

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

New Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Adopted for Long Island Sound

Long-time readers of *Sound Outlook* will recall several articles in the recent past regarding the update of the Long Island Sound Study's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) to restore and protect Long Island Sound (please see the [June 2013](#) and [February 2014](#) issues). On October 22, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Long Island Sound Study Office (LISS) and its partners issued a [press release announcing that the updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan had been completed](#).

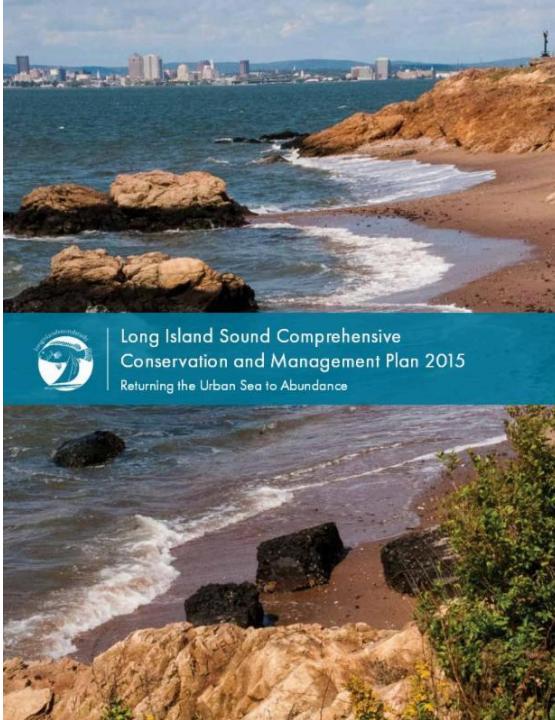
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The first CCMP was adopted in 1994 and has guided management efforts in Connecticut and New York over the last 20 years. The [updated CCMP](#) sets 20 key ecosystem targets/goals to be achieved over the next 20 years and was a culmination of a two-year effort involving staff from the DEEP Water Protection and Land Reuse Bureau's (WPLR) Planning and Standards Division and Office of Long Island Sound Programs. Consultations from other WPLR Divisions, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources, and other state agencies were also part of the process.



The LISS is a federal and state partnership led by the [Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection](#) (DEEP), the [New York State Department of Environmental Conservation](#) (DEC), and the [U.S. EPA](#). It is one of 28 [National Estuary Programs](#) (NEP) established under the Federal Clean Water Act. Each NEP develops and implements a CCMP that recommends priority actions to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the estuary including water quality, a balanced indigenous population of shellfish, fish, and wildlife, critical lands and habitat, and recreation and public access.

Today, much has improved in Long Island Sound through the partners' water quality, stewardship, and habitat restoration initiatives, but more needs to be done. The new plan builds on past successes by incorporating scientific and technological advances and the current needs of Long Island Sound communities, and by addressing new environmental challenges such as sustainability, climate change resilience, and environmental justice.

The new plan is organized around 4 central themes: Waters and Watersheds, Thriving Habitats and Abundant Wildlife, Sustainable and Resilient Communities, and Sound Science and Inclusive Management. The CCMP was developed through a collaborative process involving federal, state and local governments, university scientists, and interested representatives of business, environmental, and community groups. The plan was finalized after consideration of 250 comments from the public.

The LISS partners have launched an informative media campaign through social media platforms, and we encourage all friends, and stakeholders to



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Great Success

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Sound Tips:

Get involved for Long Island Sound

Whether it is implementing the updated CCMP, developing the Blue Plan, or embarking on a new National Estuarine Research Reserve, citizen involvement will be crucial to the success of any initiative undertaken to protect and enhance Long Island Sound. Here are a few ways for you to get involved:

- Now that the CCMP has been updated, plan on

On December 1 and 2, 2015, living shorelines practitioners from around the country met in Hartford, Connecticut for a first-ever national living shorelines summit: "Living Shorelines: Sound Science, Innovative Approaches, Connected Community."

Living shorelines are coastal erosion control treatments that feature a variety of structural and organic materials, such as tidal wetland plants, submerged aquatic vegetation, coir fiber logs, sand fill, and stone to provide shoreline protection and maintain or restore coastal resources and habitat (please see the [June 2012 issue of Sound Outlook](#) for more information on living shorelines).

