



Thames River Basin Partnership

Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Winter 2013

Volume 25

The Thames River watershed includes the Five Mile, French, Moosup, Natchaug, Pachaug, Quinebaug, Shetucket, Willimantic, and Yantic Rivers and all their tributaries. We're not just the "Thames main stem."

Greetings from the [Thames River Basin Partnership](http://www.trbp.org). Once again this quarter our partners have proven their ability to work cooperatively on projects compatible with the [TRBP Workplan](#) and in support of our common mission statement to share organizational resources and to develop a regional approach to natural resource protection. I hope you enjoy reading about these activities as much as I enjoy sharing information about them with you. For more information on any of these updates, just click on the blue website hyperlinks in this e-publication, but be sure to come back to finish reading the rest of the report.

*Jean Pillo, Watershed Conservation Coordinator
Eastern Connecticut Conservation District*

If you missed the Winter 2013 meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership, then you missed a presentation by Lois Bruinooge, Deputy Executive Director of the Last Green Valley (TLGV), describing their ongoing effort to conduct outreach to forest land owners, to teach them the value of their woods and to promote better stewardship. TLGV is one of many partners involved with the Southern New England Forest Heritage Project. The Southern New England Heritage Forest is a tri-state area that includes all of The Last Green Valley communities. For this pilot project, their focus will include the tri-corner area of CT, MA, and RI and includes the towns of Douglas, MA; Situate, Foster, Glouster and Burreville, RI; and Thompson, Putnam and Killingly, CT. The project goal is to strengthen forest stewardship and conserve the many values of the region's forest landscape for future generations. The target audience will be woodland landowners who have never engaged in any type of forest management. This three-year project is funded by a US Forest Service grant through the North East State Foresters Association, and is one of four high priority interstate landscapes in New England selected as a regional pilot. For more information, please contact [Lois Bruinooge](#).

TRBP Updates

Your opinion about the TRBP website www.trbp.org matters. To participate in a brief TRBP website opinion survey, click this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TRBPwebsite> or copy and paste the address into your internet browser. A good response to this survey is the type of support the organization needs if we want to seek grant funding for website updates. The survey will close on February 28, 2013. The outcome of the survey will be reported at the **April 9, 2013** Thames River Basin Partnership meeting.

An important notice to Thames River Basin Partnership website users: The TRBP website was created using Microsoft's FrontPage software, which is obsolete and no longer supported by Microsoft. The Partners have formed a website subcommittee to explore options for moving the website to a new platform. For the time being, TRBP website updates after 2010 are only visible using the Microsoft Windows Explorer web browser. In addition, the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will be transitioning the CT DEP website completely over to the new CT DEEP website in early February. It is anticipated this will cause many broken links from the TRBP website to the former DEP site. If you have expertise and are willing to serve on the TRBP website update committee, please contact [Jean Pillo](#).

The TRBP Floating Workshop XIII is in the early planning stages. This year the June workshop will focus on Climate Change and will feature a tour of the lower Thames River to review impacts from Super Storm Sandy and Tropical Storm Irene and future threats to existing infrastructure. If you are interested in serving on the Floating Workshop planning committee, have an interesting presentation to include as part of the workshop or just want more information, please contact [Jean Pillo](#).

Partner Reports

The partnership was welcomed to the Goodwin Forest Conservation Center Museum by Steve Broderick, who provided a history of the property and its management. There is a Friends of Goodwin volunteer program, plus they have an email distribution list to announce upcoming events at their center. Contact [Steve Broderick](#) for more information.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service announced the appointment of a new Connecticut State Conservationist. Lisa Coverdale formerly served as the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations in Salt Lake City, Utah. Special assignments have included Acting State Conservationist in Washington and Utah; Regional Assistant Conservationist's Management Analyst; and appointments to Chief's Programs Advisory Team, National Conservation Security Program Team, and Technical Services Provider Team. She is a third-generation Angus cattle producer (even managed a herd in Hackensack, New Jersey!) She and her husband are Iowa-natives, PROUD grandparents to six, and enjoy gardening, quilting, and exploring by horseback, bike, and kayak. Her report date is January 13, 2013.

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) is pleased to announce that the fishway at Hallville Dam in Preston is 90% complete! After an 8 year effort to plan and raise the funds, the fishway is installed and a viewing window is in place. The electric hookups and camera to record the fish using the fishway are the final steps needed to complete this long awaited project. A live feed is planned to enable the public to view the fish using the fishway through a link on the ECCD website.

