

Saving Lands Around Long Island Sound

By Carole Nemore

A STATUS REPORT on the Long Island Sound Stewardship System, a comprehensive approach to recognizing and protecting sites of ecologic significance and sites providing open space and public access around the Sound from New York City to eastern Connecticut and Orient Point, New York.

A proposed strategy for developing a **Long Island Sound Stewardship System (LISS)** was disseminated to key public agencies in New York and Connecticut in September. During this extremely important "ground truthing" phase, the strategy is being reviewed by those federal and state agencies most likely to be involved in its implementation.

WHY IS THERE A STEWARDSHIP PLAN?

The Long Island Sound watershed and shoreline have undergone extensive development, resulting in diminished abundance and diversity of natural habitats and restricted public access to the shore. Almost a decade ago, the Long Island Sound Study Management Conference Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), recommended the creation of a system of sites of "outstanding or exemplary scientific, educational, or biological value to reflect regional differentiation and variety of ecosystems and to include representatives of all of the significant natural habitats found in the Sound." The CCMP also called for increasing open space protection and public access to the Sound. In 2002 the Governors of Connecticut and New York and the Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been reviewing a proposed agreement to update their commitments to the Sound. This agreement would also call for the creation of a stewardship system by 2003.

WHAT IS THE PLAN?

The **Long Island Sound Stewardship System (LISS)** would be a network of sites, encompassing the immediate coastal upland and underwater areas along Long Island Sound, with special ecologic, scientific, open space or public access values that sustain the productivity, diversity, and enjoyment of Long Island Sound. The exemplary values of these sites would be preserved, protected, and enhanced for future generations through cooperative, voluntary partnerships with public and

private entities to conserve open space, enhance recreational, cultural and educational resources, protect and restore habitats, and maximize public access to the Sound in an ecologically sensitive manner.

The creation of a **Long Island Sound Stewardship System (LISS)** would be accomplished in two phases: 1) the planning phase will inventory sites, evaluate them against objective criteria, and identify exemplary sites; and 2) the implementation phase would create coordinated management structure to raise awareness, leverage additional resources, and protect critical lands through acquisition and stewardship.

The benefits of participation in the LIS Stewardship System would include extra consideration for funding under existing land acquisition and management programs, increased access to technical assistance, and greater recognition and consideration by the public, governmental agencies, and other organizations.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Audubon New York was charged by the Long Island Sound Study Management Committee in its 2001 work plan with establishing a work group to develop a strategy.

To develop the strategy, **Audubon New York** has convened a work group, since December 2001, comprised of federal and state agencies, local government, land trusts, and research institutions from New York and Connecticut. The work group was aided by funding from the New York Community Trust to Audubon New York, the Regional Plan Association, and Save the Sound, and funding to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The proposed strategy represents the preliminary product of the work group. Before embarking on a comprehensive effort to solicit public comment on the strategy, it will be reviewed by the LIS Management Committee and their member organizations. The work group will then incorporate comments provided on the strategy, and with Management Committee approval, release a revised draft strategy for widespread public review and comment this coming winter and next spring.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INVOLVED?

If your group would like to participate in a public meeting to discuss this plan, please contact Robin Kriesberg at Save the Sound at rkriesberg@savethesound.org. Public meetings will be occurring throughout the Sound area in early 2003.



Legacy

It's what you leave for future generations of birds and birdwatchers.

For years, you have supported Audubon's protection of birds, wildlife and habitat.

Help us sustain the culture of conservation for the next generation.

*Make a bequest to Audubon!
It's your legacy!*

Sample Language for Your Attorney

I bequeath to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation chartered under the laws of New York State, with its principal offices located at 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003, the sum of \$ _____ (or _____ % of my estate). This gift is to be applied to the permanent endowment of Audubon New York.

For further information contact:

Jan Hesbon at (518) 869-9731 or jhesbon@audubon.org

12

Conservation Award



Audubon's David J. Miller received the New York State Conservation Council's Professional Conservationist of the Year award, sponsored by the New York State Power Authority. This marks the first time in the award's twenty-two year history that someone other than an agency or sportsman organization representative was selected. It is a tribute to the partnerships that Audubon has forged with sportsman groups on issues ranging from conservation funding, open space/habitat protection and most recently the ban on sale of lead sinkers. Pictured above (left to right) are John Osinski, New York Power Authority, David J. Miller, executive director of Audubon New York, Arnie Talgo, New York Power Authority, and Howard Cushing, president of New York State Conservation Council.