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

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The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is proud to announce that the [Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve \(NERR\) for Long Island Sound](#) has been officially designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Notice of the designation was published in the [Federal Register](#) on January 14, 2022, a little over three years from the beginning of the process to designate the Long Island Sound NERR.

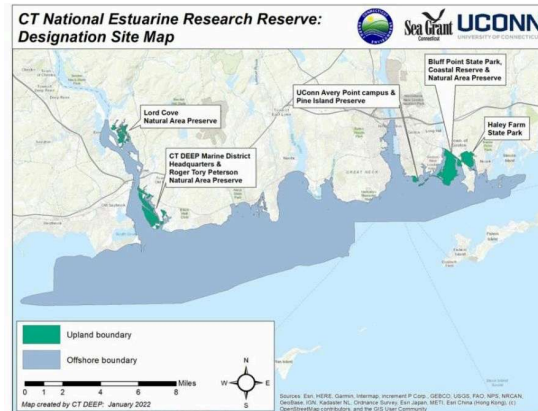
DEEP and its NERR partners--the University of Connecticut (UConn), Connecticut SeaGrant, Connecticut Audubon, and NOAA--are planning a formal designation ceremony at UConn Avery Point in the Spring of 2022. UConn will provide primary support for the NERR, and an "open house" event will be hosted once the NERR is fully established and operational. Until that time, the NERR partners

No. 21-3 Promotes State Agency  
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will continue to hold regular planning meetings as  
logistics are finalized.

First Impressions: DEEP Deputy  
Commissioner Mason Trumble

Please visit the [DEEP's NERR website](#) to keep up-to-  
date on NERR happenings.



## **SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL RESOURCE: Great Meadows Marsh in Stratford is About to Get Even Greater!**

After years of planning, the Great Meadows Marsh in Stratford--one of the last remaining unditched, intact tidal wetlands in Connecticut--is now undergoing a \$4 million restoration effort. Construction began on November 1, 2021 to restore almost 33 acres of tidal wetland and other vital coastal habitats, including freshwater ponds and Saltmarsh Sparrow nesting habitat.

Audubon Connecticut is leading the project in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Connecticut DEEP. The effort should be completed by spring/summer of 2022.

For more information on this tremendous endeavor, and to sign-up for updates, please visit the [Great Marsh Restoration website](#).



An aerial view of [Great Meadows Marsh](#)

Photo Credit: Joel Stocker

### **SPOTLIGHTED PUBLIC ACCESS: Ferry Landing Park/DEEP Marine Headquarters, Old Lyme**

Regular readers of *Sound Outlook* are no doubt familiar with several sites that make-up Connecticut's National Estuarine Research Reserve, such as [Bluff Point/Haley Farm](#) and the [UConn Campus at Avery Point](#). Now that the NERR has been officially designated, there's no better time to also get acquainted with [Ferry Landing Park at DEEP Marine Headquarters in Old Lyme](#), another component of the Reserve.

The DEEP Marine Headquarters facility houses the office and support space for the DEEP's Fisheries and Boating Divisions and includes docking for small vessels. The facilities will provide support functions for activities at the western-most NERR properties located in the Connecticut River.

The facility also sports a small park and a public access boardwalk along the Great Island marshes. If you're looking to get out of the house this winter, the park provides a great opportunity to take a quick, brisk walk along the boardwalk, just a little over half a mile long, and take-in the sweeping views of the mouth of the Connecticut River.

For information on the over 300 coastal public access sites like this one available along Connecticut's shore, please visit the [Connecticut Coastal Public Access Guide](#).





The boardwalk at DEEP Marine Headquarters/Ferry Landing Park, Old Lyme  
Photo Credit: CT DEEP



A lookout tower at the end of the boardwalk allows magnificent views of the marshes at the mouth of the Connecticut River  
Photo Credit: CT DEEP



The Great Island Marsh complex is still spectacular on a dreary winter day  
Photo Credit: CT DEEP

## **CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE: Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 21-3 Promotes State Agency Coastal Resiliency**

On December 16, 2021, Governor Lamont signed [Executive Order \(EO\) No. 21-3](#) which directs state agencies to, once again, lead by example in the fight against climate change.

In addition to continuing the work of the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) reinvigorated in September of 2019 (please see [EO No. 3](#)), EO No. 21-3 contains 23 specific actions that various state agencies must undertake to improve resiliency and reduce carbon emissions in Connecticut.

From a coastal management perspective, Action 22 of EO No. 21-3 focuses on using nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of state properties to the impacts of climate change.

