Long Island Sound Futures Fund

NFWF CONTACTS

Carrie Clingan
Program Director,
Northeast Watersheds
carrie.clingan@nfwf.org
202-595-2471

John Wright
Program Manager,
Northeast Watersheds
john.wright@nfwf.org
202-595-2478

Victoria Moreno
Program Coordinator,
Regional Programs
victoria.moreno@nfwf.org
202-888-1645

PARTNERS

- Long Island Sound Partnership
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative
- Zoetis Foundation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,300 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of $11.3 billion.

Learn more at **www.nfwf.org**

American oystercatcher

OVERVIEW

The Long Island Sound Partnership and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in partnership with The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), announced a 2025-round of funding for Long Island Sound Futures Fund (Futures Fund) projects. Thirty-six new grants totaling nearly $12 million were awarded. The 36 awards announced leveraged more than $8 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of over $20 million.

Long Island Sound is the second largest estuary on the East Coast and one of North America's most biologically diverse — an amazing fact, considering that more than 23 million people live within 50 miles of the Sound. Its watershed stretches 16,820 square miles across five states. Fresh water from 16,000 miles of river fuels the Sound's productivity. Its waters and surrounding lands are busy and complex, playing a vital role in the environment and in the lives of residents.

The Sound faces many of the same issues that impact coastal communities across the United States. Diffuse sources of pollution, from plastics to fertilizer, drain into rivers and streams that feed into the Sound. Sewage pollution from wastewater treatment plants and aging residential septic systems force the closure of beaches and shellfish beds. The loss of wetlands reduces the Sound's value as habitat and its ability to buffer communities against storms and floods. The Futures Fund supports efforts to address these problems by providing grants which test and proven innovative approaches to conservation, deliver transformative projects and support people and communities who value the Sound and take a direct role in its future.

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Marsh land in Connecticut

CLEAN WATERS AND HEALTHY WATERSHEDS CONNECTICUT

Buffers for Bridgeport, Connecticut (CT)
Grantee: Aspetuck Land Trust
Grant Amount:.....$180,000
Matching Funds:.....$99,300
Total Project Amount:.....$279,300
Supply 40 free buffers to qualified residents and business owners in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and install a 3,100-square-foot demonstration buffer at a high-traffic community art and event site along the Pequonnock River. Project will add 15,100 square feet of nature-based infrastructure to the landscape and engage 17,000 people and community organizations in supporting a healthy Long Island Sound.

Constructing Agricultural Nutrient Management to Reduce Nitrogen in Long Island Sound (CT)
Grantee: Eastern Connecticut Conservation District
Grant Amount:.....$513,200
Matching Funds:.....$257,000
Total Project Amount:.....$770,200
Construct a composting facility in Woodstock, Connecticut. Project will provide local farmers with a nutrient management system that will reduce 2,299 pounds of nitrogen and 853 pounds of phosphorus from entering the Long Island Sound.

Installing Nature-based Infrastructure at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo (CT)
Grantee: Save the Sound
Grant Amount:.....$275,400
Matching Funds:.....$137,700
Total Project Amount:.....$413,100
Install nature-based infrastructure, as well as a green roof replica at the ground level, to provide an interactive exhibit on the improvements to stormwater at the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Project will create infrastructure that will prevent 29,000 gallons of stormwater from entering the Long Island Sound and replace 1,200 square feet of impervious surface.

Planning for Riparian Buffer and Supplemental BMP Strategies at Three Rivers Park in Woodbury (CT)
Grantee: Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
Grant Amount:.....$160,000
Matching Funds:.....$81,500
Total Project Amount:.....$241,500
Develop engineering plans for riparian buffer restoration and Best Management Practices to stabilize the streambanks at Three Rivers Park in Woodbury, Connecticut. Project will facilitate site assessments and stakeholder engagement in order to deliver preliminary design plans for the permitting phase.

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Stormwater Management and Education for Edgewood Park (CT)
Grantee: New Haven Urban Resources Initiative
Grant Amount:. $273,000
Matching Funds:. $140,000
Total Project Amount:. $413,000
Implement a coordinated stormwater management effort for Edgewood Park, Connecticut, through the removal of parking lot impervious surfaces, construction of two large bioswales, installation of a rain garden, removal of invasive vegetation, replanting of native plants, and restoration of a hydrologic connection to Iris Pond. Project will remove 1,250 square feet of impervious surface, improving water quality of rivers draining into the Long Island Sound and restoring riparian areas.

