

# Nassau County Soil & Water Conservation District



## Contents

Message from the District Manager .....	Page 2
S.E.P.T.I.C. Replacement Program .....	Pages 3, 4
Long Island Regional Envirothon .....	Pages 5, 6
Grant Awards .....	Page 7
Part B Composting Project .....	Page 8
Part C Projects .....	Pages 9-17
Invasive Species Removal Events .....	Pages 18-19
Outreach and Education .....	Page 20-21
Welcoming New Staff .....	Page 22

## Meet the Team

### **NCSWCD Staff**

Derek Betts .....	District Manager
Olivia Cunningham ..	Conservation Technician
Sean Rooney .....	Conservation Technician
Kaia Madigan .....	Conservation Technician
Ishika Joshi .....	Conservation Technician
Yoan Carrillo .....	Bookkeeper

### **NCSWCD Board of Directors**

Tara Schneider .....	Board Chair
Meagan Fastuca .....	Vice Chair
Eric Swenson .....	Treasurer
Patricia Aitken .....	Secretary
Reese Michaels .....	Board Member
Mary Studdert .....	Board Member
Lou Imbroto .....	Board Member



Seasonal Change in Muttontown Preserve



## A Message from the District Manager

As the District Manager of the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District (the District), I am proud to present the 2025 District Newsletter. This publication highlights the District's many accomplishments over the past year while also recognizing the exceptional dedication, expertise, and passion of our staff, board members, and project partners, without whom this work would not be possible.

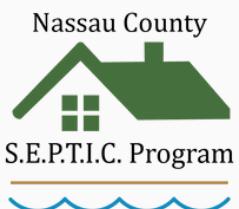
The District achieved several exciting milestones in 2025, perhaps the most significant of which is the District's historic participation in the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. Through participation in AEM, Nassau County farmers and agriculturists can formally document their environmental stewardship and further strengthen their positive contributions to their communities, the economy, and the environment. The District's involvement in this critical program opens the door to new funding and technical assistance opportunities for farmers (both terrestrial and aquatic) across Nassau County. Ultimately, AEM advances sustainable resource use and the implementation of best management practices.

The District is also proud to have secured a \$230,000 Local Assistance Grant from the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council to install green septic infrastructure in Point Lookout, marking a significant step forward in protecting local water quality and coastal resources. In addition, the District submitted a competitive grant application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to support invasive species removal and ecological restoration efforts throughout Nassau County. This initiative was made possible through strong collaboration and letters of support from our dedicated County partner organizations.

From the continued success of the 2025 Long Island Regional Envirothon to the ongoing implementation of Nassau County's S.E.P.T.I.C. Program, the District is incredibly proud of the meaningful progress achieved in 2025 to protect and enhance Nassau County's unique landscapes and natural resources. Thank you and congratulations to everyone who helped make 2025 such a successful year.

- Derek Betts

# NASSAU COUNTY S.E.P.T.I.C. REPLACEMENT PROGRAM



The Nassau County Septic Environmental Program to Improve Cleanliness (S.E.P.T.I.C. Program) aims to reduce nitrogen pollution by helping LI homeowners and other property owners replace their conventional cesspools and septic systems with nitrogen-reducing septic systems. By providing up to \$20,000 in grant funding per property, this program has successfully installed 195 Innovative/Alternative On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (I/A OWTS) throughout Nassau County. Antiquated wastewater technology is one of the greatest threats to clean water on Long Island.