The summit was presented by [Restore America's Estuaries](#) and the [Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation](#) (CIRCA). Peter Francis and Sue Jacobson of [DEEP's Office of Long Island Sound Programs](#) contributed to program development, while CIRCA Program Manager Jessica LeClair was a lead meeting planner.

Drawing nearly 300 researchers, government employees, engineers, students, and others, the two-day event covered both national and regional landscapes. Day 1 had a national focus, in which presenters explored groundbreaking science, forward-looking permitting, effective outreach and education strategies, and innovative finance mechanisms. On Day 2 conference participants broke down by region to discuss relevant successes, challenges, and solutions to advance the deployment of living shorelines in their home states. Proceedings from the summit are forthcoming, but a [list of summit presentations](#) is currently available.

The event also featured an optional field session to a [living shoreline project in Stratford, CT](#) being conducted by Sacred Heart University. The field session was led by Dr. Jennifer Mattei of Sacred Heart.

attending a Long Island Sound Study meeting to help implement it. Most committee meetings are open to the public, and every issue of *Sound Outlook* provides a link to the [meeting calendar](#).

- Get involved with the development of the Blue Plan for Long Island Sound. The new [Blue Plan website](#) has background information, agendas for Advisory Committee meetings, and instructions for joining a list serv to receive emails regarding Blue Plan progress.
- DEEP is also in the process of establishing a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) for Long Island Sound. The [DEEP NERR website](#) provides background about the NERR site selection process and has a link to join the list serv to receive information and updates by email.
- Finally, as always, ring in the summer season and celebrate Long Island Sound Day, the Friday of Memorial Day weekend. This year LIS Day falls on Friday May 27, 2016.

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**Look Out For
Upcoming Events!**

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



Reef Ball Living Shoreline Project with
Tidal Wetland Restoration, Stratford
Photo Credit: Sacred Heart University

Stay tuned to *Sound Outlook* for information about an upcoming living shorelines conference later in 2016. In the meantime, if you have any questions about living shorelines in Connecticut, please contact [Peter Francis](#) at 860.424.3651.

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Connecticut DEEP to Host Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is proud to be hosting the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission's 27th annual nonpoint source (NPS) pollution conference. Please see the [February 2004 issue of Sound Outlook](#) for some background information on NPS pollution.

This conference is the premier forum in our region for sharing information and improving communication on NPS pollution issues and projects. The conference brings together all those in New England and New York State involved in NPS pollution management, including participants from state, federal, and municipal governments, the private sector, academia, and watershed organizations.

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

Purchase of a LIS License Plate Supports the LIS Fund



The Long Island Sound fund supports projects in the areas of education, public access to the shoreline, habitat restoration, and research.

[Order a Long Island Sound License Plate today!](#)

This year's conference will be held on **April 20-21, 2016** at the Hilton in downtown Hartford, Connecticut. [Registration](#) is now open for attendees and exhibitors, and a [draft event program](#) is available. We hope to see you there!

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Sound Outlook Remembers Terry Backer

Terry Backer passed away on December 15, 2015 at the age of 61.

Before he started the first of his 12 terms as a state representative from Stratford, Terry was well-known to DEP/DEEP as a shellfisherman and a staunch defender of Long Island Sound as Connecticut's Soundkeeper.

Over the years, Terry and the Long Island Soundkeeper Fund partnered with the DEP/DEEP in several ways. Back in the 1990's, the Soundkeeper Fund received Long Island Sound License Plate grants for two educational projects: in 1995, Soundkeeper developed a coloring and activity book for 5 to 10 year old kids that taught them how to defeat the "Megablob" that had taken over Long Island Sound by recycling, picking up litter at the beach, and watching for oil and other nonpoint source pollution on parking lots and streets; and in 1999, Soundkeeper developed a Clean Boater Guide that taught boaters how to deal with wastewater in holding tanks, and how to maintain their boats and engines and fuel their boats in a more environmentally friendly way.

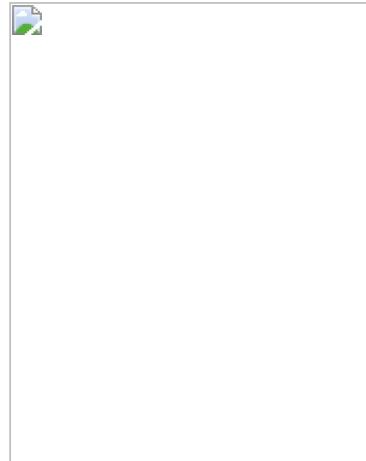
In many ways, the Clean Boater Guide set the stage for the Soundkeeper Pump-out Boat Program, supported by DEEP's Clean Vessel Act fund, that has evolved into four boats providing free holding tank pump-outs for recreational vessels in most areas between the Byram River in Greenwich and the Saugatuck River in Westport, Connecticut, and in Mamaroneck, New York from Memorial Day through October. The pump-out boat partnership with DEEP continues to this day.

