

NYSG Developing the Next Generation of Great Lakes Stewards

New York needs a well-informed citizenry, properly educated regarding Great Lakes issues. New York Sea Grant (NYSG) is dedicated to developing the next generation of Great Lakes stewards by working with students to have them conduct environmental stewardship activities, and by instructing teachers on the importance of having their students get involved with environmental activities.

NYSG Responds

In 2013, NYSG engaged 30 undergraduate students enrolled in a Great Lakes Ecology course at the University of Buffalo (UB) in Great Lakes stewardship. The students provided 10 hours of stewardship activities, including:

- coastal clean-ups,
- invasive species removal,
- native species planting, and
- pharmaceutical take-back programs.

NYSG also engaged 45 educators in learning about the importance of stewardship activities for 4,000 of their middle and high school students in NY. The students worked with nature centers, fish hatcheries and community groups.

Steward Projects Make Learning Authentic

The UB college students' activities helped to improve several acres at Tifft Nature Preserve in Buffalo through the removal of invasive species and planting of native trees to enhance the environment.

The students reported on their stewardship projects; many indicating that the activities helped to make their course learning relative and authentic. They expressed pride in their accomplishments and acknowledged the positive impact their efforts had on their local Great Lakes environment.

NYSG coastal education training has seen teachers get students out in the Great Lakes shoreline environment to clean-up beaches and waterways, take and test water samples, work on eliminating invasive species such as water chestnut, mark elm trees for Emerald Ash Borer control, and teach community members about the importance of



High school students test water they collected as part of a stewardship education activity, photo: Kim Linkinhoker

properly disposing of unwanted or unused medications.

Through these NYSG-prompted activities, the students learned about the Great Lakes and have seen how humans can negatively impact the environment, but, more importantly, by experiencing how their actions can make positive changes, they now understand they can personally play a part in protecting the environment.

This hands-on learning encourages interest in supporting future clean-up efforts, joining environmental groups, taking actions to control the spread of aquatic invasive species, and initiating other stewardship activities.

Partners: Tifft Nature Preserve, University of Buffalo, Western NY school districts, local resource managers

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.

New York Sea Grant Extension

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New York Sea Grant teach-the-teacher training exponentially extends Great Lakes literacy to thousands of students in NY's freshwater region

NYSG Teach-the-Teacher Training Extends Great Lakes Education to 12,000 NY Students

New York's K-12 educators interested in teaching about local resources often do not have first-hand knowledge to do so. Through experiential professional development opportunities, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) provides state-of-the-art research and environmental information so educators can infuse their newfound knowledge and Great Lakes Literacy into classrooms.

NYSG Responds

NYSG-led educator workshops include field trips, classroom exercises, and hands-on learning with local, state and federal researchers. In 2013, NYSG provided Great Lakes science workshops for 115 teachers who engage more than 11,000 students in lessons on critical environmental issues.

One workshop organized by NYSG in cooperation with the US EPA and Center for Great Lakes Literacy provided the opportunity to work alongside scientists aboard the US EPA *Lake Guardian* research vessel. One teacher dubbed the week-long training *"the chance of a lifetime."*

A four-day land-based program (part of the NOAA-funded B-Wet Project) included seining for fish, working in a USGS fish laboratory, and fish hatchery and Lake Ontario dunes tours for 15 educators.

NYSG participation with the 2013 Science Exploration Day in Western New York educated another 56 teachers who work with 900-plus students.



NYSG workshop participants aboard the Lake Guardian, photo: NYSG/Paul Focazio

Great Lakes Literacy Advances

According to 2013 workshop evaluations, participants will change how and what they teach. Several have already involved students in local waterway clean-ups and stewardship activities to slow the spread of invasive species.

"This (NYSG) workshop is perfect for helping students understand the local environment and that they can make a difference right here at home," said Kimberly Preshoff, Williamsville North High School.

