



Connecticut
NATIONAL ESTUARINE
RESEARCH RESERVE

eNewsletter

Spring 2024



Beach cleanup at Bluff Point. Photo by UConn Foundation

A note from the Education Coordinator, Larissa Graham

I'm sure you've noticed that spring has sprung - the osprey have returned, flowers and trees are blooming, and wildlife is waking!

This is my favorite time of year because it means longer daylight hours, warmer weather, and - most exciting! - the kick off to our spring and summer educational programming.

As the Education Coordinator for the Reserve, my goal is to promote environmental stewardship and environmental literacy through meaningful, hands-on educational



experiences for learners of all ages.

This spring and summer we have a lot of exciting programs and events coming up. Here are a few highlights:

- CT Trails Day Hike at Haley Farm State Park - On June 1st at 9AM, we'll be joining CT Sea Grant to learn about the Reserve and take a short hike. [Learn more here.](#)
- Groton Clean up - On June 5th, we're partnering with the Baker Cove Watershed Committee (BaCWaC) to clean up various sites in Groton. [Learn more and register here.](#)
- Hikes and kayaking - This summer, we'll be hosting guided hikes and kayaking paddles at Bluff Point State Park and along the CT River. Keep an eye on social media sites (links at the end of this email) and future email correspondences for more info.

We'll also be kicking off our Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant to develop a Restoration Plan for Bluff Point State Park. For this project, we'll be collecting input from park visitors so, if you see our staff at the park, holding tablets and talking with people, please come over and say hi!

It's a great time to dust off those hiking boots, fishing poles, and binoculars and get out and explore the Reserve. We hope to see you at an upcoming event!

Reserve Updates

Now offering process skills training

Did you know that our Reserve's training program can build not only knowledge on specific coastal management topics, but also "process" skills? Our Training Coordinator brought NOAA staff to CT this winter for Facilitation Basics and Planning Effective Projects trainings. If you are interested in these types of offerings, check out the [full list here](#) and be in touch with Katie.Lund@uconn.edu if you or your organization is interested in these types of offerings.

Research Team shares results at regional meeting

The Research team presented at the New England Estuarine Research Society's (NEERS) spring meeting in Freeport, Maine. Jamie Vaudrey (Research Coordinator) discussed the status of seaweed blooms in Long Island Sound, Emily Watling (Graduate Student) introduced NEERSians to the Reserve-led Eelgrass Collaborative, Meg Shah (Undergraduate Research Assistant) presented a historical reconstruction of eelgrass distribution prior to the mass 1930s

Summer stewardship projects

Our Stewardship sector has been hard at work writing grants to improve accessibility and resiliency of reserve properties. We anticipate onboarding a bumper crop undergraduate field assistant this summer to assist with various projects. Look for us this summer surveying invasive plants in Roger Tory Peterson and Lord Cove Natural Area Preserves. In the next few months, we will be looking for your help prioritizing restoration and accessibility improvements at Bluff Point State Park. As part of a Long Island Sound Futures Fund supported effort, we will be collecting feedback in person at Bluff Point, as well as through a web "story map" that's under development by our project partner SLR Consulting.

Teachers on the Estuary workshop

This August, we'll be hosting our first Teacher on the Estuary, or TOTE, workshop. We'll be working with researchers from UConn and Audubon to learn about how climate change is impacting osprey and saltmarsh sparrow populations. More details to come in the next month and, if you are

die-off, and Shelby Larubina (Research Technician) presented a poster on the prevalence of invasive plant species in the Bluff Point properties.

interested, be sure to email Larissa at Larissa.Graham@uconn.edu to get on our educator email list.



Larubina wins award

Our Reserve's Research Technician, Shelby Larubina (far right) took home the "3x3 Award" for an exceptional poster reporting on the prevalence of invasive plant species in the Bluff Point properties at the New England Estuarine Research Society's (NEERS) spring meeting. The 3x3 award recognizes excellent communication, with the message being clear and compelling and able to be understood in "3 minutes from 3 feet away."

Congrats, Shelby!

Earth Day Challenge

Thanks to everyone that participated in our Earth Day Challenge on our social media sites and a congrats to Laurie Gorham who won a Reserve tote bag for participating. We'll have other challenges this summer so be sure to follow us if you aren't already!



Volunteering with the Reserve

We've launched a new webpage where we'll be posting our upcoming events and highlighting partner volunteer events too. Click on the button below to see what's coming up!

[Volunteer Opportunities](#)

Highlights from past Reserve events

Regional Reserve Meeting

On April 24 and 25, the Reserve hosted staff from the four other Research Reserves in the Northeast (Wells ME, Great Bay NH, Waquoit Bay MA, and Narragansett Bay RI) along with staff from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration regional office. This meeting, typically held every year in the spring, allowed regional reserves the opportunity to get together and share examples and ideas for collaboration, and to catch each other up on work being done. Since this is the first time the Connecticut Reserve is hosting the event, it also served as a chance for other NERR staff to see all the great things we have to offer!



Northeast Reserve staff at Bluff Point State Park. Photo by Ward Feurt

Thank you to our volunteers!

On April 21, UConn Cares volunteers celebrated Earth Day with a beach cleanup at Bluff Point State Park. The cleanup was organized by the UConn Southeast CT Alumni Network, working with the Reserve and CT DEEP State Parks. Volunteers hiked out to the bluff to clean the beach, dunes, and wetlands. Thank you all for our efforts!



Beach cleanup at Bluff Point. Photo by UConn Foundation



Email us at: ctner@uconn.edu

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