



Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Spring 2017

Volume 42

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 April 18, 2017 Thames River Basin Partnership meeting, then you missed a presentation by Adam Whelchel, Science Director for The Nature Conservancy. TNC recently completed a project with 10 southeastern Connecticut municipalities focused on regional community resilience. Southeastern Connecticut is a collection of communities each with its own individual identity and history. However, everyone involved with the project was reminded during this project that the fate of each community is closely tied to the social, environmental, and economic health of the whole region. Therefore, it is quite clear that the challenges facing this region are best tackled collectively with multiple towns, organizations, associations, foundations, and businesses working together. TNC hopes that this Regional Resilience Vision process, the Summary of Findings and the Guidebook help each community gain greater clarity on the common challenges faced while providing positive steps toward continued dialogue, resource sharing, and forward thinking leadership critical to community resilience building in Southeastern Connecticut. Outcomes of the process can be downloaded from the links below.

- Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resilience Vision Project – Summary of Findings:
<https://tnc.box.com/s/7k899k4wet92bd293x7xvoo0mej56yu>
- Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resilience Guidebook
<https://tnc.box.com/s/8nne60yjk2g3m1mgzkfa86rndxyjiawf>

Funding for this project was provided in part by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut.

TRBP Updates

SAVE THE DATE! The TRBP's annual flagship event, the Floating Workshop, has been scheduled for June 9, 2017. Click [here](#) to download a registration form. This year will mark the 17th year for this event. FW XVII will feature the Little River watershed in Woodstock and Putnam, CT. The watershed is an USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) [National Water Quality Initiative Watershed](#). Many conservation practices and water quality restoration projects have been funded in the watershed by both the NRCS and the CT DEEP with support of EPA Clean Water Act funding. Upstream of a public drinking water supply surface water intake, the Little River watershed has been the focus of much remediation and many agricultural conservation practice installations. The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) is currently involved in a study of Roseland Lake in the watershed, and is in the process of developing a lake and watershed management plan. ECCD has completed multiple other projects within the watershed, and is on track to complete several more.

We have reserved the barn at Roseland Park for the indoor presentations. The on-water component will take place on Roseland Lake. Workshop participants are encouraged to bring their own paddle craft to the workshop. If you have a small powerboat that can transport a few people who don't have paddle craft and are willing to take on passengers for the event, please contact the [TRBP Coordinator](#). There is an optional morning tour of several project sites before the workshop.

The Thames River Basin Partnership was selected to receive the first ever Outstanding Source Water Protection Award by the Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association on February 1, 2017 at their annual meeting. The plaque is on display at the ECCD Norwich office.

The TRBP website www.TRBP.org is still static. Once again, our request for grant funding to hire a contractor to update the website was sadly declined. If you know someone who has the talent to restructure a website and is willing to work at a discounted rate, please have them contact the [TRBP Coordinator](#). If you are interested in supporting this project, please mail your donation to TRBP, c/o ECCD, 238 West Town Street, Norwich, CT 06360. Write your check out to **ECCD** and put "TRBP website fund" in the memo on the front of your check.

For the time being, the Last Green Valley (TLGV) is continuing to temporarily host a basic [TRBP page](#) on its website where recent meeting agendas, notes, newsletters and the TRBP Plan of Work can be downloaded. If you are not able to activate the hyperlinked text above, go to www.thelastgreenvalley.org and look for watershed protection under the "learn and protect" tab. Then, go to the TRBP tab.

TRBP has an active [Facebook](#) page. The [TRBP coordinator](#) will post your upcoming event or other announcements to the page upon request. If you use Facebook, please "Like" and "Follow" the TRBP page and TRBP postings will show up in your feed, and then please "share" the featured partner activities with your "Friends" to generate interest in our organization.

The next TRBP meeting will be on July 18, 2017 in the Branford House on the UCONN Avery Point Campus, courtesy of Connecticut Sea Grant. Further meeting information will be available closer to the meeting date.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) updates:

A benefit of participating in Thames River Basin Partnership includes the opportunity to collaborate with other conservation organizations in order to achieve greater success of our joint conservation goals. In recent years, this has been evidenced by interagency cooperation through opportunities for programs funded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) RCPP projects. 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

Through this project, three producers have been enrolled in the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and 101 acres of cropland was planted with diverse cover crops or developed rotational grazing programs.

