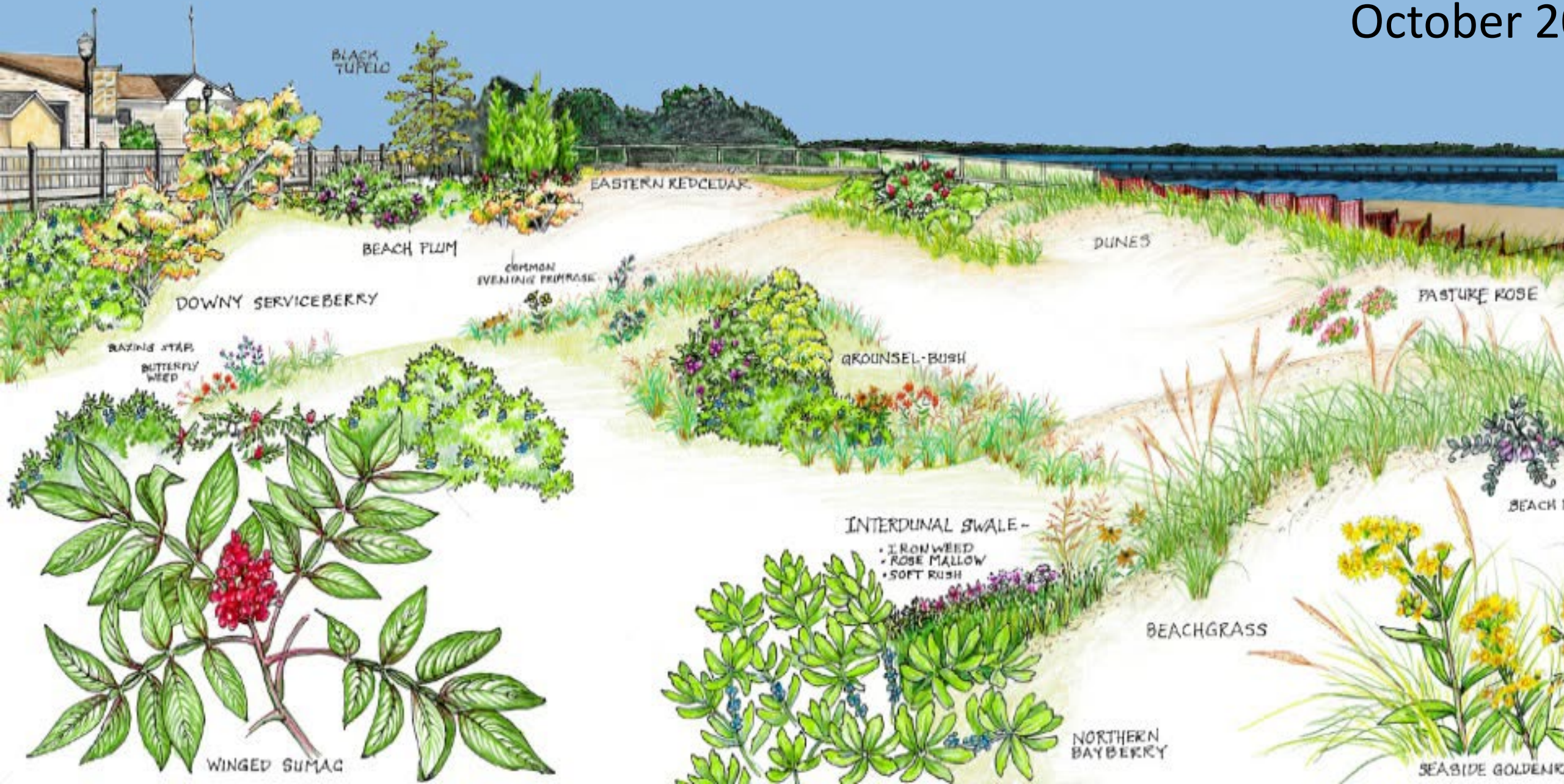


Eco Park West Haven

October 20





Why Eco Park?

A protected shoreline

Eco Park occupies City of West Haven land within the approximately 39-acre shoreline conservation easement established with the Land Trust in 2007.

A new chapter in conservation

The project turns a small portion of the shoreline into a native coastal planting and learning space for residents and visitors.

The Goal

Demonstrate shoreline restoration, support pollinators and wildlife, and connect the public with local ecology.

