



**Connecticut**  
NATIONAL ESTUARINE  
RESEARCH RESERVE

# eNewsletter

Winter Updates 2025



*Photo by Jamie Vaudrey*

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## **A note from our Stewardship Coordinator, Jason Krumholz**

It is an eventful time here at the Connecticut Reserve. We just celebrated our 3rd birthday, and we're gearing up for another busy field season here in the Stewardship sector. Each of our other sectors - Research, Education, and Training - have had the opportunity to introduce themselves to you in previous newsletters, but I always say, "Save the best for last, right?"

Throughout the 30 Reserves in the National system, the Stewardship sector is perhaps the most variable. Some of the Reserves, like our colleagues in Narragansett Bay, RI and



Waquoit Bay, MA, own and/or directly manage the land on which the Reserve is situated, and so for these Reserves, Stewardship involves maintenance of visitor facilities and trails, proscribed burns, mowing, and other direct land management tasks. In the case of the Connecticut Reserve, the terrestrial properties in the Reserve (Bluff Point, Haley Farm, Lord Cove, Great Island) are owned by the state, and managed by CT DEEP, with whom we have built a very close working relationship, and our Reserve HQ is at UConn Avery Point.

So what exactly DO we do then here in the Stewardship Sector? As the inaugural Stewardship Coordinator here at the Connecticut Reserve, I've had a bit of latitude to choose the direction that the sector moves. I feel like the overall goal of "Stewardship" in a Reserve context is about connecting people to special places, and our Reserve has lots of special places, both on land, and on the water. I believe building those connections is a critical step towards ensuring that those special places will be there for our children, and grandchildren to enjoy. And the Reserve system provides lots of great tools with which to accomplish this mission!

First and foremost among those tools are the other Sector Coordinators here at the Reserve, and our Stewardship program is tightly interwoven with the other sectors. I work very closely with Jamie Vaudrey, our Research Coordinator, and our team of technicians and students, to gain a better understanding of how we can manage and restore sensitive coastal ecosystems such as salt marshes, eelgrass, and coastal forest, which provide habitat, and ecosystem services such as erosion protection and absorbing terrestrial pollutants. We can't protect it if we don't understand how it works. Stewardship also works closely with our Education Coordinator Larissa Graham and our Coastal Training Coordinator Katie Lund, participating in celebration events, helping to host workshops and site visits, and our newest top secret outreach project (shh!) where we hope to shortly be able to connect you directly to the underwater beauty of our Reserve using a transparent 360 degree dive helmet and rebreather combo designed by our partners at ***Oceans of Opportunity***.

Over the last two years, we have built many partnerships, and submitted over a dozen grants this year alone to try to bring external funding into our Reserve's properties. A few examples of our success stories are a Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant to work on ***resilience planning in Bluff Point Complex***, an Infrastructure & Jobs Act funded study to conduct rapid assessments of invasive plants in the Reserve properties, a NOAA grant with The Nature Conservancy to work on restoration and resilience in Rocky Neck State Park, and a grant from the Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative to work with the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium to establish a ***Long Island Sound Coastal Restoration Coalition*** which will allow us to pool resources and improve information sharing to facilitate more effective restoration of coastal habitats.

We are anticipating bringing on two new staff in 2025, and continuing to work to strengthen partnerships, build connections between people and places, and bring in funding to support restoration, resilience, access and accessibility to the Reserve's special places. If you'd like to learn more, please feel free to explore different ways to ***connect with us***, check out our ***volunteer opportunities list***, or send me an email at ***Jason.krumholz@uconn.edu***.

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## Reserve Highlights



## E. O. Smith High School wins the 2025 Quahog Ocean Sciences Bowl

Congratulations to E.O. Smith High School and all of the teams that participated in the Quahog Ocean Sciences Bowl on February 8th. This event is part of an academic competition that introduces high school students to ocean science. The Reserve partnered with Project Oceanology, UConn's Department of Marine Sciences, and more than 60 volunteers to host and run the event.



