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

## Forty Years of Coastal Management in Connecticut

Regular readers of *Sound Outlook* may recall that our [February 2015 issue](#) heralded 35 years of Connecticut's coastal management successes, from coastal habitat restoration and protection, to support for water-dependent uses, to management of coastal hazard areas.

The February 2015 issue also speculated about the challenges the next 35 years might have in store.

Five years later, no one could have predicted the challenges that 2020 would unleash. From a coastal management perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the importance of planning and preparing for emergencies and protecting vulnerable populations, and has highlighted how public access to natural places is essential for both physical and mental health.

These challenges have also taken center stage as the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3) kicked into high gear this year. The GC3 was re-established in 2019 by Governor Lamont to address mitigation strategies, and was expanded to also consider adaptation and resilience in the face of climate change impacts. The [Working Groups](#) established to support the GC3 have developed [reports](#) that address many of the same issues that Connecticut's coastal management program has grappled with for four decades. This edition of *Sound Outlook* will explore several parallels between the GC3 reports and coastal management objectives.

As 2020 comes to an end and we celebrate 40 years of coastal management in Connecticut, we also recognize that many of our readers may have impacted by the coronavirus. We hope you are safe and well and have weathered the pandemic relatively unscathed. We wish you all a peaceful and healthy 2021.

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No. 63

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## Climate Change Update: The Governor's Council on Climate Change

On September 3, 2019, Governor Ned Lamont issued [Executive Order No. 3](#) (EO3), re-establishing and expanding the membership and responsibilities of the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#), also known as the GC3.

The GC3 was originally established in 2015 by Governor Dannel P. Malloy to address mitigation strategies to reduce greenhouse gases. The newly expanded GC3 will continue with these mitigation efforts, and also consider adaptation and resilience in the face of climate change impacts.

The GC3's membership includes [23 members](#) from state agencies, quasi-public agencies, businesses, local governments, and nonprofits, and is tasked with two primary objectives and related tasks:

1. Monitor and report on the state's implementation of the greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies set forth in the inaugural GC3's December 2018 report [Building a Low Carbon Future for Connecticut: Achieving a 45% GHG Reduction by 2030](#), and
2. Develop and implement adaptation strategies to assess and prepare for the impacts of climate change in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, natural resources, and public health.

All of the GC3's efforts must also incorporate an equity and environmental justice lens to identify ways to protect vulnerable communities that may be disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change.

The Council established seven [Working Groups](#) to assist the Council with carrying out the objectives of EO3. These Working Groups are:

- Progress on Mitigation Strategies,
- Working and Natural Lands,
- Public Health and Safety Adaptation,
- Infrastructure and Land Use Adaptation,
- Financing and Funding Adaptation and Resilience,
- Science and Technology, and
- Equity and Environmental Justice.

Over the past several months, the [Working Groups met via Zoom](#) to develop and finalize [reports](#) with recommendations for the full GC3 to consider for adoption into their Phase I January 2021 report. The Phase I report will focus on those recommendations the full Council agrees may begin to be implemented in the next 1-2 years, and will be submitted to Governor Lamont by January 15, 2021.

To assist in developing the Phase I report, the GC3 was split into two Subcommittees, one on Mitigation and the other on Adaptation and Resilience, to review the Working Group reports and recommendations covering those topics. The [Subcommittees met via Zoom in early December](#) to review the Working Group recommendations and determine which recommendations to put forward to the full GC3 for adoption and incorporation into the Phase I report.

The full [GC3 then met via Zoom in mid-December](#) to review the Subcommittee recommendations, and drafted its Phase I report. The draft [Taking Action on Climate Change and Building a More Resilient Connecticut for All](#) report is currently out for public review. Public comments will be accepted through 11:59

## First Impressions

### Sharing the "First Impressions" that Make an Environmental Difference

This column features the "First Impression" that set someone on his or her path to environmentalism. We hope Sound Outlook readers will relate to these "First Impressions" and recall their own experiences that led them to appreciate and care about Long Island Sound.

