



Save the Sound[®]

Action for our region's environment.

Community Engagement Strategies

Featuring the Blind Brook in Rye, NY

Dam Busters 201

June 4th, 2025

Megan Lung

New York Ecological Restoration Project Manager



Save the Sound[®]

Action for our region's environment.

**Save the Sound leads environmental action in the Long Island Sound region.
We fight climate change, save endangered lands, protect the Sound and its
rivers, and work with nature to restore ecosystems.**



Restoration

Save the Sound leads hands-on habitat restoration, creating lasting physical change that strengthens natural ecosystems for the benefit of wildlife and communities.



New York Ecological Restoration Program

- ❖ Save the Sound's Ecological Restoration team has over a decade of experience in river restoration, green infrastructure, watershed planning, and wetlands restoration.
- ❖ Since 2021, we have expanded further into New York to implement on-the-ground projects and today have a portfolio of seven active projects in Westchester, the Bronx, Queens, and Long Island.
- ❖ Roles we play include:
 - Facilitator and Convener
 - Project Development Partner
 - Project Manager





Quick Disclaimer!

- ❖ Everyone is doing the best they can with what they have in a given timeframe
- ❖ Community engagement is a way to champion a project and change hearts, minds, and behavior
- ❖ Keep practicing- give yourself grace and say yes to training opportunities
- ❖ I've learned from others and adapted in a way that works for me.



Tool Demonstration with MentiMeter

- Free*
- Join with code or scanning QR code
- Gather live feedback and information from the audience

Join at menti.com | use code **4847 0281**

 Mentimeter

Instructions

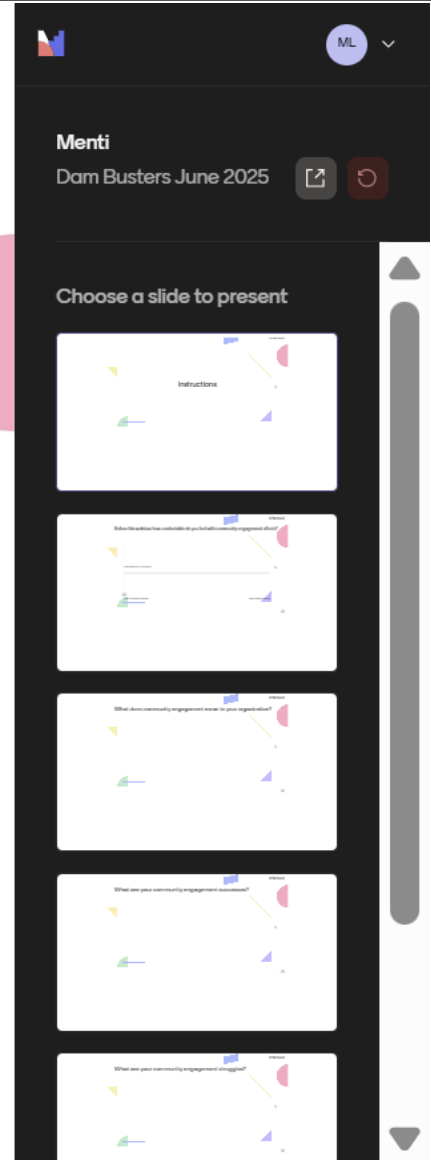
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Temperature Check

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Mentimeter

Before this webinar, how comfortable do you feel with community engagement efforts?

Pre-webinar comfort

1.0

Very Uncomfortable

Very Comfortable



Mentimeter interface sidebar showing a list of slides to present. The slides are titled "Instructions", "What does community engagement mean to your organization?", "What are your community engagement successes?", "What are your community engagement challenges?", and "What does your community engagement look like?". The interface includes a "Menti" header, a "Dam Busters June 2025" subtitle, and a "Choose a slide to present" section.

