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

**Spring 2023
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SPOTLIGHTED COASTAL RESOURCE: Protect Long Island Sound Water Quality and Fertilize with Care



Spotlighted Coastal Resource:
Protect Long Island Sound Water
Quality and Fertilize with Care

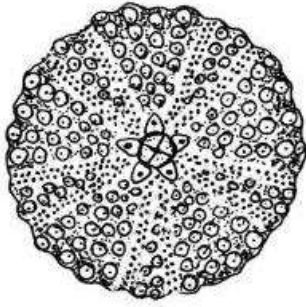
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Regular readers of *Sound Outlook* are no doubt aware that excess fertilizer on lawns can have a significant impact on Long Island Sound water quality. The closer a lawn is to the Sound, the more likely it is that the nitrogen in the fertilizer will get into the water. Just as it encourages plants on the upland to grow, fertilizer washing off into the water can cause excess algae to grow. That algae eventually dies, and the process of decomposing uses up the oxygen in the water, leading to [hypoxia](#).

Most lawn care experts agree that you should fertilize your lawn only **when** you need to. Fertilizing your lawn more than twice a year, especially during the mid-summer, is wasteful and doesn't provide any significant benefit. The best times to apply fertilizers are after spring green-up (mid-March to mid-April) and no later than October 15th. Your lawn isn't ready to get fed if you fertilize



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Everyone loves an
environmentally friendly lawn
Photo Credit: DEEP LWRD

too early in the year, and it can't take up any more nutrients if you fertilize too late.

You should also be mindful of the weather forecast when applying fertilizer. April showers might bring May flowers, but a big rain event will just wash the fertilizer away into nearby streams and rivers, which might ultimately end up in Long Island Sound.

Regardless of the time of year, you should apply fertilizer only **if** you need to. But how do you know if you need to fertilize? Contact the [**Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station**](#) to perform a soil test. The results will tell you if you need to fertilize and what type of fertilizer you need. And if you need to apply fertilizer, never apply more product than the instructions recommend.

You can also minimize the need to add nutrients to your lawn--and save yourself some effort--by leaving grass clippings in place when you mow.

Also, be sure to apply fertilizer only **where** you need to. Minimize spillage onto hard surfaces, because it won't make the concrete grow and it will just get washed away.

You can also talk to your lawn care company, if you use one, and ask them to employ these practices when caring for your lawn.

We encourage readers to visit these online resources for additional tips for cultivating lawns and gardens that are both beautiful and environmentally friendly:

- The [**Long Island Sound Study's "Sound Gardening" website**](#) has information about proper lawn maintenance and alternatives to conventional lawns;
- [**DEEP's Organic Lawn Care website**](#) has information about soil testing and native landscaping; and
- Rain gardens are another landscaping practice that goes above and beyond to protect water quality. The [**UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research's comprehensive rain garden website**](#) is packed with details about these multi-tasking landscaping features.

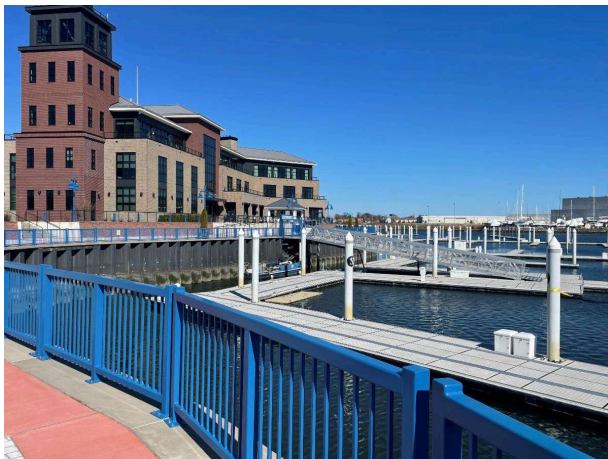
Regular readers of *Sound Outlook* know that public access to the shores of Long Island Sound is one of the cornerstones of the State's Coastal Management Program. Public access is defined as a water-dependent use in the Connecticut Coastal Management Act, and highest priority and preference must be given to locating water-dependent uses in shorefront areas. Most often, the provision of coastal public access areas is achieved through the municipal coastal site plan review process.

In May of 2010, back when DEEP was DEP, the then-Office of Long Island Sound Programs (now the Land and Water Resources Division) reviewed a municipal coastal site plan application for the redevelopment of Steel Point in Bridgeport. The project represented a unique opportunity to showcase Bridgeport's vision to reestablish its connection to Bridgeport Harbor, promote more sustainable development practices, and maximize water-dependent use of suitable waterfront property. The General Development Plan proposed for the property included development of a marina, a general public access walkway, public fishing, and a mix of non-water-dependent uses such as retail and restaurants that would invite the public to the water's edge.

Throughout the subsequent redevelopment of Steel Point, the Office of Long Island Sound Programs/Land and Water Resources Division continued to work closely with the applicant and the City of Bridgeport to ensure that the DEEP-related components of the project moved forward in an efficient manner, and that consistency with coastal management policies was appropriately achieved. To that end, we are happy to report that the [Steelpointe Harborwalk](#) public access walkway is one of the newest additions to the Connecticut Coastal Access Guide.

The Steelpointe Harborwalk runs along Bridgeport Harbor from The Bass Pro Shops, and loops in front of Boca Oyster Bar. Bicycles and skateboards are not allowed, but leashed dogs are welcome. This site is open daily from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

When you take a stroll along the Harborwalk, or any of the over 350 public access sites on the [Connecticut Coastal Access Guide](#), you can take comfort in knowing that Connecticut's Coastal Management Program is working continuously to bring additional public opportunities to enjoy Long Island Sound.



Steelpointe Harborwalk
Photo Credit: DEEP LWRD



The view from Steelpointe Harborwalk includes Bridgeport Boatworks and Pleasure Beach in the distance
Photo Credit: DEEP LWRD

CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Coastal Resilience Fund 2023 Request for Proposals

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has announced the [2023 National Coastal Resilience Fund \(NCRF\) Request for Proposals](#). The goal of the NCRF is to enhance protections for coastal communities from the impacts of storms, floods, and other natural coastal hazards and to improve habitats for fish and wildlife. This fund will make investments in planning, design, and implementation of natural and nature-based solutions to meet this goal.

NFWF will award approximately \$140 million in grants to create and restore natural systems to increase protection for communities from current and future coastal hazards and improve habitats for fish and wildlife species. All projects under this program must demonstrate dual benefits to both coastal communities and habitats. The NCRF supports projects that will result in the creation and/or restoration of natural systems to increase the resilience of communities from coastal hazards and improve habitats for fish and wildlife species.

Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state and territorial government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal governments and organizations, educational institutions, or commercial (for-profit) organizations.

Preproposals are due April 12, 2023 by 11:59 pm. You can find more information on the [NCRF website](#), including a recording of a pre-proposal webinar held on March 2, 2023.

If you have a question about a project idea, please contact John Wright at John.Wright@nfwf.org.

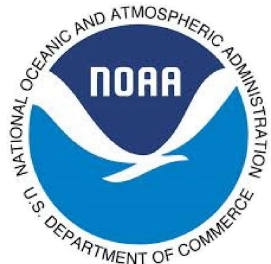


Restoration implementation activities like living shorelines are eligible for NCRF funding
Photo Credit: DEEP LWRD

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