



# Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Winter 2018

Volume 45

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 Project Manager  
Eastern Connecticut Conservation District  
And TRBP Coordinator*

## Special Presentation

If you missed the January 2018 meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership, then you missed a presentation by Amanda Ryan, the Municipal Stormwater Educator for the Center for UCONN Land-use Education and Research (CLEAR). Amanda is responsible for statewide outreach and education to communities and institutions regulated by the state Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer Systems (MS4) general permit. Amanda reviewed the six minimum measures required under the MS4 permit and new online tools to assist with reporting requirements. These tools can be found at <http://nemo.uconn.edu/ms4/index.htm>. There's a new [short video](#) that reviews the MS4 Annual Report submission process and how to complete the Annual Report. It also covers some commonly asked questions - all in 10 minutes!

## TRBP Updates

TLGV/ECCD entered into a new cooperative agreement that includes a stable level of funding for TRBP and TLGV WQM Coordinator time for federal FY18 through September 30, 2018.

Good news to report on the TRBP website front. The TRBP website is still static. ECCD applied for a small grant from Rivers Alliance of CT on behalf of the Thames River Basin Partnership and the grant has been awarded. Once the contract is in hand, an RFP will be developed to solicit bids for the project. The TRBP is listed as an active partner in three Regional

Conservation Partnership Projects with an outreach role. The website is a critical tool for providing outreach on these projects.

TRBP received a \$500 small grant from the Chelsea Groton Bank Foundation to support 20 scholarships for Municipal Officials to attend the 2018 Floating Workshop. A scholarship application form is in development, as well as a distribution list, for all the municipalities in the greater Thames River watershed.

On behalf of the TRBP, ECCD applied for and received a \$500 mini-grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut to support additional TRBP Coordinator time (and meeting refreshments) for a series of 3 meetings focused on the TRBP Plan of Work update. The focus of this project is building the number of organizations involved in the partnership and to develop a plan of work that represents the expanded organization. This grant opportunity resulted from an event on October 24, 2017 sponsored by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut which featured a conversation about balancing economic growth and environmental preservation and what that means for vibrant communities. The “Parks and Parking Lots” program was attended by over 50 area conservation organizations and was one in a series of facilitated conversations the Foundation sponsored. The TRBP Plan of Work meetings will take place in spring 2018.

Floating Workshop XVIII -- Project Oceanology has reached out to TRBP to offer the use of its 55 passenger Envirolab for this year’s Floating Workshop. The theme of the workshop we proposed for the Chelsea Groton Bank Foundation Grant was river continuity. Based on Project O’s schedule, June 15 has been selected for this year’s workshop. Any partners interested in participating on the TRBP Floating Workshop Planning committee, please contact Jean at [TRBP@comcast.net](mailto:TRBP@comcast.net).

TRBP Plan of Work will expire in April 2018. All Partners are asked to review the current plan and suggest updates and revisions to make the next plan more inclusive and partner focused. A series of TRBP Plan of Work meetings will be scheduled to update the plan.

Have you signed on as a follower of the [Thames River Basin Partnership Facebook Page](#) yet? This is the fastest means to receive updates from our partners. If you are a TRBP partner looking for assistance with outreach on conservation projects, workshop announcements or sharing your newsletter with a broader audience, you can send those updates in a “copy and paste” format to [TRBP@Comcast.net](mailto:TRBP@Comcast.net). Photos and graphics are encouraged.

Avalonia will be celebrating a big anniversary (50) year next year and is looking for “gifts” of events to celebrate this milestone. During the Connecticut Forest and Parks Trails Day Weekend, ECCD/TRBP will host a paddle on Poquetanuck Cove on June 2, 2018. This event will also be advertised as a TLGV Spring Outdoors Program. Email [TRBP@Comcast.net](mailto:TRBP@Comcast.net) for more information.

