



# Thames River Basin Partnership

## Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Autumn 2010

Volume 18

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 autumn meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership meeting in Sprague, then you missed a guided tour of fish habitat restoration work completed in 2009 in the Shetucket River. The group was welcomed to the Sprague Town Hall by First Selectman Catherin Oston. After a short business meeting, the partners relocated to nearby Salt Rock Camp Ground to meet up with Brian Murphy of the CT DEP Inland Fisheries Division. Partnering with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, three constructed log jams and three constructed floating log covers were installed by CT DEP to enhance instream fish habitats. For more information on this project, click [here](#). The CT DEP Inland Fisheries Division has also conducted several other fish habitat improvement projects in this watershed. You can learn more about them by clicking [here](#). CT DEP Inland Fisheries Division is interested in hearing from riverfront property owners that may be interested in working with them and other partners on riverine habitat enhancement work. For more information, please contact Brian Murphy at [Brian.Murphey@ct.gov](mailto:Brian.Murphey@ct.gov).

### **TRBP News**

The CT DEP Wetlands Habitat and Mosquito Management staff is scheduled to complete the third season of Phragmites herbicide treatments and mulching in Poquetanuck Cove this autumn. This project is a partnership of the TRBP, Avalonia Land Conservancy, the DEP WHAMM Program, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Thank you to everybody that has supported the Thames River Basin Partnership through the purchase of a rain barrel. If you have not already done so, it is time to drain your rain barrel and put it away for winter storage.

## Partner Reports

The State of Connecticut has a new State Conservationist. Jay Mar comes to Connecticut from Wyoming where he served as Assistant State Conservationist for Programs as well as Small Watershed Program Manager. Mar was born in Minot, North Dakota, and grew up on farms in the White Earth Valley and Red River Valley. He began his conservation career planting trees for the Ward County Soil Conservation District. He brings 30 years of diverse conservation experience with NRCS. One of his focus areas will be on enhanced conservation partnerships in Connecticut.

The fall conference for the [New England Association of RC&D Councils](#) was focused on sustainable agriculture and agricultural energy efficiency/renewable energy. There were several excellent sessions and tours highlighting some of the innovations and efficiency measures being undertaken on farms in the Pioneer Valley, and fostered by the [Berkshire-Pioneer](#) "Massachusetts Farm Energy Program." This year, the award for "Outstanding Performance by an RC&D Council" for New England was given to the [Eastern Connecticut RC&D](#). The "Outstanding Performance by a Coordinator" awards were given to Liz Rogers, the NRCS Coordinator for the Eastern CT RC&D and to Rick DeMark of North Country RC&D (New Hampshire). Also this year the award for "Outstanding Performance by a Council Member" went to John Guszowski, President of the Eastern CT RC&D Council. Congratulations to our colleges at Eastern CT RC&D! Each of these award winners are the official New England entry for these same categories at the national level. Those awards are chosen by the National Association of RC&D Areas and will be named in January.

Charlie McCaughtry of the [Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited](#) (TVTU) was awarded the Distinguished Volunteer Award at the 2010 Trout Unlimited National Meeting. In addition, an environmental education day sponsored by TVTU and Joshua's Trust were recognized in the "Trout" magazine with a short article and photos of the event. Look for it on pages 50 and 51 in fall 2010 issue.

The TVTU sponsored "Walking with Trout" at Salt Rock Campground as part of The Last Green Valley's (TLGV) Annual [Walktober](#) events. The program was a great success! About thirty people signed up for the walk and they came from distant places including Rhode Island, Florida, and California. Lots of campers stopped by their information tent for apples, cider and donuts and to talk with TU volunteers. The week before the event, 100 large Atlantic salmon were stocked in the Shetucket River and when they rose during the walk it was WAHOO!! Many TU members are reporting great catch-and-release fishing near the Fish Habitat Enhancement area featured at the October TRBP meeting.

