



Nitrogen Smart Communities

Nitrogen Smart Communities (NSC) is a voluntary program created by The Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC) and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC) Long Island Watershed Program (LIWP). By following a series of 5 steps, each community will learn more about its distinct sources of nitrogen pollution, make a plan to address priorities, and take actionable measures to reduce or eliminate nitrogen and engage residents so that they too can play a role in improving water quality where they live. Participating communities earn tiered levels of status certification – bronze, silver, and gold.

Nitrogen is the leading cause of water quality deterioration in Long Island's estuaries. Excess nitrogen can cause toxic algal blooms that lead to low oxygen conditions, fish kills, and degraded wetlands, and marine habitats. Nitrogen also contaminates the groundwater which is the sole source of Long Island's drinking water.

Nitrogen Smart Community (NSC) Program Goals

- Inform, educate, and encourage community knowledge, engagement, and responsibility related to nitrogen pollution.
- Inventory unique sources of nitrogen pollution within each municipality and the impacted waterbodies.
- Create community-specific action plans and schedule activities to reduce nitrogen and protect Long Island's water.
- Engage in an evolving and ongoing process of nitrogen reduction actions.
- Participate in protecting the water quality of Long Island for generations to come.

How do communities benefit from the NSC program?

- Acknowledgement as a leader on Long Island for clean water.
- Investing in economic growth, which will benefit tourism and property values.
- Improving community public health and safety.
- Networking and sharing best practices with peers.
- Greater engagement with residents who care about the future of their community.

How do communities participate in the NSC program?

- To learn more about NSC visit [Nitrogen Smart Communities](#), or email liwaterquality@dec.ny.gov