Newfane High School Living Environment teacher Timothy Lanighan noted, *"This Sea Grant workshop provides resources, ideas and contacts that will help develop Newfane's new environmental science advanced placement curricula."*

Partners: US EPA, USGS Great Lakes Science Center Lake Ontario Biological Station, Center for Great Lakes Literacy, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant

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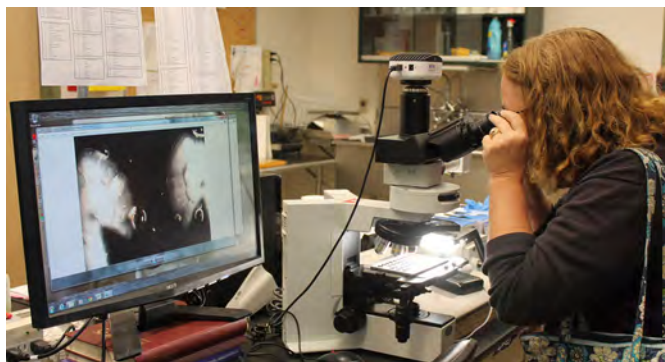
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Examining fish otoliths in USGS Lake Ontario Biological Field Station fish lab; photo: Kara Lynn Dunn



New York Sea Grant-organized Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) workshops connected diverse stakeholders with HAB science experts to help mitigate the environmental and economic impacts of HAB outbreaks

NYSG Harmful Algal Bloom Workshops a Model for Helping Great Lakes Stakeholders

Increased incidence of harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the Great Lakes threatens human, fish and wildlife health, and is a significant impediment to recreational water use and coastal community economies. One Lake Ontario community, Sodus Point, NY, reported a \$200,000 revenue loss from a HAB outbreak in 2010.

HABs are increasing due to heavy nutrient input from watersheds and climate changes. HABs occur when populations of certain noxious blue-green algae (classified as cyanobacteria) produce toxins in embayments and nearshore areas. The toxins cause human illness from direct contact or ingestion of lake water and kill fish and wildlife.

NYSG Responds

With NOAA Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) funding, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) organized workshops for Lakes Erie and Ontario bringing together 60 diverse stakeholders representing county government, marinas, lakefront communities, sportsmen groups and internationally-renown research institutions to discuss HAB formation, impacts, and citizen monitoring and reporting guidelines.

With Pennsylvania Sea Grant, NYSG developed a companion workshop for 60 stakeholders representing county and state agencies and academia in PA, NY, and Ohio. One participant commented: *"The timing of the workshop for health and environmental managers on HABs could not be more perfect as the discovery of harmful blue-green algae was recently confirmed in Presque Isle Bay."*

Workshops A Model for HAB Education

NOAA OAR Program Analyst John Wickham reported the workshops as the best Sea Grant HAB workshops he has seen and recommended the NYSG HAB workshops as templates for other Sea Grant outreach programs on HABs.



Harmful algal bloom along Lake Ontario; photo: SUNY ESF

As a direct result of the workshops, Sodus Bay is incorporating workshop information into its watershed management plan to mitigate HAB outbreaks. Pennsylvania state agencies developed a HAB response plan at the workshop in their state.

These NYSG-organized HAB workshops connected diverse stakeholders with harmful algal bloom science experts to help mitigate HAB-related environmental and economic impacts in two states.

Partners: Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Pennsylvania Sea Grant, State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science & Forestry, SUNY Stony Brook, citizen environmental groups

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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.

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The New York Sea Grant waterfront steward program is expanding its educational impact and geographical outreach to help boaters slow the spread of aquatic invasive species.

NYSG Launch Stewards Educating Boaters, Public to Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers

Scientific-accurate educational outreach is needed to increase citizen awareness and knowledge of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and to engage and empower the boating public to help slow the spread of AIS. This type of public programming can also positively impact AIS management cost.

NYSG Responds

Due to the past success of New York Sea Grant-managed Waterfront Steward programs in Jefferson and Oswego counties, the Launch Steward program that began in 2012 expanded in 2013 to include Madison, Oneida, Onondaga and Wayne counties.

Seven college students conducted voluntary watercraft inspection training with motorized and non-motorized boaters at 15 sites on Lake Ontario and inland waters. Through the inspections, boaters learn how to look for, remove, and properly dispose of aquatic hitchhiking debris and organisms.

The student stewards also:

- conducted public education presentations
- wrote media articles about the need for, methods of, and cost of managing AIS
- started a NYSG Launch Steward Blog: <http://nysglaunchsteward.blogspot.com>), and
- taught waterfront users how to use iMapInvasives.org for reporting unusual sightings that may be unwanted species.

Boaters, Diverse Audiences Engaged

The 2013 NYSG Launch Stewards conducted 2,166 inspections and educated 5,178 boaters (85 percent NYS-registered). Seventy-four percent of the boaters reported the Steward interaction increased their AIS awareness by a moderate-to-large degree.

Visible debris was removed from 9 percent of inspected vessels. This impact is likely due to 92 percent of the boaters surveyed reporting the use of watercraft inspection on their own.