The next TRBP meeting will be on April 17, 2018. A special presentation will be conducted by Dr. Robert Craig of Bird Conservation Research, Inc. He will overview his ongoing forest bird

mapping project for Connecticut and Rhode Island. The meeting will be held at the Old Pomfret Townhouse in Pomfret Center.

## Partner Reports

One benefit of participating in the Thames River Basin Partnership includes the opportunity to collaborate with other conservation organizations in order to achieve greater success of our shared conservation goals. In recent years, this has been evidenced by interagency cooperation through opportunities for programs funded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP). The RCPP encourages partners to join in efforts with agricultural producers to increase the restoration and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife and related natural resources on regional or watershed scales through locally-led initiatives.

- The Last Green Valley (TLGV) [Improving Soil Health and Water Quality in the Thames River Watershed](#). The long-term objective of this project is to implement soil health conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program on 500 acres of cropland and show a measurable improvement of edge-of-field and in-stream water quality, including a decrease in nutrient and turbidity levels.
- The University of Connecticut's (UConn) *PATH to Reduce Pathogens in CT Agricultural Runoff* project has completed its first year of water sampling in ten streams known to have high bacteria levels, downstream of agricultural activity. Samples were sent to a specialty lab in Florida.
- The Last Green Valley (TLGV) [Accelerating the Pace of Conservation in the Southern New England Heritage Forest](#). The Last Green Valley Forestry RCPP contract with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service was executed in September and an official project rollout is being planned for Spring 2018. This \$6.1 million project includes \$1.5 million of special EQIP funding for forest management plans and forest conservation practices with a focus on bird habitat. \$4.6 million is included to buy Healthy Forest Reserve Easements from private landowners. The project will support landowners interested in preserving their woods, including surveys, transaction costs and funding for bird habitat assessments. Landowners within the 1.4 million acre tri-state Southern New England Heritage Forest are eligible to participate in the program. Contact [Lois](#) at The Last Green Valley for more information.

TLGV Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator's Report

The 2018 water quality monitoring program planning is in progress.

- Monitoring groups were required to submit their 2018 monitoring plans for review at the February 13, 2018 TLGV Water Advisory Group meeting for approval.
- Applied for small grant from the Rivers Alliance of Connecticut to purchase equipment to expand the program to include volunteer monitoring for harmful algae blooms using protocols developed by the EPA. This grant has been awarded.

- TLGV WQM program, in partnership with ECCD, submitted almost 4000 data points to the CT DEEP for inclusion in their database. The data was submitted in time for the drafting of the 2018 CT Water Quality Assessment Report for Congress.
  - Shetucket River E. coli samples indicate impairment status pending for some stream reaches.
  - 2016 data collected at Backwater Brook in Thompson will add that stream to the impaired list. ECCD implemented a suite of stormwater management retrofits at the Thompson library. Since work has been completed, TLGV is hoping to revisit the site for a new evaluation of the brook.
- TLGV volunteers collected 15 samples from 14 sites using the RBV method after the fall 2017 RBV season.

The Amos Lake Association developed “Welcome Neighbor” packages which included non-point source pollution solutions for homeowners new to the watershed. They were also awarded a small grant from the Preston Community Fund to assemble watershed-based education materials that will be available to all homeowners in the town. This information will be directly mailed to the homeowners within the Amos Lake watershed, and available for pick up to all other town residents. A long range goal of the Amos Lake Association is to complete individual site assessments for all homes within the lake watershed with a goal of reducing non-point source pollution runoff into the lake.

Project Oceanology is a year-round, marine science educational organization governed by local school districts, in collaboration with universities and other educational institutions. Through its programs, it has collected over 40 years of water quality information from the Thames River. It recently submitted a pre-application for an NOAA Environmental Education Grant in partnership with CT Sea Grant UCONN Avery Point and ECCD. The focus of this three year program, if approved, will be teaching Environmental Resiliency concepts to area high school students. The pre-proposal was approved, resulting in the submission of a full proposal.