Call our office to find out if you are eligible →

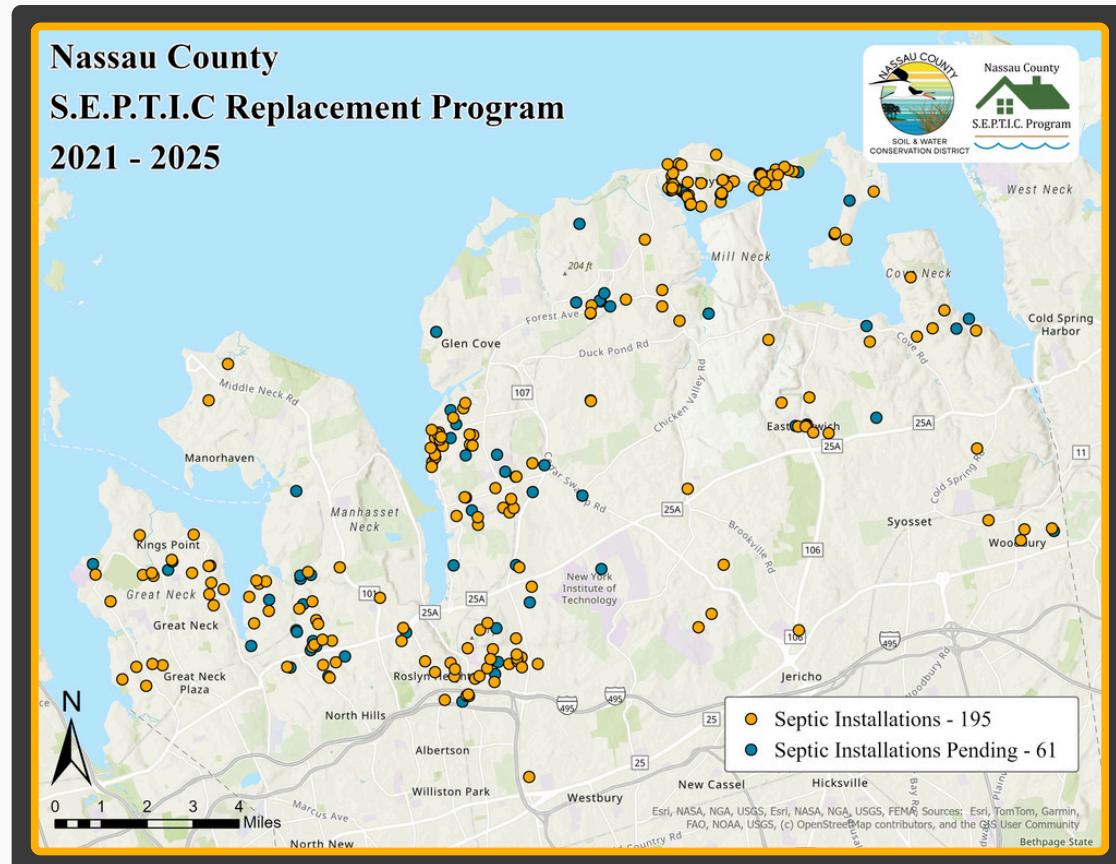
✉ [www.nassauswcd.org/SEPTIC](http://www.nassauswcd.org/SEPTIC)  
☎ 1 (516) 364 - 5861



**IA Septic  
Systems  
installed**



**Over  
\$3.9 million in  
Program funds  
reimbursed**



## LONG ISLAND SOUND D.C. EDUCATION DAY

The Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District joined the Citizen's Campaign for the Environment and other members of the Long Island Sound Partnership in Washington D.C. in July. As a group, we met with members of Congress and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin. We expressed our gratitude for the consistent federal funding that allows all groups in the partnership to continue their efforts in protecting the Long Island Sound. The District addressed the importance of I/A OWTS in nitrogen reduction and harmful algal bloom prevention in the Long Island Sound.



**LONG ISLAND SOUND  
PARTNERSHIP**

## NATIONAL ONSITE WASTEWATER RECYCLING ASSOCIATION (NOWRA) MEGA CONFERENCE

The District attended The National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) Mega Conference in Sandusky, Ohio.

Staff attended multiple presentations covering important wastewater topics such as new technologies, leaching field studies, updated Operation & Maintenance, and more. Staff also toured different technologies and systems that are used throughout the country.

This mega-conference is a great way to stay up to date as the industry expands and changes, while building connections with other professionals in the field.



**NOWRA**

# LONG ISLAND REGIONAL ENVIROTHON

Event Hosted on April 23rd, 2025 [longislandenvirothon.org](http://longislandenvirothon.org)

The Long Island Regional Envirothon is organized jointly by the Nassau and Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, but our success can be attributed to the countless volunteers who donate their time annually to help run this competition. Special thanks to participating environmental professionals who help keep the spirit of the Envirothon alive by inspiring students.

