

Long Island Sound Study: 2019 Mentor-Teacher Workshops

Given Long Island Sound's (LIS) significant environmental and economic importance in New York and Connecticut, as well as its status as an urban estuary heavily impacted by human activity, it is crucial to create programs that promote an understanding of the dynamics that govern LIS, and foster stewardship. Importantly, equipping educators who will introduce youth to these environmental subjects at an early age helps create more environmentally conscientious and engaged citizens.

The Long Island Sound Study's Mentor-Teacher program provides educators with a platform, resources, and support to create and lead professional development workshops for other educators. The workshops are built around LIS subjects to equip educators to share localized lessons and hands-on activities that can be included in existing curricula.

In 2019, workshops were built on the themes of *From Your Yard to the River* and *Plot Studies of Coastal Ecosystems on Long Island's North Shore*. The first workshop, led by Veronica Morabito-Weeks (Hauppauge Public Schools) and Amy Olander (Smithtown School District), centered around nitrogen pollution and included activities on how to use oyster tanks for classroom demonstrations on water quality.

The second workshop was led by Leah Master, a teacher at the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County, and Dr. Hildur Palsdottir, an environmental educator on the ReWild Long Island Board of Directors and the Science Museum of Long Island Board of Trustees. The workshop focused on hands-on activities to explore erosion and microplastics.



Mentor-Teacher Amy Olander, left, and a workshop participant verify the results of a water quality test. Photo: Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG



Workshop participants and Mentor-Teachers Dr. Hildur Palsdottir, 2nd from left, and Leah Master, far right, create a study plot on the beach to sample microplastics at Sands Point, NY. Photo: Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG

Thirteen educators in total participated in these workshops with the potential to reach an estimated 1,325 youth: 125 elementary, 600 middle school, and 600 high school students.

The Long Island Sound Study's Mentor-Teacher program equips teachers to ensure lessons about Long Island Sound and local environmental issues are incorporated into existing school curricula. This educational outreach raises awareness and encourages interest in stewardship.

Project Partners:

Coastal Steward Long Island
Town of Brookhaven

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development in New York.

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