Marc Cohen, a TRBP representative from the Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association announced he will be retiring in March 2018. He plans to continue his involvement with the organization as a retiree, and will strongly encourage ASRWWA to continue to send a representative to our meetings in the future.

The Southeast Connecticut Council of Government (SCCOG) is performing a Community Rating System Study with a Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) Grant from CT Office of Policy and Management. Through this project, SCCOG is helping interested towns join the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System.

SCCOG recently completed a 5-year Hazard Mitigation Plan update for its towns. The plan can be reviewed at [http://www.seccog.org/Hazmit2017/SCCOG\\_MJ\\_Plan\\_ADOPTED.pdf](http://www.seccog.org/Hazmit2017/SCCOG_MJ_Plan_ADOPTED.pdf).

SCCOG received an additional RPIP grant from OPM to develop a Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan. Work has not yet started on this project.

SCCOG also recently completed a regional Housing Study to forecast housing needs to 2030. This project is complete and available online at <http://www.seccog.org/pdfs/2018Housing.pdf>.

The Last Green Valley (TLGV) organized broad participation in the 2018 Midwinter Eagle Survey. Twenty-four eagle sightings were reported between 7 – 11 AM on January 13th. A total of 29 volunteers covered 31 sites during the survey.

TLGV is accepting Spring Outdoor event applications for outdoor events planned between the Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice. Event sponsors must be members of The Last Green Valley. For more information please visit <http://thelastgreenvalley.org/explore-the-last-green-valley/spring-outdoors>. During TLGV's 2017 Walktober programs, over 84,000 people participated in various hikes, bike rides, paddles and equestrian events.

Judy Rondeau of the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) gave a presentation on the French River Watershed Based Plan at the November TLGV Water Advisory Committee meeting. The focus of her presentation was on volunteer water quality data leading to actions. TLGV water quality monitoring volunteers sampled Backwater Brook in Thompson, CT and it was determined to have high *E. coli* concentrations. Backwater Brook is piped under the Thompson Library and the stormwater from that campus drains directly into the brook. As a result of the volunteer water quality monitoring, two rain gardens, a stormwater planter and stormwater catch basin filters were installed at the library. Additionally, a tree filter was installed at the Mary R Fisher Elementary School, which also received an Enviroscape to teach the students about non-point source pollution.

The Roseland Lake Nutrients Modeling Project was completed by ECCD in late February. After it was determined that up to 50% of the nutrients fueling algae blooms were originating from in-lake sources, the plan focused on means to reduce algae blooms using in-lake management strategies. Watershed management priority areas were also identified. Click the blue hyperlinked text to review a copy of the final [Roseland Lake Management Plan](#) or just the [Executive Summary](#).

Progress on the Mashamoquet Brook Septic System Upgrades project has not progressed as planned. A \$5000 rebate intended to encourage homeowners in areas identified as high priority properties has not led to any homeowners applying for the funding assistance. ECCD is working with the Town of Pomfret and the CT DEEP to identify a different project in the Mashamoquet watershed before the grant expires later this year.

The Woodstock Agricultural Waste Management Project at Fairvue Farm is continuing toward completion. Construction of the concrete receiving tanks is complete and the final connection to the storage tanks previously installed with NRCS assistance is scheduled to take place this spring. The pump house is currently under construction.

Monitoring of the inflow and outflow from a woodchip bioreactor installed at Valleyside Farm in Woodstock is scheduled to begin this spring. The monitoring will assess the effectiveness of the woodchip bioreactor, in the Connecticut climate, at removing nutrients and bacteria from agricultural field drainage.

ECCD staff will be working within the 36 towns in their District to install 100 rain barrels and 100 rain gardens. This project is being funded by a Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The rain gardens will be approximately 70 square feet each. Partners on this project include the Boy Scouts of America, who will help install the rain gardens, and Coca-cola, who will provide used syrup barrels that will be transformed into rain barrels. For more information on this project, or if you might like a rain garden or rain barrel on your property, please contact [Dan Mullins](#) at 860-319-8808.