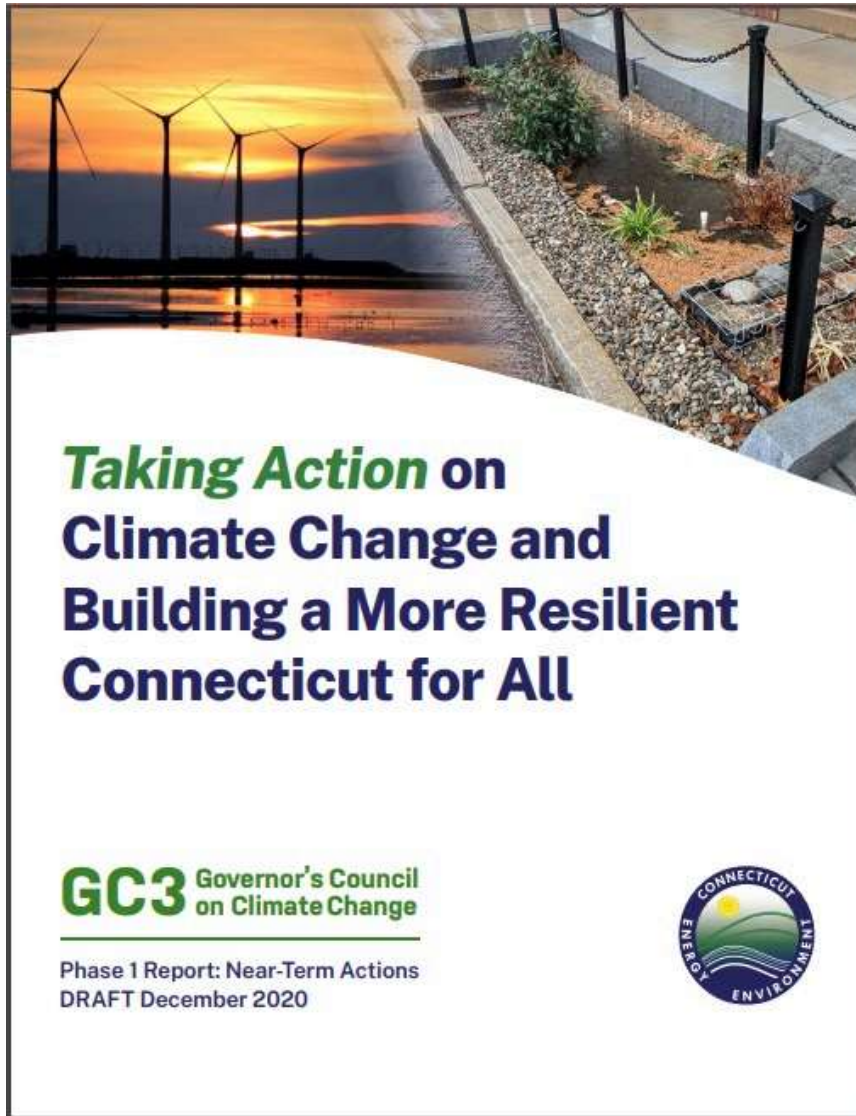
In keeping with this month's newsletter theme of "Forty Years of Coastal Management in Connecticut," we highlight the First Impression of David J. L. Blatt, a Supervising Environmental Analyst in the Land and Water Resources Division at CT DEEP:



David Blatt started his career with Connecticut's Coastal Management Program in August of 1987, when the concept of coastal management was still young. Now, as the most senior staff member in the program, David is the "go-to guy" when staff--old and new alike--need a seasoned perspective that the breadth and depth of his institutional knowledge can provide.

While David's journey to coastal manager in Connecticut from

pm on January 6, 2021 and may be submitted, preferably, via a [survey](#), or sent to [deep.climatechange@ct.gov](mailto:deep.climatechange@ct.gov).



## Taking Action on Climate Change and Building a More Resilient Connecticut for All

**GC3** Governor's Council on Climate Change

Phase 1 Report: Near-Term Actions  
DRAFT December 2020



The work of the GC3 has only just begun. According to EO3, the GC3 process will continue through 2021 with a subsequent report due by December 31, 2021 that will include both near-term and longer-term recommendations for implementation. Please sign-up for the [Climate Change Listserv](#) to receive news, information, and updates as the GC3 continues their important work.

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### GC3 Report Identifies the Effects of Climate Change in Connecticut

The GC3's Science and Technology Working Group was tasked with providing scientific and technical support to the Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency Subcommittee and Working Groups, and translating climate modeling and data into actionable information that can be incorporated into various adaptation and resiliency planning processes.

