



# Save the Sound

A program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment

# SoundBites

Fall 2010

## Stormwater hobbles local business

Dave Hopp is a fifth generation shell fisherman who farms 900 acres of Long Island Sound in the Bridgeport area. Dave has taught the trade to the sixth and seventh generation of Hopps.

The Sound area along the Bridgeport-Stratford line is a prime shell fishing bed and Dave's 900 acres yield more than Dave can harvest right now. Dave would love to expand his business by hiring more crew and putting more boats on the water. In the process,

Dave would set off a minor economic ripple effect by buying more fuel and supplies from local dealers.

The problem is that two-thirds of Dave's lease area can be shut down any moment by stormwater runoff and raw sewage overflows from the treatment plant in Bridgeport.

"It's a shame," says Dave, gazing over the Sound. "Right now I'm on the boat looking at this beautiful treasure, and I know what those rain storms this past week did to it."

Although the shellfish beds recover in dry weather, every rainstorm leads to a new closure due to high bacteria counts in the water. Unable to predict when he can harvest and earn more income, Dave can't even afford to fix the blown engine on one

of the boats he has now. Expansion is out of the question.

Every commercial and recreational user of Long Island Sound's near shore waters shares Dave Hopp's stormwater problem. Stormwater pollution hurts our public health, stunts our economic recovery and reduces our quality of life. This is the next big problem we must solve to restore Long Island Sound, and the communities that share it, to full health.



Hundreds of volunteers supported Save the Sound coastal cleanups in 2010. This year's oddest find was probably this wooden deer head collected in Branford.

Dave Hopp can at least look forward with some hope. Last year, legal action from CFE/Save the Sound finally got the City of Bridgeport to take action on chronic

sewage overflows from its poorly managed treatment plant. Since then, Bridgeport has submitted a long-term plan to fix the problem. And new plans to control combined sewer overflows on Bridgeport's Pequonnock River (see Program Updates, Page 4) should bring added relief.

With your continued member support, Save the Sound will help lead the way to stormwater solutions so that Dave Hopp can rely on the clean water he needs to expand his business.

## Stormwater solutions for the Sound

Save the Sound is working on many fronts to move stormwater solutions to the top of "to-do" lists for city and state officials around Connecticut and New York.

Relying on legislation Save the Sound authored, New Haven expects to set up Connecticut's first municipal Stormwater Authority next summer. We'll work together to enhance that legislation in 2011.

Over the next year, Save the Sound will help New Haven and Bridgeport assess "green infrastructure" stormwater measures. Green infrastructure uses simple ideas, like directing rain into rain gardens and streetscapes, to capture stormwater runoff before it pollutes water bodies or overwhelms storm sewers.

We are closely involved with the statewide general permitting processes that set limits on stormwater pollution in New York and Connecticut. CFE/Save the Sound's legal staff has joined other environmental groups to challenge weak provisions in New York's recent General Permit for cities and towns. Our staff also secured stricter limits on pollution from runoff at construction and industrial sites in Connecticut.

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Home energy loans, 2011 Energy Bill

## Your legacy for Connecticut and Long Island Sound

You can create a lasting heritage of environmental protection for generations to come with a tax-advantaged gift or bequest to Connecticut Fund for the Environment or Save the Sound. Your attorney can advise you on the many ways you can pass our environmental legacy into the future with your planned gift to Connecticut Fund for the Environment or Save the Sound. To learn more about our planned giving opportunities, please call our Senior Director of Development, Julie Parr, at (203) 787-0646, extension 109.

And if you have already named CFE or Save the Sound in your will, please call or write Julie Parr to let her know.

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The mission of Connecticut Fund for the Environment is to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise to bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

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142 Temple Street, Suite 305  
New Haven, Connecticut 06510  
(203) 787-0646  
protect@cfenv.org

Written by: Cause & Effect, Inc.  
Designer: Ricki Pappo, Enosis – The Environmental Outreach Group  
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142 Temple Street, Suite 305  
New Haven, CT 06510



# Connecticut Fund for the Environment

Environmental action through legal and scientific expertise

# GreenSheet

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## CFE proposes energy loan fund

CFE members know that beautiful older New England homes come with hidden costs: the owner's cost to heat and cool them, and social costs of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Our old houses were built with little or no insulation, inefficient heating systems and poorly sealed walls and windows, making them major sources of wasted energy and greenhouse gas emissions.

That very waste creates a huge opportunity. Modest investments in heating and cooling efficiency improvements can pay for themselves over a few years and go on saving homeowners cash indefinitely. Another benefit: home energy efficiency gains on a large scale are cheap. Those energy gains can be achieved for as little as 25 percent of the cost of new generators to produce the same amount of energy. And the energy we don't use is 100 percent green energy.

Yet a look at home energy efficiency programs also shows that while most of us have compact fluorescent bulbs in our lights, very few of us have taken the next step of investments needed to realize significant savings on energy use and costs in our homes.

The sticking points? Cost and uncertainty. To really cut your home energy bill, you may need to invest anywhere from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Homeowners balk at spending such sums now for savings somewhere down the road. Besides, without technical help, most of us don't know if or when we'll really make our money back on investments in insulation, doors and windows or a heating and cooling system upgrade.