However, Terry's passion for Long Island Sound was never more evident than during a federal review of Connecticut's coastal management program in July of 1990. One of the most important aspects of a federal review is the opportunity to introduce the federal review team to local stakeholders and experts, to give them a true read of how well the state's coastal management program is protecting Long Island Sound. Terry had graciously provided a boat trip out to Sheffield Island off the Norwalk coast for the review team, during which he talked about Soundkeeper, water quality, oysters, and coastal resource protection. After the boat trip, we gathered for dinner at a trendy restaurant in South Norwalk before parting ways for the evening. While our dinner orders were being taken, Terry asked our waiter if the oysters on the menu were local. The waiter replied, "Oh no, we would NEVER serve oysters from out THERE," motioning toward the harbor, his voice dripping with disdain.

That poor waiter had no idea who he was dealing with, or what was coming next.

Without missing a beat, Terry schooled our waiter on the finer points of Norwalk oysters, how they are sought by the world's finest restaurants and that the oysters being served by this restaurant couldn't possibly compare. Terry even demanded to see the tags from the bags of oysters being served in the restaurant to identify where they came from!

None of this was for show; Terry genuinely believed in the superiority of Norwalk oysters. He was a "localvore" long before the farm-to-table concept was cool.



Coloring and activity book
Long Island Sound
License Plate Fund, 1995



Long Island Sound
License Plate Fund, 1999

But he also knew that many organizations and agencies, including the Soundkeeper Fund and the DEP/DEEP, had been hard at work improving the environmental conditions of Long Island Sound. He knew that the local oyster resources were healthy, sustainable, and safe to eat as a result of that hard work.



Terry Backer and his larger-than-life personality will be missed. But his legacy lives on in the children and boaters he educated, and in the improvements to water quality and coastal resources in Long Island Sound that have occurred thanks to the Soundkeeper pump-out boats he championed.

So the next time you eat a local oyster (or any other local shellfish), or get your holding tank pumped-out, give a little thanks to Terry!

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Reprinted from The Soundkeeper Clean Boater Guide, 1999

And Then There Were Three: OLISP Streamlines General Permits, Consolidates Activities into Three Categories

As you may know, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Office of Long Island Sound Programs (OLISP) regulates work in tidal wetlands and in the tidal, coastal, and navigable waters of the state waterward of the [Coastal Jurisdiction Line](#) (CJL). "Work" means, among other things, building, repairing, or replacing seawalls, rock slopes, piers, floats, ramps, walkways, pilings, or any structure waterward of the CJL and in or over tidal wetland vegetation. Depending on the work that you would like to do, you may need a full permit or a certificate of permission (COP), or you may be eligible for a general permit (GP).

Since 1997, OLISP had developed and authorized a total of 15 different GPs, many of which were in need of modification. Further, 10 new GPs were under development.

Rather than modifying the existing GPs and issuing 10 new authorizations (for a grand total of 25!), OLISP reexamined the entire suite of GPs and found that the activities essentially fell into three overarching categories: new structures, maintenance of existing structures, and storm-related activities. In light of this review, OLISP grouped the 25 activities and their associated conditions as sub-categories within three consolidated GPs: [\(1\) Minor Structures](#), [\(2\) Maintenance](#), and [\(3\) Storm Preparation and Response](#). [New registration forms, instructions, and fact sheets](#) for these new GPs may be found on the DEEP website. Additional guidance and outreach information can also be found on the [OLISP Coastal Permitting webpage](#).

A number of changes were also made to previously covered GP activities which now require little or no regulatory paperwork! For example, a waterfront homeowner looking to reconstruct a permitted dock was previously required to get authorization by submitting a COP application, but the new Maintenance GP will allow in-kind reconstruction of the dock with a simple registration and fee.

If you are considering coastal work at your property, we strongly encourage you to contact DEEP ahead of time to discuss the project. It is better to be working under proper authorization instead of restoring environmental damage and suffering financial penalties from a potential violation. Most often, a pre-application meeting is the best way to determine if your project is approvable and what type of authorization covers the activity.