Temperature Check


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Mentimeter

What does community engagement mean to your organization?


leader focus
creative
fast inspiration
bold
transpiration



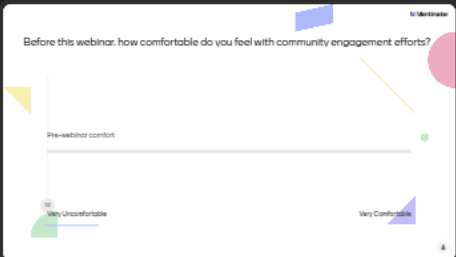
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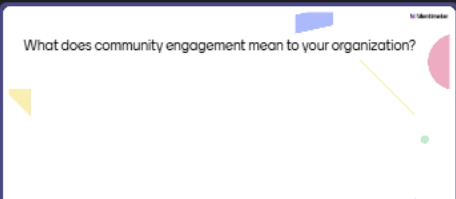
Instructions



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What does community engagement mean to your organization?



Addressing Challenges with Recon Studies

- Concept that Save The Sound is piloting in the LIS Watershed
- More than a single site visit but short of a removal design
- Owner and Stakeholder engagement
 - Owner not committed to removal at this stage

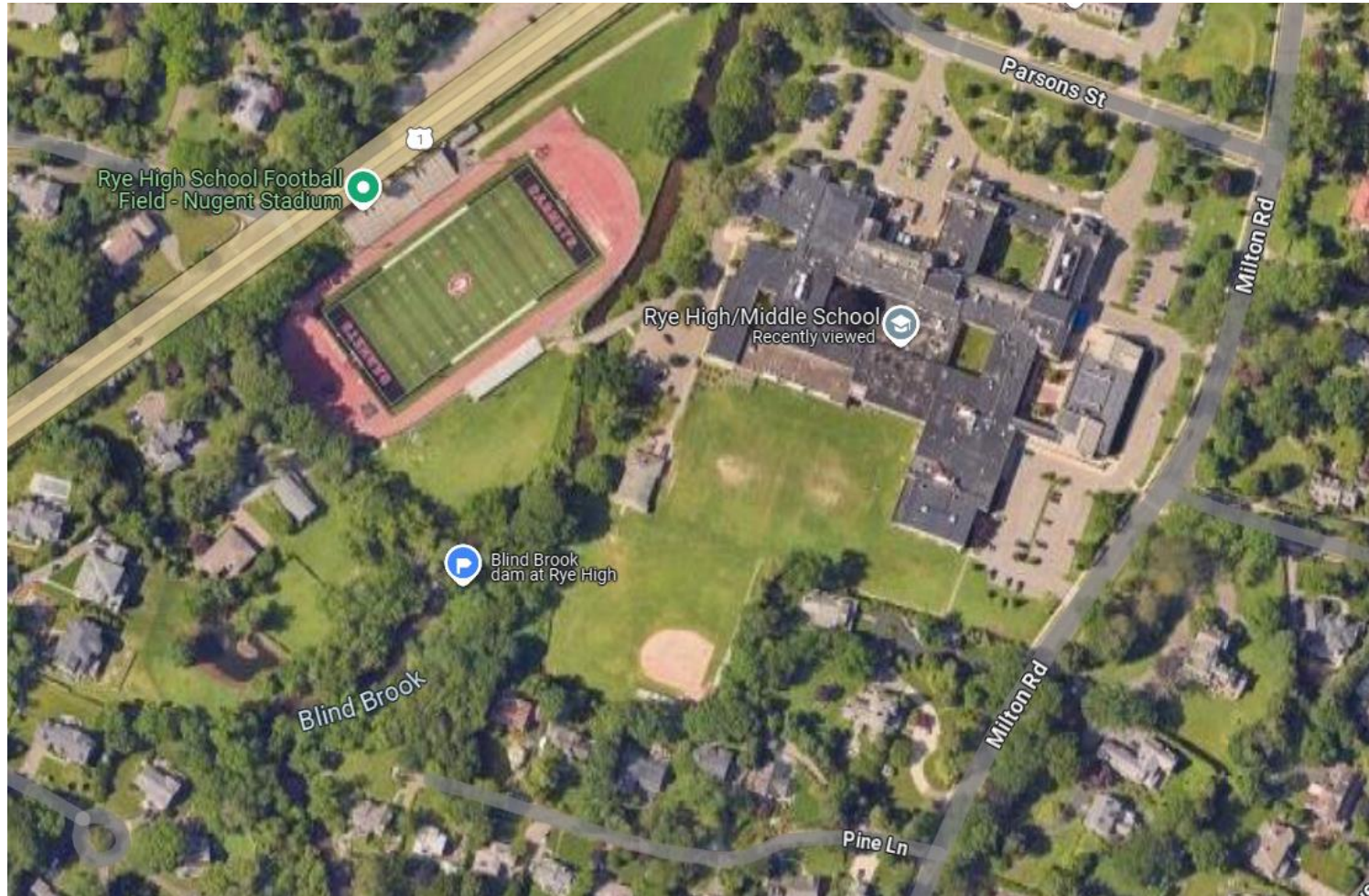


Case Study: Blind Brook Dam Rye, New York





Project Background



- First barrier on the Blind Brook
- Owned by the Rye City School District
- Project funded through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)



Unique to the Blind Brook Project

Student interest in conducting research on the impact of the dam

Strong community interest in restoration and resiliency

4.1.2 RYE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL BRIDGES