## Participating Schools

Center Moriches High School  
Chaminade High School  
Commack High School  
Division Ave High School  
Farmingdale High School  
Garden City High School  
Gen Douglas MacArthur HS  
Great Neck HS North  
Great Neck HS South  
Half Hollow Hills East HS  
Harborfields High School  
Smithtown High School  
Wantagh High School  
West Babylon Senior HS  
Wyandanch High School



The winners of the 2025 Long Island Regional Envirothon were the Smithtown High School "Groundhogs" and the Garden City High School "Opossums." Congratulations to the winning teams!





# LONG ISLAND REGIONAL ENVIROTHON

Organized jointly by the Nassau and Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

We're looking forward to our next Envirothon to be held on **Earth Day, April 22nd, 2026!**



## Thank You to our 2025 Event Sponsors



ReWorld is a world leader in providing sustainable waste and energy solutions. ReWorld operates four Waste-to-Energy facilities on Long Island. The facilities in Westbury, West Babylon, East Northport, and Ronkonkoma collectively process 1.8 million tons of waste, while generating electricity to power 100,000 homes and recycling more than 55,000 tons of metal every year.

Learn more at [www.reworldwaste.com](http://www.reworldwaste.com)



If you're interested in making a contribution to future Envirothon Events, please reach out to us at (516) 364-5860 or email [info@nassauswcd.org](mailto:info@nassauswcd.org)

# GRANT AWARDS

## SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE LOCAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

The New York State Department of State is supporting local efforts to protect and improve water quality, habitat, and coastal resilience by awarding \$2.4 million through the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER) Local Assistance Grant Program.

We're excited to announce that the Nassau County Soil & Water Conservation District has been awarded \$236k in funding across 2026-2029 to upgrade public and municipal outdated wastewater treatment systems with nitrogen-reducing systems in Point Lookout. This grant will also support the surveying and mapping of unsewered areas across Nassau County to support water quality improvement efforts and the S.E.P.T.I.C. Program.



Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District (right) pictured with other awardees at Tobay Beach.

## AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (AEM)

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a voluntary, incentive-based program available in New York State to all farmers through their local Soil and Water Conservation District. The program supports common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decision-making that helps farms achieve operational goals while protecting and conserving New York's natural resources. Through participation in AEM, farmers can document their environmental stewardship and further advance their positive contributions to their communities, food and bio-systems, the economy, and the environment.

The District is pleased to announce the launch of Nassau County's AEM Program. This milestone marks the first time since the County's formation in the 1970s that Nassau County has participated in AEM. Beginning in 2026, Nassau County will join 58 other participating counties across New York State. The District will engage with local growers, horse farms, and shellfisheries to address environmental concerns, promote best management practices for manure and water management, support regulatory compliance, and ultimately conserve and protect soil and water resources.

**If you are interested in participating in AEM, please contact us at 516-364-5860.**

## PART B 2025- COMPOST PROJECT



For the 2025 Part B project, the District constructed a system to produce nutrient-rich compost for use in the Muttontown Preserve and rain gardens throughout the County. The system includes a three-bin setup and compost tumblers, allowing District staff to effectively manage materials at varying stages of decomposition. District staff initiated the program by contributing food scraps (greens) from home, supplemented with mulch, leaves, twigs, and other carbon-rich materials (browns) collected within the Preserve. More recently, several residents of the Village of Sea Cliff began contributing food scraps through a pilot program, increasing overall processing capacity.

In addition to supporting soil health, the composting program will serve as an educational resource for community members interested in learning about composting practices.