On Colony Road in East Lyme, ECCD completed the installation of five storm water tree filter systems to improve water quality in Latimer Brook, a tributary to the Niantic River. This project was designed to reduce nutrient inputs and other pollutants from impacting the Niantic River estuary. For more information, contact [Judy Rondeau](#).

ECCD, with assistance from many of the Thames River Basin Partnership core members, completed a three workshop series needed to develop Conservation Action Plan (CAP) for Poquetanuck Cove. Poquetanuck Cove is a 2 mile long tidal cove of the Thames River estuary. The meetings included a combination of local stakeholders, town officials and conservation professionals. In addition to the CAP workshops series, there are several other workshops scheduled to provide information to the local residents and officials on ways to prevent degradation of this brackish water tidal estuary. A workshop on Low Impact Development is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2013 featuring Mike Dietz of the Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials program. This workshop will begin at 7 PM at the Ledyard Town Hall annex building. A second workshop on backyard conservation is scheduled for March 6, 2013 at Bill Library, Ledyard at 7 PM. A Climate Change meeting for municipal officials is being developed. In addition, ECCD is sponsoring a BYO-Boat paddle on Poquetanuck Cove at 4 PM on June 1, 2013, in honor of National Trails Day. For more information on Poquetanuck Cove or any related events contact [Jean Pillo](#) or visit the [ECCD website](#), click on Current Projects, and then the Poquetanuck Cove CAP tab. If you like to visit the Poquetanuck Cove area, please click [here](#) to participate in a short online survey. This survey will remain active through February.

ECCD is currently involved in a Coastal Equine Manure Management project funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. ECCD is soliciting qualified horse owners to participate in manure management improvement efforts in the towns of Stonington, Groton, Ledyard, Preston, Norwich, Montville, Waterford, New London, and East Lyme. The project goal is to prevent nutrients that originate from horse manure (nitrogen and phosphorous) from getting into Long Island Sound. ECCD will help horse owners voluntarily adopt best management practices (BMP's) that will improve water quality. Participating horse owners will benefit from resource materials, on-farm free assessments, technical assistance, and cost share funding to implement practices. Interested horse owners are encouraged to please contact [Matt Snurkowski](#) at the Norwich office at (860) 887-4163, x403 for more information.

The Eastern Connecticut RC&D's next installment of the *Healthy Soils! Workshops* will be Monday, April 22 and Tuesday, April 23, 2013. This two day workshop is going to focus on the Economics of Soil Health, as well as Cover Cropping.

Day 1: An exciting day of presentations from some of the leading minds on soil health in the country.

Day 2: Field Trip to tillage and cover crop demonstrations where we will perform in field learning - so please bring appropriate field clothes!

Ray Archuleta and David Lamm are expected to be instructing this course – both are fantastic instructors. Space will be limited! Contact [Ray Covino](#) for more information.

The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) will be hosting a full-day of free workshops for municipal officials. The workshops are part of TLGV's Sustainable Communities Program and will focus on the basic roles, responsibilities, and tools that municipal volunteers need to succeed in their positions. Since most communities rely heavily on volunteer commissions, committees and boards, with frequent turnover in membership, these workshops have perennial importance. *Legal Requirements in Land Use Decision-Making, Roles and Responsibilities of Land Use Commissions, and Map Reading and Low Impact Development* will be presented in series on Saturday, February 9, 2013, from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, at the Northeastern Connecticut Council

of Governments, 125 Putnam Pike, Dayville, CT. A snow/ice date has been set for February 16. The workshops will be taught by faculty from UConn's Land Use Academy. The workshop series is free but pre-registration is required. Participants may register online at <http://clear.uconn.edu/lua/basic/schedule.htm> or by contacting Lois Bruinooge at 860 774-3300 or lois@tlgv.org.

The Last Green Valley Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program is ramping up for their 8th season in 2013. In 2012:

- Volunteers assisted with conducting rapid bioassessments by collecting stream insect samples in twenty locations throughout eastern Connecticut
- 10 sites were monitored for water temperature fluctuations.
- Water samples for bacterial analysis were collected at 15 locations
- A Stream Walk was conducted in the Flat Brook watershed in Ledyard
- 3 lakes and 40+ streams were monitored for dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity, conductivity and temperature using an InSitu Troll 9500.

