

## NYSG Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher Program Encourages Local Watershed Literacy

A 2006 Public Perception Survey by the Long Island Sound Study indicated local watershed residents lacked knowledge about Long Island Sound, its watershed, tidal wetlands, and water quality.

### NYSG Responds

To increase public awareness of the Long Island Sound watershed, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) provides formal and informal K-12 educators in Westchester, Bronx, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk counties with professional development workshop opportunities through the Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher Program. The workshops align with New York Science Frameworks content standards and/or National Science Education Standards, and include a field training component within the Long Island Sound watershed. Participants learn strategies and receive supplies for incorporating Long Island Sound concepts and student activities into existing curricula.

### Workshops Inspire Positive Impact

In 2013, two workshops focused on water quality, ecology, and climate change for secondary school educators were held in New York:

- “Awesome Estuaries” at Sunken Meadow State Park in Kings Park, in the Nissequogue River River Stewardship Area; and
- “Teach at the Beach” at West Meadow Beach in Stony Brook, in the Stony Brook Harbor Stewardship Area.

Participating in the workshops were 34 educators, whose evaluations indicated using the experience to reach more than 5,440 students and fellow educators. Comments included: “As a language arts teacher, I found the multi-disciplinary approach to presenting this information incredibly useful,” and “Top notch! I will be doing water sampling in the creek behind our school.”

Since 2002 (Connecticut) and 2010 (New York), the Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher Program



*Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher, Fanny Kleisler, discusses the different kinds of marine arthropods found in Long Island Sound with attendees at the “Awesome Estuaries” workshop at Sunken Meadow State Park, photo: NYSG/Amy Mandelbaum*

has conducted 37 workshops with more than 350 educators, and, through those educators, has reached more than 25,000 students.

### Partners:

- New York State Marine Education Association
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
- Town of Brookhaven

### *The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Healthy New York Coastal Ecosystems.*

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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