



Thames River Basin Partnership

Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Summer 2013

Volume 27

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 Summer 2013 meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership at Project O, then you missed a presentation by Holly Drinkuth, Director of Outreach and Watershed Programs for The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Connecticut Chapter. Ms. Drinkuth gave an overview of their efforts working with eastern Connecticut shoreline communities in a program called [Community Resilience, Using Nature to Reduce Climate and Disaster Risks](#). TNC recently worked with the towns of Stonington, East Lyme, Old Lyme and Waterford in an approach that uses four critical steps:

- Assess risk and vulnerability to coastal hazards
- Identify solutions using built and nature-based infrastructure
- Take action to implement adaptation solutions
- Measure effectiveness of reducing risk

To download the report from this effort, click [here](#).

TRBP Updates

An important notice to Thames River Basin Partnership website users: The TRBP website was created using Microsoft's FrontPage software, which is obsolete and no longer supported by Microsoft. The Partners have formed a website subcommittee to explore options for moving the website to a new platform. For the time being, TRBP website updates after 2010 are only visible using the Microsoft Windows Explorer web browser. We appreciate your understanding during this transition.

The TRBP Thirteenth Annual Floating Workshop was held on June 21, 2013 and focused on Connecticut's Changing Shoreline. This workshop was co-hosted by the Coast Guard Academy

and Mitchell College in New London. The program featured Joel Stocker, Assistant Educator, UCONN Cooperative Extension System, who gave a presentation of his *Analysis of Shoreline Change in Connecticut*. The analysis was based on over 100 years of mapping data from as far back as a shoreline survey completed in 1882 up to the present. Planning tools available for coastal regions was presented by Jean Pillo, watershed conservation coordinator for the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District. Workshop attendees then boarded a small flotilla of boats provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, CT DEEP and Project Oceanology for a trip down the Thames River to Mitchell College beach, the site of a sand dune restoration project impacted by both Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 and Super Storm Sandy in 2012. Professor Victoria Brennan of Mitchell College overviewed the project and the current strategies to rebuild the dune system. To view a PowerPoint recap of this event, click [here](#).

Partner Reports

The League of Women Voters of Northeastern Connecticut (formerly the League of Women Voters of Mansfield) and the Connecticut Institute of Water Resources are cosponsoring an educational water forum on Monday, July 29, 2013, from 7 – 9 PM, in the lower level of the Elks Lodge, 198 Pleasant St. in Willimantic. The purpose of the event, titled “Regional Water: Where Is It? Who Uses It? Who Decides?” is to promote understanding of local water resources and how their use relates to regional planning for water and economic development. There will be three panel discussions: Regional Water Resources, Regional Water Systems, and Water, Economic Development and Regional Planning. Panelists include water experts from the University of Connecticut, representatives from Windham Water Works, CT Water Company and UCONN, and representatives from the Economic Development Commissions of Windham, Tolland and Mansfield. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, see the website for the League of Women Voters of Northeast CT, <http://www.lwvmansfieldct.org>, or email: patricia.bresnahan@gmail.com.

On May 2, 2013, the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Hallville Fishway in Preston. DEEP Deputy Commissioner Macky McCleary and State Conservationist Lisa Coverdale were among the dignitaries present for the ceremony. After a nine year process, the fishway was constructed allowing fish from the Atlantic Ocean to once again reach their historical freshwater breeding ponds upstream of the Hallville Dam. Six alewife were recorded passing the video recording system this season. Early season low flows in Poquetanuck Brook are suspected as the cause in the low number of fish recorded this inaugural year. For more information on the Hallville Fishway, click [here](#) and then click on the Hallville Fishway tab. During the spring breeding season, a live camera feed of the viewing window will be available by clicking on the image of the alewife. Multiple partners and funding sources made this project possible.

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District, and the Connecticut Horse Council sponsored a free workshop at Killingworth Horse Farm in Killingworth, CT in May. The goal of the workshop was to show how horse owners can make a contribution to protecting and improving water quality by use of best management practices. Technical and financial assistance available to help with planning and implementation was also described. Guest speakers included Dr. Jen Nadeau, Equine Extension Specialist from UCONN, and Javier Cruz, district conservationist for the Natural Resource Conservation Service. This was

an interactive walking workshop where speakers would address resource concerns and discuss ways to prevent environmental impacts. ECCD staff is currently conducting farm assessments, collecting and analyzing soil samples, writing grazing plans, and discussing implementation projects with a few farms as a result of this outreach.