Volunteers are being sought to assist with weekly Tuesday morning water sampling in Ashford, Mansfield and Willimantic in June and July. Free training will be provided. A volunteer appreciation event is being planned for early March. For more information, please contact [Jean Pillo](#).

TLGV is once again looking for people who care about this beautiful place we call home. TLGV will provide funds to nonprofit organizations and municipal, regional, state or federal agencies that sponsor a 2013 Earth Month or River Cleanup in the region. TLGV will reimburse your organization up to \$500 for expenses like publicity, cleanup supplies such as trash bags and work gloves, and food for your volunteers. TLGV will also help publicize your event and work with you to recruit more volunteers. For more information or to sign up for a project, click [here](#).

TLGV Water Trails committee will be installing kiosks and developing information for them with funding provided by a Recreational Trails Grant. The targets for this signage are boat launches for paddling access to the Willimantic and Quinebaug Rivers that were granted National Recreation Trail status in 2012. A Quinebaug River Water Trail DVD is also in the works. For more information, contact [Lois Bruinooge](#).

Documents relating to the former Quinebaug River Association from 1987 are now archived at the TLGV office in Danielson, CT. Contact [Lois Bruinooge](#) if you have interest in this material.

TLGV Chief Ranger Bill Reid once again organized a coordinated effort of volunteers to participate in the annual [Mid-Winter Eagle Survey](#) on January 12, 2013. Twenty teams were sent to over 30 locations this year. The unofficial results were a total of 12 Adult Bald Eagles and 2 Juvenile Bald Eagle sightings. Some of these sightings are likely the same bird. Survey results were provided to the CT DEEP. Initial objectives of this national survey were to establish an index to the total wintering Bald Eagle population in the lower 48 states, to determine eagle distribution during a standardized survey period, and to identify previously unrecognized areas of important winter habitat.

The CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is currently overseeing eleven non-point pollution reduction watershed planning and/or implementation projects in eastern Connecticut. In the [2012 Connecticut Integrated Water Quality Report](#), North Running Brook in Woodstock was delisted as an impaired waterbody. A two page “success story” is in development outlining combined implementation work on a Woodstock dairy farm completed by DEEP, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and ECCD that successfully rerouted corn silage leachate from draining into this small brook.

[Stream flow standards and regulations](#) were passed in Connecticut in December 2011. DEEP is in the process of classifying fresh water streams for the stream flow category. The Thames River basin was selected to be the first watershed to be completed and the mapping process for the Thames watershed should be complete by late winter. A series of public informational meetings will be arranged to present the classification proposals and to allow for public feedback. There will be three to four classifications and these classifications will be used to guide future regulations for water withdrawals. To supplement stream flow knowledge in the Thames watershed, DEEP has funded a project to record flow data in three southeastern Connecticut locations. ECCD and the USGS Connecticut Water Science Center are working cooperatively to collect this data.

The Statewide Conservation and Development Policies Plan is in the process of being updated. Area Councils of Governments were involved with outreach for this project, and area municipalities were encouraged to submit comments to the draft document in 2012. Comments received from the Windham Region Council of Governments (WinCOG) led to forest habitat block areas identified by the Center for Landuse Education and Research (CLEAR) and locally important farm soil as identified by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and adopted by some towns to be considered in the analysis for areas important for conservation. In addition, where prime and important farm soil areas are connecting, the areas outlining these farm soils on a soils map will be joined into a larger area, making the land a higher priority for conservation. Recent amendments to state statutes have delayed the revision process for the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut (State C&D Plan). The current State C&D Plan, which was adopted in 2005, will remain in effect until the 2013 legislative session when the General Assembly is scheduled to vote on adopting the next plan revision. For more information on the Conservation and Development Policies Plan, click [here](#).

The Windham Region Council of Governments (WINCOG) offers a [website](#) where anyone may access maps for the Thames River Basin towns of Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Lebanon, Mansfield, Scotland, Willington and Windham. The website is an online regional inventory of tax parcels and assessment data that can be combined with natural resource information and other community maps in an easy-to-use, searchable online interface. The website features a variety of different map layers including Wetlands, Open Space, Endangered Species and Habitats, Drainage Basins, Farmland Soils, Historic Districts, and Zoning maps. It is also possible to search property information by region or town using Owner, Address, Map-Block-Lot, and more.

WINCOG recently received a Regional Performance Incentive Program grant to conduct a high resolution aerial flight in 2013. Stay tuned!

