Connecticut
Coastal Management Program
Assessment and Strategy

2026 to 2030

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Introduction

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is pleased to provide this Assessment and Strategies for its coastal area management program in accordance with the June 2024, revised February 2025 Guidance from NOAA's Office for Coastal Management (OCM). As in previous cycles, the Assessment evaluated Connecticut's coastal management program with regard to the nine areas of potential enhancement identified by the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), as amended. The 309 Program enhancement areas are: wetlands, public access, marine debris, cumulative and secondary impacts, special area management planning, ocean and great lakes resources, energy and government facility siting, aquaculture, and coastal hazards. NOAA's OCM has designated the Wetlands and Coastal Hazards categories as enhancement areas of national importance.

This document includes an assessment of each of the nine enhancement areas as they apply to Connecticut and identifies the relative importance of each area in consideration of the state's approved coastal management program, existing conditions, and anticipated program changes and implementation activities eligible for funding under section 309.

The Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA), effectuated in 1980, is the centerpiece of the State's comprehensive coastal resource management program, building upon existing authorities as well as providing additional ones. Responsibility for implementing the CCMA is shared by state and municipal levels of government. In addition to providing the foundation for Connecticut's coastal management program, the CCMA delineates a coastal management boundary, contains statutory policies, standards, and procedures that implement the program, and defines management responsibilities for agencies at all affected levels of government. Most significantly, the CCMA established over 50 specific policies and standards regarding the state's coastal resources and uses, to be applied to all development by each level of government with cognizance over such activities within the coastal area.

The DEEP Land and Water Resources Division (LWRD) is the organization directly responsible for implementation and enforcement of Connecticut's coastal management program. LWRD regulates all work in tidal wetlands and in tidal, coastal and navigable waters, implements the State's flood management certification program, and monitors and/or certifies for consistency purposes, as appropriate, all state and federal actions subject to our approved coastal management program. In addition, LWRD oversees and assures compliance of municipal implementation of CCMA-mandated coastal site plan review requirements for all activities subject to local planning and zoning regulations.

Over the past forty-five years of implementation of the state's coastal program, Connecticut has successfully preserved, protected, and, in fact, restored critical coastal resources, improved coastal water quality, and has promoted water-dependent waterfront development, including significant public access to coastal waters. We have continually refined our organizational structure, our legal and programmatic guidance, and strengthened our network of related programs to enhance our capabilities of achieving the three basic tenets of coastal management: coastal resource and water quality protection, proper management of coastal flood hazard areas, and promotion of water-dependent uses at waterfront sites. Perhaps most importantly, through the day-to-day implementation of our core program we have institutionalized the basic premises of the federal CZMA and state CCMA.

Regular stakeholder engagement has been an integral part of the implementation of the Coastal Management Program, and LWRD staff obtain regular input not only from the regulated community but

from environmental organizations, stakeholder interest groups, and members of the public as well. As a result, LWRD's outreach initiatives relied on ongoing involvement with several stakeholder engagement efforts and the National Estuarine Research Reserve that closely correlate with Section 309 enhancement areas: the Blue Plan Advisory Committee and their respective sectors for Ocean Resources and Energy Facility Siting; Connecticut Sea Grant and their networks for Ocean Resources and Aquaculture; the Long Island Sound Eelgrass Collaborative for Ocean Resources; the Improving Public Access in Connecticut (ImPACT) Fellowship Steering Committee and their respective sectors for Public Access; the Connecticut Harbor Management Association and municipal harbor management commissions for Marine Debris and Special Area Management Planning; the Tidal Wetlands and Riverine Migratory Corridors restoration teams for Wetlands; and various Long Island Sound Partnership (formerly known as the Long Island Sound Study) working groups for Cumulative and Secondary Impacts, Wetlands, Coastal Hazards, and Public Access. LWRD also engages in frequent inter- and intra- agency collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

This Assessment and Strategy continues to reflect the status of Connecticut's Coastal Management Program as an established, mature institution. The 2021 Program Change that incorporated the Long Island Sound Blue Plan's enforceable policies into Connecticut's coastal management program further strengthened its existing planning and regulatory statutes, regulations, programs, and policies and their ability to address the State's most salient coastal management problems and offshore concerns.

The 2026 to 2030 assessment will reinforce our continuing need to develop, maintain and refine existing programs to better achieve coastal management objectives and lay the groundwork for future initiatives through continued engagement, program analysis, and information dissemination. While Connecticut's Section 312 Review conducted in 2021 identified no major gaps in our coastal management program, the Section 309 assessment process gives states continued opportunities to make program improvements within the nine enhancement areas, and as such is an important aspect of the Coastal Zone Management Act. Accordingly, there are new initiatives that, if funding were available, Connecticut could use to address the categories of Wetlands, Coastal Hazards, Public Access, and Ocean Resources. Therefore, LWRD has designated those areas as Connecticut's high priority enhancement areas for this assessment as tasks associated with these areas will require the greatest staff and financial resources to accomplish.

In keeping with the national priority of **Wetlands**, Connecticut will fully complete an ongoing EPA-funded project to revise tidal wetland regulations for internal DEEP review. A 309 strategy will shepherd the revised regulations through the formal adoption process as specified by statute, building public support through stakeholder outreach and engagement. The strategy will complement the state's efforts to establish a compensatory mitigation program to address compensation for loss of tidal wetlands, intertidal flats and other coastal waters as authorized by recent legislation (Public Act 25-84) and develop Connecticut's first wetland mitigation bank.

Coastal Hazards will also be a high priority for Connecticut in this assessment. Recent legislative changes and the 309 projects completed during the previous assessment period have filled several programmatic gaps pertaining to monitoring development in coastal flood hazard areas. However, a strategy to remap the coastal boundary to reflect updated FEMA coastal flood maps will provide for a truer representation of hazard areas as they currently exist will give DEEP a more accurate sense of municipal coastal hazard management.

With respect to **Public Access**, Connecticut has developed and maintained a robust program to identify and communicate opportunities for coastal public access since the early 1990s, and developed an online web guide along with brown and white public access signs posted at or near many of the locations on the guide that help the public find their way to over 350 diverse shoreline sites in Connecticut that provide a variety of opportunities for coastal enjoyment. In an effort to further strengthen Connecticut's coastal public access program, LWRD applied for and was granted a NOAA Coastal Management ImPACT Fellowship to conduct a thorough assessment of public access in the state and develop recommendations to improve and enhance access opportunities. Accordingly, we anticipate several strategies to implement select recommendations from the Fellowship, including legislative proposals, outreach on public trust responsibilities, and much needed updates to the online access guide.

Ocean Resource issues continue to be a high priority in this assessment as Connecticut implements the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, approved and adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2021. Although the offshore energy landscape is currently in flux, Connecticut's coastal management program must be prepared and proactive when offshore energy projects in adjacent waters move closer to completion and energy transmission into and through Long Island Sound are imminent. The Resource and Use Inventory and Blue Plan underwent their first statutorily required review during the previous assessment period, and the plan and inventory will again need to be reviewed and updated during this assessment period to ensure the ecologically significant areas and significant human use areas identified in the plan, and the policies developed to protect them, are sufficient. We anticipate a strategy to review and assess and, if necessary, revise the inventory and plan.

The remaining five enhancement areas were all ranked as a low or medium priority for Connecticut's coastal management program. **Marine Debris** and **Special Area Management Plans** (SAMPs) are adequately addressed through existing programs, including DEEP's Clean Boater program and the Long Island Sound Partnership and through administration of the State's harbor master program and municipal harbor management planning, and as such are ranked as a low priority. While LWRD considered the feasibility of developing a SAMP in and around the New London (harbor and Thames River) area, or in and around Bridgeport Harbor, New London is currently developing a harbor management plan under existing authority and Bridgeport already has developed such a plan, and the state's harbor management legislation provides adequate planning authority for those municipalities.

Cumulative and Secondary Impacts, ranked medium, will continue to pose a challenge in Connecticut's heavily developed coastal area, but existing and ongoing programs already address important cumulative effects such as nutrient enrichment, stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution, and nature-based solutions. We anticipate that **Energy and Government Facility Siting** and **Aquaculture** will be adequately addressed under implementation of the Blue Plan, and therefore these assessment areas are ranked as a medium priority.

Summary of Recent Section 309 Achievements

During the previous assessment, the categories of Wetlands, Public Access, Marine Debris, Cumulative and Secondary Impacts, Special Area Management Planning, and Aquaculture were assigned a medium priority, but no 309 projects were undertaken for these assessment areas.

The following list contains 309 projects undertaken since the 2020 Assessment. Additional information on efforts in these high and medium priority categories is presented in the Phase I Enhancement Area Analysis (Section III) for the respective category.

Coastal Hazards
High priority in last Assessment

- Developed Guidance on Adaptation to Coastal Hazards
- Led a stakeholder working group that culminated in a report entitled *Connecticut Tidal Wetland Migration Protection Policy Proposal and Work Group: Final Report, June 30, 2023*. The report includes guidance and recommendations concerning tidal marsh migration.
- Developed legislative concepts to strengthen Connecticut's approach to coastal hazards:
    - Revise the real estate disclosure form to highlight the impacts of sea level rise
    - Disallow rebuilding of non-water-dependent structures not used for littoral access within the public trust area (waterward of mean high water) after a casualty loss
- Established new "critical activity" definition for state flood management certifications to include infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants, power generation facilities, data storage facilities, readiness centers, emergency shelters and police / fire facilities.
- Amended the Coastal Management Act to require a mandatory referral to LWRD for all coastal site plan reviews where tidal wetlands, beaches, and dunes are present on site, and for activities proposed within A/AE, V/VE, and Limit of Moderate Wave Action areas.

Ocean Resources
High Priority in last Assessment

- Developed policy, guidance, and outreach materials to advance beneficial use of dredged materials for habitat restoration/enhancement
    - Continued development of clearer and more helpful guidance on the regulatory framework governing the management of dredged sediment by alternative approaches to open water disposal, including beneficial uses such as tidal wetland restoration and nearshore or riverine placement.
    - Participated on a cross-functional agency working group to address regulatory processes in establishing a pilot program for the reuse of beneficially reclaimed materials to allow them to be used as fill when there is an engineering need for fill materials, and to facilitate the reclamation or redevelopment of environmentally impaired or underutilized land. As a result, the Department is implementing a Use of Beneficially Reclaimed Materials in Large Scale Filling Pilot Program that creates a new pathway to establish in-state facilities that can beneficially manage dredge materials
    - Assisted the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with the creation of a web-based New England Beneficial Use Planning Tool that identifies potential beneficial use opportunities and their proximity to navigable channels throughout New England.

  - Established a State Dredging Team to discuss planning for beneficial use projects and the regulatory framework for upland use with other agencies and external stakeholders.
  - Worked with the CT Port Authority and USACE to investigate and identify potential sites for alternatives to open water disposal of dredged material, including beneficial use opportunities and confined aquatic disposal (CAD) cells.
  - Worked with the CT Port Authority and USACE as part of their planning and design for federal dredging projects in New Haven and Bridgeport to identify opportunities for CAD cells in those harbors
  - Conducted a study, in collaboration with CIRCA, on a proposed approach for island restoration using dredged material at Thatchbed Island in Essex. Outputs from this study will inform future guidance on alternatives.
  - Compiled a preliminary sediment testing protocol and worked with consultants for the US Navy regarding a potential implementation of the protocol for a beneficial use placement project at Rocky Neck State Park, and with CTDOT related to a pilot scale thin layer placement project also at Rocky Neck.
  - Continued coordination with DEEP's Remediation and Solid Waste divisions regarding regulatory processes and procedures for upland and beneficial use of dredged material. Updated a Draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that describes and outlines the LWRD regulatory process for determining the suitability of dredged material for beneficial reuse. This SOP assists LWRD staff in advising potential applicants and consultants of the pre-application Sampling Analysis Plan and Final Suitability Determination process to facilitate a smoother authorization of such dredging projects and includes:
    - Sampling and Suitability Determination processes for open water disposal, upland placement, and beneficial use
    - Guidance for Consultants for Upland Placement of Dredged Materials
- Blue Plan Implementation
  - Continued stakeholder outreach activities including new publications
  - Continued ongoing coordination of Blue Plan activities including statutorily required quarterly meetings of the Blue Plan Advisory Committee and annual public hearings

Energy & Government Facility Siting
Medium Priority in last Assessment

- Blue Plan Update
  - Began development of the first revision and update to the Blue Plan, which by state statute will be required no later than the spring of 2026, based on the experience of implementing the Plan, any new information or policy issues that have arisen since initial adoption, and input received during Advisory Committee meetings, public hearings, and stakeholder engagement.
  - Established DEEP Blue Plan Revision Planning Team with standing monthly meetings to assign work tasks and keep on schedule.
  - Developed a communication strategy and survey for stakeholder/sector engagement
  - Assigned DEEP Revision Team members with Advisory Committee members to conduct public/stakeholder outreach with distribution of the update survey.
  - Compiled a list of necessary updates and amendments to the Plan policies and data as warranted.

- Drafted a report on the need for updates to the Plan for legislative approval and adoption through a similar process of stakeholder outreach, consideration by the Advisory Committee, drafting by LWRD, public hearing, and submission to the Legislature
- Developed SOPs for ongoing revisions to Blue Plan policies and datasets through
    - gathering of stakeholder input through discussions and public comment opportunities at Blue Plan Advisory Committee meetings
    - determine how the Plan is working in practice
    - evaluate data and policy gaps and needs
    - summarize data and policy needs and recommendations for Blue Plan updates.

Phase I Assessment

Wetlands

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Protection, restoration, or enhancement of the existing coastal wetlands base, or creation of new coastal wetlands. §309(a)(1)

> *Note: For the purposes of the Wetlands Assessment, wetlands are "those areas that are inundated or saturated at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." [33 CFR 328.3(b)]. See also pg. 14 of the CZMA Performance Measurement Guidance[1] for a more in-depth discussion of what should be considered a wetland.*

Phase I (High-Level) Assessment: (Must be completed by all states.)
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. Using the tables below as a guide, provide information on the status and trends of coastal wetlands. Be as quantitative as possible using state or national wetland trend data.[2] The tables are information presentation suggestions. Feel free to adjust column and row headings to align with data and time frames available in your state or territory. If quantitative data is not available for your state or territory, provide a brief qualitative narrative describing wetlands status and trends and any significant changes since the last assessment.

Tidal wetlands cover approximately 0.5% of Connecticut (approximately 18,168 acres). Connecticut has many programs which authorize wetland losses and gains to occur in state-regulated waters, however LWRD currently lacks the capability to track and aggregate wetland losses and gains in internal regulatory databases. Tidal/coastal wetland gain and loss are therefore not quantified or known, however the table below presents the loss/gain information that LWRD has access to based on Connecticut's geospatial land cover datasets. Staff are actively developing an update to modernize LWRD's internal regulatory database, such that LWRD may accurately track quantitative wetland loss and gain data tentatively beginning in 2026 and include that information in future reporting cycles.

[1] coast.noaa.gov/data/czm/media/czmapmsguide.pdf

[2] National data on wetlands status and trends include NOAA's Land Cover Atlas (coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/lca.html), the U.S. Geological Survey's National Land Cover Database (usgs.gov/centers/eros/science/national-land-cover-database), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory data (fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory).

Connecticut Wetlands Status and Trends

	Change in Wetlands from 2015-2023*
Tidal/estuarine Wetlands % change	Unknown* For the 2020-2025 assessment cycle, Connecticut's land cover geospatial information was not updated to include tidal wetland net change percentages, and DEEP does not currently track tidal wetland loss/gain quantities to determine net change. We are currently revising our regulatory database to develop this capability and hope to begin comprehensively tracking tidal wetland loss and gain data in 2026
Forested Wetlands % change	-0.01 % / -201.49 acres of net loss
Non-forested Wetlands % change	+0.01 % / +284.22 acres of net gain
*Note the wetland data depicted includes both inland and tidal wetlands and identifies only 'forested' and 'non-forested' wetland categories; tidal wetland extent data were not available for the current reporting period.)	

How Connecticut Wetlands Are Changing

Land Cover Change	Area of Wetlands* Converted (Lost) to Another Type of Land Cover between 1996-2023 (Sq. Miles)
Wetland to Developed Land	-4.25 sq. mi. (2,720 ac.)
Wetland to Agriculture	-1.65 sq. mi. (1,056 ac.)
Wetland to Barren Land	-0.38 sq. mi. (243 ac.)
Wetland to Open Water	-4.28 sq. mi. (2,739 ac.)
Total	-10.56 sq.mi. (6,758 ac.) Wetlands Converted to Other Lands
*Note 'wetlands' includes both inland and tidal wetlands combined; tidal wetland extent data were not available during this reporting period.	

Management Characterization

1. Indicate any significant changes at the state or territory level (positive or negative) since the last assessment that could impact the future protection, restoration, enhancement, or creation of coastal wetlands.

Significant Changes in Wetland Management

Management Category	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y
Wetlands programs (e.g., regulatory, mitigation, restoration, acquisition)	Y

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information.
    a. Describe the significance of the changes.

LWRD has made some highly significant programmatic and statutory changes to benefit tidal wetlands and other coastal waters in the 2020-2025 reporting cycle, including creating new programs and pursuing new laws/regulations as follows:

- Programmatic change: Established the CT Water Resource Mitigation Program (2024-2025) to address compensation for losses of water resources and provided CT mitigation website, guidance materials, tech assistance, education and outreach presentations
- Legislative change: Passage of new law for water resource compensation: The CT legislature passed Public Act 25-84 in June 2025, with Section 2 effective July 2025. Section 2 of this new law will allow for water resource mitigation, including new permit options for how compensation for resource loss occurs and provisions for contracting expert mitigation service providers to manage compensation projects in Connecticut.
- Revision of Tidal Wetland Regulations (in progress): Connecticut's tidal wetland regulations were last revised in 1996 and are currently being modernized, such that they will be more consistent with case law, state policy, and nationwide practice. The revision of Connecticut's wetland regulations is taking place under an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Wetland Program Development Grant.

b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.
The above-listed programmatic and legal changes were not 309 or CZM-driven.

c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.
With the provision of statewide mitigation guidance materials and outreach, we anticipate that project stakeholders will be better-informed and state mitigation will become increasingly robust, as project planning becomes more reliable and transparent in addition to being more streamlined.

Compensatory mitigation commencement and completion will be benchmarked and tracked, such that projects will have clearer goals and stated ways to meet measurable performance goals/standards.

Passage of Public Act 25-84 Section 2 sets the foundational authority for Connecticut to accept watershed-level mitigation programs [mitigation banking and in-lieu fee (ILF)] in addition to the current single option for state mitigation, permittee-responsible mitigation. We anticipate this new law for watershed-level mitigation may greatly streamline how state mitigation gets done, for example, use of a state-sanctioned ILF or Connecticut's first mitigation bank would greatly assist CTDOT in offsetting resource impacts, taking the mitigation burden off CTDOT staff and having experts manage instead. Significant staff time will be required to achieve this, to develop a process for watershed-level mitigation projects, including issuing a Request for Proposals to retain professional third-party mitigation services in the state and establish an interagency instrument for the administration of Connecticut's first mitigation bank and/or ILF fund.

We anticipate a large cost savings to permittees in the 2025-2030 assessment cycle and beyond by phasing out duplicative state/federal mitigation under the new program, as permittee-responsible mitigation will get more robust, i.e., Connecticut mitigation is

becoming modernized such that all variants of state mitigation will align with the Corps of Engineers federal Mitigation Rule (a state ILF and bank are also anticipated to become available such that one mitigation project will meet the requirements of state and federal regulators, avoiding the duplicative costs that currently remain standard practice.

Modernization of the state's Tidal Wetland Regulations would have far-reaching implications toward improving implementation of Connecticut's Tidal Wetlands Act through LWRD's coastal permitting programs.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

   High __X___
   Medium _____
   Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

   Establishing and developing the compensatory mitigation program has been a high priority for LWRD, with the goal to ensure that water resource losses authorized by the state may be compensated for in a more efficient, streamlined, cost-effective manner in the future, with mitigation projects having higher ecological value and heightened likelihood of success.

   To set up the mitigation program Connecticut collaborated closely with many relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the state Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and many relevant Bureaus and Divisions within CT DEEP (i.e., Wildlife, Fisheries, land management). Furthermore, industry experts, consultants, and the public were collaborated with during the development, and informed of the new program at several different events. Public presentations related to the new program were given at the 2025 Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists (CAWS) conference, the USACE-DEEP Connecticut Mitigation Summit in 2025, and at various stakeholder, legislative, and innovation fairs highlighting the new program developments. This outreach and engagement helped inform program development and addressed concerns from the regulated community. We anticipate broadening mitigation program outreach, education, and guidance to be released in the 2025-2030 assessment cycle.