### Benefits of Composting:

- Increases the nutrient content and biodiversity of microbes in soil
- Helps to conserve water use
- Prevents soil erosion
- Improves plant growth
- Improves water filtration capacity
- Helps to regenerate soils that have been depleted by overuse or contamination

### Compost Dos and Don'ts

#### Do

- Fruit and vegetable scraps, nut shells
- Coffee grounds, tea leaves
- Dry leaves, wood chips, grass clippings, plant trimmings
- Egg shells
- Cardboard (no toxic ink)

#### Don't

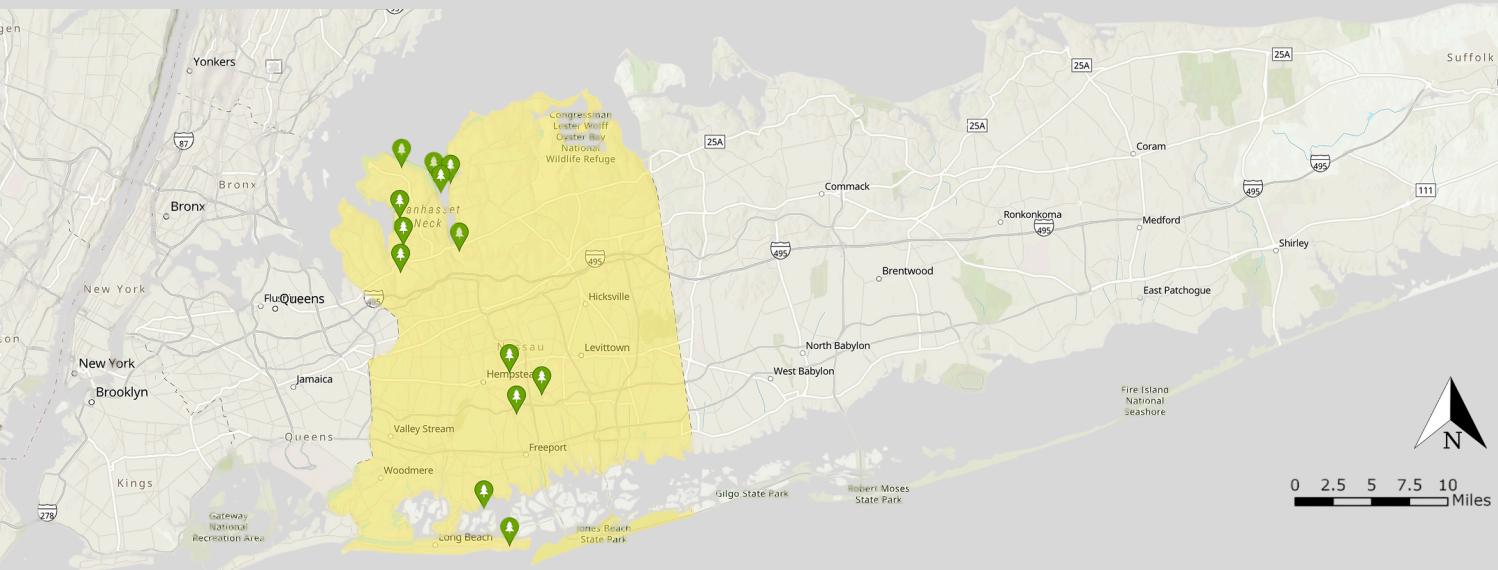
- Meat, fish, poultry, bones, fatty foods (cheese, oil)
- Dairy products
- Cat litter, dog feces
- Synthetic fibers
- Produce stickers, bands
- Coated paper and cardboard



# 2025 PART C FUNDED PROJECTS

*A full list and map of Part C Projects funded in 2025*

- **Forest Restoration at Baxter's Pond** – Baxter's Pond Foundation
- **Together We Grow, With a Little Kelp** – Cornell Cooperative Extension, Nassau County
- **Horseshoe Crab Monitoring** – Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor
- **Invasive Species Removal Project** – Friends of Cedarmere
- **Hempstead Bay Benthic Flora and Fauna Surveys** – Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways
- **Wetland Habitat Restoration** – Friends of Garvies Point Museum and Preserve
- **Hempstead Harbor Hydrodynamic Study Year 2** – Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee
- **Bluff Stabilization** – The Sands Point Preserve Conservancy
- **Habitat Restoration and Invasive Species Removal** – Science Museum of Long Island
- **Food & Environmental Resilience Hub in Roosevelt** – Succotash Gardens
- **Native Plant Residential Rebate Program** – Town of North Hempstead
- **Advanced Management of Post-Burn Grassland Habitat at the Hempstead Plains Preserve & Burn Preparation at Francis T. Purcell Preserve** – Friends of Hempstead Plains Preserve



