



Long Island Sound Study

A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
Project Spotlight

BIL Funds to Remove Strong Pond Dam, Reopen 10 miles of Fish Passage on Norwalk River



Save the Sound

BIL funding will help support removal of the Strong Pond Dam in Wilton, CT. The dam is a barrier to fish migration between the Sound and upstream habitat. Turn to page 2 to learn more.

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 Remove Dams?

Rivers and streams that connect Long Island Sound to inland habitats are a necessary part of the life cycle of migratory fish species. They must be cleared of obstructions, and kept clear, in order to connect fish with their historic spawning grounds.

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



Strong Pond Dam to Undergo Final Step for Removal and River Restoration

With funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) will be removing the Strong Pond Dam in Wilton, CT, opening an additional 10 miles of river habitat for migratory fish swimming from Long Island Sound.

The Strong Pond Dam, also known as the Dana Dam, is the first barrier migratory fish encounter after swimming upriver on the Norwalk River from Long Island Sound. Planning for its removal began in the 2000s.

To support this final demolition phase, Long Island Sound Study (LISS) is contributing \$250,000 to the project using BIL funds. Previously the LISS awarded CT DEEP \$2.2 million for dam removal in 2020. Demolition of the dam began in 2021, starting with a repair of the lower-level outlet, which was needed to drain water from the area before the next phase of the removal could begin. Construction for the final phase to remove the dam and restore the section of the river is expected to take place between July and October 2023.



A rendering of what the Norwalk River will look like in Wilton, CT after the Strong Pond Dam is removed and the riverbanks are restored.

In addition to CT DEEP the project has many partners, including Trout Unlimited, the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative, and the Town of Wilton. Save the Sound is the project lead.

Improving migratory fish access to the Norwalk River is an important step to improving the health of not only the river, but Long Island Sound as a whole. Many important fish species like herring and sea lamprey have not had access to these historical spawning grounds since the construction of the Strong Pond Dam and others built on the river. Now, these species will once again have access to these spawning grounds which will help restore the ecological balance in the river and the Sound. The project also includes planting 1.5 acres of vegetation along

the restored riverbank to benefit birds, mammals, amphibians, and other wildlife.

The Strong Pond Dam has been on the radar for removal for other reasons as well. The dam has created flooding issues for the surrounding area, especially during large storm events. Flooding around the dam has threatened parts of Downtown Wilton and the nearby railroad infrastructure. With the threat of increased storms brought on by climate change, the need to remove the Strong Pond Dam has greatly increased.

The Long Island Sound Study and its partners have reopened nearly 430 miles of rivers and streams for fish passage in Connecticut and New York since 1998.



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