

Realizing the Vision

Nearly twenty years ago, a plan to restore an ailing Long Island Sound took shape, spurred by a unique partnership of those who shared a love of the Sound. Over the years the Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee, a diverse group of businesses, organizations and municipalities, has taken action to improve the Sound's health.

Like most residents in our region, the CAC believes the beaches, harbors, bays and shores of Long Island Sound define this place we call home.

There has been significant progress in the last two decades. We've restored and protected over one thousand acres of open space and habitat, re-opened miles and miles of rivers, substantially reduced nitrogen pollution, and engaged thousands of children and residents with education programs and volunteer opportunities. But our heritage—which is centered on appreciating beautiful views of the coast, enjoying our beaches, sailing and kayaking, clamming and fishing—remains threatened. Litter still fouls our coastline. Raw sewage continues to close beaches and shellfish beds. And great areas of open beach, marsh and forest along our coast are jeopardized by over-development.

We need to protect our landscape, not only for the birds, fish and other animals that depend on special habitats, but also to re-build the economically vibrant legacy of shoreline industries and neighborhoods for our children and their children.

Today the CAC, advised by the best Long Island Sound scientists and experts, has developed this practical and attainable Action Agenda to heal and restore the Sound. It's time to bring together all who care about the Sound to make a real difference.

The Action Agenda has four major components:

- Protecting Clean Water to Achieve a Healthy Sound
- Creating Safe and Thriving Places for All Sound Creatures
- Building Long Island Sound Communities that Work
- Investing in an Economically Vibrant Long Island Sound

*To make this action plan a success, we need your help.
Email action@lisoundvision.org today to join the effort!*

Sound Vision Citizen Action Agenda

Protecting Clean Water to Achieve a Healthy Sound: Action Steps

1. Update the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Long Island Sound by 2014.
2. Reduce the low oxygen dead zone.
3. Update our nitrogen pollution reduction plan.
4. Realize progress toward a sewage-free Sound.
5. Promote green infrastructure projects in neighborhoods and in large city sites.
6. Ensure that new construction in the Long Island Sound region uses low impact development to avoid stormwater pollution.
7. Develop and publicize guidelines for non-polluting lawn care.
8. Protect natural forests and vegetation along streams and rivers.

Creating Safe and Thriving Places for All Sound Creatures: Action Steps

1. Improve management and protect our last great coastal and island sites.
2. Protect and acquire Important Bird Areas.
3. Restore critical habitats to protect wildlife populations in light of climate change.
4. Balance the biology of the Sound through innovative pilot projects.
5. Monitor water quality to better understand our local bays, coves and harbors.
6. Invest in Ecosystem Management by analyzing correlations between fishery health and climate.

Building Long Island Sound Communities that Work: Action Steps

1. Invest in creating and maintaining clean water, habitat restoration and green infrastructure jobs around the Sound.
2. Implement effective and environmentally sustainable dredge management to maintain access to harbors and recreational areas.
3. Encourage sustainable recreational and commercial fishing and shellfishing to protect a way of life and the Sound.
4. Engage urban and diverse coastal neighborhoods.
5. Work with communities to better prepare for sea level rise.
6. Begin underwater area planning to balance industrial, recreational and environmental uses of Long Island Sound for the future and to protect our economy.

Investing in an Economically Vibrant Long Island Sound: Action Steps

1. Maintain or increase current federal investment levels in Long Island Sound.
2. Advocate for state capital investments that improve water quality and create jobs.
3. Create new Connecticut and New York investments to advance research, habitat protection and outreach.

Citizen Advisory Committee Members (<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/citizens-advisory-committee>)

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Long Island Sound Ours to Protect, Restore and Enjoy.



A Community Vision for Long Island Sound

Both our heritage and our future can be found in this water and along this coast.

Today, we join together to restore litter-free beaches and natural preserves for people and wildlife. We work toward a Long Island Sound vision with waters that are clean and healthy, safe to swim in and filled with healthy fish, clams and oysters. We work to protect undeveloped habitats with islands of abundant and diverse wildlife available to us for renewal and exploration, restore healthy fishing and make harbors accessible to the boating public. We seek a way of life that protects and sustains this fine stretch of water that defines our home.



Protecting Clean Water to Achieve a Healthy Sound



The good news is that Long Island Sound's water quality has improved. Toxic dumping has been virtually eliminated and enhanced treatment has dramatically decreased sewage disposal. However, acres and acres of the western Sound are still plagued each summer by a dead zone that threatens marine life. Local industries lose income from closed shellfish beds, and beaches are closed to swimming. The main culprits are raw sewage and contaminated runoff from roads and lawns.

Together, we can ask our elected officials to do their part by passing Sound-wise policies and providing funding for sewage treatment plant upgrades. These improvements protect us from sewage spills and reduce the nitrogen pollution causing the low oxygen dead zone.

Every acre of healthy forest and marsh that surrounds our rivers filters out litter and pollution, protecting the Sound. To protect clean water, we must protect these forests and marshes.

We can also prevent water pollution by “greening up” our neighborhoods and cities with creative landscaping and tree plantings, and storm-drain filter systems. This “green infrastructure” approach filters runoff from streets and parking lots that would otherwise flow untreated into our Sound, and creates landscaping jobs.

Creating Safe and Thriving Places for All Sound Creatures



The natural areas around the Sound are ours to protect, restore and enjoy.

We share our coast with many types of wildlife. We must invest in protecting the last great places around the Sound— islands threatened with development and the coastal gems of marsh, beach and dunes that are places of refuge—for us all.

We can take many actions to restore balance for the creatures in the Sound. We can increase oyster and clam beds to filter pollution. We can reestablish underwater vegetation like eelgrass to provide safe places for fish and crabs. We can reinstate safe passage for fish to migrate up rivers to their breeding grounds. We can reestablish healthy marshes that serve as nurseries for fish and nesting grounds for birds. Restoring ecological balance will allow natural processes to clean and heal the Sound.

Building Long Island Sound Communities that Work



We can support Long Island Sound industries and heal and restore the Sound by building active communities that encourage citizens to connect to the Sound.

Local shopkeepers, coastal restaurants and shoreline neighborhoods help create the charm of the Sound region. In small fishing villages, urban harbor centers, and suburban open spaces, families, schools and friends join together to clean up floating bags and trash from our beaches. Throughout the region citizens are monitoring the health of the water in our rivers, harbors and bays. Together we make a difference!

We can strengthen our communities by working with the boating community, fishermen and shellfishers to protect clean water and enforce clear rules for sustainable fishing and aquaculture.

Affordable working marinas provide access for thousands of citizens to explore the Sound by boat. Our harbors generate commerce and support businesses throughout the Northeast. To thrive, these marinas and our harbors must be dredged in a safe and beneficial way.

Investing in an Economically Vibrant Long Island Sound



If we want a healthy Long Island Sound, we're going to have to renew our investment in projects that will clean and repair the Sound. Our elected officials must hear that we support maintaining federal funding and providing new state capital investments to get projects moving on the ground.

Sewage treatment plant upgrades clean our water while creating thousands of solid construction jobs. Designing and building fish ladders along rivers restores fish populations by providing access to upstream breeding grounds. This brings life to rivers while employing design engineers and construction contractors. Maintaining our ports and marinas puts engineers, transporters and dredgers to work while keeping waterfronts working and harbors accessible.

Other critical investments, like protecting the last great beaches, dunes, marshes and forests along our coast, will expand tourism opportunities and support an enhanced quality of life now, and for future generations.

Act Today: Five Ways YOU Can Help

1. Sign onto this Action Agenda today! Email action@lisoundvision.org to sign up for action alerts and updates on LIS progress, and to let us know what steps you are taking to protect Long Island Sound. Call or email your elected officials and ask them to support Sound-wise Action Agenda policies.
2. Volunteer for a coastal cleanup, local river bank restoration, or bird survey. <http://www.lisvolunteer.net>
3. Participate in Sound lawn care: test soil to ensure the right type and amount of fertilizer is used (and go organic), reduce or eliminate pesticides, and leave natural vegetation along coastline and river frontages. <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/get-involved/what-you-can-do/around-your-backyard>
4. Purchase a *Preserve the Sound* license plate (CT) or a *Marine and Coastal District* license plate (NY). Fees generated from both help protect our coastal waters.
5. ...and remember to always enjoy and celebrate the Sound.