MASSACHUSETTS

Establishing a Nutrient Recycling Network to Reduce Nitrogen in Franklin County (MA)
Grantee: Rich Earth Institute
Grant Amount:. $146,800
Matching Funds:. $183,800
Total Project Amount:. $330,600
Establish a nutrient recycling network in Franklin County, Massachusetts. Project will develop plans for 12 urine-diversion installation sites, which are designed to capture and recycle nitrogen from human waste, which will reduce the amount of nitrogen entering the Connecticut River and ultimately the Long Island Sound.

Saltmarsh sparrow

Installing a Stormwater Infiltration System in the City of Pittsfield (MA)
Grantee: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Grant Amount:. $266,700
Matching Funds:. $152,700
Total Project Amount:. $419,400
Install 948 square feet of stormwater infiltration system in the City of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Project will result in the treatment of more than 1.3 million gallons of stormwater runoff and prevent 19.10 pounds of nitrogen from entering the West Branch Housatonic, ultimately improving the water quality of the Long Island Sound.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Planning and Expanding Nature-based Solutions in the Ammonoosuc River Watershed (NH)
Grantee: Connecticut River Watershed Council dba Connecticut River Conservancy
Grant Amount:. $53,300
Matching Funds:. $27,100
Total Project Amount:. $80,400
Develop final engineering plans and obtain all required permits to restore a major riverbank failure on the Ammonoosuc River in Lisbon, New Hampshire. Project will complete the planning that will lay the groundwork for the implementation of 500 feet of restored riverbank, which will ultimately reduce nutrients and sediments from entering the Connecticut River and the Long Island Sound.

NEW YORK

Installing 10 Woodchip Box Nitrogen Removing Biofilters in Suffolk County (NY)
Grantee: Research Foundation of SUNY
Grant Amount:. $585,000
Matching Funds:. $399,400
Total Project Amount:. $984,400
Install 10 woodchip box Nitrogen Removing Biofilters (NRBs) in the Suffolk County portion of the Long Island Sound Watershed. Project will reduce 570 pounds of nitrogen from entering groundwater in the watershed and gain wider distribution of this efficient nitrogen removal technology.

Nature-based Infrastructure Schoolyard at PS 69Q to Improve Water Quality (NY)
Grantee: The Trust for Public Land
Grant Amount:. $408,800
Matching Funds:. $900,000
Total Project Amount:. $1,308,800
Construct a nature-based infrastructure schoolyard in Jackson Heights, Queens, at PS 69Q, 1.6 miles off the Bowery Bay. Project will reduce approximately 589,934 gallons of stormwater runoff from entering the sewer by capturing and infiltrating it or slowly releasing it back to the combined sewer system.

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VERMONT

Implementing Shovel-ready Nitrogen Reduction Plans in Vermont"s Connecticut River Watershed (VT)
Grantee: Connecticut River Watershed Council dba Connecticut River Conservancy
Grant Amount:.....$132,900
Matching Funds:.....$466,000
Total Project Amount:.....$598,900
Deliver a lasting nature-based solution using large wood and riparian buffers to address the underlying cause of bank erosion and nitrogen loading along 370 linear feet of the Ottauquechee River in Woodstock, Vermont. Project will increase channel boundary resistance; reduce the amount of coarse- and fine-grained sediment supplied to the river; create a stable, active floodplain bench; and restore 0.42 acres of woody riparian buffers for bank stabilization and habitat improvement.

MULTIPLE STATES

Building the Foundations of Nutrient Management Planning with Farmers (CT, MA, NH)
Grantee: American Farmland Trust
Grant Amount:.....$500,000
Matching Funds:.....$250,000
Total Project Amount:.....$750,000
Work with 75 farmers in the Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire portions of the Long Island Sound Watershed to develop 25 farm-specific informed nutrient pollution reduction plans, information for farmers on co-benefits of nutrient management, and a dataset on current nutrient management practices in region. Project will reduce nutrient pollution from agricultural sources in the Connecticut River Valley and reduce nutrient flux into the Long Island Sound.

