



Connecticut Fund
for the Environment
Save the Sound®

SUMMER 2019

GreenSheet

Celebrating the Battles Won This Legislative Session

Following the nail-biting conclusion of this year's Connecticut legislative session, we're celebrating some major victories for the environment—thanks to your hard work. You showed up this winter and spring and wrote letters to legislators, the governor, and state agencies to demand a cleaner environment for everyone. **Check out some of the things you fought for, and won, in this legislative season:**

It was a big year for climate, with exciting news for electric vehicles, renewable energy, and protecting our shoreline communities.

Clean Transportation Rolls On

Transportation causes nearly 40% of Connecticut's greenhouse gas pollution, but it's starting to clean up its act. Together we won \$3 million per year towards a rebate program for residents like you, and a stronger target requiring the state to purchase electric vehicles and buses.

"There's no clean air without clean cars and buses," said Chief Program Officer Leah Schmalz. "We're glad that steady funding will help make electric vehicles affordable for more Connecticut residents, and that the state is setting a good example and making our cities healthier by switching to more electric buses and electric vehicles for the state fleet."

Wind Energy Breezes Through

Connecticut passed an offshore wind bill that will keep the energy flowing. The legislation will help increase reliability for the electric grid and reduce reliance on natural gas. It also protects the environment and fishing economy by requiring a plan to avoid impacts to wildlife, natural resources, ecosystems, and water-dependent activities, such as commercial fishing.

"In order to meet Connecticut's greenhouse gas reduction targets, we must diversify and promote clean climate initiatives like energy efficiency, solar, and wind," said Schmalz. "Increasing our use of offshore wind will help meet climate goals, reduce costs for ratepayers, and create good-paying jobs that spur the green economy here in Connecticut."

Defending Against Climate Change

You demanded action on climate change impacts, and you got it. Senate Bill 1062 allows towns to establish a Climate Change and Coastal Resiliency Fund to fund infrastructure updates and studies on mitigating climate change hazards and vulnerabilities.

"As sea levels rise and severe storms become more common, Connecticut communities need resources to prepare,"

said Soundkeeper Bill Lucey. "The municipal resiliency fund program is a great start at giving towns some tools to plan their storm responses, upgrade infrastructure, and explore approaches like strategic retreat from the high tide line and restoring living shorelines like dunes and marshes that absorb wave impacts naturally."

Your support also made a splash in securing legislation that sets a course for long-term water protection.

Connecticut's Water Get a Game Plan

After a million-dollar, multi-year process with input from the public, environmental and water supply stakeholders, committees, and legislators, Connecticut has its first State Water Plan.

"Everyone who fishes, swims, kayaks, or brushes their teeth should be excited about the passage of the State Water Plan," said water advocate Karen Burnaska. "It reiterates the importance of existing statutes, ensures that state law can continue to evolve to implement the plan over time, and works to protect our drinking water supply and Connecticut's beautiful streams."

Your advocacy and support made a lot happen this session, and we're happy to call citizen activists like you a part of our team. Here at CFE/Save the Sound, we're toasting to all you've accomplished and excitedly planning for what we'll all do next.

Looking Back Through 40 Years

Defeating Broadwater

Over 10 years ago, CFE/Save the Sound members stopped the construction of Broadwater, a natural gas facility proposed off the coast of New Haven. This prevented irreversible damage to the sea floor, saved fish spawning grounds, and maintained recreational access in the Sound—all thanks to you.



Boats gather on Long Island Sound

In this issue...

- Freeing the Quinnipiac..... 2
- Introducing The Terry Backer II..... 3
- Curt's Corner: Our 40 Year Journey..... 4
- In Soundbites: Banning Plastic Bags

Upcoming Events

CFE/Save the Sound Annual Meeting Sunday, October 6 • 4-7 p.m.

All members are invited to join CFE/Save the Sound at Westport Public Library for the 2019 Annual Meeting! This year's speaker will be Patrick Lynch, an accomplished author, illustrator, photographer, and artist. He is retired from Yale University where he served as director of media and communications. He has won over 35 national and international awards for his publications, authored nine books, including "A Field Guide to Long Island Sound," and wrote over 100 professional papers. Come hear him speak on his experiences and meet and mingle with other members, enjoy food and drink, and cast your vote in the annual board election.

International Coastal Cleanup Events August - October Coastlines around the Sound

Save the Sound is the Connecticut coordinator for the Ocean Conservancy's annual International Coastal Cleanup (ICC), a global effort to remove trash from beaches to help eradicate marine debris. This year, cleanup events will take place throughout August, September, and October, with the ICC big day on September 21. For more information visit www.tinyurl.com/stscleanup.

