



Nissequoque River Watershed Stewardship Initiative Underway

A pilot stewardship program for the Nissequoque River watershed on Long Island is implementing the principles of the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative and advancing the mission of the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act of 2006.

A 25-member Nissequoque River Steering Committee is coordinating stakeholder activities aimed at improving stewardship of natural, recreational, and ecological resources in the watershed. The committee includes:

- New York Sea Grant (NYSG)
- Regional Plan Association
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
- Suffolk County
- Town of Smithtown
- Villages of Nissequoque, Head of Harbor and the Branch
- residents, marinas, developers, and civic and environmental groups.

Better education and communication among stakeholders is helping reduce or eliminate stakeholder and agency activities that can often work at cross purposes and even hinder the successful stewardship of ecological and recreational resources.

Collaborations with the Regional Plan Association and NYSG Long Island Sound Study Outreach Coordinator Kimberly Graff, Chair of the Outreach Subcommittee of the Nissequoque River Steering Committee, which consists of local teachers, nonprofit



Ron Gelardi of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation offers a guided nature walk along the Nissequoque River in November. Photo: Robert Freudenberg, Regional Plan Association

organizations, and State Parks staff, assisted with advertising and implementing an October 2006 public meeting at which more than 70 watershed residents learned about the stewardship project and provided input to the project leaders. In November, a Nissequoque River State Park nature walk attracted 20 hikers.

Under Graff's guidance, the Subcommittee is now working on eight action items that include establishing a speakers bureau, developing an education work group, and creating publications to engage the community in stewardship of the watershed. These actions will be combined with action items from the other four subcommittees to form a Stewardship Action Plan. The plan will articulate a comprehensive vision for the watershed. NYSG will continue to be involved in the implementation of the plan.

New York Sea Grant is a cooperative program of the State University of New York and Cornell University. Sea Grant Extension administration is located at 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

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