



Save the Sound®

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Soundkeeper and CFE/Save the Sound to join forces

Building power to protect Long Island Sound and continue Terry Backer's legacy

NEW HAVEN, CONN. – Representatives of Soundkeeper, Inc., and Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state program Save the Sound announced today that the two organizations are joining forces to support a full-time Soundkeeper advocate dedicated to protecting and restoring Long Island Sound. Relaunching this critical on-the-water watchdog is the major goal of the planned future merger of Soundkeeper, Inc. into CFE/Save the Sound.

Soundkeeper, Inc., has its origins in the Connecticut Coastal Fishermen's Association, founded in 1987 in response to devastating summer algae blooms that sucked oxygen from the Sound's waters and resulted in massive fish kills. It is a part of the worldwide Waterkeeper network. Founder Terry Backer, who went on to serve as Connecticut state representative for Stratford, passed away in 2015.

"As the original Soundkeeper, Terry Backer was the guardian of Long Island Sound for nearly three decades," said Curt Johnson, executive director of CFE/Save the Sound. "With massive cuts to environmental protection and enforcement looming in D.C., our Long Island Sound needs a strong Soundkeeper now more than ever. She or he will patrol, monitor, track down, and work to fix pollution problems. The on-the-water Soundkeeper will be backed up by CFE/Save the Sound's environmental attorneys to ensure that clean water rules are enforced. The Soundkeeper will be citizens' eyes and ears on the Sound's many bays and harbors, and the Sound's voice in the halls of government."

"I can't imagine a better legacy for Terry than re-launching a Soundkeeper this summer who will continue on as a powerful Long Island Sound advocate," said longtime Soundkeeper board member Jim Murkette. "I am confident that joining forces under CFE/Save the Sound's umbrella is the best way to achieve this goal."

Seasonally, the Soundkeeper will make patrol circuits around the Sound, working out of home ports in lower Fairfield County and the mid-Connecticut coast. These patrols will include documenting signs of pollution, responding to citizen reports, and bringing media attention to conditions on the Sound—from sewer overflows to whale sightings. The majority of the Soundkeeper's time will be devoted to direct advocacy and coalition building to further strategic Long Island Sound restoration and protection goals. These include rallying community support to stop bacterial and nitrogen pollution, and partnering with other organizations to advocate for restoration funding and strengthen fisheries regulations.

A new organization, East Norwalk Blue, has taken over and is continuing Soundkeeper, Inc.'s summer sewage pumpout boat program.

CFE/Save the Sound and Soundkeeper, Inc. encourage passionate advocates for Long Island Sound to apply for the Soundkeeper position and are seeking a donated boat to facilitate on-the-water patrols. A [detailed job description](#) and [boat specifications](#) are available on CFE/Save the Sound's website.

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The mission of [Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state program Save the Sound](#) is to protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations. The Save the Sound program identifies and eliminates water pollution sources through community engagement and, where necessary, legal enforcement. Our water quality team uses water monitoring and data analysis to identify and prioritize pollution reduction goals. Save the Sound engages supporters in nature-based projects that restore our rivers and coast and provide green and resilient neighborhoods.

[Soundkeeper, Inc.](#) is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of Long Island Sound and its watershed. Laws established by the Clean Water Act, as well as others, were designed to protect the Sound, and other waters, from pollution. But citizens are responsible for seeing that these laws are enforced. Soundkeeper is the vital link, "the voice and action of concerned citizens," in making the waters of Long Island Sound fishable and swimmable. By raising awareness and attacking critical issues with the commitment and support of a dedicated citizen network, Soundkeeper is the advocate for the Sound. Our daily work is patrolling, investigating, intervening, and raising public awareness of the Sound's problems.