



Thames River Basin Partnership

Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Spring 2012 Volume 22

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 Spring 2012 meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership, then you missed a presentation on Road Culvert Surveys given by Neal Hagstrom of the CT Department of Environmental Protection Fisheries Division. There are different types of culverts used under roadways, and some types become barriers to fish going up and down stream. This impedes both migratory fish and local populations. CT DEEP, working with summer staff and volunteers including Dixie Goodwin of the Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, is attempting to catalog stream crossings under roads. This information, along with fish population data, will help to prioritize habitat improvement projects. Click [here](#) for more information from the 2008 Stream Crossing Guidelines.

TRBP Updates

The TRBP Floating Workshop 12 will focus on the Willimantic River and the 40th anniversary of the US EPA Clean Water Act and likely be scheduled towards the end of June 2012. A Floating Workshop Committee was formed. If you are interested in joining the TRBP Floating Workshop Planning Committee, please contact [Jean Pillo](#) at 860-928-4948.

Partner Reports

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service hosted the meeting at their new office suite. Their new office space is located in the same USDA Service Center building located at 238 West Town Street, Norwich, CT, but NRCS has moved to the far end of the building in a newly renovated space. The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District has also moved to same end of the building. District Conservationist, Javier Cruz welcomed the Partners to the meeting.

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District introduced Matt Snurkowski, their new Conservation Technician. Matt's priorities will be to focus on training with NRCS to be able to develop comprehensive nutrient management plans. Funding for his position has been provided in part by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Matt will also be assisting with a grant focusing on reducing nutrient and bacterial runoff from horse farms in the coastal region.

ECCD, as a follow up to the 2009 Little River/Muddy Brook/ Roseland Lake Watershed Based Plan (Woodstock and Putnam), is working on several water quality improvement implementation projects in Woodstock. A demonstration bioretention rain garden is being installed behind the Woodstock Historical Society at the Woodstock Arboretum on Route 169. A riparian buffer is planned for a June installation at the Woodstock Golf Course on Roseland Park Road. Rain gutters have been installed on the dairy barns of Elm Farm on Dugg Hill Road. These projects have been partially funded by US EPA Clean Water Act § 319 funds with the assistance of many partners.

ECCD continues to move forward the plan to install a fish ladder at the Hallville Dam in Preston. This fish ladder will open up 9 more miles of breeding habitat for migratory fish. Additional watershed studies are underway for Amos Lake in Preston and Flat Brook in Ledyard, and stormwater retrofit projects in East Lyme and Waterford are being planned.

Partnering with the USGS Water Science Center, ECCD will be installing and monitoring stream flow gauges in the lower Thames watershed. This project is being funded by US EPA Clean Water Act § 604B funds through the CT DEEP. The objective of this study is to gather data useful for the recently passed [Connecticut Stream Flow Regulations](#).

ECCD is also preparing to kick off the Poquetanuck Cove Conservation Action Plan process, inviting municipal officials from Ledyard and Preston and the Tribal Council of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation to work with conservation professionals to identify the most valuable natural and cultural resources of the cove, the threats to those resources, and finally to develop strategies to eliminate or reduce those threats. This project is funded in part by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as part of the Long Island Sound Study.

The Community & Natural Resources Conservation Planning Program (CNP) will be presenting a workshop series cosponsored by CT Environmental Review Team & Southeastern CT Council of Governments (SCCOG). These workshops will be held at the Southeastern CT Council of Governments office in Norwich.

- [Economic Development Strategies](#), by Paula Stahl - March 28, SCCOG
- [Growth & Community Character](#), by Paula Stahl - April 18, SCCOG
- [Planning for the Future of Your Town](#), by Susan Westa - April 25, SCCOG
- [Win-Win of Subdivision Design](#), by Paula Stahl - May 16, SCCOG
- [Using CLEAR Web Tools for Local Planning](#), Chet Arnold - May 30, SCCOG

The Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited has taken an oppositional stand against the Jordon Brook rock crushing project application in Waterford. For more information on their point of view, please click [here](#).

Students from the Coast Guard Academy will be monitoring the Thames River from the Academy to Norwich Harbor, collecting data on temperature, salinity and depth in 6 locations. Their data will be presented on Thursday, April 26 at the CGA.

Eighty percent of the Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc properties have a waterbody on them. With that in mind, they organized a series of outreach programs from February – April featuring many different speakers on important water related topics such as the impacts of lawn care and the functions of wetlands. These programs were done in cooperation with the Groton Public Library.

Avalonia Land Conservancy has organized a canoe/kayak paddle on Poquetanuck Cove scheduled for June 2 from 8 – 11 AM in honor of Connecticut Trails Day. Contact Anne Roberts Pierson if you would like to participate.