The University of Connecticut in association with the Town of Mansfield proposes to extend a source of potable water to Mansfield and Storrs to augment the University's water supply system to serve current and future needs. This action involves extending water supply transmission piping and interconnecting with another supplier's existing water system. In particular, the proposed additional water supply will: (1) enable the University to maintain adequate margin of safety in its public water system; (2) supply additional incremental demand to serve the proposed Technology Park on the University's North Campus; (3) supply water demands in northern Mansfield in areas proximate to the University's Main and Depot campuses; and (4) provide water supply for potential future on-campus University developments. Public hearings were held in January and comments on the proposed plan to import water from outside the watershed were accepted through January 31, 2013. To view the comments submitted to the UCONN Office of Environmental Policy for this proposed diversion of water from one watershed into another, click [here](#).

The [Willimantic White Water Partnership](#) is preparing for a return of the Willimantic Riverfest on May 18, 2013. The event will include a river float from the Eagleville Dam to Willimantic, Whitewater kayak demonstrations, music, food and conservation themed presentations. For more information, contact Dan Mullins at WilliWhitewater@gmail.com.

The Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TVTU) is in their 7th year of supporting a [Trout in the Classroom](#) program, with the 20th school joining the program this year.

TVTU is also involved in a joint venture with TU National and the National Fishing in Schools Program (NFSP) and was awarded a grant to start a pilot program to introduce fishing at five schools in eastern Connecticut. Additional information on the program can be found [here](#).

TVTU is participating in the Women in Trout Unlimited initiative and offering free memberships to female anglers who enjoy angling and want to help "keep America's rivers cold, clean and fishable". To learn more about this initiative, click [here](#).

Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc, partnering with the Groton Public Library will once again present a series of conservation themed workshops. The seven part series of workshops in 2012 were focused on water and were well attended. For more information, contact [Joellen Anderson](#).

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing a land conservation initiative in Washington DC to focus on habitat preservation for the [New England Cottontail](#). Click [here](#) to see priority areas for NE Cottontail habitat preservation projects.

The USFWS [Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge](#) consists of 11 properties along the Connecticut shoreline. They are in the process of forming a "Friends of Stewart B. McKinney" group to assist with stewarding these coastal resources. For more information, contact [Rick Potvin](#).

Mastering the Business of Agriculture is accepting [applications](#). The Advanced Mastering the Business of Agriculture Program will provide one-on-one technical assistance to Ag-businesses working to implement their business plans. Some Quick Facts:

- Selection process: Submit an application describing the technical assistance you need as you work toward implementing your written business plan.
- Application due date: February 11, 2013
- Program end date: September 30, 2013
- Cost: None. The program is funded by a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant and The Last Green Valley.
- Eligibility: Be located within The Last Green Valley, the 35-town National Heritage Corridor in eastern CT and south-central MA; have a written business plan; and be an established farm (details on application).

For more information, or contact Paula Stahl at 860-486-1215 or paula.stahl@uconn.edu

Other news

The [Wyndham Land Trust](#) recently received a nearly 50 acre land donation that expands the Linda Rapoport Memorial Preserve in Woodstock, CT. This land donation expands the preserve in the Taylor Brook watershed to 158 acres. The most recent addition contains forest and a wetland shrubby thicket and three active hay fields that will remain in agricultural use.

[Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust](#) was the recipient of a conservation easement on land in Chaplin. The 30-acre Goodrich parcel, on England Road, abuts the Natchaug River. This property is particularly important because it either abuts, or is across the river from other protected parcels. One of its unique assets is the Goodrich mountain laurel, first identified here.

In an effort to meet the "21% open space by 2023" goal, the State of Connecticut recently announced the most recent recipients of the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program. The following 5 projects are located in eastern Connecticut.

Project Title Rita Edwards Preserve: Sponsor Town of Hampton

Hampton \$101,500 50.8 acres

Description: This undeveloped forested lot is located on the north side of Cedar Swamp Road. The property abuts protected open space land owned by Wyndham Land Trust and Goodwin State Forest. The property is characterized by a slightly sloping terrain that sustains a mixed hardwood forest and wetlands.

Project Title Manchester Property Sponsor [The New Roxbury Land Trust, Inc.](#)

Union \$146,500 84 acres

Description: This is the acquisition of two separate parcels of land in close proximity to each other. The southern parcel is a 53-acre densely forested lot with a 3-acre hay field all within the Natchaug River Watershed. The northern parcel is a 31-acre dense forest block within the Quinebaug River Basin and is contiguous to Nipmuck State Forest. This parcel contains wetlands and a stream that drains to Breakneck Pond. For more information on this purchase, or to contribute to the matching funds needed to finalize this purchase, contact [Valerie Letto](#).