The low flow conditions in the rivers and streams in eastern Connecticut this summer were very distressing. Please visit the [River News](#) page on the TVTU website for comprehensive information about the streamflow regulations. The DEP's proposed stream flow regulations are to be considered by the Regulations Review Committee in the near future.

Mile-a-minute vine that was discovered by a TU member who helped DEP eradicate it. It was discovered near Sandy Beach on the Shetucket River. We should all know what it looks like and

if discovered, report the location to DEP. For more information on Mile-a-minute vine, click [here](#).

Trout Unlimited has asked manufacturers to discontinue the manufacture of felt-soled wading boots in 2011 due to the danger of spreading aquatic nuisance species in our streams. Here is a link to TU's [press release](#) on the subject. *Cabelas* in East Hartford provided two links to information on how to clean your felt-soled waders and other equipment to help solve the same problem. Since many people will be heading to the streams soon in felt-soled boots, this information is very timely. The first link is to [www.protectyourwaters.net](http://www.protectyourwaters.net). This link is sponsored by the USFWS and the U.S. Coast Guard. The second link is to [www.cleaninspectdry.com/default.asp](http://www.cleaninspectdry.com/default.asp). This is a website sponsored by the Greater Yellowstone Area Working Group.

The TLGV Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator Jean Pillo was the featured speaker at the September 2010 TVTU meeting. She gave a stream side rapid bioassessment demonstration followed by a presentation on volunteer water quality monitoring opportunities in the Last Green Valley for approximately 50 people.

After a four year hiatus, the [Green Valley Institute](#) organized a [weekend retreat](#) for 29 conservation volunteers. The 3 day workshop called A New Introduction to the Natural World featured lessons on soils, hydrology, map reading and how land use decisions impact natural resources and the environment. Each participant committed to provide one year service in a volunteer position in The Last Green Valley. The program was a sponsored by The Last Green Valley and UCONN Extension System, in partnership with TNC, USDA NRCS, ECCD, CT Audubon and others.

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) presented their annual GreenCircle Awards during a ceremony at The Siemon Company in Watertown. The GreenCircle awards program celebrates volunteer efforts, both large and small, that make a difference in the state of Connecticut. Eastern Connecticut GreenCircle award winners are:

- MANSFIELD CENTER Lynne Warren is a certified Master Gardener volunteer who has spent over 800 volunteer hours over 2.5 years designing, installing and maintaining the Richard Haley Native Plant Wildlife Gardens at DEP's Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center. She led the effort to create a program of collecting native plant seeds, propagating plants, and selling seeds and plants to raise funds for the Center.
- PRESTON Employee Volunteers of Covanta, Southern Connecticut: Volunteers from Covanta of Southeastern Connecticut (Covanta SECONN) partnered with the Connecticut Nature Conservancy to improve the habitat for local flora and fauna at TNC's Poquetanuck Cove Preserve located in Ledyard, CT.
- TAFTVILLE BSA Troop 80: In May 2009, the BSA Troop 80 of Taftville organized and followed through with a cleanup of the environmentally challenged area on the riverbanks of the Quinebaug River between the Greenville Dam fish ladder and the Eighth Street Bridge. The scouts cleared four paths for local recreational fishermen to use as new places to fish.

Since the Winter 2010 DEP presentation to TRBP about the proposed regulations, DEP received nearly 400 written comments. DEP released a revised and final version of the regulation this past August, meeting the requirements of the 2005 Connecticut public act on minimum stream flow standards (PA 05-142). The final regulation addresses concerns from several water utilities and others that include resetting a compliance time frame for major users now to ten years. There were additional changes to proposed Class 4 rivers. The regulation was submitted to the Attorney General's office, and now are in front the Connecticut Legislative Regulation Review Committee, who may make a decision in late October or November. DEP website updates are available [here](#).

The 2010 CT Integrated Water Quality Assessment report, which includes the sections formerly referred to as the "305(b) and 303(d)" reports, is still in internal draft form and has not been released for public comment. The 2008 statewide report is posted at [here](#).

