



New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

New York State has 3,400 miles of diverse coastline and is the only state in the U.S. bordering both the Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean. More than 85% of NY's population lives in a coastal region.



New York Sea Grant regional offices provide innovative research, technical assistance, and outreach on such issues as water quality, coastal resilience, marine & freshwater fisheries, invasive species, algal blooms, aquaculture & seafood, coastal literacy, and shoreline community development.

New York Sea Grant Extension
112 Rice Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
www.nyseagrant.org

NYSG Focus Areas
for this project summary:
Resilient NY Communities
and Economies,
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Written by
Long Island Sound Study Outreach
Coordinator Jimena Perez-Viscasillas
 631-824-4906
 jbp255@cornell.edu

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NYSG and LISS Partners Conduct Environmental Justice Needs Assessment for Communities in the Long Island Sound Region

This environmental justice needs assessment will help shape future environmental programming and resources to be more useful, relevant, and accessible to underserved populations

More than 23 million people live within 50 miles of Long Island Sound, the large waterbody between Long Island and Connecticut, but access to its resources has historically been limited for many minority or low-income populations.

New York Sea Grant, in partnership with the social science research firm Responsive Management, worked with a team of partners across New York and Connecticut to conduct an Environmental Justice Needs Assessment to better connect with local underserved communities and explore issues, challenges, and barriers they face related to their environment. The process included conversations with community leaders, community dinners and discussions held across the region, on-site engagement through tabling at libraries, and a survey questionnaire.

This assessment wrapped up in December 2023; its results will be shared widely to help shape local projects and ensure they meet the needs of vulnerable communities. The results are also expected to contribute to a revision process for the Sound's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, a document which dictates how projects and funding are prioritized around the Sound. Moreover, this project facilitated connections between local groups, the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) estuary program, and the Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund—two major sources of funding and educational resources—and, as a result, new opportunities are on the horizon.

This formal assessment process serves as a significant first step towards addressing environmental disparities in the Long Island Sound region.

Project Partners:

- Connecticut Sea Grant • CTDEEP • Save the Sound
- Responsive Management (contractor) • Environmental Leaders of Color
- Junta for Progressive Action • Restore America's Estuaries
- Funding: Long Island Sound Study

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Alex Rodriguez of Save the Sound speaks at the community discussion held in Mount Vernon on November 11, 2023.
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