



Connecticut Fund
for the Environment
Save the Sound®

Annual Report 2015

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION THROUGH LEGAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE



What Sets Us Apart

Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state program Save the Sound take on broad, significant, and widespread environmental issues with the potential to bring about systemic change. We are uniquely qualified to do so. Our core strengths include policy development and advocacy, coalition-building, and, when necessary, litigation. We collaborate with stakeholders and work with communities, inspiring action to protect our region's land, air, and water. We have 40+ years of experience in conducting public education and outreach, and we build diverse coalitions to lay the groundwork for our effective legal and legislative advocacy. We see to it that environmental laws currently on the books are enforced. We advocate for environmental policies and regulations needed to protect the safety and well-being of all – because corporations and government interests cannot always be relied upon to put public health before private gain. Our region needs an organization that can fight for citizens' environmental rights in court and at the policy level. Without CFE/Save the Sound, Connecticut and the Long Island Sound region would be a very different place to live and work.


Our Mission

The mission of Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state program Save the Sound is to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise, and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

You Make the Difference

Your membership works hard for protected lands, cleaner air and a healthy Long Island Sound. Thank you for your support! Consider volunteering at one of our many events listed on our website calendar. Sign up for Action Alerts to stay informed about key issues and make your voice heard.

By the Numbers



14,089

Dedicated activists who take action by calling and emailing elected officials, testifying at hearings, and talking to friends and family about environmental issues in their communities



350,000

Gallons of stormwater runoff captured yearly by the two 450-square-foot rain gardens we installed in New Haven



13,000

Plants installed as part of the Sunken Meadow State Park marsh restoration



6,517

Pounds of trash cleaned from beaches and waterways as part of our beach cleanup effort for International Coastal Cleanup Day



400

Water samples collected and analyzed for fecal bacteria in Long Island Sound harbors and bays

What People are Saying about Us

"I don't just want to restore Long Island Sound. I want to see the Sound, one of the world's largest estuaries, serve as an example of ecological restoration, collaboration and sustainability on a global scale. If any group can set us on that path, it's Save the Sound."

—Timon Malloy, Sun Hill Foundation

"Long Island Sound is a living ecosystem surrounded by one of the most densely populated areas in the country. I want to leave it a cleaner place for my children. Save the Sound is aggressively addressing problems like bacteria, beach closures, and hypoxia."

—Robert Alexander, Save the Sound member

"We have been battling for years to preserve the Oswegatchie Hills, and now we feel the cavalry has arrived! We couldn't be more thrilled about the legal firepower CFE brings to this important regional cause."

—Michael Dunn, Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve

"Clean energy solutions exist, but outdated, entrenched policies and regulations are limiting our ability to make use of many clean technologies. CFE is a leader in advocating to bring clean energy options to Connecticut that will curb carbon pollution while building our economy."

—Bruce Becker, Architect, Becker and Becker

"My experience of spending the summers on the Thimble Islands has taught me to appreciate the Sound as one of the world's largest and most beautiful estuaries. I'm pleased to be part of Save the Sound's efforts to reduce pollution in Long Island Sound and protect this critical natural treasure."

—Judith Fisher, Save the Sound member

"The bedrock of CFE/Save the Sound's approach to legal advocacy is to bring together innovative legal theory with tested scientific research in order to achieve solutions to the most difficult environmental problems which face us."

—Peter Cooper, CFE member and former General Counsel

2015 HIGHLIGHTS



The Fight for Plum Island

Plum Island is an ecological treasure. We issued a notice of intent to sue to the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the General Services Administration, in which we alleged that the agencies had failed to protect endangered and threatened species while pursuing a public sale of the federally-owned island. Last year, we gave many presentations, worked with our partners in the Preserve Plum Island Coalition, and advocated for a conservation solution with Connecticut's and New York's federal delegations. In 2016, as part of congressional action, DHS announced it would perform a study in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Interior to identify conservation opportunities and recommend needed changes in law to Congress. We remain committed to bringing suit if the proposed sale is not abandoned.

Climate and Energy

CFE president Donald S. Strait was appointed to the Governor's Council on Climate Change, which was established to keep the state on track to meet the 2020 goals of its Global Warming Solutions Act. The Act puts Connecticut among a handful of states committed to concrete carbon reductions in a specific time frame. We kicked off our Share the Sun Campaign for full-scale shared solar in Connecticut and advocated for Zero Emission Vehicle incentives.



Restoring Long Island Sound

We filed a case to enforce the Clean Water Act in Westchester County and 11 municipalities—seeking to clean up bacterial contamination and get all responsible parties to the table to reach a long-term solution. We expanded our water quality monitoring program to 12 sites, documenting the presence of fecal bacteria in many harbors and bays in the western Sound. We launched our Sound Health Explorer, an online tool that shows the public the levels of fecal bacteria and other pollution at their local beaches. We also filed a petition with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency demanding a broad new program to address the nutrient pollution that is choking Long Island Sound—smothering aquatic life, fueling toxic algae blooms and destroying tidal marshes that protect against flooding and harbor young fish. Early in 2016, the EPA released its comprehensive, new strategy to reduce nitrogen pollution in the Sound.



Endangered Lands

Even as we celebrated victory in the decade-long fight to protect Old Saybrook's Preserve, we joined local groups to save the Oswegatchie Hills—prime riverfront land in East Lyme endangered by reckless development plans. Throughout 2015, we led the legal challenge to this environmentally devastating proposal, fighting the developers in the East Lyme Zoning Commission and Connecticut Superior Court. We also intervened in the administrative proceeding before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to oppose a fracked gas pipeline through critical watershed lands in Greater Hartford. In April 2016, Kinder-Morgan announced they were putting the proposal on hold; we are keeping a watchful eye to ensure it is not revived or does not return in a different form.





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Message from the Treasurer

Fiscal year 2015 was a year of progress and challenges for Connecticut Fund for the Environment. We ended the year with a deficit of \$4,296. Seventy-six percent of our resources directly benefited our programs. In New York, our work to protect the western Long Island Sound and reduce its hypoxic dead zones led to filing suit against the County of Westchester and some of its municipalities in order to enforce the law governing the amount of pollution that is released into the Sound as the result of aging and leaking infrastructure. We also launched the Sound Health Explorer, an online tool that allows the public to easily understand the level of fecal bacteria and other pollution at their local beaches and harbors. In Green Projects, our funding to install green infrastructure in Connecticut cities nearly doubled from \$156,000 to \$309,000. In our Forest, Island, and Coastal Protection program, our work to protect Plum Island from a for-profit sale by the United States government drew significant attention and

will continue to be a focus for the next few years. We also undertook a campaign to help protect Oswegatchie Hills in East Lyme from development. Through a generous multi-year pledge, we were able to expand our Legal Program and add another skilled lawyer to our outstanding staff. We look

forward to continued growth in these programs and all our other efforts in the year ahead. For further details, please view our full financial statement at our website www.ctenvironment.org.

Diane Stoner, Treasurer

Our Financials

Statement of financials October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015.

