



# Thames River Basin Partnership

## Partners in Action Quarterly Report

July 2006

Volume 1

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

*Greetings from the Thames River Basin Partnership Coordinator. As an outreach effort for the Partnership, I have developed a quarterly newsletter to report the Plan of Work achievements of the Partnership for those that are unable to attend the quarterly meetings. From this effort, I hope to develop a distribution list of people who are mutually interested in protecting the natural resources of the Thames River watershed basin. I hope you find this newsletter informative and inspiring. Most of all, I hope that the list of actions will grow in quantity from quarter to quarter.*

*-Jean Pillo  
TRBP Coordinator*

**February 2006:** Little River Watershed Sourcewater Protection Plan was presented to the towns of Putnam and Woodstock. The Little River is a public drinking water supply source for portions of Putnam and Woodstock. Partner organizations involved in the Little River Team included Connecticut Audubon Society, CT DEP, Eastern CT Resource Conservation and Development, Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, the Green Valley Institute, the Quinebaug Shetucket Heritage Corridor, UCONN Cooperative Extension Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Town of Woodstock. Outcomes of this plan:

- Quarterly water quality monitoring of the Little River and its tributaries in Woodstock were begun by the Northeast District Department of Health for baseline water quality information. Two cycles have been completed at this time.
- The Woodstock Conservation Commission led the application process to achieve Greenways Status for the Little River in Woodstock and Putnam by the Connecticut Greenways Council (approved 6/3/2006) For more information, contact Jean Pillo, TRBP Coordinator at (860) 928-4948.
- Eastern Connecticut RC&D Council received a 319 NPS Grant to explore alternate manure management strategies in Woodstock. For more information, contact John Guskowski, President of the Eastern C RC&D Council at (860) 923-9475.
- The Connecticut Audubon Society is coordinating with the Woodstock Conservation Commission to select access sites for a Streamwalk water quality monitoring project in late summer and to recruit volunteers to train to collect the data. For more information, contact Paula Coughlin, Citizen Science Coordinator at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret at (860) 928-4948.
- The Sourcewater Team applied for an EPA 319 grant to introduce farming equipment that will reduce nonpoint source pollution. CT DEP has given tentative initial approval.

**April 2006:** TRBP hires a Coordinator funded in part by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection through a United States Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant. Jean Pillo of Woodstock, CT has an office located at The Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret. Phone (860) 928-4948. A second office location will be at the Project Oceanology facility in Groton. Ms. Pillo is also partially funded by the Quinebaug Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. to function as a Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator for the Natural Resources and Agriculture water subcommittee.

**May 2006:** QSHC announces Grant recipients of their Annual Partnership Program Grant. Sprague is awarded funding for a Sprague River Park project. Wyndham Land Trust receives a grant for a wetland boardwalk project for their Little River property in Woodstock. For more information, contact The Quinebaug Shetucket Heritage Corridor at (860) 963-7226.

**May 2006:** The UConn Biodiesel Consortium, in partnership with the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District and the UConn Office of Environmental Policy, presented the first in a series of workshops on Biofuels.

**May 2006:** The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District along with the Amos Lake Association hosted a workshop on Invasive Aquatic Plants featuring Dr. Robert Capers of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

**June 2006:** At a Ceremony attended by the DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy, the Connecticut Greenways Council announced the 2006 Greenway Award Recipients. In the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor region, the towns of Woodstock and Putnam were jointly awarded a **Special Achievement Award** for entering into a partnership to preserve the area surrounding the Little River, which runs between the two towns and is the municipal water supply for Putnam. They jointly applied for Official Greenway status for the corridor as part of a land protection strategy. The 2006 Officially Designated Greenways in the Thames River basin includes the Little River in Putnam and Woodstock; the Natchaug River System in the towns of Ashford, Chaplin, Eastford, Mansfield, Union, Windham and Woodstock; the Mount Hope River in Mansfield and Ashford; the Fenton River in Ashford, Mansfield and Willington. For more information on the Natchaug River System, the Mount Hope River and Fenton River Greenways, contact Holly Drinkuth of The Nature Conservancy at (860)774-9600.

**June 2006:** The Connecticut Audubon Society offered free training for volunteers interested in participating in gathering scientifically significant information about the health of our rivers and streams in northeastern Connecticut. Stream Walk volunteers attended a 3-hour training session to learn how to collect information about a stream channel and surrounding land use, as well as document possible impairments to water quality that may warrant further investigation. Trained volunteers will then walk sections of tributaries to the Quinebaug River watershed in northeast CT. This free volunteer training was conducted at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center, 189 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT. Paula Coughlin, CAS Citizen Science Coordinator can be contacted at the Connecticut Audubon Society (860) 928-4948 for more information.