ECCD hosted a workshop on Low Impact Development in Ledyard featuring Mike Dietz, Connecticut Non-point Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Program Director. The Town of Ledyard Public Works Department sponsored the videotaping of this workshop, which will be aired on the public access channel 12 in the towns of Groton, (Mystic) Ledyard, (Gales Ferry), Stonington, North Stonington, and Voluntown. Non-point source water pollutants carried in stormwater are the biggest concern for water quality, and encouraging infiltration rather than runoff will help to recharge ground water supplies. The 69 minute workshop will air on the following dates and times:

- Sunday , July 21st at 12 noon and again at 8:00pm
- Monday, July 22 at 9:00pm
- Friday, July 26 at 4:00pm

A DVD of the program is also available for loan from ECCD. Contact [Jean Pillo](#) for more information.

ECCD, funded in part by EPA Clean Water Act grants through the CT DEEP, and in cooperation with The Last Green Valley Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program, the Ashford Conservation Commission, the Amos Lake Association and the Connecticut Department of Public Health, is involved with three separate water quality investigations in eastern Connecticut this season.

- Amos Lake (Preston, CT) is not meeting water quality standards due to excess nutrients leading to algae blooms in the Lake. ECCD and Amos Lake Association volunteers are monitoring water quality in the watershed to track down nutrient sources. A watershed based plan will be developed from the outcomes of this study.
- The Mount Hope River (Ashford and Mansfield, CT) is not meeting water quality standards for recreation. Indicator bacteria exceed acceptable limits. Volunteers from the Ashford Conservation Commission are assisting with weekly water sampling to help track down the sources of this contamination. A matrix of potential projects designed to reduce bacterial levels in the river will be developed, and at least one implemented as an outcome of this study.
- The Natchaug River between the Willimantic Reservoir and the confluence with the Willimantic River (Mansfield and Windham, CT) is not meeting water quality standards for recreation. Indicator bacteria exceed acceptable limits. Volunteers from TLGV Water Quality Monitoring Program are assisting with weekly water sampling. The Rivers Alliance of Connecticut has provided additional funding to follow up the bacteria monitoring with visual assessments of watershed conditions. This is known as a StreamWalk, a type of monitoring developed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Stream segments reporting high bacteria amounts will be further investigated, looking for areas of concern that contribute to bacteria laden runoff. A watershed based plan to address areas of concern will be developed as an outcome to this project.

In cooperation with the TLGV Water Quality Monitoring Program, the Connecticut Audubon Society Citizen Science Program is conducting a water quality investigation in the French River watershed in Thompson, CT. Data collection includes bacteria monitoring, nutrient monitoring and Stream Walk visual assessments. Funding support for this project has been provided by the Rivers Alliance of Connecticut and the Thompson Conservation Commission.

In addition to the above projects, The Last Green Valley Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program has expanded to include volunteer secchi disk monitoring in Roseland Lake (Woodstock, CT) and a pilot monitoring program in Alexander Lake (Killingly, CT).

The Last Green Valley (TLGV) office is moving up the street from their current location to 203B Main Street, Danielson, CT, above the First Niagara Bank. Their phone number and PO Box mailing address will remain the same.

TLGV river cleanup funds are still available. Visit the TLGV website to download the [application form](#). ECCD staff and volunteers participated in a cleanup in the Poquetanuck Cove area in early June resulting in the removal of three tires and nine bags of assorted trash.

New publications available from The Last Green Valley:

- The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor Map has been updated. The new map shows the entire Thames watershed area on one side, and zooms into the 35 TLGV towns on the other side. Click [here](#) to download these maps.
- The Willimantic River National Recreation Trail Paddle Guide has been reprinted and now includes safety and other information similar to the Quinebaug River National Recreation Trail Paddle Guide. Paddle guides are available [here](#).

Kiosks are being installed at all water trail public access areas along the National Recreational Trail system in The Last Green Valley. Students from Ellis Technical School built kiosks in Brooklyn and Canterbury. A Boy Scout Troop built another kiosk at the Plainfield Fish Hatchery. Each kiosk will contain a similar water trail map that is still under design.

Enviroscape watershed models purchased for the 2009 TLGV Source to Sea Expedition are still actively in use. This spring, twelve eastern Connecticut schools were visited by TLGV staff to learn basic watershed science and to trace how the water flows from their home downstream to Long Island Sound.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) is now accepting proposals for the prevention, control and/or abatement of nonpoint source pollution. Under [Section 319 of the Clean Water Act](#) (§319 C.W.A.), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awards a grant annually to the CT DEEP to fund eligible projects that support the implementation of the Connecticut's Nonpoint Source Management Program. These funds are limited; therefore, a competitive bid process is used to ensure that the most appropriate projects are selected for funding. The 2014 proposals must comply with the new [Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories](#) issued on April 12, 2013. These guidelines apply to all § 319-funded grant activities beginning in fiscal year 2014. For more

information about this grant program, click [here](#). For a list of approved Watershed Based Plans in Connecticut, click [here](#).

