



Austin and Allison McChord

"Manresa Wilds should be a place of discovery, where people can help shape a more resilient future," said **Austin and Allison McChord**. "R.E.S.A. brings that vision to life by connecting students, researchers, and the broader community to the site. We're excited to be supporting partnerships that will make Manresa Wilds a hub for learning and coastal stewardship for generations to come."

Jessica Vonashek

"R.E.S.A. is about making research and education something the whole community can see, touch, and be part of," said **Jessica Vonashek, Executive Director of Manresa Island Corp.** "These partnerships are helping us build Manresa Wilds as a place where students can learn by doing, connecting classroom knowledge to the real work of studying, restoring, and activating a coastal public space. We're creating pathways for students to explore coastal science, environmental stewardship, and the kinds of careers that will help build a more resilient Connecticut."

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal

"This R.E.S.A. partnership is a powerful example of how environmental leadership, scientific research, and educational opportunity can come together to bolster Connecticut's future," said **U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal**. "As we increasingly face the harms of climate change, partnerships like this are essential to advancing critical research and restoration while preparing the next generation of scientists and innovators. This investment is a critical step towards protecting and strengthening our coastal communities for decades to come."

Congressman Jim Himes

"Long Island Sound is one of Connecticut's greatest natural and economic resources, and I'm thrilled to see this local partnership come together in a shared mission of advancing discovery, education, and conservation," said **Congressman Jim Himes**. "By bringing world-class research institutions to Norwalk's shoreline, this partnership will help us better understand the environmental changes affecting our coast while preparing students and workers for the jobs that will shape Connecticut's future. Manresa Wilds is an exciting example of how public access and coastal innovation can advance together to benefit the local community."

Connecticut State Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff

“For generations, this part of Norwalk was defined by heavy industry. Today, Manresa Wilds is becoming a place shaped by education and environmental stewardship,” said **Connecticut State Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff**. “R.E.S.A. will give students direct access to field-based learning on Long Island Sound while strengthening the partnerships that make our region more resilient. This is the kind of forward-looking local investment that benefits Norwalk families now and for generations to come.”

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

Connecticut’s economic progress depends on developing talent and turning underutilized sites into long-term community assets,” said **Daniel O’Keefe, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development**. “R.E.S.A. advances that work by creating hands-on learning opportunities at Manresa Wilds, a complex coastal brownfield being returned to public use. As this project moves forward, it offers a model for how Connecticut approaches other challenging industrial sites with community benefit at its core.”

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

“R.E.S.A. will build upon the land-based advances taking place at Manresa Wilds, which will create meaningful ways for students and the public to engage with terrestrial and coastal science in real time,” said **Katie Dykes, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection**. “Linking the restoration of Manresa Wilds to the water quality of the Long Island Sound, which nearly surrounds this location, will advance science and serve to strengthen the community’s connection between the land and our shared waters.”

Norwalk Mayor Barbara Smyth

“R.E.S.A. reflects the incredible potential of Manresa Wilds to serve Norwalk as a civic asset and a place where students can learn directly from the environment around them,” said **Norwalk Mayor Barbara Smyth**. “I have seen first-hand how powerful it is when young people can connect classroom learning to real-world experience. We’re excited to see how this partnership will expand access to environmental education while helping Norwalk students see themselves in the future of coastal science and stewardship.”

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

“Understanding the complexities of our marine environment has never been more important, and the extraordinary setting of Manresa Wilds offers a truly unique laboratory for urban coastal oceanography,” said **Rob Munier, Vice President for Marine Facilities & Operations, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution**. “R.E.S.A.

will enable vital, long-term research that will contribute to a deeper understanding of these unique and critical ecosystems. We are thrilled to bring the coastal research vessel Tioga to Norwalk to mark the beginning of a transformative era of scientific discovery that will advance our knowledge of Long Island Sound and engage the public.”

The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk

“The Maritime Aquarium has long been dedicated to inspiring stewardship of Long Island Sound, and R.E.S.A. offers an incredible opportunity to expand this work in a meaningful, community-driven way,” said **Jason Patlis, President and CEO, The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk**. “By engaging local students in active shoreline monitoring at Manresa Wilds, the site is transforming into a living laboratory. This partnership ensures that the next generation is actively contributing to our coastal resilience.”

Wesleyan University

“The transformation of Manresa Island is as much a human story as it is an environmental one,” said **Courtney Fullilove, Professor of History, Wesleyan University**. “As a founding partner of R.E.S.A., Wesleyan bridges the sciences, arts, and humanities in the study of post-industrial ecologies — from soil and sediment analysis to visual culture and performance to the ‘Manresa Stories’ oral history project. We’re committed to creative practices that explore the site’s past to help imagine its future.”

Sacred Heart University

“At Sacred Heart University, we believe deeply in the power of experiential learning to prepare students not just for careers, but for meaningful impact,” said **Dean Mark A. Beekey, Ph.D., Dean, College of Arts & Sciences at Sacred Heart University**.

“Manresa Wilds represents an extraordinary extension of our classroom—where students and faculty can engage directly with Long Island Sound, advancing research, informing environmental stewardship, and contributing to the resilience of our coastal communities. Through this partnership, we are proud to help develop innovative marine science and interdisciplinary coursework that connects academic inquiry with real-world application in transformative ways.”

SCAPE

“At SCAPE, we design with the conviction that our coastal landscapes must be environmentally resilient and deeply connected to the communities they serve,” said **Kate Orff, Founder, SCAPE**. “Manresa Wilds represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform an inaccessible industrial site into a vibrant living shoreline and

public park. R.E.S.A. advances one of the core goals at the heart of the project – to be a “hub for learning and discovery” – where the landscape is not only a place to enjoy, but also a site of research, engagement, and participation. We are proud to be a part of cultivating the next wave of environmental designers, scholars, and stewards of the Connecticut coast.”