**June 2006:** Working with the QSHC water quality monitoring coordinator, the Thompson Together Environmental Committee began a pilot project to examine water quality in the tributaries of the French River. The French River begins in Massachusetts and flows through Thompson where it converges with the Quinebaug River. In Connecticut the French River is listed as impaired for some designated uses, including aquatic life support and for recreation. There are known point sources of discharge into the French River, including 3 municipal wastewater treatment plants in Massachusetts which are regulated. The Thompson Together group will be coordinating with The French River Connection and the Webster Lake Association, both Massachusetts-based organizations, to monitor the tributaries of the French River looking for non-point sources of pollution and establishing baseline data on the water quality of the streams that flow into the French River. The French River Connection began their water quality monitoring in 2005. For more information about the French River water quality monitoring project, contact Jean Pillo, TRBP Coordinator at (860) 928-4948. For more information on the French River Connection, contact Ken Parker at [ken.parker@charter.net](mailto:ken.parker@charter.net).

**July 2006:** Fifty people participated in the Thames River Basin Partnership 6<sup>th</sup> annual Floating Workshop, hosted this year by the City of Norwich. The program began indoors at the Norwich City Hall in their beautiful Council Chambers, where speakers presented on issues ranging from redevelopment along the waterfront, the re-institution of intercity rail transportation, and an introduction to the Project NEMO Community Resource Inventory On-line. Our Keynote speaker this year was Kirt Mayland of Trout Unlimited who spoke on "Connecticut Streamflow and Water Quantity Issues: Water for Fish and Faucets". At the harbor side, Planning Consultant Geoff Steadman shared the City of Norwich Harbor-vision with Harbor Commission Chairperson, Ron Aliano at his side. Our "float" this year was on Project Oceanology's Envirolab II from Norwich Harbor to just beyond the Route 2a bridge area and back. On route, we viewed areas that represented "success stories" along the Thames River including the former Thermos Plant – once a "brownfield" and now remediated to become waterview condos and a Charter School; Shantok Cove – a tidal influenced wetland system impacted by siltation and stormwater runoff from Route 2A which was restored by the Mohegan's to a more natural state; an offsite stormwater retrofit project at the Mohegan transportation fleet center that will reduce NPS pollution into the Thames River; and a water distribution pipeline also funded by the Mohegan Tribal Nation that will provide for consistent drinking water availability on both sides of the river. Representatives from CT Department of Transportation, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and the National Corridors Initiative discussed future transportation issues and the potential for developing inter-modal transportation opportunities. Project Oceanology staff shared their water quality data analysis of the entire Thames River Estuary, and a recap of a TRBP organized special morning tour of Poquetanuck Cove with local conservation groups and land use planners with US Fish and Wildlife Service personnel and DEP representatives was presented. Workshop participants received an information packet to follow up on workshop presentation, with more to be posted on the TRBP website. For more information, contact Jean Pillo, TRBP Coordinator at [trbp\\_jeanpillo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:trbp_jeanpillo@sbcglobal.net) or call (860) 928-4948.

**July 2006** A Streamwalk was conducted on the Little River in Woodstock and Putnam, led by Paula Coughlin of the Connecticut Audubon Society at Pomfret Center. For more information, please contact Paula Coughlin at (860) 928-4948.

**July 2006** The Partnership held its quarterly meeting at the beautiful Project Oceanology facility on UConn-Avery Point campus in Groton. The 2006-07 Plan of Work was formally approved, past workshops and outreach efforts were highlighted, partners provided project reports, and tasks were assigned, including offer assistance to Towns of Ledyard and Preston to promote natural resources planning and protection within Poquetanuck Cove and contributing watershed. For more information, contact Jean Pillo, TRBP Coordinator at (860) 928-4948.

**Later this summer...** The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be conducting a stream restoration project on the French River in Thompson, near the Community Center. This project will involve replanting a streamside riparian buffer. Part of their project funding requirement includes a Streamwalk investigation of a portion of the French River in Thompson to review the river for further potential restoration sites. For more information on the riparian buffer project in Thompson or to participate as a Streamwalk volunteer, contact Phil Renn of the USDA NRCS at (860) 871-4016.

The Thames River Basin Partnership is a voluntary, cooperative effort to share resources, and strives to develop a regional approach to resource protection. The Partnership is made up of a variety of agencies, organizations, municipalities, educational institutions, companies, and individuals interested in the environmental health of the Thames River basin. If your group is interested in being included in the next update of this newsletter, please contact Jean Pillo, Thames River Basin Partnership Coordinator at [trbp\\_jeanpillo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:trbp_jeanpillo@sbcglobal.net) or call (860) 928-4948. The TRBP Coordinator is funded in part by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection through a United States Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant.