



Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) - June Newsletter

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation sent this bulletin on 06/28/2019 08:30 AM EDT

Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) - June Newsletter Suffolk County Updates

In this month's issue of the LINAP newsletter, we highlight the ongoing nitrogen reduction initiatives lead by our LINAP partners in Suffolk County.

- **Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan**
- **Septic Improvement Program**
- **Septic/Cesspool Upgrade Program Enterprise**
- **Environmental Health Information Management System**
- **Water Quality Improvement District Feasibility Study**
- **Coastal Resiliency Initiative**

Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan

Suffolk County's [Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan](#) (SWP) has evaluated parcel-specific nitrogen loads from wastewater, fertilizer, stormwater, and atmospheric deposition to the groundwater and receiving waters of nearly 200 subwatersheds identified by Suffolk County and stakeholders, including the Wastewater Plan Advisory Committee. The SWP initiative includes the development of first order (initial) nitrogen load reduction goals; establishes ecological sensitivity priority ranks for each of the surface waterbodies, based on nitrogen; and recommendations for implementation of a phased countywide wastewater upgrade program. Work on the SWP began in summer 2016. A draft plan is expected to be released for public comment this summer and the final plan to be released by the end of 2019.



Photo credit: Kyle Rabin

Septic Improvement Program

Over the past several years, Suffolk County has effectively laid the groundwork to make the transition from outdated cesspools and septic systems to newer, state-of-the-art systems. Under the County's [Septic Improvement Program](#), individual homeowners may be eligible for a grant for the purchase and installation of an approved Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System and associated engineering and design services. Under the program, homeowners who decide to replace their cesspool or septic system with the new and advanced technologies will be eligible for a grant of up to \$30,000 from Suffolk County and the [New York State Septic System Replacement Fund](#) to offset the cost of one of the new systems. In addition to the grant, homeowners can qualify to finance the remaining cost of the systems via a loan, payable over 15 years at a low 3% fixed interest rate. The purpose of the loan is to provide "gap" funds to finance the difference between the grant to be provided by Suffolk County and the contract amount needed to install the replacement septic system. Since July 3, 2017, over 1,700 people have registered for the program, of which 435 have been issued grant certificates. An additional 444 are in the process of submitting an application. To date, there have been 111 installs and there are 132 pending installations.

Septic/Cesspool Upgrade Program Enterprise (SCUPE)

During 2018 and 2019, Suffolk County continued to examine [new technology](#) through its DEC-funded Septic/Cesspool Upgrade Program Enterprise (SCUPE). A total of 14 individual technologies have been installed on 43 residential sites. Six technologies have been approved for Provisional Use in Suffolk County. Three additional systems are currently pending

Provisional Use Approval and expected to be approved this summer. The County is working with the remainder of the manufacturers to improve performance.



Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Installation (Fuji Clean CEN Series) - Photo Credit: Suffolk County

Suffolk County Environmental Health Information Management System (EHIMS)

In the summer 2018, Suffolk County began construction of the Environmental Health Information Management System (EHIMS). EHIMS will provide a centralized, GIS linked, database and public interface to support permitting, oversight, and enforcement of Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems installations and maintenance countywide. EHIMS will allow citizens to submit applications, upload documents, make payments, and get real-time status updates through an online portal. The system will also improve communication between County offices through a shared database and shared workflows that will notify different groups when there is a new application or task that needs their attention. Communication between the County and licensed professionals should also improve, as submissions and revisions can be shared electronically. EHIMS is anticipated for startup testing this summer.

Suffolk County Water Quality Improvement District Feasibility Study

On October 2, 2018, a resolution was passed unanimously by the Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC) to fund a Suffolk County Water Quality Improvement District (WQID) feasibility study; identified as an early action item in the LINAP scope. With the funding approved, [Suffolk County](#), in partnership with the [LIRPC](#) and the [Department of Environmental Conservation \(DEC\)](#), issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the evaluation of the technical and financial implications of a Countywide Water Quality Improvement District. Multiple proposals were received and the contract was awarded to Raftelis, a utility and public sector consulting firm.

The overall goal of the study is the development of an Implementation Guide for a WQID including the various prerequisite actions that would be required to establish the WQID and the management structures and financing required for its operation. Specific components of the RFP are to:

- Identify and evaluate the infrastructure that would be incorporated into the WQID
- Conduct a financial analysis of potential costs and revenue sources
- Propose the programmatic functions of the WQID
- Propose the management structure of the WQID including all involved entities and stakeholders
- Establish a timeline/critical path for all actions at all levels (State, County, Town, etc.)

Work on the study will begin this summer.

Suffolk County Coastal Resiliency Initiative

In 2015 Suffolk County was awarded \$390 million in funding through the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) to install sewers in communities in unsewered, low-lying, areas along

the County's south shore; these areas had been inundated by Superstorm Sandy. The sewer projects, known as the [Suffolk County Coastal Resiliency Initiative](#), mark the largest investment in water quality infrastructure in the County in more than 40 years and will eliminate thousands of cesspools and septic systems to improve water quality, boost economic development and protect against storm surges by strengthening wetlands.

Before sewers can be constructed and the funding used, a public referendum needed to be held in the areas proposed for sewerage which included, Mastic, Great River and portions of the Town of Babylon. The individual referendums were held on January 22, 2019. Only registered voters in the areas that would connect to the sewer districts were able to vote. Mastic residents voted to sewer 2,770 residential parcels and businesses along the Forge River and construction of a new sewage treatment plant at Brookhaven Calabro Airport. Voters in West Babylon, North Babylon and Wyandanch, around the Carlls River, voted to connect 2,847 homes to sewers. Voters in Great River, along the Connetquot River, voted against the proposal that would have connected 474 homes in their community. This funding has been redirected for sewerage parts of Oakdale, connecting up to 400 homes to an existing system.

Construction is expected to start next year. The projects will use low-pressure sewer systems, that include pumps buried in front of each house; a method that is cost effective and causes less construction disruption.

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