## Bluff Point Complex Resilience Plan completed and released

The Reserve was awarded grant funding through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund to develop an evaluation of the State of Connecticut owned properties at Bluff Point in Groton, Connecticut.

Working with SLR Consulting and CT DEEP, the Reserve conducted two public meetings and collected input from more than 640 Park visitors.

View results of the project and the Final Report at <https://s.uconn.edu/bluffpoint>

## Welcome the Reserve's 2025 NOAA Hollings Scholars

We are excited to welcome two new NOAA Hollings Scholars, Piper Priddy and John Yudt, to the Connecticut Reserve where they will spend 10 weeks with us over the summer to gain hands-on research experience in the field and conduct projects aimed at enhancing coastal resilience and monitoring ecosystem health.

We look forward to supporting these talented students as they contribute valuable insights into our efforts to protect and restore Connecticut's coastal habitats!

## Launching the Reserve's long-term monitoring stations

Each Reserve's monitoring activities fall under the System Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP), whose goal is to measure impacts of short-term variability and long-term changes on water quality, biological systems and land use/cover within each Reserve's boundaries.

Reserves are able to do this by maintaining specific monitoring stations and following strict sampling protocols in order to contribute to the larger, [nation-wide dataset](#). Some of the earliest Reserves have been collecting water quality data for 30 years!!

One of our tasks as a new Research Reserve is to determine where our SWMP stations should be located. There are many factors to consider when choosing our stations - they must have long-term access; they must be easily accessible; and they must characterize the estuarine gradient within our Reserve boundaries. Additionally, Long Island Sound already hosts many water quality monitoring efforts, so we want to be strategic in complimenting the great research already taking place.



After several stakeholder meetings last year with the local research and coastal decision maker communities, the CT Reserve is excited to pursue a list of sites for our long-term water quality, water chemistry and weather monitoring. Over the coming months, we will work towards the permission

and permitting of those areas and establish the necessary infrastructure and routines to collect long-term, quality data.

A graphic for a webinar announcement. It features a background image of a coastal landscape with water, grass, and trees under a blue sky. Overlaid on this is a semi-transparent light green rounded rectangle containing text. At the top left of the rectangle is the 'MyCoast' logo, which consists of three blue curved lines of increasing size followed by the word 'MyCoast' in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font. Below the logo, the title 'Webinar: Piloting the MyCoast Tool in New London, Groton, and Stonington' is written in a bold, black sans-serif font. Under the title, the date and time 'Thursday, April 10, 2025 1:00 - 2:30 pm' are listed in a black sans-serif font. Below that, the text 'Click Here to Register' is written in a black sans-serif font and underlined. At the bottom of the rectangle, a smaller line of text reads 'Use MyCoast to submit photos of coastal events like storms, floods and extreme high tides to a public database'. At the bottom of the entire graphic, outside the green rectangle, are three logos: on the left, the 'Connecticut NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE' logo; in the center, the 'Sea Grant CONNECTICUT' logo; and on the right, the 'CIRCA Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation' logo.

**MyCoast**

**Webinar: Piloting the  
MyCoast Tool in  
New London, Groton, and  
Stonington**

Thursday, April 10, 2025 1:00 - 2:30 pm

[Click Here to Register](#)

Use MyCoast to submit photos of coastal events like storms, floods and extreme high tides to a public database

 **Connecticut**  
NATIONAL ESTUARINE  
RESEARCH RESERVE

 **Sea Grant**  
CONNECTICUT

 **CIRCA**  
Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation

Join us for a virtual gathering to learn more about the new MyCoast project recently funded through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF) and focusing on the CT communities of Stonington, Groton, and New London.

**MyCoast** is a tool that allows residents to submit photos of flooding events and high tides to a public database. This information can be used by municipalities to improve planning for local flood events and increase public awareness about coastal flooding.