Partnerships made it possible

Land Trust + City

The Land Trust of West Haven and the City of West Haven collaborated on the vision, site planning, implementation and public programming.

Technical and educational partners

Project collaborators included SLR Consulting, GEI, Save the Sound, Connecticut Sea Grant, and Connecticut Audubon.

Community engagement

Shoreline Restoration Committee, schools, volunteers, environmental educators, and shoreline stakeholders help connect the site to the wider community.

From concept to site plan

Design for place

Select native coastal plants, pollinator resources and interpretive elements appropriate to a highly visible and visited public shoreline.

Coordinate across disciplines

Align conservation goals, landscape design, City operations, installation work and educational programming.

Plan for public learning

Interpretive signs and QR codes connect on-site observations with more detailed information and resources on the website.

Funding

Despite applying for several grants, we were not able to secure funding (Long Island Sound Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program)

- **ARPA Funding \$200,000**
- **State Bond Commission Funds \$200,000**

What funding enables

Planning and technical expertise, site preparation, plant installation, interpretive materials and ongoing care.

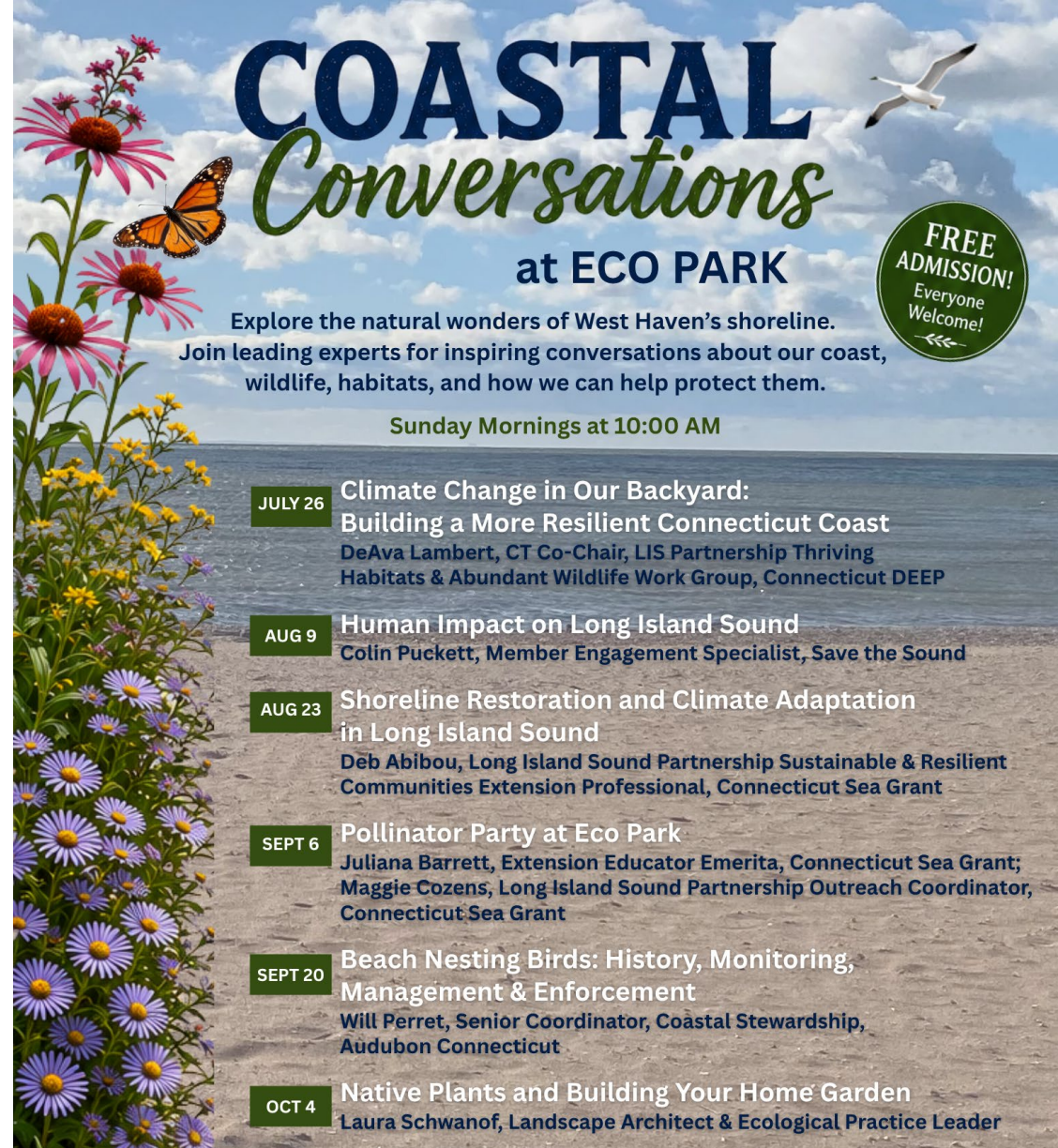
Stewardship continues after opening

Maintenance, replacement planting, monitoring, and programming require sustained capacity and resources.

Project Progression

- **May 2021 - Shoreline Restoration Committee was formed**
- **SLR to 30%**
- **Oct – Dec 2022 – Community Input (Onsite Event and Online Survey)**
- **GEI to 100%**
- **June 2026 — Grand Opening**
- **July – October 2026 — Coastal Conversation Series**

The series has brought together professionals from leading environmental organizations to share their knowledge directly with the West Haven community.



COASTAL *Conversations*

at ECO PARK

Explore the natural wonders of West Haven's shoreline.
Join leading experts for inspiring conversations about our coast,
wildlife, habitats, and how we can help protect them.

Sunday Mornings at 10:00 AM

FREE ADMISSION!
Everyone Welcome!

- JULY 26** **Climate Change in Our Backyard:
Building a More Resilient Connecticut Coast**
DeAva Lambert, CT Co-Chair, LIS Partnership Thriving
Habitats & Abundant Wildlife Work Group, Connecticut DEEP
- AUG 9** **Human Impact on Long Island Sound**
Colin Puckett, Member Engagement Specialist, Save the Sound
- AUG 23** **Shoreline Restoration and Climate Adaptation
in Long Island Sound**
Deb Abibou, Long Island Sound Partnership Sustainable & Resilient
