



A site on Bridgeport harbor was being remediated last summer in preparation for the Avangrid-Park City Wind project, which is expected to complete a lease agreement for the property in the coming months.

AVANGRID AND PARK CITY WIND

Avangrid Renewables LLC will be building Park City Wind, recalling the nickname for Bridgeport, the city where its staging area will be located. Avangrid was awarded the lease in 2019 in the same federal waters as Revolution Wind, Beacon Wind and other projects. The clustered leases take advantage of the strongest winds on the East Coast. Transmission cables from Park City Wind will come ashore in Barnstable, Mass., to a newly constructed substation, according to Avangrid's website. Scheduled to be completed in 2026, Park City Wind is expected to power 400,000 Connecticut homes annually.

Barnum Landing, a 15-acre parcel in Bridgeport, is anticipated to be the base of operations during the construction phase. Once construction is completed, three acres will be used for an operations and maintenance hub.

At a September conference of Environmental Business Council of New England, Sarah Lewis, Connecticut bids commitment manager for Avangrid, talked about the significant job creation expected over the life of this project and an anticipated \$890 million in direct economic benefits. The company will help develop a skilled offshore wind workforce in partnership with vocational schools and universities, and

through labor and pre-apprenticeship programs, she said.

Power generation through renewable energy is critical to reducing both our dependence on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, it is no small matter that the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)'s proposed lease areas along the Atlantic coast may eventually support thousands of wind turbines. Potential impacts to living resources, communities and the environment must be investigated and monitored by individual companies for each lease area, but how will any associated cumulative impacts be measured or determined? These and other questions will be explored in future installments.

In the next article, commercial and recreational fishing impacts, concerns and opportunities will be considered.

MORE INFORMATION:

Federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy>
 Northeast Sea Grant Consortium Ocean Renewable Energy Initiative: <https://www.northeastseagrant.com/initiatives/ocean-renewable-energy>
 National Sea Grant Offshore Wind Energy Liaison: <https://www.seagranteenergy.org/>
 Interactive map of proposed projects: <https://www.seagranteenergy.org/where-is-owc-being-developed>
 National Renewable Energy Laboratory: <https://www.nrel.gov/>
 Ocean energy research projects funded by Northeast Sea Grant Consortium, NOAA and DOE: <https://seagrant.mit.edu/2022/05/19/six-ocean-energy-projects-announced/>
 Connecticut Sea Grant offshore wind web page: <https://seagrant.uconn.edu/offshore-wind-connecticut/>



Gary Yerman, right, owner of New London Seafood Distributors, talks with a representative of Equinor, developers of the Beacon Wind project, at a public meeting at Mystic Aquarium on Oct. 3. Photos: Judy Benson



s To Len reflects on the journey that led him to the CT Sea Grant art project



Above, sTo Len makes a sound recording of a stream at Sandy Point in West Haven. Left, a section of one of sTo Len's works titled, "Waste Wave." Photos courtesy of sTo Len

Editor's Note: New York City artist sTo Len has been chosen for a 2023 Connecticut Sea Grant Arts Support Award, a program that has been funding environmentally themed art aligned with CTSG's mission since 2009. Learn about the Connecticut-based project he has begun for this award and about his background and development as an artist in these 12 questions he answered for Wrack Lines Editor Judy Benson in August.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR ONGOING AND RECENT PROJECTS?

Currently I am the resident artist at the Department of Sanitation in New York City, a 1½-year position that will conclude in December. In that role I am deeply researching and making work about sanitation. Over the past several years, I have been in residence at other places such as a wastewater treatment facility, a desert town in New Mexico and a radio station sound art retreat in upstate New York. I really enjoy working in this place-based way and through these experiences have been able to pursue my interests in water, sound, print-making and installation in diverse ways.

WHAT WERE SOME MILESTONES ON YOUR PATH TO BECOMING AN ARTIST?

I moved to New York City in 2000 after undergraduate art school and I consider living here another type of school that truly formed me as a person and an artist. In 2004, I started a gallery

space called Cinders with another artist, Kelie Bowman, which was an amazing learning experience and one that created so many relationships and opportunities over the years. I began working outdoors with water and ecological subjects around 2014 which has sent me on the trajectory that I am on today.

IN A RECENT PHONE CONVERSATION, YOU SPOKE ABOUT YOUR TRAVELS TO YOUR MOTHER'S HOME COUNTRY OF VIETNAM AS A TURNING POINT. HOW DID THOSE EXPERIENCES SHAPE WHO YOU ARE TODAY?