Join this webinar to learn how the MyCoast tool can help address flooding in your community and understand next steps for this project and how you can participate.

Registration required: [Registration link](#)

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## Other Upcoming Events

Feb 15: Guided Bird Walk  
*Register here: [LINK](#)*



**Guided Bird Walk**  
Haley Farm State Park  
SAT Feb 15, 2025 @ 9A



- No experience needed
- Binocs and guides provided
- Easy to moderate walk
- Free to attend

SPACE IS LIMITED  
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Scan the QR code above or contact Larissa  
CTNERR.Education@uconn.edu or (860) 446-7371




Join us for a winter walk to observe birds at Haley Farm State Park. The walk will be led by fun and friendly birder, Joe Attwater (The Connecticut Audubon Society's Conservation & Education Coordinator). Registration is required and space is limited.



## Mar 4: Social Science Basics

Register here: [LINK](#)

Social science is sometimes an overlooked element in local planning. Issues from flood mitigation to economic development to land use planning all involve critical human elements (knowledge, values, and attitudes) of the people that live, work, and play in our communities. Space is limited to 35 participants; reserve your spot today!

 **The Forgotten Rail**  
at Midway Yard  
(now known as Bluff Point State Park)  
SAT Mar 22, 2025 @ 10AM  
Register for more info



SPACE IS LIMITED  
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Led by historian Joe Baril, this 1.5-hour walk with be mostly flat with some hills and uneven terrain.

Learn about the history of Midway Yard built in 1904 and abandoned in 1939.

See the remnants of the turntable pit and roundhouse foundation.

**Scan to REGISTER**



or visit  
s.uconn.edu/ReserveEvents

**Questions?** Contact Larissa at  
CTNERR.Education@UConn.edu or (860) 446-7371

## Mar 22: Explore Midway Yard

Register here: [LINK](#)

Join us for a winter walk with historian Joe Baril to learn about the large rail yard called Midway Yard that was built in 1904 at Bluff Point. The yard declined beginning in the late 1920s and was abandoned in 1939 but the turntable pit and the roundhouse foundation remain extant inside the park. The walk will start at Poquonick Bridge Boardwalk and travel through Bluff Point State Park. Registration is required and space is limited.



 **GROTON PARK CLEAN-UP**

REGISTER HERE  
s.uconn.edu/ReserveEvents

**Birch Plain Creek Wildlife Area**  
Fri. Apr 11, 2025 @ 9A-11A  
Rain date: Sat. Apr 12

**Questions?** CTNERR.Volunteer@UConn.edu or (860) 446-7371

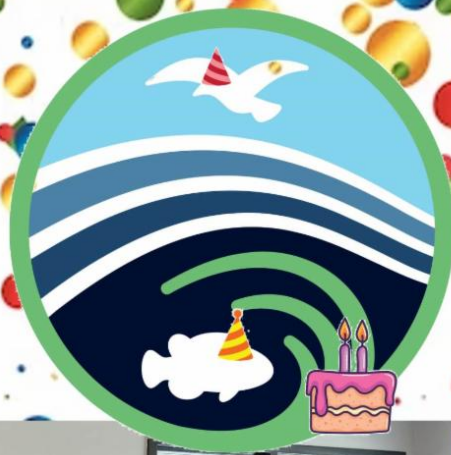
## Apr 11: Groton Parks Cleanup

Register here: [LINK](#)

Join us as we partner with the Baker Cove Watershed Committee, Mystic Aquarium, Town of Groton, and City of Groton to clean up various sites in Groton, CT. Neon vests, gloves, pickers, and bags will be provided. All you need to do is sign up and show up!

# The Reserve turns THREE!

# Happy Designation Day



The Reserve was designated on January 14, 2022. Happy three years to us!



Email us at: [ctnerr@uconn.edu](mailto:ctnerr@uconn.edu)

[Visit our Website](#)

**UConn**

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