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NFWF Announces $1.29 Million Awarded in Grants from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund

Twenty grants to Improve the Health and Ecosystem of Long Island Sound in New England

STRATFORD POINT, CT (November 16, 2017) – Today, top federal and state environmental officials announced 20 grants totaling $1.29 million to local government and community groups to improve the health and ecosystem of Long Island Sound. Eighteen projects, totaling $1.2 million benefit Connecticut. Two projects totaling $83,000 benefit the New England states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.

The projects, which are funded through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, will restore 39 acres of habitat for fish and wildlife including coastal forest, grassland, river and tidal marshes. This grant program combines funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).

“Protecting Long Island Sound is a priority for EPA," said **Deb Szaro, Acting Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA, Region 1**. "These projects will support vital and diverse initiatives throughout the region. We must all work to improve water quality and reduce pollution in the Long Island Sound watershed, while involving the public in protecting one of our natural treasures."

The Long Island Sound Futures Fund 2017 grants will reach more than 870,000 residents through environmental and conservation education programs. Water quality improvement projects will treat 439,000 gallons of water runoff, reducing more than 15,600 pounds of nitrogen, and collecting 2,800 pounds of floating trash. The grants will be matched by $1.1 million from the grantees resulting in $2.45 million in funding for on-the-ground conservation in Connecticut and New England.

“One of the greatest environmental challenges facing our nation and its communities is the protection and restoration of highly productive estuaries,” said **Jeff Trandahl, Executive Director and CEO, NFWF**. “This year, funded projects will help youth become stewards of the outdoors and introduce them to wildlife in their schoolyards. Additionally, work will help restore the health of our rivers, coastal marshes, forests and grasslands for the benefit of fish, wildlife and to enhance the strength of coastal communities."

The Long Island Sound Study initiated the Long Island Sound Futures Fund in 2005 through the U.S. EPA’s Long Island Sound Office and NFWF. To date the Futures Fund has invested $17 million in 380 projects. With grantee match of $33 million, the program generated $50 million for locally based conservation. The projects have opened up 157 river miles for fish

passage, restored 1,090 acres of critical fish and wildlife habitat and open space; treated 202 million gallons of pollution, and educated and engaged 3 million people from communities surrounding the sound.

"Long Island Sound is one of Connecticut's most treasured natural resources and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is committed to preserving and protecting the Sound for the benefit of all Connecticut residents as well as those who live, work, and recreate in its watershed," said **Robert Klee, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.** "Today, we are honored to celebrate with our watershed partners in the awarding of over $1.29 million to 20 recipients in Connecticut and the upper watershed. We are also pleased that the 18 Connecticut projects leverage over $1.1 million in additional local funding sources. These projects will build on our efforts to protect and improve the health of Long Island Sound by fostering environmental stewardship and public awareness and education, habitat restoration, water quality improvements, and identifying Ecologically Significant Areas in Connecticut and New York for the Long Island Sound Blue Plan."

Long Island Sound is an estuary that provides economic and recreational benefits to millions of people while also providing habitat for more than 1,200 invertebrates, 170 species of fish, and dozens of species of migratory birds.

Each project contributes to a healthier Long Island Sound for everyone, from nearby area residents to those at the furthest reaches of the sound. All 9 million people who live, work and play in the watershed impacting the Sound can benefit from and help build on the progress that has already been made.

About the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 4,500 organizations and committed more than $3.8 billion to conservation projects. Learn more at www.nfwf.org.

About the Long Island Sound Study
The Long Island Sound Study, developed under the EPA's National Estuary Program, is a cooperative effort between the EPA and the states of Connecticut and New York to protect and restore the sound and its ecosystem. To learn more about the LISS, visit www.longislandsoundstudy.net.

Long Island Sound Futures Fund 2017 Projects in New England

Rapid Action Plans to Deliver Green Infrastructure in Coastal CT Communities (CT)
University of Connecticut
Project Area: South Central Region Basin which includes the communities of Bethany, Branford, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meridan, Milford, North Branford, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, Woodbridge, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $234,712
Matching Funds: $134,148

The project will plan, design and implement five Green Infrastructure (GI) projects in communities in the South Central Region Basin, Connecticut. The project will provide measurable annual reductions in stormwater pollution into Long Island Sound and provide examples of successful GI paving the way for future installations around the sound.

Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels for Eastern Connecticut (CT)
Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, Inc.
Project Area: 36 towns in the Thames, Quinebaug and Shetucket Basins, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $84,996
Matching Funds: $95,365

The project will install an estimated 7,000 sq. ft. of rain gardens and 100 rain barrels in Eastern Connecticut. The project will prevent up to 8,581 gallons of stormwater from flowing into Long Island Sound.