Specifically, the DEEP and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) have been tasked with developing guidance for state agencies on how to:

- implement nature-based and/or nonstructural solutions to control flooding and erosion, improve water quality and manage stormwater on State properties;
- integrate consideration of coastal marsh migration in design and implementation of state projects, state-funded projects, and land acquisition in coastal areas to ensure continued ecosystem services from wetlands; and
- employ techniques and materials for low impact development and design and green infrastructure for new state construction, redevelopment, and state-funded construction or redevelopment to mitigate flooding and water quality degradation.

Once the guidance is developed, all state agencies must follow the guidance in all capital project planning, to the extent feasible, and must report annually on the implementation of such efforts to the Steering Committee on State Sustainability that was established pursuant to [EO 1](#) on April 24, 2019.

Further, all capital projects administered by state agencies will have to be designed in accordance with the guidance, to the extent feasible, and each administering agency will be required to provide annual compliance reports to the Steering Committee on State Sustainability.

Connecticut's Coastal Management Program (CMP), in effect since January 1, 1980, has decades of experience promoting nonstructural solutions to control flooding and erosion, recently encouraging [living shorelines](#) as one such solution. The CMP also administers and implements the state's [coastal nonpoint source pollution control program](#), federally approved in November of 2003, which promotes low impact development/green infrastructure practices and watershed planning to improve coastal water quality. In addition, the CMP has identified marsh migration in response to sea level rise as an emerging coastal management issue (please see the [February 2016](#) and [October/November 2017](#) issues of *Sound Outlook* for more information). Thus, the CMP is well positioned to provide meaningful input as DEEP and DAS develop nature-based guidance for state agencies, and we are excited to contribute to such an important undertaking.

In the meantime, we encourage readers to visit the [Governors Council on Climate Change \(ct.gov\)](#) website for links to GC3 reports and meeting information, including Zoom meeting recordings and presentation slides.





Tidal marsh migrating into the upland forest area at Hammonasset Beach State Park  
Photo Credit: CT DEEP

## First Impressions: DEEP Deputy Commissioner Mason Trumble

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 this issue, we highlight the First Impression of DEEP Deputy Commissioner Mason Trumble:

In August of 2020, Mason Trumble joined the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection as Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Conservation.



As head of the agency's Bureaus of Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation, he arrived just in time: Connecticut was in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, and state parks and fishing spots were experiencing crowds of visitors the likes of which DEEP had not seen before. Luckily, as an avid outdoorsman and a leader in Connecticut's outdoor industry, the Deputy Commissioner was able to hit the trail running. His love for the outdoors was developed as a youngster living in Orland, Maine on Penobscot Bay, when his **First Impression** came about in a very basic way—by playing outside:

*Growing up in a small town, there wasn't a lot to do, so naturally I drifted towards playing outdoors. My first memory is fishing at around age six, but I quickly grew to love backpacking, birding, biking, trail running, whitewater kayaking, hunting, or skiing. If it was outdoors and it was fun, I wanted to do it. And, as the oldest of six kids, I had lots of adventure partners from a very early age.*

Conservation was a big part of Deputy Commissioner Trumble's family background, especially taking care of their favorite recreation areas. His parents instilled in him the concepts of respecting the land, leaving the place better than you found it, and fishing in a sustainable way:

*Both of my parents are very active outdoors in different ways, so it was more camping, hiking, and coastal exploration with my mother, and more paddling, hunting, and fishing with my dad. My grandparents would tell stories of the amazing salmon fishing on the Penobscot River, but those salmon runs were gone by the time I was old enough to fish, which was an important conservation lesson to learn at a young age.*

Public access to recreation areas is a primary focus of the Deputy Commissioner's mission at DEEP, which directly relates to his **First Environmental Step**:

*Another lesson I learned at an early age is, if you don't take care of something, you can lose it. Whitewater kayaking was the first outdoor sport I pursued individually, so river access was incredibly important to me. To this day, I understand that from an access perspective, if you don't respect the local community, and protect the ecosystem, you can lose access to an outdoor recreation resource or even lose the resource altogether. That was something I really took to heart.*

While pursuing a business degree in college, Deputy Commissioner Trumble spent his summers working as a whitewater rafting guide. Not only did he love running whitewater rivers, he also loved that his rafting skills enabled him to share the outdoors with people who might not otherwise be able to experience a whitewater river on their own. His plan after graduation was to apply his business acumen to some aspect of the outdoor industry:

*I knew I wanted to apply my business skills together with sharing the outdoors with more people, and I thought outdoor education would be a good way to do that. So I went to the University of New Hampshire for a Master's Degree in outdoor education.*