The New York Sea Grant Launch Steward program educates boaters about watercraft inspection to reduce the spread of AIS, photo: Megan Pistolese

Additionally, the Stewards extended AIS awareness to diverse audiences, reaching more than 7,000 people, including:

- 100 7th graders at Dune Fest
- 40 Save Our Sodus Citizen Science Expo visitors
- 400 visitors to Empire Farm Days, the largest outdoor agricultural show in the Northeast
- 46 Oswego Triathlon athletes, and
- 75 citizens at water chestnut pulls (nearly 1,000 lbs. of plants removed).

Partners: City of Oswego, New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation, New York State Office of Parks, Onondaga County, Towns of Henderson, Sodus, and Scriba; funding: US Fish & Wildlife Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative monies to Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance

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NYSG Increasing Awareness of “Living Shorelines” for Erosion Protection

Several New York State reports have called for the use of “living shorelines” for coastal erosion control since this method has environmental benefits and is considered more “adaptable” to sea level rise than traditional erosion control structures. Agencies and NGOs are also promoting living shorelines for erosion protection. Unfortunately, living shorelines are not presently used in New York due to regulatory hurdles, a populace unfamiliar with the approach, and a lack of reliable technical information.

NYSG Responds

With funding from the National Sea Grant Office’s Climate Change Adaptation Initiative, New York Sea Grant’s (NYSG) Coastal Processes Specialist organized and chaired a New York Living Shorelines Work Group and Steering Committee with representatives of government agencies, marine contractors and consulting firms. With this committee, NYSG planned and held a technical workshop entitled *Living Shorelines for Coastal Erosion Protection in a Changing World*.

Information Improves Hazard Resiliency

The workshop attracted 90 federal, state and local officials, property owners and managers, marine consultants and contractors, NGOs and property owners who learned how to evaluate, site, design and implement living shoreline projects from nationally recognized experts with extensive experience in designing, building, and monitoring living shoreline projects around the country.

After attending the workshop:

- a NYS Coastal Management Program representative said the state would use \$800,000 to fund a living shorelines demonstration project (a workshop recommendation)
- the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated that NYSG workshop information was being used in the development of a \$20 million study to identify strategies to reduce risk and increase resiliency in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy, and



NYSG Living Shorelines for Coastal Erosion Protection in a Changing World workshop, photo: NYSG/James Pearce

- the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Marine Habitat Section leader indicated the Department would reevaluate regulations to help encourage the use of living shorelines.

With the overarching goal of helping coastal communities and property owners improve response to coastal hazards with adaptive responses, NYSG is providing resource managers and decision-makers with critical information about living shorelines and their use in New York.

Partners: NYS Department of State, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Long Island Marine Contractors Association, GEI Consultants, First Coastal Corporation

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Hazard Resiliency in New York Coastal Communities.

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

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NYSG Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials: Leading Inter-Municipal Water Quality Restoration

Water quality protection initiatives are central to promoting community vitality, productive economies, and public health. Such efforts, however, often demand costly skills, equipment, and expertise. Inter-municipal agreements provide the framework for reducing such costs by leveraging local governments' resources.

Efforts to advance inter-municipal partnerships arise from the need to overcome the lack of resources, inefficiency, and duplication of effort caused by a much layered 'home rule' system of government on Long Island. With more than 100 municipalities, water resource protection often lacks funding, focus, and effectiveness.

For these reasons funding agencies increasingly require joint applications for grants. While watershed managers know that cross-jurisdictional cooperation and consistency are essential to acquiring funding and restoring water quality, such formalized agreements are difficult to achieve.

NYSG Responds in Peconic Estuary Area

In the Peconic Estuary, excessive levels of nitrogen and bacteria are a major challenge. As Co-Chair of the Peconic Estuary Program's Stormwater Work-group, New York Sea Grant's Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program has led efforts to establish an inter-municipal consortium to reduce water quality impairments through education, improved technology, and best management practices.

The Peconic Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) will provide for a Coordinator who will identify and help secure funding, ensure collaborative efforts, and provide leadership for municipalities with limited staff time and budgets.



Inter-municipal agreements ensure the effectiveness of natural resource protection, photo: NYSG NEMO/Eileen Keenan

Agreement Uniting Multiple Entities

Since 2011, an inter-municipal agreement (IMA) and a first-year work plan have been drafted, and in 2013 the majority of the 12 Peconic municipalities adopted resolutions signifying their intent to sign the IMA.

