

New York NEMO Program

Long Island is often viewed as the birthplace of Post-World War II suburban development. Now predominantly urbanized to the west and under rapid development pressure to the east, Long Island municipalities grapple with balancing economic growth, community livability and natural resource protection. Long Island leaders recognize New York Sea Grant's NEMO Program as a practical resource that can assist them in protecting water quality and valuable coastal areas.

The majority of program funding has been received from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation Section 319 Program and the EPA Long Island Sound Study office. In addition, the NOAA Coastal NEMO Enhancement Initiative and the Long Island Sound Study have provided grants to enable NY NEMO to expand its GIS capabilities.

Focused initially in Nassau County, NY NEMO's topical scope and geographic reach are broadening. NY NEMO has worked with two Nassau County Long Island Sound watersheds—Hempstead Harbor and Manhasset Bay—where two intermunicipal watershed protection committees are established. There, the issues stem from urban runoff and include closed shellfishing, restricted bathing, sedimentation of boating channels and degraded wildlife habitat. To assist communities in addressing these problems, NY NEMO co-sponsored the Long Island Stormwater Conference which was attended by over 130 municipal officials and staff. Implementation of the municipal EPA Stormwater

Phase II Program has become a priority on Long Island and NY NEMO has provided dozens of presentations to facilitate municipal efforts at local and regional trainings.

In Suffolk County where there is still significant undeveloped land, NY NEMO has begun assisting communities by offering a proactive impact prevention strategy. Future workshops for priority Suffolk County Long Island Sound watersheds will address local water quality issues, demonstrate the regional impacts of local land use using aerial photography, remotely sensed images and GIS data.

As the result of NY NEMO's efforts, Long Island municipalities that now see the benefits of consistent, watershed-based resource protection are exploring ways to work together. In addition, several have made changes to their policies, municipal maintenance practices and land use regulations. For example, the village of Manorhaven strengthened its erosion and sediment control ordinance and enforcement measures, passed a requirement that all new driveways drain onsite, and now prohibits commercial vehicle washing on village streets. Manorhaven officials are utilizing NEMO site design principles including onsite runoff containment and use of xeriscopic and native plants, to protect water quality. The village of Kings Point has adopted stricter controls on non-stormwater discharges, improved its catch basin maintenance schedule and increased erosion and sediment controls required of construction site operators.

"No effort to deal with polluted runoff, habitat protection and open space preservation will be successful without providing local decision makers with the information, insight and tools that they need to make better decisions. The NEMO Program assists municipal officials in seeing the bigger picture, tying together the quality of their communities and environment.

- Mark Tedesco, Director, EPA Long Island Sound Office.

Program Partners

New York Sea Grant
Cornell Cooperative Extension

Contacts

Eileen Keenan
Water Quality Educator

ek72@cornell.edu
631-632-8730

Robert J. Kent
Marine District Coordinator,
New York Sea Grant

rjk13@cornell.edu
631-727-3910

On the Web at: www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/NEMO

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