I had always wanted to go to Vietnam but didn't get a chance to until 2015. I think I was so hungry to discover my roots by that time that I had these inflated, romanticized notions of what it was going to be like. Soon after I arrived, I took a week-long boat trip around Saigon and down to the Mekong Delta. Water is a huge part of life in Vietnam and even the word for water, nước is also the word for country. What I saw on that trip was soberingly tragic; heavily polluted waterways full of single-use plastics beyond anything that I had ever seen up to that point. Despite this, there is still a lot of life out in the water. People's lives depend on it with an immense local fishing trade, busy boaters and floating markets. It was beautiful to witness the lively culture on the water but that made the pollution that much worse to see. I couldn't unsee it and I couldn't get it out of my mind. The trip was still amazing as I was able to visit the places where my mom grew up and really live life as a local for a few months. My parents even met me there for Tet, the Vietnamese New Year celebration, which marked the first time my mom had been back in more than 40 years. I also met many artists on that trip and began an artistic relationship with the country, having exhibitions and doing performances there every year until the pandemic hit. Seeing the heavily polluted water really hit me hard though, and I came back from that initial trip inspired to create work about these issues and to do something positive about it.

WHERE ARE YOU BASED AND WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT EXHIBITS OR PROJECTS BOTH CURRENTLY AND IN THE PAST?

I live in Queens, N.Y. All the exhibitions I have been in were significant in that I almost always learn from each one and they tend to inform each other in meaningful ways. In June I was in a group exhibition called "Steeped in Spilled Milk Part 2" at Elizabeth Fine Arts in Manhattan that was in response to the physical violence waged on the Asian community brought on by COVID-19. This elegant and powerful show featured some incredible Asian American and Pacific Islander artists who I did not previously know so meeting them was great. In April, I exhibited at Peel Gallery in Chapel Hill, N.C., where I was able to work with a local river cleanup group on artwork and do a residency at Level Retreat, a center for multidisciplinary artists in that community. In January I exhibited at a wonderful gallery called ArtYard in Frenchtown, N.J., and was able to work with a local historian on a research-based publication. I am currently working on a multimedia exhibition about my sanitation residency.

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND RELEVANT TO YOU AS AN ARTIST?

I have always drawn, painted and wrote in journals as far back as I can remember. Art for me has always been about creating my own world, a place where I could be myself and explore my ideas, a space where I could be free. I went to art school at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., as soon as I graduated high school. I could not wait to go to school for art and devote myself to learning about it and doing it. After moving to New York City, I became deeply involved in the local art scene and began putting on art shows, starting an art collective and eventually a gallery, all of which was very informative to my development. In 2018, I decided to pursue a master's degree with a unique program called Nomad MFA at the University of Hartford. This is a traveling interdisciplinary art program that took me to Mexico,

"...seeing the heavily polluted water really hit me hard though, and I came back from that initial trip inspired..."

Minneapolis, Miami, New Mexico and of course Connecticut. It opened me up to new ways of being and broke me out of a bubble that I found myself in after 18 years of being an artist in NYC. Many of the professors and places were extremely impactful for me and continue to inform my work.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU AS AN ARTIST AND IS THERE AN OVER-ARCHING MESSAGE OR THEME THAT CONNECTS ALL YOUR WORKS?

I am interested in creating new perspectives in the world. I believe that artists see the world differently and that we can be extremely adept at responding to situations through a type of creative problem solving that is at once fantastical, wild, beautiful and meaningful. I am interested in advocating for the artist in society and working to dispel the myth that art is unnecessary. The defunding of art programs in schools and the lack of grants in this country is a travesty. I see an urgent call to action in America right now and I am interested in creating art that can speak to the current issues of our times with facts as well as grace and humor.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF ART IN BRIDGING SCIENCE, ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND IN MOTIVATING ACTION?

I think art can be a beautiful bridge to the public that can communicate and motivate in alternative ways that are quite unique. Artists should work with scientists, activists, educators and organizers when they can. These collaborations can lead to unpredictable possibilities and help inform everyone involved. Art has this ability to inspire that charts and graphs just don't have and I think it is exciting when a cross-pollination occurs.