CT DEEP, with funding through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, is in the process of developing a management plan for [Barn Island Wildlife Management Area](#). Previous efforts on conservation practices on this property have been ad-hoc. This project will allow for a more focused and coordinated natural resource management effort on this preserve.

CT DEEP has finalized Connecticut's Climate Preparedness Plan – see link [here](#):

Draft stream flow classification maps have been prepared for eastern Connecticut including the Thames, Pawcatuck and Southeastern watershed basins, and will be ready for public comment by fall 2013. Up to three meetings will take place. For more information on CT Stream Flow regulations, click [here](#).

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service will be hosting another in their series of Healthy Soils Workshops on August 29, 2013 at Woodstock Orchard in Woodstock, CT. This workshop will feature a tour of cover crop test plots, field testing and observation. After this workshop, you will understand the awesome power of cover crops, and their benefits to crops, soil health and your wallet! In-field talks by Dr. Tom Morris from UConn, and Tom Akin the state agronomist from MA will be featured. Lunch will be included in registration. For more information, or to reserve you space, please contact [Ray Covino](#), Windham County Conservationist.

The Nature Conservancy is involved with sea grass research in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Maine. Four locations in Connecticut will be selected for this research. For more information on this effort, click [here](#).

The US Fish and Wildlife Service will receive Hurricane Sandy Emergency Supplemental Funding. In Connecticut, the funding will fund removal of debris along several islands that make up Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, and assess additional damage repair needs.

Project Oceanology is continuing their water quality monitoring and shellfish studies with students and campers from their Avery Point location. Mickey Weiss is pursuing a study of blue crabs in the Poquonuck and Mystic Rivers and Birch Plain Creek.

Avalonia Land Conservancy is involved in a capitol campaign to raise matching funds for an Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant awarded to purchase a 74 acre parcel along the Shunock River in North Stonington. This parcel abuts with the two other Avalonia holdings along the river. The property has both habitat value and recreational potential. For more information about Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. click [here](#).

Thames Valley Trout Unlimited received a National Recreation Foundation grant that allowed them to train teachers from five schools the sport of fly casting. The intent of the program was to

transfer the training from the teachers to middle and high school students who would learn about water quality and trout habitat while also learning a new potential lifelong sport of fly fishing.

The non-profit group [Clean Up Sound and Harbors](#) (CUSH) released a new educational brochure entitled *Be A Sound Friendly Boater*. For more information, click [here](#).

News from the Municipalities

The Ledyard Conservation Commission, partnering with the Ledyard Garden Club, is continuing to work on a riparian buffer planting project along Poquetanuck Cove at the Royal Oaks Drive boat launch. Invasive species removal has been a challenge, but once complete, the area will be planted with native plants suitable for coastal areas. The project is expected to be completed by fall 2013.

Other news

Save the date for the **CT Green Infrastructure/LID Symposium** scheduled for Thursday, September 19th at the Cromwell Marriott. This all day conference (lunch included) will feature sessions describing how municipalities can overcome barriers to adopting/implementing GI/LID techniques in their Plans of Conservation and Development, zoning/subdivision regulations and municipal facility management practices and requiring new development to adopt these techniques to protect water quality and other resource conservation objectives. More information will be posted on the TRBP Calendar of Events when it becomes available.

Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) has several projects they are seeking volunteer help for. Please note that some projects are ongoing through the summer and fall or have multiple work dates planned, but only the start date is listed. Contact the person listed with each project on the CIPWG calendar for more information and to join their efforts to control invasives.

- Invasive Species Removal Project for Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. - Groton
- Northern Haley Farm State Park Bittersweet Clearing - Groton
- Invasive Plant Project in Lebanon - Lebanon
- Eradication of Japanese Knotweed - Niantic

Please visit the CIPWG website at www.cipwg.uconn.edu, click on “Get Involved” on the top menu bar and then select “Calendar of Events” to find out more about the worthwhile projects that need your help to control invasives. You can make a difference!

2013 Connecticut General Assembly Session Legislative Update:

The following issues are related to TRBP mission:

Commitment to Water Quality – Clean Water Fund

- Bond package in [SB 842](#) enhances CT’s national leadership in water quality and clean water infrastructure.

- Includes record setting \$1 billion commitment for grants and loans to support municipal wastewater treatment, with a special focus on phosphorous, a key concern of municipalities.
- These investments will create an estimated 21,000 jobs in CT.