**We are always adding new
events to our online calendar.
Check back to see where we'll
be in your neighborhood next!**

www.ctenvironment.org/take-action/upcoming-events/



Connecticut Fund
for the Environment
Save the Sound®



2018 Coastal Cleanup Days

Published by Connecticut Fund for the Environment. All rights reserved. • 900 Chapel St, Suite 2202, New Haven, CT 06510 • 203-787-0646 • mlemere@ctenvironment.org
Articles in this newsletter may be reprinted with permission. • Newsletter team: Joseph DiMaggio, Karina Krul, Michelle LeMere, Laura McMillan, Melissa Schlag.

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 403
New Haven, CT

900 Chapel St, Suite 2202
New Haven, CT 06510





Save the Sound®

SoundBites

Bluff Point Park, Groton, CT

One Bag at a Time: Ridding the Sound of Plastics

Waves crashing, sand between your toes, birds flying overhead, and plastics swimming like sharks in the water, threatening unsuspecting fish and animals. This is supposed to be a day at the beach, not a Jaws film.

“For the first time ever, the top ten items collected by volunteers around the world during last year’s International Coastal Cleanup were made of plastic,” said Soundkeeper Bill Lucey. “Plastic grocery bags made the top five with over 750,000 picked up around the world.”

But soon you’ll be able to swim in the waters of Long Island Sound without hearing that eerie “duh-dum” of plastic bags floating toward you.

Thanks to your support, advocacy of our own Soundkeeper Bill Lucey, our allies at Citizen’s Campaign for the Environment,

and your state lawmakers, we now have a ban on plastic bags in every New York and Connecticut community.

Thirty-nine individual towns, counties, and boroughs in New York and Connecticut had already passed legislation to either ban or tax plastic bags. Then, this spring both states passed legislation that will institute state-wide bans on plastic bags.

“That’s a win for wildlife,” said Lucey.

So, why are plastic bags like a B movie monster?

Not only do they choke wildlife and fill the stomachs of whales, birds, and turtles, causing starvation, they also take an extremely long time to break down.

“They are eventually broken into tiny pieces, becoming a form of microplastic, an emerging threat to our health and wildlife,” explained Lucey. “Recent studies have found microplastics in all humans tested, meaning that our own trash has entered our drinking water and food web where we end up consuming it.”

What then does this recent victory mean for the future of our environment? A clean and restored Sound.

“This ban will stop thousands of plastic bags—bags that take a century or more to decompose—from rushing into storm drains, into our rivers, and out to our Sound,” said President Curt Johnson. “Now that’s pollution prevention at its best location—the source.”



For the first time ever, the top ten items collected by volunteers around the world during last year’s International Coastal Cleanup were made of plastic.”

- Soundkeeper Bill Lucey

In this issue...

- Freeing the Quinnipiac..... 2
- Introducing The Terry Backer II..... 3
- Curt’s Corner: Our 40 Year Journey..... 4
- In GreenSheet: CT Legislative Wins



Turning Back Time: Undoing Damage on the Quinnipiac

Life is coming back to the Quinnipiac River. This once dismal waterway will, in time, start to flourish again as the ecosystems that once inhabited it begin to recover, thanks to members like you. Your support and commitment opened a free-flowing river to improve recreational access and restore natural ecosystems.

Our Ecological Restoration team removed an old, unused water line on the Quinnipiac River in Meriden, the third barrier brought down in three years. This project was the last step of a longer project, which included two dam removals and two fishways, to open up 36 of the river's 38 miles for key species of migratory fish like the American shad and river herring. It also improved access and safety for paddlers and boaters.

"Throughout our industrial history, this river has been repeatedly mistreated," said Director of Ecological Restoration Gwen Macdonald. "Thanks to the hard work of people acting within the watershed, we're now seeing substantial positive changes."

Dams and waterlines create barriers that prevent migratory fish from reaching their spawning grounds, causing species decline.

Now, with those barriers removed and rocks and native flowers placed along the river to prevent erosion, migratory fish can once again reach their spawning areas and the river can begin to heal.

"It's going to take a while for some of the fish to start coming back," said Ecological Communications Specialist Anthony Allen. "But the key thing is that they are able to now."

You'll see your support in the new beauty of the river and reap its benefits when you go fishing, boating, or kayaking. Dams don't just cut off fish habitats, they restrict recreational access for fishermen and boaters. Now that

36 miles of river have been given back to our environment, we can continue to enjoy it for generations to come.

"A new generation of river stewards will now be able to experience a free-flowing Quinnipiac River, and explore the diverse riparian ecosystem and Connecticut's industrial history from a canoe, a kayak, or their own backyard," said Macdonald.

In the long run, because of you, we'll all benefit from river restoration projects like the one on the Quinnipiac.

