



Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Summer 2021

Volume 59

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 Plan of Work](#) 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 the summer TRBP 2021 meeting, you missed a special presentation featuring Jeanne Davis, Executive Director of the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area (CT RC&D). Jeanne provided an update on the status of the Air Line Trail Master Plan that RC&D is developing. The [Airline Trail State Park](#) is a linear greenway following a former railroad track known as the Air Line. The trail passes through 12 Connecticut municipalities from Portland to Thompson. The multi-faceted plan will include sections on economic development opportunities by connecting town centers to the trail, accessibility both for mobility-challenged individuals as well as horses and bicyclists, a youth ambassador participation program, and much more. As a pilot project, a phone app is being developed that will be useful for trail users to find facilities and other resources in close proximity to the trail. RC&D's goal is to initiate an Air Line Trail newsletter by September 2021 and launch a website about the trail in 2022.

TRBP Updates

The number of followers of TRBP Facebook page continues to grow. Our current number of followers is 211. For our partners who would like to share updates of their activities, this is an easy way to do it. Send your copy and paste information to Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net and include a picture if you have one.

If you are not a follower of TRBP on Facebook, it is never too late to get on board. Click this link and then either “like” or “follow” the page. <https://www.facebook.com/Thames-River-Basin-Partnership-766778116778125/>

The current TRBP Plan of Work will sunset in 2021. At the quarterly meeting, partners discussed potential revisions to the new 3-year Plan of Work including the updated Long Island Sound CCMP, the Governor’s Report on Climate Change, Sustainable CT and inclusivity. Eric Thomas, Lois Bruinooge and Dan Mullins volunteered to participate in a TRBP PoW committee. The TRBP Plan of Work committee will seek input from other partners prior to updating the Plan of Work. All partners are requested to review the current TRBP Plan of Work and send comments or feedback to Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net.

The TRBP Floating Workshop 2021 was held on June 18th. The theme of the workshop was Coastal Embayments of the Eastern Connecticut Shoreline. The workshop included a paddle in a protected area along the Groton coastal region. Workshop topics included the Baker Cove Water Advisory Committee, eelgrass restoration, and coastal water quality indicators. Project Oceanology conducted hands-on activities, including water quality testing and seining for marine life, to engage workshop participants. Jean Pillo of TRBP presented on shellfish that inhabit coastal CT and discussed their roles in the marine ecosystem. To view a story map summary of the TRBP Floating Workshop #21, use this [link](#).

HELP WANTED: ECCD is looking for someone with WordPress and HTML knowledge that can manage the plugins and themes used within the website to correct compatibility issues when WordPress updates. Contact Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net for more information.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Project Summaries

The 2014 Farm Bill included new ways for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to innovate, leverage additional contributions, offer impactful solutions and engage more participants. One such program is the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The purpose of the program is to promote coordination with partners to deliver conservation assistance to agricultural producers and landowners. This is done by providing technical assistance through agreements and direct funding for conservation practices. Through Thames River Basin Partnership, partners meet to discuss ways to collaborate on projects like these. TRBP is conducting outreach for three Regional Conservation Partnership Programs.

FY14/15 (State level funding): The Last Green Valley was lead partner in this \$400,000 NRCS RCPP project entitled **Improving Soil Health and Water Quality in the Thames River Watershed**. The project addressed two national priorities (soil health and water quality), and all five Connecticut state priorities (water quality degradation, soil erosion, soil quality degradation, degraded plant conditions and livestock production limitations). Through the TLGV RCPP, four collaborating partners implemented soil health conservation practices on cropland in eastern Connecticut’s Thames River Watershed. Funding to implement the practices was provided by Natural Resources Conservation Service through its Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The long-term objective of the project was to improve soil health, as well as edge-of-field and in-stream water quality by decreasing nutrient and turbidity levels.

Project update: Funding for the TLGV RCPP expired on June 25, 2021. A full project update is pending the final report.

FY15/16 (State level funding): The University of Connecticut is the recipient and lead partner in an RCPP project entitled **Path to Reduce Pathogens in CT Agricultural Runoff (PATH)**. This \$669,000 NRCS RCPP is focused on reducing high bacteria levels in Connecticut's rivers and shellfish beds, which is, in part, caused by runoff from agricultural operations. To address water quality degradation, ten conservation partners are collaborating to achieve the objectives of the project: University of Connecticut, Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, The Last Green Valley, Inc., CT Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, CT Sea Grant, Stonington Shellfish Commission, CUSH, Inc. (Clean Up Sound & Harbors), the Thames River Basin Partnership and UCONN Extension.

