



Restoring Life to the Norton River

Driving south on I-95 through Fairfield County, you might find yourself stuck in a traffic jam. Trapped behind hundreds of other cars, without a way forward.

But as you sit stuck in traffic while travelling down Connecticut's coast, migratory fish are struggling to navigate many of the waterways beneath you. In a number of Connecticut rivers, fish have been stuck without a way forward for centuries. Fortunately, thanks to your support, this year river herring will be able to access prime spawning habitat on the Noroton River for the first time in decades.

"The completion of the Noroton River Fishway represents a huge victory for those fighting for abundant fish populations in Connecticut," says Gwen Macdonald, director of green projects at CFE/Save the Sound.

Each spring, migratory fish like alewife and blueback herring make their way from the open waters of Long Island Sound upstream through rivers that lead to freshwater habitat suitable for spawning. Unfortunately, the construction of dams, culverts, and other

river obstacles has made many of these migration routes and freshwater habitats inaccessible and unsafe for fish. By disrupting migration and spawning, these barriers disrupt the entire Long Island Sound ecosystem.

"I think people lose sight of the fact that these fish aren't just created out of the ocean," says Steve Gephard, supervising fisheries biologist with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. "They're created out of freshwater habitat—it's like pasture land."

Not long before you reach exit nine in Stamford, you'll cross the Noroton River. You might never notice it as you pass over, but the culvert that supports this little section of highway has been preventing upstream migration on the Noroton River since the 1950s. Save the Sound has been working to restore fish passage at this site since 2010.

"Removing dams is difficult, but modifying a culvert that supports a major highway like I-95 presented a unique set of challenges," Gwen says. "It took many years and many people to make this happen, but this fishway will help restore a species population that's been suffering from habitat loss for centuries."

The culvert itself was modified with a series of baffles—staggered underwater walls that form a sort of stepladder for the fish—which makes it easier for them to swim upstream despite the high speed with which the river flows through the cement culvert. Rocks were systematically arranged at the mouth of the culvert to create an underwater environment that's more natural and inviting for fish.

This spring, just as cars are traveling above, migratory and resident fish will be able to



Gwen Macdonald and Steve Gephard at the fishway construction site, as seen from within the culvert.

Anna Marshall

travel upstream on the Noroton River, from Long Island Sound to freshwater spawning habitat.

"With this project, we are celebrating opening up habitat that has been blocked for over 70 years," says Anna Marshall, green projects associate at CFE/Save the Sound. "Returning these fish to their historic spawning grounds brings us one step closer to restoring the biodiversity of Long Island Sound."

In addition to CFE/Save the Sound contributors, this project is generously supported by the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, an initiative of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Long Island Sound Study; the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Land and Water Resources Division; Planet Fuel Charitable Fund; and the Darien Land Trust.

Sunny Outlook for Shared Solar

At the time of this writing, a shared solar bill had just been approved by the Connecticut legislature's Energy and Technology Committee, paving the way for a full-scale shared solar program that will help Connecticut meet state climate mandates, make solar available to all—including renters—and create green jobs. This and other renewable energy bills will be voted on by early May, so be sure to check the next issue of GreenSheet for a legislative update.



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Upcoming Events

DENALI NIGHT OUT • THURSDAY, MAY 24

Denali is hosting a special event at the Trumbull Mall to celebrate supporters of CFE/Save the Sound! Come grab a pint between 6–8 p.m., enter to win prizes, and do some shopping knowing you'll have the chance to donate a portion of the proceeds from your in-store purchases to CFE/Save the Sound.

YOGA ON THE SOUND • WEEKENDS IN JUNE

Yoga studios along the Western Sound coast are hosting special weekend classes throughout the month of June, with proceeds benefiting Save the Sound!

BASS-A-PALOOZA XI • SATURDAY, JUNE 2

Join Save the Sound and host Clay Persinger for the 11th annual Bass-A-Palooza charity fishing tournament! Register your team for a 5:00 a.m. fishing kickoff, or skip the fishing and join us back at Rowayton Seafood in Norwalk from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. for the after party, awards ceremony, and silent auction. All proceeds will benefit Save the Sound.

PADDLE ACROSS THE SOUND • SUNDAY, JULY 22 (RAIN DATE JULY 29)

This annual fundraiser to benefit Save the Sound is now in its third year! Mark your calendar now and then join host Nancy Vincent of SUP Westchester and local stand up paddleboard and kayak enthusiasts for a seven-mile round-trip paddle from the New York Athletic Club at Travers Island in New Rochelle to Sands Point, Long Island, and back. Participants will raise funds to benefit Save the Sound.

