



Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Spring 2015

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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 our April 2015 TRBP spring meeting at the NECCOG office in Dayville, CT, then you missed a presentation given by Chris Stone of the CT DEEP. Chris works in the Water Permitting & Enforcement Division of CT DEEP. His presentation was an overview of the proposed updated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) regulations required by the US EPA. Under the current MS4 regulations, cities and urban-like suburbs within a radius of those cities are required to complete six minimum measures to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater on water quality. Phase II of the MS4 program is adding more municipalities to the Tier 1 list based on current census data, and proposes a second tier for smaller municipalities to comply with a modified list of minimum measures. New towns within the Thames River watershed basin that now qualify as Tier 1 towns under the revised regulations include Killingly, Brooklyn, Plainfield, Coventry, Willington and Sprague. CT DEEP has created a special website www.ct.gov/deep/stormwater where you can get more information.

TRBP Updates

The [TRBP Plan of Work](#) is a document prepared with input from the Partners. It outlines shared goals for natural resource conservation in the greater Thames River watershed. At TRBP meetings, the Partners share their organization's activities that are compatible with this Plan. After receiving input from the Partners, the Plan was updated and approved at the April meeting. The updated TRBP Plan of Work will guide the common focus of our organization through 2018.

The TRBP is seeking people with WordPress website experience that are willing to serve on the website update committee. The TRBP website www.TRBP.org was created using software that is no longer supported by the manufacturer. A funding request was made for financial support to hire a professional website designer to assist with updating the website and transfer it to WordPress platform, but unfortunately, the request was denied. The TRBP website is not only a valuable tool for anyone seeking information on natural resources in the greater Thames River watershed but also a means for outside people to make contact with the TRBP Coordinator for various reasons. Recent examples of this include the Principal Planner from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), who was looking to partner with organizations within the Massachusetts part of the watershed to submit a non-point source grant. The TRBP Coordinator was able to refer him to the Webster Lake Association and their desire to retrofit a storm water runoff situation impacting their lake. The TRBP Coordinator was also invited to participate in National Ocean Policy, New England Healthy Ocean and Coast Workshop in Massachusetts because a Contact the Coordinator link is maintained on the TRBP website. Please contact [Jean Pillo](#) if you can assist with this project.

Floating Workshop XV is scheduled to take place on June 19, 2015. The event will be hosted by Old Sturbridge Village and the theme will be the upper Quinebaug River. The workshop fee of \$25 will include entrance to the Village, so workshop attendees can opt to arrive early to take advantage of that opportunity. It is undecided if a morning paddle on the Quinebaug River Trail will be organized. An attempt to get local sponsors to donate funds to cover scholarships for college students to attend the workshop was not funded.

Partner Reports

The Last Green Valley (TLGV) will be hosting a meeting of area land trust representatives on April 30, 2015 beginning at 6 PM at the TLGV office in Danielson. Bill Labich of the [Highstead Foundation](#) will be the main speaker at this meeting and will overview the advantages of developing a regional conservation plan. Jean Pillo will represent TRBP at this meeting as this concept is compatible with Goal 1 Action Item A of the updated TRBP work plan “Accelerate the pace of conservation by participating in the development of a regional conservation strategy.”

The TLGV is [Explore Guide](#) is now available as paper booklets, or you can download an e-copy from their website at <http://thelastgreenvalley.org/explore-the-last-green-valley>

TLGV soliciting proposals for their 25th annual *Walktober*. For more information, please visit their *Walktober* page on their website <http://thelastgreenvalley.org/explore-the-last-green-valley/walktober>.

TLGV is sponsoring river clean ups in 2015 for municipalities or other groups that organize them. For more information, please visit their website at www.TLGV.org

TLGV Water Quality Monitoring Program update:

- Water sampling for a bacteria monitoring project will be focused on the Connecticut portion of the French River and its tributaries in Thompson. A second project to monitor

the Quinebaug River at canoe/kayak trail launch sites in Connecticut will also take place. This monitoring is possible due to a special partnership with the CT Department of Public Health, who will analyze the water samples in their Rocky Hill lab. A similar partnership in Massachusetts has not yet been formed.

