Long Island’s unique character and culture derive from its rich and vibrant agricultural and maritime history. The region’s parks, farms, and beaches provide substantial economic and recreational benefits to the region, support a multi billion-dollar tourism industry, and represent what Long Islanders most value about their way of life. As is the case with half of the United States population, the region’s 2.8 million residents rely on groundwater as their sole source of drinking water. New York State’s largest and most extensive groundwater system underlies Nassau and Suffolk Counties, making the protection of Long Island’s environment a priority. However, mounting challenges threaten Long Island’s water bodies, drinking water, and natural habitats that if left unresolved, will affect the region’s long-term viability and the well being of its residents.

Long Island’s groundwater system lies beneath a porous surface soil layer that provides little barrier against toxins, making the connection between what is done at the land surface and what is found in the groundwater unmistakable. Overdevelopment, antiquated wastewater systems, and human activity (pollution, over fertilizing, overfishing) continue to degrade groundwater, surface water, and marine life. Additionally, while land conservation is an integral element of the Long Island economy, the region’s lack of planning and suburban sprawl has resulted in diminished open space and a loss of farmland. Limited energy alternatives, inadequate transportation options, and a proliferation of polluted brownfields further harm the natural resources that are distinctive of Long Island.

Long Islanders are united in their desire to maintain a healthy environment while ensuring the economic vitality of the region as indicated by their approval of nearly every land acquisition measure put before them, however Long Island’s fragile ecosystem requires constant vigilance and support.
Recent LICF Grants

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST - $30,000 to encourage specialty crop farmers to adopt nutrient management practices to reduce the harmful environmental effects of nitrogen loading and runoff.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FUND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, Farmingdale - $20,000 to promote the safe disposal of pharmaceuticals by healthcare institutions and the public.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SUFFOLK COUNTY, Riverhead - $22,000 to support environmentally sound pest-management programs at six vineyards on the North Fork.

LONG ISLAND PINE BARRENS SOCIETY, Riverhead - $55,000 (2 years) for a multi-year plan to protect Long Island water quality.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, East Hampton - $35,000 to help create messaging for a campaign to improved water quality on Long Island.

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK RESEARCH CENTER, Farmingdale - $22,000 to inform the public about the risks of pesticide use and encourage the use of organic alternatives to pest control.

ONE REGION, Tri-State - $30,000 for a funders’ collaborative on transportation and land use reform in the tri-state metropolitan region.

OPERATION SPLASH, Freeport - $18,000 to involve the community in addressing water pollution in the Western Bays.

PECONIC BAYKEEPER, Quogue - $20,000 to advocate for nature-based solutions to coastal hazards and climate change, like wetlands and eelgrass beds instead of hardening shore structures.

PECONIC GREEN GROWTH, Riverhead - $25,000 to pilot an alternative wastewater treatment system for commonly used septic tanks for the hamlet of Orient.

PECONIC LAND TRUST, Southampton - $10,000 to involve the public in an update of Suffolk County’s agricultural and farmland protection plan.

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY School of Marine & Atmospheric Sciences, Southampton Campus - $15,000 to launch the Shinnecock Bay Restoration Project, which help will limit nitrogen contamination and improve water quality with organic filtration.

SUSTAINABLE LONG ISLAND, Farmingdale - $35,000 (2 years) to develop an environmental justice action agenda on Long Island and to build the capacity of two grassroots organizations to create a movement for environmental justice in their communities.

VISION LONG ISLAND, Northport - $20,000 to promote public investment in housing and commercial development built near transit hubs.

To learn more about how LICF addresses this issue, please visit our website at www.licf.org.