The University of Connecticut (UCONN) has begun its Path to Reduce Pathogens in CT Agricultural Runoff

This year's goal is to place passive water samplers in 10 streams with known fecal bacteria contamination in the watershed. Existing water quality data was obtained from CT DEEP and the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD). The monitoring sites were carefully selected by the project partners after reviewing water quality data and aerial maps of the watersheds. Eight samplers are in place and sampling will begin in May after volunteers are trained as part of The Last Green Valley's Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program. The project team has agreed to meet quarterly to provide project updates.

The Last Green Valley (TLGV) NRCS RCPP program for Accelerating the Pace of Conservation in the Southern New England Heritage Forest

This project is still in the contract development phase. For more information, please contact [TLGV](#).

Partner Reports

Quinebaug Valley Community College hosted an Earth Day Fair on April 18 that was part of a series of outreach events developed for residents in Northeastern, CT. The day began at WINY 1350 AM radio station in Putnam from 6 to 9 a.m. with a drive-by distribution of sample water bottles (free from the CT Department of Public Health Drinking Water Division to test for lead and arsenic). The show then moved to QVCC for a campus-wide Earth Day Celebration, including a lecture by Climate Scientist, Brenda Ekwurzel. Brenda also spoke to 400 students at Woodstock Academy earlier in the morning. Multiple conservation organizations tabled displays at the QVCC event, including Connecticut Audubon, Northeast District Department of Health,

Wyndham Land Trust and The Last Green Valley. By the end of the day 253 water sample bottles were distributed for private well testing.

DEEP's Watershed/NPS Management Program is currently providing financial support for numerous targeted planning and implementation projects across the greater Thames River Basin. The majority of that assistance comes through agency administration of the federal Clean Water Act Section 319 NPS grant program, which can provide up to 60% of eligible project agreement costs through a reimbursement process. Recent repeat grant recipients have included:

- Eastern CT Conservation District for site plan reviews and a plethora of technical assistance, targeted trackdown studies and watershed-based planning projects, as well as agricultural conservation and other best management practices (ag tiled field nutrient reduction bioreactor, precision planting "Growing Green" equipment, silage leachate and milkhouse wastewater collection, and dairy manure/livestock mortality composting, as well as rain garden, bioretention, stormwater tree filter and stormwater infiltration practices, septic system upgrades, goose control and outreach, and lake watershed nutrient load management);
- University of Connecticut for a number of stormwater management retrofit and green infrastructure projects on the Storrs campus in support of the water quality-impaired Eagleville Brook watershed (bioretention areas, pervious pavement, vegetated green roof, stormwater tree filters, interpretive signage suite, impervious cover disconnection tracking, and local watershed team coordination)
- University of Connecticut for a statewide sports turf grass research and outreach project comparing 6 commonly used turf treatment practices and targeting training and outreach with annual Field Day events and a pending homeowner smartphone application.

For grant awards executed within the current TRBP 5 year work plan, approximately **\$1,610,000** of CWA Section 319 NPS grant funds have been spent, leveraging approximately \$1,075,000 of local matching funds and services, all in the pursuit of targeted reduction and elimination of nonpoint sources of pollution in the greater Thames River Basin.

DEEP, through the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program, had a very significant acquisition this quarter. Just outside of the Thames River Basin in the adjacent Southeast Coastal Basin, and involving one active TRBP partner- Groton Open Space Association (GOSA)- the Tilcon, Inc. property in Groton was acquired through the contributions of multiple cooperators that resulted in critical habitat protection (pitch pine/scrub oak woodland) on this 199 acre property. GOSA has entered a Stewardship Agreement with DEEP and will be an active cooperator in the day-to-day management of this unique area.