For details on these events and more, check our calendar at www.savethesound.org/take-action/upcoming-events/

LEAVE A LEGACY

A planned gift from your estate to CFE/Save the Sound can help protect public health and the endangered places you care about far into the future. For more information, contact Alicia Sullivan at 203-787-0646, ext. 109.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT:

Plunge for Plum Island

This year's Plunge for Plum Island took place on April 7—and thanks to the enthusiasm of our bold plungers, we surpassed our fundraising goal with over \$5,400 raised! These funds will support CFE/Save the Sound's campaign to preserve the island from commercial sale and development.

"We're trying to conserve Plum Island because it's such an important piece of land," said Jay DePalermo, plunge participant and president of Old Saybrook High School's Ecology Club. "We should treasure Plum Island as we do the beautiful lands we have in Connecticut."



Sophie Alden and Jay DePalermo of Old Saybrook High School running into the water at Old Saybrook Town Beach.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Coastal Crab

In each newsletter, we'll shine a spotlight on a member who finds creative ways to turn their passion into action.

When Laura Westner and Rachel Redding reached out to start a partnership with Save the Sound in late 2017, we were thrilled to learn about their ideas for spreading the word about Save the Sound's mission in new and exciting ways.

Laura and Rachel are the founders of Coastal Crab, a Connecticut-based clothing company that sells shirts, hats, and other brightly-colored, beachy wears featuring their signature crab logo. The couple are teachers in Connecticut public schools and share a passion for the health and future of Long Island Sound. They generously designed and donated custom t-shirts for this year's Plum Plunge participants, and will soon offer special Save the Sound t-shirts and reusable water bottles at www.coastalcrabct.com, with proceeds benefiting Save the Sound.



Coastal Crab owners Laura Westner (far left) and Rachel Redding (not pictured) are proud sponsors of Save the Sound.

"We love the idea of being able to give back. We did a lot of research on companies we would like to work with and we just felt working with Save the Sound and making a difference in our environment was a great fit for us."

— Rachel Redding

Visit our new CFE/Save the Sound website at www.ctenvironment.org!

MONTHLY GIVING

Your gym membership. Your Netflix account. Small monthly expenses that shape how you spend your days. Fortunately, protecting the natural resources your family enjoys is just as affordable. A monthly gift of \$5, \$10, \$20, or more is a small addition to your household budget and a big contribution to the environmental work you care about most. Contact Michelle at mlemere@ctenvironment.org for more information.

Shifting Landscapes

SUCCESS STORIES FROM COMMUNITIES ON THE MEND—AND THE INDIVIDUALS WORKING TO IMPROVE THEM.

Mamaroneck, New York Harbor Island Beach

Katherine Desmond remembers a time in the '70s when Harbor Island Beach was so crowded you couldn't find space for a towel. But as recently as 2015, water testing revealed dangerously high bacteria levels that made the beach unsafe for swimming. A Save the Sound member and passionate advocate for clean water, Katherine has worked tirelessly both within and outside her local government since the '90s, tracing the beach's poor water quality to failing infrastructure and fighting for repairs.

"Save the Sound has really lightened my load," Katherine says, noting how the culture around clean water has shifted in recent years. "When you see people trying to get New York Harbor swimmable, you know things have changed."

In 2015, Save the Sound filed a lawsuit against the Village of Mamaroneck and 10 other Westchester municipalities for the desperately needed infrastructure upgrades Katherine had been pushing for with limited success. The Village settled in 2017 and agreed to expend the resources necessary to repair their system by 2019. The lawsuit is still pending against many of the other municipalities.

Over the past several years, the Village of Mamaroneck began investing in cleaning up

its local waterways. This effort has included inspecting and repairing broken sewer lines and managing the goose population around the harbor.

Save the Sound's water samples collected in 2016 and 2017 revealed much lower bacteria levels, and Katherine says she's looking forward to swimming at Harbor Island Beach this coming summer.

"I'm very excited about the momentum that's pushing us into the clean water, so that people can really enjoy it," Katherine says. "It belongs to us."

Katherine helped open the Marine Education Center in Mamaroneck's Harbor Island Park to increase awareness about Long Island Sound's wildlife. The interactive mini-aquarium offers a place where visitors can learn about the many species that call Long Island Sound home. The Center opened for its sixth season on April 14.