The CT DEP proposed new Water Quality Standards revisions that went out for public comment in the last year. There was significant vocal opposition from some community constituents. DEP has reviewed the nearly 60 written comments submitted while redrafting the standards. The current standards and proposed revisions, with public comments, are posted [here](#).

CT DEP announced the Open Space and Watershed Lands Acquisition Grant awards. The awards announced within the Thames River Basin include the following:

- Town of Coventry – Malon property 36 acres \$105,000
- Town of Sprague – Watson property 230 acres \$276,816
- Wyndham Land Trust (Thompson) Robbins Property (Five Mile River) 123.5 acres \$230,000
- Town of Preston - Preston Pequot Trail 143 acres \$230,000
- Town of Tolland – Luce Property 83.33 acres \$270,000
- Additional TRBP partners and greater basin towns receiving open space grant awards include Groton, Groton Open Space Association, Avalonia Land Conservancy (North Stonington) and the Nature Conservancy (Salem).

The CT Department of Public Works recently submitted a letter to the CT DEP indicating a custody and control transfer of a 13+ acre parcel of the former Norwich State Hospital property, within the town of Norwich. The property is situated between Route 12 and the Providence and Worcester rail line that runs along the east side of the Thames River. DEP's request for this parcel was based on the protection of water quality of the Thames River.

[Connecticut's Statewide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy](#) is a guidance document meant for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Forestry, and our forest conservation partners in academia, extension, non-profits, regional, municipal, and private landowners. State Assessments are intended to identify key forest-related issues and priorities to support development of the long-term State Strategies. State assessments and strategies focus on three national S&PF themes:

1. Conserving working forest landscapes;

2. Protecting forests from harm; and
3. Enhancing public benefits from trees and forests.

With the completion of this document, state agencies are now eligible to receive direct financial assistance, apply for competitive grants, and accept other support from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service through the Cooperative Forest Assistance Act (CFAA).

Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc and the US Fish and Wildlife Service are preparing a proposal for a cost sharing project for further outreach efforts related to Poquetanuck Cove. Under consideration for this funding would be a kiosk at the Town of Ledyard car top boat launch area at Royal Oaks Drive and printing a limited supply of waterproof Poquetanuck Cove Canoe/Kayak Paddle Guides that were developed for the [TRBP Floating Workshop 10](#).

The [Eastern Connecticut Conservation District](#) (ECCD) staff recently completed their field work related to Contamination Source Investigations (CSI) in three project areas. They are now in the process of reviewing the data in order to develop abbreviated watershed based plans for area. Each of the projects was related to bacterial contamination, but the settings varied from urban to rural so each investigation was unique to the land use in the surrounding area. The Spaulding Pond (Norwich) Water Quality Improvement Plan is expected to be completed by mid November. The Baker Cove (Groton) and Mashamoquet Brook (Pomfret) projects should be completed by this winter.

ECCD presented several conservation awards at their October 13, 2010 annual meeting. The awards were presented to recognize outstanding volunteers and special partnership relationships.

- The Town of Lisbon was recognized with the Supporting Town Award in appreciation of their generosity to provide meeting space for many ECCD events. First Selectman Tom Sparkman received the award on behalf of the town.
- Syma Ebbin of Connecticut Sea Grant was awarded the Professional Project Contributor Award for cooperative education and outreach efforts in the Niantic River watershed, supplementing ECCD's efforts to implement the Niantic River Water Quality Improvement Plan.
- Bet Zimmerman of Woodstock received the Conservation Journalism Award for a weekly conservation themed column in the Villager newspapers. Her articles are archived at [www.ourbetternature.org](http://www.ourbetternature.org).
- The Muddy Boots Award was co-received by Grace Jacobson of Woodstock and Beverly Thornton of Brooklyn for their dedicated volunteer service assisting ECCD in the weekly collection of water samples in Pomfret as part of a bacterial contamination source investigation.
- Eric Thomas of the CT Department of Environmental Protection was presented with the ECCD Watershed Champion Award in appreciation of his dedication to protecting the

water resources of Connecticut and for generously sharing his vast knowledge of local watersheds, as well as for being a great interagency facilitator.

- This year's Project Partnership Award was given to The Last Green Valley, Inc in recognition of a five year partnership with ECCD in support of TLGV Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator. Receiving this award on behalf of The Last Green Valley was Deputy Executive Director Lois Bruinooge.
- Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator Elizabeth "Liz" Rogers of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service was presented with the Partner Organization Leadership Lifetime Achievement Award for her many years of helping improve the region's natural resource conservation organizations, including ECCD.

[The Last Green Valley](#) (TLGV) partnered with the Town of Killingly on a river clean up in the Danielson section of town. Volunteers removed a ton of trash from the Five Mile River. The volunteers used a modified trash data card based on a model available from American Rivers. Any interested groups who would like to use the same format, please contact [Lois](#).

TLGV Water Trails Committee continues to make progress on promoting the use of our rivers by recreational boaters. A new kiosk was installed at the Killingly boat launch with financial assistance by United Natural Foods. Another kiosk was installed at Robert Manship Park in Canterbury as the result of an Eagle Scout project. Both of these boat launch areas provide access to the Quinebaug River. The [Willimantic River Alliance](#) will soon be releasing a new paddle guide for the Willimantic River. A downloadable version will also be available from their website.

TLGV water subcommittee has been awarded two LaMotte Smart2 Colorimeters and 2 secchi disks with cords as part of an expansion of the volunteer water quality monitoring program. This equipment is being provided as part of a US EPA Equipment Loan Program. The colorimeters will be used to measure the amounts of nitrates and phosphates in our aquatic environments. Secchi disks are a means to measure the water transparency in lakes and ponds. If you are interested in participating in the 2011 [Secchi Dip-in](#), contact [Jean](#) for more information.

The [Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association](#) (ASRWVA) will be developing a plan to protect the Hunts Brook watershed above the Miller Pond outlet. This Waterford area watershed has been designated as a potential public water supply source. Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority (SCWA) has an agreement with the owner of Miller Pond to develop the pond as a public water supply. SCWA's Regional Water Supply Plan projects a water deficit to begin occurring between 2010 and 2020; with the projected deficit of approximately 10 million gallons per day (mgd) by 2040. Using the Hunts Brook watershed as a public water source has the potential to reduce that deficit by 1.5 mgd. If you are interested in being involved on the steering committee, please contact [Marc Cohen](#). ASRWVA is also working with the Town of Putnam to expand their current well field.

## **News from the Municipalities**

The Town of Sprague has created a river overlay zone for the Shetucket and Little Rivers. Their current Zoning Regulations include the recent amendment that outline the special permitting process within the Watercourse Focus Area Overlay Zone Requirements. Click [here](#) to review the zoning regulations. Look in Section 4.1.10 for a description of this new zone, and in 7 A for the Watercourse Focus Area Overlay Zone Requirements and Section 16.23 for Special Permit requirements. To view the zoning map that includes a Natural Resource Protection Zone including the Shetucket River and Little River corridors, click [here](#).

By unanimous vote, the Town of Pomfret approved the purchase of the development rights on 468 acres of forested land for \$1,000,000. This parcel contains the legendary Lost Village. The property will remain in private ownership and permission of the landowner is required to visit this land.

### **Other news**

Officials from the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and The Nature Conservancy released [BioMap 2](#), a comprehensive land conservation strategy that includes an [updated map](#) of the Commonwealth's most critical lands, waters and habitats, and a plan to protect the Commonwealth's plants and wildlife in the context of a changing climate. BioMap2 was developed by a partnership between DFG 's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) and its Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and The Nature Conservancy.