ECCD will begin work on the Upper Natchaug Healthy Watershed Plan and the Anguilla Brook Bacteria Trackdown and Watershed Based Plan once the contracts have been executed.

DEEP reports that the draft 2018 Biannual Water Quality Assessment Report will be available this spring. When the draft report becomes available, TRBP will share a link to it on its Facebook page. Partners are encouraged to review the document and provide comments before the review period ends.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is interpreting state soils to predict which soils will have more problems with ground water contamination due to salt infiltration. For more information, visit the [NRCS web page Soil Survey of the State of Connecticut](#) - Interpretations and download Potential Mobility of Road Salt report and the Soil Potential Mobility Ratings of Road Salt Applications on Soils poster.

The USDA NRCS is also involved in coastal zone subaqueous soil mapping

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has finalized the 2017-2022 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) The SCORP is a planning document that identifies outdoor recreation issues of statewide significance and evaluates the supply of and the demand for outdoor recreation resources and facilities in Connecticut. The SCORP provides unified guidance to state and municipal officials as they develop and expand outdoor recreation opportunities for their respective constituents. To review a copy of the SCORP, click this link

[http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2707&q=323864&deepNav\\_GID=1642%20](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2707&q=323864&deepNav_GID=1642%20).

DEEP announced the recipients of the 2017 Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Awards. Eight (8) grants were awarded for the following projects throughout the greater Thames River, Southeast Coastal and Pawcatuck River watersheds in December 2017. The grant funds/acre ratio ranged from \$679-3,342/acre, averaging \$1,833 acre over these 8 awards. The grants provided a range of 65-75 % of fair market value As these projects close, details will be provided in future CT DEEP Open Space monthly reports to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee and the State Bond Commission. Click here to review the monthly reports

<http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?A=2706&Q=477776>.

Town: Ellington

Project Title: Bellante Preserve

Sponsor: Northern Conn. Land Trust, Inc.

Address: Sandy Beach Road

Grant: \$36,000

Acreage: 35 acres

This 35-acre undeveloped upland forest is located in the eastern panhandle off Rt. 140 (Tolland Tpke) in the Town of Ellington. The parcel abuts Ernie Boothroyd Nature Preserve (NCLT), which is in close proximity to the Nye-Holman State Forest. Within a Conservation Corridor established by Capitol Region COG along the Willimantic River, the current owner has witnessed a plethora of wildlife including: turkey, fisher cats, coyotes, rabbits, various species of birds and bear.

Town: Mansfield

Project Title: Simpson Family Property

Sponsor: Town of Mansfield

Address: 652 Warrenville Road

Grant: \$207,000

Acreage: 114 acres

Located in the central eastern portion of the town on Warrenville Road, this parcel is characterized as an undeveloped woodlot with limited development potential based on soils, its stony nature, and the presence of wetlands and steep slopes. This property is located across the street from the Mt. Hope Property protected with the assistance of a grant from this program in 1999. A portion of this property is identified in the Natural Diversity Database. This is a large parcel with natural and archeological assets along with the potential to provide quality passive recreational and educational opportunities.

Town: North Stonington

Project Title: Green Falls River Glen

Sponsor: Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc.

Address: 119 Puttker Road

Grant: \$195,000

Acreage: 86.5 acres

With over a half-mile of river frontage on the Green Falls River, this property is located off Puttker Road in the northeastern portion of North Stonington, 1/2 mile from the Pachaug State Forest. The river is stocked by DEEP. The property is comprised of 33 acres of wetland, vernal pools, prime farmland soils and a historic woolen mill site, and is part of an Aquifer Protection Area of the Pawcatuck River basin.

Town: North Stonington, Griswold and Preston

Project Title: Tri-Town Ridgeline Forest

Sponsor: Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc.