Project update: ECCD, in partnership with NRCS, is working on conservation plans for several farms in the watershed, with recommendations for practices to improve manure storage and management. Some of the practices include manure storage facilities and bedded pack facilities requiring Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs). All the financial assistance available through the project has been expended, but technical assistance is still available. A portion of the technical assistance funding has been appropriated to updating the Muddy Brook and Little River Water Quality Improvement Plan (Woodstock, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson).

FY16/17 (National level funding): The Last Green Valley (TLGV) was awarded \$6,144,000 through NRCS' RCPP for **Accelerating the Pace of Conservation in the Southern New England Heritage Forest**. The Southern New England Heritage Forest (SNEHF) is a uniquely positioned forest corridor stretching north along the Connecticut and Rhode Island border to the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts. A remarkable partnership of non-profit organizations and regional, state and municipal agencies is offering private woodland owners a suite of NRCS tools for sound management and forestry conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Permanent protection through easements under the Healthy Forests Reserve Program is also available. To accelerate the pace of conservation in SNEHF, the project serves as a "conservation pipeline" of forest and bird habitat plans, EQIP practices and HFRP easements on private forestlands.

Project update: Through efforts of The Last Green Valley (TLGV), the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership (MassConn) and the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD), the project has resulted in 5500 acres of forestland under contract for forest management plans with half of the FMPs completed!

Large forested landowners not selected for the project (10 landowners with a combined 800 acres of forested land) are collaborating to apply for conservation easements through the Forest Legacy Program. That application is being prepared for submission. For more information, visit the [TLGV website](#). A new round of assistance for development of Forest Management Plans is planned for October.

For more information about USDA NRCS RCPP opportunities, please visit the NRCS website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp>.

Partner Reports

CT DEEP Watershed program continues to provide technical and financial assistance for priority nonpoint source pollution planning and implementation projects. Utilizing federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source (NPS) funds from US EPA, DEEP's program issues grants, develops contracts, administers projects in numerous locations across the greater Thames River and Southeast Coastal watersheds. Currently the program is completing administrative filing for several completed projects and has 4 active grant contracts spanning a few contract years (totaling ~\$950,000) primarily with the Eastern CT Conservation District on a range of technical assistance and plan-based implementation agricultural conservation to urban stormwater retrofit projects – details are available elsewhere in this PIA report. These projects often leverage funding from various stakeholder sources including TRBP partners. The current FY2021 grant round will soon progress to award notifications and follow up contracting this fall. They anticipate an FY2022 319 grant Request for Proposals later this year (likely in November) with contracting funds available after 10/1/2022.

Watershed-based Plans (WBP) – a required WBP checklist has been revised and will be posted shortly; it is used by CT DEEP programs and local watershed stakeholders to further refine work plan and priority action steps. Approved WBPs with checklists are posted on the CT DEEP Watershed Management webpage at Watershed Management Plans and Documents (ct.gov). DEEP is now reviewing WBPs that it has not funded or managed– including a Bolton Lakes watershed plan (headwaters to Hop R./Willimantic River regional).

Total Maximum Daily Load analyses (TMDLs) for Fresh Water Lake Nutrients – CT DEEP has developed a statewide core document, along with piloting a Bantam Lake watershed summary appendix, and Bantam watershed. The draft plan was shared at a public information meeting. CT DEEP is investigating additional freshwater lake appendices for Roseland Lake in Woodstock, and West Thompson Lake Reservoir in Thompson.

CT DEEP ambient water quality monitoring season is well underway with enhanced field crews in fresh water, Long Island Sound, and include weekly state swimming beach monitoring (Note: Mashamoquet Brook State Park swimming closed for season for maintenance in Pomfret). The next biennial statewide Integrated Water Quality Assessment will begin this fall with a public notice of this important draft report in April 2022.

CT DEEP's Dam Safety program current workload includes three dams slated for repairs in the coming months: Pachaug Pond in Griswold, Pine Acres Pond in Hampton, and Upper Bolton Lake Dam in Vernon.

CT DEEP is also involved with Environmental Reviews with a focus on water/watershed issues: Consumptive water diversion permit renewal applications – including earth materials processing sites (2) in Plainfield, a large wholesale plant nursery in Lebanon, an established public water wellfield in Sprague, and a drinking water supply interconnection in Ledyard/Groton.

Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) Scoping Notices – include Hop River State Park Trail bridge replacement in Columbia/Coventry (recently had one review upstream as well).

CT Siting Council petitions include large solar array energy generation projects – including North Stonington (Pawcatuck River) and Waterford (Niantic River).

MS4 (Stormwater) General Permit – regulated communities are now entering the 5th year of the 5-year permit; new permit with some modifications are under draft for next year. Six towns in the greater Thames will be completing their first five-year permit cycle, with a couple dozen other greater Thames and Southeast Coastal towns regulated under multiple permit cycles. Annual report submissions by each regulated MS4 are available to review to aid TRBP in tracking progress and identifying opportunities to further assist towns in compliance.