Coastal Hazards

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Prevent or significantly reduce threats to life and property by eliminating development and redevelopment in high-hazard areas, managing development in other hazard areas, and anticipating and managing the effects of potential sea level rise and Great Lakes level change. §309(a)(2)

Note: For purposes of the Hazards Assessment, coastal hazards include the following traditional hazards and those identified in the CZMA: flooding; coastal storms (including associated storm surge); geological hazards (e.g., tsunamis, earthquakes); shoreline erosion (including bluff and dune erosion); sea level rise; Great Lake level change; land subsidence; and saltwater intrusion.

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states.)*
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization:

1. In the table below, indicate the general level of risk in the coastal zone for each of the coastal hazards. The following resources may help assess the level of risk for each hazard. Your state may also have other state-specific resources and tools to consult. Additional information and links to these resources can be found in the "Resources" section at the end of the Coastal Hazards Phase I Assessment Template:

    - The state's multi-hazard mitigation plan
    - Coastal County Snapshots: Flood Exposure
    - Coastal Flood Exposure Mapper
    - Sea Level Rise Viewer/Great Lakes Lake Level Change Viewer

General Level of Hazard Risk in the Coastal Zone

Type of Hazard	General Level of Risk[3] (H, M, L)
Flooding (riverine, stormwater)	M-H
Coastal storms (including storm surge)	H
Geological hazards (e.g., tsunamis, earthquakes)	L
Shoreline erosion	M
Sea level rise	M-H
Great Lakes level change	N/A
Land subsidence	L
Saltwater intrusion	Unknown
Other (please specify)	N/A

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional data or reports on the level of risk and vulnerability to coastal hazards within your state since the last assessment. The state's multi-hazard mitigation plan or risk assessment or plan may be a good resource to help respond to this question.

[3] Risk is defined as "the estimated impact that a hazard would have on people, services, facilities and structures in a community; the likelihood of a hazard event resulting in an adverse condition that causes injury or damage." *Understanding Your Risks: Identifying Hazards and Estimating Losses. FEMA 386-2. August 2001*

The statewide Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP) was last updated and adopted on December 13, 2023 and was developed in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) hazard mitigation planning requirements as set forth in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, and in alignment with the FEMA State Mitigation Planning and Policy Guide of April 2023. The implementation and updating of the State NHMP are the responsibility of the CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division within the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

Since 2020, Connecticut has experienced two presidential declared disasters, while during the prior decade of January 2010 to 2020, the state experienced nine major disaster declarations.[4] Though the available data for the time period from 2020 for this Report is only for a five-year period as compared to the data from the last Report, it does show that the first half of the 2020-2030 period was similar to the last half of the 2010-2020 period, which only had two disaster declarations during that five-year period.

Presidential Disaster Declarations for Connecticut:
January 2020 to 2025

Disaster Number	Name	Incident Period	Declaration Date
DR-4629-CT	CT Remnants of Hurricane Ida	9/1-2/2021	10/30/2021
DR-4820-CT	CT Severe Storm, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides	8/18-19/2024	9/20/2024

It should be noted that Connecticut is comprised of 169 towns, including 36 coastal municipalities (plus two tribal governments and political subdivisions in Groton and Stonington). All communities in Connecticut participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and are covered by a local or regional hazard mitigation plan. A major effort was made by the state, starting with the 2015 NHMP update, to standardize and incorporate hazard rankings from local hazard mitigation plans and compare them to the State's overall hazard ranking. This detailed information can be found in the State's NHMP Appendix. In summary, Tropical Cyclone risk ranks High in New Haven County, Medium to High in Fairfield and New London Counties, and Medium in Middlesex County, all of which contain coastal municipalities. Flood Risks ranked Medium to High in Fairfield County, Medium in New Haven and New London Counties, and Medium to Low in Middlesex County. However, the entire coast of Connecticut is very vulnerable to the impacts from a 1% flood event occurring. As expected, coastal counties and communities ranked flooding as high in importance and concern.

FEMA's HAZUS flood model was used to run a 1% annual chance flood based on the hazard depicted on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) available for Fairfield, Middlesex, New Haven, and New London Counties. Based on this model, it is apparent that the coastal and riverine areas are at higher risk, specifically in Fairfield and New Haven Counties. HAZUS was also used to develop flood loss estimates by county for a 1% Annual Chance Flood occurrence. The counties

[4] Information obtained through FEMA's website: https://www.fema.gov/locations/connecticut#declared-disasters.

with coastal communities or tidally influenced waterways have the most development and the largest estimated losses due to such a flood event.

FEMA's HAZUS-MH software was also used to determine losses due to storm surge in Connecticut. The HAZUS storm surge analysis uses the National Hurricane Center's (NHC) Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) Maximum of the Maximum Envelope of Waters (MEOWs) (MOM) depth grid. Four separate single-frequency depth grid scenarios for the Category 1 to 4 hurricanes were run, and a loss estimate was determined for each hurricane category. Storm surge impacts to residential buildings are projected to be the highest building loss value, followed by commercial buildings. The results indicate that the "commercial" and "other" sectors are the most vulnerable to business interruption during a storm surge event.

The Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) was used to project the potential response of Connecticut's marshes to sea-level-rise (SLR). Updated elevation and tide-range data and a new developed-land-footprint for coastal Connecticut were used to refine and expand existing model predictions for marsh fate under updated future sea-level rise scenarios. Multiple series of SLAMM simulations were performed to investigate whether additional marsh migration pathways may exist beyond those initially identified by model results. That analysis identified areas that are not connected to tidal water but, that could potentially accommodate tidal-marsh establishment if connected (for example by using hydraulic structures as culverts or by creating ditches). Using SLAMM, this "unconnected-marsh" analysis was updated, refined, and further analyses were completed completing the third iteration of SLAMM in Connecticut.

Management Characterization

1. In the tables below, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) have occurred that could impact the CMP's ability to prevent or significantly reduce coastal hazards risk since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Hazards Statutes, Regulations, Policies, or Case Law

Topic Addressed	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Elimination of development/redevelopment in high-hazard areas[5]	N	N/A	N
Management of development/redevelopment in other hazard areas	Y	Y	Y
Sea level rise or Great Lakes level change	Y	Y	N

Significant Changes in Hazards Planning Programs or Initiatives

Topic Addressed	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Hazard mitigation	Y	Y	Y
Sea level rise or Great Lakes level change	Y	Y	N

[5] Use the state's definition of high-hazard areas.

Significant Changes in Hazards Mapping or Modeling Programs or Initiatives

Topic Addressed	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Sea level rise or Great Lakes level change	Y	Y	N
Other hazards	Y	N	Y

2. Briefly state how "high-hazard areas" are defined in your coastal zone.

   "Coastal hazard areas" are defined by the Connecticut Coastal Management Act as "those land areas inundated during coastal storm events or subject to erosion induced by such events, including flood hazard areas as defined and determined by the National Flood Insurance Act, as amended (USC 42 Section 4101, P.L. 93-234) and all erosion hazard areas as determined by the commissioner." Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §22a-93(7)(H)

3. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
   a. Describe the significance of the changes.

      Connecticut saw significant changes to the CCMA related to management of the development and redevelopment within coastal hazard areas. Public Act 25-33 was passed during the 2025 legislative session and requires that a copy of each coastal site plan application submitted for any activity proposed within a FEMA-designated V, VE, A, AE or Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA) area, or any site that contains tidal wetlands, beaches, or dunes be referred to DEEP for review and comment.

      With respect to significant changes in hazards planning programs or initiatives, the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated by DEEP and the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection in 2023. The NHMP is a guiding document meant to proactively inform actions that Connecticut will take to reduce risk from disasters over the next five years and beyond. This plan includes an assessment of the natural hazards that can impact the state and specific actions that the state should take to manage risks.

      The Connecticut Institute for Resiliency and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) continued to fine tune their hazard mapping, including a 2021 update of their Zones of Shared Risk of Coastal Towns Dataset | Resilient Connecticut maintenance of a Vulnerability Index Mapping Tool to identify areas that are more vulnerable to hazards and are more likely to experience harm as flooding worsens. DEEP has also been involved with CIRCA's engagement with several coastal municipalities to identify zones of shared risk and identify solutions to chronic flooding and other hazards and establish a more Resilient Connecticut.

b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

None of these efforts was driven by or resulted from 309, and the changes to the CCMA regarding coastal site plan review referrals were the only CZM-driven changes.

c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

The changes to the CCMA regarding CSPR referrals will give DEEP review responsibility for activities that are proposed withing FEMA-designated A, AE, V, VE zones and Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA) areas and projects that could affect tidal wetlands, beaches, and dunes, thereby giving DEEP a better understanding of most development and redevelopment activities proposed within coastal flood hazard areas.

The updated NHMP serves as guidance for hazard mitigation actions in the State of Connecticut. It is intended to support state and local governments' efforts to articulate accurate and prioritized needs for hazard mitigation that will reduce exposure to natural hazards. This planning effort will result in timely allocation of funding and more effective risk reduction strategies and projects.

CIRCA's efforts to engage coastal communities in resilience planning efforts will help municipalities identify local vulnerabilities resulting from physical exposure, sensitivity or susceptibility to harm, and lack of capacity to cope and adapt to threats. Understanding vulnerability helps decision-making about resource allocation, policy development, and project prioritization, siting, and design.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High	__X___
Medium	_____
Low	_____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

Coastal hazards and their impact on coastal residents and their property continue to be a high priority in Connecticut. The impacts from increased intensity and frequency of coastal storms, tropical cyclones, and sea level rise are expected to increase during this century, and residents in low-lying coastal areas continue to see an increase in sunny-day nuisance flooding occurring more frequently. Although strides undertaken during the past 309 assessment period, such as guidance provided to municipal decision-makers, developers, and the public regarding coastal flood hazard management and living shorelines, fact sheets developed by CIRCA on Sea Level Rise and Increased Precipitation as part of efforts associated with the Governor's Council on Climate Change (CG3), much work remains to be done.

In 2022, the Long Island Sound Partnership conducted a Regional Needs Assessment to Help Build a Sustainable & Resilient Long Island Sound to better understand the threats and hazards that coastal communities are most concerned about, what those communities might already be doing to address

these issues, and what barriers they are facing when it comes to implementing projects and taking action. The results of this significant public engagement effort will help coastal communities identify ways to be pro-active in developing resiliency plans and incorporating coastal hazard management concepts into their land use plans. This will help guide future development to the most appropriate areas and improve the resilience of existing development within coastal hazard areas.

Public Access

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Attain increased opportunities for public access, taking into account current and future public access needs, to coastal areas of recreational, historical, aesthetic, ecological, or cultural value. §309(a)(3)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states.)*
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. Use the table below to provide data on public access availability within the coastal zone.

Public Access Status and Trends

Type of Access	Current number[6]	Changes or Trends Since Last Assessment[7] (↑, ↓, –, unknown)	Cite data source
Beach access sites	84	No increase or change from previous assessment	**CT Coastal Access Guide database: "On Guide" & "significant sandy beach"**
Shoreline (other than beach) access sites	273	An increase in 14 sites is due to a variety of factors including sites gained through municipal coastal site plan review (CSPR) approvals that were constructed this reporting period, sites that previously existed but were not known to exist and omitted from the Access Guide	**CT Coastal Access Guide database: "On Guide" less "significant sandy beach access sites"**
Recreational boat (power or non-motorized) access sites	163	No change; 52 boat ramp sites for motorized drop-in that coincide with a cartop launch location	**CT Coastal Access Guide database**
Designated scenic vistas or overlook points	2	No change- none previously reported in error as these two sites have previously existed	**CT Coastal Access Guide database: "On Guide" + ("scenic overlook")**
Fishing access points (i.e. piers, jetties)	177	Increase in 4 sites, not limited to sites with piers/ jetties.	**CT Coastal Access Guide database: "On Guide" + "Fishing" (not limited to sites with piers etc.)**
Coastal trails/ boardwalks *(Please indicate number of trails/boardwalks and mileage)*	75/ 148 (No data on total length (linear miles); majority "boardwalks" are improved walkways)	The number of trails and boardwalks (paved walkways included) each increased by 3 and 6 sites, respectively. The lengths of the trails/ boardwalks are not tracked.	**CT Coastal Access Guide database: "On Guide" + ('trail' or walkways'). Walkways include boardwalks and other improved footpaths**

[6] Be as specific as possible. For example, if you have data on many access sites but know it is not an exhaustive list, note "more than" before the number. If information is unknown, note that and use the narrative section below to provide a brief qualitative description based on the best information available.

[7] If you know specific numbers, please provide. However, if specific numbers are unknown but you know that the general trend was increasing or decreasing or relatively stable or unchanged since the last assessment, note that with a ↑ (increased), ↓ (decreased), – (unchanged). If the trend is completely unknown, simply put "unknown."

Type of Access	Current number[6]	Changes or Trends Since Last Assessment[7] (↑, ↓, –, unknown)	Cite data source
Acres of parkland/open space	N/A	Unknown	N/A
Access sites that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant[8]	40	ADA accessible amenities are recorded in the descriptions of sites.	**CT Coastal Access Guide database: "On Guide" + search: 'ADA'**
Other (please specify)			

2. Briefly characterize the demand for coastal public access and the process for periodically assessing demand. Include a statement on the projected population increase for your coastal counties. There are several additional sources of statewide information that may help inform this response, such as the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan,[9] the National Survey on Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation,[10] and your state's tourism office.

   Coastal public access in Connecticut is largely characterized by the 458 miles of shoreline frontage along the Long Island Sound and the sizeable population that utilizes access sites on a regular basis. Similar to the 2017-2020 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the current edition of the 2024-2029 SCORP identified both non-swimming beach activities and swimming in freshwater/saltwater as the top reported activities for household participation in water-based outdoor recreation. According to the 2022 National Survey on Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation, almost 13% of total anglers (6,276,626 out of 49,446,153) in 2021 were participating in the sport for the first time. Comparatively, in 2020, there were a total of 47,929,800 total anglers. This increase in almost 1.5 million recreational anglers as well as increases in other outdoor recreational activities can be attributed to pandemic conditions, which reinforced how important open, natural spaces are. In a comparison between the 2017 and 2023 avid outdoor enthusiast surveys, there's a notable decrease in dissatisfaction surrounding documented issues and barriers that impact the quality of outdoor recreation. In the next five-year period, the number of

[8] For more information on ADA see *ada.gov.*

[9] Most states routinely develop "Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans", or SCROPs, that include an assessment of demand for public recreational opportunities. Although not focused on coastal public access, SCORPs could be useful to get some sense of public outdoor recreation preferences and demand. Download state SCROPs at*.recpro.org/resources--reports/scorp-resources.*

[10] The National Survey on Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation produces state-specific reports on fishing, hunting, and wildlife associated recreational use for each state. While not focused on coastal areas, the reports do include information on saltwater and Great Lakes fishing, and some coastal wildlife viewing that may be informative and compares 2016 data to 2011, 2006, and 2001 information to understand how usage has changed. The most recent survey was conducted for 2022 but due to a change in methodology, results cannot be compared to previous reports. See *fws.gov/program/national-survey-fishing-hunting-and-wildlife-associated-recreation-fhwar.*

participants in outdoor recreation and use of public access is expected to grow, especially as development continues to occur in coastal areas.

The highest demand for coastal access occurs in the summer season, when a majority of access centers around coastal sandy beaches. During this time of year, it's not uncommon for demand at some State and municipally operated coastal park beaches to exceed capacity on fair-weather weekends. In addition, during the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, state parks and fishing spots were experiencing crowds of visitors the likes of which DEEP had not seen before. Although the state-managed saltwater beaches are able to accommodate large crowds of annual visitors to the parks, coastal municipal beaches are only capable of accommodating a select number of visitors. According to U.S. Census data, the population estimate of Connecticut increased by 57,893 between 2023 and 2024. Each of the planning regions that contain coastal towns and beaches, including the Greater Bridgeport, Lower Connecticut River Valley, South Central Connecticut, Southeastern Connecticut, Western Connecticut Planning Regions, had a slight increase in population size between 2020 and 2024. The overall increase in population could cause an increase in public access utilization and contribute to larger crowds inundating coastal beaches.

Many barriers also exist that deter non-residents from utilizing coastal municipal beaches, including exorbitant parking fees. The 2024-2029 SCORP outlined other barriers to participation in outdoor recreation for avid outdoor enthusiasts, including limited access, parking access, trail-related issues, maintenance issues, and limited space. However, based on a comparison between the data in the 2005 and 2017 survey presented in the 2017-2022 SCORP and the data presented in the 2024-2029 SCORP, there is overall trend of decreasing household participation in water-based outdoor recreation over the past decade. According to feedback in the Long Island Sound Partnership Needs Assessment,:

> …the primary issues with access that community members feel should be addressed throughout the region are transportation challenges, trash and debris buildup on beaches, costs associated with access, and a lack of signage and information that outlines public access locations.

These barriers will need to be addressed in order to accommodate the growing population and increased visitation to Connecticut's public access sites.

3. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional data or reports on the status or trends for coastal public access since the last assessment.

Other information reviewed to assess trends in demand for coastal access are phone inquiries and comments received through an email address CT DEEP LWRD maintains and monitors, **coastal.access@ct.gov**, which is dedicated to public access site updates from the public. In the past five years, there has been an increase in inbox traffic, showcasing the influx of people utilizing sites and reporting issues with maintenance or accessibility and inquiring about allowed uses of specific sites. This increase, combined with the continual challenges posed by increasing coastal development, highlights the inverse relationship between public access needs and opportunities in CT.

Management Characterization:

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state- or territory-level management changes (positive or negative) that could impact the future provision of public access to coastal areas of recreational, historical, aesthetic, ecological, or cultural value.

Significant Changes in Public Access Management

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	N
Operation/maintenance of existing facilities	Y	N	N
Acquisition/enhancement programs	Y	Y	Y

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:

    a. Describe the significance of the changes.

    With respect to enhancement program changes underway since the last assessment, LWRD was awarded a NOAA Coastal Management Fellow in 2024 to conduct a thorough assessment of the state's coastal public access program, work with a Steering Committee to develop recommendations on how to improve the program, and then work through a process to implement select recommendations. Connecticut has maintained a robust program to identify and communicate opportunities for coastal public access since the early 1990s. Coastal access opportunities on properties not directly owned by the state are largely the result of recommending or requiring water-dependent uses through the state coastal regulatory program or municipal planning review. The Improving Public Access in Connecticut (ImPACT) Fellowship is an excellent opportunity to promote sustainable access to coastal resources in Connecticut and assess and improve how the coastal management program advances coastal access.

    b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

    The ImPACT Fellowship is not 309-driven but is driven by the state CZM program.

    c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

    The goal of the ImPACT Fellowship is to recommend and develop programmatic, policy, and funding outcomes intended to improve the quality and quantity of open coastal access opportunities in Connecticut, focusing on innovative approaches and broadening the ways coastal access can better address the needs of communities and the public.

3. Indicate if your state or territory has a publicly available public access guide. How current is the publication and how frequently it is updated?[11]

Publicly Available Access Guide

Public Access Guide	Printed	Online	Mobile App
State or territory has? (Y or N)	Y but printing was discontinued	Y	Y
Web address (if applicable)		https://www.depdata.ct.gov/maps/coastalaccess/index.html	Same
Date of last update	2001	2023	2023
Frequency of update	None planned	As needed	As needed

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium __X___
Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

The engagement undertaken through the Long Island Sound Partnership's Needs Assessment, a Professional Development Needs Assessment conducted in September 2025 by Connecticut's National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the efforts of the ImPACT Fellowship Steering Committee all provided support and justification for ranking public access as a high priority for this 309 assessment. In fact, the ImPACT Fellowship Steering Committee identified several recommendations in conjunction with these needs assessments to improve and enhance coastal public access opportunities in Connecticut, some of which can be pursued as Section 309 Strategies. This is especially advantageous since relatively little significant shoreline development/redevelopment has resulted within the previous assessment period that would add new coastal public access sites through the municipal coastal site plan review and state regulatory processes. Therefore, identifying opportunities to enhance existing access sites and improve the public's ability to access municipal beaches are a high priority. Further, because many sections of Connecticut's coastal shoreline are already highly developed, conflicts over public access to the shore and neighboring landowners was identified by the Steering Committee as an issue that should be addressed. Finally, the online coastal access guide was developed on a platform that has outlived its utility, especially with regard to accessibility and translation to languages other than English, and significant updates and revisions are necessary to continue to provide this meaningful guide.

[11] Note some states may have regional or local guides in addition to state public access guides. Unless you want to list all local guides as well, there is no need to list additional guides beyond the state access guide. You may choose to note that the local guides do exist and may provide additional information that expands upon the state guides.