He also juggled his graduate school responsibilities with a full-time job at REI:

*Pursuing a brick-and-mortar Master's Degree in a different state from where I was living and working did have its challenges, so it took me longer than two years to earn my graduate degree.*

The unfettered access to outdoor recreation Mason enjoyed as a kid fueled his passion while at REI, when he took on a role providing grants to local community and non-profit organizations to promote and improve public access to outdoor recreation throughout New England. Some of those grants improved access to Long Island Sound in Bridgeport and New Haven:

*Diving into these projects gave me a first-hand view into the fact that, growing up, I was incredibly privileged to have access to the outdoors with no restraints. Not everyone has that privilege. In fact, I would say it's pretty rare. This is especially important as I think about my career related to equitable outdoor access and environmental justice. I have a lot to learn in that regard, and I am always trying to grow.*

With respect to a **Behavior Change**, the Deputy Commissioner can't really put a finger on one particular experience. It's more based on decisions that have come at random times throughout his life:

*When I was younger, conservation was connected to my immediate environment -- clean up your campsite, fish in a sustainable manner, etc. As I grew in the outdoor industry, conservation become more connected on a global scale, especially related to environmental justice and climate change. Thinking about these issues and my role in contributing to them are bigger and larger lessons that I am continuing to learn.*

Which is why Deputy Commissioner Trumble continues to make every-day choices on a small scale to support large-scale initiatives to combat climate change. For example, he lives within bicycling distance of 79 Elm Street, and joined [Blue Earth compost](#) in an effort to make a big difference in a small way. While working at REI, Mason also founded the [Connecticut Outdoor Recreation Alliance](#) (CORA), a coalition of organizations focused on protecting and promoting Connecticut's outdoor recreation resources:

*CORA is a nonprofit that engages the business community around increasing outdoor recreation opportunities. There are quite a few recreation-based businesses in Connecticut, including REI, Cannondale, and LOWA hiking boots. Connecticut has ski resorts, and boating and fishing both inland and on Long Island Sound, and it has a robust recreation economy, the second largest in New England after Massachusetts.*

*And Connecticut has a variety of recreational experiences, from the coast to rivers, to hiking forest mountains, and they're all very accessible, which is something I'm really passionate about. We have over 140 state parks and forests crunched into a tiny state, so if you live in Connecticut, chances are good that you live close to one. When you add municipal parks on top of that, there are lots of opportunities to get outside. And with the state's "Passport to Parks" program, you don't have to pay every time you go to a state park. So that allows you to swing by your favorite spot after work and take the dog for a 20-minute walk or go for a run. You might not do any of that if you had to pay a fee every time you wanted to visit a park.*

When considering his experience at REI and with CORA, coupled with his outdoor experiences, Mason Trumble has been preparing his entire life for his ultimate **Big Environmental Step**: Becoming the Deputy Commissioner of a state environmental agency. Little did he know that all of those days of being dropped off at the lake by his parents to play outside with his five siblings were actually on-the-job training! And he has first-hand knowledge of the co-benefits of just being outside in nature, not only the physical and mental health benefits, but the link to protecting the natural resources that are important to us:

*At its most basic level, if you don't enjoy being outside, you may not care as much about preserving the outdoors either. So the way that I can best focus on climate change and environmental issues is to share my love for the outdoors with other people. Hopefully give them a love for the outdoors. And once people realize how amazing the outdoors is, in whatever form that they choose to enjoy it, they'll start to think a little bit about how to take care of the places and resources that they love so much.*

At the same time, Deputy Commissioner Trumble recognizes that outdoor resources that are accessible can also be used very heavily, which can also create conflict. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a significant increase in outdoor use, as being outside became one of the only safe entertainment options available to residents. Trying to balance sustainable use with increased



access has been a challenge, but it's a topic with which the Deputy Commissioner is extremely familiar:

*It all goes back to being respectful. We have to use the outdoors sustainably. A lot of folks who were playing outside during the pandemic might not have ever done so before. So we have to educate the people who might be new to the outdoors and encourage them to take care of their new "playground." And maybe they will turn into environmental and conservation advocates.*

With the wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities available in Connecticut, chances are you'll run into the Deputy Commissioner this winter on a ski slope or a trail or ice fishing, or maybe in the spring you'll find him on a river in the canoe he's building himself in his spare time. No matter where you find him, Connecticut's outdoor recreation spaces—and the people who use them—couldn't have asked for a better advocate than Mason Trumble.

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