The Working Group's summary of climate impacts in Connecticut is included in the draft Phase I report. The impacts pertain to sea level rise, precipitation, temperature, and storms, and include:

landlubber in West Virginia came about purely by happenstance, his journey to environmentalism was certainly shaped by his experiences growing up in Athens, West Virginia, which served as his First Impression:

*I was very upset about strip mining, as it was called then. It's not like I personally experienced strip mining--I never actually went to one because you can't, they deliberately located them in out-of-the-way places--but I remember it seemed horrible. It was wholesale destruction of the landscape. I went to some kind of debate or public forum at Concord College with one of my sisters. I was in high school at the time. I remember even trying to agitate amongst my friends about it, which is very unlike me. I wanted people to be aware and upset about it, as it was a very big political issue at the time.*

Although David's family lived in the small town of Athens, they also owned a 72-acre farm about five miles down the road in Speedway, home to the horses ridden by David's sisters. David claims that one of his least favorite farm chores was shoveling horse manure, which his co-workers might find hard to believe because he seems to be so good at it, but he admits that he learned many things at the farm that still serve him to this day:

*I spent a lot of time out there. My father enjoyed keeping the horses as pets even after my sisters stopped riding. I tried to wander away from him so he wouldn't make me do chores. One chore I didn't mind was building fences. I actually learned how to build a split rail fence, as well as stacking hay bales and starting an International Harvester Farmall*



- Mean sea level in Long Island Sound could be up to 20 inches above the National Tidal Datum Epoch (1983-2001) by 2050. This projection is not sensitive to future trends in carbon dioxide emissions.
- Changes in mean sea level will significantly impact the frequency of flooding along the Connecticut coast, but the flood zone will not expand much in most areas. With 20 inches of sea-level rise, coastal flood risk could increase by a factor of 5 to 10 with no change in storm conditions. High water levels, like occurred during Superstorm Sandy, would then be expected every 5 to 10 years.
- Sea level rise will continue after 2050. Recent simulations indicate that the mean sea level could be up to 80 inches higher by 2100 if CO2 emissions are not reduced soon.
- Average temperatures in Connecticut could increase by 5F (2.7C) by 2050 compared to the 1970-1999 baseline. Connecticut's temperature has already risen more than the global average in part because temperature changes tend to increase in middle and high latitudes (towards polar regions). Consequently, a 2 C target for global average temperature would result in a higher temperature (than 2 C) in Connecticut.
- All indices of hot weather are expected to shift toward more frequent and higher temperature events. For example, by mid-century, the number of days per year with temperatures above 90 F (32 C) could increase. Statewide, from 1970 to 1999, the average number of days was 5, and this is projected to increase to an average of 25 days between 2040-2069.
- Projection of changes in the frequency of tropical cyclones in a warmer climate are uncertain. However, they will likely have stronger winds and more precipitation. Since 1980 there has been an increase in the frequency of hurricanes in category three or greater.



"Sunny-day" flooding during high tide on Beachland Avenue in Milford  
Photo Credit: Town of Milford

The Science and Technology Working Group indicates that there is high confidence in projected changes through the mid-century. However, projected changes after the mid-century will depend on mitigation actions taken in Connecticut and globally. Because scientists' understanding of the processes that determine climate is advancing rapidly, and data is being continuously collected, the Working Group recommends that a comprehensive review of projections be undertaken by the State every five years.

*tractor with a crank.*

David's father was a biochemist who taught at Concord College in Athens (now Concord University). His mother, after earning her Ph.D., also taught physiology at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. Although they were scientists, David's parents didn't provide any particular environmental exposure to their family. But the farm provided opportunities for David to explore the environment:

*I was able to eat wild strawberries and blackberries and chinquapins, which are kind of like an acorn that's edible. I caught fireflies in jars. There are intermittent streams and springs on the property that formed ponds. Some of them were created to water livestock because it had been a working farm before my parents bought it. But the ponds were colonized by frogs, and I observed the entire life cycle of frogs in those farm ponds. All this was very normal for that time and place, but was very different from the upbringing my own kids had.*

