sure to check the
[Calendar of Events](#) on
DEEP's website

Save the Date:
24th Annual Long Island
Sound Citizens Summit
Friday, April 10, 2015

Have You Enjoyed New England's Coast in the Last 12 Months? Then Surfrider Wants to Hear from You

If you are over the age of 18 and have participated in a "non-extractive" ocean or coastal activity (i.e., beach-going, surfing, kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding, swimming, wildlife viewing, jogging on the shore, etc.) in New England at least once in the last 12 months, you are eligible to take a survey to help ocean planners better understand where and how people enjoy New England's coast and ocean.

Northeast Coastal and Ocean Recreational Use Survey



[The Northeast Regional Planning Body \(RPB\)](#), responsible for developing New England's Ocean Plan, has put together a team that includes [Surfrider Foundation](#) and [SeaPlan](#) to help characterize coastal and marine recreation in the Northeast. The team will be gathering data about how and where people enjoy the ocean along New England's coast. Surfrider Foundation will lead the individual recreation user portion of this study, which features an [online survey](#) that any individual who is 18 or older and has participated in an ocean or coastal activity is encouraged to take. The deadline to complete the survey is midnight on April 30, 2015.

When you access the online survey, enter your email address. A unique survey link will then be emailed to you with instructions for participation. You can start, save and finish later, or complete the survey in one sitting. Your participation in the survey will help

identify the areas throughout New England that are important for recreational users, ensuring that these areas are recognized during the ocean planning process.

For more information about this study, please contact Surfrider's [Melissa Gates](#) at 207.706.6378.

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SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL ACCESS: For 35 Years, Connecticut's Coastal Management Program Has Helped the Public Find Their Place on Connecticut's Coast

Since colonial times, competing uses of Connecticut's shoreline have influenced how and where the public can access the coast. Early colonial trade and settlement depended on waterborne transportation, which fostered expansion of coastal cities such as New London, New Haven, and Bridgeport. By the turn of the 20th century, rail lines established along many of these early waterborne trade routes facilitated both the industrial growth of our coastal cities and the first influx of tourists away from those rapidly expanding urban areas to nearby seasonal seaside resorts. Subsequent construction of the interstate highway system and the post-war baby-boom housing development also set the stage for much of the development we see today surrounding many of Connecticut's coastal cities. New-found post-war prosperity resulted in sprawling coastal residential development outside of well-established urban areas, including a burgeoning market for seasonal home development.

This development scenario would seem somewhat common and not particularly troubling, if the colonists had decided to give Long Island (and all of that sandy beach) to Connecticut. Alas, while the state has 333 miles of mainland shoreline fronting directly on Long Island Sound and its bays, harbors, and coves, merely 88 miles is sandy beach (26% of the state's total shoreline), the type of shoreline most sought after for coastal outdoor recreation; and just 30% of those 88 miles of sandy beach is publicly owned, almost exclusively by the CT DEEP and coastal cities and towns. Further, Connecticut's coastal county population density is the 8th highest of the 31 coastal states, with over half of the land within 1,000 feet of the shoreline developed with structures, roads, parking lots, and maintained lawns. Thus it is no surprise that the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) places such a high priority on increasing and enhancing public access to the coast!

In fact, the framers of the CCMA were keenly aware of the state's inability to consistently meet public demand for sandy beach swimming. As early as 1978, while the coastal management program was being development, a planning report on coastal recreation (Planning Report #25--Coastal Recreation Planning) documented that Connecticut's then four State Park saltwater bathing beaches were not consistently meeting demand. The culprits? Connecticut's bedrock- and glacial till-dominated shoreline having precious little sandy beach within a short drive of the region's major population centers, and the nearly continuous historic conversion of undeveloped shoreline property to uses that displaced traditional public uses like shoreline angling and recreational shellfishing, that had been allowed by custom on private lands for generations.

In response to this continuing unmet demand, the CCMA contains enforceable policies to expand and enhance public access to Long Island Sound. Among these policies are requirements that new non-water-dependent development at waterfront sites provides opportunities for the public to access coastal waters, and that in-water structures such as groins and docks not impede public access at or below the mean high water mark, which is the portion of the shoreline held in public trust by the State of Connecticut.

These enforceable policies are implemented through the state's coastal regulatory programs and through municipal coastal site plan review, and the administration of these regulatory programs has created over 60 coastal public sites at privately owned waterfront sites. Information about these sites can be found among the 328 sites featured in the [Connecticut Coastal Access Guide](#), created by the coastal management program thanks to a grant from the Long Island Sound License Plate fund.

So, the next time you plan a visit to Connecticut's shoreline using the Coastal Access Guide, thank those framers of the CCMA who had the vision to recognize that, while the coast will always be the scene of competition, the public will always be able to find their place on Connecticut's coast.

Purchase of a LIS License Plate Supports the LIS Fund



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

**For information on ordering a
Long Island Sound License Plate,
call 1-800-CT-SOUND.**

SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL RESOURCE: DEEP's Wildlife Action Plan Also Helps Protect Connecticut's Coastal Resources

In 1980, the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) established a program to protect the state's coastal resources and waters. The protective policies of the CCMA are also reflected in another state program that strives to protect and conserve coastal wildlife habitat. [Connecticut's Wildlife Action Plan](#) (WAP) provides an additional state framework for proactively conserving important fish and wildlife and their coastal habitats, providing guidance and vision for wildlife conservation in Connecticut.


The plan addresses the broad array of all fish, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrate species in Connecticut and identifies the species (and their habitats) that are in the greatest need of conservation. The plan also strives to address the problems facing these species and habitats by identifying priority research needs and conservation actions in an effort to conserve species diversity and "keep common species common." Ultimately, the plan encourages partnerships with conservation organizations at the local, state, and regional levels to enhance opportunities for implementation of actions to conserve wildlife.

Connecticut's first WAP, then known as Connecticut's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, was completed in 2005. That document is currently undergoing a revision for the next decade, 2015-2025. The draft revised plan has identified several key threats to wildlife and their habitats in Connecticut, some of which are similar to the issues that gave rise to the CCMA. These threats include:

- residential and commercial development which converts habitat to uses such as buildings, parking lots, and roads;
- pollutants including sewage, solid waste, industrial and agricultural discharges, and nonpoint source pollution that can impair key riverine, aquatic, and land habitats throughout the state;
- invasive species and diseases that can alter the diversity of species and habitats;
- human intrusion and disturbance, such as human use of beaches and dunes for recreation during important mating and nesting periods for horseshoe crabs or shorebirds like piping plovers and least terns;
- modification of natural systems, such as constructing dams or diverting surface water;
- transportation infrastructure that can fragment habitats and interrupt wildlife corridors; and
- climate change, which causes rising sea levels that can drown tidal wetlands resulting in their conversion to mudflats.

The DEEP is currently soliciting public input on the revised Wildlife Action Plan. This is your chance to help shape the future of fish and wildlife conservation in our state for the next 10 years and make the Wildlife Action Plan an effective tool for conserving Connecticut's diversity of wildlife resources for future generations.

To review drafts of the Wildlife Action Plan, the proposed Species of Greatest Conservation Need list, and the proposed Conservation Threats and Actions, please visit the [Wildlife Action Plan website](#).

You can also follow the progress of the plan via  Facebook and Twitter: @CT_SWAP #CTSGCN. Comments or questions may be submitted online or via email at deep.wildlifeactionplan@ct.gov. You may also contact the DEEP Wildlife Division's Wildlife Diversity Program at 860.424.3011 for additional information on the Wildlife

Visit the DEEP website at

www.ct.gov/deep.



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