



Save the Sound[®]
Action for our region's environment.

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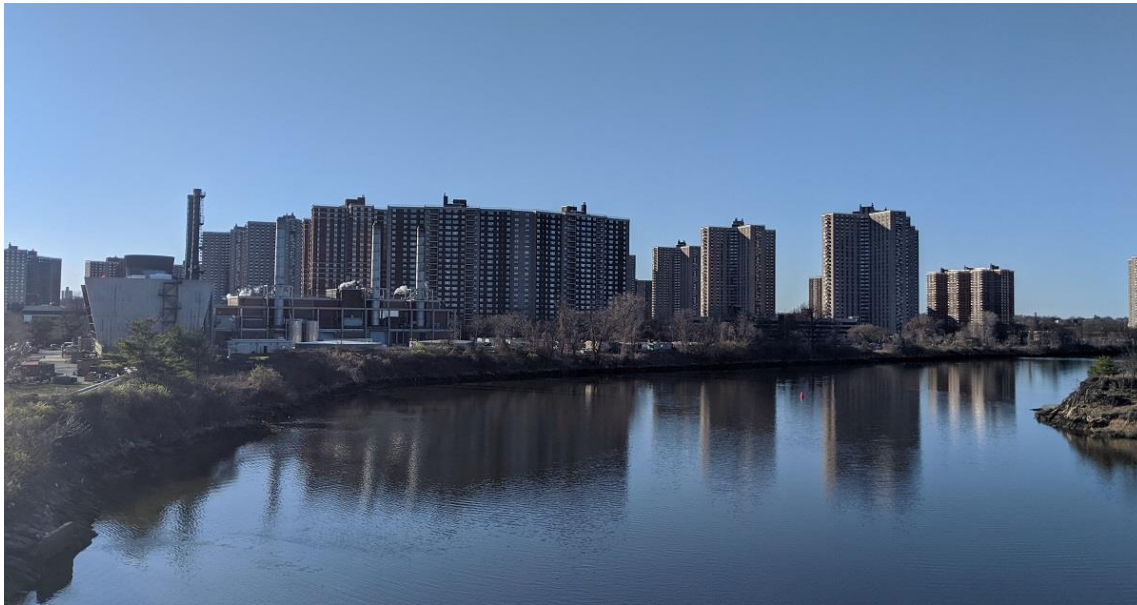
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Save the Sound receives funding for Hutchinson River plan and Southeastern CT fishway design

Recently announced grants totaling more than \$370K move high-impact regional work forward

NEW HAVEN, CONN – Save the Sound has been awarded two grants from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF), administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The funds awarded include \$200,000 to produce a watershed-based plan for the Hutchinson River in Westchester County and \$172,000 to design a nature-like fishway at Long Pond Dam on Whitford Brook in Ledyard, CT. Both awards were publicly announced at a December 7 virtual press event hosted by the Long Island Sound Study that featured videos from grant recipients, remarks by federal and state environmental agencies, and statements from Sen. Chuck Schumer (NY) and Reps. Rosa Delauro (CT-3), Lee Zeldin (NY-1), and Thomas Suozzi (NY-3).

The LISFF, which is funded by the Long Island Sound Study (LISS), granted a total of \$3.8 million to governments and community organizations across Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire this year. The focus of the fund is projects that will improve water quality and restore habitat in the Long Island Sound watershed.



1 - The Hutchinson River flows through Westchester and the Bronx on its way to Long Island Sound

A Watershed Plan for the Hutchinson River

Using the awarded funds and matching contributions, Save the Sound and the Westchester County Department of Planning will work closely with local stakeholders to develop a watershed plan for the portion of the Hutchinson River watershed in Westchester County. Watershed planning is an in-depth process through which the project team and local stakeholders will identify sources of pollution, as well as priority projects which may be used to mitigate those sources of pollution and improve water quality in the Hutchinson River. Save the Sound has led similar efforts on the Mill River and West River in the New Haven area, and on the Pequonnock River in the Bridgeport area. The Westchester County Planning Department has completed a half-dozen watershed management plans throughout the county focused on Long Island Sound and the Bronx and Hudson rivers in Westchester County.

“We’re really looking forward to working with Westchester County and community partners across all the lands that drain to the Hutchinson River to complete our first watershed plan in New York,” said **Nicole Davis, watershed coordinator at Save the Sound**. “These plans are critical for developing a comprehensive approach to building pollution reduction, flood resilience, approaches to stormwater management, and community engagement in advocacy and stewardship across municipal lines.”

The ultimate goal of the planning effort, and of discrete restoration and resilience projects identified in the watershed plan, is to remove the River and its tributaries from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s list of impaired waterbodies.

“Our department, due to the landscape of our County, is no stranger to watershed plans like this,” said **Norma Drummond, Westchester County Planning Commissioner**. “We look forward to partnering with Save the Sound on behalf of Westchester residents. This plan will address pollutant issues as well as their sources while also providing a foundation for furthering the river’s protection through scientifically sound stormwater management practices.”



2 - Long Pond Dam inhibits migratory fish access to the natural deep water pond habitat above.

Fish Passage Progress Continues in Southeastern CT

With an award of \$172,000 from this round of the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, Save the Sound and project partners will design a nature-like fishway to help migratory forage fish like alewife pass Long Pond Dam. Successful fish passage at this site would build on years of restoration efforts on Whitford Brook, the main tributary of the Mystic River. Long Pond Dam is currently the first barrier to migratory fish journeying upstream from Long Island Sound, and the CT DEEP Inland Fisheries Division has estimated that the habitat in Long Pond and other areas upstream of the dam could support an annual run (migration) of 250,000 alewife, a critically important species for overall ecosystem health.

“With this design funding, we’ve moved one step closer to a connected river system on Whitford Brook,” **said Gwen Macdonald, director of ecological restoration at Save the Sound.** “The restoration of our rivers and the fish runs that bring them so much vitality each spring must remain a top priority across the Long Island Sound region. We’re thrilled to have the support of the Long Island Sound Study to continue our work on Whitford Brook by designing a nature-like fishway at Long Pond Dam.”

Previous projects on Whitford Brook include the removal of Hyde Pond Dam downstream by Save the Sound in 2015 and the construction of a fishway upstream at Lantern Hill Pond by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. Restoration of fish passage at Long Pond Dam would join those two efforts and result in 6.6 miles of connected riverine habitat for migratory fish.

"Completion of the Long Pond fishway will provide alewife journeying up Whitford Brook with multiple choices of habitat in Long Pond, Bush Pond, and Lantern Hill Pond for spawning and growth before their return to Long Island Sound," **said Betsy Graham, Secretary for the LHVA.** “The Lantern Hill Valley Association is thrilled to participate in this critical environmental project to restore the river pathway for alewife to complete their lifecycle.”

Next Steps

Work on the Hutchinson River Watershed-Based Plan will begin in January 2021. Community members, property owners, and local organizations who would like to participate or offer input are encouraged to reach out to restoration@savethesound.org.

Work on a nature-like fishway design at Long Pond Dam will begin in early 2021.

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