CFE members have asked what we could do to help them understand the options and take action to make their homes more planet-friendly and efficient. Now we've responded with a carefully designed new proposal to create a statewide low interest loan program for energy retrofits in homes and small businesses.

Our plan was designed to complement and extend the benefits of the popular, but limited, Home Energy Solutions program now offered to residential ratepayers by Connecticut Light and Power.

The core of the program, the revolving loan fund, would recycle energy credit to many more homeowners than current programs can reach. Before work begins, home energy experts will prepare a payback analysis showing your best return on investment and potential monthly savings. Loan payments can be set at less than the projected savings, providing immediate monthly cash gains for participating owners.



Is there hope for a stronger Department of Environmental Protection under Connecticut's Governor-elect Dan Malloy? See our story on page 3.

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## Energy bill: back in 2011

Connecticut residents and businesses face the highest electricity costs in the continental United States. That didn't stop Governor Rell from vetoing a bill last May that would have reduced Connecticut energy costs through a mix of conservation, appliance efficiency standards and incentives for solar power.

Governor Rell's veto also killed badly needed new green jobs in the energy efficiency and solar industries. Now CFE wants to work with Governor Elect Malloy to fix that mistake.

CFE played a key role in shaping the energy bill passed and vetoed earlier this year. It would have provided funding to help consumers and businesses invest in energy-saving retrofits and technologies. The bill set energy efficiency standards for new electronics and created new incentives that would expand the market for homegrown solar power.

We will be fighting for those provisions once again when the new General Assembly convenes in January. Our 2011 energy agenda also includes bringing all statewide energy policies under a single new authority, streamlining the current fractured system. As always, we will be relying on the powerful support of our Activist Network to make the energy bill stick in 2011.

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Stormwater: Problems and Solutions

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## Public transit options surging

Not long ago, Connecticut's relentless expansion of highways seemed as unstoppable as heavy rush hour traffic on I-95. But now Connecticut's excessive highway spending appears to be headed for the exit after years of persistent education and leadership from CFE and allies in the Transit for Connecticut coalition.

At the same time, public transit projects are ramping up. Over the next five years, the state Department of Transportation plans to spend nearly 47% of its anticipated funding, about \$2.1 billion, on public transit.

This new public transit spending will create better options for commuters – and thousands of new jobs. DOT's plans include adding new high-speed intercity rail lines linking New Haven, Hartford and Bradley International Airport to New York, Springfield and Boston. A \$121 million federal grant announced in October did a lot to bring that vision closer to reality.

Construction alone will create 4,000 jobs. But, the big employment opportunities will emerge as new service comes online in cities between New Haven and Hartford over the next five years.

## Gina McCarthy keynotes Annual Meeting

Connecticut Fund for the Environment was proud to bestow awards on five outstanding environmentalists at the Annual Meeting. The awardees were:

**The Crow Hill Foundation** for steadfast support to CFE's work to protect and improve the environment of Connecticut and Long Island Sound.

**William McCullough**, with deep appreciation for important efforts to protect the coastal habitat at Griswold Airport from a major development.

**Gina McCarthy**, with deep appreciation for long public leadership in protecting our air, land and water and our planetary future.

**The Werth Family Foundation** for steadfast support to CFE's work to protect and improve the environment of Connecticut and Long Island Sound.

**Bruce Becker** for incorporating innovative sustainable green design into a mixed-use urban development project at 360 State Street and for advocating for policy solutions that support green sustainability.

High-speed transit for workers is key to the state's strategy of making the I-91 corridor a power in the emerging knowledge economy.

Meanwhile, the future of urban transit may be taking shape along the 9.4 mile Capitol West Transitway, an innovative high speed bus-only route between Hartford and New Britain. The core route will operate much like a light rail line; with 11 transit stations serving buses that will run as often as every 3 minutes. The terminal at New Britain will offer connections via high-frequency bus to Bristol and to park-and-ride locations in Southington, Cheshire and Waterbury. Planners expect to attract 5,000 new daily riders.

An article by Christine Woodside in the *Connecticut Mirror* earlier this year took note of this major shift in state priorities. Woodside reported that the current project to replace the Q Bridge on I-95 in New Haven would be the last major highway expansion in Connecticut for the near future. State officials said planned highway and bridge spending through 2014 will go to primarily to repairs and maintenance, not new infrastructure.



Former Connecticut Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection Gina McCarthy was our featured speaker at the CFE Annual Meeting September 26. Ms. McCarthy now serves the federal EPA as Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation.



The clean up crew from Haddam-Killingworth High School sends a message.



## Strait Talk: Members make us leaders

CFE took on a long-term commitment to expanded public transit because heavy auto and truck exhaust make Connecticut's air some of the most polluted in the United States. Vehicle emissions generate 30 to 40 percent of the Connecticut greenhouse gas pollution warming our planet. Meanwhile, Connecticut commuters are stuck in traffic.