"More resilient natural ecosystems allow for more resilient human existence," said Allen. "You can't separate the two."



Thirty-six of the Quinnipiac River's 38 miles are now free-flowing, thanks to members like you.

88 MILLION GALLONS OF STORMWATER CAPTURED

Just days after a major storm, your neighborhood is surrounded by a sea of deep black and pea-green water. Why? Heavy rain forced stormwater down your streets, picking up oils, chemicals, and excess nutrients from animal waste on its way to the waters that feed into Long Island Sound. Stormwater is a major pollutant; it contributes to fish die-off, harms birds and other wildlife, and inhibits recreational activities like boating and fishing.

But, with your membership to CFE/Save the Sound, you're turning the tide on unwanted pollution. Your membership has allowed for a strong surge in the number of bioswales and rain garden installations in and around New Haven.

In under a year, our Ecological Restoration team, along with the Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority, installed 75 bioswales around the City of New Haven, largely concentrated in the West River Watershed.

So what does all of this mean for the health of the Sound? These landscaped retention areas will capture

88 million gallons of polluted stormwater runoff from the streets before it enters the sewer system, reducing the amount of untreated pollutants moving into rivers and, eventually, Long Island Sound.

Similarly, rain gardens capture and filter stormwater, that previously would have been fed directly into the sewer system, by disconnecting downspouts and redirecting the water from our roofs into shallow, basin-like beds filled with beautiful native plants. Just this year, the Ecological Restoration team completed 11 rain gardens, including New Haven's first edible rain garden, complete with strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and elderberries. In fact, Roydon Road in New Haven is turning into a parade of colors thanks to the cluster of rain gardens sited and installed at homes in that neighborhood.

"It's all connected to the greater picture," said Ecological Communications Specialist Anthony Allen. "Each rain garden is one less household's stormwater contaminating our waters and wildlife."

Want to use your backyard to fight pollution?

Homeowners in the area are encouraged to contact restoration@savethesound.org if they are interested in having a rain garden installed on their property or to learn more about the process.



Planting a rain garden in New Haven

DO LESS FOR A HEALTHY LAWN

Summer is here and everyone wants a head-turning lawn. But why work so hard to get it? Many landscaping practices apply excess fertilizer, which releases nitrogen into waterways and triggers rampant growth of algae that can kill fish, harm wildlife, and poison the shellfish people eat.

Here are some tips for you to DO LESS for a healthy yard and a more vibrant, thriving Long Island Sound:

TIP #1: MOW LESS OFTEN

No one enjoys mowing the lawn in the blistering summer heat. Good news! Your lawn doesn't like it either. It's actually better to mow once every two weeks to give the grass recovery time. While you're at it, don't cut your grass so short. A height of 2" - 4" inches keeps grass at its healthiest.

TIP #2: LEAVE GRASS CLIPPINGS ON YOUR LAWN

Give your rake a break! Raking your grass clippings off your lawn, or bagging them, is totally unnecessary. The clippings double as an environmentally friendly fertilizer.

TIP #3: STOP FERTILIZING YOUR LAWN, OR FERTILIZE LESS

Most lawns do well being fertilized only once a year in the fall. Applying fertilizer during the hot summer months will build up and burn your lawn or be washed off during heavy rains. All of that excess fertilizer poisons our waters. It's a waste of money and time, so skip the fertilizer!

TIP #4: HAVE A SMALLER LAWN AND HELP THE POLLINATORS

Give back a part of your lawn to nature! Take one section of your lawn and plant native flowers to turn it into a pollinator oasis for hummingbirds, butterflies, and most importantly...bees. You'll add some color, beauty, and usefulness to your yard and help your environment while doing it.

TIP #5: WATER LESS

Ditch the sprinklers. They're fun for kids, but a disaster for your lawn. They unevenly distribute water and wash fertilizer into waterways. Instead, apply water only when necessary. Your lawn only needs about one inch of water per week, but most homeowners overthink and over-water.

So now that you're working less on your lawn, what will you do with all your newly found free time? We suggest exploring the Sound to see for yourself why it's so important that we protect it together. If you need ideas, visit our blog at tinyurl.com/visitthesound to see 40 favorite places around the Sound.



Excess fertilizer can cause harmful algae blooms that smother habitats, kill fish, and harm wildlife.

The Terry Backer II Hits the Water

When Save the Sound resurrected the Soundkeeper program two summers ago, Soundkeeper Bill Lucey said: "There has been a lot of progress in cleaning up Long Island Sound since I was kid fishing for flounder and snappers, and I want to be a part of the ongoing effort to clean up the Sound." Now, thanks to the generous support from three donors, his third summer on the water will be with a newer boat that will allow him to fight harder for clean water in Long Island Sound.