Creating a Pipeline of Stormwater Management Projects to Reduce Nitrogen in the Connecticut River (NH, VT)
Grantee: Connecticut River Watershed Council dba Connecticut River Conservancy
Grant Amount:.....$228,100
Matching Funds:.....$127,000
Total Project Amount:.....$355,100
Create a pipeline of six projects to install stormwater management infrastructure and low impact development improvements by supporting local site identification, design, engineering and permitting activities across the Connecticut River Watershed. Project will produce preliminary designs for projects aiming to reduce nitrogen in the Connecticut River and downstream to Long Island Sound.

Removing Lost and Abandoned Fishing Gear in Long Island Sound (CT, NY)
Grantee: The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk
Grant Amount:.....$537,300
Matching Funds:.....$272,600
Total Project Amount:.....$809,900
Conduct on-water recovery of lost and abandoned lobster traps in the Long Island Sound through the deployment of a specialized grapple system via fishing vessels. Project will recover 3,200 traps (20 per recovery trip), which will amount to a removal of 160,000 pounds of marine debris from the Long Island Sound.

Roseate terns

THRIVING HABITATS AND ABUNDANT WILDLIFE

CONNECTICUT

Designs to Restore Stream Continuity, Fish Passage and Water Quality along the Norwalk River (CT)
Grantee: Norwalk River Watershed Association
Grant Amount:.....$140,000
Matching Funds:.....$107,200
Total Project Amount:.....$247,200
Complete planning, designs and permitting to restore fish passage along the Norwalk River in Ridgefield, Connecticut. Project will prepare plans for the removal of one stream barrier, opening 3 miles of brook for fish passage for American eel, brown trout and cutlip minnow, and restoring 4.12 acres of wetland habitat.

Managing Invasive Plant Species and Restoring Island Habitat at Shell Island Preserve (CT)
Grantee: The Greenwich Land Trust
Grant Amount:.....$164,300
Matching Funds:.....$114,000
Total Project Amount:.....$278,300
Remove invasive plant species across 4.20 acres on Shell Island in southwestern Long Island Sound through invasive species control and native plant installation. Project will restore coastal island forest, coastal grassland and dune habitat, improving ecological function and resilience of coastal island habitat, enhancing biodiversity and supporting nesting and foraging habitat for priority birds, native pollinators and other wildlife.

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Planning to Restore Fish Passage along the Quinnipiac River (CT)
Grantee: Save the Sound
Grant Amount:. $499,500
Matching Funds:. $250,000
Total Project Amount:. $749,500
Conduct a site assessment and develop designs to restore fish passage for American shad, alewives, blueback herring and American eel along the Quinnipiac River. Project will complete design plans, cost estimates and permit applications, resulting in a shovel-ready plan that will ultimately restore the Quinnipiac River by reconnecting more than 30 miles for migratory fish, including 8 river miles of permanent, maintenance-free, whole-system restoration with a total impact area of more than 255 acres of rivers and ponds.

Restoring Fish Passage on the Fourmile and Branford Rivers (CT)
Grantee: American Rivers
Grant Amount:. $757,600
Matching Funds:. $900,000
Total Project Amount:. $1,657,600
Complete the design, engineering and permitting to restore fish passage along the Fourmile and Branford rivers, which drain directly into Long Island Sound. Project will open 12.30 miles of aquatic habitat for migratory fish species such as alewives, river herring and shad.

Anglers at Montauk Point

Restoring Salt Marsh Habitat in Stamford Harbor (CT)
Grantee: SoundWaters
Grant Amount:. $152,400
Matching Funds:. $107,300
Total Project Amount:. $259,700
Restore a degraded 2.20-acre salt marsh, one of the last remaining natural spaces in Stamford Harbor, through the removal of the common reed from the upland and high marsh areas. Project will engage 760 community volunteers and 2,600 high school students to manually remove nonnative and invasive phragmites and replant native vegetation in the low marsh (smooth cordgrass) and high marsh (salt marsh hay).

