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**About R.E.S.A.**

The Research & Education Station at Manresa Wilds (R.E.S.A.) is a founding partnership between Manresa Island Corp. and five leading scientific and academic institutions, with the mission of turning the 125-acre Manresa Wilds site into a "living lab" for coastal research, environmental stewardship, and place-based education. Manresa Island Corp. has committed \$500,000 in initial grants to support these partnerships.

Founding Partners & Key Roles

- [Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution \(WHOI\)](#): Activating the site for long-term scientific study and exploring the creation of a permanent Manresa Island Center for Coastal Urban Oceanography.
 - WHOI has installed a sophisticated acoustic water level sensor on the Manresa dock. This is the third link in a Norwalk Harbor monitoring triangle (joining sensors at The Maritime Aquarium and Sheffield Island). This network tracks real-time tides and sound-wave data to predict "hyperlocal" flooding.
 - Proposed future opportunities include:
 - Custom Research Vessel: Plans for a dedicated 25-meter state-of-the-art coastal research vessel homeported at Manresa Wilds, designed to support up to 30 people for research and public outreach throughout the Long Island Sound.
 - The "Manresa Wilds Stations": A proposed network of autonomous, solar-powered water-quality observatories at the Norwalk River mouth and Manresa Pier to capture real-time pollution and nutrient data.
 - Remote Exploration Command Center: A vision for a "telepresence" hub where students and visitors can watch – and even help control – underwater robots (ROVs) exploring the deep ocean in real-time.

- Advanced Robotics: Using specialized robots like the Res-Q ROV (to remove "ghost" fishing gear and trash from the Sound) and Deep Venture AUVs (autonomous vehicles).
 - Green Energy Innovation: Testing "Feather Folding" wind turbines – next-generation, portable, and storm-tolerant renewable energy systems designed for rugged coastal environments.
- **The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk**: Leading shoreline monitoring and educational field trips for local students and working closely with Manresa Wilds and additional partners to shape educational programming for students visiting the Northern Forest.
 - The Aquarium is also exploring a potential permanent presence that would unite research, animal welfare, and education. This vision includes behind-the-scenes spaces for animal welfare and quarantine, with the potential for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation; exhibits and animal encounters specifically connected to the Manresa Wilds story and the Long Island Sound; and multipurpose classrooms with the capacity to serve thousands of learners, including Norwalk Public Schools students and regional educators.
- **Wesleyan University**: Seven undergraduate and graduate courses to date have engaged in interdisciplinary studies of Manresa, including “Media and Environment,” “Energy Legacies and Ecological Futures,” “Environmental Arts Research,” “Environmental and Industrial History of the Long Island Sound,” “Soils,” “Environmental Geochemistry,” and “Botanizing Worlds.”
 - Geochemical Studies: Students collected sediment cores from the marshes that provide a record of environmental changes dating back several hundreds of years. In addition, students measured tree ring chemistries to establish the history of air pollution of the area.
 - The "Manresa Stories" **Oral History Project**: Led by Professor Courtney Fullilove, students are documenting the human and industrial history of the island.
 - Partnering with the University of Connecticut (EPOCH) and Central Connecticut State University’s Public History Programs to record, archive, and exhibit community histories using digital platforms.
 - Students are conducting interviews with former power plant workers and community members while integrating company logbooks, city

planning reports, and recovered artifacts into an interactive digital StoryMap.

- Forestry & Phytoremediation Research: Led by Professor Dana Royer, students are analyzing the birch forest that grew over the site's coal-ash deposits during the last 50 years.
- Students are installing site-specific environmental artworks in the Turbine Hall and Administration Wing.
- **[Sacred Heart University](#)**: Conducting interdisciplinary research (restoration ecology, conservation biology, evolution, coastal management, and genetics) with undergraduate students and developing new place-based, hands-on activities focused on local marine systems that highlight the unique ecology of Long Island Sound.
 - SHU Biology faculty are using Manresa Island as a valuable and unique case study for SHU undergraduate students in Restoration Ecology, Marine Biology, Conservation Biology, and Coastal Management, with students benefitting from hands-on field trips to the site and new course activities that include collection, analysis, and interpretation of environmental data.
 - SHU faculty and undergraduate students are conducting a variety of coastal research projects at Manresa Island aimed at understanding the dynamics and trajectories of populations and communities before, during, and after the restoration process. This includes the expansion of Project Limulus to Manresa, a long-term, community-based research study examining the ecology of Long Island Sound horseshoe crab populations, as well as interdisciplinary research examining the dynamics of salt marsh recovery.
- **[Norwalk Schools Board of Education](#)**: Partnering on youth education and discovery opportunities.
 - Cranbury Elementary School students visited to plant pollinator-friendly plants and install a small garden outside the site gates, supporting hands-on environmental learning and stewardship.
 - Through the Carver Foundation, the project's landscape architecture firm SCAPE visited several local after-school programs to teach students about landscape architecture. SCAPE also visited the Marine Science Academy at Brien McMahon High School.