Address: 85 Miller Road

Grant: \$555,000

Acreage: 409 acres

This property is located in the towns of North Stonington, Griswold and Preston. The parcels link about 1,400 acres of protected land owned by Avalonia (76 ac.), The Nature Conservancy (Cons. Easement), State DEEP (Pachaug State Forest, 213 ac.), and conservation restricted land held by the Town of North Stonington (133 ac.). This property is an unfragmented forest

(currently under PA490, chestnut oak upland forest), with over 4 miles of trails (stone-walled), 100-foot cliffs, three mountains (240' to 506' ASL, Lambert Mountain), and contains vast and varied wildlife habitat.

Town: Preston

Project Title: Kendall/Thomas Preserve

Sponsor: Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc.

Address: 16 Rude Road

Grant: \$195,750

Acreage: 177 acres

Located in northeastern Preston, this property is primarily an undeveloped forested lot (currently in PA490) transected by Rattlesnake Brook, Folly Works Brook and Broad Brook. The property contains wide and diverse habitats including open fields (still being hayed), shrub swamp, red maple swamp, riparian and upland woodland and a sand barren.

Town: Sprague

Project Title: Tenenbaum - Morehouse

Sponsor: Town of Sprague

Address: 269 Scotland Road

Grant: \$96,600

Acreage: 28.9 acres

Located off Scotland Road (Rt. 97) in Sprague, the property is principally a forested wood lot with some open fields that are being used for silage (listed as 13ac. farmland), wetlands, swamp grasses, and two ponds for irrigation. The property is bisected by a rail line leaving a small section of the property (1.9 ac.) separated from the main parcel but having frontage on the Shetucket River. This parcel also abuts State DEEP land to the north.

Town: Sprague, Franklin

Project Title: Peltier Property

Sponsor: Town of Sprague

Address: 154 Holton Road

Grant: \$158,200

Acreage: 51.40 acres

This property will become part of the Sprague Land Preserve, which is located in both Sprague and Franklin and totals over 330 acres of open space that has received three grants under this program (includes the Mukluk Property). Acquisition of this parcel will secure the main access to this preserve off Holton Road in Franklin. It is an undeveloped forested woodlot with 7% wetland, mapped farmland soils and is about 25% steeply sloping.

Town: Thompson

Project Title: Bull Hill

Sponsor: Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.

Address: 57 Bull Hill Road, N. Grosvenor Dale Road, and 120 Bull Hill Road, Woodstock

Grant: \$172,500

Acreage: 254 acres

The 254 acres of this proposal is part of a 3,000 acre undeveloped forest located in the towns of Thompson and Woodstock. It is principally an inholding with the best access being Bull Hill Road. The property has developed trails, with areas undergoing timber harvesting and other areas of the forest regenerating. About 1/2 of this property is within the Little River Watershed and is close to the Army Corp of Engineer's West Thompson Dam.

The first draft of the Blue Plan Resource and Use Inventory is ready for your review. The Inventory provides information on the natural resources and human uses of Long Island Sound, including recreational boating, recreational fishing, and waterfowl hunting, based on the best available data and maps. The Inventory will be used to develop the Blue Plan, a spatial plan that will guide future use of the Sound's waters and submerged lands, and help minimize conflicts between marine life and human uses of the Sound. Its success depends on the involvement of all those who have an interest in Long Island Sound. DEEP encourages you to provide your insights, questions, and thoughts on the Inventory to [DEEP.BluePlanLIS@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.BluePlanLIS@ct.gov). Visit [www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan](http://www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan) to download a copy of the Plan.