New Haven, Connecticut West River Watershed

Doreen Abubakar was one of the first New Haven residents to have a rain garden installed on her property last year as part of CFE/Save the Sound's green infrastructure partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven. Founder of the West River Water Festival and a passionate educator, Doreen attends workshops and trainings and shares her knowledge with

neighbors, friends, and community members.

"New-Haveners don't really think of New Haven as being on the water," Doreen says, noting the busy pace of inner-city living.

After hearing about a rain garden workshop a few years back, Doreen says she was excited to help others join her in learning

Katherine Desmond speaking with youth outside the Marine Education Center at Harbor Island Park.



CFE/Save the Sound and NHS New Haven staff working with volunteers to plant rain-loving shrubs in Doreen's new rain garden in June 2017.

more about stormwater management. "I was able to recruit five other people who look like me—I'm African American—from the neighborhood for the training," Doreen says.

When CFE/Save the Sound launched its residential rain garden installation program in New Haven, Doreen jumped at the opportunity to build one on her property. Not only does Doreen's new rain garden help filter polluted stormwater runoff before it flows into New Haven's West River, it serves as a tool to help Doreen continue educating others on the importance of stormwater management.

"These are things that if we actually take time to engage the owner or the resident or the neighborhood, it becomes a learning experience," Doreen says.

CFE/Save the Sound will resume its residential rain garden installation program this spring. Contact reducerunoff@savethesound.org for more information. The West River Water Festival will be held on July 14, from 1–4 p.m. at West River Memorial Park in New Haven.



CURT'S CORNER: A QUARTERLY NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Celebrating Board Impact



During my first eight months as President of CFE/Save the Sound, I've spent a great deal of time thinking about expanding our

impact as we work to restore Long Island Sound and its feeder waterways, protect Plum Island, and re-instate Connecticut as a leader in the fight against climate change. I'm awed by the generosity of CFE/Save the Sound Board Members, whose contributions amplify our impact. Recently I've found great inspiration in one Board family's efforts to bolster CFE/Save the Sound's membership program.

Libby and Rob Alexander have been sailing together since they were racers in college. In 2016, with the vision of ensuring all members of Long Island Sound's coastal community become members of Save the Sound, Libby and Rob decided to impart a transformative, multi-year gift that has forever impacted CFE/Save the Sound's membership program—and with that, the future of Long Island Sound.

The Alexanders championed their vision by identifying actionable goals for our membership team: increasing name recognition throughout Sound communities,

strengthening financial support from members, and enhancing our organizational brand through the adoption of new communications strategies.

Not only did the Alexanders provide financial backing to support the execution of these goals, but Libby has contributed priceless expertise as Chair of the Board's membership subcommittee. She's also leveraged her business acumen and professional network for our benefit, including the recent redesign of our website. The breadth of the Alexanders' impact is extensive, and spans far beyond their financial contribution.

I believe the power of their impact is thanks to a few critical factors. While Libby and Rob recognize the value in all of CFE/Save the Sound's vital work, they've been able to make real progress towards a focused goal by supporting their distinct vision with passion, wisdom, and a commitment to success.

Thanks to their dedication to impact, CFE/Save the Sound has welcomed hundreds of new members while becoming richer in knowledge and foundational support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Curt Johnson".

Curt Johnson
President, CFE/Save the Sound



Libby and Rob Alexander

Remembering Danielle

Danielle Bradley served as Director of Finance and Administration of CFE/Save the Sound from March to July 2017. She passed away last summer and is dearly missed.

by Michelle LeMere, Assistant Director, Member Relations and Annual Fund

When I was asked to write a memorial tribute in honor of my friend and colleague Danielle Bradley, my immediate thought was, "How can I possibly sum up the life of a woman who was, quite simply, larger than life?"

I had the pleasure of first meeting Danielle back in 2014 when her son, Scott, and my daughter Kaylie were playing together on the Lyman Hall/Haddam-Killingworth/Coginchaug Trojans ice hockey team. From there we became great friends, and when a finance job here at CFE/Save the Sound opened up, she asked me about applying for it and I encouraged her to do so.

Danielle was a remarkable woman with an infectious smile and a personality that touched and inspired us all here at CFE/Save the Sound, and we count ourselves lucky to have known her. She could always brighten our mood at the office with her wonderful sense of humor. Even if you were having a bad day, she would look at you with a big smile on her face and say, "Keep smiling." That would immediately cheer you up. Danielle loved life and is greatly missed by all of us.