David is now an avid bicyclist who a few years ago spent two weeks in Portland, Oregon earning a Certificate in Professional Repair and Shop Operation from the United Bicycle Institute. But he wasn't a big bike rider until his late teens when, as an angst-filled teenager, he took up the sport to get away from home. But his rides would give him insights into land use planning; he just didn't realize it at the time:

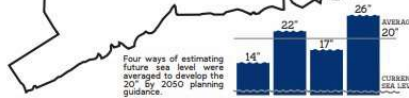
*I would bike-ride to just be in a different place. And in West Virginia, you have to go up and down a lot of hills, and the roads would sometimes follow streams. It gave me an appreciation for landscape and terrain and ecosystems. I could*



## SEA LEVEL RISE & COASTAL FLOODING IN CONNECTICUT

Information from the Governor's Council on Climate Change

1. Sea level is expected to rise by up to 20 inches by 2050, and to continue increasing after that.
2. Small changes in mean sea level have a big impact on the frequency of flooding.
3. Areas that experience flooding every few years now should expect flooding multiple times a year by 2050.



### FLOODING WATER LEVELS IN CT NOW

- MAJOR FLOODING
  - MINOR FLOODING
  - MEAN HIGHER-HIGH WATER
  - CURRENT SEA LEVEL
- Current water level benchmarks from Long Island Sound tide gauges. Vertical axis scale is in feet and referenced to the North Atlantic Vertical Datum of 1988. More extreme water levels are located further west. For values in 2050, add 20" (0.66').



More detailed information is in the Sea Level Rise in Connecticut Report, which is available here: <https://circa.uconn.edu/sea-level-rise/references>  
resilientconnecticut.uconn.edu

Return intervals describe the frequency and severity of a storm by giving the average time between flood events. For instance, in Stamford a storm with 10' storm surge has a return interval of 100 years.

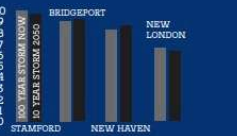
With up to 20" of sea level rise, storms with a 100 year return interval now will have a 10 year return interval in 2050. Vertical axis scale is in feet.

### Sea Level Rise Predictions:

Connecticut is expected to experience up to 20" of sea level rise by 2050, leading to greater frequency of flooding from tides and storms. Small changes in mean sea level have a big impact on the frequency and severity of flooding.

With 20" of sea level rise, what we experience today as a 4.5' storm surge will occur up to ten times more often in 2050. Some areas that flood once every 10 years will likely flood every 2 years. Chronic flooding will be a challenge for neighborhoods, roads, and areas affected in the past.

Planning for communities, infrastructure, and human health should consider the 2050 planning guidance, acceptable levels of risk, and strategies that do not increase exposure of public investment to flooding. Future development plans should consider "resilient corridors," as well as high ground that will be inherently resilient to future sea level rise.



### Consequences & Flood Risk:

Coastal residents could expect:

- Higher cost of living
- Greater property damage risk
- More highway and road closures
- Inaccessibility to and higher maintenance costs for critical infrastructure

Individual towns are beginning to plan for coastal and inland impacts of climate change, as well as co-ordinated regional efforts that are underway. Some current actions include the Governor's Council on Climate Change; Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning by Regional Councils of Governments; and Resilient Connecticut.

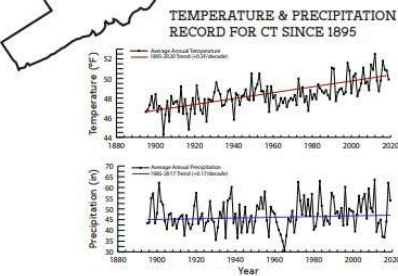
Resilient Connecticut is an initiative charged with creating a regional adaptation plan for Fairfield and New Haven counties by coordinating actions between local and regional stakeholders. The project includes coordination and planning with state agencies, policy recommendations, and strategies that use up-to-date monitoring and science based regional risk assessments to inform pilot projects.

Over the coming years, estimates will be revisited and updated with the most recent data and models.

## RIISING TEMPERATURES & PRECIPITATION IN CONNECTICUT

Information from the Governor's Council on Climate Change

1. By 2050, average temperatures are expected to increase about 5°F, with increases thereafter dependent on emissions choices now.
2. Average precipitation is expected to increase about 8% (4 inches/year).
3. Indices of hot weather, summer drought, and extreme precipitation, are expected to increase.



