



Thames River Basin Partnership

Partners in Action Quarterly Report

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Volume 6

The Thames River Basin includes the Five Mile, French, Moosup, Natchaug, Pachaug, Quinebaug, Shetucket, Willimantic, and Yantic Rivers and all their tributaries and, of course, the "Thames main stem."

Greetings from the [Thames River Basin Partnership](#). Once again this quarter our partners have proven their ability to work cooperatively on projects compatible with the TRBP [Workplan](#) and in support 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 like sharing information about them with you.

-Jean Pillo, TRBP Coordinator

If you missed the fall TRBP Quarterly meeting, the Partners were presented with an overview of the [Connecticut Statewide Forest Resource Plan 2004 – 2013](#) by Helene Hochholzer of the CT Department of Environmental Protection. Although the CT DEP participated in the drafting of this plan, it is not a CT DEP Plan. Ms. Hochholzer, as a graduate student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, worked with multiple forest stakeholders to help assemble this Plan. It includes the creation of the CT Forestlands Council to function as the oversight committee to oversee the implementation of this plan. The plan is broken into 8 subject areas with working groups to focus on each singly or concurrently with other related subject areas. TRBP partners asked many questions and contributed feedback to Ms. Hochholzer, which she will forward to the CT Forestlands Council.

[Connecticut Audubon Society](#) (CAS) has recently benefited from a technology upgrade thanks to a grant from Fujitsu Computer Corporation. With this funding, they have been able to install up to date technology and network their computer systems statewide. The Connecticut Audubon Society generously supports the Thames River Basin Partnership by providing office space for the TRBP Coordinator at their Pomfret Center location. As a result of the CAS technology upgrade, the TRBP Coordinator email contact information is changed to jean.pillo@conservect.org. The phone number to reach the Coordinator is the same, (860) 928-4948, but the new phone system allows for a voice mailbox dedicated to the Coordinator. This voice mailbox is at extension 605.

CAS will be hosting a Grassland Birds Workshop on Friday, January 25, 2008 at their Pomfret Center location at 189 Pomfret Street (Route 169). Pomfret is the location of the CAS 700 acre Bafflin Sanctuary, which adjoins an additional acreage managed by the Wyndham Land Trust. These properties abut the Airline Trail, which is part of the [East Coast Greenway](#). This 1000+ acres of protected land is listed as an [Important Bird Area](#). Much of the land at Bafflin Sanctuary is managed for grassland birds through periodic mowing that does not disrupt the nesting activities of the birds that rely on this special habitat, a habitat type identified as experiencing serious decline in the State of Connecticut. A portion of the sanctuary now hosts a new duck marsh designed by the [USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service](#) and installed by the [CT Department of Environmental Protection Wetlands Habitat and Mosquito Management](#) (WHAMM) program, funded in part by a NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program grant.

Bafflin Sanctuary is open to the public seven days a week from dawn to dusk and the CAS Center at Pomfret Visitor Center is open Wed – Sun noon to 4 p.m. It is always worth a call during off hours as someone is invariably there to let you in.

The [Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor](#) Water Quality Monitoring Program is preparing to review the StreamWalk data collected over the summer. Working cooperatively with CAS and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff, 44 volunteers were trained to conduct [StreamWalks](#) using the NRCS protocol. CAS Citizen Science Coordinator, Paula Coughlin continued her work with volunteers in the Pomfret area. Portions of the upper Five Mile River watershed were evaluated by members of the Quaddick Lake Association. There was also a review of the Poquetanuck Cove watershed in Preston and Ledyard.

The QSHC Water Quality Monitoring Program, working cooperatively with CAS and Mike Beauchene of the CT DEP, trained 46 volunteers this fall how to conduct water quality assessments utilizing the [Rapid Bioassessment for Volunteers](#) protocol. Record low stream flows is limiting where data can be collected this season. Volunteers have been able to borrow all the equipment necessary for this effort from the QSHC Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator thanks to the [US EPA Equipment Loan Program](#) coupled with equipment purchased using funds from a small EPA Clean Water Act grant administered by the CT DEP.

In addition to the volunteer monitoring program, the QSHC Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator participated in a QSHC Walking Weekend event, demonstrating both water quality monitoring techniques along the Little River Trail at Murphy Park in Putnam. The Little River was designated a Greenway by the [Connecticut Greenways Council](#) in June 2006. Twenty-five walkers attended this event.

The [Quaddick Lake Association](#) (QLA) in Thompson has been awarded \$200,000 in special funding provided by the State of Connecticut through Governor Jody Rell to combat several species of invasive aquatic weeds that have seriously impacted the underwater habitat and recreational value of their lake. This funding request was prepared by Shawn Johnson, CT Representative for the 51st District, in conjunction with the Town of Thompson's First Selectman, David Babbitt and their Director of Planning and Development, Kevin Kennedy on behalf of the Quaddick Lake Association. In addition to being home for nearly 220 full-time and seasonal residents, Quaddick Lake State Park is located on this lake and is open to the public for swimming, boating and other recreational uses.