Marine Debris

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Reducing marine debris entering the nation's coastal and ocean environment by managing uses and activities that contribute to the entry of such debris. §309(a)(4)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states.)*
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, characterize the existing status and trends of marine debris in the state's coastal zone based on the best-available data.

Existing Status and Trends of Marine Debris in Coastal Zone

Source of Marine Debris	Significance of Source (H, M, L, unknown)	Type of Impact[12] (aesthetic, resource damage, user conflicts, other)	Change Since Last Assessment (↑, ↓, –, unknown)
Beach/shore litter	L	Aesthetic	-
Land-based dumping	L	Aesthetic	-
Storm drains and runoff	M	Aesthetic, resource damage, health	-
Land-based fishing (e.g., fishing line, gear)	L	Aesthetic, resource damage	-
Ocean/Great Lakes-based fishing (e.g., derelict fishing gear)	L	Resource damage	-
Derelict vessels	L	Aesthetic, resource damage	-
Vessel-based (e.g., cruise ship, cargo ship, general vessel)	L	Aesthetic, resource damage	-
Hurricane/Storm	M	Aesthetic, resource damage	-
Tsunami	L	Aesthetic, resource damage	N/A
Other (please specify) Microplastics	H	Aesthetic, resource damage	-

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends or potential impacts from marine debris in the coastal zone since the last assessment.

   The Long Island Sound Marine Debris Action Plan (2022-2027) was developed through a

[12] You can select more than one, if applicable.

collaborative effort by stakeholders from Connecticut and New York with funding from NOAA's Marine Debris Program to the Connecticut and New York Sea Grant programs. The initial plan was developed in 2019, and it represents the culmination of numerous discussions among interested parties to develop comprehensive framework of strategic action to mitigate the impacts of marine debris over a period of five years (2022-2027). The plan establishes goals, strategies, and actions to reduce marine debris from several sources, and working groups were established to address Single-Use Plastic and Other Land/Water-based Consumer Debris, Abandoned and Lost Fishing/Aquaculture Gear, and Microplastics and Microfibers. T

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state- or territory-level management changes (positive or negative) for how marine debris is managed in the coastal zone.

Significant Changes in Marine Debris Management

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Marine debris statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	N
Marine debris removal programs	N	N	Y

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
    a. Describe the significance of the changes.

    Connecticut continues to implement and administer programs in effect since our 2020 assessment to address marine debris. The Long Island Sound Partnership set a goal of decreasing the mass of marine debris in the Sound by 2035 from the 2013 baseline of 475 pounds of debris collected per mile. As a result of volunteer-based beach and coastal park cleanup events, over a period of five years (2016-2024), there was a 68 percent decrease in marine debris from the baseline. In 2023, 1,800 volunteers in 74 cleanups collected 7,707 pounds of debris along 132 miles of coastline.

    Other programs and initiatives that continue to be implemented on an on-going basis include: CSO abatement programs and state and local recycling, anti-litter campaigns, and local litter ordinances. Marine debris abatement practices as identified in DEEP's Marina Best Management Practices Manual continue to be routinely incorporated into municipal harbor management plans and are often used as conditions within state authorizations for marina facilities. In addition, marina facilities are required to receive a stormwater general permit for operations which addresses floatable debris associated with stormwater.

The 2022 Long Island Sound Marine Debris Action Plan underwent a mid-plan review conducted in August 2025. The Single-Use Plastic and Other Land/Water-based Consumer Debris, Abandoned and Lost Fishing/Aquaculture Gear, and Microplastics and Microfibers working groups met virtually in February 2025 to review three years of reported progress by goal, strategy and action and determined which actions should be retained and which should be revised, combined, or deleted altogether.

NOAA's Marine Debris Program is also providing funding to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County for removal of approximately 1,000 derelict lobster fishing traps from Long Island Sound in New York and Connecticut.

DEEP, in cooperation with the Menunkatuck Audubon Society and Connecticut Audubon Society, has installed monofilament fishing line recycling receptacles at inland and coastal sites around the state to encourage less waste line in the environment. The disposed fishing line is collected by volunteers and then sent to a company that recycles it to make underwater habitat structures for fish.

b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

None of these changes was a 309-driven or a CZM-specific change.

c. Characterize the outcomes and likely future outcomes of the changes.

We anticipate continued engagement with DEEP's NGO partners, the Long Island Sound partnership, and CT Sea Grant, and continued participation on the Marine Debris Action Plan working groups, to meet marine debris reduction goals and determine if there are other factors contributing to the declining trend indicated by beach cleanup data.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High	_____
Medium	_____
Low	__X___

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

Marine debris is considered a low priority enhancement area for this assessment because of the many programs already in place to address the various sources of marine debris. Feedback from DEEP engagement with NGO stakeholders, partners, marine debris plan working groups, as well as the public engagement during beach cleanup events all contributed to marine debris being assigned a low priority for this assessment.

Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Development and adoption of procedures to assess, consider, and control cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, including the collective effect on various individual uses or activities on coastal resources, such as coastal wetlands and fishery resources. §309(a)(5)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment:

Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. *Using National Ocean Economics Program Data on population and housing, the change in population and housing units in the state's coastal counties between 2014 and 2019 (the most recent 5-year period for which data is available) is shown in the table below:*

Trends in Coastal Population and Housing Units

	2017	2021	Percent Change (2017-2021)
Number of people	Fairfield County: 950,424 Middlesex County: 165,832 New Haven County: 868,204 New London County: 272,960 **All Counties: 2,257,420**	Fairfield County: 957,231 Middlesex County: 164,660 New Haven County: 864,819 New London County: 268,761 **All Counties: 2,255,471**	Fairfield County: 0.72% Middlesex County: -0.71% New Haven County: -0.39% New London County: -1.54% **All Counties: -0.09%**
Number of housing units	Fairfield County: 367,886 Middlesex County: 75,513 New Haven County: 364,343 New London County: 121,335 **All Counties: 929,057**	Fairfield County: 376,773 Middlesex County: 76,250 New Haven County: 368,269 New London County: 122,634 **All Counties: 943,926**	Fairfield County: 2.42% Middlesex County: 0.98% New Haven County: 1.08% New London County: 1.07% **All Counties: 1.60%**

2. *Using data from the University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR), the status and trends for various land uses in the state's coastal counties between 1995 and 2015 are shown in the table below:*

Distribution of Land Cover Types in Coastal Counties

Land Cover Type	Land Area Coverage in 2015 (Acres)	Percentage Gain/Loss Since 1995 (Acres)
Developed	348,582	7.19
Turf and Grass	141,067	11.65
Other Grasses	27,591	-10.73
Agriculture	68,108	-10.81
Deciduous Forest	696,192	-3.11

Coniferous Forest	63,140	-2.15
Water	58,531	-2.27
Non-forested Wetland	5,644	-0.90
Forested Wetland	56,109	-0.92
Tidal Wetland	14,493	-1.95
Barren Land	9,867	-5.09
Utility Corridor	5,932	-1.31

3. *Using the most recently available Connecticut-based data from the University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research (UConn CLEAR), the status and trends for developed areas in the state's coastal counties between 1995 and 2015 are shown in the two tables below.*

Development Status and Trends for Coastal Counties (Acres)

	1995	2015	Percent Net Change
Land area developed	325,186	348,582	7.19
Impervious surface area	143,092	150,058	4.87

How Land Use Is Changing in Coastal Counties

Land Cover Type	Areas Lost to Development Between 1995-2015 (Acres)
Other Grasses	-3,317
Agriculture	-8,251
Deciduous Forest	-22,323
Coniferous Forest	-1,389
Water	-1,359
Non-forested Wetland	-51
Forested Wetland	-523
Tidal Wetland	-288
Barren Land	-529
Utility Corridor	-79

1. Briefly characterize how the coastal shoreline has changed in the past five years due to development, including potential changes to shoreline structures such as groins, bulkheads and other shoreline stabilization structures, and docks and piers. If available, include quantitative data that may be available from permitting databases or other resources about changes in shoreline structures.

   The CCMA promotes the use of nonstructural solutions to flood and erosion problems and allows structural solutions such as bulkheads and groins in very limited circumstances to protect water-dependent uses, infrastructure like roadways and bridges, and residences constructed as of January 1, 1995. As such, very few new shoreline flood and erosion control structures are approved locally and through DEEP's coastal regulatory programs. During the previous five-year assessment period, a total of 37 coastal site plan applications for new shoreline flood and erosion control structures located landward of DEEP's Coastal Jurisdiction Line were reviewed by LWRD. According to LWRD's

coastal regulatory database for activities conducted waterward of the coastal jurisdiction line, a total of four new groins/bulkheads were authorized for residential parcels, four were authorized for water-dependent uses, and one was authorized for a coastal municipality since the previous 309 assessment.

In addition, a total of 241 residential new docks were also authorized, half of which were covered by the General Permit for 4/40 docks (structures comprised of a fixed pier, ramp and float, or any part or combination thereof, which is accessory to a residential property, does not extend further waterward than the distance to a depth of -4 feet mean low water or a distance of 40 feet from mean high water, whichever is shortest). Four water-dependent facilities and 3 municipalities were also issued authorizations for dock structures.

2. Briefly summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, such as water quality, shoreline hardening, and habitat fragmentation, since the last assessment.

   CT DEEP continues to administer a Water Monitoring Program, performing an intensive year-round water quality monitoring program in Long Island Sound, the most recent results of which are reported in the 2022 Integrated Water Quality Report to Congress. The 2022 report found that, during the summer, water quality in over 50% of marine waters continues to be impaired and does not support fish or other aquatic life. These continued impairments are due to low dissolved oxygen in the Sound and several coastal embayments, which is caused by excess nutrients. DEEP continues to implement its long-standing nitrogen reduction program for Long Island Sound, including the Second Generation Nitrogen Strategy developed in 2017 and updated in 2020 to address nutrient loading in coastal embayments. Further, watershed management plans, developed for several coastal embayments in an effort to address nitrogen loading issues, continue to be implemented and updated as appropriate. With respect to recreational use of the Sound's waters, the state's coastal beaches are tested weekly during high use summer months and consistently meet water quality standards.

   CT DEEP also continues to partner with the UConn CLEAR in development and implementation of projects and tools to help DEEP and municipalities protect water quality through improved land use decisions. Some of the programs include support to Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System communities, and a rain garden mobile application

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state-level changes (positive or negative) in the development and adoption of procedures to assess, consider, and control cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, including the collective effect on various individual uses or activities on coastal resources, such as coastal wetlands and fishery resources, since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Management of Cumulative and Secondary Impacts of Development

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	Y
Guidance documents	Y	Y	N
Management plans (including SAMPs)	Y	Y	N

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
    a. Describe the significance of the changes.

    Connecticut saw significant changes to the CCMA related to coastal development that is currently regulated by municipal land use authorities. Public Act 25-33 was passed during the 2025 legislative session and requires that a copy of each coastal site plan application submitted for any activity proposed on a site that contains tidal wetlands, beaches, or dunes be referred to DEEP for review and comment. This will provide DEEP LWRD with a better understanding of coastal development that could potentially adversely impact sensitive coastal resources and coastal water quality.

    b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

    The passage of Public Act 25-33 was a CZM-driven change but was not a 309 effort.

    c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

    The changes to the CCMA regarding mandatory municipal CSPR referrals will give DEEP review responsibility for activities that are proposed on sites that contain sensitive coastal resources and adjacent coastal waters, thereby giving DEEP a better understanding of shoreline development and redevelopment activities. We anticipate improved resource protection and more positive outcomes associated with development adjacent to tidal wetlands, beaches, and dunes, including conservation of these resources to provide ecosystem services like flood storage and erosion control, as well as support for tidal wetland migration.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

    High _____
    Medium __X__
    Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

CT DEEP possess a vast scope of existing programs already in place to control cumulative and secondary impacts. DEEP continues to administer its comprehensive coastal nonpoint source pollution control program, nitrogen control program, and a No Discharge Area program which all adequately address cumulative and secondary impacts to water quality. Most, if not all, coastal municipalities have incorporated stormwater management into their zoning regulations and require adherence to Connecticut's Stormwater Quality Manual, which was recently updated to strongly encourage Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure practices. The new referral requirement for municipal coastal site plan review applications affecting tidal wetlands, beached, and dunes will also provide addition DEEP oversight for coastal development. LWRD's continued standing engagement with stakeholders through the Long Island Sound Partnership's work groups that include UConn CLEAR, Connecticut Sea Grant, and several NGOs including Save the Sound, and LWRD's direct participation in the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission's annual nonpoint source conference all helped inform DEEP's decision to assign Cumulative and Secondary Impacts a medium priority under this 309 assessment.

Special Area Management Planning

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Preparing and implementing special area management plans for important coastal areas. §309(a)(6)

The Coastal Zone Management Act defines a special area management plan (SAMP) as "a comprehensive plan providing for natural resource protection and reasonable coastal-dependent economic growth containing a detailed and comprehensive statement of policies; standards and criteria to guide public and private uses of lands and waters; and mechanisms for timely implementation in specific geographic areas within the coastal zone. In addition, SAMPs provide for increased specificity in protecting natural resources, reasonable coastal-dependent economic growth, improved protection of life and property in hazardous areas, including those areas likely to be affected by land subsidence, sea level rise, or fluctuating water levels of the Great Lakes, and improved predictability in governmental decision making."

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states and territories.)*
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, identify geographic areas in the coastal zone subject to use conflicts that may be able to be addressed through a SAMP. This can include areas that are already covered by a SAMP but where new issues or conflicts have emerged that are not addressed through the current SAMP.

Geographic Area	**Opportunities for New or Updated Special Area Management Plans** Major conflicts/issues
Lower Connecticut Rive	Invasive species especially common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and the submerged aquatic plants water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) and Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*); impaired habitat; development pressure
Lower Thames River	New London State Pier support for wind turbine component assembly, distribution, and transport; potential energy infrastructure development (cable landings); potential flooding of waterfront commercial areas
CT Coastal Zone	The effects of climate change (e.g., sea-level rise, marsh migration, more frequent and extensive flooding) are expected to pose use conflicts in both the near and long term; impaired habitat; development pressure; retreat in the face of sea level rise

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends of SAMPs since the last assessment.

   There are no other data or reports available.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any significant state- or territory-level management changes (positive or negative) that could help prepare and implement SAMPs in the coastal zone.

Significant Changes in Special Area Management Planning

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
SAMP policies, or case law interpreting these	N	N	N
SAMP plans	N	N	N

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
    a. Describe the significance of the changes;
    b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes; and
    c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

    There were no significant changes since the previous assessment and as such there is no additional information provided.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

    High _____
    Medium _____
    Low __X__

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

    Historically, the scope of LWRD's existing planning initiatives has resulted in a limited need for formal Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs) within Connecticut's coastal zone. The conflicts and issues that might warrant development of SAMPs can more readily be addressed through existing state and municipal planning processes. In many cases, locally adopted Harbor Management Plans (HMPs), administered in coordination with municipal Harbor Management Commissions and state-appointed harbor masters, have provided a framework for addressing site-specific navigation, mooring, and waterfront use issues. These local plans and authorities have, to some extent, fulfilled functions that might otherwise be addressed through SAMPs. The US Army Corps of Engineers has also taken on a concerted effort to eradicate Hydrilla from the lower Connecticut River, obviating the need for development of a SAMP.

    Accordingly, the existence of planning authorities in conjunction with LWRD's standing coordination with stakeholders including municipal land use commissions and staff, Harbor Management Commissions, and harbor masters all helped inform this category's low priority ranking for this 309 assessment.

Ocean and Great Lakes Resources

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Planning for the use of ocean [and Great Lakes] resources. §309(a)(7)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states and territories.)*
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. Understanding the ocean and Great Lakes economy can help improve management of the resources it depends on. Using Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW),[13] indicate the status of the ocean and Great Lakes economy as of 2021 (the most recent data) in the tables below. Include graphs and figures, as appropriate, to help illustrate the information. Note ENOW data are not available for the territories. The territories can provide alternative data, if available, or a general narrative, to capture the value of their ocean economy.

Status of Ocean and Great Lakes Economy for Coastal Counties (2021)

	All Ocean Sectors	Living Resources	Marine Construction	Ship & Boat Building	Marine Transportation	Offshore Mineral Extraction	Tourism & Recreation
Employment (# of Jobs)	*62,789*	*914*	*268 in 2013*	*12,576*	*13,056*	*342*	*35,494*
Establishments (# of Establishments)	*3,189*	*83*	*40 in 2013*	*20*	*129*	*42*	*2,872*
Wages (Millions of Dollars)	*3,000*	*31.5*	*18.7 in 2013*	*1,300*	*611.5*	*15.1*	*1,100*
GDP (Millions of Dollars)	*6,500*	*77.5*	*35.74 in 2013*	*3,000*	*895.1*	*82.6*	*2,400*

[13] *coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/enow.html*. If you select any coastal county for your state, you are directed to various data displays for that county. In the upper left of the screen, click the "State" box, to the left of the county box so that the state name will be highlighted. Now the data will reflect statewide data for all of the state's coastal counties. Make sure "2021" is selected for the year (top right corner). You can then click through the sector types by selecting the icons along the top and the type of economic data (employment, wages, GDP, etc.), by clicking through the icons on the left.

Change in Ocean and Great Lakes Economy for Coastal Counties (2005-2021)[14]

	All Ocean Sectors	Living Resources	Marine Construction	Ship & Boat Building	Marine Transportation	Offshore Mineral Extraction	Tourism & Recreation
Employment (# of Jobs)	*19,705*	*554*	*85 (2009-2013)*	*4,047*	*7,560*	*-180*	*6,522*
Establishments (# of Establishments)	*761*	*15*	*-5 (2009-2013)*	*0*	*6*	*19*	*720*
Wages (Millions of Dollars)	*1,493*	*20.4*	*7.9 (2009-2013)*	*681*	*308.5*	*-12.1*	*494*
GDP (Millions of Dollars)	*3,539*	*38.9*	*13.4 (209-2013)*	*1,948*	*344.9*	*10.6*	*1,189*

2. Understanding existing uses within ocean and Great Lakes waters can help reduce use conflicts and minimize threats when planning for ocean and Great Lakes resources. Using Ocean Reports,[15] indicate the number of uses within the ocean or Great Lakes waters off of your state. To avoid duplication, energy uses (including pipelines and cables) are reported under "Energy and Government Facility Siting" in the following template. However, feel free to include energy uses in this table as well if listing all uses within ocean and Great Lakes waters in one place is preferred. Add additional lines, as needed, to include additional uses that are important to your state. Note: The Ocean Reports tool does not include data for the Great Lakes states. Great Lakes states should fill in the table as best they can using other data sources.

Uses within Ocean or Great Lakes Waters

Type of Use	Number of Sites
Federal sand and gravel leases *(Completed)*	Not applicable
Federal sand and gravel leases *(Active)*	Not applicable
Federal sand and gravel leases *(Expired)*	Not applicable
Federal sand and gravel leases *(Proposed)*	Not applicable
Beach Nourishment Projects	41
Ocean Disposal Sites	28
Principle Ports *(Number and Total Tonnage)*	2; 12,580,906
Coastal Maintained Channels	28
Designated Anchorage Areas	33
Danger Zones and Restricted Areas	1
Other (please specify)	n/a

3. In the table below, characterize how the threats to and use conflicts over ocean and Great Lakes resources in the state's or territory's coastal zone have changed since the last assessment.

[14] Trend data is available at the bottom of the page for each sector and type of economic data. Mouse over the data points for 2005 and 2021 to obtain the actual values and determine the change by subtracting 2005 data from 2021.

[15] *coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/ort.html*. Select the "view quick reports" button and enter the name of your state or territory in the search bar. Some larger states may have the "quick reports" for their state waters broken into several different reports. Click on the "state waters" reports to view. Note the Ocean Reports tool also generates "quick reports" for national estuarine research reserve boundaries in your state. These reports are just a subset of the "state waters" report(s) so you can ignore the reserve "quick reports." Use the icons on the left hand side to select different categories: general information, energy and minerals, natural resources and conservation, oceanographic and biophysical, transportation and infrastructure, and economics and commerce. Scroll through each category to find the data needed to complete the table. The top six categories in the table above are in the "energy and minerals" section while the other information to complete the table can be found under the "transport
ation and infrastructure" section.