Health advocates joined with us because air pollution drives high rates of childhood asthma and respiratory disease among adults, particularly the elderly. Forward-looking business executives wanted faster, more reliable transportation for workers than Connecticut's crowded highways could ever provide. Economists and planners knew that efficient transit routes could attract business.

The Transit for Connecticut coalition CFE coordinates brought all these groups together. Transit for Connecticut fought for and won expanded bus service on high-volume highways and in underserved rural communities, taking thousands of polluting autos off our roads. We led the way to replace dirty diesel buses with high efficiency clean diesel vehicles.

Now, Connecticut has reached a tipping point in transportation spending and policy. No one predicts the end of automobiles, but from now on, we can expect to have more and better alternatives to our cars for many kinds of trips. That's good news for our environment, our health and our economy.

CFE has been able to serve as coordinator of this broad transit coalition thanks to steady support from members like you. Every CFE member can be proud of their contribution to creating real alternatives to car travel for everyone in Connecticut.

With best regards,

Don Strait, Executive Director

## Governor-elect sees DEP as short of funds and staff

In a pre-election forum on the environment, newly elected Governor Dan Malloy attributed delays and poor performance at the Department of Environmental Protection to years of chronic underfunding and staff cuts at the agency under prior administrations. Malloy's views of DEP stood in clear contrast to those of Republican Tom Foley and Independent Tom Marsh. Foley and Marsh both claimed DEP's problems could be solved without added resources. However, Malloy did not commit to increasing support to the department.

CFE and nine other regional environmental groups co-sponsored the forum held on October 18 at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. CFE designed the forum to focus on policies and avoid heated exchanges. Candidates appeared one at a time to give a five-minute statement followed by a 15-minute individual interview by moderator Nancy Cohen of WNPR, Connecticut Public Radio.



An overflow crowd of about 150 citizens packed the hall at CFE's "Getting to Green" forum for gubernatorial candidates on October 18.

All three candidates broadly endorsed the goals of environmental protection and the development of new green energy technologies as a strategy for job creation. Both Malloy and Foley opposed wind turbine stations on Long Island Sound.

## Seascapes win photo contest

Thanks to dozens of Save the Sound members and friends for entering our first-ever Save the Sound photo contest. Check out more beautiful entries on Save the Sound's Facebook page.



Contest winner Richard Sack created an impressive black-and-white study of Long Island Sound's grandeur and complexity.

## Thank Save the Sound volunteers for cleaner coastlines

Save the Sound coordinated 76 coastal cleanups in Connecticut by volunteers of every age in September and October as part of the 25th annual International Coastal Cleanup. Save the Sound has been Connecticut's coordinator for this worldwide effort to remove trash from shorelines and waterways since 2002.

Those volunteers, together with participants in our 2010 Spring Cleanup and Corporate Cleanup programs, contributed to the removal of more than 18,800 pounds of refuse from 65 miles of Connecticut coastline. This army of 2,600 volunteers pulled nearly 10 tons of trash out of our waters. Our thanks to every one of you!

To join one of our ongoing series of cleanups or to ask about our Corporate Cleanup program, call Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Kierran Broatch (203) 787-0646, Ext. 113.



A proud beach cleaner holds up her interesting find at Gulf Beach in Milford on September 25.

## Program updates

**Protect Plum Island** The federal government owns the 840-acre Plum Island with nine miles of pristine beach that is home to endangered roseate terns and piping plover as well as a host of seals and waterfowl. As the federal General Services Administration continues to push the ill advised scheme of selling the Island to the highest bidder, CFE and Save the Sound are working with the State of New York and with Suffolk County government to ensure they use all their rights to protect critical habitat on the mostly undeveloped island. CFE also proposed to add protections for Plum Island to federal legislation pending in Congress. Our staff toured Plum Island on September 22 and October 6.

**Preserving the Preserve** Despite a string of court defeats, River Sound, the proposed housing and golf course development that would destroy rare coastal forest habitat (The Preserve) in Old Saybrook and Essex, just won't go away. River Sound Development is submitting a new proposal for construction in areas of the property that are already developed. The concern is that, once approved, River Sound will come back with bigger plans. CFE is talking with the Department of Environmental Protection and conservation groups to see if earlier plans for a conservation purchase can be revived.

**Sound Vision looks ahead** Save the Sound has been a leading coordinator as the regional planning body for Long Island Sound, the Long Island Sound Study, updates the first regional management plan for Long Island Sound adopted in 1994. The new plan must address critical issues that have emerged since then, including sea level rise and warming oceans, lobster and shellfish die-offs and the role of stormwater pollution. In consultation with major citizen and official stakeholders, Save the Sound has framed the critical areas to be addressed and is now coordinating development of the action plan. We expect the final draft to be issued in March, with public engagement to follow in the summer of 2011.

**Cleaning the Pequonnock** Save the Sound has partnered with Bridgeport and the towns of Monroe and Trumbull to develop a watershed plan for the Pequonnock River watershed. The citizen-based Pequonnock River Initiative has a 15-member Steering Committee with members from each community on the river. A first draft of the watershed plan is due in February 2011, with final adoption planned for May.