



Thames River Basin Partnership

Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Winter 2010

Volume 15

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](#). 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 meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership at the Buchanan Center at the Mansfield Public Library, you missed a special presentation featuring Rob Hust and Chris Bellucci of the CT DEP. They jointly overviewed the draft Connecticut Minimum Stream Flow Regulations and the proposed implementation schedule. More information on these proposed regulations can be found [here](#), including a link to the entire draft document. A public hearing regarding these proposed regulations was held on January 21, 2010. Meeting participants were encouraged to attend the public hearing, or submit written comments by February 4, 2010 to the CT DEP at the following address:

Paul Stacey
DEP Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse
Planning and Standards Division
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

TRBP News

Planning is underway for the 10th annual Thames River Basin Partnership Floating Workshop. This year's workshop will celebrate one of the TRBP's most successful Partnership initiatives, the Phragmites Control Project in Poquetanuck Cove. If you would like to be involved or just want more information, contact [Jean Pillo](#).

The Third Annual TRBP Rain Barrel Promotion, in partnership with the [New England Rain Barrel Company](#), is being planned. This year, in addition to featuring affordable rain barrels at

\$84.95, NE Rain Barrel Company also is offering Bio Orb Composters for \$99.95. The NE Rain Barrel Co. shares a portion of the proceeds, which will be used to fund a portion of the TRBP program support provided by the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District. A general delivery date of June 19, 2010 has been set, but the pickup locations have not been determined at this point. Check the [TRBP](#) website for updates.

Partner Reports

The [Eastern Connecticut Conservation District](#) (ECCD) is gathering information in the following watersheds: Mashamoquet Brook in Pomfret, Spaulding Pond in Norwich and Baker's Cove in Groton in order to develop plans to remove those waters from the list of Connecticut Impaired Waterbodies. There will be volunteer opportunities for each project. Contact the ECCD main office at 860-887-4163 x 400 if you would like to become involved.

ECCD, a not-for-profit natural resource conservation organization, will be offering a variety of plants and shrubs for sale this spring. Plants should be pre-ordered using a downloadable order form and then picked up at either the Norwichtown Mall on April 16 or 17 or at the Brooklyn Fairgrounds on April 23 or 24. Soil test kits may also be ordered. A limited supply of extra plants will be available at each location for those that missed the March 20 ordering deadline. To see descriptions of this year's plant assortment, click [here](#). Many native plant types are available. Those suitable for planting in a rain garden are identified.

The Last Green Valley (TLGV) [Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program](#) will be starting their 5th season this year. Last season, 5 separate teams collected water quality information on a monthly basis using an In-situ Troll 9500 multi parameter sonde and hand held microprocessor in the French, Quinebaug and Five Mile River watersheds at more than 60 unique locations. This season, a second Troll system is available and the program will expand further into Connecticut. Anyone interested in learning more about the In-situ Troll 9500 is invited to attend the next TLGV Water Subcommittee meeting on February 9. This 9:30 AM meeting will be at TLGV office located at 111 Main Street in Danielson, CT. Please call 860-774-3300 to register you intent to attend.

The 20th annual TLGV Walktober event registration period is currently open until March 5. This early deadline insures their staff will have ample time to assemble the variety of proposed walk, paddle and other event information in time to be printed and distributed. Their goal is to have more events this year than ever. For more information on how to register an event, click [here](#).

The Last Green Valley is pleased to announce that its 2010 Grant Program is now open for nonprofits and municipalities. Grant awards may range from \$500 - \$25,000 for projects in the Heritage Corridor that conserve, celebrate, interpret or enhance The Last Green Valley's significant natural, historic, cultural and scenic resources, or promote economic development and tourism consistent with the region's character. Please note that all grant funds will be on disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Applications are due March 31, 2010. For more information, click [here](#).

Green Valley Institute in conjunction with CT DEP and Dr. Glenn Warner of the University Of Connecticut Department Of Natural Resources and the Environment has developed a GIS based system for the identification of potential water bodies suitable for installation of a dry-hydrant for fire protection. The analysis considers proximity of water bodies to public roads, volume of water, drought conditions and potential for environmental impact. The analysis conducted for the Natchaug Basin is transferable to additional watersheds and will assist municipal fire companies with planning for Insurance Service Organization (ISO) certifiable hydrant installations. The analysis was the first phase of research funded through a grant from the US Forest Service. The second phase, which is nearing completion, identifies privately owned forestland parcels in the Natchaug Basin with the greatest impact to freshwater streams .