It was a privilege for me to have been a part of Danielle's life. Although much too short, hers was a life well lived! She was a caring and beloved mother, and a cherished colleague and friend. Danielle will be missed by many but will never be forgotten by those of us who were fortunate enough to have known her.





SoundBites

Citizen Watchdogs are the Sound's Secret Superheroes

Steve Cadenhead, a Save the Sound member and citizen watchdog, reached out to us when he noticed a persistent, unpleasant odor during his morning walks in the City of Rye. Steve knew there was a real problem when other members of his family started mentioning the smell. He narrowed the odor down to one specific storm drain, and emailed Soundkeeper Bill Lucey with details.

"Watchdogs are incredibly valuable towards efforts to stem local water pollution," explains Peter Linderth, Save the Sound's water quality program manager. "We do our best to keep our eyes on things, but we don't have the staff to be in all places at all times."

When you record and report suspected pollution in progress, you amplify Save the Sound's ability to protect Long Island Sound and the streams that flow to it. Raw sewage leaks, wet weather overflows,

and other dangerous pollution problems threaten communities throughout the Long Island Sound region, and compromise the overall health of your Sound.

"If you see something, say something. That's how things get better," Steve says, emphasizing the importance of stepping up as citizen watchdogs. "Bureaucracy really just by nature isn't equipped to identify and prioritize these small, hyper-local situations, and that's where citizens can take their fate into their own hands, and cause change."

After Steve reported the problem, Save the Sound's water quality monitoring team rapidly inspected the site, collected water samples, and conducted lab tests that confirmed Steve's suspicion—raw sewage-contaminated water was flowing into the storm drain and dumping into Blind Brook. Save the Sound sent our findings first to the City of Rye and then to Westchester County and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

"We've identified and resolved quite a few pollution problems through watchdog reports like Steve's," Peter says.

In addition to alerting government agencies, Save the Sound engaged local media outlets to push for swift action from the city while keeping local residents informed. During the time it took for the issue to be resolved, the story was covered by CBS, News 12, and local media sources.

In March, when the City of Rye reported that the collapsed sewer line responsible



Elena Colón, Save the Sound environmental analyst, collecting a sample to test for fecal contamination at the reported storm drain in the City of Rye.

for the long running polluted overflow had been fixed, Save the Sound conducted another round of sampling and confirmed this report.

"It's a dream to have our coastline area become pristine and healthy," Steve says. "You're the best weapon that I as a citizen have."

Citizen watchdogs like Steve are essential to Save the Sound's success. To learn more about watchdogging or to submit a pollution report of your own, please write to pollution@savethesound.org.



Citizen watchdog Steve Cadenhead on the shore of Long Island Sound.

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Long Island Sound Goes to Washington

Save the Sound President Curt Johnson and Director Tracy Brown braved the first of March's many Nor'easters to bring your concerns for Long Island Sound directly to congressional leaders in Washington, D.C. The duo met with 21 senators, congressional representatives, and legislative staffers over the course of two days, advocating for an increase in EPA's Long Island Sound program funding, and pushing for the permanent preservation of Plum Island.

Their lobbying paid off—big time. The federal budget omnibus for 2018 that passed on March 23 included a landmark \$12 million designated for Long Island Sound through the National Estuary Program. This came as a welcome surprise, since President Trump repeatedly threatened to zero out funding for the EPA's water-body-specific programs. All the region's legislators worked to ensure funding for Long Island Sound.

"Clean water is definitely something everyone can agree on," Tracy says. "It's our privilege to represent the shared interests of Sound shore communities in our nation's capital."

To drive the message home, Curt brought each legislator a stack of letters written by students from the Sound School in New Haven, in which the students let their lawmakers know why Long Island Sound matters most to them.

"I plead with you to consider the future generation that are migrating to the growing aquaculture industry and how this will greatly affect them," wrote high school sophomore La'Risa Renee Green.

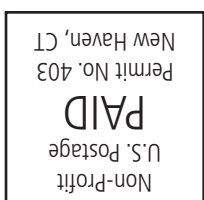
The support of these students and members like you ensures Save the Sound's ability to petition lawmakers to support the issues that matter most to Sound communities.



Curt Johnson and Tracy Brown at the Capitol

"These funds will help get bacteria and damaging excess nutrients out of the Sound, save beautiful shoreline places for people and wildlife, and protect neighborhoods from coastal flooding," Curt added. "It's an investment in this great body of water and in our collective future."

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