More detailed information is in the Connecticut Physical Climate Science Assessment Report which is available here: <https://circa.uconn.edu/ct-climate-science>  
resilientconnecticut.uconn.edu

Indices are tools used to track trends and projections in local climate. Extreme indices help quantify impacts of a warming climate on weather measurements. Many of these extreme indices have been increasing due to climate change.

Annual counts of certain indices (defined below) in CT are to the right. Gray bars indicate today's and black 2050 values.

### Current Trends:

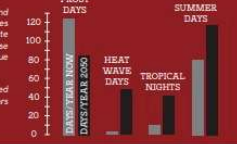
Since 1895, Connecticut's annual average temperature has been increasing by 0.3°F per decade, or 3°F warmer in 2020. Seasonal averages have also been increasing, with winter experiencing the greatest increase. Observations show more warming along the southern coast and eastern half of the state.

Precipitation across Connecticut has been increasing by 0.17 inches per decade since 1985, with the largest increases in fall.

### Predictions:

According to high CO<sub>2</sub> emission scenarios (RCP 8.5) for the future, average temperatures in Connecticut are predicted to rise 5°F (± 1°F) by 2050 and continue rising thereafter. The largest temperature increase is expected in summer and fall.

In the same scenario, average annual precipitation is expected to increase about 8% (4 inches per year), with much occurring in winter and spring. In a warmer Connecticut, precipitation will increase because of evaporation and the water cycle.



### Present & Future Extreme Indices:

#### Heat/Cold Indices:

- Frost Days (annual number of days when the daily minimum is below 32°F) to drop from 124 to 85.
- Heat Wave Days (6 or more consecutive days with daily maximum temperature above the 90th percentile) to rise from 4 to 48.
- Tropical Nights (annual number of days when the daily minimum is above 68°F) to rise from 10 to 40.
- Summer Days (annual number of days when the daily maximum temperature is above 77°F) to rise from 81 to 118.
- Number of Days above 90°F (annual number of days with maximum temperatures above the threshold value) to rise from 25 to 25.

#### Wet/Dry Indices:

- Number of days with more than 1 inch of precipitation to rise from 12 to 14.
- Number of heavy precipitation days to rise from 3 to 5.
- Fraction of heavy precipitation to rise from 15% to 20%.
- Maximum 1-day precipitation to rise (27%) from 2.8 to 3.5 inches.
- Maximum 5-day precipitation to rise (20%) from 4.5 to 5.4 inches.

Fact Sheets Provided by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA)

Click on Images for Larger View

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## SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL RESOURCE: Wetlands and Rivers Highlighted in GC3 Phase I Report

For the past 40 years, the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) has played a key role in protecting and restoring Connecticut's coastal resources

see other types of insults inflicted on the landscape that weren't associated with strip mining. There was so much of what would be called auto-oriented strip development in West Virginia. There's rural sprawl, people live on back roads and commute elsewhere to work. Downtowns that could be quaint are neglected, now just shabby and deteriorating. Even Athens, which could be a cute college town; in my day there was an actual movie theater and several stores downtown. Kids would walk to the movies and hang out at Ball's store. Now there isn't really anything to do there, as my children would always tell me when visiting their grandmother.

When it came time for David to decide on where he would attend college, his choice was somewhat random:

Most of the kids in my high school who went to college attended local schools like Concord, though a few went farther afield to West Virginia University or Virginia Tech. My high school guidance counselor had films that colleges used as recruiting tools. I wanted to go to a small school and saw a recruiting film from Grinnell College in Iowa. It pitched itself as a low-key, laid-back school in a bucolic small town that encouraged free inquiry into ideas and had few, if any, required classes.

David studied political science at Grinnell. It was a time when the oil embargoes under President Jimmy Carter, along with energy saving practices like a 55-mile-an-hour speed limit, and donning sweaters and turning down thermostats were fresh in everyone's mind. An energy policy course and a senior-year, upper-level seminar in the international politics of sea and land resources--taught

including tidal wetlands and estuaries. The GC3's draft Phase I Report includes several recommendations that will support these CCMA efforts.