UConn, supported by several partners, is bringing a new Connecticut Brownfields Initiative to their campus. This program aims to bring much-needed assistance to the redevelopment of these sites. To fully fund this endeavor, Connecticut Brownfields Initiative is partnering with the Department of Economic and Community Development, Mohegan Sun, Fuss & O'Neill, GZA Geoenvironmental, TRC Solutions, AECOM, Loureiro Engineering Associates, Manafort Brothers Inc., Langan Engineering & Environmental Services Inc., Shipman & Goodwin, and Tilcon, who will also provide important expertise and networking support to the program. More information click here [https://today.uconn.edu/2017/12/brownfield-remediation-gets-groundswell-support-uconn/?utm\\_campaign=Newsatme&utm\\_content=Brownfield%2BRemediation%2Bgets%2BGroundswell%2Bof%2BSupport%2Bfrom%2BUConn&utm\\_medium=news%40me&utm\\_source=mail%2Balert](https://today.uconn.edu/2017/12/brownfield-remediation-gets-groundswell-support-uconn/?utm_campaign=Newsatme&utm_content=Brownfield%2BRemediation%2Bgets%2BGroundswell%2Bof%2BSupport%2Bfrom%2BUConn&utm_medium=news%40me&utm_source=mail%2Balert)

EPA has awarded \$1,345,000 in grants to strengthen the capacity of the states to protect and restore wetlands. The Wetland Program Development Grants provide interstate agencies, tribes, and nonprofit organizations with funding to develop and refine comprehensive state and local wetlands programs.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) was awarded \$97,500 to advance and improve Connecticut's wetland condition through planning, regulatory, and outreach approaches that increase the knowledge of wetland stakeholders. CT DEEP will refine their wetland program plan to be aligned with the department's recent restructuring. Final products of this grant include: 1) a redeveloped Wetland Program Plan; 2) refined DEEP Land and Water Resources Division standard operating procedures that address the integration of inland and tidal wetland regulatory functions; 3) workshops and educational materials for municipal officials to improve knowledge and increase skills facilitating consistent management and protection of wetlands and watercourses; 4) a report, including maps and policy recommendations, which assesses the regulatory viability of tidal wetland setbacks; 5) a workshop discussing expected response of Connecticut's 20 largest coastal wetland complexes; 6) GIS data sets identifying significant coastal marsh migration areas, road flooding frequencies,

and suitable areas for creating new marsh; and 7) a marsh migration land conservation plan describing ecological significance, threats, and opportunities to accommodate migration.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection was awarded \$75,000 to better protect wetlands and aquatic resources. MA DEP will undertake tasks to align Massachusetts state stormwater standards, requirements, and certifications with the EPA Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit, which will come into effect on July 1, 2018 for 249 communities. The following major tasks will be accomplished: 1) Perform research, analyze options, and evaluate choices for aligning the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer General Permit requirements; 2) Convene a Stormwater Management Technical Advisory Committee to provide input in resolving Wetland Protection Act and Water Quality Certification inconsistencies; 3) Conduct outreach and provide technical assistance with MS4 communities and statewide stormwater coalitions; 4) Update and revise the Massachusetts Stormwater Management Handbook and the Massachusetts Hydrology Manual; and 5) Provide workshops and training for towns and coalitions.

Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Office was awarded \$73,803 to use modeling data to characterize coastal wetland migration corridors and to use this information to improve land use planning efforts in the area. This project will expand the areal scope of existing site monitoring and mapping efforts by integrating historical image data and by performing change analysis on the image data.

The University of Massachusetts (Amherst) was awarded \$148,660 to collect wetlands data during critical times and test the potential of using various sensors to assess vegetation health/stress and physical characteristics of salt marshes. The collected data will be calibrated, and assessments validated, using data collected on the ground. The goal is to use unmanned aerial systems to assess the physical and biological condition of salt marshes.

### **Upcoming Workshops and Conferences**

Organic farmers, mark your calendars for April 26, 2018 for a special Soil Health Workshop. The keynote Speakers for this workshop will be Jack Kittredge and Julie Rawson, who have been farming and homesteading organically at Many Hands Organic Farm in Barre, MA since 1982 (certified organic since 1987). They focus on good soil, strong nutrition and carbon-friendly farming practices. Their farm contains 3 acres of vegetables and a broad array of poultry, beef and pork, besides an acre of fruit - all on a small farm scale. Jack and Julie have been tillage free for 2 years.