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN YOUR POSITION AS THE ARTIST IN RESIDENCE FOR THE N.Y. DEPT. OF SANITATION, AND WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

I started in September 2021. The PAIR (Public Artist in Residence) program was developed by the Department of Cultural Affairs in 2015 and embeds an artist within a city agency. It's been an incredible experience as I have been able to do everything from riding along with collection trucks to visiting sanitation garages, waste transfer stations, landfills and incinerators as well as meeting many employees of the 10,000-person workforce. Through the records unit of the sanitation department, I have had the opportunity to do research using the archive of photos, books, videos and artifacts collected there. I have resurrected a defunct print shop and began creating prints using the old equipment and materials. I also have been using the old TV Studio, discovering video and film dating to 1903. I'm currently helping digitize hundreds of these tapes and have been creating my own videos in the process, which show on flatscreen TVs in all of the sanitation buildings and garages. I call it SAN TV (Sanitation Art Network TV) and it really is like my own TV channel for the employees. I also have an online waste study project called the Privy Pit, which relies on the public to submit to prompts that I created about our waste habits. You can see it here: <https://www.officeofinvisibility.com/privypit>. My overall project is called the "Office of In Visibility." The underlying idea is that I am bearing witness to the unseen labor of sanitation through my art and discoveries. I will have several exhibitions next year with the work I am creating.

sTo Len gestures toward some of the approximately 50 volunteers who participated in a cleanup of the Long Wharf area of New Haven. Trash collected by the volunteers was used in several of his art projects. Photo: Judy Benson





An exhibit at the Seton Gallery at the University of New Haven Oct. 26-Dec. 9 showcased some of the works created by sTo Len from the trash collected in a cleanup of the Long Wharf section of New Haven. Top left is a collage of impressions of various trash objects; center is a display of some of the items collected; below, UNH students view more of his work. Photos: Judy Benson

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING EXPERIENCES YOU'VE HAD IN THIS POSITION?

It has been amazing to talk to sanitation workers, all of whom have been incredibly hospitable and candid about their work. I think the length of this residency has allowed me to transcend being an outsider and be seen as part of the crew. I have been able to prove myself by showing up every day and being genuinely interested in what they're doing. I did a ride-along with the sanitation workers that pick up my actual garbage and that was amazing. We rode all through my neighborhood and now I know them personally. Now when I put my trash out, I think about two of the workers, Frank and Eagan. I practically gift wrap my trash because I want them to be safe and I want my trash bags to be easy to pick up. I've gone to a few retirement parties and sanitation barbecues this summer. I have seen so many sides of the job and the people who do it. The department really is like a family and being able to experience that has been great.

DESCRIBE SOME OF THE RESPONSES TO YOUR PROJECTS AND HOW THESE HAVE VALIDATED OR INFLUENCED YOUR APPROACH TO YOUR CREATIONS.

When people show up to my exhibitions and say, "Thank you, I feel seen," or when people tell me they never think about their trash the same way again since seeing my work—that is very rewarding. Or when people are enticed by the beauty of a print I made and then discover it was made with pollution in their neighborhood waterway and then get involved in the local cleanup group—that is the best thing to hear. I created an "adoption service" for trash objects that we pulled out of a river. Seeing people respond by taking these objects home and donating to the local river keeper group was very gratifying. This type of engagement and reaction certainly fuels my fire.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR THE CONNECTICUT SEA GRANT ARTS AWARD AND HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

I am creating an exhibition for the Seton Gallery at the University of New Haven that opened on Oct. 26 and was scheduled to close on Dec. 9. For this project, I am researching Connecticut waterways and making trips to New Haven to explore them. I have been observing and documenting the public's interaction with their local waters with photos, video, prints and recordings of the sound of the water with hydrophones. The show is called "To Dissolve into the Hydrocommons....one Drop at a Time" and it is about how we are all part of our water, from our habits to our stories to how we live. What memories are embedded in our water? How do we define our watery relations? Much of my work is geared towards a re-thinking of our attitudes towards water through artwork made on, with and about bodies of water and issues of waste in contemporary life. There will be a public water trash cleanup walk on October 1, talks and some other events associated with the show.

The show came about when Jacquelyn Gleisner, a University of New Haven professor and curator of the gallery, invited me to give a solo exhibition. I began researching and thinking up ideas for a show. Since I had gone to graduate school at the University of Hartford, I was familiar with Connecticut but because the program was based around traveling to other locations, I was never in the state long enough to collaborate with the water and this place, so I was excited about this opportunity.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE WILL COME OUT OF THIS PROJECT, BOTH SHORT- AND LONG-TERM?

I hope people who see the show are moved to spend more time with their local waterways and think about their own relationships to the water. What stories do they have connected to water? What places do they want to protect? What waterways do they want to become more familiar with? If these types of questions occur, if my work simply creates an excitement or a new way of looking at water, then I am very pleased. Personally, I hope to become more familiar with this area and truly connect with its waterways and stewards, while also cleaning up along my journey.