DEEP has finalized its preliminary Integrated Water Resource Management report which includes a list of waters prioritized for action plan development by the Department by year 2022. The listing is grouped into two categories (Restoration, Protection) of freshwater and estuarine waters. Within the Thames River Basin, Restoration freshwater priorities to address Recreation use support include: Day Brook (Pomfret), Shetucket River (Norwich), Spaulding Pond (Norwich) and Kahn Brook (Bozrah). Estuarine waters of restoration priority for Recreation and/or Shellfish Harvesting use support will include the Thames River segments from the mouth with Long Island Sound up to Norwich Harbor in Norwich. Within the greater Thames River

watershed basin, Protection freshwater priorities include the Natchaug River and Mount Hope Watershed (including the Natchaug, Bungee, Still, Bigelow and Stonehouse Rivers/Brooks)
Note: Outside of the Thames River Basin, Protection priority freshwater watersheds include the Upper Pawcatuck Watershed (Pawcatuck, Wyassup, Green Fall, and Ashaway Rivers).
Additional coastal embayments in the Niantic River Basin and the Southeast Coast Basin are prioritized for Recreation and/or Shellfish Harvesting use support. As resources become available over the next five year period, DEEP will be seeking watershed stakeholders and partners to assist in developing these action plans. This listing is included in the 2016 Connecticut Integrated Water Quality Report, found online at:
http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2719&q=325610&deepNav_GID=1654.

The [Recommendations for Connecticut Statewide Phosphorus Strategy Pursuant Final Report](#) required under Connecticut Public Act 12-155 has been completed by CT DEEP. While DEEP and the Committees have made tremendous progress and fulfilled the Connecticut legislative mandate, DEEP is committed to continuing to work together and to sharing information in order to best protect our rivers and streams from excess phosphorus.

DEEP Water Planning and Management/Infrastructure Management Program has recently posted a Notice of Scoping for two river dams on the lower Pachaug River in Griswold. This may be of particular interest to many in TRBP as the Pachaug River was the focus of a popular Thames River Floating Workshop a few years back. The two dams – United Pond Dam and City Pond Dam -- are located in Jewett City at Slater Road and the intersection of Water Avenue. These dams operate as “run of river”. It is the goal of the Department to remove the dams in order to eliminate a public safety risk and to eliminate another migratory barrier to diadromous fish by restoring a stretch of free-flowing river. Contaminated sediments in the impoundment will be identified and excavated prior to dam removal. Dam removal will eliminate exposure hazard to recreationists and downstream residents and strengthen the long-term resilience of the aquatic organisms. Public comment was solicited on the removal of these two dams and an opportunity to participate was posted to the [TRBP Facebook](#) page.

You have an opportunity to give your feedback to Connecticut’s Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan. In accordance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965, the DEEP is undertaking an update of Connecticut’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The LWCF is a federal program that provides matching grants to states for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation sites and facilities. To be eligible for LWCF funding, the National Park Service requires Connecticut to prepare a SCORP and update it at least once every five years. The main goals of SCORP are to evaluate the supply and demand of all types of public outdoor recreation resources throughout Connecticut and to identify outdoor recreation issues of statewide significance. This includes the identification of capital investment priorities for acquiring, developing and protecting all types of outdoor recreation resources, assuring the continued opportunity for local units of government and private citizens to take part in planning for outdoor recreation, and the coordination of outdoor recreation programs across the state.

You are invited to assist in the creation of the 2017 SCORP by participating in a [brief survey](#). The survey provides the unique opportunity for individuals from a variety of outdoor recreation interests to provide feedback that will help shape SCORP over the next five years.

Connecticut's Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Strategy is now out on the streets. This five year Green Plan will guide the State of Connecticut and many of its land conservation partners (including municipalities, land trusts, water and other utility companies, and private landowners) to meet the goal of conserving 21% of Connecticut's land base as open space by year 2023. Take some time to read a short summary or delve into the full document – see it all [here](#).

DEEP's Wildlife Division has announced its new partnership with the USDA-NRCS and the Wildlife Management Institute to cooperate on the Regional Young Forest Initiative for At-Risk Species. Funding is made possible through a partnership under NRCS' Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Participating states include Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The joint project will increase the capacity to provide technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forestland owners wishing to implement practices outlined in NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). In Connecticut, the program will result in an increase in the quantity and quality of young forest habitat essential to New England cottontail rabbits, American woodcock, and over 50 other species associated with young forest habitat. Focus areas have been established based on species occurrence and landscape factors that deem certain specific geographic areas most likely to result in positive responses to management treatments by these target wildlife species. Practices that will create young forest habitat include forest and wildlife planning, brush mowing, non-native invasive plant control, prescribed burning, tree/shrub plantings, early successional forest habitat management, and brush pile creation. Presently, DEEP staff are reaching out to potential program participants. The process would include a site review and plan development by a forester and wildlife biologist. The first deadline for project applications is June 16, 2017. After that date, ranking will be conducted, and successful applicants notified. For additional information, contact either Lisa Wahle at (860) 424-4138; or Nick Zito at (860) 424-4044.

