

Prime Time for NY Beach and Boating Season: How's the Water? May 27, 2014

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Photo: With the kick-off of beach season, the Long Island Clean Water Partnership is launching a campaign to raise awareness about the need to protect and restore the waters off Long Island. Photo: Kenton Rowe

LONG ISLAND, N.Y. - New Yorkers may appreciate this summer's beach and boating season more than ever, given the long hard winter. However, local advocates warn that the waters they are enjoying need attention now.

Senior marine scientist Carl Lobue, The Nature Conservancy, says aging sewage treatment systems, and in some areas the absence of sewage treatment, are fueling nitrogen pollution on Long Island.

"We're all anxious to get fishing and boating and get down to the beach, although the water is still a little bit cold," Lobue says. "The unfortunate reality is the water is not what it used to be on Long Island, but a lot of people have recognized that and are working to try to turn things around."

One major sign of progress he points to is a stakeholders hearing Wednesday that Gov. Cuomo has called for Brentwood. It will bring state and county officials together with experts and the public to discuss [solutions](#) to local infrastructure problems linked to pollution.

Lobue says both county executives have played a critical role in raising awareness of the problem of declining water quality and why it is critical that Long Island protect and restore it.

"The bays and the harbors drive our tourism industry," Lobue notes. "We have 97,000 boats registered in Nassau and Suffolk County alone. We spend over \$1 billion a year just on recreational boating. The quality of our surface waters is so important to our economy."

Lobue says the Long Island Clean Water Partnership just launched an advertising campaign to increase public awareness on water quality issues.

"What we are finding is that people really do care, once they understand what's causing the problem and that we know how to fix it," he adds. "And what's really interesting is that some of the fixes with the harmful algal blooms and our fishing losses also end up protecting our drinking water."

Details on the projects are available at www.LongIslandCleanWaterPartnership.org.

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