Questions can be directed to any staff member of the [OLISP Permitting and Enforcement Section](#) at 860.424.3034. Remember, we're from the state and we're here to help.

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Photo of a ramp and float

General Permits can cover minor activities

Photo Credit: DEEP OLISP

SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL ACCESS: The Lunch-eater's Guide to the Connecticut Coast

For many of us, a visit to the shore is as life-sustaining as the food we eat and the water we drink. We are drawn to the coast to rejuvenate our souls, no matter the weather or the season. However, for many of us, our busy schedules or the howling winter winds prevent us from taking that long walk on the beach we so desperately need.

So what better way to "sandwich-in" a quick trip to the shore than when you're eating your lunch?! Whether you're brown-bagging it or grabbing a value meal on the go, your lunch break can nourish body and soul alike if you head to one of these spots, identified by OLISP staff as their favorite haunts for lunch-eating when they're in the field.

Most of these sites have free and easy parking, so you can stay in the car if it's raining sideways or snowing ([please don't idle your car when you're parked](#)), and it's a great way to offer your elderly parents or other mobility-impaired people a sweeping vista at the water's edge. It's also a much better way to be surrounded by seagulls, rather than in the parking lot of your local fast-food restaurant.

Many of these sites are accessed through residential areas, so please be respectful and obey the speed limits. Also, these sites are small and generally don't provide for garbage disposal, so always keep your garbage in your vehicle and recycledispose of it properly when you get home.

Click on the links for directions and more information about each of these sites. Click on each photo for an enlarged view. Bon appetit!

Stamford

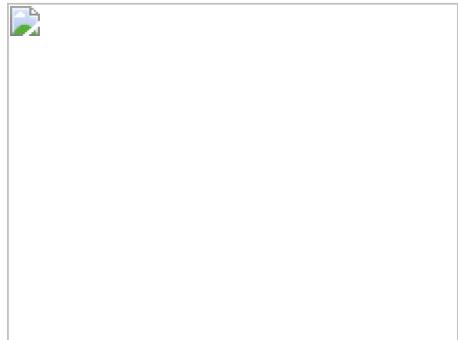
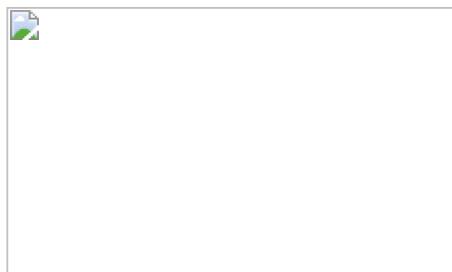
[The Village at Stamford Landing](#)

This public access is an excellent example of your state coastal management program hard at work! The access was required during the local zoning review process to offset the "non-water-dependent" commercial, retail, and residential uses being proposed at a waterfront site. The site offers views of Stamford Harbor and a walkway and benches if you need a quick stroll after your sandwich.

Norwalk

[Mill Pond Park](#)

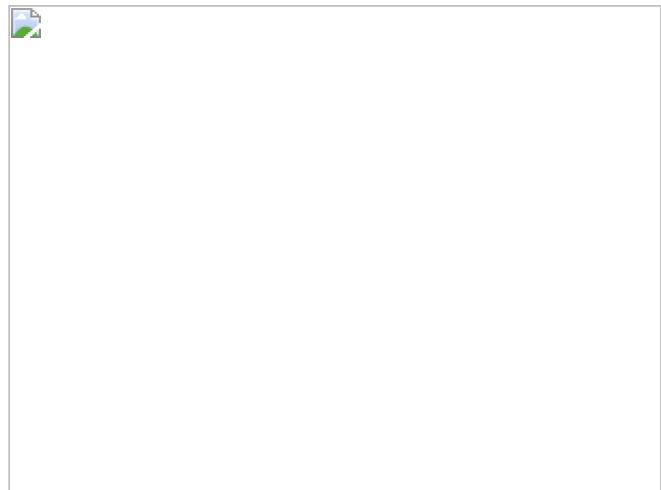
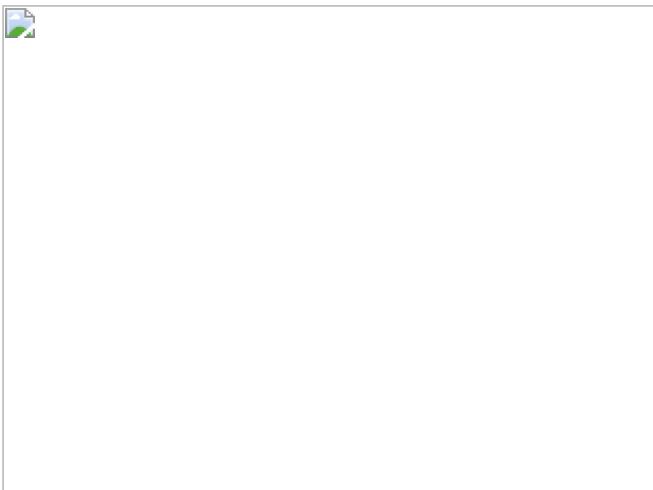
A lovely little park with benches and educational signs, and a direct view of the Mill Pond as well as views of Norwalk Harbor. Some local eateries are nearby if you've forgotten your lunch.