Meet the New CTECO – Home to Connecticut's Natural Resource Maps. Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online or CTECO (<http://cteco.uconn.edu>) is the state's home to natural resource based geospatial data. The website has been revamped with a new look and new viewers to make the data easier to find and use for everyone from the casual user to the geospatial wizard. It is also the home to the State's new (2016) high resolution (3 inch) imagery. A webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, May 24, 2:00-3:00 pm and will highlight the new features of the site and how to navigate it. Use the following link to register for this informative webinar: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4422608883442900995>.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has just released Environmental Quality in Connecticut 2016, its annual report on the condition of the state's air, water, land and wildlife. The report is built upon 30 environmental indicators that measure the state's progress towards meeting its goals during the past ten years or longer. The report shows a regression or lack of progress in meeting many of Connecticut's environmental goals, including river and reservoir

water quality, preserved lands, forests and birds, and more. Three problems that impede Connecticut's progress are highlighted: Climate – more heat + intense rain, Permanent pavement, and Not enough conservation investments.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offers financial and technical assistance to help agricultural producers make and maintain conservation improvements on their land.

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program ([EQIP](#)) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat. The next EQIP grant round will close on May 19, 2017.
- The Conservation Stewardship Program ([CSP](#)) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. CSP is becoming more active in NE CT than any other region in the state. NRCS is using this program to push soil health programs further.

Through EQIP funding, major upgrades as part of a Comprehensive Nutrients Management Plan (CNMP) are underway at a large dairy farm in Woodstock. A leaking underground tank is being replaced with a 7 million gallon containment structure. NRCS is working in partnership with ECCD on this project, who, with funding from an EPA § 319 Clean Water Act grant through the CT DEEP, is redirecting silage leachate to the containment structure, further protecting water quality in Little River.

In New London County, a CNMP is underway at a large dairy farm in Lebanon and expected to be completed by summer. Various improvements are being implemented as they proceed through the process.

At the March 21, 2017 CT NOFA Conference, NRCS Windham County District Conservationist, Ray Covino gave a presentation about permaculture and soil health and how to design systems.

Eastern Connecticut Conservation District

Riparian Buffer at Lauter Park on the Lower Natchaug River – ECCD has received another installment of SEP funds from Rivers Alliance of CT. The District will continue its work at Lauter Park to beef up the riparian buffer installed two years ago. ECCD will also design and install a rain garden to infiltrate run-off from a seasonal high-tunnel that has been constructed at the new model. Interpretive signage will be developed for the site to inform the public about the benefits of riparian buffers to water quality.

Urban Ag Conservation Grant – in collaboration with GrowWindham, Eastern CT Community garden Association, Fresh New London, Coogan Farm and other partners, ECCD is developing an urban agricultural network to provide technical assistance to community garden organizations in eastern CT. As part of the program, we are developing a model community garden at Lauter Park in Willimantic. We are conducting five hands-on workshops. For more information, contact Michael Soares: Michael.soares.eccd@comcast.net. (NRCS funds administered by the NACD)

Fairvue Farm – Little River Water Quality Improvement Fairvue Farm Ag Waste Mngt Practices Project: ECCD received CWA §319 funds from CT DEEP to install subsurface drainage beneath the silage bunkers which will keep clean water separate from silage leachate; as part of the project, a silage leachate, manure and milkhouse waste collection and conveyance system will be installed to pipe the waste to a 62' diameter concrete receiving tank. The concrete receiving tank will hold waste which will then be pumped to two larger storage tanks being constructed by NRCS.