*Learn more about these projects and how to apply for funding at  
[nassauswcd.org/projects](http://nassauswcd.org/projects)*



[instagram.com/nassau\\_swcd/](https://www.instagram.com/nassau_swcd/)



[facebook.com/nassauswcd](https://www.facebook.com/nassauswcd/)

# PART C 2025

## FOREST RESTORATION AT BAXTER'S POND

The Baxter's Pond Foundation applied for funding to restore a 30,000 sq. ft. area of invasive trees and turf grass with nearly 1,700 native trees, shrubs, flowering perennials, ferns, and groundcovers. In total, 32 unique species of native plants were installed, prioritizing Coastal Oak-Beech forest communities. All work was performed by Spadefoot Design & Construction, LLC. ReWild Long Island and volunteers assisted with site preparation and native plantings.



## TOGETHER WE GROW, WITH A LITTLE KELP



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Nassau County

Chemical fertilizers, while effective for crop growth, release nutrients rapidly, leading to runoff that pollutes waterways and causes harmful algal blooms, hypoxic zones, and ecosystem damage. In contrast, biofertilizers like sugar kelp provide slow and sustainable nutrient release, reducing runoff and improving soil health.

Sugar kelp, native to Long Island, also removes excess nitrogen and phosphorus from water. Despite successful pilot projects in Oyster Bay and Hempstead, the market for kelp-based fertilizers remains underdeveloped. To promote its use, CCE Nassau began a citizen science project testing kelp fertilizer on tomato plants and an educational campaign through Master Gardener Volunteers, aiming to raise awareness and encourage adoption of this eco-friendly alternative.



## PART C 2025

### HORSESHOE CRAB MONITORING: COALITION TO SAVE HEMPSTEAD HARBOR

CSHH's 2025 participation in the NY Horseshoe Crab Monitoring Network enabled Hempstead Harbor to become an official horseshoe crab monitoring site. A total of 2,058 horseshoe crabs were counted across monitoring nights. 75 horseshoe crabs were tagged with US Fish & Wildlife tags, which will help provide information about behavior and movement. This is the first time horseshoe crabs in Hempstead Harbor have been tagged. During monitoring events, nine previously tagged horseshoe crabs were observed—eight of which had tags that were applied this season in Hempstead Harbor and one of which had a tag that was applied several years ago in a different waterbody.



### PHRAGMITES REMOVAL AND NATIVE PLANTING: CEDARMERE PRESERVE

Cedarmere Preserve is the historic home of 19th-century poet, newspaper editor, and civic leader William Cullen Bryant. The 40-acre property in Roslyn Harbor features a house, pond, boathouse, mill, gardens, greenhouse, ice house, and a spectacular landscape. The Friends of Cedarmere is a non-profit organization that applied for supplemental funding to complete a project started in 2024 to remove invasive Common Reed *Phragmites australis* from 0.6 acres of shoreline and replace it with plants native to our coastal ecosystems. This project will help ensure the long term sustainability of the property and promote biodiversity, supporting local wildlife.



## PART C 2025

### Town of Hempstead Conservation & Waterways Survey of Hempstead Bay



Hempstead Bay is an important resource for marine life and the local economy. Following a significant decline of the hard shell clam population after the opening of harvesting in 1978, Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways has been running a successful shellfish restoration program for over 40 years. This recovery was shown in a 2022 shellfish population inventory, which revealed an abundant variety of flora and fauna.

To accomplish this goal, Town conservation staff equipped a vessel with sampling and diving gear. For each surveying event, 300 samples are collected from 100 stations throughout Hempstead Bay. Data collection is repeated every three years as part of a long-term monitoring program.