For example, the draft report includes several recommendations pertaining to wetlands, including:

- Encourage land and ocean management behaviors that support ecosystem services by incorporating new and emerging science and technologies, such as sediment additions to marshes, low impact development, green infrastructure, living shorelines, conservation and other nature-based adaptations.
- Identify and conserve ecosystem services vulnerable to climate change. Identifying and preserving future inland advancement zones would help create future protective storm buffers for coastal communities while providing the co-benefit of preserving an ecologically important habitat and protect Long Island Sound from pollutants.
- Work with partners to develop a habitat suitability model for restoring inland and coastal wetlands, identifying areas which provide the greatest increase in ecosystem benefits when protected or restored.
- Evaluate how to integrate the newest rainfall data modeling into stormwater models and management tools and ensure coastal floodplain planning is informed by the state's sea level rise scenarios.



Installation of a reef ball living shoreline, Stratford  
Photo Credit: CT DEEP

Likewise, recommendations in the draft report pertaining to rivers and estuaries include:

- Expand water quality focus of watershed-based planning to also consider related flooding and climate resilience issues and solutions.
- Encourage nature-based adaptive restoration approaches for rivers, floodplains, and estuaries and encourage the utilization of nature-based adaptation approaches over hard armoring techniques.

in Iowa!—served as David's First Environmental Step:

*The seminar was taught by my political science advisor, and it was referred to as "Gloom and Doom." The course and the books I read for it (e.g., Limits to Growth, An Inquiry Into the Human Prospect), books I still have, stamped out most of my youthful idealism. This is what I tell people: I'm not cynical, I'm realistic. But those environmental courses made me realize I should have at least minored in Environmental Studies.*

David's Behavior Change can also be attributed to his formative experiences at Grinnell. He attended talks by Amory Lovins, who espoused soft energy paths shifting away from consumption toward renewable energy sources, and Herman Daly, who developed the concept of "steady-state economics" which is an economy based not on growth, but on a balance of inputs and outputs within natural constraints and the capacity of the earth to support it.

As a Grinnell sophomore, David earned a Truman Scholarship which covered the cost of his junior and senior years at Grinnell, covered most of the cost of the first two years of law school, and provided an internship at a federal agency. David's first experience with public service would be a stultifying two-year stint at the Department of Energy in Washington, D.C.:

*As a leftover from the oil crisis of the Carter era, oil supplies were allocated. Distributors and gas station owners could petition for relief for their allocations, and I worked for the office that adjudicated those relief petitions. All of that went away shortly after President*





A "tree well" treats stormwater in East Lyme  
Photo Credit: Judy Rondeau, Niantic River Watershed Coordinator

Sound familiar? The Coastal Management Program has spent four decades implementing policies and identifying emerging issues that are very similar to these recommendations. The program's success in implementing these efforts has, admittedly, been somewhat mixed, in part because the land use and coastal regulatory decisions to realize these policies are often difficult to make given ongoing coastal development pressures.

[In signing Executive Order No. 3](#), Governor Lamont said, "Climate change is an urgent, existential threat that must be tackled immediately, and under the leadership of this administration I am going to see to it that Connecticut remains a national leader on climate action." From a coastal management perspective, the hope is that the GC3 reports will provide an additional scientific foundation to bolster the Connecticut Coastal Management Program, and provide defensible support for local and state regulators to make the tough decisions necessary to further protect resources like wetlands and estuaries from the effects of climate change.

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*Reagan took office.*

Wanting to escape the federal bureaucracy (and how ironic is that?), David followed-through on a previous plan to attend Yale Law School, where he claims to have only gotten in as a diversity applicant from West Virginia. Given the Presidents and Supreme Court Justices who attended that august institution, David had an original notion that he would become some kind of crusading lawyer/politician. In fact, one of David's classmates was Elizabeth Esty, who went on to represent Connecticut's Fifth District in Congress. David was also one year ahead of former DEEP Commissioner Dan Esty (as well as 19 years ahead of former DEEP Commissioner Rob Klee, and 20 years ahead of current DEEP Commissioner and fellow West Virginian Katie Dykes). Despite being surrounded by such thought leaders, David's notion came to an early death as law school provided him with a cynical/realistic picture of what the practice of law was all about. He decided he wanted no part of it. Again, environmental classes seemed to be more to his liking:

*I felt that the way the legal profession teaches you to look at issues was more confining rather than inclusive. I took all of the few environmental courses the law school offered, and I took a course at the Forestry School that made me wish I had pursued a joint degree. The Forestry School TGIF Happy Hours were much more fun and happier than the Law School's too.*

Upon graduation from Yale Law School, David and his wife Renae moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, as it was Renae's turn to pursue a graduate degree at the University of North Carolina

## SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL ACCESS: GC3 Report Shines a Light on the Need for Public Spaces

A keystone of the Connecticut Coastal Management Program is improving public access to Connecticut's coast. Since it began in 1980, the program has provided the citizens of Connecticut with better access to the state's waterfront areas, including the addition of over 12.5 miles of coastal access, much of which was obtained through the municipal coastal site plan review process.

In addition, the program developed the [Connecticut Coastal Access Guide](#), now an online interactive website that identifies more than 300 coastal sites where the public can enjoy diverse access opportunities including boating, swimming, fishing, and hiking.

The importance of providing access to public spaces has also been highlighted throughout the GC3 process, from both an environmental equity perspective and a public health perspective.

The [Science and Technology Working Group draft report](#) states:

The [COVID-19] pandemic has spotlighted the rapidly emerging research linking nature to health, and many natural areas throughout Connecticut saw unprecedented visitation (and some frequently closed due to overcrowding). Equitable, local, and accessible opportunities such as community gardens, parks, forests, recreational trails, and nature preserves provide cool places for respite and benefit everyone.

Beyond individual benefits, we cannot lose sight of the fact that nature is our collective lifeline. It is imperative that we protect and increase ecological integrity strategically and connect ecosystems across the landscape - from urban spaces to forested regional corridors, and as recommended in the Green Plan. Prioritizing nature for environmental justice includes identifying and prioritizing opportunities to protect ecosystems where possible and restore them as needed with evidence-based interventions in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Further, the following recommendation contained in the draft GC3 Phase I Report identifies the importance of access to natural areas:

Create safe, equitable opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to access and enjoy water resources through strengthening grants; enhancing programs that better engage and inform underserved communities and improve their access to freshwater resources; and improving staff training and diversity.

A rivers-related recommendation in the Phase I Report also promotes the expansion of urban green spaces, including the protection and/or re-establishment of riparian corridors.

(UNC) School of Public Health. While there, David assumed he would seek some kind of legal job and spent many tedious hours preparing for the North Carolina Bar Exam:

*I did have a job interview with a law firm in Raleigh, arranged through the Yale Law School recruitment process, and I had an interview to be a clerk for an appellate court judge. They both rejected me. I think I was rejected for every legal job I applied for. Even a lawyer could tell I wasn't that into it.*

While studying for the Bar Exam and trying to find employment, David networked with David J. Brower, a renowned planning professor at UNC whose contact information had also been provided through Yale Law School connections. Brower enticed David to enroll in his UNC planning program by dangling an assistantship, and David didn't need much convincing:

*I had been toying with the idea of planning for a while. I had encountered "Planning Magazine" in the library at the Yale Forestry School and it fascinated me. It was much more interesting to me than legal coursework, as you could look at all sides of an issue. I had also encountered Ian McHarg and [Design with Nature](#) through the Forestry School course.*

So David's Big Environmental Step started with pursuit of a Master's Degree in Regional Planning at UNC (also the alma mater of DEEP Deputy Commissioner Betsey Wingfield). His assistantship with David Brower provided opportunities to work on a variety of interesting coastal management issues:

*I worked on projects pertaining to hurricane impacts, flood*





Fishing at Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport  
Photo Credit: CT DEEP

The Connecticut Coastal Management Program is proud to be a leader in enhancing the public's ability to access Long Island Sound and its coast. In light of the GC3 Science and Technology Working Group's finding that there will likely be more frequent and higher temperature events in Connecticut because of climate change, the ability to find a cool, green (or blue) space, especially in underserved communities, will be even more crucial. And Connecticut's Coastal Management Program will continue to lead the charge to provide public access to Long Island Sound for everyone.

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## Don't Forget the Long Island Sound Blue Plan

The Final Draft of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan was submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly's Environment Committee before the start of the last legislative session on February 5, 2020. The approval resolution was warmly endorsed by speakers at a public hearing, and was unanimously approved by the Committee. The Blue Plan appeared to be on a smooth path to approval, but then the COVID-19 pandemic hit Connecticut, and the legislative session was lost.