New Hampshire's "2010 Guide to Upland Invasive Species Booklet" can be found at: [http://www.nh.gov/agric/divisions/plant\\_industry/index.htm](http://www.nh.gov/agric/divisions/plant_industry/index.htm)

EPA's Office of Water launched a new Web clearinghouse of [Lake Shoreland Protection Resources](#), which provides practitioners with links to key resources to protect and restore fragile lake shorelands and to promote better stewardship by lakeside property owners and others who recreate on lakes. The clearinghouse, which includes links to fact sheets, webcasts, videos, and other helpful resources for lakeshore protection, is part of an outreach campaign to educate the public and others about the key findings of the National Lakes Assessment (NLA). According to the NLA, poor lakeshore habitat and high levels of nutrients are leading stressors affecting the biological health of lakes. Among the key findings:

- 56% of our lakes are in good biological condition.
- More than one-third of our lakes exhibit poor shoreline condition; poor biological health is three times more in lakes with poor lakeshore habitat.
- Nearly 20% of lakes have high levels of nutrients. Lakes with excess nutrients are 2.5 times more likely to have poor biological health.
- Microcystin - an algal toxin that can harm humans, pets and wildlife - is present in about one-third of lakes across the country.

### **Upcoming Workshops**

The Connecticut Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions will be celebrating four decades of environmental conservation & habitat protection on Saturday, November 13, 2010 at their annual conference from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Mountain Ridge on

High Hill Road, Wallingford, CT. This conference will be attended by over 200 participants from Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commissions and staff. For directions and/or brochure go to <http://www.caciwc.org/>

The Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret will be presenting an introductory program on their Citizen Science Volunteer Mammal Monitoring Project on Wednesday, Nov. 17, beginning at 7:00 p.m. This program will take place at 189 Pomfret Street (Route 169) in Pomfret Center. This program will be free of charge. Center at Pomfret Paula Coughlin, program coordinator, will show slides, animal mounts, and share stories about trained volunteers who participate in this exciting local conservation effort. Please call to register.

Additional training hikes are necessary to become a program volunteer. Select training hikes that suit your schedule throughout the seasons. (Dates are subject to change due to weather conditions.)

- Sat. Dec. 4, 2010 – Canterbury
- Sat. Jan. 8, 2011 – Woodstock
- Sat. Jan. 22, 2011 – Canterbury
- Sat. Feb. 5, 2011 – Canterbury
- Sat. Feb. 19, 2011 - Woodstock

Registration required. There is a program fee per hike: \$50 members; \$60 non-members.

Canterbury residents' fees covered by US Fish and Wildlife grant. For information call Paula Coughlin, Citizen Science Coordinator, 860-928-4948; or email [Paula](mailto:Paula) or call Kathleen Hart at the Canterbury Public Library at 860-546-9022.

Learn about your natural environment with your friends and neighbors. Become a Citizen Science Volunteer! Visit The [CT Audubon Society](http://www.ctaudubon.org/) website for more information about the Mammal Monitoring Program.

Forest Conservation Action is focus of 6th Annual Connecticut Forest Forum. Join forest conservation enthusiasts from all walks of life on Tuesday, November 23rd for the 6th Annual Connecticut Forest Forum at the University of Connecticut Greater Hartford Campus (1800 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, CT). Registration is \$35 (\$25 for students and volunteers). For more details, including how to register, click [here](#).

Soil and Water Conservation Society, Southern New England Chapter Winter Meeting, will feature a workshop entitled *From Rain to Runoff* on December 17, 2010 from 9:00 AM-3:30 PM. This meeting will take place at The Bishop Center, Room 7, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT. For additional information call 413-213-6885 or email [anliker@charter.net](mailto:anliker@charter.net)<<mailto:anliker@charter.net>>

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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 [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 meet quarterly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month

The next meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership will be held on Tuesday, January 18 beginning at 9:30 AM at a place to be determined. Look for updates at [www.trbp.org](http://www.trbp.org). Please mark your calendars to save the date. 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 greater 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.