



Long Island Sound Study

A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
Project Spotlight

BIL Funds to be Used to Protect Open Space on Long Island's North Shore



Vicky O'Neill/NYSDEC

One of the properties to be acquired will help protect Little Bay. Turn to page 2 to learn more about this project.

What is BIL?

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (or BIL) was passed by Congress in 2021 to improve infrastructure and climate resiliency in an equitable manner throughout the United States.

Under the legislation, the Long Island Sound Study will receive \$21.2 million per year to fund local projects over the next five years (2022 – 2026). Several projects will support the Justice40 Initiative to provide funding assistance to underserved and overburdened communities.

Why Protect Open Space?

Preserving natural areas from development helps maintain a healthy ecosystem, habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities for people, and reduces flooding and storm impacts to adjacent properties. Since 2015, LISS's partners have protected more than 4,600 acres for the Long Island Sound watershed in New York and Connecticut.

The Long Island Sound Study (LISS) brings agencies, commissions, universities, citizens, and environmental, industry, and user groups together to improve the health of Long Island Sound.

To learn more about the BIL projects, visit the fact sheet series at:

LISSstudy.net/BIL



Acquisitions in Suffolk County Will Expand Conservation Areas to Improve Health of Coastal Waters and Protect Wildlife

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is anticipating acquiring three properties within the Long Island Sound watershed in 2023 with the support of a \$3 million grant from the Long Island Sound Study (LISS). EPA will award the grant using funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Two of the properties totaling 2.5 acres are located near the 62-acre Conscience Bay-Little Bay State Tidal Wetland Area in Setauket, NY. Both properties will be purchased at a fair market value, which is estimated to be between \$350,000-400,000 for the smaller property and around \$900,000 for the larger one.

The area is important to conservationists for its undeveloped intertidal mudflats, which are some of the largest on the north shore of Long Island. Many important waterfowl use the wetlands for foraging and wintering. And many types of shellfish, finfish species, and even Atlantic ridley sea turtles have been known to utilize the wetland area as well. Expanding the Tidal Wetland Area by adding the new properties acquired will help ensure habitat connectivity, allowing wildlife to easily pass through the greater area.

For the third property, NYSDEC plans to use the balance of the funds to purchase undeveloped coastal forest land within a 22-acre area near Little Bay and Port Jefferson Harbor. The harbor, which is part of the Long Island Sound Mt. Sinai-Port Jefferson Harbor Stewardship Area, provides important habitat for many marine fish like winter flounder, northern puffer, and Atlantic silversides. The acquisitions will help to provide



NYSDEC

Volunteers plant trees in the Conscience Bay-Little Bay State Tidal Wetland Area.

a vegetated buffer to protect the Harbor from pollution and improve water quality. The proposed acquisitions are part of an upland coastal forest—a mix of hardwoods, pitch pine, and coastal red cedar—that provides habitat for songbirds, red fox, and white-tailed deer. Property boundaries are within 400 feet of Little Bay and 800 feet of Port Jefferson Harbor.

Protecting natural and undeveloped areas helps maintain a healthy ecosystem and provides natural resource-based recreational opportunities. The LISS has an ecosystem target to protect 7,000 acres through acquisitions and easements by 2035. Since 2015, an average of 530.84 Connecticut acres and 130.19 New York acres have been protected each year, for a total of 4,627 acres.



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