RECLAIMING OUR WATER INITIATIVE: TARGETING THE NITROGEN POLLUTION CRISIS & RESTORING COASTAL RESILIENCY

SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE STEVE BELLONE

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SUFFOLK COUNTY RECLAIM OUR WATER: ACTIONS TAKEN

Collect and Package Data
COLLAPSE OF FISHING INDUSTRY, ECONOMIC IMPACT
Tourism is one of Long Island’s largest industries
Distribution of Coastal Vegetation: 1930
Distribution of Coastal Vegetation: 2012

Estimated distribution of eelgrass beds in the South Shore Estuary in 2012 courtesy of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.
NITROGEN SOURCES IN THE GREAT SOUTH BAY

- Septic/cesspool systems: 69%
- Atmospheric deposition: 21%
- Sewage treatment plants: 1%
- Golf courses: 1%
- Lawns: 7%
- Agriculture: 1%

(source: Kinney, E.L. and Valiela, 2011)
61% OF SUFFOLK COUNTY’S POPULATION LIVES IN THE GREAT SOUTH BAY WATERSHED

Source: “Assessing future risk: quantifying the effects of sea level rise on storm surge risk for the southern shores of Long Island” 2012, Natural Hazards, by Christine Shepard, a postdoctoral fellow with the Nature Conservancy’s Global Marine Team
360,000 unsewered homes in Suffolk County
Nitrogen Pollution and Adverse Impacts on Resilient Tidal Marshlands

NYS DEC Technical Briefing Summary

Photo Courtesy of TNC

Photo Courtesy of TNC
Suffolk County has identified four priorities:

1. Fortify our existing wastewater infrastructure
2. Sewer targeted areas
3. Pilot alternative/innovative on-site wastewater treatment systems
4. Address agricultural impacts
ACTIONS TAKEN: PRIORITY AREAS
ACTIONS TAKEN: 2014 STATE OF THE COUNTY
ACTIONS TAKEN: COMMUNITY OUTREACH
ACTIONS TAKEN: MULTI-STATE SEPTIC TOUR
ACTIONS TAKEN: IBM SMARTER CITIES CHALLENGE
ACTIONS TAKEN: EDUCATION

crapSHOOT Film Contest:

“Because We Can’t Gamble With Our Water Quality”

Coincided with EPA’s Septic Smart Week in Sept
ACTIONS TAKEN: SEPTIC DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM
Governor Cuomo Announces Actions to Strengthen Coastal Resiliency Against Future Storms on Long Island
“Clean water should be the birthright of every Long Islander and it’s time we tackle this crisis together and Reclaim our Water.”

-Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive
2014 State of the County