Westport

[Levitt Pavilion/Westport Riverwalk](#)

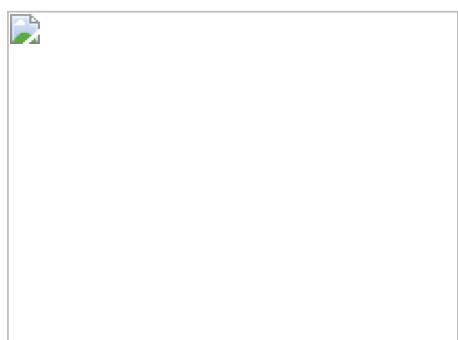
Located at the public library in town, this is a beautiful walkway and pavilion on the shores of the Saugatuck River. Benches are available for good-weather days.



Stratford

[The Dock Shopping Center](#)

Another shining example of Connecticut's coastal management program ensuring public access at waterfront sites when a non-water-dependent use is proposed. The shopping center could only be approved if the developer provided a water-dependent component, so the site is chock full of public walkways, a park area with picnic tables, and a fishing pier. It appears that the access area is being loved to death, however, as there is a lot of litter along the water's edge. A clean-up for Coast Weeks or an Eagle Scout project might be in order here!



Milford

[Milford Landing Marina](#)

Talk about convenient--this town marina has walkways and benches that provide views of Milford Harbor, all within walking distance of downtown and the green (and many restaurants). You can also walk or park across the harbor at [Wilcox Park](#) for more unhindered views of the harbor.



New Haven

[Long Wharf Pier](#)

A great way to enjoy nature right in the city! The parking area offers sweeping views of New Haven Harbor, and at low tide you might see wading birds, maybe even a terrapin. You'll absolutely see food trucks, no matter the tidal cycle.



Branford

[Branford Point](#)

With its small parking area at the end of Harbor Street, this park offers beautiful views of the Branford River as it meets Long Island Sound. Even in the fog. And the seagulls seem much more at home here.



Guilford

[Great Harbor Wildlife Management Area](#)

This wildlife management area is a true gem of an access site. From the parking spot in the turn-around at the end of Trolley Road, you'll have gorgeous views of the tidal marsh of Joshua Cove and of Long Island Sound. This area is accessed through a quiet neighborhood, so please respect the neighbors.



Clinton

[Clinton Landing](#)

Another beautiful municipal park providing access to the public. Located behind Town Hall, the park offers ample parking, benches, a gazebo, and a walkway with educational signage along the Indian River. It's a wonder that Town Hall employees ever make it back inside to work after lunch!



Westbrook

[West Beach](#) (off-season)

During the summer, there is a \$20 daily fee for non-residents to park at this beautiful Westbrook beach. But off-season (after Labor Day and before Memorial Day), non-residents can experience the sweeping views of Long Island Sound and easy access to the sandy beach from the parking lot for free.



Old Lyme

[CT DEEP Marine Headquarters-Ferry Landing Park](#)

DEEP staff located in Hartford have good reason to be jealous of our colleagues based at Marine Headquarters. From the boardwalk and observation deck, you can view the mighty Connecticut River as it enters Long Island Sound.