NEW YORK

Implementing Nesting Habitat Enhancement and Biosecurity for Terns on Great Gull Island (NY)
Grantee: University of Connecticut
Grant Amount:. $742,400
Matching Funds:. $395,600
Total Project Amount:. $1,138,000
Create and implement biosecurity protocols to protect a colony of common and roseate terns on Great Gull Island, New York, from introduction of predators and invasive plants. Project will engage 180 community volunteers to assist in clearing debris, restoring native vegetation, building and placing nest boxes to improve habitat on 17 acres.

Implementing the Blind Brook Riparian Restoration Plan (NY)
Grantee: Friends of Rye Nature Center
Grant Amount:. $443,200
Matching Funds:. $445,000
Total Project Amount:. $888,200
Implement engineered designs to restore a 1,660-foot stretch of the Blind Brook that passes through the Rye Nature Center, located in Rye, New York, a mile before it empties into Long Island Sound. Project will restore 8 acres of floodplain, create and repair 2.78 acres of wetland habitat and riverine migratory corridor, and offload 352,740 pounds of sedimentation deposition into the Blind Brook and thereby the Long Island Sound.

Installing Wildlife Tunnels at Cedar Beach to Protect Diamondback Terrapins (NY)
Grantee: Town of Brookhaven
Grant Amount:. $109,000
Matching Funds:. $119,500
Total Project Amount:. $228,500
Install several wildlife tunnels for protected diamondback terrapins at Cedar Beach, Mt Sinai, in the Town of Brookhaven, New York. Project will provide an important corridor between the Mt Sinai Harbor and their nesting areas and improve 1.20 miles of beach habitat for the region.

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Manhasset Bay Oyster Restoration Initiative (NY)
Grantee: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County
Grant Amount:.....$716,100
Matching Funds:.....$360,400
Total Project Amount:.....$1,076,500
Launch a bay-wide oyster restoration initiative in Manhasset Bay through community oyster gardening, Floating Upweller Systems (FLUPSY), and post release monitoring. Project will maximize the number of oysters deployed in Manhasset Bay for habitat restoration and improved water quality in the Long Island Sound.

Piloting Small-scale Burns to Restore Critical Coastal Habitat on Fishers Island (NY)
Grantee: Henry L. Ferguson Museum
Grant Amount:.....$53,500
Matching Funds:.....$32,700
Total Project Amount:.....$86,200
Develop and implement controlled burn plans for important coastal habitat on Fishers Island, New York. Project will result in six burn plans for important coastal habitat types (coastal grasslands and coastal forests), pilot burns in 20 acres of important coastal habitat, and collect data to determine the efficacy of the controlled burns in reducing nonnative plants and improving floristic quality in coastal grasslands and coastal forests.

Restoring Ecosystem Function at Sunken Meadow State Park Salt Marshes (NY)
Grantee: National Audubon Society
Grant Amount:.....$1,500,000
Matching Funds:.....$752,100
Total Project Amount:.....$2,252,100
Employ sediment placement techniques to repair ecosystem function and increase resilience of salt marsh habitat at Sunken Meadow State Park in Kings Park, New York. Project will restore 4 acres of high marsh and 10 acres of low marsh to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife, including saltmarsh sparrow.

Diamondback terrapin

SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

CONNECTICUT

Design and Permitting of Flood Reduction Plans in the City of Groton (CT)
Grantee: The Nature Conservancy
Grant Amount:.....$360,100
Matching Funds:.....$185,500
Total Project Amount:.....$545,600
Develop technical designs and secure permits for nature-based solutions and Best Management Practices to address stormwater flooding in the City of Groton, Connecticut. Project will continue to work in partnership with stakeholders in the area and advance a series of conceptual designs that were developed following an intensive stormwater modeling and community effort.

NEW YORK

Building Capacity to Restore and Protect the Hutchinson River (NY)
Grantee: Hutchinson River Restoration Project
Grant Amount:.....$225,000
Matching Funds:.....$128,600
Total Project Amount:.....$353,600
Expand established stewardship and outreach activities to communities along the Hutchinson River. Project will develop a network of five organizations from local communities and increase participation in clean-up activities along the river.