Three new fact sheets have been posted on the Green Valley Institute's website, www.greenvalleyinstitute.org. Please see the GVI Publications page for these fact sheets:
#10 Commercial Development with Character
#13 Community Involvement
#17 Selecting Trees Along Our Streets and Roads

GVI conducted an initial Needs Assessment survey in 2000 and a follow-up survey in 2005. In 2010, GVI's survey will take a somewhat different format from previous years but the overall goal of the survey will remain the same. The goal is to determine what information and tools land use decision makers, landowners and others in TLGV need to make sound land use decisions. This survey will consist of two parts. The first part, an online survey, will provide much needed quantitative data. The second part will involve collecting data by means of focus groups. The workshops will provide more qualitative data that will also be very useful for planning for the region's information needs. Bob Ricard, Extension Educator, Natural Resources Policy and Governance, will assist with survey design, workshop facilitation and analysis of results. For more information, contact GVI Co-Director [Susan Westa](#).

The [Borderlands Project](#) involves the towns of Killingly, CT and Exeter RI. Both towns are developing strategies to implement the visions they identified in Phase 1. Killingly is working with a consultant who will focus on redevelopment alternatives for the Dayville Four Corner Area. Exeter just received a \$98000 grant from the state of RI to indentify and analyzed alternative village development scenarios. Susan Westa of the GVI is wrapping up a report analyzing the regulatory tools available to implement these visions, including transfer of development rights and form based zoning. This information will be useful to communities throughout TLGV as they address future growth issues.

[Trout Unlimited](#) (TU) Thames Valley Chapter has been focusing on increasing their outreach to attract more volunteers. By using electronic media, they have been able to increase their outreach by up to 35%. They continue to utilize their Trout in the Classroom and CARE programs as a means to introduce children to fishing stream ecology. A river clean up for the Moosup River is being planned. Contact TU TVC President [Dixie Handfield](#) for more information.

[Avalonia Land Conservancy](#) is working on a partnership with the Ledyard Garden Club to plan a riparian buffer planting project along Cranberry Pond in Ledyard. Contact [Joellen Anderson](#) for more information.

Revisions to the Connecticut Water Quality Standards will be the subject of a public hearing and comment period beginning February 3, 2010. Click [here](#) for an informative slide show regarding the proposed revisions. Click [here](#) for more information and a full draft of the proposed Connecticut Water Quality Standards. Written comments are encouraged and can be mailed to CT DEP by February 16, 2010 to:

Paul Stacey
DEP Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse
Planning and Standards Division
79 Elm Street
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The CT DEP is also preparing the Connecticut 2010 Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report. This biennial report combines the former 305(b) and the 303(d) technical reporting sections. DEP is developing fact sheets and other outreach materials. More information on this report can be found [here](#).

The DEP 2010 spring monitoring program is scheduled to work in the lower Thames River basin and Southeast Coastal and Pawcatuck River basin to wrap up the 5 year rotating river basin ambient monitoring program. The upper Thames River basin was part of the main focus in last year's ambient monitoring efforts – results should be incorporated into the 2012 CT Integrated Water Quality Assessment report.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) launched a new website, Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online (CT ECO) that includes the latest and most accessible online maps and tools for viewing Connecticut's environmental and natural resource information. The new CT ECO website, www.cteco.uconn.edu, includes environmental and natural resource information for Connecticut such as protected open space, farmland soils, wetland soils, aquifer protection areas, water quality classifications, and drainage basins. Each can be viewed separately or in conjunction with other environmental and natural resource information. In addition, CT ECO includes several sets of high resolution imagery.

The CT DEP Inland Fisheries Division has released a revised diadromous fish restoration plan for the Shetucket/Quinebaug river basins. This 47 page document has been posted to the TRBP website and can be downloaded [here](#).

DEP's LID Coordination, Jessica Morgan, has been working with Watershed Managers and several other DEP programs to assist municipalities with project site reviews (ERTs, CEPA documents), and development of outreach materials. [A Residents Guide to Rain Barrels](#) and a [Residents Guide to Impervious Surfaces](#) are now available.

The newest issue of *Sound Outlook* newsletter (February 2010, No. 33) is now available at www.ct.gov/dep/soundoutlook. This issue highlights winter on Long Island Sound. You will find articles describing water and habitat conditions at this of year and how they affect the living

resources of the Sound. Also featured are discussions of some of the monitoring programs employed by DEP to better understand and document those conditions and effects.

Westville Lake, an US Army Corp of Engineers Quinebaug River flood control project in Southbridge, MA has been seeping since it was constructed in the 1950s. Click [here](#) more information regarding their Dam Safety Modification Project.

Further down the Quinebaug River at the West Thompson Lake property, the Blain Road footbridge was closed due to safety concerns. Cost estimates to replace the footbridge range from \$100 – 200K. Funds have not been secured for this project.

The USGS is preparing an update on nitrogen loads to Long Island Sound. Contact [John Mullaney](#) for more information.

News from the Municipalities

The Towns of Thompson, Putnam and Killingly have jointly applied for Connecticut Greenway status for the Five Mile River as part of a resource protection strategy. The Connecticut Greenways Council will announce their decision on National Trails Day in early June.