The project's long-term monitoring approach will help ensure sustainable management and inform future conservation strategies. This benefits not only commercial shellfisheries but also the entire ecosystem of Hempstead Bay.



## PART C 2025

# Garvies Point Museum and Preserve Wetland Habitat Restoration

The Garvies Point Museum and Preserve consists of 62 acres of glacial moraine covered by forests, thickets, and meadows. There are about five miles of marked nature trails and wooded areas which exhibit various stages of succession, and contain over 60 species of trees as well as numerous shrubs, vines, and wildflowers. The property is both a museum and a nature preserve, and we encourage visitors to engage in both aspects.

The northern section of the Preserve is a red maple-hardwood swamp, plagued by invasive species. These invasive species include multiflora rose, English ivy, and others typical in Nassau County. These species are problematic to the soils on-site and the function of the wetland, as they use up limited resources, shade native species, and form monoculture stands, ultimately outcompeting native growth.

This project not only removed these invasive species without the use of chemicals, but it also planted native species in support of the existing forest to prevent invasive species from recolonizing the area.

The species utilized for this restoration project were selected based on the defined New York State Natural Heritage Program's classification for the Red maple-hardwood swamp, such as ferns, red maple, blueberry, spicebush, and other site-appropriate species, sourced from Long Island growers.



Before



After

## PART C 2025

### Hydrodynamic Modeling in Hempstead Harbor

The Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee is an intermunicipal committee of nine local governments focused on water quality. In 2021 they began a shellfish seeding program for all of the north shore bays in Nassau County. Over the next three years, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County has been contracted to grow 6 million "spat-on-shell" oysters for this program, of which 2 million will be placed in Hempstead Harbor. This program will work with, and complement, a successful oyster gardening project being carried out by the Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor.



Oysters are known as a "keystone species" helping form the basis for entire marine ecosystems that would not exist and be fundamentally different without them. Oyster reefs provide food and habitat while protecting shorelines from storm damage and erosion. They also improve water quality by filtering nutrients such as nitrogen. A single adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons a day. At that rate, 2 million oysters will filter 100 million gallons a day once they reach full size.

To build a sustainable population of oysters, larvae need to be placed on suitable underwater substrate that consists of at least 20% gravel and shell, and less than 25% silt and mud. These substrate conditions are favorable for oysters, upon which the larvae will settle, attach, and grow.

A Shellfish Density Survey of the harbor was conducted in 2021 to determine the number of existing shellfish and characteristics of the underwater beds. This also helped determine the ideal locations for planting oysters.

To complement these surveys, hydrodynamic modeling of the Hempstead Harbor was conducted by Adelphi University. This modeling is necessary because once oysters spawn, their larvae (spat) are carried by the currents for a week or two before settling to the bottom. If they are carried into the Long Island Sound, they will not help populate our harbor, or if they settle in muddy areas with unfavorable substrate, they are not likely to survive. Hydrodynamic modeling looks at tidal cycles, water current velocity, water current direction, underwater land composition, and several 24-hour water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen levels to determine suitable habitat for planting oysters in the harbor.

## PART C 2025

### FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE HUB IN ROOSEVELT: SUCCOTASH GARDENS

Succotash Gardens was provided funding to develop a community garden, expanding mutual aid and food sovereignty in their community. With assistance from partners such as Roosevelt Community Garden, North Shore Land Alliance, ReWild Long Island, and local community members, a garden was planted with vegetables, herbs, woody perennials, and pollinator plants. Additionally, a rainwater catchment and composting system was installed to support these plantings.

Succotash Gardens has worked with PowerHouse Church to distribute thousands of pounds of food each week to residents in Roosevelt and has led five educational workshops, including introductions to native plantings.



### BLUFF STABILIZATION: THE SANDS POINT PRESERVE CONSERVANCY

The Sands Point Preserve Conservancy applied District funding to slow the coastal erosion of a sandy, near-vertical bluff through the establishment of strong, interconnected root systems using innovative, patented cubby-frame devices from Coastal Technologies Corp. that secure plants to the bluff face.