The CT DEEP Water Protection and Land Reuse Bureau has been working with its partners on implementation projects in the Little River watershed in Woodstock, CT. The completion of the installation of a silage leachate collection system on a dairy farm and subsequent downstream water quality monitoring demonstrating improved in-stream habitat conditions is allowing them to propose that North Running Brook be delisted as impaired for aquatic life support status in the 2012 Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report to Congress. The draft of this report is expected to be released soon for public comment.

Water based recreation standards are based on *E. coli* concentrations. *E. coli* is used as the indicator species for the presence of fecal contamination in surface water. A Connecticut Statewide Total Maximum Daily Load limit for *E. coli* has been drafted and awaiting approval by the US EPA. For more information on this project, click [here](#).

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is able to provide financial assistance to farmers and non-municipal landowners through funding opportunities offered through the Farm Bill. Click [here](#) to access fact sheets about the various programs. The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is concentrating on improvements to create suitable habitat for New England Cottontails, a species in decline in Connecticut. For more information about NRCS programs, contact Javier Cruz, District Conservationist for New London County, or Ray Covino, District Conservationist for Windham County.

DEEP Fisheries Division reports that in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene and the October snowstorm, there is more woody debris in Connecticut rivers and streams. Woody debris impacts stream geomorphology and creates important habitat for certain fish species. When it comes to woody debris management for paddling enthusiasts, it is important to not totally remove the material from the stream channel. For a factsheet on large woody debris management in streams, please click [here](#).

DEEP fisheries information has been accumulating over time. There is some data up through 1994 which is not available in a GIS compatible format. All data compiled from 1994 is in a GIS compatible format, but there is no portal to upload the information to make it easy to access. The data includes fish, crayfish and invasive species information. Non-native and invasive crayfish have been introduced to Connecticut, likely from improperly disposed of bait. A web based host site is being sought to make this information accessible for planning purposes.

News from the Municipalities

Woodstock is the first town in Connecticut to install solar panels on every municipal building. Click [here](#) to see a news story on WFSB when solar panels were mounted on Woodstock Middle School.

Other news

An EPA 2012 Environmental Merit Award was presented to Betsey Wingfield, who works in the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Nancy has led the way in establishing a consensus to come up with effective laws regulating stream flow. After six years without legislative support, Betsey and her staff, along with other interested parties, sought common ground in this divisive undertaking. In January 2011, the group asked EPA New England to point them in the right direction. Soon after, the group took ownership of the process with an impressive display of commitment, creativity and sheer determination over 10 months. In November, the group announced that the state legislature had approved regulations proposed by the group. In the words of DEEP Commissioner Daniel Esty, "These new regulations are based on sound science and environmental needs, but offer a realistic, flexible and cost-effective means of accomplishing our water-related goals." The regulations include rules governing the release of water from dams, a public process to assign rivers to one of four classes and special provisions to help balance human and ecological needs.

EPA has released a technical manual for concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to provide states, producers, and the general public with general information on Clean Water Act and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program requirements for CAFOs, information to explain CAFO permitting requirements under the Clean Water Act, and technical information to help states and producers understand options for nutrient management planning.

It is EPA's intent that this is a living document that will be updated periodically to incorporate new and emerging approaches to CAFO management, including those focused on manure reuse and recycling and use for energy generation. Interested parties are encouraged to bring to EPA's attention questions and suggestions concerning the content of this manual at any time. EPA will consider this input and update this document periodically to ensure that this manual is as helpful as possible. For more information and to view a copy of the manual, visit:

http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/afo/info.cfm#guide_docs.

EPA is pleased to unveil a new website on nutrient pollution policy and data to help individuals access information on EPA actions to reduce nutrient pollution, state efforts to develop numeric nutrient criteria, and EPA tools, data, research, and reports related to nutrient pollution. Visit the website at <http://epa.gov/nandppolicy>. Nutrient pollution is one of America's most widespread, costly and challenging environmental problems, and is caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorus in the air and water. EPA is also pleased to unveil a new website on nutrient pollution for homeowners, students, and educators. The site features information explaining the problem of nutrient pollution; the sources of the pollution; how it affects the environment, economy, and public health; and what people can do to reduce the problem. The site also features an interactive map of local case studies in reducing nutrient pollution. Visit the website at <http://epa.gov/nutrientpollution>.

2012 Draft National Water Program Strategy: Response to Climate Change Open for Public Comment EPA has released the draft "National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change," which describes how EPA's water-related programs plan to address the

impacts of climate change and provides long-term visions, goals and strategic actions for the management of sustainable water resources for future generations.

The 2012 strategy, which builds upon EPA's first climate change and water strategy released in 2008, focuses on five key areas: infrastructure, watersheds and wetlands, coastal and ocean waters, water quality, and working with Tribes. It also describes geographically-based strategic issues and actions. To read or submit a comment on the draft "National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change," visit: <http://epa.gov/water/climatechange>.

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 meet quarterly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month

The next meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership will be held on Tuesday, July 17, 2012 beginning at 9:30 AM. The location and theme of this meeting is still being determined.

Look for updates at 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. Partial funding support for FY 12 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.