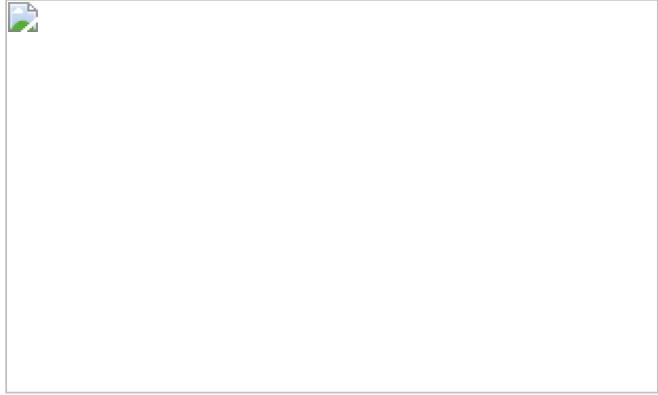


East Lyme

[Cini Memorial Park](#)

By far the most-voted-for site by OLISP staff, Cini Memorial Park offers views of the mouth of the Niantic River as well as walkways, benches and picnic tables, and a fishing pier. More improvements to the park are in the works. Cini Memorial Park also serves as a starting/ending point for the [Niantic Bay Boardwalk](#) and parking for the beach, renourished with 75,000 cubic yards of beach sand as a condition of the DEEP permit to allow realignment of the Amtrak bridge. Once again, a stellar example of how your coastal management program works hard for you.

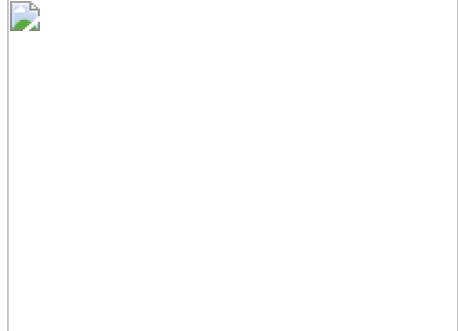




Groton

[Bluff Point State Park and Reserve](#)

Perhaps one of the most beautiful spots on Connecticut's coast, this state park and nature reserve offers views of the Poquonnock River right from the parking lot. A longer walk to the bluff and the cobble beach should also be experienced whenever possible.



Stonington

[Dodge Paddock and Beal Preserves](#)

We might be letting you in on a favorite staff secret by telling you about Dodge Paddock. Tucked away at the end of Wall Street in Stonington Borough, this property is owned by the Avalonia Land Conservancy and is a slice of heaven. Wall Street is very narrow here and is lined with homes, so please be respectful of the neighbors.



These OLISP staff favorites merely scratch the surface of the scores of public access sites waiting to be discovered. Find your own favorite lunch spot in the [Connecticut Coastal Access Guide](#).

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SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL RESOURCE: New Marsh Migration Model Hits a Grand "SLAMM"

Sound Outlook's faithful readers will no doubt recall an article about the Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) for Long Island Sound (please see the [October 2014 issue of Sound Outlook](#)). To refresh your memory, SLAMM is a computer model used by coastal managers since its initial development by EPA in the 1980s to predict how sea level rise (SLR) may affect saltmarshes.

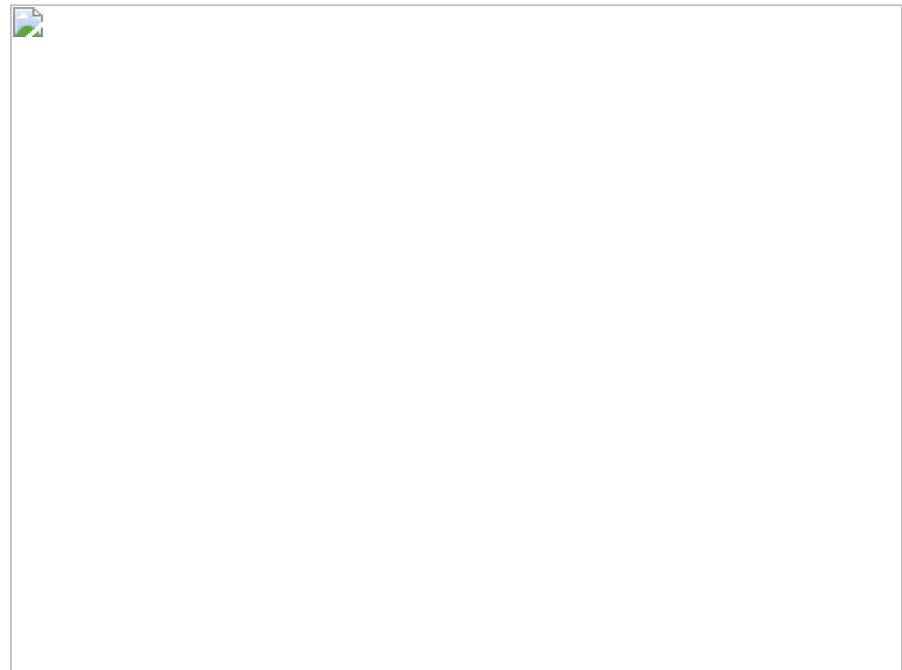
Recent enhancements to the model not only predict how saltmarshes are expected to migrate in response to SLR, but, importantly, they also predict the likelihood that a marsh will exist in a given location under a variety of SLR scenarios. With these model enhancements, limited resources for marsh conservation can now be more effectively targeted to areas with greatest potential to support marshes in the future.