Two small bridges and a low-head inline dam span Blind Brook near the Rye Middle/High School building and sports field. The structures are shown to be marginally influenced by tidal and sea level rise conditions. The school football field to the east of Blind Brook is located within the floodplain and floods regularly (Figure 4-11). Across from the football fields to the west, the Rye school building is shown to be situated outside of the 100-year floodplain although it is mapped within the FEMA 500-year flood hazard zone. City of Rye officials reported that the school building has flooded in the past.



Figure 4-11 Rye High/Middle School football field flooded during Hurricane Irene 2011. The masonry stone arch bridge over Blind Brook is seen underwater (center left). Photo Courtesy of Patch.com News Report.



Engagement Strategies in the Blind Brook

- Documenting in field
 - Include people
- Intentional slide design*
- Audience Engagement and language
 - **Who are you?** Beyond technical or academic knowledge
 - Meet people where they are a **today**
- Stakeholder Group meetings
- Communication with School for site visits
- Community Meetings
- Communications and Social Media



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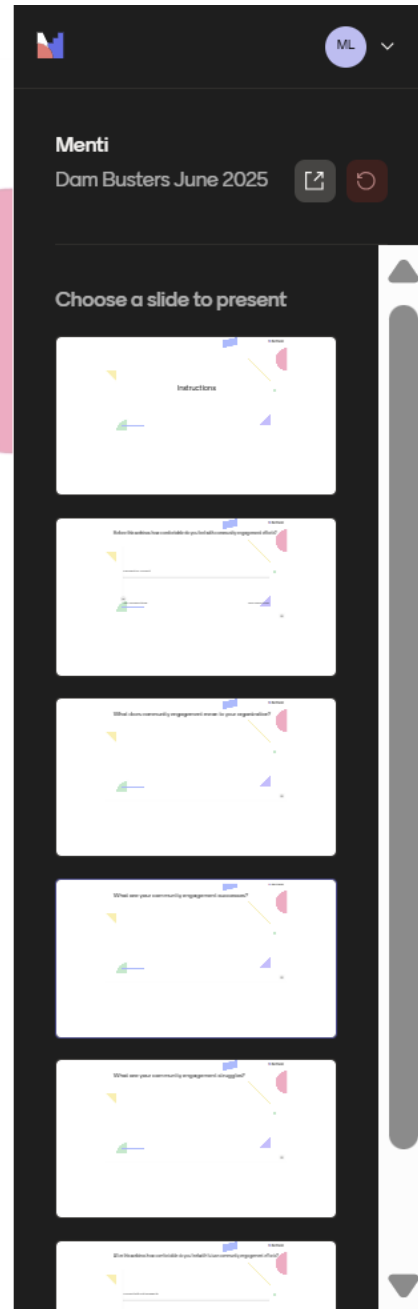
Mentimeter

What are your community engagement successes?