Partnering for Pollution Prevention: Water Quality Monitoring of Impaired Waterways (CT)
Earthplace - The Nature Discovery Center, Inc.
Project Area: The project will take place on Bruce Brook, Byram River, Comstock Brook, Greenwich Creek, Horseneck Brook, Mianus River, Rippowam River, and Rooster River, Fairfield County, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $65,363
Matching Funds: $54,383

The project will monitor eight impaired waterways bi-weekly for water temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, fecal coliform, and bacteria in Fairfield County, Connecticut. The project will provide an update to a dataset of water quality conditions and work towards identifying sources of sewage pollution impacting Long Island Sound.

Promoting Green Infrastructure through Monitoring & Evaluation of Bioswales (CT)
New Haven Urban Resources Initiative
Project Area: New Haven, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $42,966
Matching Funds: $66,685

The project will monitor Green Infrastructure (GI) bioswales to evaluate their capacity to improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff; and conduct a communications program for residents, the business community and the public about the value of the GI to their neighborhoods in New Haven, Connecticut. The project will aid in the design and installation of GI systems in three New Haven river watersheds and in urban areas of the Long Island Sound.

Unified Water Study Equipment Loan Program: Collaboration in Embayment Monitoring (CT, NY)
Earthplace - The Nature Discovery Center, Inc., Harbor Watch
Project Area: Long Island Sound Embayments in Connecticut and New York
LISFF Funds: $99,971

Matching Funds: $118,153

The project will manage an equipment, supplies and technical resources loan program for up to 20 embayment groups and 200 citizen science volunteers to support the Unified Water Study for Long Island Sound embayments in Connecticut and New York. The project will result in a greater number of embayments being monitored providing important information from the first areas affected by pollution sources that impact the health of Long Island Sound.

Collaborative Watershed Planning for the Ten Mile River (CT, NY)
Housatonic Valley Association, Inc.
Project Area: Ten Mile River watershed: Eastern Dutchess County, New York; and western Litchfield County, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $64,358
Matching Funds: $83,000

The project will develop a watershed management plan for the Ten Mile River in eastern Dutchess County New York and western Litchfield County, Connecticut. The project will ultimately, when the plan is completed and implemented, inform restoration and water quality activities focused reducing on nitrogen loads from the Ten Mile River to the Housatonic River and Long Island Sound.

Unified Water Study: Long Island Sound Embayment Monitoring (CT, NY)
Connecticut Fund for the Environment, Save the Sound
Project Area: Long Island Sound Embayments in Connecticut and New York.
LISFF Funds: $99,991
Matching Funds: $132,000

The project will implement the Unified Water Study a water quality monitoring program in two embayments; and engage five water quality monitoring groups in nine embayments providing them with technical support as participants in the UWS in Connecticut and New York. The project will engage a coordinated effort to collect data on the health of bays and harbors to provide for synthesis about water quality issues affecting Long Island Sound.

Using Flow Meters to Remove Nitrogen at the Amherst Wastewater Treatment Plant (MA)
Town of Amherst Department of Public Works
Project Area: The Connecticut River which flows to Long Island Sound, Hadley, Massachusetts.
LISFF Funds: $17,650
Matching Funds: $8,850

The project will install flow monitoring systems on effluent and return activated sludge at the Town of Amherst Wastewater Treatment Plant, Massachusetts. The project will improve process control for nitrification and denitrification resulting in a reduction of nitrogen loading to the Connecticut River which drains into Long Island Sound.

Watershed Monitoring to Support the Long Island Sound Nitrogen Strategy (MA, NH, VT)
Connecticut River Watershed Council, Inc.

Project Area: Monitoring locations within the Connecticut River watershed on the mainstem and tributaries in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont
LISFF Funds: $65,284
Matching Funds: $40,000

The project will create a watershed-scale monitoring strategy to add nutrient and other water quality data in the Connecticut and Housatonic River watersheds of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. The project will add to the current effort to implement the Long Island Sound Nitrogen Reduction Strategy for the large river systems that drain to Long Island Sound.

H. Smith Richardson Wildlife Preserve Restoration Project (CT)
Connecticut Audubon Society
Project Area: Westport, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $145,780
Matching Funds: $134,047

The project will restore 33 acres of the H. Smith Richardson Wildlife Preserve to a coastal forest habitat in Westport, Connecticut. The project will improve conditions for birds and other wildlife at one of the largest open spaces in southwest Connecticut along the Long Island Sound.

Resilience Management Planning and Restoration at Dodge Paddock/Beal Preserve (CT)
University of Connecticut
Project Area: Stonington, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $55,449
Matching Funds: $34,478

The project will develop a resilience management plan for and restore coastal grassland and upland at the Dodge Paddock/Beal Preserve in Stonington, Connecticut. The project will incorporate planning for rising tides and storms to protect tidal wetlands, coastal grassland, beach/dune habitat and rocky intertidal shoreline.

