



2017 Newsletter

**We Work To
Protect,
Preserve,
Restore, and
Enhance our
Natural
Resources**

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The District Today A Message from the District:



Throughout the years, the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District has been working to promote conservation efforts throughout Nassau County. This past year has been filled with many great projects and opportunities. We are proud to continue our work and are looking forward to an extremely productive year in 2018. We would like to thank everyone who helped us make 2017 so great.

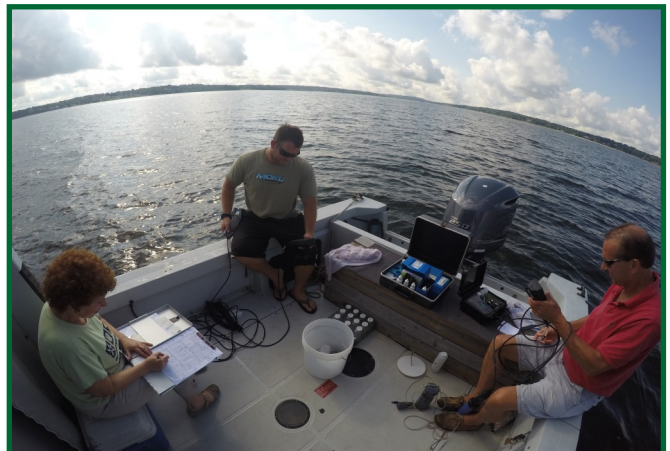
**Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District
1864 Muttontown Road, Syosset, NY 11791
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Hempstead Harbor Water Quality Monitoring

During 2017, the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee (HHPC) expanded its water quality monitoring from bi-weekly to weekly for the 2017/ 2018 season due to assistance provided by Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District. This monitoring program is in its 26th year and is one of the most comprehensive of its kind on Long Island Sound.

Due to funding issues, the HHPC had to cut its 2017/ 2018 program in half (biweekly instead of weekly) for the first time in 26 years. Given the seriousness of the water quality issues faced by the Long Island Sound (LIS), there was much concern as to how this may affect the LIS recovery efforts led by several different groups such as HHPC. The HHPC has been granted funding of \$17,000 by NCSWCD to restore the weekly monitoring for the 2017 annual report that will be released in August 2018.

- Water quality monitoring collects crucial data for pollutants in the LIS
- This data can be compiled and given to government agencies like Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District to improve the water quality
- The Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan and the Long Island Sound Nitrogen Reduction Strategy can greatly benefit from the data compiled from the HHPC



Black Skimmer GPS Tagging

During 2017, the Nassau County Soil & Water Conservation District partnered with the Town of Hempstead's Department of Conservation & Waterways to help fund a satellite tagging study using black skimmers. Black Skimmers are a coastal nesting water bird and are a NYS species of special concern. A 2015 Black Skimmer Conservation Management Plan issued by the NYS DEC asserts that there are only two major colonies remaining in New York State; both located in Nassau County, and as detailed in the plan, more information and further attention on this species is warranted to better manage them and to better understand the overall embayment health of the South Shore Estuary Reserve.

Locations of food resources and the distances skimmers are willing to travel to access those resources from the colony is critical to understanding their conservation and habitat needs during their breeding season. Attaching satellite transmitters to the selected black skimmers helps to provide critical data such as:

- Water quality analysis in nesting locations to better understand the importance of water quality to the black skimmer
- Determining point and non-point source pollution that occurs in the area
- Providing insight on habitat specific requirements to help prevent the habitat loss/degradation of colonial water birds on the south shore of Long Island



Planting for Clean Water

In 2015, the Nassau County SWCD received a grant from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund to enact the Planting for Clean Water program. This grant funded the construction of three raingardens which were installed and maintained throughout 2016 and 2017 and will continue to be maintained into the future. The grant provided funding for educational signage, raingarden workshops and our new brochure “Raingardens for Residents”. These raingardens will protect the Long Island Sound from pollution carried by stormwater runoff. The location of each raingarden was carefully chosen and built where it would collect the most stormwater runoff.