Their talk will discuss reasons for prioritizing carbon-friendly growing practices.

- for improved quality and quantity of production
- for lessened weed, disease and pest pressure
- for building a biodiverse soil that is a net carbon sequesterer.

More importantly, they will discuss their experience and that of others in

- specific methods of soil preparation for a no-till system

- creative use of inter-planted and over-wintering cover crops
- intricate livestock rotations in annual vegetable and perennial fruit production.

Registration will be available soon at [www.CTRCD.org](http://www.CTRCD.org)

The 29th Annual Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference for the New England states and New York will be held on April 25 & 26, 2018 at the Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls, New York. Both full conference and single day registrations are available. Registration will close March 30th.

This conference, which is coordinated by New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) in partnership with member states and EPA, has become the premier forum for sharing information about nonpoint source pollution (NPS) issues and projects in this region. The conference sessions will reflect the theme of Innovation.

Conference attendees will include representatives from public and private sectors in New England and New York State involved in NPS pollution management, including participants from state, federal, and municipal governments; the private sector; academia; and watershed organizations. For more information about this conference, and to register, please visit the registration page. <http://neiwpc.org/our-programs/nps/annual-nps-conference/>

### **News from the Municipalities**

The Woodstock Conservation Commission and The New Roxbury Land Trust, Inc will be co-sponsoring a workshop on Gypsy Moths on April 17, 2018. The workshop will be held at the Woodstock Town Hall lower level beginning at 7 PM. The last few years have been banner years for gypsy moth population explosions. A virus killed many of them last spring; does that mean there will be less this year? Guest presenter will be Tom Worthley, Associate Extension Educator from the UCONN Cooperative Extension System. This program is free and open to the public.

### **Land Trust Updates**

The Wyndham Land Trust recently received a donation of 81 acres of forested land in East Killingly from Anna May Scanlon of Smithfield, RI. The property will be known as the Edward R. Laby Preserve in honor of her late son, who hunted on the land.

The Sherman and Susan Waldron family recently donated 191 acres of forested land on Bull Hill in Thompson to the Wyndham Land Trust—the largest single donation in the 42-year history of the land trust. Preserved land along the Bull Hill ridgeline now totals well over 500 acres.

Esther Labbee left a legacy behind by donating her 56-acre Chenes Roches property in the northwest corner of Willington to Joshua's Trust. The preserve's name is French, meaning "oaks rocks." According to the trust, Labbee named the property after a sprawling oak tree standing next to a stone wall near the entrance to the 56-acre preserve. There are also several large glacial erratic boulders and ridges within the preserve.

## Other News

Almost 30 USGS specialists were scattered along the Atlantic coastline from Maine to Connecticut collecting data from the recent nor'easter that struck the region in early March. The crews worked in the field for days recovering storm-tide sensors that were installed before the storm struck and measuring high-water marks, which scientists can use to determine how high the flood waters reached. Working from sunup to sundown, the crews were trying to complete the important scientific data collection work before another winter storm, which was forecast to hit the area that Wednesday, interfering with some of the critical high-water marks. The high-water mark data collected will document the extent and depth of the flooding and will help the affected communities save lives and property by better preparing for future flood events. High-water marks can also be used for future flood forecasting, predicting the severity of future floods, and also for delineating flood zones in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's floodplain maps

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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 meets quarterly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

Next meeting will be on April 17, 2018. The meeting will be held at the Old Pomfret Town House, located at 17 Townhouse Road, Pomfret Center. Dr. Robert Craig of Bird Conservation Research, Inc. will be our featured presenter at this meeting.

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 previous versions of this quarterly publication from the [TRBP website](#) (Summer 2006 – Spring 2015) or more current editions from more recent editions at <http://thelastgreenvalley.org/learn-protect/watershed-protection/thames-river-basin-partnership>.

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 17 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.