

Long Island Sound Stewards: Student Education Encourages Coastal Conservation

New York Sea Grant's Long Island Sound Stewardship (LISS) Initiative protects and restores lands that are important for maintaining a healthy environment for marine animals and humans around the Sound. New York's LISS Outreach Coordinator engages K-12 and college students as Sound Stewards in citizen science research projects in 33 designated Long Island Sound Stewardship Areas.

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) works closely with partners, including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and LISS, to develop citizen science research projects that allow students to learn about the problems facing Long Island Sound.

Since 2008, more than 4,000 students have been involved in LISS projects. Their efforts have included collecting significant data of use to partner agencies. More than 10 years of data now exists from projects conducted at Sunken Meadow State Park, in the Nissequogue River Stewardship Area.

In 2017, students were engaged in projects involving data collection on the water quality and species abundance at Sunken Meadow State Park. The data they collected adds to a larger database that spans more than a decade and is used to highlight ecosystem changes over time. NYSG shares the impact of this work with stakeholders and elected officials.

This work conducted by the Long Island Sound Stewards students has led to further restoration of important habitats and ecosystem. A \$2.5 million National Fish and Wildlife Foundation/Department of the Interior grant award received in 2016 supports expanded education and outreach, and other restoration efforts, at Sunken Meadow State Park.



Environmental science high school students seine for organisms in the creek at Sunken Meadow State Park as part of the Long Island Sound Stewards program. Photo: Anna Weshner-Dunning, NYSG/LISS

Partners:

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

***The Sea Grant Focus Areas for this project are
Healthy New York Coastal Ecosystems
Environmental Literacy & Workforce
Development for NY***

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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