Woodchip Bio-reactor and precision planter at Valleyside Farm in Woodstock – in May, ECCD, in collaboration with Valleyside Farm, will be installing a woodchip bioreactor at the south farm to intercept and treat run-off from a tile-drained hay field. ECCD has purchased precision planting that will be capable of planting corn into a living cover crop. (Funded through CT DEEP with CWA §319 funds)

Mashamoquet Brook Septic Upgrade Project – although this project began with an extensive outreach campaign to inform local residents of the importance of maintaining their septic systems, and an offer of a generous rebate to help offset the cost to upgrade systems that are not in compliance in critical areas near streams, to date, no one has come forward to take advantage of this opportunity. ECCD is reviewing other ways to reach out to Pomfret homeowners about this project. As part of this project, a septic system record keeping file folder printed with educational information about septic systems was an early outcome of this project. Using the ECCD folder design, the Woodstock Conservation Commission has ordered their own supply to distribute locally. (Funded through CT DEEP with CWA §319 funds)

French River WBP – ECCD continues its project to develop a watershed-based plan for the French River. As part of that effort, Judy Rondeau is conducting a rain barrel workshop on June 3rd between 10:30- 1:30 at the Thompson Library. Come to the workshop and leave with a rain barrel. For more information, contact Judy at Judy.Rondeau@comcast.net .

The Last Green Valley annual report is available now in a magazine form called *In Touch*. It has been printed and distributed to members and sponsors of the organization. This season's magazine is focused on water resources. Click [here](#) to view an online copy of the magazine. The next issue will focus on the region's land trusts.

TLGV's Spring Outdoors programs are underway. Spring Outdoors events have been scheduled from the vernal equinox to the summer solstice. Over 150 different activities have been offered this year. It is not too late to sponsor an event, which will be posted to TLGV's online calendar. For more information, contact [Lyann](#) at The Last Green Valley.

- Over 20 Earth Day River Clean Ups were sponsored by TLGV this year.
- TLGV is sponsoring a paddle on the Shetucket River on Sunday, June 4 as part of Trails Weekend. Contact [Bill](#) for more information.

- On Monday, June 5, a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held to commemorate the Shetucket River being designated a National Recreation Trail by the National Park Service.
- On the evening of Monday, June 5, there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new boat launch in the Quinebaug River National Recreation Trail in Putnam. This boat launch was relocated from Simonzi Park further downstream near the Putnam industrial park access road river crossing.
- Bald Eagle update in The Last Green Valley. Currently there are 6 bald eagle nests being monitored and all have chicks in them. The nest at Webster Lake blew down and it is unknown if a new nest has been built in the area.

The 2017 TLGV volunteer water quality monitoring season ramping up.

- The equipment tune up completed with assistance from Luke DeCesaris, Goodwin College intern to TLGV.
- The HOBO temperature monitoring probe roundup will be scheduled for early May. After calibration checks with assistance from Dennis Latchum, most will be returned to the same locations for a second year of data collecting.
- A Shetucket River water quality assessment for recreation is planned for this season. A water quality report card will be produced with the results. Many reaches of the river are not accessible from boat launches.
- The 2016 Quinebaug River report card showed some improvements over the 2015 report card.
- The annual water quality monitoring volunteer appreciation event was held on March 31 at YMCA Camp Woodstock.
- A new volunteer orientation was held on April 4 at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret. Fifteen new volunteers attended. Other were interested but unavailable that evening.
- TLGV volunteers will be assisting with the UCONN PATH RCPP project. Training will be taking place shortly.
- TLGV volunteers will be trained to do modified Edge-of-Field Monitoring once field sampling locations have been selected.
- Hilary Snook of EPA Region 1 has offered to give a half day training workshop for lake groups interested in monitoring for cyanobacteria. TLGV may host an event and encourages lake monitoring groups to participate. Contact [Jean Pillo](#) if your lake group would like to attend this event.

The [Willimantic Whitewater Partnership](#) is again coordinating a Riverfest on the Willimantic River in Willimantic, Connecticut. The Riverfest 2017 will be on Saturday, May 20.

- Due to a recent remediation and re-seeding (more details below), they will be holding this year's festival portion of the event in the parking lot of Bridge Street Plaza, right across the street from the site on Bridge Street.

- The river paddle will run from 10 a.m. thru 12 p.m. You can drop off your kayak/canoe at the Eagleville Dam starting at 9:15, then drive to Bridge Street Plaza to register and catch a bus back up to the dam.
- Riverfest 2017 river paddle tickets are available online at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2937671>. Tickets cost \$10 for an individual paddler and \$25 for 3 or more related paddlers. You can also buy your ticket for the river paddle on the day of the event.

