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Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP)- Newsletter

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Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) - Newsletter Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District Update

In this issue of the LINAP newsletter, we highlight the initiatives led by our partners at the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District to support LINAP.

- Septic Environmental Program to Improve Cleanliness (S.E.P.T.I.C.)
- A Day in the Life
- Raingarden and Native Plant Funding
- Annual Native Sapling Giveaway
- 2023 Long Island Regional Envirothon
- Grant Opportunities & Highlights

Septic Environmental Program to Improve Cleanliness

The [Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District](#) (NCSWCD) continues to administer the Septic Environmental Program to Improve Cleanliness (S.E.P.T.I.C.), a program which provides grants of up to \$20,000 to eligible Nassau County residents, small businesses, and not-for profit organizations to replace a failing septic system with nitrogen reducing Innovative and Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (I/A OWTS).

Tens of thousands of homes and small businesses in Nassau County are currently served by cesspools and septic systems. Cesspools and conventional septic systems allow for nitrogen to leach into the groundwater, which eventually flows into our embayments and surface waters. For this reason, human waste is one of the largest contributors to nitrogen pollution on Long Island. Reversing water quality degradation will depend on replacing these existing systems with new I/A OWTS. To date over 400 residents have applied to the program!

Interested residents can contact SepticReplace@nassaucountyny.gov or call 516-364-5861 for more information and instructions on how to apply. Applications can be filled out online on the [SEPTIC webpage](#).



Installation of I/A OWTS at a residence in Manhasset. Photo credit: NCSWCD.

A Day in the Life

A Day in the Life (ADITL) is a program organized by the [South Shore Estuary Reserve](#) 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 project is to run single-day field trips to sites around Long Island's Coast where students are given the opportunity to collect water quality samples, learn about ecosystem services, and engage with local flora and fauna.

The NCSWCD hosted two ADITL events last year—one at the Marine Nature Study Area in Oceanside and another at the Jones Bay Boat Basin at Jones Beach. These events were attended by high school and college students from Westbury High School and SUNY Old Westbury College. Students were able to test water samples for phosphates, nitrates, and fecal coliform, allowing them to understand the effects that different nutrient levels can have on the health of our local waters and the organisms that inhabit them. Using the LaMotte Water Quality Kit, students measured nitrate levels three times at three different locations within their sites and recorded the results for future analysis.



Photo of the A Day in the Life of an Estuary Event held at the Marine Nature Study Area in Oceanside, NY. Photo credit: NCSWCD.

Raingarden and Native Plant Funding

Each year the NCSWCD funds several conservation projects that align with the District's mission under a competitive grant program called [Part C funding](#). Eligible applicants include local governments and not-for-profit organizations in Nassau County.

Over the past year several grants were awarded to revitalize a number of neglected raingardens across the County including:

- Nassau Hall inside the Muttontown Preserve
- Bayville Community Center
- West Harbor Beach in Bayville
- Bayville Eastern Waterfront Center
- The Hempstead Plains Nature Preserve on the Nassau Community College Campus

Rain gardens are a sustainable infrastructure that provide important environmental benefits. When it rains, a rain garden fills with a few inches of water and allows that water to slowly filter into the ground rather than running off to storm drains that connect to surface water and groundwater. These green infrastructure projects utilize native plants which have a multitude of environmental benefits, including an extensive root system that absorbs and filters polluted stormwater before it reaches local waterways, and a reduced need for fertilizer and irrigation.



The NCSWCD works with the Friends of the Hempstead Plains to restore a raingarden at the Hempstead Plains Preserve on the campus of Nassau Community College which was predominately populated by invasive species. The District enlisted the help of Nassau's local Girl Scouts of America to replace the invasive species with over 300 native plants. Photo credit: NCSWCD.

Last year, Part C funding was also awarded to the [Town of North Hempstead](#) to develop a program that offers rebates to Town residents to replace lawn grass or an existing garden space with a native plant garden or rain garden. The program has successfully provided funding to over 30 homeowners. NCSWCD recently awarded additional Part C funding to the Town to continue the program!

NCSWCD provides ongoing advisement on the installation of rain gardens and soil testing to any Nassau County resident who is interested. For more information about this service contact 516-364-5860 or email srooney@nassauswcd.org.

Annual Native Sapling Giveaway

The NCSWCD's annual sapling giveaway was hosted on April 28th, 2023, Arbor Day. The giveaway was sponsored by Bartlett Tree Experts and the Town of Hempstead Conservation and Waterways, and provided over 200 native saplings, bushes, and perennial flowers to the community, along with educational material on the benefits of native plants, proper plant selection and planting techniques. Native plants are adapted to local growing conditions, so they need less artificial fertilizer. This event was hosted at the NCSWCD office located in Nassau County's largest nature preserve, the Muttontown Preserve.

2023 Long Island Regional Envirothon

Nassau and Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosted the annual [Long Island Regional Envirothon](#) on April 26, 2023.

The Long Island Regional Envirothon is Long Island's leading environmental studies program for high school students. The Envirothon is an environmental competition based on five environmental subject areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and the current issue—which changes annually. In past years, the current issue has covered topics such as agricultural preservation, non-point source pollution, wetlands, biodiversity, and alternative and renewable energy. This year's current issue is "Adapting to a Changing Climate."

The primary objective of the Envirothon is to help students understand the natural environment and to encourage them to become responsible stewards of the land. To prepare for the competition, students develop research skills, practice team building, and learn about consensus decision making. The Envirothon Committee has carefully crafted the program's learning objectives, which align with the New York State Department of Education's Learning Standards in Mathematics, Science & Technology, Social Studies, and English Language Arts. By providing educational tools, the program aims to foster an advanced level of comprehension about the students' natural surroundings.

This year's winning teams came from Chaminade High School in Nassau County, and Half Hollow Hills High School East in Suffolk County.

The winning teams will move on to participate in the [New York State Envirothon](#) and each member of the will receive a scholarship of \$500!



Photo Credit: NCSWCD

Grant Opportunity- NYS DEC Urban and Community Forestry Grants

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is working to improve the health of urban and community forests and to increase the sustainability of forestry programs. Healthy forests and trees can benefit water quality by reducing stormwater flow and increasing the infiltration and treatment of precipitation. Right now, there is approximately \$3 million in Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) grants available for tree inventories, community forest management plans, tree planting and tree maintenance. Eligible applicants for this program include New York municipalities and quasi-governmental entities, and Not-for-Profits Corporations. For more information about eligible applicants, projects, and the Urban and Community Forestry Grants click [here](#)!

DEC urban and community foresters (listed below) can provide technical advice as part of this grant process. They also are available as a resource for technical assistance and advice throughout the year.

Region 1: Suffolk
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Region 1: Nassau and Suffolk
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