EPA's [Long Island Sound Study Office](#) recently released the [SLAMM for Long Island Sound website](#), designed to assist conservation commissions, land trusts, academic institutions, NGOs, and others interested in managing the Sound's saltmarshes in the advent of sea level rise, using the most recently available data describing the Sound's saltmarshes. The website allows users to check out how a local marsh may respond to SLR at different time steps through the year 2100, and to learn more about Long Island Sound's tidal marshes and the ecological processes that might affect them in the future.

SLAMM is also unique in that it predicts not only where marshes are expected to occur in the future, but how different habitat types within a marsh are expected to change. For example, even under a moderate SLR scenario, the existing high marsh-dominated plant communities at Hammonasset Beach State Park, shown at right, are expected to change significantly before the end of the century, posing significant marsh habitat and park management issues that will need to be addressed in the near term.

In addition to predicting SLR effects on marshes, SLAMM is increasingly being applied to address broader coastal resiliency planning issues. Therefore, the model may also be of interest to communities that are developing coastal resilience and coastal hazards plans.

Further, updates to SLAMM are also underway that will provide information regarding the effects of tidal and storm flooding on roads and other infrastructure, and how such infrastructure may affect tidal marsh migration pathways. The update--the first of its kind to investigate the relationship between infrastructure and its effect on tidal flooding--is expected to be released in summer of 2016.



SLAMM predicts that infrequently flooded, high marsh-dominated saltmarshes are expected to change to low marsh-dominated systems with more mudflats. This will affect the plants and animals that use the high marsh to breed and feed.

For more information about SLAMM or the new website, please contact [David Kozak](#) at 860.424.3608.

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CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE: CIRCA Awards Municipal Resilience Grants

The [Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation](#) (CIRCA) has awarded a round of grants under its Municipal Resilience Grant Program. Several important criteria were considered by the CIRCA Executive Steering Committee in reviewing applications, including:

- Does the proposed project enhance community resilience to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather?
- Does the proposed project have transferable results?
- Does the proposed project involve collaboration with CIRCA?
- Does the proposed project have measurable goals?
- Will the proposed project be completed in an 18-month timescale?
- Does the proposed project have multiple funding sources?
- Does the proposed project emphasize implementation?

After careful review of the applications submitted, CIRCA has awarded Municipal Resilience Grants for the following projects that will not only increase local resilience, but may also serve as learning tools for other communities hoping to

replicate their success:

City of Milford - *Developing and Implementing a Restoration and Management Plan* to combat threats and challenges to coastal dune resiliency in urban landscapes.

City of New Haven - *Industrial Toolbox* to enhance the resilience of the City's commercial infrastructure to flooding and sea level rise.

Town of Waterford - *Municipal Infrastructure Resilience Project* to assess the vulnerabilities of sewer pump stations and create a list of priority actions and cost estimates to reduce each sewer pump station's present and future vulnerability.

Northwest Hills Council of Governments - *Building Municipal Resilience and Climate Adaptation through Low Impact Development.*

Western Connecticut Council of Governments - *Establish a Regional Community Rating System Program* to assist communities within western Connecticut and provide flood resiliency benefits for the western Connecticut region.

For more specific information on each of these projects, please visit the [CIRCA award recipients website](#).

CIRCA has announced another round of funding under the [Municipal Resilience Grant Program](#) with applications due **April 15, 2016** (please see the [October/November 2015 issue of Sound Outlook](#) for more information). This is yet another opportunity for Connecticut towns and cities to start adapting to a changing climate and enhancing the resilience of their infrastructure.

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Visit the DEEP website at
www.ct.gov/dep.



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