Communities Extension Professional, Connecticut Sea Grant
- SEPT 6** **Pollinator Party at Eco Park**
Juliana Barrett, Extension Educator Emerita, Connecticut Sea Grant;
Maggie Cozens, Long Island Sound Partnership Outreach Coordinator,
Connecticut Sea Grant
- SEPT 20** **Beach Nesting Birds: History, Monitoring,
Management & Enforcement**
Will Perret, Senior Coordinator, Coastal Stewardship,
Audubon Connecticut
- OCT 4** **Native Plants and Building Your Home Garden**
Laura Schwanof, Landscape Architect & Ecological Practice Leader



EXPLORE. CONNECT. PROTECT
Together for a healthy shoreline.



City of
West Haven

 Eco Park, Old Grove Park Building, 1 Palace Street |  landtrustwesthaven@gmail.com

Challenges

- **First rodeo**
- **Committee issues**
- **Securing funding**
- **Changing design plan**
- **Planting accuracy and weeds!!!**
- **Online trolls and educating the public to be patient**
- **Building awareness for Eco Park**

Successes

- **Creating a new coastal conservation and educational space**
- **Restoring native plants (16,000 plants!) and wildlife habitat**
- **Building successful partnerships**
- **Developing a permanent outdoor classroom**
- **Generating public awareness and community engagement**
- **Establishing a new, free public educational program (Coastal Conversations) and creating interactive learning opportunities**

Maintenance is part of restoration

Routine care

Identify and remove invasive or unwanted plants while distinguishing them from desirable seeded native growth.

Monitor the park

Track plant survival and species present, plant replacement needs, and changing site conditions.

Protect the site

Maintain fencing, signage, and public access while minimizing disturbance to establishing vegetation.

Feedback and community response

Public engagement

The grand opening, Coastal Conversations, and school outreach demonstrate opportunities for residents to experience the site and ask questions.

Operational feedback

Plant identification and weed control have emerged as important issues requiring follow-through.

Next step: capture feedback systematically

Gather visitor and partner comments, attendance, school participation, and maintenance observations; distinguish documented comments from general impressions. Track website visits

What comes next

Establish a repeatable care plan

Document plant inventory, seasonal maintenance tasks, responsibilities, and a process for escalating issues.

Measure ecological and educational progress

Track plant establishment, pollinator observations, program attendance, and school participation.

Keep telling the story

Use signs, Coastal Conversations, social media, and Land Trust member communications to connect conservation with daily shoreline life.