The project was incorporated into the Preserve's educational offerings and the visitor experience. Informative signage was placed near the project site to explain its purpose and methodology. These efforts spread awareness about the threat of coastal erosion on Long Island and innovative, nature-based methods of protecting our soil and water.



## PART C 2025

### HABITAT RESTORATION AND INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL: SCIENCE MUSEUM OF LONG ISLAND



The Science Museum of Long Island (SMLI) is a non-profit (501c3) providing science education on Long Island since 1962. The educational programs are run on-site at the 36-acre Leeds Pond Preserve in Manhasset, NY. As a Part C 2025 project, the SMLI partnered with Spadefoot Design & Construction, LLC to remove invasive species, stabilize disturbed soils, and plant native species in a previously degraded 11,000 sq ft area.



*Before*

On-going stewardship activities at the preserve provide habitat, ground cover, and food resources for wildlife. The SMLI continues to do great restoration work and provide hands-on learning opportunities, helping children understand the environment.



*After*



## PART C 2025

### TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD PLANT REBATES

*Part C Project run by NCSWCD Board Member Meagan Fastuca supporting native plantings in Town of North Hempstead*

The NCSWCD provided reimbursement to Town of North Hempstead Residents who purchased native plants to create native plant gardens and raingardens. These native plants provide food, shelter, and nesting resources for a variety of wildlife species, including birds, pollinators, and small mammals. In 2025, 38 new native gardens were created throughout the Town.

Native plants have a multitude of environmental benefits, including but not limited to extensive root systems that absorb polluted stormwater, carbon sequestration, reduced maintenance requirements, and a reduced need for fertilizer, mowing, and irrigation.

[www.northhempsteadny.gov/np](http://www.northhempsteadny.gov/np)



### ADVANCED MANAGEMENT OF POST-BURN GRASSLAND HABITAT AT THE HEMPSTEAD PLAINS PRESERVE & BURN PREPARATION AT FRANCIS T. PURCELL PRESERVE

Hempstead Plains Preserve is Long Island's last remaining Tallgrass Prairie, home to over 200 plant species—14 of which are considered rare.

This project, led by the Friends of Hempstead Plains Preserve, covered a 5-acre section of grassland dominated by little blue stem and goldenrods, and a 1-acre plot in which the globally endangered, fire-dependent Sandplain Gerardia grows.



# INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

## MUTTONTOWN PRESERVE



The District continued the careful management of Japanese/Bohemian Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) present in Muttontown Preserve. A non-herbicide method requiring 3 cuts per year to weaken the plants was chosen to protect the natural freshwater vernal pool habitats present in the area, which provide spawning grounds for native spotted and tiger salamanders. Technicians also continue to manage rain gardens across the county.

## VALLEY STREAM STATE PARK

In 2025, the District assisted Long Island Invasive Species Management Area (LIISMA) staff with aquatic invasive species removal from Valley Stream State Park. Focused on the invasive Floating Water Primrose (*Ludwigia peploides*), this removal helped eradicate a species that is known to alter ecosystems both physically and chemically, and shades out native aquatic plants. This species also has an allelopathic ability, which means it releases chemicals that inhibit the growth of other plants throughout a given year.



*District Staff pictured with LIISMA team*

## GERRY PARK, ROSLYN



District Technicians worked alongside Town of North Hempstead staff, including District board member Meagan Fastuca, in Gerry Park to remove nuisance species across the park and stream bank. Dominant invasive species included Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), and more. Native species were planted in disturbed areas and the pollinator garden to stabilize soils and provide habitat for local wildlife.

# WATER CHESTNUT REMOVAL AT MASSAPEQUA PRESERVE

Conservation Technicians attended NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Water Chestnut removal events at Massapequa Lake and Twin Lakes Preserve. These events are largely volunteer-based, supported by school groups and local organizations. Over 300 bags were filled with water chestnut and removed from the sites.



Water chestnuts (*Trapa natans* L.) are an aquatic invasive species, native to Eurasia and Africa. These plants grow rapidly, outcompeting native plants by creating dense mats across the water column. These mats can decrease dissolved oxygen, contributing to potential fish kills and loss of native habitats.