QLA has become very pro-active advocates for their lake. They have engaged the [Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station](#) to conduct vegetative surveys of their lake bottom. Several members of the QLA have become involved with the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor Water Quality Monitoring Program and participated in StreamWalk assessments of the main tributary streams that drain into Quaddick Lake this summer, looking for visual signs of water quality problems. Through this effort, four illegally dumped car batteries were located and removed from the stream bank. These batteries were properly disposed of for no fee at the town transfer station. QLA is continuing their effort this fall by coordinating with the QSHC Water Quality Monitoring Program to participate in the Rapid Bioassessment for Volunteers program, sampling water in various places in the Five Mile River.

The [Wyndham Land Trust](#) was awarded \$225,000 by the [Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program](#) towards the purchase of a 53 acre parcel in Pomfret. This property

abuts existing Wyndham Land Trust property and property managed by CAS. This purchase, once complete, will create over 1200 contiguous acres of protected open space.

[The Nature Conservancy](#) also received an Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$250,000 to use towards the purchase of 97 acres of forest and wetlands in Woodstock and Eastford. The Towns of Eastford and Woodstock are contributing towards this purchase. This land being purchased is part of TNC's [Quinebaug Highlands](#) Project Area.

[Green Valley Institute](#) (GVI) completed a co-occurring resource inventory project in Lebanon and is currently working with the towns of Ashford, Coventry, Hampton, Lisbon, Plainfield and Preston to conduct resource inventories and promote open space planning.

TNC, GVI, Naubesatuck Watershed Council, [WINCOG](#) and Willimantic Waterworks are partnering to provide a series of Conservation Action Planning stakeholder meetings for the Natchaug River Basin in 2008. The goals are to facilitate communication between towns, NGO's and agencies and to implement conservation strategies for the protection of water quality and quantity for the benefit of people and nature.

[Trout Unlimited, Thames Valley Chapter](#) (TU) continues to stay advised on the status on the Scotland Dam FERC relicensing application process. They have submitted their temperature monitoring data from the Shetucket River below the dam to the CT DEP.

The [Eastern Connecticut Conservation District](#) (ECCD) welcomes [Pat Young](#) to their staff as a Natural Resource Specialist.

The ECCD has several projects in the works and is progressing on all of them.

- The engineering firm selected for the Hallville Dam fishway has produced preliminary drawings for a fish ladder. Revisions are underway. Hallville Dam is located in Preston and impounds Poquetanuck Brook.
- The ECCD has completed the collection of this year's soil and cornstalk samples in Woodstock and Thompson as part of a study being conducted on nitrogen content by UCONN scientists. This study will lead to a better understanding of fertilizer application requirements for corn.
- The ECCD has solicited and received bids for engineering work needed for a stream bank restoration project at Simonzi Park, which is located adjacent to the Quinebaug River in Putnam. A contract award will be made soon to the firm selected.

The [Town of Killingly](#) is looking for an opportunity to work cooperatively with the Thames River Basin Partnership on a stormwater retrofit project in the Borough of Danielson during Phase 2 of their Water Street redevelopment project. The Five Mile River flows through this section of town where there is a very high percentage of impervious surfaces.

The [Killingly Conservation Commission](#) and Historic District hosted a Walking Weekend event entitled "Five Miles Along the Five Mile". Over 100 people attended this event. The Five Mile River benefits from a special overlay district where this walk was conducted.

[MaryAnn Haverstock](#) has been given the position of Supervising Environmental Analyst overseeing the [Watershed Management](#), [Non-point Management](#) and [Lakes Management](#) Programs at [CT Department of Environmental Protection](#) (CT DEP).

The CT DEP has developed a [Total Maximum Daily Load](#) (TMDL) analysis for [Eagleville Brook](#) in the Mansfield area. The TMDL was developed using Impervious Cover (IC) as a surrogate parameter for a mix of pollutants conveyed by stormwater. The TMDL is established as the percent of impervious cover (% IC) throughout the watershed that must be achieved to meet the aquatic life criteria and attain the designated aquatic life uses. This analysis linking stormwater impacts directly to the aquatic life support function of a stream is a first in the nation.

The CT DEP is in receipt of the West Thompson Lake Nutrient Budget Report draft document prepared by the [United States Geological Survey](#) (USGS) and is the process of reviewing it. This study will help to understand the nutrient budget of West Thompson Lake, located in Thompson, CT.

The [USGS National Water Quality Assessment](#) program is conducting nutrient synthesis studies in several regions of the U.S. In the study of nutrients in the Northeastern U.S., annual point-source nutrient loads have been compiled for a small number of drainage basins in the region, including the Quinebaug River Basin, as part of the regional evaluation of stream nutrient loads.

The [Willimantic River Alliance](#) received a mini-grant from the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor to add a “Willimantic River Greenway Parks and Trails Guide” to their website.