The Town of Killingly is sponsoring the second annual River Fun Race in May. This event debuted last year as part of The Last Green Valley Source to Sea initiative. This sprint style relay race includes the following disciplines: .7 mile run, 2 mile paddle, 1mile ‘just wheels’ (skateboard, rollerblade, or a non motorized scooter) and a 1 mile bike ride. All teams and solo participants must provide their own equipment for all disciplines of this relay race. For more information, contact [Eric Rumsey](#). In addition, there will be several more informal paddling opportunities in Killingly. Dates and times will be posted at www.paddlekillingly.webs.com.

The Town of Pomfret voters approved spending funds from an open space bond that will permanently protect from development 716 acres of land.

The Pomfret Conservation Commission has been focusing on means to protect old stone walls in their community as well as aquifer protection strategies. For more information, contact [Cheryl Champ](#).

Other news

[**Fish and Wildlife Service: North American Wetlands Conservation Act: Standard Grants Program**](#) provides support to public-private partnerships carrying out projects that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats. The application deadline for this program is March 5, 2010.

American Rivers is encouraging individuals and organizations to participate in the 2010 National River Cleanup Program. To find a river clean up event near you, click [here](#). To organize a river clean up event, click [here](#).

A coalition of conservation groups is hosting four separate “roundtables” in February, designed to create a vision for what Connecticut’s forests might become in the future. The results will lay the foundation for an important state forest planning process underway right now. This forest resource “assessment” and plan, under the direction of the Connecticut Division of Forestry, will directly impact the amount of federal funding Connecticut receives for future forest management and conservation. You are invited to join a local roundtable session on February 12, 17, or 27, 2010. For more information, visit the [CT Forest and Parks Association](#) website.

The US EPA is seeking input on [federal stormwater regulations](#) in the following areas:

- expand the area subject to federal stormwater regulations;
- establish specific requirements to control stormwater discharges from new development and redevelopment;
- develop a single set of consistent stormwater requirements for all municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4);
- require those sewer systems to address stormwater discharges in areas of existing development through retrofitting the sewer system or drainage area with improved stormwater control measures;
- explore specific stormwater provisions to protect sensitive areas.

Written comments must be submitted on or before February 26, 2010. Submit your comments identified by Docket ID No. EPA–HQ–OW–2009–0817. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

A "Water Is Worth It" Facebook Page was launched EPA's Office of Water On December 9. It provides a public forum to share information, encourage discussion, and raise awareness about the value of our water and water-related resources. EPA will be regularly posting information and discussion topics, which Facebook users can have delivered to their virtual door by becoming a "fan" of the page. You can reach the page via this [link](#). All are encouraged to post and interact as we discuss and learn about our nation's water and water infrastructure--and the many ways that Water Is Worth It!

EPA conducted a national lakes assessment on sample lakes. For a factsheet on this project, click [here](#).

Upcoming Workshops

Get ready to Celebrate Earth Day 40! On March 1, 2010 the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District will be co-presenting a special workshop on rain gardens with Susan Munger of the UCONN Extension System New London County Master Gardener Program. A slide show demonstrating the step by step process of planning and installing a rain garden will be followed by a presentation on native plants suitable for rain garden designs. This workshop will begin at 7 PM at the main building at Uncas on the Thames located at 401 West Thames Street, Norwich, CT 06360. Email [Jean Pillo](#) to reserve your seat.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities is sponsoring a workshop on *Making the Best Land Use Decisions* on February 17, 2010 9 AM – noon at the Glastonbury Town Hall. This

workshop is designed to help participants understand the relationship between wetlands, water quality, and permanent land use change. For more information, click [here](#).

Dr. Temple Grandin, a leading animal behaviorist and expert on humane treatment of our food animals, will speak Monday, March 1 at Old Sturbridge Village as part of the tri-state project "Producing Natural Local Meat for Consumers," funded by the US Department of Agriculture SARE Professional Development Program. The public is invited. For more information, contact [Jean King](#) at 860-916-7367.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau Association is sponsoring its 1st Annual Statewide Conference. This Thursday March 4 conference is featuring a Farming and Inland Wetlands Forum: What every Agricultural Producer Needs to Know. For more information, contact [Joan Nichols](#) at 860 768-1105.

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 [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 meeting quarterly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month

April 20, 2010 The Northeast Connecticut, Windham Region and Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments' GIS staff will give a joint presentation on the newly available online GIS data developed through a CT Office of Policy and Management grant. Meeting location NECCOG office, Dayville CT.

July 20, 2010 Project Oceanology, Groton, CT. Juliana Barrett of CT SeaGrant will be our guest presenter who will overview recent work on Coastal Buffer Planting guidance.

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

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. 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. Without your support, future services available from the TRBP Coordinator will be extremely limited.