We would like to give a special thank you to the Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardener program, the Friends of Cedarmere, the Village of Bayville, the Village of Centre Island, the Nassau County Department of Public Works, the Nassau County Parks Department, and the Long Island Sound Future’s Fund for all their support.

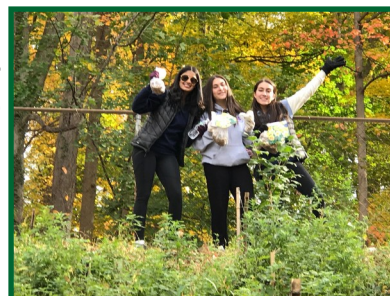
Raingarden Locations

- Bayville Village Hall
- Centre Island
- Cedarmere Preserve



Cedarmere Invasive Removal and Native Plant Restoration

Cedarmere was the home of William Cullen Bryant, a prominent 19th century poet and currently is the location of one of Nassau County's most picturesque park preserves. On July 25th, 2017 the district worked with volunteers from The Friends of Cedarmere to remove invasive species and maintain the rain garden that was installed in 2016 with funding from the Long Island Sound Future's Fund. In addition to the removal of the invasive plants, we planted Black Tupelo, Black Walnut, and Flowering Dogwood trees that are native to the area. We returned on August 22nd, 2017 for a cleanup day and tree planting with Friends of Cedarmere. We would like to thank all our wonderful volunteers for making this event a success! Because of their help, the area was extensively cleared of invasive plants and replanted with native plants that are used to prevent erosion and help mitigate storm water pollution.



Outreach

Throughout the year, the district provided various methods of outreach, at events, on social media pages and on our website. The district was present at numerous events in Nassau County, with our goal being to connect with local residents, provide informative materials, provide technical assistance, and to build a relationships with anyone who wishes to utilize our services that we provide.

Here are just a few events that the district participated in:

- Harbor Fest, Port Washington
- Long Island Fair, Old Bethpage
- LISSMA, St Josephs
- Cedarmere Volunteer Day
- Raingarden presentations at Oyster Bay Civic Association and Nassau Shores Civic Association
- Long Island Native Plant Symposium



Envirothon

On April 25, 2017 the Suffolk County and Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosted their 19th Annual Long Island Envirothon at Old Bethpage Village Restoration Plaza. The Envirothon is a nationwide environmental science competition for high school students. Schools can have up to two teams of 3-5 people compete. On Long Island, we have our own regional Envirothon where one team from Nassau County and one team from Suffolk County are chosen as winners and are presented with scholarships. The Envirothon is based on five subject areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and the current issue—which changes annually. Each one of these subject areas are managed by a station master, who is tasked with supervising their station during the event. The current issue for 2017 was “Agricultural Soil & Water Conservation Stewardship”



The students conducted research on the topics, and were then tested in each subject area with a 25-question multiple choice test. Finally, students give an oral presentation based on a current environmental issue. The winners of the 2017 Envirothon were Great Neck South High School (Nassau) and Sachem North High School (Suffolk).

We would like to give a special thank you to Covanta and all of our other sponsors that made this event possible.

ESC Training



During 2017, the district hosted 3 Erosion and Sediment Control Training events. The events are meant to teach trainees about the principles of stormwater runoff control. Many contractors, engineers, municipal stall and equipment operators were trained. This training is required under the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Stormwater Permit GP-0-15- 002, which states all developers,

contractors, and subcontractors must identify at least one trained individual from their company that will be responsible for implementation of the SWPPP (Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan), and have at least one trained individual on site on a daily basis when soil disturbance activities are being performed. In addition, developers must have a qualified inspector conduct regular site inspections in accordance with GP-0-15-002. This year's trainings were held at Old Bethpage Village Restoration.

The cost of the training was \$100 per person, and included lunch, training materials, a certificate and a certificate ID card. Participants at this year's trainings were trained by Jake Wedemeyer, from Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District and Corey Humphrey, from Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District.