Connecticut state legislation in 2021 recently signed by Governor Lamont includes a broad ranging Climate Change Adaptation Act - with enabling (not required) legislation for all CT towns to establish stormwater authority with necessary administrative tools. New London is the sole CT town to date with an established stormwater authority and has successfully completed several water quality improvement and flooding projects. TRBP should anticipate several watershed towns reviewing options for individual or perhaps inter-town agreements or coalitions, working effectively to plan and address stormwater, flooding and related impacts to natural resources.

The 2020 Open Space and Watershed Lands Acquisition grant program (OSWA) grant awards were noticed this past Spring, and several are moving toward project agreements (including Townsend in Pomfret, and Watrous in Groton).

In May CT DEEP issued a new grant round for aquatic invasive species control on lakes, ponds and rivers, totaling \$360,000 to 21 projects to help restore Connecticut's waterbodies. This was made possible in 2019 when the Connecticut General Assembly established an Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp fee (Public Act 19-190) applied to all registered boats using Connecticut waters, to provide a dedicated funding source for the "Connecticut Lakes, Rivers and Ponds Preservation Account." This account funds programs to protect the state's lakes, ponds and rivers by addressing aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms. Grant recipients will conduct work on the following waterbodies within the greater Thames River basin: Amos Lake in Preston, Middle and Lower Bolton Lakes in Bolton/Vernon, Coventry Lake (Coventry) and Eagleville Lake (Coventry/Mansfield), as well as statewide work that continues to benefit eastern CT with the CT Agricultural Experiment Station.

A CT DEEP Water Program administrative note– our Planning and Management Division has a new Assistant Director, Christopher Bellucci, who is familiar to several TRBP partners; Chris will be doing double duty presently with supervision of the Water Monitoring and Assessment program.

The CT DEEP's Recreational Trails & Greenways Program has \$3 million in available funding for the 2021 grant round. This fund enables Connecticut to continue its legacy as a leading

investor in supporting activities on over 2,000 miles of trails statewide. Specifically, the Recreational Trails & Greenways Program gives matching grants that support projects such as planning, design, and construction of new trails and increasing maintenance, construction, restoration and acquisition. New educational programs and tools to promote trail-related safety and environmental protection will also be a priority for this fund. The Request for Proposal (RFP) is available through CTDEEP with a grant application deadline of November 1, 2021; learn more at this link. <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Business-and-Financial-Assistance/Grants-Financial-Assistance/Recreation---Grants-and-Financial-Assistance>

CT DEEP has extended the deadline for electronic submission of application packages for the Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA) and Urban Green and Community Garden Grant Program (UGCG) to October 31, 2021. For more information, visit its website at this link <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Business-and-Financial-Assistance/Grants-Financial-Assistance/Open-Space---Grants-and-Financial-Assistance>.

In addition to the Air Line Trail Master Plan project, CT RC&D is involved with several other projects focused on [agriculture](#). Funded by a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Innovative Grant, RC&D initiated a No-Till & Cover Crop Pilot Project for sharing equipment necessary for adopting no-till farming methods. RC&D selected two farm equipment hub hosts - Mountain Dairy in Storrs, CT and Sub-Edge Farm in Farmington, CT. Each hub hosts selected area farms, and allows cooperative use of the equipment, and provides an educational network among the farms. Each farm equipment hub contains (1) no-till seed drill and (1) roller crimper.

RC&D conducts a long running program to promote soil health through educational workshops. Past programs have promoted education and practice through hands-on demonstrations and field exercises on rolling cover crops, soil pit investigation, and rainfall simulation on healthy and not-so healthy soils. Healthy soils, rich in organic matter, drain better, have greater disease resistance, and better water holding capacity in times of drought. Watch for upcoming workshop announcements on the TRBP Facebook page.

The Last Green Valley has compiled a list of 180 opportunities to enjoy its annual Walktober events this fall. For more information, and to view late proposals that will not be included in TLGV's printed Walktober Guide, please visit TLGV's website at www.thelastgreenvalley.org.

The Last Green Valley Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program has continued to collect data this summer.

- Ten temperature data loggers were placed in streams with a goal of documenting cold water stream habitat. The loggers will be retrieved in September. Hopefully all of the loggers will be retrievable after the heavy rain and flooding events this summer.
- An E. coli trackdown survey of Bungee Brook in Eastford and Woodstock was conducted after the results of the Natchaug River E. coli Trackdown Survey in 2020 implicated Bungee Brook as the major contributor of pathogen contamination in the Natchaug River. After 10 weeks of sampling, it was determined that the main sources of E. coli contamination in the Bungee Brook watershed were in the Safford Brook watershed in Woodstock. A follow up survey looking for traces of laundry detergent in the tributary

streams using optical brightener pads resulted in non-detectable levels at all the selected sites. Optical brightener pads are a potential means to detect an illicit discharge or failing septic systems.