All responses to your question will be shown here

Each response can be up to 200 characters long

Turn on voting to let participants vote for their favorites



The image shows a vertical screenshot of the Mentimeter mobile application. At the top, there's a header with the Mentimeter logo and a user profile icon labeled 'ML'. Below this, the title 'Menti' and the session name 'Dam Busters June 2025' are displayed, along with share and refresh icons. The main section is titled 'Choose a slide to present' and shows a vertical list of six slide thumbnails. The first thumbnail is labeled 'Instructions' and shows a question slide. The other five thumbnails show the same question slide: 'What are your community engagement successes?'. At the bottom of the screen, there are four circular icons: a thumbs up, a heart, a question mark, and a person icon.

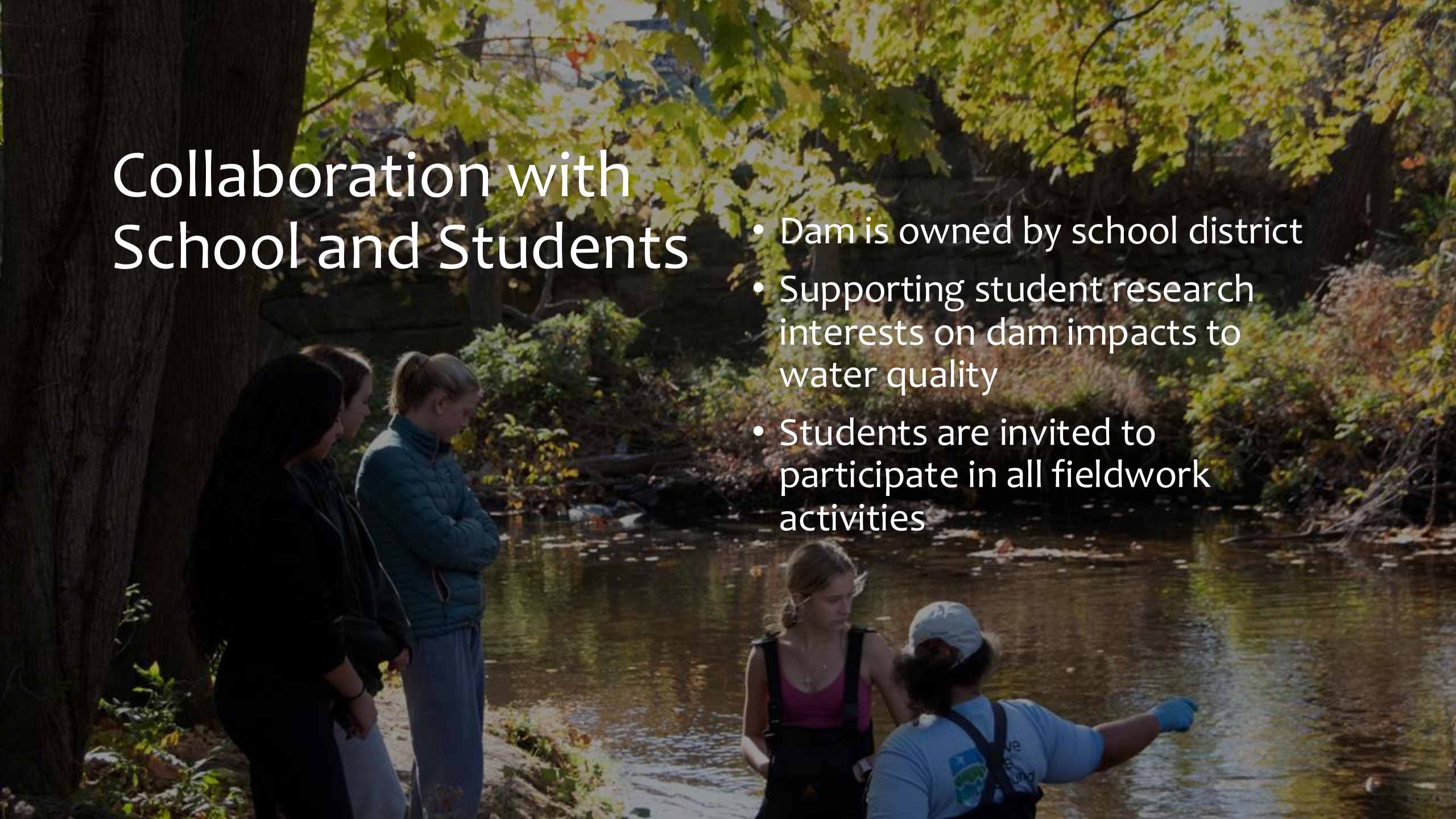


Stakeholder Group

- Monthly meetings that are topic focused but open membership
- Mixture of local conservation commissions and sustainability committees, regulatory agencies, funders, other NGOs
- Connect project to larger efforts

Collaboration with School and Students

- Dam is owned by school district
- Supporting student research interests on dam impacts to water quality
- Students are invited to participate in all fieldwork activities





Collaboration with School and Students

- Importance of mentorship*
- Facilitate interaction with natural world and real-world application



Community Meetings

- Plan each meeting for your audience
- Daytime vs evening meeting- both!
- Opportunities to introduce your project to a new audience and build a larger partnership

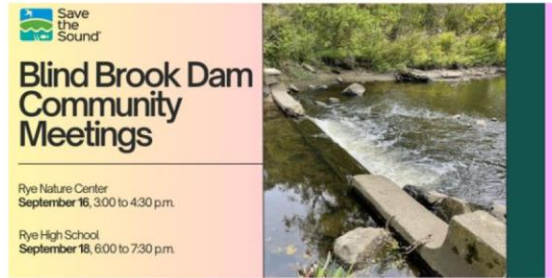


Community Meetings

Meeting different needs: translation services, childcare*, food and drink vs refreshments, follow up and networking with community members

Communications and Media

Blind Brook Dam Community Meeting



RSVP: www.savethesound.org/rye-community-meeting

Join Save the Sound, Friends of Rye Nature Center (FRNC), and community members in a discussion about two exciting Blind Brook riparian projects that are happening in Rye. Save the Sound will talk about the benefits of dam removal and FRNC will speak about the restoration features planned for their part of the brook. The meeting will include a screening of the River Restoration Network's documentary film, *Reconnected*. Lively discussion guaranteed! Registration is required and refreshments will be provided.

There will be two opportunities for members of the public to join us for this community event:

Monday, September 16 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. at the Rye Nature Center
Wednesday, September 18 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Rye High School

We hope to see you at one or both of them!



Utilizing social media as an additional engagement and education tool

Using digital and physical methods- including flyers in mailboxes!

Connect and collaborate with others doing the same work



Save the Sound

January 26 at 8:08 AM · 🌐

Oh the places you'll go....to measure a culvert or dam.

#dam #culvert #river #stream #ohtheplacesyoullgo #westchesterSBI



Questions?

Please contact Megan Lung, New York Ecological Restoration Project Manager, at mlung@savethesound.org.

Communications and Media

- Screening *Reconnected*, a dam removal documentary focused on the Long Island Sound
- Features the Blind Brook dam as one of the sites-community able to see where their stream fits in



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What are your community engagement struggles?