The Terry Backer II, a 25-foot Parker, is the newest addition to the Save the Sound fleet, fully equipped with an on-board water testing lab and the latest technical tools to enhance the success of Save the Sound's efforts to keep your favorite harbor, beach, or bay safe and clean for you and your family to swim.

"With the addition of Terry Backer II, we'll track down more pollution and sewage overflows and hold responsible parties accountable for cleaning our waters," said Lucey. "We will continue to strive for a healthier Long Island Sound to create a thriving ecosystem for our friends, neighbors, and all the wildlife that depend on it."

Last summer, Bill investigated citizen water pollution reports in Port Chester and the Hutchinson River/Eastchester Bay. He's gone as far as Rikers Island and along the north shore of Long Island to Northport Harbor, pulling trash out of the water at every stop, trawling for microplastics, and sampling for bacteria.

Aboard the Terry Backer II, he'll stay out longer and travel farther and, with more citizen watchdogs and members like you, he will help ensure that the future of Long Island Sound is a healthy, vibrant, and beautiful one.



PLANNED GIVING

You've cherished and protected a healthy, vibrant environment your whole life. By including Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound in your estate plans, you'll protect the land, air, and water of Connecticut and the Long Island Sound region for generations to come.

Please contact Chief Development Officer Alicia Sullivan at 203-787-0646 Ext. 109 or asullivan@ctenvironment.org to discuss the possibilities. Thank you!

CURT'S CORNER: A QUARTERLY NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our 40 Year Journey—Growth of a Movement



As we celebrate 40 years of working together, I find myself reflecting on all we've accomplished as a launching pad to future actions.

Members like you are the life blood of CFE/Save the Sound. You've been alongside us at every victory, every milestone, and every celebration. That is why I want to share a few exciting ways we're growing and using those past victories to drive the environmental outcomes that our region and our planet so desperately need.

The past never goes away—ours is coming back to help us. Our restoration work on the Quinnipiac River is one of the best examples. In the 1980s, when the Old Southington Landfill began leaking into your groundwater, we jumped to action in a lawsuit that resulted in the Quinnipiac River Groundwater Natural Resources Fund. Fast

forward a few decades, and that fund has supported our restoration of the Quinnipiac.

In the early 2000s, we built a state-wide coalition for the first time to protect 15,000 acres of water company land in Connecticut. Ever since, we've used that know-how in battles to save The Preserve, Oswegatchie Hills, and utility lands. Moving into the future, the policy precedent we helped set is becoming important in an emerging battle to protect water company lands in Northwestern Connecticut.

Another victory came when we prevented the construction of Broadwater, a natural gas facility, in the Sound. We attacked with everything in our toolbox—petitions and protests, litigation, federal energy docket advocacy, and everything in between. This successful bi-state strategy is working again in our ongoing fight to preserve Plum Island.

We're working to keep our future as bright as our past by addressing climate change head on. We were a leader in the 2008

passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act, creating greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 and 2050. But we didn't stop there. Just last year we secured an interim 2030 target. Now we're making strides in shared solar and off-shore wind energy.

In the mid 2000s, we successfully pushed for clean car standards in Connecticut. Since then, we've built on this by working to get cleaner vehicles on the road by lowering barriers for electric car purchases.

Your support is making us stronger and smarter. We're using the past to guide our future, and together we will continue to protect all the landscapes and communities of our Long Island Sound region for our children and future generations.

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

Curt Johnson
President, CFE/Save the Sound

Welcoming New Faces to the CFE/Save the Sound Family



Martin Dodd

Barbara Osborn David Chief Legal Director

Martin is a lifelong Connecticut outdoorsman with a passion for environmental conservation. He leads our legal efforts, maintaining our role as a leading litigator in environmental protection for Connecticut and Long Island Sound.

"My two favorite natural resources are Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River. I spend as much time as possible enjoying them in one type of boat or another, and now I work to protect them," said Dodd. "Over my lifetime, I have been inspired by the progress that has been made on water quality due to environmental legislation and the contributions of CFE/Save the Sound, the Soundkeeper, and organizations such as ours."

Alex Krofta

Ecological Restoration Projects Manager

Alex was born in Chicago and fell in love with nature at an early age. Now, he's on the ground turning your support into restored rivers, healthy landscapes, and clean water.

"I've been fascinated by wild creatures since I was a kid," said Krofta. It was urban wildlife, like the declining Common Nighthawk, that first caught his eye. "I'm excited to be restoring river and marsh habitats, but also helping with urban rain gardens and other green infrastructure projects. These systems are all interconnected. The restoration work we do at CFE/Save the Sound contributes to healthy ecosystems—and abundant wildlife."