To register for a future training, please visit our website.

Mill Pond Restoration

Mill Pond is located in the incorporated Village of Port Washington North, on the eastern side of Shore Road between Harbor Road and Mill Pond Road. The manmade pond was constructed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, over 200 years ago. It is currently owned by the Town of North Hempstead and located in the historic district of the Village of Port Washington North.

Nassau County SWCD has continued work with the Town of North Hempstead to control a stand of invasive *Phragmites australis* and plant native tidal wetland species located at Mill Pond. *Phragmites* out-competes the native plant species and is detrimental to the surrounding ecosystem by creating a less productive and diverse ecosystem. The Nassau County SWCD has taken the lead on the native plant restoration portion of the project. The native plant restoration involves *Spartina* plugs and other native wetland species, erecting a silt fence, and goose exclusion fencing.

This year, focus was on increasing the amount of *Spartina* in the pond further along the shoreline.

- Doing this, we will slow or stop the spread of any future *Phragmites* growth, while also removing excess nitrogen from the entire pond.
- This will work to prevent algal blooms in both the pond and any connecting waterbodies. Smaller areas are along the outer banks of Mill pond and were planted with *Spartina alterniflora* and *Spartina patens* to prevent future *Phragmites* growth, while also acting to stabilize the shoreline. In total, approximately 7,000 square feet of shoreline was protected or restored.
- The outcome of the project is to reinforce and add to the ecological diversity of Mill Pond; more specifically, planting of native plants at Mill Pond will increase the biological diversity, improve water quality by nutrient uptake, soften wave energy of storms and improve the overall water quality to Manhasset Bay



May Newburger Cove Restoration

Part of Hempstead Harbor, May Newburger Cove is located along West Shore Road in Port Washington, NY. The cove is located along one of the longest shoreline nature trails on Long Island, the Hempstead Harbor Trail. According to the Long Island Sound Study, Hempstead Harbor is designated as part of an Important Bird Area by Audubon New York. Depending on the season, hawks, falcons, osprey, sandpipers, plovers, herons, egrets, and waterfowl can be found around the Harbor.

Hempstead Harbor has also been designated by New York State as a Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat Area. Nesting diamondback terrapins have been spotted in the lower harbor, and twice in recent years, pods of dolphins have visited the harbor. The harbor is also an important part of the local economy, bringing boaters, fishermen and beachgoers to the area. Because of this, it is important to maintain the local ecosystems and protect the area from invasive plants that could cause harm. One of these invasive plants is *Phragmites australis*. *Phragmites* will form a dense monoculture and slowly take over an area, outcompeting the native plants in which the local ecosystem relies.

During 2017, the District worked with the Town of North Hempstead to remove treated *Phragmites*, and plant *Schoenoplectus robustus*, *Spartina alterniflora* and *Va frutescens* in its place.

- The project will work to protect and restore approximately 1 acre of tidal wetland in Hempstead Harbor.
- The project will eventually result in a highly productive ecosystem and diverse habitat
- These plants will filter out pollutants and nutrients from stormwater runoff, that will ultimately work to improve the water quality in Hempstead Harbor.



Board of Directors and staff

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Town of Hempstead

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District Manager

David Ganim

Conservation Technician

Sergiy Grim

Conservation Technician

Dolores Gelish

Book keeper

Technical Assistance

Natural Resources Management:

- Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)
- Stream corridor restoration
- Wetland construction and restoration
- Shoreline protection

Project Implementation:

- Grant/contract administration
- Inter-agency cooperative agreements
- Project survey & design
- BMP implementation on public/ private lands

Protecting Public Health & Safety

- Water supply protection
- Water quality monitoring

Land Use Planning

- Soil interpretations
- Soil Surveys
- Site plan reviews
- Stormwater Management
- Recreation & open space planning
- Farmland protection
- Wetlands protection
- Watershed protection plans

Public Involvement

- Public participation/stakeholder advisory groups
- Identifying key audiences
- Communication plans
- Consensus building
- Coalition building
- Networking

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