

## It's Time for Climate Action

**Climate change is REAL. The time to act is NOW. The solution? YOU.**

Climate change is threatening the public health of our region, nation, and planet. Our warming world not only endangers the natural resources that sustain life for all of us, but will also have a devastating impact on Connecticut's economy. We must take bold action to hold our state accountable for meeting its science-based climate goals.

"Emissions-reduction targets may sound wonky, but it comes down to families' health and safety," explains Claire Coleman, Climate and Energy Attorney for Connecticut Fund for the Environment. "Absent aggressive action by state leaders, Connecticut will face sharp sea level rise, wetland loss, and coastal flooding. Changes in weather will cause increased respiratory health issues and disease. These impacts will be devastating to our health and our economy. We need individuals to stand up and demand action."

Connecticut has historically been a leader on climate action, and has the opportunity to be once again. In 2008, Connecticut passed legislation that established goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This sent signals to the environmental community that Connecticut was leading in the fight to curb climate change. It let concerned residents know their voices were heard on the climate issues that matter most to all of our wellbeing.

Almost a decade later, data shows that the state will miss its greenhouse gas reduction mandate for 2020 unless it changes course immediately. And failure to act now means the requirements Connecticut set for itself for 2050 are even further from reach.

This past legislative session, the energy debate unfortunately focused on merely preventing rollbacks rather advancing a



*Claire Coleman, accompanied by her daughters, addresses the crowd at the Children's Environmental March in Greenwich, Connecticut, on April 29, day of the People's Climate March.*

transition to a clean energy economy. In an attempt to plug holes in the budget, there were renewed efforts to raid clean energy and energy efficiency funds, programs paid for by Connecticut electricity customers who depend on efficiency services. Some legislators proposed slashing resiliency funds that ensure our state's ability to protect our vital coastal communities against sea level rise and major storms. They even tried to offer the Millstone nuclear power plant a special deal, despite the fact that Millstone is already heavily subsidized and shouldn't get dollars set aside for renewable, clean energy projects.

It's clear that right now, the state's budget woes are overshadowing critically needed climate action. But we all know the warming world won't wait for balanced budgets. That's why it's more important than ever for us to keep up the pressure.

That's right—in the fight against climate change, you are the solution.

While the next legislative session doesn't start until February, you can take action now. Call and write your state legislators. Let them know you expect them to protect the funds

designated for energy efficiency programs. Push them to support shared solar programs that allow anyone to benefit from solar energy, including those who are unable to install their own solar panels. Remind them that nearly half of Connecticut's greenhouse gas emissions come from cars and trucks, and push them to support policies that make electric vehicles easier to buy. Urge them to incentivize building efficient homes and businesses, and expand goals for solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources.

Make your voice heard, and remind your leaders that you won't wait for climate action.

Visit [www.ctenvironment.org](http://www.ctenvironment.org) to find out more about how you can take action on climate.

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# Long Island's Voice for Plum Island

Louise Harrison joined the Save the Sound team in September 2016 as our Long Island voice for the preservation of Plum Island. She brings unparalleled expertise to the campaign as a conservation biologist and award-winning environmental advocate who's served in federal, state, and Suffolk County agencies, held leadership roles at nonprofit environmental organizations, and led numerous land conservation efforts.

As a seven-year resident of Southold who's lived in Suffolk County since 1981, Louise has a strong understanding of the community's deep ties to Plum Island. Her own ties to the land, water, and wildlife of the region, as well as residents and local decision

makers, have Louise uniquely positioned to advocate for the permanent preservation of Plum Island on behalf of those most directly impacted.

Louise has successfully aided in the conservation of a number of Long Island's great open spaces and is confident in the team's ability to successfully save one of the region's last wild places.

"When people say Plum Island is unique, it's more than saying it is beautiful or a gem," Louise said.

"Unique really does mean like no other. That's why it is globally significant to endangered species such as the Roseate Tern. Plum Island is irreplaceable."



*Louise Harrison, Long Island's voice for Plum Island.*

## Take a Tour of Plum Island!

The photos below showcase some of Plum Island's most compelling features: its unique geology, diverse wildlife, and historical significance. Louise is your guide to some of the sites you'll want to look out for if you ever have the chance to visit Plum Island!



*Louise's take: "As an island surrounded by salt water, Plum Island is a source of fresh water for nearby islands that don't have their own. Plum Island provides for its native wildlife and other creatures that can reach it, or fly to it." Photo by Dr. J Bret Bennington.*



*Above: "Plum Island's isolation from the mainland and Long Island, coupled with its position in the archipelago—the chain of islands that reaches to Fishers Island—is key to its usefulness to the many fish and wildlife species that breed there, feed there, visit, or call it home. Plum Island is the archipelago's biological linchpin." Photo by Dr. J Bret Bennington.*



*Above: "The geological features of Plum Island are what created its unique habitats for endangered and rare plants and birds, as well as for a huge population of seals, who depend on the island's isolation and the rocks along the southern shore." Photo by Robert Lorenz.*

### MONTHLY GIVING

Protecting the natural resources that sustain your family is as affordable as a Netflix account. A monthly gift of \$10, \$20, or more is a small addition to your household budget and a big contribution to the environmental work you care about most! As a monthly contributor, you'll become a member of a growing network of passionate and powerful environmental advocates with a proven track record for big impact in Connecticut and New York, especially in this uncertain environmental climate. Contact Michelle at [mlemere@ctenvironment.org](mailto:mlemere@ctenvironment.org) for more information.

### LEAVE A LEGACY

A planned gift from your estate to CFE and its bi-state program Save the Sound can help protect public health and the endangered places you care about far into the future. Please consider a lasting gift to the environmental heritage of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. For more information, contact Heidi Green at 203-787-0646, ext. 109.



## Planting Rain Gardens, Growing Environmentalists

On a sunny morning in the Dwight neighborhood of New Haven, fourth-graders took turns digging holes in a freshly excavated patch of sidewalk. They helped each other put plants into place and surrounded them with soil designed to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff before it reaches the Sound. These kids, the next generation of environmental leaders, will grow up with powerful memories from the day they planted their first rain garden—one of the most cost-effective ways of combatting water pollution!

## Good Seeds

A remarkable effort to collect and cultivate the seeds of our region's native flora has taken root in the years since Hurricane Sandy struck our shores, and our Green Projects team has been working hard to bring that effort full circle.

The federal government has funded the multi-state coastal seed collection effort through its Seeds of Success program, to help restore and protect coastal wetlands against major storms, sea level rise, and other effects of climate change.

With help from local groups like the New England Wild Flower Society, seeds were collected by volunteers at two of Save the Sound's dam removal sites—Pond Lily Nature Preserve in New Haven and Hyde Pond in

Mystic—as well as other preservation sites around the region. The seeds were then shipped to the Cape May Plant Materials Center operated by the National Resources Conservation Service where they were frozen to mimic the effects of winter.

“Native plants are an important tool for restoration,” explained Anna Marshall, Green Projects Associate for Save the Sound. “They’re beneficial for filtering out pollutants entering waterways and increasing habitat for fish, birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.”

When Anna received a call from the Plant Materials Center last winter asking if we could use any of the native seed as part of our habitat restoration work, she jumped at the opportunity to bring the project back to the community.

Anna worked to forge relationships with local organizations that have access to greenhouses and other resources needed to cultivate seeds during the chilly New England spring. Her efforts launched two new partnerships, with the Bioscience and Environmental Technology program at Grasso Tech High School in Groton and GROWERS, an organization based at New Haven's Edgerton Park Greenhouses that provides horticultural job training and employment opportunities for adults with developmental and physical disabilities.

“When I contacted Grasso Tech High School and GROWERS this past fall, both programs jumped on board and truly brought the pilot project to life,” Anna added.

Native seedlings grown by students at Grasso Tech were transplanted at Hyde Pond this past July, bolstering riverside habitat at



*Troup School fourth-graders during a hands-on lesson about rain gardens. Photo by Ariel Shearer.*



*Top photo: Volunteers planting native perennials at the site of the former Hyde Pond Dam, July 2017. Photo by Greg Ostrinski.*

*Above: GROWERS greenhouse attendant Robert Guarino caring for native seedlings at the Edgewood Greenhouses in April 2017. Photo by Ariel Shearer.*

the site of the former Hyde Pond Dam, which we removed in 2015. The Pond Lily Nature Preserve and residential rain garden sites identified by Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven will soon be home to new plants cultivated by GROWERS students.

“Our work is about reconnecting rivers and improving the watershed, but it's also about bringing together the entire community,” Anna explained. “The two really go hand in hand in what we do on a day to day basis at Save the Sound.”

# Long Island Sound Progress Report

When government falls short, we're proud to step up and enforce laws that protect the water that sustains our region, and we're proud to have you as part of our growing network of Long Island Sound supporters.

Your support helped unite scientists and advocates on a lobbying trip to Washington, D.C., earlier this year, where we met face-to-face with your elected officials and made the case for funding a healthier Long Island Sound. A group of trusted experts from around the region visited the offices of senators and congressmen who championed Long Island Sound and fought hard for the funding it needs and deserves.

Thanks in part to our persistence, Congress awarded a record \$8.4 million this year for Long Island Sound cleanup and restoration, and New York State has committed to investing \$2.5 billion in clean

water projects over the next five years. Some of this funding will be dispersed to municipalities in the form of grants and loans, and some will be dispersed in grants to Save the Sound for use on water quality data collection and river restoration, as well as pollution reduction education.

As of this writing, Connecticut's state budget has yet to be finalized. Our policy advocates are fighting to defend millions of dollars in resiliency and green infrastructure funding that could be used to improve the health of Long Island Sound and Connecticut's coastal communities.

In our efforts to amplify the battle for clean water in New York, we're pushing New York City to implement real and lasting solutions to the problem of massive sewage overflows that pollute the Sound. Save the Sound recently joined the National Resources



*Sunset at the mouth of the Housatonic River.  
Photo by Donna Rae Henault Caporaso.*

Defense Council, Riverkeeper, and Waterkeeper Alliance in a lawsuit to require New York City's adoption of federal clean water standards.

While this is all great news, we're already preparing for next year's funding battle. We hope you'll stand with us as we prepare to fight harder than ever for the financial support Long Island Sound needs and deserves.

## A Message from the Board

### Don Strait hands the baton to Curt Johnson

Greetings from your Board of Directors, As Chaucer is alleged to have said, "All good things must come to an end."

That is true, and so it is with sadness that I report Don Strait's decision to step down as President of CFE/Save the Sound. Don has led CFE/Save the Sound for over 25 years, increasing the range of environmental issues we tackle and growing the organization from a handful of dedicated staffers into a strong team of skilled and equally dedicated professionals.

Don will be stepping down as of the annual meeting on October 1, where I hope many of you will join us to thank him for his extraordinary service and to celebrate so many major achievements under his guidance. From the Kelda water company victory and stopping the proposed Broadwater natural gas facility in Long Island Sound to today's vigorous work to protect Plum Island, Don has led CFE/Save the Sound with energy, a sound sense of strategy, and a clear vision of our purpose. Don has generously agreed to be available as a consultant for specific projects going forward, so we will look forward to continuing to call on his expertise.

I also have good news to report. Curt Johnson, who has been an integral part of CFE/Save the Sound for 24 years and a leadership partner with Don on many programs and initiatives, has accepted the Board's unanimous offer to serve as our new President. Curt joined CFE/Save the Sound in 1993 to head the legal team, later becoming Executive Director of the Save the Sound program and most recently the Executive Director of CFE/Save the Sound. We will be in good hands going forward.

The annual meeting will be a chance to celebrate Don's great work and to reflect on the achievements of this past year, including our exciting new Soundkeeper initiative. It will also be an opportunity for you to hear Curt's vision for our path forward. Today, we all face new challenges to protecting our environment. I think you will find Curt's ideas for the future not only reassuring—as CFE/Save the Sound continues the excellence of its work—but also inspiring in their focus on



*Don Strait, current President of CFE/Save the Sound; Bill Lucey, Soundkeeper; Tracy Brown, Director of Save the Sound; Leslie Lee, CFE/Save the Sound Board Chair; Libby Alexander, CFE/Save the Sound Board member; Curt Johnson, Executive Director of CFE/Save the Sound and future President.*

the health and water quality of Long Island Sound, renewable energy and impacts of climate change, and protection of significant open spaces throughout the region.

I look forward to seeing you on October 1 to toast Don and to welcome Curt as our new leader and President.

Leslie Lee  
Board Chair, CFE/Save the Sound

# Event Spotlight

This summer saw a totally new calendar of exciting events for both members and friends of CFE/Save the Sound! From beachside yoga classes to the second Paddle Across the Sound extravaganza; from the return of the Soundkeeper to our waters to Plum Island presentations in Oakdale, Fisher's Island, and Shelter Island, you turned out to show your support for land conservation, water quality, and the environmental issues that matter to you most. If you'd like to host an event for Save the Sound, contact Joseph at [jdimmaggio@savethesound.org](mailto:jdimmaggio@savethesound.org).

## Best Party Ever

We were thrilled when Meredith Amerman reached out to plan coastal cleanups as a way of celebrating her Bat Mitzvah. This summer, Meredith gathered friends and family for two cleanup events in Connecticut and asked those who attended her Bat Mitzvah to make donations to Save the Sound, raising nearly \$800 to help protect and preserve the Long Island Sound she loves. Thanks, Meredith!



*Meredith Amerman organized two coastal cleanups and raised hundreds to help protect and support the Long Island Sound she loves.*

## Save the Date: CFE/Save the Sound Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting is right around the corner! Mark your calendar for Sunday, October 1, and join us for an afternoon dedicated to celebrating the achievements you made possible this year. We'll also take a look forward at all the great work to come. Be sure to RSVP in advance, as guest speaker Gina McCarthy, President Obama's administrator for the EPA, is likely to draw a crowd! RSVP to Michelle at [mlemere@ctenvironment.org](mailto:mlemere@ctenvironment.org).

## Your Beach Needs You!

Each year, Save the Sound coordinates massive cleanups at beaches across Connecticut's shores for International Coastal Cleanup Day. Make sure to register now for a cleanup near you! International Coastal Cleanup Day is Saturday, September 16, but cleanups will be held through the end of October. To register, contact Annie at [apaltauf@savethesound.org](mailto:apaltauf@savethesound.org).

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