Project Title Coogan Farm Sponsor [Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center](#)

Stonington \$500,000 24.38 acres

Description: This property will connect to 300 acres managed by the Nature Center. The property consists of old agricultural fields, grass lands, old orchards, upland forest, wet meadows, and scrub shrub wetlands. While not physically in contact with Mystic Seaport, Mystic Aquarium and Denison Homestead, the property provides trails that directly connect all these education resources in addition, utilizing a natural ridgeline, these trails offer scenic views of Mystic River and Valley.

Project Title 31 New London Turnpike Sponsor City of Norwich

Norwich \$123,516 3.8 acres

Description: This commercially-zoned property with several structures is located on the west-side of New London Turnpike and the south bank of the Yantic River. This property is located within the flood zone of the Yantic River. After purchase, the property will be reclaimed, the buildings will be demolished and the area restored to a natural state allowing public access to more than 1,000 feet of the Yantic River. The grant will assist and match FEMA Hazard Mitigation funding.

Project Title Babcock Ridge Preserve Sponsor [Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc.](#)

North Stonington \$142,500 74.012 acres

Description: Located in North Stonington on the north side of Babcock Road, this undeveloped parcel abuts Avalonia land to the north and links up to land across Babcock Road to the south. The property is characterized by exposed ledges, steep slopes, wetlands, several vernal pools, and unnamed tributaries to Babcock Brook and the Shunock River. This proposal is a buy-out as Avalonia owns 25% interest in this property.

The US EPA has released the "National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change," which describes how EPA's water-related programs plan to address the impacts of climate change and provides long-term visions, goals and strategic actions for the management of sustainable water resources for future generations. The strategy, which builds upon EPA's first climate change and water strategy released in 2008, focuses on five key areas: infrastructure, watersheds and wetlands, coastal and ocean waters, water quality, and working with Tribes. It emphasizes working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, developing information and tools, incorporating adaptation into core programs, and managing risks of impacts including from extreme weather events. The 2012 strategy also includes goals and strategic actions for EPA in 10 geographic climate regions. For more information, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/water/climatechange>.

On January 23, EPA's Climate Ready Water Utilities (CRWU) initiative will begin a new series of webinars on its tools and resources to help drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities understand and adapt to the impacts of climate change. These webinars will assist the water sector in developing a better understanding of climate change, managing impacts, and creating adaptation strategies. Climate Ready Water Utilities' resources promote a clear understanding of climate science and adaptation options, by translating complex climate projections into understandable, actionable and localized information for the water sector. Webinar topics include climate change readiness and an introduction to climate science

for the water sector, followed by more in depth discussions on CRWU topics, such as planning a workshop on extreme weather events and the Climate Resilience Evaluation and Awareness Tool. For more information, visit the "training tab" on www.epa.gov/climatereadyutilities, or email questions to CRWUhelp@epa.gov.

If you would like your organization's efforts included in the next edition of the TRBP Partners in Action Report, consider attending one of our quarterly meetings. It includes a [TRBP Plan of Work](#) activity reporting session, which is an informal "round the table" discussion of Partner activities. It is a great time to network with like-focused organizations. All meetings begin at 9:30 AM. Generally, the TRBP meet quarterly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. The next meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership will be held **April 9, 2013**. The specific date, location and theme haven't been determined. Meeting content and locations will be posted on the TRBP [Calendar](#) of upcoming events. You must use Windows Explorer to view the website. Contact [Jean Pillo](#) at (860) 928-4948 for more information or to be added to the TRBP distribution list.

If you are not already on the e-distribution list for this publication, contact [Jean Pillo](#) by email and request to be added, or you can download the most current version of this quarterly publication from the [TRBP website](#) (Windows Explorer required).

The Thames River Basin Partnership is a voluntary, cooperative effort to share resources, and strives to develop a regional approach to resource protection. The Partnership is made up of a variety of agencies, organizations, municipalities, educational institutions, companies, and individuals interested in the environmental health of the greater Thames River basin. Partial funding support for FY 12 for TRBP Coordinator time has been provided by The Last Green Valley. Additional sources of funding are being sought to continue the TRBP Coordinator position. Please consider making a donation to the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District and designate it to support the Thames River Basin Partnership Coordinator position.