Cleanup of Contaminated Sites

- CT industrial legacy left thousands of contaminated sites across the state.
- [HB6651](#) maintains high standards while accelerating the cleanup process to put lands - especially in urban areas - back into productive use.
- Requires “make safe” actions to limit public’s exposure to sites with high levels of contamination – related bond item provides funding to assist small businesses with these actions.
- Allows municipalities to take action to prepare underutilized properties for redevelopment without exposure to liability for cleanup.
- Lightens regulatory burdens on developers of low-risk properties by providing cleanup standards tailored to proposed future uses.

Coastal Resiliency

- Working with General Assembly’s Shoreline Task Force, DEEP is supporting CT’s coastal communities and residents in preparing, adapting, and sustaining themselves in the face of more frequent and severe storms.
 - [SB1010](#) takes a forward look at sea level rise to guide state investments.
 - [SB 1012](#) requires development of best practices for permitting of coastal structures and refines coastal regulatory procedures for ease of use by the public.
 - [SB1013](#) endorses establishment of a Coastal Climate and Resiliency Center to provide resources and technical support.

Dam Safety

- Increased frequency of large storms and flooding events requires focus on dam maintenance.
- Dams are integral part of CT infrastructure – more than 5,500 in state, almost three-quarters privately owned.
- DEEP staff has been responsible for inspection of BOTH state-owned and privately-owned dams.
- [HB6441](#) provides for improved oversight by requiring dam owners to conduct periodic inspections and make necessary repairs – all by certified experts.
- Requires all dams meeting certain criteria to be registered with state and streamlines approval process for minor repairs.

Preserving and Protecting Valuable Lands

- Bond package in [SB 842](#) provides:
 - \$20 million for state acquisition of open space lands under the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program.
 - \$20 million for grants to municipalities and land trust organizations to support local open space purchase under the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program.

Hunting, Fishing and Dangerous Animals

- [SB 1018](#) strengthened and modernized laws concerning recreation and commercial fishing to better protect our fisheries, and creates an exemption for veterinarians to care for certain sick and injured animals.

- CT was authorized to participate in the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact – a program ensuring reciprocity of fishing and hunting licenses among 39 member states - as a result of passage of [SB 1020](#).

Arborists and Tree Wardens

- As a result of several recent major storms, there is increased concern over the management of trees across our state
- [HB 6538](#) provides for improved registration and regulation of arborists new requirements to help ensure the effectiveness of municipal tree wardens.

The US EPA has released its model program for onsite systems management in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The document provides technical information regarding the elements of a model program for onsite wastewater treatment systems, incorporating key recommendations to effectively and efficiently manage nitrogen treatment systems. The Agency's model program will help provide state onsite programs with the tools that they need to more effectively manage nutrients entering the Bay from onsite systems, which will help improve water quality in the Bay. Development of the model program is part of the Agency's efforts to implement Executive Order 13508 on Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration, issued on May 12, 2009, which renewed the federal commitment to restoring and protecting the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

For additional information: <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/>

The Norwich Community Development Corporation will be hosting two seminars on September 20, 2013 at their office located at 77 Main St., Norwich, CT. The registration fee includes free parking and light refreshments. An optional \$10 box lunch and walking tour of Historic Downtown Norwich are also available.

Seminar A: Grants Writing: Private, Corporate & Government Grants

Do you want or need to learn about grants writing from private, corporate and government sources? Do you work as a volunteer for a community/school organization? This is a seminar designed for the staff or volunteers of community/school groups seeking information about researching, writing and submitting grants. All participants will learn about www.grants.gov process as well as those of private and corporate foundations. It is also a perfect opportunity for anyone seeking a new career to learn about grants writing.

- Fee: \$65
- Time: 9:00 AM – noon

Seminar B - Fundamentals of Fundraising: Overview on How Community/School Groups can Raise Revenue

Are you a staff member or volunteer working with a community/school organization? This seminar highlights the major sources of fundraising revenue: special events (i.e., galas, award dinners), grants (public & private), annual & special appeals, capital campaigns. Helpful Hints are offered using tried and tested techniques. Learn how to write a fundraising strategic plan.

- Fee: \$65
- Time: 1 – 4 PM

ATTEND BOTH SEMINARS AND SAVE MONEY – \$100 FOR BOTH SEMINARS

Registration is required – Contact: Seminar Leader Harriet Grayson graysonharriet@gmail.com

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 16, 2013** at Project O in Groton. Meeting content and locations will be posted on the TRBP [Calendar](#) of upcoming events. You must use Windows Explorer to view the website. 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](#) (Windows Explorer required).

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 13 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.