- Planning is underway for stream temperature monitoring. An effort to document cold water streams in undisturbed watersheds will be the focus of this study. CT DEEP sponsored a Train the Trainer event at their Windsor lab in March as they will no longer be able to provide the same level of support for equipment calibration as they have in the past. The TLGV Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator participated in that training.
- River Bioassessments were completed in eleven eastern Connecticut streams in fall 2014. First and second order streams were the focus of this monitoring protocol. Low or no flow in many upper watershed streams due to late summer drought conditions made site selection a challenge. The results of the 2014 RBV season can be downloaded at this web-link http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/water/volunteer_monitoring/RBV-2014-Report_FINAL-04012015.pdf

Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) will be organizing volunteers to install a riparian buffer along the lower Natchaug River at Lauter Park in Willimantic this spring. ECCD intern Vicky Szamocki of Eastern Connecticut State University will be assisting Natural Resource Specialist Judy Rondeau, in project planning. This implementation project was a recommendation of the Lower Natchaug River Abbreviated Watershed Plan. It will be funded as a Supplemental Environmental Project through the Rivers Alliance of Connecticut. For project updates, follow [ECCD on their Facebook page](#).

ECCD is continuing their focus on small farm manure management assistance in the Little River and Mashamoquet Brook watersheds (Woodstock, Pomfret, Thompson and Putnam). Manure compost covers are available at no charge to horse and other livestock owners. At least one larger demonstration project will be completed with EPA NSP funds through the CT DEEP. The goal of this project is to reduce manure contaminated runoff from causing pollution in area streams. Contact [Matt](#) for more information.

Ekonk Brook in Plainfield is a tributary of the Moosup River. ECCD reviewed water quality data collected in summer 2014 and is preparing a watershed based plan that identifies the sources of *E. coli* and is developing recommendations for implementation projects that will improve water quality in the brook.

ECCD is preparing to complete a track down survey in the Connecticut portions of the French River in Thompson. The French River and some of its tributaries have cycled on and off of the Connecticut Impaired Waters list. While the French River is currently not on the 2014 list, Long Branch Brook does not meet recreational water quality standards. Data collected from the track down survey will be used to prepare a watershed based plan for maintaining or improving water quality. Data collected by the French River Connection (TLGV volunteers in the Massachusetts portion of the river) and MA DEP will be reviewed as part of this project.

ECCD has also been awarded funding to construct a covered aerated composting facility for dairy mortality and heifer manure on a dairy farm in Woodstock. Being aerated, this agricultural best management practice composts large animal carcasses more quickly than traditional composting methods and, being covered, significantly reduces the discharge of harmful pathogens and nutrients into waterways. The project design is nearly completed with an expected construction date in June. Funding support for this project is being provided by a US EPA non-point source grant through the CT DEEP.

Pending final contract signatures, ECCD will be preparing for a study of nutrient cycling in Roseland Lake in Woodstock, CT. Roseland Lake has been experiencing summer blue green algae blooms. The lake is upstream of the Putnam drinking water intake. ECCD will be partnering with the Town of Putnam, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, USGS and Nichols College on various parts of this study. CT DPH sees this project as a potential model for other small water companies working to sustainably develop and protect drinking water supplies. Funding support for this project is being provided by a US EPA non-point source grant through the CT DEEP.

Also pending final contract signatures, ECCD will be working with homeowners in Pomfret to educate them on the importance of septic system maintenance and potentially financially assisting them with upgrades to their plumbing or waste systems in priority areas. Mashamoquet Brook in Pomfret does not meet water quality standards for recreational contact. The brook supplies water to a seasonal swimming area at Mashamoquet Brook State Park. Swimming access is denied during periods of high E. coli concentrations. ECCD prepared a watershed based plan for Mashamoquet Brook in 2010. Funding support for this project is being provided by a US EPA non-point source grant through the CT DEEP.

Straight Pond Dam is a small concrete and stone spillway located off of Lincoln Park Road in Preston. The owner of the dam is the State of Connecticut DEEP. They wish to have the dam notched to promote anadromous fish restoration in the Poquetanuck Brook watershed. They have requested ECCD to oversee this effort on their behalf. ECCD has secured funds and cooperation through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Permit documents are being drafted. It is expected the project will be fully permitted and funded for a late summer implementation.