Significant Changes to Ocean and Great Lakes Resources and Uses

Resource/Use **Change in the Threat to the Resource or Use Conflict**	**Since Last Assessment** (↑, ↓, –, unknown)
Benthic habitat (including coral reefs)	The Long Island Sound Blue Plan established "Ecologically Significant Areas" (ESA) which are mapped and represented in the CT ECO Blue Plan Map Viewer. Potential conflicts with and threats to these resources remain but are significantly reduced due to improved knowledge of their location within Long Island Sound and Blue Plan policies adopted to protect them. Benthic Habitat: The Long Island Sound Blue Plan has identified and mapped Ecologically Significant Areas that include cold water corals, hard bottom and complex seafloor, sessile mollusk dominated communities, and managed shellfish beds. Waters: The threat to the resource (via measures of hypoxia) remains high and unchanged as result of continued nitrogen loading and DEEP's nitrogen reduction strategy remains in place to address nitrogen sources. Submerged Aquatic Vegetation: No change. The degree of threat to eelgrass remains high due to point and non-point nitrogen enrichment, but research and coordination with UConn and the CT NERR continues to determine how to improve the success of eelgrass restoration. Eelgrass Extent - Long Island Sound Study

Living marine resources (fish, shellfish, marine mammals, birds, etc.)	The Long Island Sound Blue Plan established "Ecologically Significant Areas" (ESA) which are mapped and represented in the CT ECO Blue Plan Map Viewer. Potential conflicts with and threats to these resources remain but are significantly reduced due to improved knowledge of their location within Long Island Sound and Blue Plan policies adopted to protect them. Coastal Birds: Threats to coastal shorebirds are high and unchanged since the last assessment as human use, development pressure, and increased flooding work to constrict and/or degrade their habitat. Inventory of Human Uses and Natural Resources 2018 Fish: Threats to finfish can be classified as moderate and unchanged since the last assessment. Primary threats result from ongoing increases in water temperatures as well as fishing effort. Inventory of Human Uses and Natural Resources 2018 Shellfish: Threats to shellfish are difficult to quantify and are listed as unknown at this point. Using the metric of approved acreage from the last assessment, CT has seen nearly 40K acres downgraded from restricted to prohibited. However, these resulted from administrative changes rather than water quality issues. Inventory of Human Uses and Natural Resources 2018 Lobsters: Threats to lobsters are high as a result of water quality issues, water temperatures, and fishing effort, and remain unchanged since the last assessment. Observational data indicates that lobster count measures in LIS Trawl surveys are minimal. (http://longislandsoundstudy.net/indicator/lobster-landings/)

Sand/gravel	The threat to sand and gravel remains moderate, unchanged since the last assessment. Potential adverse impacts on sand and gravel resources are mitigated by CGS § 22a-361(e)(1) which requires the payment of a fee for sand and gravel extraction. Sand and gravel extraction for construction aggregates has not taken place for decades. However, demand for sand for beach nourishment, particularly following periods of damaging coastal storms, can increase pressure for offshore sand extraction.
Cultural/historic	The Long Island Sound Blue Plan established "Significant Human Use Areas" (SHUA) which are mapped and represented in the CT ECO Blue Plan Map Viewer. Potential threats to and conflicts with and from these uses remain but are significantly reduced due to improved knowledge of their location within Long Island Sound and Blue Plan policies adopted to protect them. Impacts to cultural and historic resources through development remains a low threat. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviews permit applications when necessary to ensure cultural resources are properly protects. Environmental Review Procedures
Other (please specify)	N/A

Transportation/navigation	The Long Island Sound Blue Plan established "Significant Human Use Areas" (SHUA) which are mapped and represented in the CT ECO Blue Plan Map Viewer. Potential threats to and conflicts with and from these uses remain but are significantly reduced due to improved knowledge of their location within Long Island Sound and Blue Plan policies adopted to protect them. The threat posed by conflicts from transportation/navigation is moderate and remains unchanged since the last assessment. LIS has heavily trafficked commercial shipping lanes and threats from accidents, particularly fuel/chemical spills, cannot be ignored. Reliance on open-water disposal to address the needs of navigation and maritime commerce remains high absent a realized plan to help reduce disposal through beneficial uses such as habitat restoration
Offshore development[16]	The Long Island Sound Blue Plan established "Significant Human Use Areas" (SHUA) which are mapped and represented in the CT ECO Blue Plan Map Viewer. Potential threats to and conflicts with and from these uses remain but are significantly reduced due to improved knowledge of their location within Long Island Sound and Blue Plan policies adopted to protect them. The threat posed by use conflicts resulting from offshore development (particularly cables and pipelines) remains high and **has marginally increased** since the last assessment. Interest from the energy sector to deliver natural gas and other products to Long Island remains present. Energy projects coming online have generated specific discussions of proposals for transmission cables through LIS to the CT shoreline.
Energy production	Change to this use conflict has decreased, as no substantive interest in energy facilities within LIS has been received by LWRD since the last assessment

Fishing (commercial and recreational)	No Change
Recreation/tourism	Unchanged. Lack of funding for new recreational and tourism facilities remains an issue. Ongoing impediments to public access (e.g., shoreline development, local NIMBYism) continue to pose issues.
Sand/gravel extraction	N/A
Dredge disposal	The Long Island Sound Blue Plan established "Significant Human Use Areas" (SHUA) which are mapped and represented in the CT ECO Blue Plan Map Viewer. Potential threats to and conflicts with and from these uses remain but are significantly reduced due to improved knowledge of their location within Long Island Sound and Blue Plan policies adopted to protect them. Dredge disposal areas are classified as SHUAs by the Blue Plan. The threat posed by conflicts over dredged disposal remains high. Since the last assessment, the Eastern Long Island Sound Disposal Site has been utilized by Electric Boat. However, disputes from the NY coastal program have prevented any other use.
Aquaculture	The Long Island Sound Blue Plan established "Significant Human Use Areas" (SHUA) which are mapped and represented in the CT ECO Blue Plan Map Viewer. Potential threats to and conflicts with and from these uses remain but are significantly reduced due to improved knowledge of their location within Long Island Sound and Blue Plan policies adopted to protect them. Aquaculture is classified as both an ESA and a SHUA by the Blue Plan. CT's aquaculture industry continues to diversify and grow. The emerging seaweed aquaculture industry may increase potential conflict with shellfish aquaculture, boating and coastal residents. Conflicts between boat mooring fields and leased shellfish beds have **been increasing**.
Other (please specify)	N/A

[16] Offshore development includes underwater cables and pipelines, although any infrastructure specifically associated with the energy industry should be captured under the "energy production" category.

4. For those ocean and Great Lakes resources and uses in the table above that had an increase in threat to the resource or increased use conflict in the state's or territory's coastal zone since the last assessment, characterize the major contributors to that increase. Place an "X" in the column if the use or phenomenon is a major contributor to the increase.

Major Contributors to an Increase in Threat or Use Conflict to Ocean and Great Lakes Resources

	Land-based development	Offshore development	Polluted runoff	Invasive species	Fishing (Commercial and Recreational)	Aquaculture	Recreation	Marine Transportation	Dredging	Sand/Mineral Extraction	Ocean Acidification	Other (Specify)
Offshore Development		X			X	X	X	X				
Aquaculture							X					

5. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends of ocean and Great Lakes resources or threats to those resources since the last assessment to augment the national data sets.

   The Long Island Sound Blue Plan Development Team created an Ecologically Significant Areas story map Long Island Sound Ecologically Significant Areas to help explain the data assembled into the ESAs. This tool uses the Blue Plan Viewer to help visualize this data. There is a similar story map to help explain Significant Human Use Areas Long Island Sound Blue Plan: Significant Human Use Areas.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if any significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) in the management of ocean and Great Lakes resources have occurred since the last assessment?

Significant Changes to Management of Ocean and Great Lakes Resources

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	Y
Regional comprehensive ocean/Great Lakes management plans	Y	N/A	N
State comprehensive ocean/Great Lakes management plans	Y	N	Y
Single-sector management plans	Y	N	Y

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
    a. Describe the significance of the changes.

        DEEP adopted regulations to implement a release-based cleanup program and sunset the Connecticut Transfer Act.

        Special Act 25-17 directs DEEP to develop a plan for beneficial use of dredged sediment by February 1, 2027.

        The Long Island Sound Blue Plan is undergoing its first statutorily required five-year review to determine if any revisions or updates are necessary.

        The Dredged Material Management Plan, which was the product of previous 309 strategies, instructs Connecticut to "reduce and or eliminate" open water dredged material disposal. As a result, DEEP has partnered with the CT Port Authority and the US Army Corps of Engineers to identify alternatives for management of non-federal dredged material from Connecticut waters. Building from the DMMP, a wide variety of placement alternatives are being investigated, including beneficial reuse, upland disposal, CAD cells, and construction of confined disposal facilities. The study team is gathering input from various stakeholders and expects a draft of the report to be ready in 2026.

        DEEP is implementing a Use of Beneficially Reclaimed Materials in Large Scale Filling Pilot Program that creates a new pathway to establish in-state facilities that can beneficially manage dredge materials.

    b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

        The release-based cleanup regulations and the passage of Special Act 25-17 were not 309- or CZM-driven.

        The development of the Blue Plan and the review of the plan for potential revisions, and the efforts supporting improved management of dredged materials are both 309-driven and CZM-driven.

    c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

        The release-based regulations will streamline DEEP permitting approaches that will drive down the cost and time to manage sediments upland of dredging projects.

        The review of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan will enable the Blue Plan Advisory Committee to determine if additional policies are necessary, as well as determine if

additional ESAs and SHUAs should be identified. Any revision or strengthening of the Blue Plan will continue to help reduce and avoid conflicts associated with offshore development in the Sound.

The requirements of Special Act 25-17 will enable DEEP to identify navigable channels, marinas, port facilities and other potential sources of suitable dredged sediment, and the wetlands that may be best suited for the receipt of such dredged sediment. The Special Act also requires DEEP to develop technical and regulatory guidance for wetland restoration using such dredged sediment, which will address potential dredged material management conflicts and improve the health and resilience of tidal wetlands.

3. Indicate if your state or territory has a comprehensive ocean or Great Lakes management plan.

Comprehensive Ocean/Great Lakes Management Plan	State Plan	Regional Plan
Completed plan (Y/N) (If yes, specify year completed)	Y	Y
Under development (Y/N)	N	N
Web address (if available)	www.ct.gov/deep/LISBluePlan	https://neoceanplanning.org/plan/
Area covered by plan	CT offshore waters of LIS	Northeast region, including CT LIS

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High __X__
Medium _____
Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

Several programmatic issues in this category have been addressed through previous Section 309 strategies, especially with respect to dredged material management which has been a contentious issue between New York and Connecticut. Because conflicts still arise for smaller marinas, leading to higher disposal expense for their dredging projects, stakeholders are still interested in alternative management methods including beneficial reuse projects and confined aquatic disposal (CAD) cells. Ongoing efforts spurred by previous 309 strategies are underway to identify alternatives to open water disposal of dredged material.

The implementation of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan since the previous assessment has greatly improved the level of project review coordination and stakeholder engagement, especially in the areas of significant human uses and living marine resources. The plan has been used by DEEP LWRD in the review of several mooring field applications to ensure that conflicts with aquaculture activities and resources are reduced. The plan is required by statute to be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least every five years, and the first statutorily required review of the current plan is underway as this assessment was being drafted. The required plan review will provide insight into how the plan can continue to provide valuable information on the resources and human uses of Long Island Sound and will identify ways to improve the plan. The extensive outreach and Blue Plan sector

stakeholder engagement associated with the first review of the Blue Plan as conducted by the Blue Plan Advisory Committee and supported by LWRD staff revealed that the plan is a valuable resource, and that efforts to improve its visibility are needed. In addition, another five-year review will be required during this assessment timeframe. Accordingly, the category of Oceans and Great Lakes Resources has been identified as a high priority for this 309 assessment.

Energy and Government Facility Siting

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Adoption of procedures and enforceable policies to help facilitate the siting of energy facilities and Government facilities and energy-related activities and Government activities which may be of greater than local significance. §309(a)(8)[17]

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states and territories.)*
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, characterize the status and trends of different types of energy facilities and activities in the state's or territory's coastal zone based on best-available data. If available, identify the approximate number of facilities by type. For ocean-facing states and territories (not Great Lakes states), Ocean Reports[18] includes existing data for many energy facilities and activities.

[17] CZMA § 309(a)(8) is derived from program approval requirements in CZMA § 306(d)(8), which states:

> "The management program provides for adequate consideration of the national interest involved in planning for, and managing the coastal zone, including the siting of facilities such as energy facilities which are of greater than local significance. In the case of energy facilities, the Secretary shall find that the State has given consideration to any applicable national or interstate energy plan or program."

NOAA regulations at 15 C.F.R. § 923.52 further describes what states need to do regarding national interest and consideration of interests that are greater than local interests.

[18] *coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/ort.html.* Select the "view quick reports" button and enter the name of your state or territory in the search bar. Some larger states may have the "quick reports" for their state waters broken into several different reports. Click on the "state waters" reports to view. Note the Ocean Reports tool also generates "quick reports" for national estuarine research reserve boundaries in your state but this is just a subset of the "state waters" report(s) so you can ignore the reserve "quick reports." Click on the wind turbine icon on the left ("energy and minerals") for information on energy production. While outside your coastal zone, you may also want to consider facilities/activities in "federal waters" that may have effects on your coastal zone.

Status and Trends in Energy Facilities and Activities in the Coastal Zone

Type of Energy Facility/Activity	**Exists in Coastal Zone** (# or Y/N)	**Change in Existing Facilities/Activities Since Last Assessment** (↑, ↓, –, unknown)	**Proposed in Coastal Zone** (# or Y/N)	**Change in Proposed Facilities/Activities Since Last Assessment** (↑, ↓, –, unknown)
Pipelines	Y	-	N	-
Electrical grid (transmission cables)	Y	-	N	-
Electrical grid (transmission line improvements)	Y	↑	Y	↑
Ports	Y	New London State Pier expansion to accommodate off-shore wind turbine assembly New Haven Port expansion to deepen harbor channel to 42 feet from 35 feet	N	↑
Liquid natural gas (LNG)	N	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Oil)	Y	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Gas)	Y	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Coal)	N	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Nuclear)	Y	Millstone Plant -	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Wave)	N	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Tidal)	N	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Current: ocean, lake, river)	N	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Hydropower)	N	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Ocean thermal energy conversion)	N	-	N	-
Electric Power Facilities (Solar)	Y	↑	Y	↑
Electric Power Facilities (Biomass)	N	-	N	-
Other (please specify) Fuel Cells	Y	↑	Y	Various developers proposed the construction of fuel cell facilities in Milford, Stratford, New Haven, and West Haven

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific information, data, or reports on the status and trends for energy facilities and activities of greater than local significance in the coastal zone since the last assessment.

    - **ISO New England** is the independent, not-for-profit company authorized by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to perform three critical, complex, interconnected roles (grid operation, market administration & power system planning) for the region spanning Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and most of Maine. Together, these three responsibilities help protect the health of the region's economy and the well-being of its people by ensuring the constant availability of competitively priced wholesale electricity—today and for future generations. To aid in power system planning, reliability studies, and other processes, the ISO produces detailed long-term forecasts of the demand for electricity in New England. The ISO also forecasts the long-term growth of resources like energy efficiency and distributed generation that may impact the ISO's planning functions. The ISO's latest annual forecast projects an increase of over 11% in annual regional electricity use between 2025 and 2034 due in part to state policy goals to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by increasing renewable energy while electrifying heating and transportation.

    - **The Connecticut Siting Council** is statutorily required to provide an annual review of Connecticut's electricity needs and resources. The most recent of these reviews is detailed in the document entitled "Connecticut Siting Council 2024 Review of the Ten-Year Forecast of Connecticut Electric Load and Resources." All planned and proposed transmission lines in Connecticut are upland; no offshore projects or facilities are proposed. In addition to annual reviews of loads and resources the Connecticut Siting Council also publishes an annual report to the Governor, the latest of which can be accessed here.

3. Briefly characterize the existing status and trends for federal government facilities and activities of greater than local significance[19] in the state's coastal zone since the last assessment.

    Since the previous assessment, the US Navy has begun facility improvements, including dredging the Thames River adjacent to SUBASE New London in Groton and Ledyard as authorized by LWRD. These improvements will allow for accommodation of the new Columbia class of submarines. In addition, the National Coast Guard Museum also adjacent to the Thames River in New London has completed the permitting and coastal site plan review processes.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) that could facilitate or impede energy and government facility siting and activities have occurred since the last assessment.

[19] The CMP should make its own assessment of what government facilities may be considered "greater than local significance" in its coastal zone, but these facilities could include military installations or a significant federal government complex. An individual federal building may not rise to a level worthy of discussion here beyond a very cursory (if any at all) mention).

Significant Changes in Energy and Government Facility Management

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpretations	Y	N	N
State comprehensive siting plans or procedures	Y	N	N

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
    a. Describe the significance of the changes;
    b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes; and
    c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

    While there have been no significant changes since the last 309 assessment to the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, which was developed as a previous Section 309 strategy and adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2021, the plan and its policies will continue to be invaluable in helping design offshore energy projects, regardless of the type of facility or activity, to minimize conflicts between energy development and ecologically significant areas and significant human uses of the Sound. The Blue Plan is discussed in more detail in the Ocean Resources section.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

    High _____
    Medium __X__
    Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

    Connecticut's energy future will likely have a significant impact on existing infrastructure and natural resources in the coastal area and offshore, especially with respect to enhanced resiliency of existing power generating plants as well as the potential expansion of electric transmission facilities from neighboring states' offshore wind facilities into Long Island Sound. However, the current state and municipal regulatory framework, including enhancements offered through the Blue Plan, can adequately handle these challenging projects, but the need to support the Blue Plan with the best available information and data regarding the natural resources within Long Island Sound and the uses of Long Island Sound is an ongoing priority as addressed by the Ocean Resources section of this assessment. The significant sector outreach and engagement conducted as part of the first five-year review of the Blue Plan helped inform DEEP's decision to assign a medium priority to the Energy and Government Facility enhancement area.

Aquaculture

Section 309 Enhancement Objective: Adoption of procedures and policies to evaluate and facilitate the siting of public and private aquaculture facilities in the coastal zone, which will enable states to formulate, administer, and implement strategic plans for marine aquaculture. §309(a)(9)

Phase 1 (High-level) Assessment: *(Must be completed by all states and territories.)*
Purpose: To quickly determine whether the enhancement area is a high-priority enhancement objective for the CMP that warrants a more in-depth assessment. The more in-depth assessments of Phase II will help the CMP understand key problems and opportunities that exist for program enhancement and determine the effectiveness of existing management efforts to address those problems.

Resource Characterization

1. In the table below, characterize the existing status and trends of aquaculture facilities in the state's coastal zone based on the best-available data. Your state Sea Grant Program may have information to help with this assessment.[20]

Status and Trends of Aquaculture Facilities and Activities

Type of Facility/Activity	Number of Facilities[21]	Approximate Economic Value	Change Since Last Assessment (↑, ↓, –, unknown)
Shellfish operations	40	$15,000,000	↓
Kelp operations	9	Unknown	↑
Eel grow-out farm	0	Unknown	↓
Private oyster hatchery	1	Unknown	–
Commercial oyster hatchery	0	Unknown	↓

2. If available, briefly list and summarize the results of any additional state- or territory-specific data or reports on the status and trends or potential impacts from aquaculture activities in the coastal zone since the last assessment.

   CT DEEP-LWRD itself has not prepared any data or report. The National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance requires the Shellfish Authority in each shellfish producing state to determine and report to the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference the volume of shellfish harvested in that state. The intent of this requirement is to allow the authority (in CT, DA/BA) to accurately assess the risk of illness associated with shellfish produced in the state.

[20] While focused on statewide aquaculture data rather than just within the coastal zone, the *Census of Aquaculture* (*agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Census_of_Aquaculture/)* may help in developing your aquaculture assessment. The census is conducted every 10 years and the last report was released in 2018. The report provides a variety of state-specific aquaculture data to understand current status and recent trends.

[21] Be as specific as possible. For example, if you have specific information of the number of each type of facility or activity, note that. If you only have approximate figures, note "more than" or "approximately" before the number. If information is unknown, note that and use the narrative section below to provide a brief qualitative description based on the best information available.

In order to meet the requirements, Connecticut's shellfish program will collect accurate shellfish production data, including that associated with aquaculture production, via the use of an online reporting system that provides ease of use and confidentiality for producers, while providing data management and data security for managers and program partners. Data to be collected for each harvest trip includes date, Connecticut shipper number, vessel, shellfish growing area fished, species harvested, quantity harvested, and size class harvested.

The Connecticut shellfish industry was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to immediate and prolonged loss of markets as seafood distribution facilities and restaurants closed. While Connecticut oyster landings have since recovered to the past seven-year annual average, hard clam landings have continued to decline. Annual sales have decreased since the annual maximum of $20.5 million in 2008 to just over $2 million in 2022. Landings have steadily declined, with no evidence of economic recovery, since 2008.