Planning for Fish Passage at Starr Mill Pond Dam (CT)
The Nature Conservancy-Connecticut
Project Area: Starr Mill dam is the first dam on the Coginchaug River, Middleton, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $85,482
Matching Funds: $43,676

The project will develop an engineered plan for fish passage at the Starr Mill dam and for restoration of the river corridor and upstream impoundment in Middleton, Connecticut. The project plan goal is to improve connectivity, restore freshwater wetlands and riparian buffer, floodplain and aquatic habitat benefitting resident, as well as migratory species.

From the Schoolyard to the Sound: Engaging Communities through Schoolyard Habitats (CT)
National Audubon Society, Inc. (Audubon Connecticut)
Project Area: Municipalities in Fairfield and New Haven Counties particularly Stamford and New Haven, Connecticut.

LISFF Funds: $44,999
Matching Funds: $60,645

The project will create a network of schoolyard habitats at 25 schools in Fairfield and New Haven Counties, Connecticut. The project will connect local residents to Long Island Sound and empower them to engage in its conservation.

Audubon WildLife Guards: A Coastal Youth Conservation Program (CT)
National Audubon Society, Inc. (Audubon Connecticut)
Project Area: Sandy Point Beach and Bird Sanctuary, West Haven, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $27,181
Matching Funds: $27,067

The project will employ high school students working with local partners to steward, monitor and restore habitat, and increase knowledge about protecting habitat and wildlife among visitors to Sandy Point Beach and Bird Sanctuary in West Haven, Connecticut. The project will complement ongoing efforts to restore and sustainably manage Sandy Point, to engage people in stewardship, and to increase knowledge about Long Island Sound among visitors.

Connections to Long Island Sound (CT)
Sea Research Foundation, Inc., Mystic Aquarium
Project Area: Mystic Aquarium, Mystic, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $44,966
Matching Funds: $34,904

The project will use interactive exhibits, portable estuarine-based tools and curricula and interactive resources to engage and educate visitors and students about issues affecting Long Island Sound at the Mystic Aquarium, Connecticut. The project will reach approximately 750,000 individuals each year and promote environmental stewardship of Long Island Sound.

Healthy Connecticut Towns for a Healthy Long Island Sound (CT)
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut
Project Area: State of Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $36,932
Matching Funds: $20,700

The project will offer training programs about organic land care practices and principles to 100 landscapers in Connecticut. The project will have landscapers commit to transitioning properties in their care to an organic program to foster reductions of nitrogen and pesticide runoff into Long Island Sound.

Stormwater Management Education for Residents (CT)
Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven
Project Area: New Haven, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $10,000
Matching Funds: $10,000

The project will provide education about Green Infrastructure waste-water management systems in low-income neighborhoods highly-impacted by water pollution in New Haven, Connecticut. The project will seek to increase residents' understanding of the impact of water pollution and about the opportunities they have to decrease pollution into Long Island Sound through simple, low-cost solutions.

Sound Spirit Week (CT)
Sea Research Foundation, Inc., Mystic Aquarium
Project Area: Mystic Aquarium, Mystic, Connecticut, Dodge Paddock Beal Preserve in Stonington, Connecticut; Bluff Point State Park in Groton, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $9,978
Matching Funds: $8,053

The project will conduct Long Island Sound awareness and stewardship events designed to foster understanding about personal roles in maintaining a healthy environment in Mystic, Connecticut. The project will raise public awareness about the inter-related ecological and economic importance of Long Island Sound.

Long Island Sound Summit and Video Project (CT)
Solar Youth, Inc.
Project Area: West, Mill, and Quinnipiac River Watersheds and their tributaries that flow into the New Haven Harbor, New Haven, Connecticut
LISFF Funds: $10,000
Matching Funds: $7,500

The project will engage urban youth in a Long Island Sound Summit that will include curriculum and lessons, hands-on conservation activities, and creation of a Youth Voice Video where the students will share what they learned about Long Island Sound with the public in New Haven, Connecticut. The project will increase urban youths' awareness, knowledge, skills and motivation to protect and restore the sound.

Identifying Ecologically Significant Areas for the Blue Plan (CT, NY)
The Nature Conservancy of Connecticut
Project Area: Long Island Sound Watershed, Connecticut and New York
LISFF Funds: $45,000
Matching Funds: $49,607

The project will actively engage scientists, technical experts and the interested public to identify Ecologically Significant Areas (ESAs) for the Long Island Sound Blue Plan in Connecticut and New York. The project will develop one of the foundational elements of a plan to protect important aquatic habitats of Long Island Sound.

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