ECCD prepared four project proposals for consideration by CT DEEP for this year's non-point grant funding from the US EPA. ECCD also prepared two project proposals for consideration for funding through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) developed a [Connecticut Non-point Source Pollution Management Plan](#) that was approved in September 2014. The Plan is a framework for the activities for the next five years of DEEP's Nonpoint Source Program funded under EPA Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. This Plan defines the priorities for US EPA 319 grants administered through the CT DEEP.

The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) is a partnership of the UConn and DEEP, with the mission to assist Connecticut towns and cities with adaptation to a changing climate and enhancing the resilience of their infrastructure. CIRCA has up to \$100,000

available to CT municipalities, institutions, universities, foundations, and other non-governmental organizations for matching funds for projects that address the mission of the Institute. Project proposals should develop knowledge and/or experience that is transferable to multiple locations in the state and have well-defined and measurable goals. Preference will be given to those that involve collaboration with CIRCA to address at least one of the priority areas. Matching Funds requests will be accepted on a rolling basis. Awardees must confirm availability of the primary funding source related to the proposal within six months. The first review will be held on May 15, 2015 and every two months thereafter. Questions? Contact CIRCA_matchingfunds@uconn.edu.

The PREPARED Workbook is a valuable tool to manage the brownfield redevelopment process. PREPARED is a framework for evaluating actions that a local government might take to facilitate desired reuse at contaminated properties it does not own. It can help municipal decision-makers identify and manage potential risks, including environmental liability, and foster effective communication and coordination with professionals involved in the redevelopment project.

EPA and DEEP have converted the EPA PREPARED Workbook into interactive webpages describing the Process for Risk Evaluation, Property Analysis, and Reuse Decisions to redevelop brownfields. It contains editable forms that allow municipalities to consolidate and store needed information on potential brownfield redevelopment projects. The webpages break this complex process down into practical, achievable steps and includes a list of resources helpful in various stages of the process. Connecticut's Workbook is the first state-specific, web version of EPA's PREPARED Workbook. To link to the PREPARED workbook, click [here](#).

CT DEEP will host the 27th Annual [New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission](#) annual non-point source pollution conference in 2016. DEEP Watershed Manager Eric Thomas is interested in developing a tour of completed project sites in the Thames watershed as an option for the field component of this conference.

The Nature Conservancy, through their Coastal Resilience Program, has been working hard to reduce risk and improve resilience with the coastal towns in several Thames River watershed municipalities (Groton, New London, and Waterford). They recently completed a salt marsh advancement zone assessment for these town and every one of the 24 coastal municipalities. You can link to these reports as well as a roll-up for the entire state's coastline via the following link: <http://coastalresilience.org/project-areas/connecticut-solutions/#Reports> (scroll down once on the page to the salt marsh advancement zone assessment reports).

Judy Benson wrote an article on TNC's work for The New London Day <http://www.theday.com/local/20150403/salt-marshes-need-places-to-move-nature-conservancy-says>

The Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association (ARSWWA) is working with the Town of Brooklyn regarding aquifer protection regulations. ASRWWA will be working with the Town of Putnam to implement APA regulations for their Park Street well field.

The 15th annual Celebrating Agriculture Day will be held on Saturday, September 26, 2015 from 9 AM – 3 PM at the Woodstock Fair Grounds. Celebrating Agriculture is a free agricultural education event showcasing the benefits agriculture provides to the Quinebaug-Shetucket region as well as the challenge farms face today. Agriculture located in the hills of Northeastern Connecticut and South Central Massachusetts lies in what is called the “Last Green Valley” between Washington, D.C. and Boston. Woodstock Connecticut, as the host of this event exemplifies a town working with its agricultural industry to maintain agriculture as an integral part of both its economic and environmental future.

At the 40th anniversary celebration for the Wyndham Land Trust on April 29, 2015, it was announced that WLT was the recipient of a \$300,000 gift from Mitchell D. Phaiiah Foundation. This donation will be made in monthly installments over a 27 year period. The Wyndham Land Trust also celebrated the landmark of preserving 2000 acres of land. For more information, please visit their website at www.wyndhamlandtrust.org.

