



Governor's Office of Storm Recovery

For Immediate Release

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF STORM RECOVERY CALLS ON VOLUNTEERS TO GUIDE SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY HABITAT HEALTH MAPPING SURVEY

*Seagrass Mapping Project Uses Crowd-Sourced Data and Field Study in a Long-Term Effort
to Monitor Habitat Quality on the South Shore*

LONG ISLAND, NY (August 8, 2018) - The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery urges Long Islanders to be active environmental stewards by logging on and taking part in the Long Island South Shore Benthic Mapping project to study the health of the South Shore Estuary Reserve ecosystem. Volunteers will use a web application to submit water clarity and eelgrass observations that will supplement the aerial photography and field studies underway to map area's sea floor habitats.



The State's response to Superstorm Sandy includes shoreline and community resiliency improvement projects on Long Island's South Shore designed to restore the coast line and mitigate flooding inland. Monitoring and mapping aquatic vegetation and water quality is key to understanding the effects of these habitat restoration and resiliency projects. Aquatic vegetation such as eelgrass requires good water quality to grow and is a good measure of ecosystem health. In turn, the grass provides habitat for many commercially and recreationally important fish and shellfish species, stabilizes the seabed and supports coastal resiliency.

Through the summer volunteers can contribute to the environmental monitoring efforts by submitting water clarity and seagrass observations from all along Long Island's south shore bays, from western Nassau and South Oyster Bay through Great South Bay to Moriches and Shinnecock. These observations can be submitted through an online form, [Water Clarity for SSER Eelgrass](#), and seagrass observations can be submitted through a [Got Seagrass?](#) form, both developed by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). More information about seagrass in NYS is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/110813.html>, and more information on the South Shore Estuary Reserve is available at <https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/sser/>.

The project's resulting aquatic vegetation mapping and environmental data will be published in early 2019.



The Long Island South Shore Benthic Mapping project is funded by GOSR, in partnership with the federal National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the NY Department of State (DOS).



GOSR, NOAA, and National Parks service staff at work in the bay. Geography specialists from NOAA mapped and photographed seagrass and environmental conditions, with boat and logistics support provided by the Fire Island National Seashore. For more information on GOSR's initiatives, including [Community Reconstruction](#), [Infrastructure](#), and [Living With The Bay Rebuild By Design](#) programs, please visit <https://stormrecovery.ny.gov/>.



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