During the late fall of 2016, Willimantic Whitewater Partnership completed a brownfield remediation of its property located in Willimantic at 28 Bridge Street. The project involved conducting Public Outreach, developing a Quality Assurance Project Plan, conducting an Analysis of Brownfields Clean-up Alternatives, conducting a Pre-design Investigation (Extent and nature of cap and Statistical evaluation alternative), developing a Remedial Action Plan, acquiring Local Wetland Permitting, and developing Design, Plans and Specifications. WWP was also responsible for Construction and Oversight, creating a Remedial Action Report and implementing an Environmental Land Use Restriction.

The pre-design investigation involved 26 test borings and 3 surface soil samples. Thirty-one (31) samples were analyzed for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH), arsenic and/or lead. Findings revealed that ETPH was detected in 2 samples, but were less than Remediation Standard Regulation (RSR) cleanup criteria; arsenic was detected in 9 samples, but these too were below RSR cleanup criteria; lead was detected in all samples, but were also below RSR cleanup criteria. However, PAHs were detected in all samples and were above RSR cleanup criteria. Therefore, hot spot removal where levels were above cleanup criteria was conducted in four locations. Subsequently, the site was graded and stabilized and an Environmental Land Use Restriction (ELUR) was developed and recorded for the site. In the fall of 2016, after the remediation was complete, the site was hydro-seeded and erosion controls were implemented. The remediation was funded by an EPA Brownfields Grant.

The Atlantic State Rural Water and Wastewater Association is continuing to work with the Woodstock Conservation Commission on a proposed aquifer overlay to protect water quality in a significant sand and gravel aquifer. The aquifer is located in the southeastern part of town. ASRWWA expects this project will lead to a larger project of updating a Source Water Protection Plan for Little River.

The draft [Connecticut Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development](#) for 2018- 2023 is available for public comment through August 1, 2017. A series of public hearings will be held around the state and public comments will be accepted on the draft Plan. The final document is due to the CT General Assembly by December 31, 2017. Please check the webpage often for updates on public hearing schedules if you wish to participate.

Land Trust and Open Space News

Wyndham Land Trust closed on two significant parcels in Thompson, CT this quarter. They were able to purchase a 76-acre parcel along the Thompson, CT/Webster, MA line that includes Long Pond, a 20-acre natural body of water, and much of its surrounding wetlands. Long Pond is

the source of the Five-Mile River that runs south through Thompson, Putnam, and Killingly before it joins the Quinebaug River in Danielson. The purchase of the property was made possible through a grant provided by the Connecticut Wetland In-Lieu Fee (ILF) program which is administered by Audubon Connecticut in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Bafflin Foundation also contributed towards the purchase.

The Wyndham Land Trust also acquired a 254-acre preserve on Bull Hill along the Thompson/Woodstock line. The new preserve is the land trust's largest single preserve. It sits in a 3000-acre unfragmented forest block. It contains wetland and swamps with ecological value, and it has hemlock forested areas with mountain laurel that support a high diversity of bird life. The property is easy for people to access, it has existing trails, and the views are terrific. It also protects the watershed of the Little River—Putnam's water supply.

The Groton Open Space Association (GOSA) is celebrating 50 years this year, and celebrated this milestone with a gala event in April.

GOSA partnered with CT DEEP to purchase the 199 acre Tilcon property with a significant pitch pine forest on it. In this unusual agreement, the State will own the land and GOSA will be the land steward. US Navy volunteers are assisting with removing old structures from the property.

Congratulations are due to Avalonia Land Conservancy! They have completed the requirements and have received their land trust accreditation!

In 2018, the Avalonia Land Conservancy will be celebrating its 50th year of incorporation. To celebrate this achievement, they are requesting "birthday gifts" in the form of public conservation outreach programs next year. If you are interested in supporting this effort, contact ALC at this [email link](#).