Avalonia Land Conservancy will be holding their annual meeting on May 27, 2015. Jenn Pagach of the Connecticut College Goodwin-Niering Environmental Center will be the guest speaker at this event.

[The Dodge Paddock/Beal Preserve](#) is a small coastal preserve located in in Stonington owned by Avalonia. Avalonia has been working with DEEP to improve the drainage on the property. Mystic Aquarium, in partnership with Avalonia, was awarded \$45,000 to restore the landscape on the preserve.

News from the Municipalities

The Town of Brooklyn approved the funding to match for a Community Small Farm Preservation Project. The property preserved is located on Barrett Hill.

The Town of Hampton is in the process of revising their Plan of Conservation and Development. A questionnaire for the towns 1800 inhabitants is under development.

The Town of Ledyard has been working to implement a [Tri-Town Trail](#) connection between Groton and Preston. [Avery Farm](#), owned and managed by the Groton Open Space Association, straddles the border between Ledyard and Groton. An earth day focused event is planned for May 9 on the preserve.

Other news

MassWildlife, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the University of Massachusetts have launched Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife, a long-term and multifaceted volunteer based monitoring program and planning collaboration. LLMW aims to 1.) reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve public safety, 2.) enhance, protect, and restore habitats impacted by roads, 3.) incorporate conservation priorities into transportation planning, and 4.) implement wildlife transportation and research. As a citizen, you can help by contributing data or volunteering to survey road segments. You can document your observations of road-

killed wildlife using a form from their [webpage](#). Roadkill reports help inform our wildlife mitigation and transportation safety decision making.

The 2015 Massachusetts Rivers and Wetlands Months Calendar, covering more than 200 river- and wetland-related events in Massachusetts from Saturday, April 25 to Sunday July 5, has been compiled by the Mass. Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) to provide you with the opportunity to participate in events in, on, along or about the rivers and wetlands of the Commonwealth. Take this opportunity to invite your friends, family, local leaders, legislators and/or a favorite reporter to clean up, paddle, protect, enjoy and celebrate your favorite rivers, streams, salt marshes and freshwater wetlands, or experience new ones. Get some healthful exercise and spend time in nature in and/or along the Commonwealth's many scenic waterways and marshes. Click [here](#) for more information.

Toxins from harmful algal blooms are increasingly contaminating source waters, as well as the drinking water treatment facilities that source waters supply. EPA researchers are helping the treatment facilities find safe, cost effective ways to remove the toxins and keep your drinking water safe. Click [here](#) to see the video.

EPA Region 3 released a publication titled, Community Based Public-Private Partnerships (CBP3) and Alternative Market-Based Tools for Integrated Green Stormwater Infrastructure: A Guide for Local Governments. This guide comes out of a multi-year effort by EPA Region 3 and our partners to identify tools to help Mid-Atlantic communities to address their water quality challenges through faster, cheaper, and greener methods.

Input for this guide came from experts across a variety of sectors, including public infrastructure financing, green infrastructure design/delivery, investment/finance, economic development, renewable energy and military housing, among others. The Guide is intended for a variety of audiences, including, but not limited to lawyers, finance specialists, P3 experts, public officials, economic developers, stormwater and green infrastructure practitioners and managers, decision-makers, and regulators. Specifically, this report introduces the Community-Based Public-Private Partnership (CBP3) approach as a flexible, performance-based platform for implementing affordable, integrated green stormwater infrastructure to meet a variety of regulatory and community needs. The Guide also provides background information on traditional P3s in the U.S., and how this paradigm differs from the CBP3 model. Further, the Guide goes into detail on the financing alternatives as well as market-based tools.

The topic of innovative financing and funding for green infrastructure investments is not confined to the Mid-Atlantic. Region 3 has held a series of webcasts over recent years, with many drawing well over 1,000 attendees from across the U.S. and abroad.

A downloadable PDF version of this document can be found at:

http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/greeninfrastructure/GI_CB_P3_Guide_%20EPA_R3_FINAL_042115_508.pdf.

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 July 21, 2015 beginning at 9:30 AM. Location for this meeting will be Project Oceanology located at 1084 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT.

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 15 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.