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Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP)- Newsletter

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Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP)- Newsletter Nassau County Protection Committees

In this issue of the LINAP newsletter, we highlight initiatives led by Long Island's Protection Committees in Nassau County.

- Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee
- Manhasset Bay Protection Committee
- Grant Insights and Highlights

Protection Committees are inter-municipal coalitions that provide a coordinated and highly effective approach to improving water quality and solving watershed problems across Long Island. The Island is fortunate to have several Protection Committees that work to protect, restore, and enhance the watersheds that they serve. They develop and implement planning studies, capital improvement projects, educational outreach, water quality monitoring, information and technology sharing, coordination of enforcement, and collaboration. They also track and comment on proposed laws and regulations. Protection Committees also aid member municipalities in carrying out the federal and state-mandated municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) requirements. Long Island's Protection Committees collectively represent over 50 Long Island municipalities.

Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee

The [Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee](#) (HHPC), the first of its kind, was formed in 1995 with nine local governments committed to sharing the responsibility for the long-standing water quality issues in Hempstead Harbor. Since its inception, HHPC has been able to obtain millions of dollars in grant funding for various projects and has been successful in identifying priority sources of pollution and implementing multiple initiatives to improve water quality in Hempstead Harbor. Priority projects are determined and voted on by representatives of each member municipality at public meetings.

When the HHPC was formed in 1995, a community organization, the [Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor](#), had already established a comprehensive water-quality monitoring program in the harbor. The HHPC decided to adopt and support this existing program. The monitoring program has expanded over the years and is largely funded through grants obtained by HHPC. The core program (May to October) involves weekly monitoring at up to 21 locations. Additional monitoring is conducted between November and April. A comprehensive Annual Hempstead Harbor Water-Quality Report is prepared each year which analyzes the data and describes any trends.

The HHPC has also played a key role in developing and implementing [Nassau County's Septic Environmental Program To Improve Cleanliness \(S.E.P.T.I.C.\)](#), a program that provides grant funding to eligible recipients to replace a conventional or failing septic systems with an innovative and alternative onsite wastewater treatment system designed to remove nitrogen.

Last year, HHPC hired a consulting firm to perform a stormwater illicit discharge investigation using thermal drone imaging in a subwatershed that has been contributing high bacterial levels to the harbor. This technology can detect minute changes in temperature and its potential for identifying failing septic systems is being examined.

There are also multiple aquaculture projects underway in Hempstead Harbor. Since 2020, the Town of Oyster Bay has been growing seed clams and oysters in Floating Upweller Systems (FLUPSYs) at the Tappen Marina on Hempstead Harbor. In 2022, 9 FLUPSYs were located in the marina, each holding approximately 700,000 seeds. Just this past year, HHPC was awarded \$300,000 dollars from the US Environmental Protection Agency for shellfish seeding in Manhasset Bay, Hempstead Harbor, and Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor. An Advisory Committee has been established from each of the bays and the grant agreement is currently being finalized. Additionally, sugar kelp, which absorbs and stores nitrogen from surrounding water during its growing period in the winter and spring is being grown at several locations including Tappen Marina. In 2022, 650 feet of kelp was grown and harvested in late spring to use as a soil amendment at the Town's golf course and parks.



FLUPSYs at Tappen Marina in Hempstead Harbor. Photo Credit: North Oyster Bay Baymen's Association.

HHPC demonstrated that intermunicipal cooperation is an effective and resource-efficient model to implement effective solutions to improve water quality and led the way for additional Protection Committees to be formed across Long Island.

Manhasset Bay Protection Committee

Formed in 1998, the [Manhasset Bay Protection Committee](#) is a 15-member inter-municipal organization focused on addressing water quality and coastal issues with a coordinated, watershed-level approach. The Committee's goals are to protect, restore, and enhance Manhasset Bay to ensure a healthy and diverse marine ecosystem while balancing and maintaining recreational and commercial uses.

With funding from the Department of State, the Committee is currently hard at work on a Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP). The plan will be the guiding document of projects, activities, and other actions that will lead to improvements in water quality in Manhasset Bay. The previous [WQIP](#) was completed in 1999, one of the first actions the Committee took when it was created.

With grant funding from the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Committee conducts annual water quality monitoring in Manhasset Bay. The water quality monitoring program encompasses weekly in-bay sampling that includes measuring parameters related to the ecological health of the bay, including bacteria. The Town of North Hempstead donates Bay Constable time and the boat to retrieve the water samples and the Nassau County Department of Health donates the cost of bacteria analysis and sample bottles for this program.

In addition to water quality monitoring, the Committee is involved in multiple outreach and educational programs targeting septic replacement, stormwater runoff, fertilizer reduction, habitat restoration, and water conservation. The Committee has also participated in LINAP workgroups, the Long Island Sound Study Community Advisory Committee, and assisted in the development of the [Nassau County 9 Element Plan](#).



Manhasset Bay. Photo Credit: LIRPC

Grant Insights and Highlights – Funding Secured Through Partnerships

This new section of the LINAP newsletter will highlight grant opportunities and success stories. Read about Hempstead Harbor below:

As referenced above, Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee has been managing and running a successful water quality monitoring program for over 25 years. Now, let's look at how they have secured funding to have such a long-standing program.

For over a decade HHPC and the Village of Sea Cliff have worked together to successfully obtain [Long Island Sound Futures Funds](#) grants. The two entities have built a successful partnership by utilizing each other’s strengths. Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee and Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor primarily conduct the day-to-day work, including outreach and technical reporting. The Village of Sea Cliff has secured the funding and administer the grant. This is an excellent example of how municipalities and community organizations can partner with each other to overcome their individual limitations and work together to implement a program or project.

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