All responses to your question will be shown here

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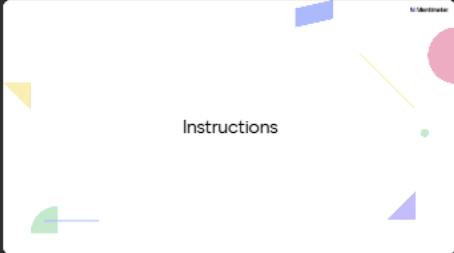
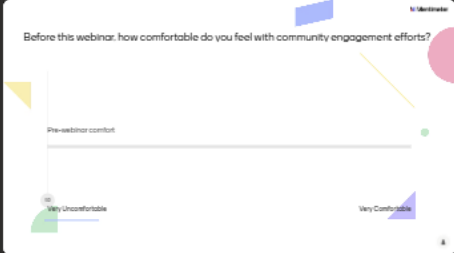
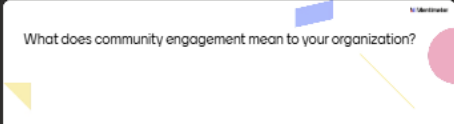
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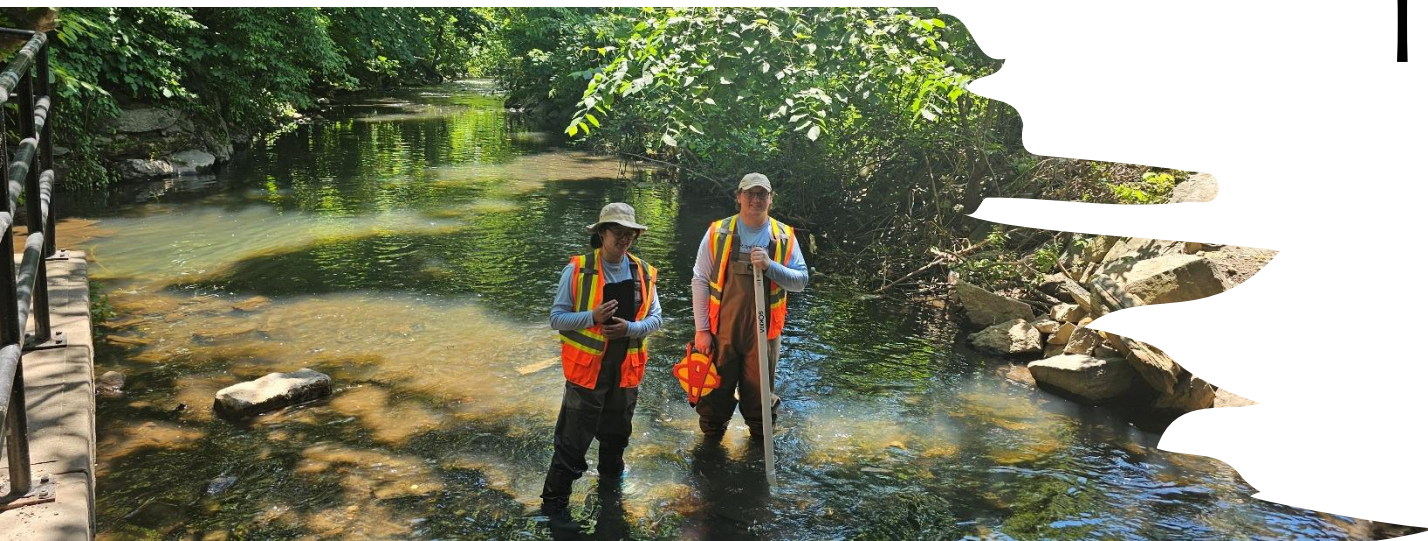
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Dam Busters June 2025  

Choose a slide to present



Thank you to Nicholas
and Sarah!





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Action for our region's environment.

Thank you!

mlung@savethesound.org