## TRAIL CAMERA HIGHLIGHTS!

*This trail camera serves as a passive monitoring tool, informing us of the species present in Muttontown Preserve. Check out "Critter Cam Tuesdays" on our social media!*



# OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The District participated in local and regional forums this year to assist with conservation education and outreach, and to provide a better understanding of current environmental conditions as they relate to Nassau County.

Conservation Technician Sean Rooney has also provided free educational presentations and technical assistance to Nassau County Parks, residents, and members of non-profit groups. These events align with the District's mission to serve as an educational conduit for environmental literacy throughout the county. Below is a list of events and presentations from the District.

- Educational Presentation – Cornell Cooperative Nassau Master Gardeners
- Development and implementation of Invasive Species Management Plan – Gerry Park, Roslyn
- Native planting and Rain Garden education – City of Glen Cove
- Radio interview with Technician Olivia Cunningham and Wild Ones to discuss the importance of planting trees – Nassau Community College
- Participation from all Technicians in NYS Long Island Invasive Species Management Area partners' meetings

## CONSERVATION SKILLS WORKSHOP

District Technicians attended the annual New York State Conservation District Employees' Association Conservation Skills (ConSkills) Workshop in Auburn, NY. Our Technicians participated in classes about stream assessments, hydrology, forest health, invasive species, manure management, green infrastructure, and surveying.



These workshops built upon several skills used by the District in order to support meaningful projects. As an added bonus, the District learned about the work of its fellow New York State Conservation Districts.

We look forward to next year's ConSkills Workshop!

# OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ESTUARY: MILL RIVER

*A Day in the Life* is a program organized by the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council that focuses on environmental education, community engagement, and water-quality monitoring. Geared towards students from local middle and high schools, the main goal of the event is to run single-day field trips to sites around Long Island's South Shore where students are given the opportunity to collect water and soil samples, learn about ecosystem services, monitor the tides, and engage with local flora & fauna. This year, the District worked with East Rockaway High School to bring the event to life at Mill River, located in Rockville Center.

Learn more: [nassauswcd.org/A-Day-In-The-Life](http://nassauswcd.org/A-Day-In-The-Life)



Special thanks to staff members from Town of Hempstead Dept. of Conservation Waterways for helping with the event.

## ANNUAL SAPLING GIVEAWAY

*Arbor Day event providing free tree saplings to community members*

Our annual sapling giveaway was hosted on Arbor Day, April 25th, 2025, and made possible through donations from Bartlett Tree Experts, Long Island Native Plant Initiative, and the Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways, who provided free saplings to event participants, as well as educational material on proper plant selection and planting techniques.

This event was hosted by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County at the East Meadow Farm. Special thanks to all who participated!



# MEET OUR NEW TECHNICIANS



Ishika Joshi started working for the District in April 2025. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College where she concentrated in Environmental Science, and is currently earning a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Certificate. In 2023, Ishika received the Student Award from the New York State Outdoor Education Association for her contributions to Hudson River educational programs. She also interned with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to support soil and water research in Alaskan peatland ecosystems. Since joining the District, Ishika has provided geospatial perspectives to longstanding conservation programs, supported A Day in the Life events, pursued grant funding opportunities, and maintained the Muttontown Preserve trail camera.

Kaia Madigan started working for the District in April 2025. She graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a B.S. in Environmental Science and Management, a B.S. in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, and a minor in Soil Science. Previously, she interned for Cornell Cooperative Extension's Marine Program in Southold, NY, gaining aquaculture experience in their shellfish hatchery and participating in educational programs. She is passionate about soil and wetland conservation and public education on local environmental issues. Since joining the District, Kaia has guided applicants through their I/A OWTS installation and SEPTIC Grant Program reimbursement, worked on our 2025 composting project, and provided technical assistance in removing invasive species across the county.



## WELCOMING BABY MEADOW

We would like to warmly welcome Conservation Technician, Olivia Cunningham's first baby: Meadow Rose! Congratulations Olivia and Rob!