Crab Meadow Watershed Education: From Suburban Plateau to Long Island Sound (NY)
Grantee: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
Grant Amount:.....$55,700
Matching Funds:.....$28,000
Total Project Amount:.....$83,700
Provide hands-on outreach education, educational signage and implement the Crab Meadow Watershed Clean-Up event to 700 community members. Project will connect 200 attendees and volunteers to the Long Island Sound through native plant and rain barrel giveaways, paddle tours, and debris cleanups for 6 miles of trails and shoreline within the watershed as well as extend Long Island Sound watershed education to the classroom, reaching an additional 500 students.

Marine Debris Removal and Habitat Stewardship in Castle Hill (NY)
Grantee: Waterfront Alliance
Grant Amount:.....$120,000
Matching Funds:.....$60,000
Total Project Amount:.....$180,000
Launch a stewardship initiative that will engage youth through hands-on learning by participating in community-wide shoreline cleanups and exploring the local ecology of Pugsley and Westchester creeks in Castle Hill, Bronx, New York. Project will reduce marine debris, strengthen local stewardship and advance long-term resilience for the Long Island Sound.

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ReWild Gardens for Long Island Sound II (NY)
Grantee: ReWild Long Island
Grant Amount: $249,300
Matching Funds: $342,400
Total Project Amount: $591,700
Install and maintain 40 new native-plant focused gardens and maintain 25 existing gardens. Project will engage youth and adult volunteers in hands-on learning on the practices of sustainable gardening, benefits to the Long Island Sound and local ecosystem.

INFORMED AND ENGAGED PUBLIC

CONNECTICUT

Hands-on Watershed Science Programs for the Health of Long Island Sound (CT)
Grantee: Earthplace - The Nature Discovery Center
Grant Amount: $162,600
Matching Funds: $81,300
Total Project Amount: $243,900
Provide high school and college students with educational opportunities to use the Long Island Sound watershed as their classroom, and train them on how to solve current water quality issues in Connecticut. The project will engage over 300 students in a variety of programs designed to provide hands-on experience in the field and laboratory.

NEW YORK

Connecting the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards to the Long Island Sound (NY)
Grantee: National Audubon Society
Grant Amount: $200,700
Matching Funds: $100,800
Total Project Amount: $301,500
Engage 600 New York City elementary and high school students in classroom, hands-on outdoor learning, and stewardship, and provide professional development to 120 teachers. Project will develop, pilot, test, evaluate and refine grade-specific engagement strategies that will connect students and teachers to the Long Island Sound and position them to become stewards of the Sound.

Flowing from Shoelace to Soundview: Cultivating Bronx Stewards of the Sound (NY)
Grantee: The Bronx is Blooming
Grant Amount: $250,000
Matching Funds: $178,600
Total Project Amount: $428,600
Advance place-based stewardship in two ecologically significant Bronx parks, Soundview and Shoelace. Project will provide public stewardship activities including volunteer days and bird and nature walks, which will reach and educate more than 1,000 community members about conservation and build long-term local capacity to protect the Long Island Sound.

River herring

Habitats and Stewardship for the Long Island Sound (NY)
Grantee: National Wildlife Federation
Grant Amount: $250,000
Matching Funds: $125,000
Total Project Amount: $375,000
Engage more than 600 students in hands-on science activities in the watershed and environmental stewardship of their communities, and establish a minimum of five new certified National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitats that will serve as outdoor classrooms in the watershed. Project will improve the Long Island Sound's water quality and increase the biodiversity of Queens neighborhoods.

Improving Forest Habitat Stewardship and Access in Forest Park, Queens (NY)
Grantee: Natural Areas Conservancy
Grant Amount: $82,200
Matching Funds: $65,000
Total Project Amount: $147,200
Implement a collaborative training series and volunteer program to build stewardship capacity to support forest health in Forest Park, Queens. Project will train local volunteers and nonprofit partners in trail management and ecological restoration, focusing on the park's 362-acre oak forest.

MULTIPLE STATES

Addressing Marine Debris through Cleanups on Long Island Sound Beaches (CT, NY)
Grantee: Atlantic Marine Conservation Society
Grant Amount: $144,600
Matching Funds: $73,900
Total Project Amount: $218,500
Work with local partners to host six in-person and four virtual events to educate community members about marine debris and its impacts on wildlife through activities including beach cleanups and sea turtle rescue training in communities throughout New York and Connecticut. Project will remove 500 pounds of marine debris from the Long Island Sound.