

Long Beach West Project

Restoring Barrier Beach Habitat



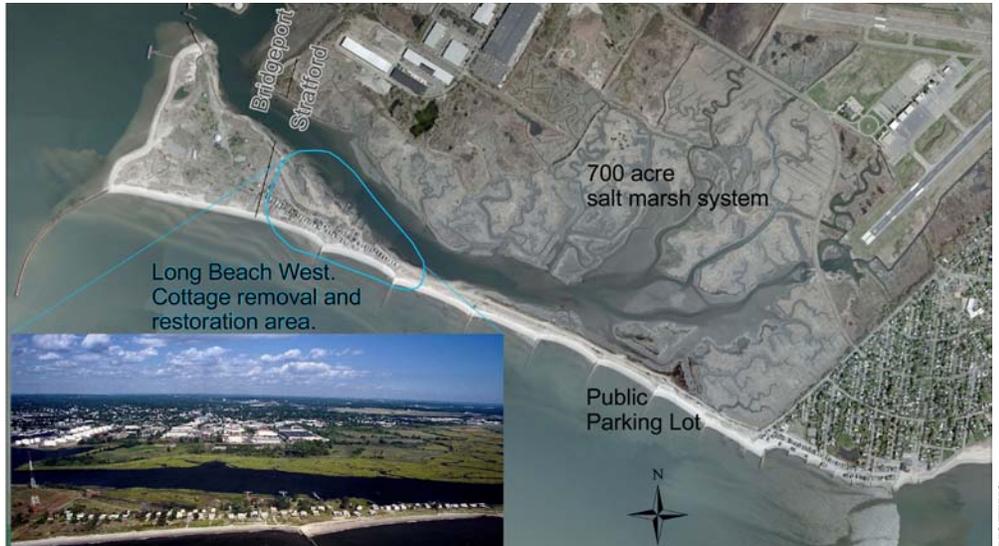
Roseate Tern

The History at Long Beach

Long Beach West is a 35-acre section of the western end of Long Beach on the Connecticut shoreline in Stratford, Connecticut. Like most coastal habitat in Southern New England, Long Beach West was developed. The cottages at the site were leased by the town until the bridge connecting the beach to the City of Bridgeport burnt down in 1996. Since then, the buildings were abandoned and extensively vandalized. Still remaining at the site are 37 cottages, 27 outbuildings, four docks, and associated debris. The dilapidated structures are a safety hazard and an eye sore. Debris, trash, contaminants, and outdated septic systems litter the site.

Cottage Removal and Beach Restoration

The Southern New England-New York Bight Coastal Program (SNEP), part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Coastal Program, received nearly \$1 million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds (ARRA) for demolition and restoration of Long Beach. In addition, funding was provided through the Environmental Protection Agency's Long Island Sound Futures Fund (\$100,000), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Dissolved Oxygen Environmental Benefit Fund (\$53,000), the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Long Island Sound Fund (\$50,000), and a Fairfield County Community Foundation Grant (\$30,000).



Removing cottages on Long Beach will provide shorebirds with important nesting habitat.

Demolition of the cottages will involve the remediation of hazardous waste materials and demolition and removal of structures. The demolition contract was awarded to LVI Environmental Services, Inc., of Milford, Conn., in December 2009. Restoration of the site will occur following the demolition and will focus on restoring natural habitat for protected wildlife and plants at the site.

This project has strong support from many conservation partners. Town residents, in 2008, voted in favor of selling Long Beach West to the USFWS, which would manage the property as part of the



Abandoned and vandalized cottage.

October 2009

November 2009

December 2009

July 2010

September 15 - December 2010

January 2011

Contract awarded for hazardous waste inventory

Hazardous waste inventory of the site, and Final Environmental Assessment and FONSI circulate

Hazardous waste removal and demolition contract awarded

Habitat restoration plan in development

Hazardous waste removal and demolition

Habitat restoration begins

Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, provided funding is available and there is a final agreement on terms and price.

The project will serve to clean up a vandalized and unsafe area and restore the barrier beach. It will also provide jobs within the local economy. Located in an urban area, this beach will be a natural place for the community to enjoy while also providing important wildlife habitat.

The Importance of Long Beach

Long Beach, including Long Beach West and Pleasure Beach, is part of the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier beach in Connecticut. The beach contains sand dunes, tidal wetlands, and sand flats that are critical habitat for federal- and state-listed species. It is also adjacent to a 700-acre estuarine system, an existing unit of Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, that provides one of the most critical areas for birds in the state. Long Beach:

- represents 20 percent of the undeveloped barrier beach habitat in Connecticut and is one of the sites identified by the Long Island Sound Study Habitat Restoration Initiative for beach and dune habitats;
- is the most important remaining block of nesting habitat for federally threatened piping plovers and state threatened least terns in Connecticut;
- is recognized as an Important Bird Area by National Audubon Society;
- is home to five state-listed plant species; and
- is adjacent to one of the most productive oyster beds on the Connecticut coast.

USFWS



Long beach is home to the federally threatened Piping Plover (eggs above).

Nate Bachelier



The end result of restoration efforts are likely to result in pristine beach/dune habitat.

Thanks to Our Partners

Without the assistance of our many partners this project would not be possible. Project partners include: Trust for Public Land, Town of Stratford, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Audubon Connecticut, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound, Connecticut Ornithological Association, Environmental Protection Agency Long Island Sound Study, Fairfield County Community Foundation, Land-Tech Consultants, Inc., SoundKeeper, The Nature Conservancy, Protect Your Environment, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



USFWS

Exposed sewage pipes.



Kate O'Brien

Least Tern chicks.

For additional information or questions contact:

Sharon Marino, Project Leader
 Southern New England - New York Bight Coastal Program
 401/364-9124
<http://www.fws.gov/r5snep/>
<http://recovery.doi.gov/press/bureaus/us-fish-and-wildlife-service/barrier-beach-restoration-on-long-beach-west/>

Federal Relay Service
 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
 1 800/877-8339

September 2010



Jerry and Marcy Monkman/EcoPhotography.com



A critical piece of Connecticut's shoreline is being protected for both people and wildlife.