Now that the start of the 2021 legislative session is a week away, the Blue Plan will get another chance at approval.

As a quick reminder, the Blue Plan provides an inventory of the natural resources and uses of Long Island Sound, and establishes a spatial plan to guide future use of the Sound's waters and submerged lands. The purpose of the Blue Plan is to facilitate a transparent, science-based decision-making process for the preservation of Long Island Sound's ecosystems and resources and the protection of traditional uses, while maximizing their compatibility and minimizing conflicts between them now and in the future.

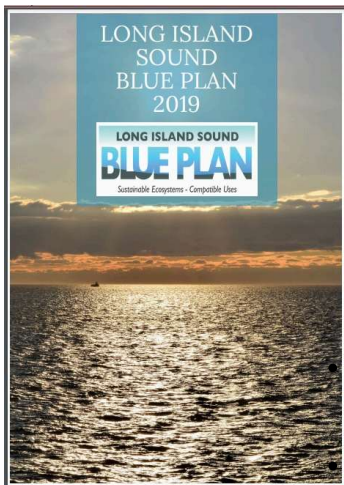
Development of the Blue Plan was authorized by Public Act 15-66 (codified in Connecticut General Statutes §25-157t). The Plan is the culmination of years of data collection and analysis, based on the best data available regarding the

*hazard mitigation, and coastal growth management. It convinced me that we should not be developing in floodplains and coastal flood hazard areas, something I still believe, although I keep encountering people who don't.*

Having been initiated into coastal management, a timely job offer called David back to coastal Connecticut. As David was finishing his planning degree, David Brower suggested he contact a colleague, Arthur J. Rocque, Jr., who was then the Director of Connecticut's Coastal Management Program. David was hired sight-unseen through a telephone interview, probably the best way for him to be successfully interviewed, and he has been with the program ever since. At first his job entailed reviewing DEP regulations and shepherding them through the adoption process, which put his legal background to practical use. And even David admits that attending law school wasn't a total waste of his time:

*The law is a language I understand but no longer speak fluently. I certainly know enough to understand what we can and can't do legally when approaching coastal development, land use, and public trust issues, and to know when we're being BS'd by lawyers we deal with.*

Ultimately, David's knowledge of legal concepts coupled with his broader planning perspective have catapulted him into the ranks of Connecticut's coastal planning elite. His legal and planning insights have proven invaluable, whether he is assisting with legislative proposals; representing staff at hearings; dealing with federal, state and local coastal management processes; or developing and



natural resources and human uses of Long Island Sound, as well as countless hours of outreach and coordination with ecological experts and human use sector representatives.

We hope to re-familiarize stakeholders and the public with the Blue Plan during the coming months. To help in this regard, we encourage our readers to:

- Visit the [Blue Plan website](#) to review the Plan, the Blue Plan Practitioners Guide, and the Blue Plan Users Guide;
- View the [Blue Plan Video Series](#), a collection of six videos about the Blue Plan;
- Visit the [Blue Plan Map Viewer](#), a mapping tool that contains all of the Blue Plan's inventory data in an interactive format, allowing users to explore the Blue Plan's maps in more detail; and
- Check out these past issues of *Sound Outlook* for more background information about the Blue Plan and its development process: [February 2012](#), [February 2015](#), [June/July 2015](#), [October 2016](#), [February 2017](#), [June/July 2017](#), [February/March 2018](#), [June/July 2018](#), [October/November 2018](#), and [February/March 2019](#).

The Blue Plan Development Team also plans to host information meetings in early 2021. To receive emails about upcoming meetings, and about Blue Plan updates in general, please join the [Blue Plan listserv](#).

The success of the Blue Plan depends on your involvement to make sure the Plan reflects the knowledge, perspectives, and needs of everyone whose lives are touched by Long Island Sound.



Visit the DEEP website at <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP>

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shepherding the Long Island Sound Blue Plan through the state legislature for approval.

David's commitment to public service and his dedication of over 30 years working to protect Long Island Sound are commendable. The citizens and coastal resources of Connecticut owe a debt of gratitude to North Carolina's legal community.

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