

Old Saybrook Coastal Resilience Coalition (OSCRC)

Quarterly Newsletter – July 2025



Engineering Firm Selected for Marsh Restoration and Erosion Control Study

The Towns of Old Saybrook and Westbrook received a \$323,400 Grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Long Island Sound Futures Fund and the two towns contributed an additional \$191,500 to develop strategies for restoring marshes and controlling erosion along a one-mile stretch of shoreline from Chapman Beach in Westbrook to Indian Town in Old Saybrook. Members of the Old Saybrook Coastal Resilience Coalition (OSCRC) are part of the committee responsible for overseeing Fuss & O’Neill, the engineering firm selected to conduct the studies.

A tide gate and culvert in the Chalker Beach Marsh contribute to incomplete draining of the marsh, degraded marsh vegetation, and flooding in the Chalker Beach neighborhood. Flooding also occurs in neighborhoods adjacent to nearby Cold Spring Brook and Hager Creek. Continuing erosion threatens to increase flooding frequency and intensity, and further impair the marsh ecosystem.

The project will develop alternatives for restoring the environmentally degraded Chalker Beach Marsh, mitigating erosion of the Cold Spring Brook Marsh and adjacent shorelines, and mitigating flood hazards within the residential neighborhoods abutting the Cold Spring Brook, Chalker Beach Marsh, and Hager Creek/Mud Creek Marshes. The selected engineering firm Fuss & O’Neill will apply a numerical hydraulic model of the marshes including shoreline structures and near shore bottom surface elevations to establish a baseline from which to compare various marsh restoration and erosion abatement alternatives.

In this Edition

Old Saybrook – Westbrook Restoration and Erosion Control Study

Living Shoreline Information Sheet

Community Highlight - Fenwood

Fulfilling OSCRC Mission

Links We Like



Engineering Firm Selected for Marsh Restoration and Erosion Control Study (continued)

The model results will support three separate evaluations:

- Multiple alternatives and a recommended restoration approach for Chalker Beach Marsh with cost estimates for restoration design in a subsequent permitting phase of the project.
- Flood mitigation strategies for residential communities adjacent to the coastal marshes in the study area including Chapman Beach in Westbrook and Chalker Beach, Summerwood, Bel-Aire Manor, and Indian Town in Old Saybrook.
- Multiple alternatives and a recommended erosion control strategy for the beach and marsh fronting Cold Spring Brook.

Old Saybrook – Westbrook Marsh Restoration and Erosion Control Study Area

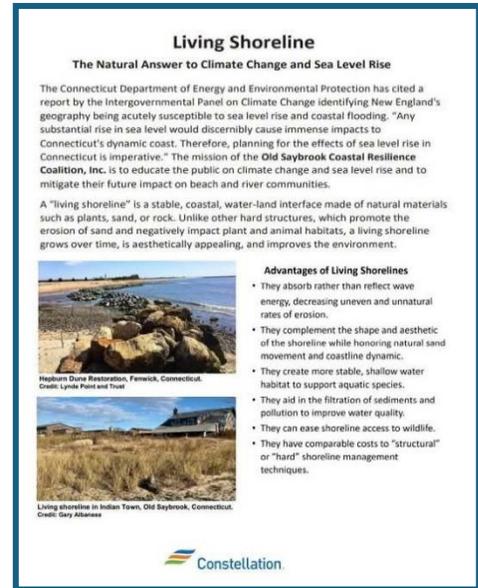


Source: Old Saybrook/Westbrook Marsh Restoration and Erosion Control Study Grant Application

The primary goal of the study is to develop the documentation necessary to design site-specific restoration and mitigation plans to a level that can be used to acquire funding for permitting and construction. There will be three public meetings associated with the project, a kick-off meeting, a mid-project meeting, and a presentation of project results prior to completing the final reports. The project is expected to be completed by August 2026.

OSCRC Publishes Living Shoreline Information Sheet

Old Saybrook Coastal Resilience Coalition (OSCRC) published a “Living Shoreline” information sheet describing recent efforts to stabilize coastal shorelines and highlights a recent success at Fenwick and Indiantown in Old Saybrook. The “Living Shoreline” information sheet is posted on OSCRC’s website (www.oscrcct.org) and Facebook page and will be available at future public meetings. OSCRC Board member Marie Cerino applied for and received a grant from Constellation Energy to educate the public on addressing sea level rise. The “Living Shoreline” information sheet was published using a portion of the grant funds. The grant will also support OSCRC’s development of additional approaches for raising awareness of the coastal hazards along the Old Saybrook coastal and Connecticut River shorelines.



Community Highlight - Fenwood

Following Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) repaired damage to the seawall along Route 154 in Knollwood Beach. The repairs did not include the seawall at neighboring Fenwood District. Ed Rajotte, an OSCRC board member, observed deterioration of the Fenwood seawall footing that could lead to significant damage during future storm events. Ed reached out to State Representatives Devin Carney and Martha Marx to identify the Fenwood seawall as a candidate for a DOT maintenance project. The DOT inspected the existing seawall deterioration, made temporary repairs, and will begin design and permitting for a permanent restoration once funds are available. Construction is anticipated to begin after Labor Day 2028.

Fulfilling OSCRC’s Educational Mission

OSCRC Chair Joe Russo presented the science of sea level rise to a combined meeting of the Old Saybrook Zoning and Planning Commissions on February 19, 2025.

On April 26, 2025, OSCRC was represented at the Old Saybrook Conservation Commission Environmental Fair at the Middle School. Members of the OSCRC engaged attendees in discussions about the impacts of sea level rise on Old Saybrook and actions that can be taken to mitigate the flooding and erosion that we see in our coastal marshes and shorelines.

On July 17, 2025 OSCRC will participate in a panel discussion with landscape architects in the seminar *Rooted Solutions – Designing Rain Gardens for Resilient Shoreline Homes* at the Florence Griswold Museum to discuss living shorelines and how they can be incorporated into landscape design.

www.oscrcct.org





The Old Saybrook Coastal Resilience Coalition (OSCRC) was formed to coordinate a response to sea level rise by documenting vulnerabilities of local beachfront and riverfront communities, educating the public on these vulnerabilities and, through governmental and commercial partnerships, identifying and implementing intermediate and long-term, science-based, mitigation solutions.

Our response to sea level rise is going to be costly, time-consuming, and socially challenging. We are looking for partners, funding sources, skilled professionals, and individuals who can assist us to sustainably fortify the infrastructure along the Connecticut coastline.

Please email us at oscrcinc@gmail.com or go to <https://oscrcct.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61563259214783> to support our efforts.

Links we like:

Connecticut Institute of Resilience & Climate:

<https://circa.uconn.edu/>

The Nature Conservancy's Coastal Resilience:

<https://coastalresilience.org/>

Old Saybrook Land Use Department Coastal Resilience:

<https://www.oldsaybrookct.gov/land-use/pages/coastal-resilience>

NOAA Office for Coastal Management:

[Natural and Structural Measures for Shoreline Stabilization](#)

FEMA Region 1 Office:

<https://www.fema.gov/about/regions/region-1>

The OSCRC Board of Directors

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The OSCRC Newsletter is published quarterly. If you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter, email OSCRC Newsletter editor Jamie Greacen at jrgreacen@gmail.com to be added to the distribution list.

We are seeking volunteers to help manage our social media. If you are interested in helping us curate and improve our website and Facebook page, contact us at oscrcinc@gmail.com

A special shout out to Chef Rick for providing space for our monthly meetings. You can enjoy a variety of Chef Rick's tasty offerings at Mindy K's on Boston Post Road in Old Saybrook.