Management Characterization

1. Indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there have been any state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) that could facilitate or impede the siting of public or private aquaculture facilities in the coastal zone.

Significant Changes in Aquaculture Management

Management Category	**Employed by State or Territory** (Y or N)	**CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ** (Y or N)	**Significant Changes Since Last Assessment** (Y or N)
Aquaculture comprehensive siting plans or procedures	Y	Y	Y
Other aquaculture statutes, regulations, policies, or case law interpreting these	Y	Y	Y

2. For any management categories with significant changes, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information:
    a. Describe the significance of the changes.

    Most of the significant changes in aquaculture management have come about through efforts of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture/Bureau of Aquaculture (DOA/BOA).

    The regulatory process for marine aquaculture and research involving aquatic organisms in Connecticut involves application review by state and federal agencies, as well as advisory comments by municipal shellfish commissions. As such, the process can become complex and burdensome if the applicant does not understand what is expected of them when completing an application. This has led to permitting delays, which are costly to producers, researchers and regulatory agencies. In an effort to

prevent delays and reduce the time to acquire the necessary permits, the Connecticut Aquaculture Permitting Workgroup[14] established a sub-committee to develop recommendations to streamline the aquaculture permitting process. The workgroup meets several times a year, but maintains regular coordination via phone and email to discuss projects, applications, and policies.

Furthermore, the group works collectively with permit staff, federal agencies, state agencies, and local universities to address concerns of the aquaculture industry and associated resource managers. The workgroup has developed a variety of educational materials to inform applicants of the requirements of the various types of aquaculture permits and licenses. The workgroup has also developed an updated Pre-Application Screening Form that allows regulating agencies to quickly determine if the location and activity place the project within the guidelines for the general aquaculture permitting process and State of Connecticut exemption, or if the project will require a more extensive application and review process.

In January of 2025, the Connecticut Aquaculture Permitting Work Group met and began working on new updated guidance for the Aquaculture Exemption Determination (AED) Permitting Process. Updates to the Guide to Marine Aquaculture Permitting were made to provide information about the regulatory process of commercial shellfish and seaweed aquaculture. In 2025 DOA/BOA also updated and released the Seaweed Hazards Guide for seaweed grown as a raw agricultural commodity.

The CT Shellfish Initiative/CT Shellfish Management Plan provides comprehensive policy guidance regarding state management and protection measures for molluscan shellfish resources in town and state waters. The effort involved multiple federal, state and local agencies, a broad and diverse group of stakeholders who identified policies and practices to protect and enhance the State's natural shellfish resources, to promote sustainable commercial harvest and agricultural viability. One of the visionary outcomes of the CT shellfish initiative was the need to create a Shellfish Restoration Guide. which was published in 2022.

The DOA/BOA also introduced a new management strategy to improve how the state handles weather-related shellfish harvest closures. Rainfall events are one of the most common reasons for shellfish area closures. Historically, DOA/BOA has closed Conditionally Approved areas after rainfall events that exceed established triggers for a minimum of seven days, allowing for work to begin on day eight. In 2023 Connecticut's coastline experienced frequent and large amounts rainfall events that resulted in a significant number of shellfish bed closures. Consequently, DOA/BOA analyzed historic and current water quality and shellfish tissue results and found that the data supported shortening the closures to five days, with work commencing on the sixth day, in numerous Conditionally Approved areas. The new approach was implemented in 2024 in key commercial harvest areas, including Greenwich, Darien, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Stratford, Milford, West Haven, New Haven, and East Haven.

The Long Island Sound Blue Plan was also developed as a previous Section 309 strategy and was adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2021. The Plan contains maps and descriptions of Ecologically Significant Areas and Significant Human Use Areas and

identifies aquaculture as both. The Plan is an important resource and tool in planning locations for aquaculture projects. Beginning in 2023, as part of the AED review process, DEEP Fisheries initiated a 30-day Public Notice to the fishing community for projects proposed within the Blue Plan Area. More detail about the Blue Plan can be found in the Ocean Resources section.

With respect to legislative changes, DEEP's Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse submitted a legislative proposal to clarify the applicability of the Aquaculture Gear Exemption from LWRD permitting. Public Act 22-143 amended CGS Section 22-11h (c) to change the reference from equipment and buoys marking them which do not otherwise require a permit under federal Army Corps of Engineers regulations to buoys that received a permit under such regulations.

b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

The DOA/BOA-led changes were neither 309 nor CZM-driven. The changes to the AED review process involving the 30-day Public Notice to the fishing community for projects proposed within the Blue Plan Area was a CZM-driven change. The legislative change to CGS Section 22-11h(c) was not a 309-driven change but was a CZM-driven change.

c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

The updates to the Guide to Marine Aquaculture Permitting are intended to help applicants understand how to use the Aquaculture Mapping Atlas to complete the required figures for applications. This new guidance will be evaluated with new applications before being finalized.

The most significant finding of the CT Shellfish Restoration Guide was the identification of oyster shell as the preferred substrate for restoration projects, and the need for shell recycling efforts in the state to provide a source of shell. The DOA/BOA and the DEEP developed an MOU that outlines the roles and authority of both agencies in shell recovery efforts, and worked together to develop Shell Recovery Guidance. The DOA/BOA also created an application for those wishing to conduct shell recovery, and an Oyster Habitat Restoration Application.

DOA/BOA efforts to safely shorten weather-related shellfish closures to five days, with work commencing on the sixth day, in numerous Conditionally Approved areas allowed key commercial harvest areas to commence operations more quickly and reduced downtime.

Since 2020, approximately 51 AEDs have been submitted to LWRD. Of these, 15 applications required additional permitting through mechanisms such as Structures, Dredging and Fill (SDF), Certificate of Permission (COP), or LIS General Permit (LISGP), while the majority proceeded without further permitting. Since then, about 12% of AED applications have fallen within the Blue Plan Area, and industries potentially affected by these proposed aquaculture projects have been notified.

Aquaculture Permits in the Blue Plan Area (Before and After 2023)

Permit Type	AED	SDF	COP	LISGP	Under Review	Total
Number of Permits	34	8	6	1	2	**51**
Total Blue Plan Area	5	2	1	0	N/A	**8**
Blue Plan Area After 2023	5	0	1	0	N/A	**6**

DEEP sought to amend CGS Sec. 22-11h(c) because one of the criteria for an aquaculture project to qualify for an exemption is that the project does not otherwise require a permit under federal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations. However, all aquaculture projects require a permit from the Corps, whether it be an Individual Permit, CT General Permit category of Pre-Construction Notification, or Self-Verification. It had been DEEP's interpretation that the statute was intended to apply only to individual Army Corps permits, which are used only for the most complex or controversial applications. In practice, the Interagency Aquaculture Working Group had followed this interpretation, and not required a permit under DEEP's coastal regulatory program pursuant to CGS sections 22a-359 through 22a-363f for Corps-authorized projects. The legislative change codified this practice and now provides certainty for agencies, applicants, and the general public.

Enhancement Area Prioritization

1. What level of priority is the enhancement area for the coastal management program?

High _____
Medium __X___
Low _____

2. Briefly explain the reason for this level of priority. Include input from stakeholder engagement, including the types of stakeholders engaged.

The state's planning for and regulation of aquaculture operations has been enhanced since the last assessment through several efforts, including the Long Island Sound Blue Plan which was a previous Section 309 strategy. Aquaculture operations are overseen and largely implemented by the DOA/BOA. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers exercises federal regulatory authority over aquaculture structures in state's waters. Many regulated activities in Connecticut's tidal, coastal, and navigable waters are covered under the Corps Programmatic General Permit (PGP), which essentially piggybacks the LWRD regulatory process. Most of the aquaculture activities are eligible for review under the PGP for Connecticut for which LWRD has already issued federal coastal consistency. Since LWRD maintains responsibility for determining coastal management consistency when aquaculture projects require a federal permit, a coordinated regulatory approach has been developed. Stakeholder input has been received through the outreach and meetings associated with The CT Shellfish Initiative/CT Shellfish Management Plan and LWRD staff's coordination with CT Sea Grant staff and participation in their workshops/programs. Overall, stakeholder feedback has been

positive regarding DOA/BOA's and DEEP's ongoing efforts to streamline permitting and support the aquaculture industry in Connecticut. Accordingly, aquaculture has been assigned a medium priority under this assessment.

Phase II Assessment

Wetlands

In-Depth Resource Characterization

Purpose: To determine key problems and opportunities to improve the CMP's ability to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands.

1. What are the three most significant existing or emerging physical stressors or threats to wetlands within your coastal zone? Indicate the geographic scope of the stressor, i.e., is it prevalent throughout your coastal zone, or are there specific areas that are most threatened? Stressors can be development/fill; hydrological alteration/channelization; erosion; pollution; invasive species; freshwater input; sea level rise/Great Lakes level change; or other (please specify).

	Stressor/Threat	**Geographic Scope** (throughout coastal zone or specific areas most threatened)
Stressor 1	Sea level rise/marsh migration	Varies coastwide by site; SLAMM model outputs depict areas of greatest concern
Stressor 2	Tidal restrictions	Restrictions such a tide gates and culverts exist along the entire shoreline. Many have been in place for decades or longer.
Stressor 3	Coastal development	Much of the Connecticut shoreline is developed, and this is strongly linked to the tidal restrictions stressor

2. Briefly explain why these are currently the most significant stressors or threats to wetlands within your coastal zone. Cite stakeholder input and/or existing reports or studies to support this assessment.

   Stressor 1: Sea Level Rise (SLR) will inundate and ultimately drown the waterward edge of many of our tidal marsh systems, eventually converting these areas to subtidal habitat. With these losses of low marsh, some areas that are currently high marsh will convert to low marsh. At the same time, upland areas will convert to high marsh. The conversion process (upland to wetland) is fairly slow, while losses seem to happen more rapidly, sometimes suddenly and immediately after storm events.

   Stressors 2&3: Tidal restrictions (including some bridge openings) result in subsidence, or a lowering, of the marsh surface. This loss in elevation makes it difficult to restore tidal flow when opportunities arise, for risk of drowning the subsided marsh. Coastal development along tidally restricted areas further complicates restoration efforts, and oftentimes leads to increased damage after storms. The tidal restriction suppresses the high tide elevation, allowing development to occur in mostly dry areas that would otherwise be at or below the elevation of high tide. In areas where this low-elevation development has already happened, it makes tidal restoration impossible due to flooding concerns. Storms and icy conditions tend to cause some tidal restrictions to fail, leading to flooding of these low-elevation developed areas. With sea level rising on one side, and coastal development on the other, many tidal marshes have nowhere to migrate, and will be lost. Data are lacking for many of these tidal restrictions and tidal crossings, but CTDEEP has a tide gate study underway, and other partner organizations are assisting by leading studies of their own to evaluate Connecticut's tidal crossings, in addition to inland stream crossings.

Stressor 3: We seem to be witnessing an increase in tidal wetland erosion, especially along the immediate waterward edge. Areas of marsh are rapidly and suddenly breaking off, even in areas that tend to have very low energy. Some ecologists say this calving of peat soil along the waterward edge is normal, but some believe it has accelerated.

3. Are there emerging issues of concern but which lack sufficient information to evaluate the level of the potential threat? If so, please list. Include additional lines if needed.

   Erosion of tidal marshes seems to be on the rise along the entire shoreline. We do not yet have good data to track or quantify this type of tidal marsh loss, but surveys utilizing aerial photos, LiDAR, and other means would be very helpful to track this. The first LiDAR survey of CT's tidal marshes will be completed in 2025. This and past years of aerial photos, will need to be analyzed to verify marsh extent and track losses. Some groups have proposed living shorelines (rock sills, Reef Balls, etc) as a means to defend the marsh edge from erosive forces such as wave energy, storms, and boat wakes. With motivated stakeholders, and funding, beneficial use of dredged material would also help to increase marsh longevity.

Emerging Issue	Information Needed
Tidal marsh erosion	Analysis of existing data, where to get funding for beneficial use of dredged material

In-Depth Management Characterization

Purpose: To determine the effectiveness of management efforts to address identified problems related to the wetlands enhancement objective.

1. For each additional wetland management category below that was not already discussed as part of the Phase I assessment, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) have occurred since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Wetland Management

Management Category	Employed By State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Wetland assessment methodologies	Y	Y	Y
Wetland mapping and GIS	Y	Y	Y
Watershed or special area management plans addressing wetlands	Y	Y	N
Wetland technical assistance, education, and outreach	Y	Y	N
Other (please specify)	n/a	n/a	n/a

2. For management categories with significant changes since the last assessment, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information.

a. Describe significant changes since the last assessment.

Wetland Assessment Methodologies, Wetland Mapping, and GIS DEEP organized a tidal wetland mapping effort utilizing LiDAR technology. The mapping effort was the first of its kind in Connecticut utilizing this technology, providing both areal extent of tidal marshes, as well as plant species zonation.

b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

This mapping was not 309-driven, it was funded entirely with FY2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act federal dollars awarded via EPA's Long Island Sound Study National Estuary Program. The project did not cover the entire Connecticut shoreline, but did capture approximately 90% of the state's tidal marshes.

c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

DEEP is in discussion with EPA to potentially make this an on-going effort, collecting data every 5 years, and expanding to include all of Long Island Sound's tidal marshes. This will provide greater and more up-to-date detail and will better inform regulatory and restoration decision making.

3. Identify and describe the conclusions of any studies that have been done that illustrate the effectiveness of the state's or territory's management efforts in protecting, restoring, and enhancing coastal wetlands since the last assessment. If none, is there any information that you are lacking to assess the effectiveness of the state's or territory's management efforts?

There are no additional studies or information gaps since the last assessment.

Identification of Priorities

1. Considering changes in wetlands and wetland management since the last assessment and stakeholder input, identify and briefly describe the top one to three management priorities where there is the greatest opportunity for the CMP to improve its ability to more effectively respond to significant wetlands stressors. *(Approximately 1-3 sentences per management priority.)*

Management Priority 1: Adopt updated tidal wetlands regulations

Description: Complete an EPA-funded project to revise regulations after almost 30 years to reflect emerging issues such as wetland migration and compensatory mitigation. This strategy would complete the process of formally adopting the revised regulations.

Management Priority 2: Improve reporting of habitat impacts through coastal regulatory programs

Description: Establish process improvements to better track habitat losses and gains from permitted activities and compensatory mitigation.

Management Priority 3: Consider re-establishment of the Long Island Sound Resource Center through coordination with the Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve

Description: The Long Island Sound Resource Center was established in 1988 as a central online clearinghouse for information and data related to the Sound but was discontinued in 2008. The center website provided access to data and information about the Sound, including scientific research, data, photographs, interactive maps, and literature related to the Sound. The majority of the literature from the Center has been transferred to the University of Connecticut's Archives, although an inventory is not yet available. A management priority is working with the Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve to re-establish the Center or establish a similar online clearinghouse.

2. Identify and briefly explain priority needs and information gaps the CMP has to help it address the management priorities identified above. The needs and gaps identified here do not need to be limited to those items that will be addressed through a Section 309 strategy but should include any items that will be part of a strategy.

Priority Needs	Need? (Y or N)	Brief Explanation of Need/Gap
Research	Y	Ongoing need for new and continued research related to tidal marsh restoration, health, and ecology; maintain a list of research priorities for grant programs through the LIS Partnership
Mapping/GIS	Y	Tidal marsh extent does not tend to change rapidly; when it does, it tends to be a rapid loss based on changing conditions. Need to map tidal marsh extent and change with greater frequency than every five years
Data and information management	Y	Research reports/articles for Long Island Sound tidal marshes (and related work) should be stored in a central and accessible clearinghouse; consider re-establishing the Long Island Sound Resource Center in coordination with the CT National Estuarine Research Reserve
Training/capacity building	Y	Stakeholder and public engagement to build support for updated regulations
Decision-support tools	Y	Revised regulations will enhance regulator decision making and manage expectations for the regulated community
Communication and outreach	Y	Legislative approval is necessary for adoption of regulations which will require rigorous communication
Other (specify)	N/A	

Enhancement Area Strategy Development

1. Will the CMP develop one or more strategies for this enhancement area?

   Yes __X__
   No _____

2. Briefly explain why a strategy will or will not be developed for this enhancement area.

In the last Assessment, LWRD discussed the challenges posed to tidal wetland resources by sea level rise leading to significant changes in overall tidal wetland function and distribution. We followed up on this concern through an EPA Wetlands Program Development grant project to revise and update

Connecticut's outdated Tidal Wetlands regulations. These regulations, first adopted in 1980, were last amended in 1996 and provide little substantive guidance on current issues such as marsh migration or marsh shading and segmentation by extensive boardwalks and docks.

At the same time, DEEP was re-evaluating its approach to tidal wetland mitigation and compensation associated with transportation and other large development projects: Water Resource Mitigation. This effort, in which LWRD staff played a lead role, resulted in a legislative approval to provide clear authority for watershed-level compensatory wetlands and water resource mitigation, and to allow an in-lieu fee program. The tidal wetlands regulations now need to be updated to take account of current mitigation policies.

Coastal Hazards

In-Depth Resource Characterization

Purpose: To determine key problems and opportunities to improve the CMP's ability to prevent or significantly reduce coastal hazard risks by eliminating development and redevelopment in high-hazard areas and managing the effects of potential sea level rise and Great Lakes level change.

1. Based on the characterization of coastal hazard risk, what are the three most significant coastal hazards[22] within your coastal zone? Also indicate the geographic scope of the hazard, i.e., is it prevalent throughout the coastal zone, or are there specific areas most at risk?

	Type of Hazard	**Geographic Scope** (throughout coastal zone or specific areas most threatened)
Hazard 1	Flooding	Throughout coastal zone
Hazard 2	Flooding with Storm Surge	Throughout coastal zone
Hazard 3	Sea Level Rise	Throughout coastal zone

2. Briefly explain why these are currently the most significant coastal hazards within the coastal zone. Cite stakeholder input and/or existing reports or studies to support this assessment.

   General flooding and flooding due to increased storm surge are occurring with increased frequency throughout the coastal zone. Due to historic and current development patterns, little open space is available for use as compensatory storage during heavy rain and storm events (including winter storms and Nor'Easters). In light of Connecticut's housing crisis, developers and municipalities continue to pursue opportunities to provide low and medium cost residential uses which can put pressure on undeveloped or underdeveloped areas within coastal flood hazard areas.

   Sea Level Rise is projected to increase the impacts of coastal storm events, including flooding by storm surge. This includes projected increases in the number of days of non-storm influenced or "sunny day" road flooding, which is anticipated to complicate storm evacuation route planning. In addition, potential increases of impacts from coastal flooding and erosion resulting from the loss of coastal marsh storm mitigation services, particularly in areas of existing low marsh, are projected under extreme sea level rise scenarios by the end of the century.

   There is extensive anecdotal and photographic information of flooding and erosion impacts, particularly following severe storms. Following Storm Irene, the Connecticut Shoreline Preservation Task Force compiled information about flooding and erosion risks from various experts and stakeholders and produced a recommendations report. The USACE North Atlantic Comprehensive Coastal Study assesses these vulnerabilities. Online tools such as DEEP's Coastal Hazards Viewer, TNC's Coastal Resilience Tool, and CIRCA's Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge Map Viewer visually illustrate potential impacts of rising sea level and storm surges.

3. Are there emerging issues of concern, but which lack sufficient information to evaluate the level of the potential threat? If so, please list. Include additional lines if needed.

[22] See list of coastal hazards on pg. 27 of this assessment template.

Emerging Issue	Information Needed
Coastal erosion	Extent and rates of erosion statewide
Wetland loss/retreat	Ongoing analysis of recently acquired Sea-Level Affecting Marsh Migration (SLAMM) data to identify and communicate areas of concern; additional analyses taking into account site-specific conditions for areas of elevated threat and/or high resource value. Better understanding of the effects of tidal restrictions (e.g., culverts, tide gates) on coastal marsh resilience and developed land cover flooding. High-resolution landcover data.
Resilience	Sentinel monitoring for key environmental indicators; access to and interpretation of historic data sources.
Sea level rise	Updated Sea level rise projections scaled to Long Island Sound.
Storm surge inundation	High resolution modeling of coastal storm surge, riverine flooding, and the interaction of coastal and riverine flooding (currently under development with CIRCA). Accurate mapping of vulnerable housing and infrastructure based on improved modeling. High resolution landcover data.