News from the Municipalities

At least 13 towns in Connecticut and 6 in the Thames watershed have enacted local bans on gas well fracking waste disposal and/or use of products produced from the waste, over concerns that harmful contaminants in that waste could degrade the local environment and water supplies. Andover, Ashford, Coventry, Mansfield, Windham and most recently Woodstock have passed local bans as a precaution because a CT DEEP moratorium to prevent fracking waste from being disposed of in Connecticut will expire on July 1, 2018. A statewide fracking waste ban is being considered by state lawmakers this legislative session.

Other News

USGS Interactive Map Provides a Long-term Look at Changes in the Quality of Our Nation's Rivers and Streams

This first-of-its-kind visualization puts 40 years of national water quality data at users' fingertips.

A new U.S. Geological Survey interactive map provides a comprehensive, long-term look at changes in the quality of our Nation's rivers and streams over the last four decades. For the first time, monitoring data collected by 74 organizations at almost 1,400 sites have been combined to provide a nationwide look at changes in the quality of our rivers and streams in the 40 years since passage of the Clean Water Act.

Tracking changes in the quality of these waterways over multiple decades is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of pollution control efforts and protecting the Nation's water resources into the future.

The interactive map can be used to track trends of 51 water-quality constituents and 38 aquatic-life metrics at nearly 1,400 sites. The map tracks whether water quality or aquatic life metrics have increased, decreased, or remained the same during four time periods: 1972-2012, 1982-2012, 1992-2012, and 2002-2012.

This map was developed by the USGS National Water-Quality Assessment Project, which conducts regional and national assessments of the Nation's water quality to provide an understanding of current water-quality conditions, whether conditions are getting better or worse over time, and how natural processes and human activities affect those conditions.

Trends in Groundwater Quality: <https://nawqatrends.wim.usgs.gov/Decadal/>

EPA's Office of Water Seeking Feedback on Reducing Regulatory Burden

Consistent with Executive Order 13777, EPA is seeking public input on existing regulations that could be repealed, replaced or modified to make them less burdensome.

As a part of this effort, EPA will be accepting written public comments through May 15, 2017, at docket EPA-HQ-OA-2017-0190. Please visit: www.epa.gov/aboutepa/office-water-feedback-reducing-regulatory-burden or see below for details.

On February 24, 2017, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 13777 on Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda. The EO establishes the, "policy of the United States to alleviate unnecessary regulatory burdens placed on the American people". Among other things, it requires each agency to create a Regulatory Reform Task Force to evaluate existing regulations and to identify regulations that could be repealed, replaced or modified to make them less burdensome.

As part of implementing the EO, OW will be hosting a public listening session to solicit proposals for OW regulations that could be repealed, replaced, or modified to make them less burdensome. The focus of this listening session will be on water actions only.

Public Listening Session by Telephone and Web Conference. This listening session took place on May 2, 2017.

If you missed the meeting, or didn't have the opportunity to speak on the call, you may submit your input to the EPA-wide docket (docket number: EPA-HQ-OA-2017-0190). OW will give

equal consideration to input provided through any of the methods above. For more information on upcoming public engagement opportunities offered by other EPA offices please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/regulatory-reform>.

The docket will be open for submitting recommendations until May 15, 2017. For those wishing to submit recommendations online, visit Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OA-2017-0190 at Regulations.gov. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Once submitted, comments cannot be edited or removed from Regulations.gov.

To allow EPA to more effectively evaluate your suggestions, the Agency is requesting comments including:

- Supporting data or other information such as cost information,
- Provide a Federal Register (FR) or Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) citation when referencing a specific regulation,
- Provide specific suggestions regarding repeal, replacement, or modification.

The EPA may publish any comment received to its public docket. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information the disclosure of which is restricted by statute. Multimedia submissions (e.g., audio, video, etc.) must be accompanied by a written comment. The written comment is considered the official comment and should include discussion of all the points you wish to make. The EPA will generally not consider comments or comment contents located outside of the primary submission (e.g., on the web, cloud, or other file sharing system).

For additional submission methods, the full EPA public comment policy, information about CBI or multimedia submissions, and general guidance on making effective comments, please visit the Commenting on EPA Dockets web page for more information.

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 3rd Tuesday of the month.

The next TRBP meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 18, 2017. The meeting will be held at UCONN Avery Point in the Branford House (meeting space and parking sponsored by CT Sea Grant) and Dr. Jack Clausen will give a presentation on the PATH project.

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 past versions 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 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.