



Connecticut Sea Grant
Strategic Plan
2014-2017
Executive Summary

This document is a brief summary of the *Connecticut Sea Grant Strategic Plan for 2014-2017*. The complete version can be found in the Publications section of the program web site: <http://www.seagrants.uconn.edu>. This Strategic Plan was prepared by the Connecticut Sea Grant College Program with stakeholder input and was formally endorsed by the National Sea Grant Office and the Connecticut Sea Grant Senior Advisory Board.



CONNECTICUT SEA GRANT STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2017

The Connecticut Sea Grant College Program (CTSG) is part of the National Sea Grant network, established by Congress in 1966 and administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). It is a highly leveraged federal and state partnership that harnesses the intellectual capacity of the nation's universities to solve coastal, ocean and Great Lakes problems. As one of Sea Grant's university programs, CTSG partners with public and private sector organizations to apply research discoveries to balance human and environmental needs, and create measurable benefits for coastal and ocean environments and communities through integrated research, outreach, and education programs. The University of Connecticut is the State's Sea Grant institution.



The strategy for success of any individual Sea Grant College Program must be consistent with the overall vision and direction of the National Sea Grant Program. It must also be tuned into the environmental, social and economic priorities and problems presented within the Program's specific venue. For CTSG this includes the State of Connecticut as well as the adjoining water bodies and the larger New York/New England Region.

VISION

Connecticut Sea Grant envisions a future where the balanced use and conservation of coastal and marine resources and ecosystems optimize environmental, economic and social benefits for Connecticut and beyond.

MISSION

Connecticut Sea Grant generates and provides science-based information to achieve healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and consequent public benefits.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Connecticut Sea Grant focuses on Connecticut, Long Island Sound, and its watershed, addressing relevant local, regional, national and international issues. As a member of the Northeast Sea Grant Consortium, Connecticut Sea Grant addresses issues critical to the northeastern United States.



THEMATIC AREAS

This strategic plan, inspired by the recognition of the environmental and economic importance of coastal and marine resources and the need to foster the sustainable stewardship of these resources, will guide the program through 2017. During this period, CTSG will focus its effort on the following four themes that respond to both local and national priorities.

Healthy Coastal Ecosystems and Economy

Seafood Production and Consumption

Hazard Resilient Coastal Communities

Ocean and Coastal Literacy and Workforce Development

HEALTHY COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS AND ECONOMY

Long Island Sound is a nationally significant estuary located in the densely populated metropolitan New York City region. The Long Island Sound estuary provides both economic and ecological benefits. Pressures from the region's dense population have resulted in estuarine and coastal habitat loss and degradation and decline in species diversity. Unless these trends are altered by the preservation, restoration, enhancement, and appropriate management of significant habitats, the Long Island Sound ecosystem—even as it currently exists—will not be sustained for the future. The achievement/reality of healthy ecosystems is also closely tied to a healthy economy. Long Island Sound is among the most important and valuable estuaries in the nation.

Vision: Coastal and watershed stakeholders are knowledgeable and take action to support healthy coastal ecosystem services and economies.

- GOAL 1: Improved water quality in Connecticut, Long Island Sound and its watershed**
- GOAL 2: Conservation and balanced use of vital coastal habitats, species and ecosystems in Connecticut, Long Island Sound and its watershed.**
- GOAL 3: Support a healthy, viable coastal and marine economy and the rational use of coastal and marine space and resources in Long Island Sound and beyond.**

SEAFOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Fisheries in Long Island Sound and beyond are in states of flux, due to stress, disease, pollution or climate change effects, stock rebuilding measures, adjustments in fishing pressure, and a constantly-evolving regulatory environment. For both capture and culture fisheries, producing and maintaining safe, high quality products remain critical goals. Connecticut Sea Grant and its partners will continue to work with seafood industries, making them aware of new technologies, tools, and approaches to supply safe and sustainable seafood while minimizing deleterious environmental impacts. Consumers will learn about the benefits of purchasing, catching, and consuming safe and sustainable local seafood products.

Vision: A sustainable and safe seafood industry, emphasizing locally-produced products.

GOAL 4: Increase consumption of safe and sustainable seafood.

GOAL 5: Increase production of safe and sustainable seafood.



HAZARD RESILIENT COASTAL COMMUNITIES



Connecticut's coast is subject to sporadic and potentially severe coastal hazards such as flooding, erosion and high winds. Hurricanes, nor'easters, high tide events, and heavy precipitation impact Connecticut's coastal as well as inland communities. Climate change adds another dimension to existing coastal hazards with predictions of more intense coastal storms and precipitation events, as well as rising sea levels.

Vision: Coastal communities are resilient and able to adapt to coastal hazards and climate change impacts on coastal areas.

GOAL 6: Coastal and watershed communities become more resilient to coastal hazards and the impacts of climate change on coastal areas.

OCEAN AND COASTAL LITERACY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The education of future environmental professionals and leaders is critical to the responsible use and management of our nation's ocean and coastal resources. Science and engineering majors, future marine scientists and education professionals need opportunities to learn science in real world settings and apply their skills at work under the mentorship of practicing scientists. Producing an environmentally and scientifically literate society as well as a group of technical, policy and managerial professionals is essential.

Vision: Diverse audiences make informed decisions about ocean and coastal issues.



GOAL 7: An environmentally literate public.

GOAL 8: A workforce that generates, provides, and/or utilizes science-based information to achieve healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and consequent public benefits.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This plan provides a framework for Connecticut Sea Grant's work during the 2014-2017 period. Implementation of this strategic plan will be outlined in the 2014-2017 omnibus work plan for Connecticut Sea Grant, including peer-reviewed research, outreach (communications and extension), and education projects. Progress towards meeting the goals outlined in this strategic plan will be measured and reported annually. The plan will be re-visited annually to ensure that Connecticut Sea Grant is accomplishing its four-year goals while maintaining flexibility to address new trends and opportunities as needed.

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