Non-episodic erosion (i.e., longer-term erosion trends that take into account the net effect of seasonal variations) represents a threat that has recently been re-assessed, updating information originally prepared during the very early years of Connecticut's Coastal Management Program nearly 35 years ago. A report entitled, Analysis of Shoreline Change in Connecticut - 100+ Years of Erosion and Accretion: Methodology and Summary Results, was developed by a cooperative effort between the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Connecticut Sea Grant (CT Sea Grant) and the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research (UCONN-CLEAR). The report identified shoreline erosion amounts and rates across the coast. It noted that while erosion is a factor to some degree coast-wide, areas in the central part of the state and along coastal marshes and barrier beaches show higher magnitudes of erosion. Further in-depth study of this area of concern is needed.

In-Depth Management Characterization

Purpose: To determine the effectiveness of management efforts to address identified problems related to the coastal hazards enhancement objective.

1. For each coastal hazard management category below, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if there has been a significant change since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Coastal Hazards Statutes, Regulations, and Policies

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Change Since the Last Assessment (Y or N)
Shorefront setbacks/no build areas	Y – local flood plain management	N	N
Rolling easements	N	N	N
Repair/rebuilding restrictions	Y	Y	N
Hard shoreline protection structure restrictions	Y	Y	N
Promotion of alternative shoreline stabilization methodologies (i.e., living shorelines/green infrastructure)	Y	Y	Y
Repair/replacement of shore protection structure restrictions	Y	Y	N
Inlet management	N	N	N
Protection of important natural resources for hazard mitigation benefits (e.g., dunes, wetlands, barrier islands, coral reefs) (other than setbacks/no build areas)	Y	Y	Y
Repetitive flood loss policies (e.g., relocation, buyouts)	Y	Y	N
Freeboard requirements	Y	N	Y
Real estate sales disclosure requirements	N	N	N
Restrictions on publicly funded infrastructure	Y	Y	N
Infrastructure protection (e.g., considering hazards in siting and design)	Y	Y	N
Other (please specify)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Significant Changes to Coastal Hazard Management Planning Programs or Initiatives

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Change Since the Last Assessment (Y or N)
Hazard mitigation plans	Y	Y	N
Sea level rise/Great Lake level change or adaptation plans	Y	Y	Y
Statewide requirement for local post-disaster recovery planning	N	N	N
Sediment management plans	N	N	N
Beach nourishment plans	N	N	N
Special Area Management Plans (that address hazards issues)	N	N	N
Managed retreat plans	N	N	N
Establishment of State Long Term Recovery Committee activated post major disaster	Y	N	N
Other:			

Significant Changes to Coastal Hazard Research, Mapping, and Education Programs or Initiatives

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Change Since the Last Assessment (Y or N)
General hazards mapping or modeling	Y	Y	Y
Sea level rise mapping or modeling	Y	Y	Y
Hazards monitoring (e.g., erosion rate, shoreline change, high-water marks)	Y	Y	Y
Hazards education and outreach	Y	Y	N
Other (please specify)			

2. Identify and describe the conclusions of any studies that have been done that illustrate the effectiveness of the state's management efforts in addressing coastal hazards since the last assessment. If none, is there any information that you are lacking to assess the effectiveness of the state's management efforts?

   There are no additional studies or information gaps since the last assessment.

Identification of Priorities

1. Considering changes in coastal hazard risk and coastal hazard management since the last assessment and stakeholder input, identify and briefly describe the top one to three management priorities where there is the greatest opportunity for the CMP to improve its ability to more effectively address the most significant hazard risks. *(Approximately 1-3 sentences per management priority.)*

Management Priority 1: Remap Connecticut's coastal boundary to reflect revised FEMA flood maps

Description: The CCMA defines the coastal boundary as a continuous line delineated based, in part, on the interior contour elevation of the one-hundred-year frequency coastal flood zone, as defined and determined by the National Flood Insurance Act. The current coastal boundary was mapped with the advent of the Connecticut Coastal Management Program in 1980 and does not reflect any changes to FEMA flood maps that have occurred since then. Because the coastal boundary is the area within which municipal land use activities and state actions which may significantly affect the environment must be evaluated for consistency with CCMA policies and standards, an accurate depiction of the coastal boundary will ensure that all such projects are captured for consistency review.

Management Priority 2: Improve outreach to and engagement with municipal land use officials regarding proper management of coastal hazard areas

Description: Section 22a-92(b)(2)(F) of the CCMA requires municipal land use commissions to manage coastal hazard areas to ensure that development proceeds in such a manner that hazards to life and property are minimized. This CCMA policy goes further than merely complying with FEMA building standards, it manages development, especially high-density residential development, within coastal hazards areas to prevent putting people in harms' way in the first place. A coastal management priority is to provide outreach materials, workshops, and webinars for municipal land use officials to properly plan for proper development within coastal hazard areas which includes the provision of dry egress for residents and first responders.

2. Identify and briefly explain priority needs and information gaps the CMP has for addressing the management priorities identified above. The needs and gaps identified here should not be limited to those items that will be addressed through a Section 309 strategy but should include any items that will be part of a strategy.

Priority Needs	**Need?** (Y or N)	**Brief Explanation of Need/Gap**
Research	N	
Mapping/GIS/modeling	Y	Revisions to the state's mapped coastal boundary based on revised FEMA flood maps for coastal Connecticut
Data and information management	N	
Training/Capacity building	Y	Fact sheets and GIS map layers for municipal land use authorities of expanded coastal boundary and for proper coastal hazard area management
Decision-support tools	Y	Outreach materials highlighting changes to coastal boundary and focusing on proper coastal hazard area management
Communication and outreach	Y	Outreach to support new coastal boundary maps and increase awareness of the boundary change, and to improve coastal hazard area management
Other (specify)	N/A	N/A

Enhancement Area Strategy Development

1. Will the CMP develop one or more strategies for this enhancement area?

   Yes __X___
   No _____

2. Briefly explain why a strategy will or will not be developed for this enhancement area.

   A strategy to update the mapped coastal boundary based on revised FEMA flood maps will be pursued. The current coastal boundary has not been updated since the establishment of the coastal management program, and an accurate depiction of the coastal boundary will ensure that all state and municipally reviewed activities proposed within the coastal boundary will be captured for coastal management consistency review.

Public Access

In-Depth Resource Characterization

Purpose: To determine key problems and opportunities to improve the CMP's ability to increase and enhance public access opportunities to coastal areas.

1. What are the three most significant existing or emerging threats or stressors to creating or maintaining public access within your coastal zone? Indicate the geographic scope of the stressor, i.e., is it prevalent throughout the coastal zone or are specific areas most threatened? Stressors can be private development (including conversion of public facilities to private); non-water-dependent commercial or industrial uses of the waterfront; increased demand; erosion; sea level rise or Great Lakes level change; natural disasters; national security; encroachment on public land; or other (please specify).

	Stressor/Threat	**Geographic Scope** (throughout coastal zone or specific areas most threatened)
Stressor 1	Increased demand	Throughout coastal zone
Stressor 2	Outdated online guide cannot track data and trends on the types of access provided/needed, size/acreage of access sites, current parking charges and other fees, especially at municipal beaches	Throughout coastal zone
Stressor 3	The developed nature of Connecticut's coast makes it difficult to obtain new coastal access sites through the municipal coastal site plan review process	Throughout coastal zone

2. Briefly explain why these are currently the most significant stressors or threats to public access within the coastal zone. Cite stakeholder input and/or existing reports or studies to support this assessment.

   The NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship to Improve Public Access in Connecticut (ImPACT) established a steering committee to identify public access needs and make recommendations to improve access to Connecticut's coast. The Long Island Sound Partnership (formerly the Long Island Sound Study) also commissioned a Needs Assessment for the Long Island Sound Watershed to determine the needs of underrepresented communities in the New York and Connecticut portions of the Long Island Sound watershed. The needs assessment identifies additional barriers to meaningful access to Connecticut's shoreline. Among the issues identified by these stakeholders are the threat from increased demand of limited beach resources, which squeezes out non-residents in favor of residents at municipally owned beaches and causes parking fees for non-residents to be significantly higher than for residents. The ImPACT Fellow project, as well as this 309 assessment,

also identified the obsolete nature of the existing online coastal access guide in being able to identify and track data regarding different aspects of coastal public access, such as the acreage of access sites, the parking and other entrance fees charged, and the types of activities allowed at various access sites (e.g., kayak launches, fishing piers), all of which can be used to improve public access statewide by identifying priority acquisition areas, exorbitant parking fees, and the lack of any given activity type in particular area of the state.

Further, because of the highly developed nature of Connecticut's coast, the acquisition of additional public access through the municipal coastal site plan review process, whereby public access is considered a water-dependent use that is given highest priority and preference at waterfront sites, is challenging. As a result, developers of waterfront sites that can provide only "marginal" access are not required by municipal land use decision-makers to provide any access at all.

3. Are there emerging issues of concern, but which lack sufficient information to evaluate the level of the potential threat? If so, please list. Include additional lines if needed.

Emerging Issue	Information Needed
Inability to continue to service and support existing database that supports the online coastal access guide, risk losing the ability to update the guide	Identify other serviceable database to house access guide data that will improve functionality
Inability of the current guide/database to track trends regarding types of access available, types of access needed, comparison of municipal parking/entrance fees, location of mass transit, priority areas for acquisition, etc.	Improved site identification, how the access was acquired (e.g., through municipal coastal site plan review condition, coastal regulatory permit requirement, land acquisition/purchase)
Inability of the current online guide to translate PDFs that provide information	Identify updated platform to host the online guide and improve functionality

In-Depth Management Characterization

Purpose: To determine the effectiveness of management efforts to address identified problems related to the public access enhancement objective.

1. For each additional public access management category below that was not already discussed as part of the Phase I assessment, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant changes (positive or negative) have occurred at the state or territory level since the last assessment.

Significant Changes to Public Access Management

Management Category	Employed by State/Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Comprehensive access management planning	Y	Y	N
GIS mapping/database of access sites	Y	N	N
Public access technical assistance, education, and outreach (including access point and interpretive signage, etc.)	Y	Y	N
Other (please specify)			

2. For management categories with significant changes since the last assessment, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information.
    a. Describe significant changes since the last assessment;
    b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes; and
    c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

    There have been no significant changes since the last assessment.

3. Identify and describe the conclusions of any studies that have been done that illustrate the effectiveness of the state's management efforts in providing public access since the last assessment. If none, is there any information that you are lacking to assess the effectiveness of the state's management efforts?

    While Connecticut's coastal management program has championed public access from its adoption in 1980, the ImPACT Fellowship steering committee recommendations and the LIS Partnership Needs Assessment have identified ways in which Connecticut's public access efforts can be improved. Many of the ImPACT steering committee recommendations mirrored issues identified in the needs assessment, including the need to improve public transit to public access sites and explore micro-transit opportunities; develop educational resources and potential programs for the public, coastal land use officials, and local police departments on the public trust doctrine and the public's right to access; work with communities to establish access at rights of way and interactive public access signage; engage with specific interest groups to better understand barriers and improve a sense of belonging; and identify funding opportunities for access acquisition and improvements to existing access sites.

Identification of Priorities

1. Considering changes in public access and public access management since the last assessment and stakeholder input, identify and briefly describe the top one to three management priorities where there is the greatest opportunity for the CMP to improve the effectiveness of its management effort to better respond to the most significant public access stressors. *(Approximately 1-3 sentences per management priority.)*

    Management Priority 1: <u>Update the online public access guide</u>

Description: The Connecticut Coastal Access Guide is one of the pillars of the state's coastal management program. Once a pioneering 309 effort that transitioned the guide from a series of static paper maps to an updatable interactive online source, the platform that hosts the guide has become obsolete on several levels, including in its inability to translate site information from English and its inability to track the size and number of access sites coast-wide. Updating the access guide and switching to a more appropriate platform will allow improved functionality, and will thereby improve coastal access in Connecticut by allowing DEEP to set priorities for the types and locations of access most needed.

Management Priority 2: Amend the Connecticut Coastal Management Act and the Connecticut General Statutes to reflect several recommendations from the ImPACT Fellowship Steering Committee

Description: Make public access a general goal of the CCMA, as this goal is currently limited to state facilities; provide opportunities for municipalities to charge developers a fee in lieu of providing public access at marginal sites, with fees deposited into an earmarked fund to make improvements to coastal public access; and cap municipal parking fees for non-residents at public beaches.

Management Priority 3: Work with the CT National Estuarine Research Reserve to develop outreach for municipal land use officials

Description: Develop a workshop and outreach materials for municipal land use authorities regarding the coastal site plan review process to ensure that public access obtained and designed is meaningful and, therefore, successful.

2. Identify and briefly explain priority needs and information gaps the CMP has to help it address the management priorities identified above. The needs and gaps identified here do not need to be limited to those items that will be addressed through a Section 309 strategy but should include any items that will be part of a strategy.

Priority Needs	Need? (Y or N)	Brief Explanation of Need/Gap
Research	N	
Mapping/GIS	Y	Upgrade current online guide to mobile friendly format, to create polygons for site locations (rather than current points) to better identify coastal access site boundaries
Data and information management	Y	Upgrade coastal access site inventory from Microsoft Access Database to spreadsheet hosted by ArcGIS to maximize updates and additions
Training/Capacity building	Y	Improve municipal decision making for acquiring public access through the coastal site plan review process; build capacity for legislative efforts to ensure public and municipal buy-in
Decision-support tools	Y	Provide training and outreach for municipal land use authorities
Communication and outreach	Y	Improve functionality of online guide; provide training and outreach for municipal land use authorities regarding establishing meaningful public access through the coastal site plan review process
Other (specify)		

Enhancement Area Strategy Development

1. Will the CMP develop one or more strategies for this enhancement area?

   Yes ___X___
   No _____

2. Briefly explain why a strategy will or will not be developed for this enhancement area.

   DEEP anticipates developing a cohesive strategy incorporating each management priority identified above, starting with updating the online public access guide. The guide is one of the foundations of Connecticut's coastal public access program and its update will set the stage for establishing a more comprehensive program, allowing tracking of data on the types of access available and how to fill gaps and meet needs.

Ocean and Great Lakes Resources

Purpose: To determine key problems and opportunities to enhance the ability of state CMP to better address ocean and Great Lakes resources.

1. What are the three most significant existing or emerging stressors or threats to ocean and Great Lakes resources within your coastal zone? Indicate the geographic scope of the stressor, i.e., is it prevalent throughout the coastal zone, or are specific areas most threatened? Stressors can be land-based development; offshore development (including pipelines, cables); offshore energy production; polluted runoff; invasive species; fishing (commercial and/or recreational); aquaculture; recreation; marine transportation; dredging; sand or mineral extraction; ocean acidification; or other (please specify).

	Stressor/Threat	**Geographic Scope** (throughout coastal zone or specific areas most threatened)
Stressor 1	Potential use conflicts from offshore development	Throughout Long Island Sound
Stressor 2	Dredged material management	Throughout LIS with specific concern in commercial port/harbor facility areas
Stressor 3	Potential non-development-related impacts to Ecologically Significant Areas and Significant Human Use Areas	Throughout LIS

2. Briefly explain why these are currently the most significant stressors or threats to ocean and Great Lakes resources within the coastal zone. Cite stakeholder input and/or existing reports or studies to support this assessment.

   The Long Island Sound Blue Plan and Resource and Use Inventory identify Ecologically Significant Areas and Significant Human Use Areas that are of most concern in the offshore waters of Long Island Sound. Potential conflicts with these important areas can arise from offshore development, such as that associated with electric cables entering Long Island Sound from neighboring offshore wind development. Alternatives to the in-water disposal of dredged material continues to be an issue that requires attention, especially in the arena of beneficial reuse of appropriate materials. Some significant ecological areas identified by the Blue Plan including cold-water corals could potentially be at risk from non-development threats such as water temperature fluctuations or invasive species, and the resilience of human uses of the Sound such as aquaculture could also be threatened.

3. Are there emerging issues of concern, but which lack sufficient information to the level of the potential threat? If so, please list. Include additional lines if needed.

Emerging Issue	**Information Needed**
Continued need to plan for potential use and resource conflicts from offshore energy sector activity (e.g., cables/pipelines, construction staging)	Resource and Use Inventory updates as additional data becomes available; potential new ESA and/or SHUA identification and Blue Plan policies to address them as guided by legislatively mandated five-year review and updates if necessary

In-Depth Management Characterization

Purpose: To determine the effectiveness of management efforts to address identified problems related to the ocean and Great Lakes resources enhancement objective.

1. For each of the additional ocean and Great Lakes resources management categories below that were not already discussed as part of the Phase I assessment, indicate if the approach is employed by the state or territory and if significant state- or territory-level changes (positive or negative) have occurred since the last assessment.

Significant Changes in Management of Ocean and Great Lakes Resources

Management Category	Employed by State or Territory (Y or N)	CMP Provides Assistance to Locals that Employ (Y or N)	Significant Changes Since Last Assessment (Y or N)
Ocean and Great Lakes research, assessment, monitoring	Y	Y	Y
Ocean and Great Lakes GIS mapping/database	Y	Y	Y
Ocean and Great Lakes technical assistance, education, and outreach	Y	Y	Y
Other (please specify)	N/A	N/A	N/A

2. For management categories with significant changes since the last assessment, briefly provide the information below. If this information is provided under another enhancement area or section of the document, please provide a reference to the other section rather than duplicate the information.
    a. Describe significant changes since the last assessment.

    LWRD continues to support a LIS Benthic Mapping Program using funds from a settlement account created by enforcement actions. LWRD also continues to administer and implement the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, as well as update and maintain the Blue Plan webpages, which were all established as a 309 strategy. Since the Blue Plan was legislatively adopted, the policies contained in the plan were applied to several aquaculture projects regulated by DEEP to reduce user conflicts. CT DEEP is also using Long Island Sound Partnership (formerly the Long island Sound Study) funds in a bi-state effort with New York to develop an Ecological and Use Sensitivity Analysis (EUSA) for Long Island Sound to supplement information contained in the Blue Plan by establishing a weighting system and map products that will identify areas within the Sound that are ecologically sensitive to disturbances such as those associated with the installation of transmission infrastructure (e.g., submarine cables), and/or may result in user conflicts.

    b. Specify if they were 309 or other CZM-driven changes.

    Benthic mapping and the EUSA with New York are not 309-driven but are CZM-driven. The Blue Plan and outreach associated with it were initially 309-driven and remain CZM-driven.

c. Characterize the outcomes or likely future outcomes of the changes.

All of these efforts are essential to generating useful data, information, and products to further extend and enhance spatial planning and resource management for regulators, project proponents, and the general public.

3. Identify and describe the conclusions of any studies that have been done that illustrate the effectiveness of the state's or territory's management efforts in planning for the use of ocean and Great Lakes resources since the last assessment. If none, is there any information that you are lacking to assess the effectiveness of the state's or territory's management efforts?

There are no additional studies or information gaps since the last assessment.

Identification of Priorities

1. Considering changes in threats to ocean and Great Lakes resources and management since the last assessment and stakeholder input, identify and briefly describe the top one to three management priorities where there is the greatest opportunity for the CMP to improve its ability to effectively plan for the use of ocean and Great Lakes resources. *(Approximately 1-3 sentences per management priority.)*

Management Priority 1: Update the Long Island Sound Blue Plan and/or Resource and Use Inventory

Description: The Blue Plan and Inventory are required by statute to be reviewed and updated at least every five years to ensure that they are informed by the best available information and data regarding the natural resources within Long Island Sound and the uses of Long Island Sound.

Management Priority 2: Continue to identify data resources to support the Inventory and Map Viewer

Description: The Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory provides information on the current state of the Sound's natural resources and human uses, based on all existing data available and known at the time of Blue Plan development. The process of collecting and vetting data on all the natural resources and uses of Connecticut's Long Island Sound needs to be an ongoing process to ensure that the inventory of those resources and uses is accurate and up-to-date.

Management Priority 3: Dredged Material Management

Description: In light of regional concerns pertaining to in-water disposal of dredged material, there is an ongoing priority to manage dredged material through beneficial reuse, including wetland elevation restoration using appropriate dredged material.

2. Identify and briefly explain priority needs and information gaps the CMP has to help it address the management priorities identified above. The needs and gaps identified here do not need to be limited to those items that will be addressed through a Section 309 strategy but should include any items that will be part of a strategy.