[Liz Rogers](#), RC&D Coordinator for the USDA [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) has relocated her office from Tolland to the Brooklyn USDA Center at 139 Wolf Den Road. Her new phone number is (860) 774-0224 ext 4.

The [Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area](#) (RC&D) is continuing with their nutrient management study, funded by an EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 grant through the CT DEP. The feasibility study was completed by Wright Pierce. A request for proposals for a marketing study and business plan is being sent out.

The seventh annual [Celebrating Agriculture](#) event, held on September 22, 2007 at the Woodstock Fairgrounds was attended by approximately 4000 people this year. Many TRBP partners had a role in this successful event that highlights the importance of agriculture in the area.

The [Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association](#) (ASRWVA) is continuing with their support of a nutrient management grant applied for by the ECCD while both organizations were involved with the formulation of a Source Water Protection Plan for the town of Putnam. The EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 grant, provided by the CT DEP will fund exploration of a manure injection apparatus designed to better incorporate nutrients into the soil rather than apply it on the surface where it is more exposed to stormwater runoff. The project was temporarily stalled by a staffing shortage at the ECCD.

ASRWVA is currently working on a Source Water Protection Plan, working with the town of Ledyard and has plans to work with the town of Preston on a similar project in the future.

A University of Massachusetts graduate student is conducting a study that involves the use of a biorention basin to treat runoff from a manure settling pond on a farm in Putnam.

The [Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor](#) (QSHC), also known as The Last Green Valley, estimates more than 5000 people participated in their 2007 [Walking Weekends](#) events. The Last Green Valley, however, continues to have funding concerns as the US Congress has not yet

passed the FY 2008 budget. The Last Green Valley funds the QSHC Water Quality Monitoring Program and partially funds the [Green Valley Institute](#) (GVI). The GVI sponsors many workshops for municipal leaders and others who make land use decisions in the area. Upcoming GVI sponsored workshops include one on the *Transfer of Development Rights* on November 28. The GVI is also continuing their Green Valley Connections workshops for regional inter-town greenway and blueway mapping and planning. Workshops will be held on November 1, 7 and 8, the location/date dependent on which geographical area you live in. For more complete program descriptions, please visit the [calendar page](#) on the GVI website.

The TRBP led watershed restoration project at [Poquetanuck Cove](#) is advancing as scheduled. Bill Moorhead, a professional botanist, was hired to conduct the one year, multi-seasonal floristic survey. This phase of the project is already underway, with the late summer and fall monitoring visits completed. As predicted, Poquetanuck Cove provides suitable growing areas for plant species listed on the Connecticut [Natural Diversity Data Base](#) as endangered, rare or of special concern, with multiple listed species positively identified there as part of this survey. The floristic survey of Poquetanuck Cove is being funded by [TNC](#), who owns the 234 acre [Poquetanuck Cove Preserve](#) in Ledyard and the [Town of Ledyard](#) Conservation Commission.

Nearly \$1 million dollars in funding for projects to improve the health of Long Island Sound were announced at a ceremony at Mystic Aquarium on October 29, 2007. The [Long Island Sound Futures Fund](#) pools money from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Shell Marine Habitat Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Multiple TRBP Partners were on the list of funding recipients for projects in the Thames River Basin:

- [Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc](#) was awarded \$27,000 towards the Phragmites control project at Poquetanuck Cove. This award will fund the first year of herbicide treatment as well as set up survey plots that will be monitored to measure the success of the project.
- The [Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc](#) was awarded \$35,000 to conduct Land Use Leadership Alliance training for Connecticut land use decision makers.
- [Project Oceanology](#) Inter-district Committee was awarded \$35,000 for a Living by the Sound – Teaching Environmental Research (LoBSTER) to benefit students from 5th grade and up

The schedule for Thames River Basin Partnership meetings in 2008 will be:

Tuesday, January 15

Tuesday, April 22

Tuesday, July 15

Tuesday, October 21

Please mark your calendars to save these dates. Meeting content and locations will be posted on the TRBP [Calendar](#) of upcoming events.

The [Town of Woodstock](#) has joined other Connecticut municipalities by committing to [Organic Land Care](#) practices for use on town managed school and recreation fields. This is a cooperative effort between the Woodstock Public Schools and the Town.

The Connecticut Board of Trustees of the Big E presented Farmland Presentation Pathfinder Awards in September. Dawn Adiletta, Woodstock's [Open Space Land Acquisition and Farmland Preservation Committee](#) Chairperson, was presented an award as an Outstanding Individual for her efforts to preserve farmland in Woodstock. The [Town of Lebanon](#) was

recognized for their efforts to encourage and promote agriculture. This award was accepted on behalf of all Town boards, commissions and staff, and the public at large who are devoted to preserving Lebanon's agricultural heritage.

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 Thames River basin. If your group is interested in being included in the next update of this newsletter or to e-subscribe, please contact Jean Pillo, Thames River Basin Partnership Coordinator at jean.pillo@conservect.org or call (860) 928-4948. The TRBP Coordinator is funded in part by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection through a United States Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant.