

Grants target Sound health

BY EMILY C. DOOLEY
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A coalition of state and federal organizations announced \$1.3 million in grants yesterday to help government and community groups in New York and Connecticut protect Long Island Sound.

Of the 22 projects, nine are on Long Island and account for more than \$407,000 in funding. They include reducing storm-water pollution in Centerport, monitoring water quality in Hempstead Harbor and organizing beach cleanups.

The grants are meant to help fund protection and restoration work that in turn affects local communities and economies, Environmental Protection Agency New England Regional Administrator H. Curtis Spalding said in a statement.

“Long Island Sound is an amazing natural resource, which provides recreation and economic opportunities for millions of people,” said Judith Enck, New York’s EPA regional administrator. “These projects are smart investments that will improve water quality and build resiliency in shoreline communities.”

The projects are paid for through the Long Island Sound



Newly announced grants will help monitor water quality in Hempstead Harbor, shown here at dusk.

Futures Fund, a pool of money supplied by the EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative. Grant recipients also contribute money toward the projects.

Huntington Town will receive more than \$137,000 to build a rain garden to catch runoff at Centerport Beach so it doesn’t enter the watershed, fouling water quality in Northport

Bay, maritime services director Ed Carr said.

“This could have a positive influence on the water quality there,” Assistant Deputy Supervisor Philip Ingerman said.

Another \$45,000 will go to the Village of Sea Cliff to monitor water quality in outer and inner Hempstead Harbor, where a coalition of governments share costs evaluating pollution levels, Village Administrator John Mirando said.

The Long Island Futures Fund was created in 2005 and has invested \$14 million in 324 projects in areas surrounding the Sound. Grantees have matched with an additional \$28 million in funding.

Collectively, the projects have opened up 157 river miles for fish passage, restored 1,024 acres of open space and fish and wildlife habitat, and treated 100 million gallons of pollution.

Hub plan nearly shovel-ready, developer says

BY OLIVIA WINSLOW
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The Ronkonkoma Hub’s developer is ready to submit building-permit applications this week on the massive housing, retail and office complex and hopes to break ground early next year, the firm’s chief operating officer told regional planners yesterday.

Robert Loscalzo of Tritec, the East Setauket-based real estate firm developing the project, gave a progress report to the Long Island Regional Planning Council at its regular meeting, held in Hauppauge. The hub already received site plan approval from the Town of Brookhaven.

“We are 95 percent complete with construction drawings,” Loscalzo said, and the company is “in contract on 12 acres” of property.

When completed, the hub is expected to encompass about 50 acres, with 1,450 apartments



Suffolk planning official David Calone speaks at the meeting.

and 545,000 square feet of retail and office space.

Loscalzo said the first phase of the project — which includes 489 rental units and a sewage treatment pumping station — is expected to take three years to complete. He estimated it would create 1,260 construction jobs over three years and 145 full-time jobs.

Phase II, if it receives town approval, would involve development of a “downtown core”

of 261 housing units, 95,000 square feet of retail space and 60,000 square feet of office space. Four phases of the project are planned.

Loscalzo laid out a vision of the Ronkonkoma Hub as Suffolk’s “grand station,” with proximity to rail, nearby Long Island MacArthur Airport and the Long Island Expressway. He also called it the “Gateway to Eastern Long Island,” citing beaches, recreational facilities

and popular dining options.

“It’s the center of Suffolk County,” he said. “We’ve modeled it after the great stations” in such places as New York City and London, bringing together residents, employers, restaurants and entertainment.

James Coughlan, a principal at Tritec, said the hub will cause a “paradigm shift” by integrating residential, retail, public and business spaces. The project’s “sense of community,” as well as dining and entertainment venues, will attract businesses there, he said.

The planning council last year designated the Ronkonkoma Hub as a project of “regional significance.”

Yesterday, council chairman John Cameron said, “Long Island needs this project.” He said the hub could generate more travelers for the Islip Town-owned Long Island MacArthur Airport, which has faced years of declining revenue and travelers.

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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1789 Benjamin Franklin wrote in a letter to a friend, Jean-Baptiste Leroy: “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”

1927 The Holland Tunnel opened to the public, providing access between lower Manhattan and New Jersey.

1940 The Walt Disney film “Fantasia” had its world premiere in New York.

1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure lowering the minimum draft age from 21 to 18.

1956 The Supreme Court struck down laws calling for racial segregation on public city and state buses.

1974 Karen Silkwood, a 28-year-old technician and union activist at the Kerr-McGee Cimarron plutonium plant in Oklahoma, died in a car crash while on her way to meet a reporter.

1982 The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, designed by Maya Lin, was dedicated in Washington.

2010 Pro-democracy hero Aung San Suu Kyi walked free in Myanmar after more than seven years under house arrest.