Priority Needs	Need? (Y or N)	Brief Explanation of Need/Gap
Research	Y	Continued research relative to the impacts of increasing water temperature, invasive species, etc. and monitoring of key environmental indicators
Mapping/GIS	Y	Updated resource and use data to support updated to the Blue Plan and Inventory
Data and information management	Y	Updated resource and use data to support updated to the Blue Plan and Inventory
Training/Capacity building	N	
Decision-support tools	N	
Communication and outreach	Y	The first update of the Blue Plan indicated that enhanced efforts should be made toward public outreach; improve social media and other public presence outside of Blue Plan related sectors
Other (specify)	N/A	N/A

Enhancement Area Strategy Development

1. Will the CMP develop one or more strategies for this enhancement area?

   Yes __X___
   No _____

2. Briefly explain why a strategy will or will not be developed for this enhancement area.

   The enabling legislation that mandated development of the Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Long Island Sound Blue Plan was written to ensure that both are living documents. Thus, it is necessary to review the Inventory and Blue Plan and monitor their implementation for accuracy and effectiveness and adjust or clarify the documents as appropriate. The Blue Plan must by law be reviewed—and possibly revised—every five years, and the process will take place again during this upcoming assessment period. The review will provide feedback and insights into how well the Blue Plan policies are addressing anticipated issues and give a better idea of how the plan might need to be revised or adjusted to address any unexpected issues or challenges that did not arise during the initial implementation of the plan. Accordingly, a strategy to complete the second statutorily required update of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan will be developed.

Strategy: Remap Connecticut's Coastal Boundary to Reflect Updated FEMA Coastal Hazard Maps

This section establishes a clear strategy (or strategies) the CMP plans to pursue during the five-year strategy period based on the management needs identified in the assessment for one or more of its high-priority enhancement areas. The CMPs must use the "Strategy Template" provided in Appendix C. Enhancement area strategies should include enough information for OCM to determine whether (1) the proposed program change or implementation activity adequately addresses the needs identified in the assessment, and (2) the program's work plan to achieve the program change is appropriate and cost-effective. Copy and paste additional strategy templates below as needed. Please make sure "Heading 1" formatting is selected for each title (Go to "Home", "Styles", "Heading 1".)

I. Issue Area(s)

A. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will *primarily* support the following high-priority enhancement area(s) *(check no more than two):*

☐ Aquaculture
☐ Energy and Government Facility Siting
☒Coastal Hazards
☐ Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
☐ Special Area Management Planning
☐ Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
☐ Wetlands
☐ Marine Debris
☐ Public Access

B. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will also support the following enhancement areas *(check all that apply)*:

☐ Aquaculture
☐ Energy and Government Facility Siting
☐ Coastal Hazards
☐ Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
☐ Special Area Management Planning
☐ Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
☐ Wetlands
☐ Marine Debris
☐ Public Access

II. Strategy Description

A. The proposed strategy will lead to, or implement, the following types of program changes *(check all that apply):*

☐ A change to coastal zone boundaries;
☒New or revised authorities, including statutes, regulations, enforceable policies, administrative decisions, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement/understanding;
☐ New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances;
☐ New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs;
☐ New or revised special area management plans (SAMP) or plans for areas of particular concern (APC) including enforceable policies and other necessary implementation mechanisms or criteria and procedures for designating and managing APCs; and,
☐ New or revised guidelines, procedures, and policy documents which are formally adopted by a state or territory and provide specific interpretations of enforceable CZM program policies to applicants, local government, and other agencies that will result in meaningful improvements in coastal resource management.

B. *Strategy Goal:* *Remap Connecticut's coastal boundary to reflect updated FEMA coastal flood map boundaries*

State the goal of the strategy for the five-year assessment period. The goal should be the specific program change to be achieved or be a statement describing the results of the project, with the expectation that achieving the goal would eventually lead to a program change. For strategies that implement an existing program change, the goal should be a specific implementation milestone. For example, work with three communities to develop revised draft comprehensive plans that consider future sea level rise or, based on research and policy analysis, present proposed legislation on wetland buffers to the state legislature for consideration. Rather than a lofty statement, the goal should be achievable within the time frame of the strategy.

The goal of this strategy is to remap Connecticut's coastal boundary to reflect updated FEMA coastal flood map boundaries.

A. Description

Describe the proposed strategy and how the strategy will lead to and/or implement the program changes selected above. If the strategy will only involve implementation activities, briefly describe the program change that has already been adopted, and how the proposed activities will further that program change. (Note that implementation strategies are not to exceed two years.)

Section 22a-94(b) of the CCMA defines the "coastal boundary" as a continuous line delineated on the landward side **by the interior contour elevation of the one hundred year frequency coastal flood zone, as defined and determined by the National Flood Insurance Act, as amended (USC 42 Section 4101, P.L. 93-234)**, or a one thousand foot linear setback measured from the mean high water mark in coastal waters, or a one thousand foot linear setback measured from the inland boundary of tidal wetlands, whichever is farthest inland.

Section 22a-94(c) of the CCMA further requires that the coastal boundary be shown on maps or photographs prepared by the Commissioner of DEEP to supplement flood hazard rate maps, and shall be sufficiently precise to demonstrate whether the holdings of a property owner, or portions thereof, lie within the coastal boundary. Copies of such maps or photographs shall be filed with the commissioner and with the clerk of each coastal municipality.

Section 22a-94(e) of the CCMA authorizes the Commissioner of DEEP to amend coastal boundary maps, and requires the Commissioner to hold a public hearing in any affected municipalities prior to the adoption of any map amendment.

Connecticut's initial coastal boundary maps were first published in 1980 with the advent of the Coastal Management Program. While they have been digitized and are available as a GIS layer, the boundary maps have not been updated. Accordingly, as currently mapped, the coastal boundary is not accurately depicted since it does not reflect any revisions or updates to the one hundred year frequency coastal flood zone as mapped by FEMA. Acting with the Commissioner's authority, LWRD will update the state's coastal boundary maps.

I. **Needs and Gaps Addressed**

Identify what priority needs and gaps the strategy addresses, and explain why the proposed program change or implementation activities are the most appropriate means to address said needs and gaps. This discussion should reference the key findings of the assessment and explain how the strategy addresses those findings.

The proposed strategy will remap the coastal boundary to reflect updated FEMA coastal hazard maps which will ensure that the entirety of Connecticut's coastal hazard areas are properly managed in accordance with CCMA policies and standards.

Benefits to Coastal Management

Discuss the anticipated effect of the strategy, including the scope and value of the strategy, in advancing improvements in the CMP and coastal management, in general.

The expected benefit of this strategy will be to better manage Connecticut's coastal hazard areas by more accurately depicting the coastal boundary.

III. Likelihood of Success

Discuss the likelihood of attaining the strategy goal and program change (if not part of the strategy goal) during the five-year assessment cycle or at a later date. Address the nature and degree of support for pursuing the strategy and the proposed program change, as well as the specific actions the state or territory will undertake to maintain or build future support for achieving and implementing the program change, including education and outreach activities.

With continuing 309 funding, we will have the staff resources necessary to update the coastal boundary GIS layer and amend the maps in accordance with statutory requirements.

Strategy Work Plan

Using the template below, provide a general work plan that includes the major steps that will lead toward or achieve a program change or implement a previously achieved program change. For example, even if the final adoption of the program change is outside of the CMP's control, what steps will be included in the work plan so the CMP ensures the program change is considered, reviewed, and hopefully adopted by the outside entity? Who are the other stakeholders or elected officials that need to be engaged, and how and when during the strategy development process? What is the decision-making or voting process that is involved in the adoption of the program change, and how will the CMP interact with this process to ensure that the proposed program change is considered? If the state intends to fund implementation activities for the proposed program change, describe those in the plan as well. The plan should identify a schedule for completing the strategy and include major projected milestones (key products, deliverables, activities, and decisions) and budget estimates. If an activity will span two or more years, it can be combined into one entry (i.e., Years 2-3 rather than Year 2 and then Year 3). While the annual milestones are a useful guide to ensure the strategy remains on track, OCM recognizes that they may change somewhat over the course of the five-year strategy due to unforeseen circumstances. The same holds true for the annual budget estimates. Further detailing and adjustment of annual activities, milestones, and budgets will be determined through the annual cooperative agreement negotiation process.

Strategy Goal: Remap Connecticut's Coastal Boundary to Reflect Updated FEMA Coastal Hazard Maps
Total Years: 3
Total Budget: $200,000

Year: 3
Description of activities: Determined how many of the state's 36 coastal-area municipalities require remapping based on revised FEMA flood maps
Major Milestone(s): Identify which coastal towns have been remapped by FEMA; work with land use staff in each municipality to determine outreach and engagement needs; perform outreach regarding remapping of the municipal coastal boundary
Budget: $80,000

Year: 4
Description of activities: Remap Connecticut's coastal boundary to reflect updated FEMA flood maps
Major Milestone(s): Work with DEEP GIS staff to update GIS coastal boundary layer for all municipalities affected by FEMA mapping revisions; hold a public hearing in the affected municipalities and consider public comment
Budget: $70,000

Year: 5
Description of activities: Work with DEEP GIS staff and UConn CLEAR as necessary to publish updated maps in accordance with statutory requirements.
Major Milestone(s): Amend boundary maps in response to public comment as warranted; coordinate with UConn to publish the final updated coastal boundary as a GIS layer in CT ECO
Budget: $50,000

IV. Fiscal and Technical Needs

A. Fiscal Needs: *If 309 funding is not sufficient to carry out the proposed strategy, identify additional funding needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to secure additional state funds from the legislature and/or from other sources to support this strategy.*

We expect 309 funding should be sufficient to carry out the specific tasks related to the coastal boundary remapping.

B. Technical Needs: *If the state does not possess the technical knowledge, skills, or equipment to carry out all or part of the proposed strategy, identify these needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to obtain the trained personnel or equipment needed (for example, through agreements with other state agencies).*

LWRD staff possess the ability and resources to complete the tasks associated with remapping the coastal boundary.

Projects of Special Merit (Optional)
If desired, briefly state what projects of special merit the CMP may wish to pursue to augment this strategy. (Any activities that are necessary to achieve the program change or that the state intends to support with baseline funding should be included in the strategy above.) The information in this section will not be used to evaluate or rank projects of special merit and is simply meant to give CMPs the option to provide additional information if they choose. Project descriptions should be kept very brief (e.g.,

undertake benthic mapping to provide additional data for ocean management planning). Do not provide detailed project descriptions that would be needed for the funding competition.

At this time, LWRD does not anticipate pursuing funding for a Project of Special Merit during this Program Enhancement Cycle.

Strategy: Enact Revised State Tidal Wetland Regulations

This section establishes a clear strategy (or strategies) the CMP plans to pursue during the five-year strategy period based on the management needs identified in the assessment for one or more of its high-priority enhancement areas. The CMPs must use the "Strategy Template" provided in Appendix C. Enhancement area strategies should include enough information for OCM to determine whether (1) the proposed program change or implementation activity adequately addresses the needs identified in the assessment, and (2) the program's work plan to achieve the program change is appropriate and cost-effective. Copy and paste additional strategy templates below as needed. Please make sure "Heading 1" formatting is selected for each title (Go to "Home", "Styles", "Heading 1".)

V. Issue Area(s)

C. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will *primarily* support the following high-priority enhancement area(s) *(check no more than two):*

- ☐ Aquaculture
- ☐ Energy and Government Facility Siting
- ☐ Coastal Hazards
- ☐ Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
- ☐ Special Area Management Planning
- ☐ Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
- ☒ Wetlands
- ☐ Marine Debris
- ☐ Public Access

D. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will also support the following enhancement areas *(check all that apply)*:

- ☐ Aquaculture
- ☐ Energy and Government Facility Siting
- ☐ Coastal Hazards
- ☐ Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
- ☐ Special Area Management Planning
- ☒ Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
- ☐ Wetlands
- ☐ Marine Debris
- ☐ Public Access

VI. Strategy Description

C. The proposed strategy will lead to, or implement, the following types of program changes *(check all that apply):*

☐ A change to coastal zone boundaries;

☒ New or revised authorities, including statutes, regulations, enforceable policies, administrative decisions, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement/understanding;

☐ New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances;

☐ New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs;

☐ New or revised special area management plans (SAMP) or plans for areas of particular concern (APC) including enforceable policies and other necessary implementation mechanisms or criteria and procedures for designating and managing APCs; and,

☐ New or revised guidelines, procedures, and policy documents which are formally adopted by a state or territory and provide specific interpretations of enforceable CZM program policies to applicants, local government, and other agencies that will result in meaningful improvements in coastal resource management.

D. *Strategy Goal:* *Complete the regulations review process for recently updated tidal wetlands regulations with the ultimate goal of legislative approval and adoption*

State the goal of the strategy for the five-year assessment period. The goal should be the specific program change to be achieved or be a statement describing the results of the project, with the expectation that achieving the goal would eventually lead to a program change. For strategies that implement an existing program change, the goal should be a specific implementation milestone. For example, work with three communities to develop revised draft comprehensive plans that consider future sea level rise or, based on research and policy analysis, present proposed legislation on wetland buffers to the state legislature for consideration. Rather than a lofty statement, the goal should be achievable within the time frame of the strategy.

Connecticut's tidal wetland regulations represent an untapped source of legal authority that should be revised and updated to address future challenges. Revision of the regulations presents an opportunity to enact specific standaards based on the best current science, drawing on the SLAMM model and other sources, as well as eliminating outdated procedural provisions.

E. Description

Describe the proposed strategy and how the strategy will lead to and/or implement the program changes selected above. If the strategy will only involve implementation activities, briefly describe the program change that has already been adopted, and how the proposed activities will further that program change. (Note that implementation strategies are not to exceed two years.)

An ongoing EPA-funded project is expected to be completed before the end of 2025, resulting in a presentable draft of revised tidal wetland regulations which has undergone internal DEEP review. Connecticut's tidal wetlands regulations were last revised in 2015 but did not contain a full suite of protective provisions to address issues such as extensive boardwalks and docks, or for assessing measures for upland areas adjacent to tidal wetlands to allow for migration. The EPA-funded project delivered a draft revision of the state tidal wetland regulations. This 309 Strategy will pick up where that project left off, bringing the revised regulations through the formal adoption process as specified by statute. The first step, however, will be an informal effort of stakeholder outreach and building public support. Next, LWRD will initiate the state's eReg system and follow a set of rigorous procedures, including public notice, comment and hearing, responses to public comments, certifications of fiscal and economic impacts, legal review by DEEP counsel and the Office of the Attorney General, and ultimately submission to the Legislature's Regulation Review Committee. Once the Committee approves the regulations, they become effective.

I. **Needs and Gaps Addressed**

Identify what priority needs and gaps the strategy addresses, and explain why the proposed program change or implementation activities are the most appropriate means to address said needs and gaps. This discussion should reference the key findings of the assessment and explain how the strategy addresses those findings.

This strategy will bring an ongoing EPA-funded project full circle, as that project will result in a draft of revised tidal wetland regulations but stops short of actually adopting them. The regulations themselves will significantly revise woefully outdated regulations and incorporate emerging issues such as tidal wetland migration and wetland mitigation.

VII. Benefits to Coastal Management

Discuss the anticipated effect of the strategy, including the scope and value of the strategy, in advancing improvements in the CMP and coastal management, in general.

This 309 Strategy will formally incorporate updated tidal wetland regulations into Connecticut's coastal management program to proactively address issues such as wetland migration and mitigation banking that could not have been conceived of when the regulations were first promulgated. Thus, the state's tidal wetlands will be better protected, and the regulated community's expectations will be better managed.

VIII. Likelihood of Success

Discuss the likelihood of attaining the strategy goal and program change (if not part of the strategy goal) during the five-year assessment cycle or at a later date. Address the nature and degree of support for pursuing the strategy and the proposed program change, as well as the specific actions the state or territory will undertake to maintain or build future support for achieving and implementing the program change, including education and outreach activities.

The tasks over which LWRD and DEEP have direct control, such as stakeholder outreach, building public support, bringing the regulations through the public notice/comment/hearing process, drafting responses to public comments, certifications of fiscal and economic impacts, and legal review by DEEP counsel and coordination with the Office of the Attorney General, and ultimately submission to the Legislature's Regulation Review Committee, will be extremely successful. Front-loading this process with significant stakeholder engagement and public buy-in will help ensure success once the regulations are submitted to the legislature for approval. Once the committee approves the regulations, they become effective.

IX. Strategy Work Plan

Using the template below, provide a general work plan that includes the major steps that will lead toward or achieve a program change or implement a previously achieved program change. For example, even if the final adoption of the program change is outside of the CMP's control, what steps will be included in the work plan so the CMP ensures the program change is considered, reviewed, and hopefully adopted by the outside entity? Who are the other stakeholders or elected officials that need to be engaged, and how and when during the strategy development process? What is the decision-making or voting process that is involved in the adoption of the program change, and how will the CMP interact with this process to ensure that the proposed program change is considered? If the state intends to fund implementation activities for the proposed program change, describe those in the plan as well. The plan should identify a schedule for completing the strategy and include major projected milestones (key products, deliverables, activities, and decisions) and budget estimates. If an activity will span two or more years, it can be combined into one entry (i.e., Years 2-3 rather than Year 2 and then Year 3). While the annual milestones are a useful guide to ensure the strategy remains on track, OCM recognizes that they may change somewhat over the course of the five-year strategy due to unforeseen circumstances. The same holds true for the annual budget estimates. Further detailing and adjustment of annual activities, milestones, and budgets will be determined through the annual cooperative agreement negotiation process.

Strategy Goal: The goal of this strategy is to complete the regulations review process for recently updated tidal wetlands regulations with the ultimate goal of legislative approval and adoption.
Total Years: 2

Total Budget: $130,000

Year: 1
Description of activities: Initiate the state's eReg system process and work with stakeholders to build public support for revised regulations
Major Milestone(s): Provide for public notice, comment and hearing; draft responses to public comments and amend draft regulations as necessary; undertake public outreach and stakeholder engagement efforts; revise draft regulations as necessary
Budget: $80,000

Year: 2
Description of activities: Submit final draft of revised regulations to Legislative Regulations Review Committee for approval
Major Milestone(s): Certify fiscal and economic impacts; provide for legal review by DEEP counsel and the Office of the Attorney General; submit final draft to the Legislature's Regulation Review Committee; submit approved regulations, if adopted, to NOAA/OCM as a program change
Budget: $50,000

XIV. Fiscal and Technical Needs

A. Fiscal Needs: *If 309 funding is not sufficient to carry out the proposed strategy, identify additional funding needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to secure additional state funds from the legislature and/or from other sources to support this strategy.*

We expect 309 funding should be sufficient to carry out the specific tasks related to the regulation adoption process.

B. Technical Needs: *If the state does not possess the technical knowledge, skills, or equipment to carry out all or part of the proposed strategy, identify these needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to obtain the trained personnel or equipment needed (for example, through agreements with other state agencies).*

DEEP staff from LWRD and DEEP's Office of Legal Counsel collectively possess the ability and resources to compete the tasks related to the regulation adoption process.

X. Projects of Special Merit (Optional)

If desired, briefly state what projects of special merit the CMP may wish to pursue to augment this strategy. (Any activities that are necessary to achieve the program change or that the state intends to support with baseline funding should be included in the strategy above.) The information in this section will not be used to evaluate or rank projects of special merit and is simply meant to give CMPs the option to provide additional information if they choose. Project descriptions should be kept very brief (e.g., undertake benthic mapping to provide additional data for ocean management planning). Do not provide detailed project descriptions that would be needed for the funding competition.

LWRD does not anticipate pursuing funding for a Project of Special Merit during this Program Enhancement Cycle.

Strategy: Blue Plan Update

This section establishes a clear strategy (or strategies) the CMP plans to pursue during the five-year strategy period based on the management needs identified in the assessment for one or more of its high-priority enhancement areas. The CMPs must use the "Strategy Template" provided in Appendix C. Enhancement area strategies should include enough information for OCM to determine whether (1) the proposed program change or implementation activity adequately addresses the needs identified in the assessment, and (2) the program's work plan to achieve the program change is appropriate and cost-effective. Copy and paste additional strategy templates below as needed. Please make sure "Heading 1" formatting is selected for each title (Go to "Home", "Styles", "Heading 1".)

XI. Issue Area(s)

E. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will *primarily* support the following high-priority enhancement area(s) *(check no more than two):*

☐ Aquaculture
☐ Energy and Government Facility Siting
☐ Coastal Hazards
☒Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
☐ Special Area Management Planning
☐ Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
☐ Wetlands
☐ Marine Debris
☐ Public Access

F. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will also support the following enhancement areas *(check all that apply)*:

☒Aquaculture
☒Energy and Government Facility Siting
☐ Coastal Hazards
☐ Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
☐ Special Area Management Planning
☐ Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
☐ Wetlands
☐ Marine Debris
☐ Public Access

XII. Strategy Description

F. The proposed strategy will lead to, or implement, the following types of program changes *(check all that apply):*

☐ A change to coastal zone boundaries;
New or revised authorities, including statutes, regulations, enforceable policies, administrative decisions, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement/understanding;
☐ New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances;
☐ New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs;
☒New or revised special area management plans (SAMP) or plans for areas of particular concern (APC) including enforceable policies and other necessary implementation mechanisms or criteria and procedures for designating and managing APCs; and,
☒New or revised guidelines, procedures, and policy documents which are formally adopted by a state or territory and provide specific interpretations of enforceable CZM program policies to applicants, local government, and other agencies that will result in meaningful improvements in coastal resource management.

