

Regional Needs Assessment: Building a Sustainable & Resilient Long Island Sound

The Long Island Sound Study (LISS), a United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-funded program created to protect and restore Long Island Sound, identifies Sustainable and Resilient Communities (SRC) as one of four themes in its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. Many communities in the Long Island Sound region have begun to consider sustainability and resilience in their planning efforts but the current rate of project implementation is insufficient to match the pace of impacts from climate change and other challenges facing the region.

In 2022, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) and Connecticut Sea Grant SRC Extension Professionals conducted a needs assessment of more than 300 regional stakeholder entities to better understand the current environmental challenges Long Island Sound communities face and the barriers to advancing sustainability and resilience efforts. The most prominent environmental threat identified across the Long Island Sound region was stormwater and associated flooding. Identified barriers to implementing desired actions included limited capacity, inefficient coordination, a lack of political will/leadership, funding and burdensome grant requirements, and institutional inequities. Identified needs included increased leadership/local champions, more funding and resources, technical expertise, coordinated approaches to planning, sharing of experiences/case studies, assistance with identifying relevant funding opportunities and tools, a step-by-step guide of “what to do,” and increased education for all stakeholder groups on a variety of environmental/climate issues.

The findings from this regional needs assessment will enable NYSG’s SRC team to create training, education, and extension products that are tailored to the needs of Long Island Sound stakeholders. This will result in a more coordinated regional response to climate change impacts, better-trained and informed community decision makers, increased implementation of sustainability and resilience projects, and an engaged community acting as stewards of Long Island Sound resources.



NYSG Sustainable and Resilient Communities Extension Professionals meet with stakeholders to discuss restoration of St. John’s Marsh in Cold Spring Harbor, NY. Photo: NYSG

*NYSG Coastal Resiliency Resources:
<https://www.nyseagrant.org/coastalresiliency>*

Partners:

- Connecticut Sea Grant
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Westchester County
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Nassau County
- SUNY Stony Brook
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The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Resilient New York Communities and Economies.

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