After signing the IMA, North Haven Mayor Jeff Sander said, *"Out here on the East End, we live and die by the bays, and I don't think we can spend enough to make sure that it is taken care of."*

The remaining municipalities have indicated positive intent to sign the agreement in 2014.

Partner: Peconic Estuary Program

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Resilient New York Communities & Economies.

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A New York Sea Grant-initiated project will help more Americans with disabilities access Hudson River waterfront areas

NYSG Hudson River Estuary Project Brings Accessibility to Those with Disabilities

People with disabilities and mobility issues who nevertheless would like to enjoy New York's waterfront areas have found sites along the Hudson River not easily, if at all, accessible.

NYSG Responds

In 2013, to increase recreational access to New York's waterfront resources for people with disabilities, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) partnered with the Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act Center (NADAC) at Cornell University to develop and deliver an assessment of 18 boat launches and adjacent beach areas located along 100 miles of shoreline on both sides of the Hudson River.

The effort was sponsored by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Hudson River Estuary Program. The program's action plan goals include providing access to the river in order to increase and sustain recreation and tourism for underserved communities. NYSG initiated the project at Cornell, contacting appropriate university expertise, and working closely with NYSDEC representatives.

Thorough accessibility compliance evaluations were conducted at 18 NYSDEC-supported sites. The December 2013 report includes specific recommendations to bring each site into compliance with the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. For example, requests included removing a raised edge on a fishing pier entry ramp, marking handicapped parking, and lowering pier railings for wheelchair users to be able to use a fishing rod or crab trap.

Additionally, all sites were assessed from a "user's perspective." These assessments were conducted by staff and clients from Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in the mid-Hudson area.

Future Holds Improved Accessibility

Suggestions from the users' assessment and United Spinal Association evaluation recommendations were provided to site managers to help them prioritize accessibility projects for development.



An Independent Living Center Assessment Team Member enjoys the Newburgh waterfront; photo: Cornell University Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act Center

In 2014, NYSG and Cornell will provide training on estuary accessibility for a wide group of stakeholders in Hudson River communities.

Partners:

- Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act Center
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of State
- New York State Water Resources Institute
- United Spinal Association, and
- 7 mid-Hudson area Independent Living Centers

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Sustainable New York Coastal Development.

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New York Sea Grant Trawl Design Workshops have helped fisheries managers and commercial trawlers improve existing programs and design new initiatives

NYSG Trawl Design Workshops Enhance Fisheries Management and Commercial Trawling

Bottom trawling is widely used to provide fish abundance information to the managers of the \$4 billion Great Lakes fisheries. However, Great Lakes assessment programs' knowledge of on-bottom trawl operation and designs lags behind that of marine trawling programs.



NYSG Responds

To increase awareness of trawl design parameters, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) developed and held an International Trawl Design Workshop for the Great Lakes in 2011. Building on the successes resulting from that educational opportunity for 35 biologists and trawl vessel personnel, the New York and Michigan Sea Grant programs organized a second workshop featuring renowned trawl design experts from the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN).

With National Sea Grant Office funding, a second workshop in 2013 had a larger focus on the dynamics of fish behavior and trawl catches for 42 attendees including fisheries assessment staff from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Idaho and Ontario, and commercial trawlers.

Workshop Meets Information Need

Workshop participants report dramatically increased awareness of trawl design parameters among trawling program managers who subsequently successfully modify trawls to reduce mussel clogging and to deploy gear and underwater cameras to evaluate trawl performance.

The international group of participants in the 2013 NYSG Trawl Design Workshop represented fisheries assessment and commercial trawling interests; photo: Michigan Sea Grant

Participants in the late 2013 workshop indicate plans to deploy additional sensing gear on trawls and have requested the NYSG-led trawl design workshops continue.

Several state and federal program participants have sent trawl design plans to MUN for design evaluation.

Partners: Michigan Sea Grant, US Geological Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric (NOAA) Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, Memorial University of Newfoundland; funding: National Sea Grant

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Safe & Sustainable New York Seafood Supply.

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New York Sea Grant's Clean & Safe Boating Education Campaign sets the model for keeping the public current on required safety equipment, environmentally-sound boating practices, and methods to reduce the transport of invasive species

NYSG Clean & Safe Boating Project

A Model for Education and Industry Partnership

Nearly 90% of respondents to the most recent state-wide Recreational Boaters Expenditures Survey (New York Sea Grant/NYSG, 2003) indicated learning about environmentally-sound boating practices is important.

NYSG Responds

In 2008, NYSG initiated a "Discover Clean & Safe Boating" project that successfully debuted at the Boating Industries Association (BIA) of Upstate New York show. It has since become a model industry-partnered educational effort that has expanded from Great Lakes' venues to sites statewide.

The Discover Clean & Safe Boating vessels, provided by NYS manufacturers and local dealers, drive annual companion programs emanating from their type (pontoon, cruiser, fishing, canoe). They are equipped with all legally-required and recommended equipment.

Education Meets Public Demand Statewide

To date (January 2014):

- More than 500,000 boaters/potential boaters have seen the exhibit at 50+ events
- Boaters have been educated at major events in all of NY's coastal regions (NYC, Hudson River, Finger Lakes, Great Lakes)
- 60+ media interviews have featured the project
- 12' canoe was added to include paddlesports
- Outreach was developed to include deaf boaters
- Boating-related invasive species and watercraft inspection education was added
- In-water life jacket/safety demonstrations have educated 500+ people at four events.



Above, 2013 NYSG Clean & Safe Boat (provided by Marathon Boat Group) at Empire Farm Days, the Northeast's largest outdoor agricultural show; below: NYSG Coastal Recreation & Tourism Specialist Dave White, standing right, with US Coast Guard/Auxiliary personnel at in-water demo, photos: Brian P. Whattam

A Boating Industry Model Partnership

The NYSG Discover Clean & Safe Boating campaign is recognized as a model for partnership development, per impact on partners and industry honors, e.g.:

- NYSG-driven, BIA-sponsored Discover Better Boating TV series (6 episodes/year, ~ 550,000 Time Warner Cable subscribers in 25 counties) launched in 2011, influencing an increase from 1200 to more than 60,000 BIA website hits/month
- program presented BOATUS Foundation Environmental Leadership Commendation, and
- four international conferences presented the project as a model industry partnership.

Partners: Boating Industry Association of Upstate New York, boating industry manufacturers and business owners, NY venue/event managers, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, media



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New York Sea Grant-encouraged initiatives are increasingly incorporating New York seafood products into local food systems and strengthening NY's commercial fishing businesses

NYSG Helping to Diversify Marketing of New York's Family-Owned Fishing Businesses

Increased public awareness via mainstream media continues to fuel the local food systems movement in New York. More than ever, consumers have a wealth of information to make decisions about their diet to promote a healthier lifestyle. At the same time, small family-owned and operated fishing businesses continue to struggle under prevailing economic challenges.

NYSG Responds

In recognition of the needs of commercial fishing businesses, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) outreach was enhanced to ensure the integration of seafood into the NY food systems movement and allow the businesses to connect with this emergent market.

In 2013, Dock to Dish, a local entrepreneurial effort encouraged by NYSG, conducted a trial Community Supported Fisheries (CSF) business model. CSF creates the opportunity for the public to purchase seafood shares directly from commercial fishing enterprises.

"NY Sea Grant insight and encouragement was integral in establishing the foundation and guiding principles for our CSF, and Dock to Dish is having tremendous impact in the way our communities view seafood that is being harvested from our local waters."

— Dock to Dish Coordinator Sean Barrett

The Dock to Dish business model is comprised of more than 36 commercial fishermen and wild shellfish harvesters.

Under the 2013 trial, six fishing vessels supplied seafood to eight households, and subscriptions for 2014 sold out due to its overwhelming success.

CSF Pilot Run Prompts Desired Response

Successes made possible with NYSG guidance include:

- Launch of a new local seafood marketing business on Long Island's east end
- 150 subscribers in four east end communities will receive a regular supply of fresh seafood products plus improved access to information



THE MODERN

Dock to Dish Coordinator Sean Barrett makes a presentation to chefs at The Modern restaurant inside The Museum of Modern Art; photo courtesy of Sean Barrett

to make decisions about improving their seafood nutrition in 2014

- 12-14 restaurants on Long Island's North and South Forks and in New York City now will feature Dock to Dish locally-harvested seafood on menus
- Overwhelming CSF response generated a 300 future member wait list for Dock to Dish seafood.

The next step in this business model development will be to partner this CSF with small farms to sell local fresh produce along with the local seafood shares.

Partners: Dock to Dish, commercial fishing businesses, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Safe & Sustainable New York Seafood Supply.

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