G. ***Strategy Goal:*** *Prepare the second review of and potential revision and update to the Blue Plan*

State the goal of the strategy for the five-year assessment period. The goal should be the specific program change to be achieved or be a statement describing the results of the project, with the expectation that achieving the goal would eventually lead to a program change. For strategies that implement an existing program change, the goal should be a specific implementation milestone. For example, work with three communities to develop revised draft comprehensive plans that consider future sea level rise or, based on research and policy analysis, present proposed legislation on wetland buffers to the state legislature for consideration. Rather than a lofty statement, the goal should be achievable within the time frame of the strategy.

The goal of this strategy is to prepare the second legislatively mandated review of and potential revision and update to the Blue Plan, which will be required no later than the spring of 2031. The second review will be based on the experience of implementing the Plan and any new information or policy issues that have arisen since initial adoption and the first five-year plan review.

H. Description

Describe the proposed strategy and how the strategy will lead to and/or implement the program changes selected above. If the strategy will only involve implementation activities, briefly describe the program change that has already been adopted, and how the proposed activities will further that program change. (Note that implementation strategies are not to exceed two years.)

LWRD will continue to monitor the implementation of Plan policies and solicit input from stakeholders and the Advisory Committee on the Plan's usefulness and effectiveness. Based on this experience and input, LWRD will compile a list of necessary updates and amendments to the Plan policies and data. Any necessary updates to the Plan identified through this monitoring effort will be adopted through a similar process of stakeholder outreach, consideration by the Advisory Committee, drafting by LWRD, public hearing, and submission to the Legislature, and will likewise be submitted as program changes. We will initiate this process so as to meet the statutorily required five-year deadline for the plan update, although the updates may come sooner than that.

XIII. Needs and Gaps Addressed

Identify what priority needs and gaps the strategy addresses, and explain why the proposed program change or implementation activities are the most appropriate means to address said needs and gaps. This discussion should reference the key findings of the assessment and explain how the strategy addresses those findings.

The proposed strategy will address the management priority of marine spatial planning in Long Island Sound, which must be a living process and not just a product with documents and maps. Following standard procedures for incorporating updated data and revised policies developed during the previous assessment, the strategy will support compiling new information on offshore resources and human uses, evaluating the effectiveness of marine spatial planning policies, and conducting outreach and receiving stakeholder input, all leading to an update and revision in the Blue Plan.

XIV. Benefits to Coastal Management

Discuss the anticipated effect of the strategy, including the scope and value of the strategy, in advancing improvements in the CMP and coastal management, in general.

The expected effect of this strategy will be to continue advancing the fundamental improvement to CT's CMP that is represented by the Blue Plan. The Plan must be reviewed and updated if necessary to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance in managing offshore resources and human uses.

XV. Likelihood of Success

Discuss the likelihood of attaining the strategy goal and program change (if not part of the strategy goal) during the five-year assessment cycle or at a later date. Address the nature and degree of support for pursuing the strategy and the proposed program change, as well as the specific actions the state or territory will undertake to maintain or build future support for achieving and implementing the program change, including education and outreach activities.

With continuing 309 funding, we will have the staff resources necessary to follow the Blue Plan process, including Advisory Committee meetings and stakeholder outreach, to complete the next modification. Based on our experience from the first Blue Plan update, we are confident that the review process and any Plan updates, if warranted, can be successfully completed.

XVI. Strategy Work Plan

Using the template below, provide a general work plan that includes the major steps that will lead toward or achieve a program change or implement a previously achieved program change. For example, even if the final adoption of the program change is outside of the CMP's control, what steps will be included in the work plan so the CMP ensures the program change is considered, reviewed, and hopefully adopted by the outside entity? Who are the other stakeholders or elected officials that need to be engaged, and how and when during the strategy development process? What is the decision-making or voting process that is involved in the adoption of the program change, and how will the CMP interact with this process to ensure that the proposed program change is considered? If the state intends to fund implementation activities for the proposed program change, describe those in the plan as well. The plan should identify a schedule for completing the strategy and include major projected milestones (key products, deliverables, activities, and decisions) and budget estimates. If an activity will span two or more years, it can be combined into one entry (i.e., Years 2-3 rather than Year 2 and then Year 3). While the annual milestones are a useful guide to ensure the strategy remains on track, OCM recognizes that they may change somewhat over the course of the five-year strategy due to unforeseen circumstances. The same holds true for the annual budget estimates. Further detailing and adjustment of annual activities, milestones, and budgets will be determined through the annual cooperative agreement negotiation process.

Strategy Goal: To update the Long Island Sound Blue Plan in light of relevant new information and implementation experience
Total Years: 2
Total Budget: $140,000

Year: 4
Description of activities: Development of Blue Plan Review Strategy and Process for Revisions
Major Milestone(s): Establish a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Long Island Sound Blue Plan review and revision process based on experience of the first five-year review; continue regular outreach and Advisory Committee activities; compile master list of any proposed corrections, data needs, map and policy changes; obtain Advisory Committee input and guidance
Budget: $60,000

Year: 5
Description of activities: Approval of Blue Plan Revisions
Major Milestone(s): Conduct public and stakeholder outreach; conduct public notice, comment, and hearing process for any proposed draft revisions; develop final draft revisions or final review report for submission to the legislature; submit approved revisions to NOAA/OCM as program changes.
Budget: $80,000

XVII. Fiscal and Technical Needs

A. Fiscal Needs: *If 309 funding is not sufficient to carry out the proposed strategy, identify additional funding needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to secure additional state funds from the legislature and/or from other sources to support this strategy.*

We expect 309 funding should be sufficient to carry out the specific tasks related to Plan and/or Inventory updates. Technical assistance in creating updated maps, websites and documents may be provided by partners such as CT Sea Grant or UConn, but LWRD may also need to use 309 funds to contract for these services.

B. Technical Needs: *If the state does not possess the technical knowledge, skills, or equipment to carry out all or part of the proposed strategy, identify these needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to obtain the trained personnel or equipment needed (for example, through agreements with other state agencies).*

LWRD staff, in conjunction with partners such as CT Sea Grant and UConn CLEAR, collectively possess the ability and resources to compete the tasks related to reviewing and updating the Blue Plan.

XVIII. Projects of Special Merit (Optional)

If desired, briefly state what projects of special merit the CMP may wish to pursue to augment this strategy. (Any activities that are necessary to achieve the program change or that the state intends to support with baseline funding should be included in the strategy above.) The information in this section will not be used to evaluate or rank projects of special merit and is simply meant to give CMPs the option to provide additional information if they choose. Project descriptions should be kept very brief (e.g., undertake benthic mapping to provide additional data for ocean management planning). Do not provide detailed project descriptions that would be needed for the funding competition.

At this time, LWRD does not anticipate pursuing funding for a Project of Special Merit during this Program Enhancement Cycle.

Strategy: Public Access Improvements

This section establishes a clear strategy (or strategies) the CMP plans to pursue during the five-year strategy period based on the management needs identified in the assessment for one or more of its high-priority enhancement areas. The CMPs must use the "Strategy Template" provided in Appendix C. Enhancement area strategies should include enough information for OCM to determine whether (1) the proposed program change or implementation activity adequately addresses the needs identified in the assessment, and (2) the program's work plan to achieve the program change is appropriate and cost-effective. Copy and paste additional strategy templates below as needed. Please make sure "Heading 1" formatting is selected for each title (Go to "Home", "Styles", "Heading 1".)

XIX. Issue Area(s)

G. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will *primarily* support the following high-priority enhancement area(s) *(check no more than two):*

☐ Aquaculture
☐ Energy and Government Facility Siting
☐ Coastal Hazards
☐ Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
☐ Special Area Management Planning
☐ Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
☐ Wetlands
☐ Marine Debris
☒Public Access

H. The proposed strategy or implementation activities will also support the following enhancement areas *(check all that apply)*:

☐ Aquaculture
☐ Energy and Government Facility Siting
☐ Coastal Hazards
☐ Ocean/Great Lakes Resources
☐ Special Area Management Planning
Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
☐ Wetlands
☐ Marine Debris
☐ Public Access

XX. Strategy Description

I. The proposed strategy will lead to, or implement, the following types of program changes *(check all that apply):*

☐ A change to coastal zone boundaries;
☒New or revised authorities, including statutes, regulations, enforceable policies, administrative decisions, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement/understanding;
☐ New or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances;
☐ New or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs;
☐ New or revised special area management plans (SAMP) or plans for areas of particular concern (APC) including enforceable policies and other necessary implementation mechanisms or criteria and procedures for designating and managing APCs; and,
☒New or revised guidelines, procedures, and policy documents which are formally adopted by a state or territory and provide specific interpretations of enforceable CZM program policies to applicants, local government, and other agencies that will result in meaningful improvements in coastal resource management.

J. Strategy Goal: *Strengthen Connecticut's coastal public access program through a comprehensive review of program needs and subsequent development of legislative and other efforts to address those program needs*

State the goal of the strategy for the five-year assessment period. The goal should be the specific program change to be achieved or be a statement describing the results of the project, with the expectation that achieving the goal would eventually lead to a program change. For strategies that implement an existing program change, the goal should be a specific implementation milestone. For example, work with three communities to develop revised draft comprehensive plans that consider future sea level rise or, based on research and policy analysis, present proposed legislation on wetland buffers to the state legislature for consideration. Rather than a lofty statement, the goal should be achievable within the time frame of the strategy.

The goal of this strategy is to strengthen Connecticut's coastal public access program through a comprehensive review of program needs, including incorporation of several steering committee recommendations from Connecticut's Improving Public Access in Connecticut (ImPACT) Fellowship. The most pressing need is to update the functionality of the existing online public access guide to allow for tracking of data to further identify access needs statewide. An updated access guide will allow for easier tracking of the types of access available (e.g., swimming, small boat launching), the variation in municipal parking fees, and the availability of public transit will provide the necessary support for ImPACT steering committee recommendations for any legislative changes necessary to more broadly support public access coast-wide and address gaps in municipal effort to provide meaningful public access.

B. Description

Describe the proposed strategy and how the strategy will lead to and/or implement the program changes selected above. If the strategy will only involve implementation activities, briefly describe the program change that has already been adopted, and how the proposed activities will further that program change. (Note that implementation strategies are not to exceed two years.)

LWRD will hire a consultant to update the existing online coastal access guide and bring it into 21st century functionality. The current guide is populated with PDF files that are static, cannot be translated to other languages, and are difficult to update within the guide's current platform. Further, the data associated with the guide will become obsolete if not moved to an updated platform. A consultant knowledgeable in interactive media platforms will be integral to improving the online guide experience for the public as well as making it easier for LWRD staff to manage and track pertinent data.

Once the database is moved to a more advanced platform and its functionality is improved, LWRD staff will then be able to identify gaps and needs, in keeping with ImPACT steering committee recommendations, and will draft legislation to amend the Connecticut Coastal Management Act to expand the general goal of providing public access coast-wide. The Act currently only encourages access at state-owned facilities. This legislative change will enhance the CMP's coastal access efforts by providing a stronger legislative goal.

LWRD will also use data from the updated online guide and database to support draft legislative proposals to address municipal coastal access barriers and needs as identified by the ImPACT steering

committee and LIS Partnership needs assessment. For example, legislation could establish a Fee in Lieu of Public Access program, similar to an existing Fee in Lieu of Open Space for Conservation Subdivisions, whereby municipalities will be able to assess a fee to developers of waterfront property where access would be marginal at best due to factors such as adjacent sensitive intertidal resources or steep slopes, and deposit the fee into a municipal fund dedicated to enhancing existing or providing/acquiring new coastal public access elsewhere within that town or city. Another example could be legislation capping municipal beach parking fees at a rate to be determined, such as no more than the admission charged for non-Connecticut-residents at Connecticut's state beach parks.

XXI. Needs and Gaps Addressed

Identify what priority needs and gaps the strategy addresses, and explain why the proposed program change or implementation activities are the most appropriate means to address said needs and gaps. This discussion should reference the key findings of the assessment and explain how the strategy addresses those findings.

The proposed strategy will address several recommendations generated by the steering committee established to guide the ImPACT Fellowship. The members of the steering committee represent a broad range of stakeholders and interests, and these recommendations will require a significant amount of LWRD staff time to see to fruition. With the necessary supporting data from the updated guide and public buy-in, we anticipate support to establish a new program that will provide municipalities with additional tools to enhance public access opportunities and, possibly, offset any revenue loss due to parking fee caps

Benefits to Coastal Management

Discuss the anticipated effect of the strategy, including the scope and value of the strategy, in advancing improvements in the CMP and coastal management, in general.

The expected effect of this strategy will be to continue advancing the fundamental improvement to Connecticut's coastal management program's public access efforts.

XXII. Likelihood of Success

Discuss the likelihood of attaining the strategy goal and program change (if not part of the strategy goal) during the five-year assessment cycle or at a later date. Address the nature and degree of support for pursuing the strategy and the proposed program change, as well as the specific actions the state or territory will undertake to maintain or build future support for achieving and implementing the program change, including education and outreach activities.

With continuing 309 funding, we will have the staff resources necessary to hire a qualified consultant to revise the online coastal access guide. LWRD will have the staff resources necessary to update and track data, and draft any necessary legislation to fill gaps.

Strategy Work Plan

Using the template below, provide a general work plan that includes the major steps that will lead toward or achieve a program change or implement a previously achieved program change. For example, even if the final adoption of the program change is outside of the CMP's control, what steps will be included in the work plan so the CMP ensures the program change is considered, reviewed, and hopefully adopted by the outside entity? Who are the other stakeholders or elected officials that need to be engaged, and how and when during the strategy development process? What is the decision-making or

voting process that is involved in the adoption of the program change, and how will the CMP interact with this process to ensure that the proposed program change is considered? If the state intends to fund implementation activities for the proposed program change, describe those in the plan as well. The plan should identify a schedule for completing the strategy and include major projected milestones (key products, deliverables, activities, and decisions) and budget estimates. If an activity will span two or more years, it can be combined into one entry (i.e., Years 2-3 rather than Year 2 and then Year 3). While the annual milestones are a useful guide to ensure the strategy remains on track, OCM recognizes that they may change somewhat over the course of the five-year strategy due to unforeseen circumstances. The same holds true for the annual budget estimates. Further detailing and adjustment of annual activities, milestones, and budgets will be determined through the annual cooperative agreement negotiation process.

Strategy Goal: Strengthen Connecticut's coastal public access program through a comprehensive review of program needs and subsequent development of legislative and other efforts to address those program needs
Total Years: 3
Total Budget: $180,000

Year: 1
Description of activities: In the first year this task will focus on beginning the process of updating and transferring the Coastal Access Guide to a new platform, which will include development of a workplan and determination of the extent to which contractor support is needed. The guide updates will allow for improved data revision and tracking which will provide support for all subsequent strategies. Based on guide data updates, LWRD will develop draft legislative proposals, conduct stakeholder and public outreach to garner public buy-in, and submit proposals to the legislature (if supported by the administration), preparing testimony and responding to questions.
Major Milestone(s): Draft legislative proposals to bolster the general public access goal contained in the CCMA; draft legislative proposal to establish a Fee in Lieu of Public Access program for municipalities; draft legislative proposal to cap municipal parking fees for non-residents; conduct stakeholder engagement and outreach; submit legislative proposals to DEEP's legislative package for submittal to the Connecticut General Assembly for the 2027 legislative session.
Budget: $50,000

Year: 2
Description of activities: If the proposed legislation is passed, develop guidance and outreach for implementation of newly adopted statutory requirements. If legislation is not passed, make necessary adjustments and conduct additional stakeholder outreach to bolster support and resubmit for the 2028 legislative session (if supported by the administration).
Major Milestone(s): Draft guidance and outreach materials to support implementation of new coastal access requirements, or revisions and stakeholder engagement to gain support for passage of coastal access legislation; draft coastal access guide updates.
Budget: $80,000

Year: 3
Description of activities: Finalize and disseminate guidance and outreach materials if legislation is passed; finalize and publish updates to online coastal access guide

Major Milestone(s): Trouble shoot functionality issues; publish updated guide online; undertake outreach effort to advertise new guide; submit legislative changes, if approved, to NOAA/OCM as a program change
Budget: $50,000

XXIII. Fiscal and Technical Needs

A. Fiscal Needs: *If 309 funding is not sufficient to carry out the proposed strategy, identify additional funding needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to secure additional state funds from the legislature and/or from other sources to support this strategy.*

We expect 309 funding should be sufficient to carry out the specific tasks related to the guide update and the drafting of legislative proposals, however additional funds may be determined to be necessary to provide contractual support migrating the coastal access guide to a new platform.

B. Technical Needs: *If the state does not possess the technical knowledge, skills, or equipment to carry out all or part of the proposed strategy, identify these needs. Provide a brief description of what efforts the CMP has made, if any, to obtain the trained personnel or equipment needed (for example, through agreements with other state agencies).*

LWRD will publish a Request for Proposal to hire a qualified consultant to update the online access guide. LWRD staff, in conjunction with partners such as UConn CLEAR, collectively possess the ability and resources to complete the tasks related to updating the current public access database and tracking data. LWRD staff possess the ability and resources to complete the tasks associated with drafting legislative proposals.

Projects of Special Merit (Optional)
If desired, briefly state what projects of special merit the CMP may wish to pursue to augment this strategy. (Any activities that are necessary to achieve the program change or that the state intends to support with baseline funding should be included in the strategy above.) The information in this section will not be used to evaluate or rank projects of special merit and is simply meant to give CMPs the option to provide additional information if they choose. Project descriptions should be kept very brief (e.g., undertake benthic mapping to provide additional data for ocean management planning). Do not provide detailed project descriptions that would be needed for the funding competition.

At this time, LWRD does not anticipate pursuing funding for a Project of Special Merit during this Program Enhancement Cycle.

5-Year Budget Summary by Strategy

At the end of the strategy section, please include the following budget table summarizing your anticipated Section 309 expenses by strategy for each year. Generally, CMPs should only develop strategies for activities that the state intends to fund and work on given their anticipated level of Section 309 funding. However, in some circumstances, CMPs may wish to use the assessment and strategy development process as a broader strategic planning effort for the CMP. In that case, the CMP may elect to include additional strategies that exceed the state's anticipated Section 309 funding over the five-year period. If the CMP chooses this approach, it should still clearly indicate which strategies it anticipates supporting with Section 309 funding and which strategies it anticipates supporting through other funding sources.

Strategy Title	**Anticipated Funding Source (309 or Other)**	**Year 1 Funding**	**Year 2 Funding**	**Year 3 Funding**	**Year 4 Funding**	**Year 5 Funding**	**Total Funding**
Enact Revised State Tidal Wetland Regulations	309	$80,000	$50,000				$130,000
Various Public Access Enhancements	309	$50,000	$80,000	$50,000			$180,000
Remap Coastal Boundary	309			$80,000	$70,000	$50,000	$200,000
Blue Plan Update	309				$60,000	$80,000	$140,000

Total Funding		$130,000	$130,000	$130,000	$130,000	$130,000	$650,000

Summary of Stakeholder and Public Comment

This section provides a list of the stakeholder groups or individuals engaged during the assessment development process and a brief summary of their feedback. It also provides a summary of the public comments received during the public comment period and how the CMP responded to those comments.

Regular stakeholder engagement has been an integral part of the implementation of the Coastal Management Program, and LWRD staff obtain regular input not only from the regulated community but from environmental organizations, stakeholder interest groups, and members of the public as well. As a result, LWRD's outreach initiatives relied on ongoing involvement with several stakeholder engagement efforts and the National Estuarine Research Reserve that closely correlate with Section 309 enhancement areas: the Blue Plan Advisory Committee and their respective sectors for Ocean Resources and Energy Facility Siting; Connecticut Sea Grant and their networks for Ocean Resources and Aquaculture; the Long Island Sound Eelgrass Collaborative for Ocean Resources; the Improving Public Access in Connecticut (ImPACT) Fellowship Steering Committee and their respective sectors for Public Access; the Connecticut Harbor Management Association and municipal harbor management commissions for Marine Debris and Special Area Management Planning; the Tidal Wetlands and Riverine Migratory Corridors restoration teams for Wetlands; and various Long Island Sound Partnership (formerly known as the Long Island Sound Study) working groups for Cumulative and Secondary Impacts, Wetlands, Coastal Hazards, and Public Access. LWRD also engages in frequent inter- and intra- agency collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.