

## **GEI Consultants chosen for Boardwalk Eco-Restoration Project**

**WEST HAVEN**, Oct. 23, 2023 — The West Haven Shoreline Restoration Committee has chosen GEI Consultants Inc. for Phase 2 of the West Haven Boardwalk Resilience and Eco-Restoration Project.

Over the next four months, the committee will collaborate with the Glastonbury consulting company to complete the coastal resilience and ecological restoration of a 1.5-acre portion of the West Haven shoreline adjacent to Old Grove Park.

The committee, also known as the SRC, will announce its final plans to the public in February 2024.

“The project addresses challenges associated with restoring and preserving native coastal habitat in a densely populated urban area and in response to climate change,” said project co-leads Marilyn Wilkes, the vice president of the Land Trust of West Haven, and Mark E. Paine Jr., the director of the city Department of Parks and Recreation. “It will help the community understand the connection between robust ecosystems and coastal resilience, will provide accessible and healthy green spaces to systemically marginalized and vulnerable populations, and will manage the shoreline space so that wildlife and people can thrive.”

The project’s target outcomes and impacts include:

- The restoration of 1.5 acres of native coastal habitat and improved habitat connectivity to adjacent public green spaces.

- A long-term plan for invasive plant control and restoration maintenance at the site.
- A living classroom for public school and public use that includes interpretive signage linking by QR code to in-depth information on the Land Trust's website.
- Free educational events on-site designed to appeal to a range of audiences and ages.
- Improvements to public amenities, including benches and walking paths at the site.
- Access for residents under the Americans with Disabilities Act, including access mats to the beach area.
- The creation of a replicable model for use by similar coastal restoration efforts in other communities.
- More site visitors equating to more economic opportunity in the area.

In August 2022, Rep. Dorinda Borer, D-West Haven, secured \$200,000 in state funding for the project's design phase.

Additional funding is needed for the construction phase, and the committee is applying to a number of state and local environmental agencies.

GEI, a full-service ecological firm, provides geotechnical, environmental, water resources, civil design and construction services throughout the project's delivery

lifecycle, from conceptual planning to permitting, design, engineering and construction management.

The committee chose GEI from a competitive pool of request-for-proposal applications because of its innovative strategies, extensive experience with successful shoreline projects and team approach.

The SRC is composed of members of the Land Trust, the city and the City Council, as well as residents who volunteer with local environmental groups.

Extensive community outreach contributed to Phase 1's completion of preliminary engineering plans to 30% design.

Phase 1 plans and community surveys can be viewed on the project's website at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/806ffac8f509415a8278595435707de4>.

Shoreline Restoration Project updates can be found on the Land Trust's website at <https://landtrustwesthavenct.org/> or the city's website at <https://www.cityofwesthaven.com/354/Shoreline-Restoration-Project>.



Members of the West Haven Shoreline Restoration Committee and officials of GEI Consultants Inc. of Glastonbury conduct a site visit at the West Haven Boardwalk Resilience and Eco-Restoration Project on Oct. 23, 2023. From left, project co-lead Mark E. Paine Jr., the director of the West Haven Department of Parks and Recreation; Jane Whelan of the Menunkatuck Audubon Society; Ron Walters of the Native Plant Initiative; Kathy Hebert of the Land Trust of West Haven; Robin Parsons of the Native Plant Initiative; and Michael Koontz, GEI's senior urban design/waterfront planning practice leader, and Laura Schwanof, GEI's landscape architect/ecological practice leader. Missing

from photo is project co-lead Marilyn Wilkes, the Land Trust's vice president. (SRC  
Photo/Marilyn Wilkes)

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