

Thames River Basin Partnership Quarterly Meeting Notes
Lisbon Town Hall
January 16, 2007

Attendees: Eric Thomas, CT DEP; Carl Fontneau, Griswold Town Planner; Lee Szruba, Town of Lisbon; Mike Goodwin, Trout Unlimited; David Lavallee, QSHC intern from the Audubon Expedition Institute; Kevin Essington, TNC; Lois Bruinooge, QSHC; Greg Smith, ECCD; Elaine Trench, USGS; Dave Schroeder, Ledyard Conservation Commission; Kathy Howard, Project O; Holly Drinkuth, TNC/GVI; Marie Szul, Pfizer; Jean Pillo, TRBP Coordinator

Meeting opened by Lee Szruba. Welcome by The Honorable Thomas Sparkman, First Selectman of Lisbon

J. Pillo gave the **Financial Report:**

Balance at the start of the quarter		\$1275.83
Partial payment to Project O for use of boat at FW6 (10/31/06)		425.00
Website renewal fee (12/12/06)		<u>30.00</u>
Ending balance		\$820.83

Discussion of remaining funds owed to Project O. Motion to pay balance of \$425.00 made by H. Drinkuth, second by E. Thomas. Motion carried. J. Pillo to notify K. Johnson to send the final payment. Balance in TRBP account after this payment will be under \$400. A grant application to Pfizer Corp in the amount of \$1200 had been prepared and submitted by L. Szruba to fund Floating Workshop VII. M. Szul of Pfizer made a surprise announced the grant was funded and notification would be forthcoming. A discussion of other potential fund raising options were discussed with no resolution.

TRBP Coordinator's Report and Watershed Restoration project Report by J. Pillo:

Major focus of the last quarter was on the grant required "Watershed Restoration Project". The Phragmites control project at Poquetanuck Cove was approved by the CT DEP

Meetings attended relating to this project:

- USF&WS LISFF grant writing workshop November 2
- Meeting with the ad-hoc committee in Preston on November 28

To date, 3 direct funding requests were prepared for varying portions of this project

- BASF grant (declined)
- DEP Land Owner Incentive program (for Phragmites spraying only, still undecided)
- US F&WS LISFF grant (July decision)

The LISFF grant proposal contains several phases. **Phase 1** is a floristic survey of P. Cove as recommended by Ken Metzler of CT DEP LIS Program. P. Cove has habitat consistent with the needs of more than one special concern plant species listed on the CT DEP Natural Diversity Database and it is important to locate these non-target species before any herbicide is applied. **Phase 2** is a multi year herbicide/mulching program to be administered by the CT DEP Wetlands Habitat and Mosquito Management program. **Phase 3** is a pre/post application multi-year monitoring program to record the success of the treatment. The total requested amount of funding through the LISFF grant was for \$27,000. Matching funds have been or will be requested from the Town of Ledyard, the US Fish and Wildlife Partners for Fish and Wildlife Funds and The Nature Conservancy. Additional in-kind service matching will be provided by volunteer time provided through the QSHC water quality monitoring program which will recruit, train and organize volunteers to conduct stream walks along the cove shores and the major tributary streams; and volunteers recruited to participate in multi-year monitoring of plots for

success of treatment. The estimated total value of the project is \$51,400. Relevant experts were consulted during the preparation of this grant. Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc, a property owner in the cove, is acting as the umbrella applicant on behalf of all the effected property owners in the cove and will administer the grant funds if the project is approved. Support letters were prepared for this grant by the Eastern Connecticut Conservation Service, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut Non-Point Education for Municipal Officials program, the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, the Mayor of Ledyard, the First Selectman of Preston as well as all the partnering organizations involved in the grant preparation. A letter was sent to the CT 2nd District Congressional Representative, Joe Courtney, providing background on this project and requesting his support as well.

The July 2006 quarterly meeting notes state, "The Thames River Basin Partnership authorizes the TRBP Coordinator to work with representatives of the towns of Preston and Ledyard to offer the requested assistance, including the development of an ad hoc committee, inviting local participation to inventory the natural resources and form a strategy for protecting the resources of the Poquetanuck Cove area. After 6 months, the TRBP will review the commitment level of local interest groups to participate in this effort and decide whether to continue this focus." The TRBP Coordinator recommended that the Partnership renew this authorization.

J. Pillo will attempt to add video clips from the July 14, 2006 Poquetanuck Cove to the TRBP website.

The TRBP website is being updated with meeting notes and calendar events but technical problems with the software have limited how much it can be updated. Microsoft is no longer producing FrontPage and will not be offering further updates or software support on this product, but the cost to convert to a different program is too high. In the future, the ECCD and TRBP may consider applying for a grant to convert to a different format.

Outreach events:

Represented the Thames River Basin Partnership at a Connecticut Watershed Network Conference hosted by the Rivers Alliance at the Northeast Utilities facility in Berlin on November 3. Presentations on public relations and the tools available on-line by the USGS were valuable.

Represented the QSHC water subcommittee at Volunteer Monitoring Workshop sponsored by the MA DEP. Some good grant writing tips were provided at that workshop.

TRBP Coordinator Grant update by G. Smith of the ECCD:

Year 1: J. Pillo is on track with her work toward completing the tasks required by the grant. To date, ECCD (Jean) has submitted invoices for approximately half of the funds. We are very confident that all of the grant tasks will be completed on schedule, and the final of the funds will be invoiced prior to the end date of the grant.

Year 2: The grant has been approved, but work may not begin until a contract has been signed. The contract is in the process of being drafted by DEP. DEP will send it to ECCD for signature, then ECCD will send it back for State signatures. We estimate that this process will take 60 to 90 days.

Year 3: An application was submitted and is under consideration by DEP.

TRBP Work Plan implementation

J. Pillo asked all Partners to review the 06/07 Plan of Work and to begin listing suggested revisions for the 07/08 PoW. TRBP grant required tasks to be added. A March 13, 2007 Plan of Work Steering Committee meeting set for 9:30 AM at the Brooklyn Agricultural Center on Wolf Den Road. All partners asked to review this years Plan of Work and comment prior to that meeting.

TRBP Floating Workshop VII

Potential topics were discussed, including a “van” tour along the Shetucket River, a water-based tour to include a power plant, a possible Mohegan docking system, and fishery resources research and management, and an update on Norwich State Hospital redevelopment and Thames River shoreline options. First planning meeting to be February 1. Location SECCOG office in Norwich.

Partner Reports are listed in the January issue of the *TRBP Partners in Action Report*. If you would like to view the latest Partners in Action Report, please visit the TRBP website at <http://www.thamesriverbasinpartnership.org> and click on the Partners in Action Report in the What’s New box, or contact J. Pillo at PO Box 11, Pomfret Center, CT 06259 or call (860) 928-4948 for a copy.

A special presentation by **The Nature Conservancy** (TNC) featuring *The Thames Watershed Preliminary Conservation Action Plan* was debuted by Kevin Essington, TNC Pawcatuck Borderlands Project Director and Holly Drinkuth, TNC Quinebaug Highlands Project Director. This draft Action Plan included an overview of the criteria used to select the target rivers and species within the greater Thames River watershed area, the major threats to those targets and the key environmental objectives within those areas. They are in the beginning stages of peer review of this Action Plan.

Next steps

Year 2 TRBP Coordinator grant includes involvement in a stormwater retrofit project. Steering committee formation will be a focus of April quarterly meeting.

The Partners present agreed by general consensus to allow the Coordinator to continue to support the Ad-hoc Committee for the Preservation of Poquetanuck Cove.

Next Meeting date will be April 10 rather than April 16 at the office of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments at 9:30 AM.