

Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher Program Returns

Long Island Sound (LIS) is a major urban estuary, with more than 23 million people living within 50 miles of its coastline. Given LIS's significant role in supporting local ecosystem services, economy, and wildlife, it is essential for the next generation to become familiar with its resources and threats to its health. The Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher (LISMT) program meets this need by providing funding and technical support to teams of teachers to create professional development workshops for educators centered around Long Island Sound topics.

In 2022, after a two-year break due to the pandemic, LISMT hosted workshops in Oyster Bay, City Island, and Mamaroneck. The workshops covered nitrogen pollution, estuarine habitats, and the impacts of climate change. Workshop activities included walking or kayaking harbor tours; demonstrations of hands-on activities, such as making green infrastructure models and preparing eelgrass tortillas; research presentations; visits to oyster reef restoration sites, and participating in water quality testing.

A total of 43 teachers and educators attended the workshops, with 97.6 percent expressing plans to incorporate the lessons learned into their teaching. Several participants reached out to workshop organizers to bring their classes to coastal programs along LIS. When asked what they found useful about the workshop, attendees commented *"I can bring ideas to both my home and my classroom!"*, *"Lesson ideas I can use right away,"* and *"Fantastic usable resources and hands-on experiences."*



Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher Veronica Morabito-Weeks demonstrates how to make 'tortillas' used to plant eelgrass. Photo: Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG



After the long absence of this mentor teacher opportunity, attendees of the LISMT workshops in 2022 enjoyed the on-site, hands-on opportunities that made them excited to bring lessons about the Long Island Sound to their classrooms.

Long Island Sound programming:
<https://longislandsoundstudy.net/get-involved/educational-resources/mentor-teacher-program>

Partners:

- The Waterfront Center
- The Marine Education Center in Mamaroneck
- **Funding:** Long Island Sound Study program

LISMT participating educators from New York City test estuary water quality at the City Island Oyster Reef site at PS 175. Photo: Lillit Genovesi/NYSG

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

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