- A pilot project was initiated in partnership with the Crystal Pond Association, CT DEEP and Northeast Aquatic Research to install an array of temperature data loggers in Crystal Pond (Eastford/Woodstock) to determine the stability of the temperature layers in the pond. This project required a buoy permit from DEEP.
- TLGV is continuing to support the Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative and CT DEEP by collecting and submitting samples from lakes that suffer from chronic cyanobacteria blooms. This season, 11 lakes in eastern CT and southcentral MA were selected to participate in the project, but the above average rainfall and limited number of 90-degree days this summer resulted in less cyanobacteria blooms to sample. A cyanobacteria bloom in Avery Pond (Preston) was documented and the samples sent to the EPA lab in Chelmsford, MA for cyanobacteria IDs and toxin testing.

TLGV's Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator Jean Pillo took part in a review of the Hamilton Reservoir Watershed Based Plan and contributed feedback that was included in the final Plan. The Hamilton Reservoir is an impoundment of the Quinebaug River in Holland, MA.

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) is working with its 22 municipalities to update their Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans. The five-year plan update facilitates municipal eligibility for Federal Emergency Management Agency discretionary funds. A discussion about looking for opportunities to include fish passage considerations with culvert replacement/redesign followed this announcement.

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) continues progress on the Little River Agriculture Waste Storage and Management Project. A new silage storage bunker on the farm in Woodstock has been completed. Current efforts involve constructing a freestall barn with manure storage capacity below. The manure storage pit beneath the barn has been constructed. Construction of the barn will begin in late October or early November. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) developed the site plan for the barn. CT DEEP is funding the project through an EPA Clean Water Act § 319 grant. NRCS is also providing funds through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

ECCD continues to focus on reducing contamination from stormwater runoff in the Niantic River watershed. The District is working with the four towns in the watershed, Waterford, East Lyme, Salem and Montville, to install 20 storm drain filter systems, tree filters and rain gardens. ECCD is also distributing rain barrels to area residents. Master gardeners will be assisting with the design of the rain gardens.

In a new initiative, ECCD will be working with area schools to install Green School Yards. In addition to the current focus on developing green school yards at the Putnam Middle School in Putnam and Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy in Windham, funded by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, ECCD will be partnering with Project Oceanology on a NOAA-funded project that will include funding for 6 – 9 more green school yard projects in eastern Connecticut over the next 3 years.

ECCD also continues its work to update the *Muddy Brook and Little River Water Quality Improvement Plan* (Woodstock, Thompson, Pomfret, Putnam). The update of the *2009 Muddy Brook and Little River Water Quality Improvement Plan* is being funded through NRCS and administered by Connecticut Council on Soil and Waters Conservation as part of a Source Water Protection Project. Additional funding has been provided from the UCONN Path RCPP and The Last Green Valley Soil Health RCPP. A meeting of project partners is scheduled for October 12, 2021.

The Shewville Dam is the last major obstacle to migrating fish swimming upstream from Long Island Sound through the Thames River and Poquetanuck Cove on their way to Amos Lake and Avery Pond in Preston, an important historic breeding areas for alewife. The design of a fishway over the dam is nearly ready to submit for approval. This project is funded through a Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant and an Electric Boat mitigation fund.

In cooperation with and through a memorandum of understanding with CT DEEP, ECCD staff have been inspecting two solar power installation projects for compliance with their Stormwater Pollution Control Plans. One of the projects is in Canterbury/Brooklyn. The other is in North Stonington.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Norwich office has been wrapping up contracts for this fiscal year to obligate funds for 14 or more projects. Twenty-two projects could not be funded this fiscal year due to lack of funds. The funded projects will include two manure management projects, a large Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) in Sprague and another CNMP in Waterford. Multispecies cover crops are also garnering a lot of interest.

The Windham County NRCS office reported that it has 64 contracts on the books, seventeen new projects and two large agricultural projects including the one previously mentioned in Woodstock. NRCS is seeing a lot of interest in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) including one dairy farm, three forested properties and one organic vegetable farm.

NRCS urges all farmers that have experienced erosion or crop damage from the recent heavy rain events to get in touch with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for emergency assistance as soon as possible. Reports from FSA will determine whether or not the State declares a disaster area.

Adam Houston is the new manager of the Quiet Corner Initiative (QCI), an outreach program of the Yale-Myer Forest located in Ashford, Eastford, Union and Woodstock. He graduated in May from the Yale School of the Environment and spent the summer as a member of the Forestry Apprentice team. The QCI is not planning any upcoming in-person workshops in the immediate future, but staff are busy preparing to welcome everyone back to the Forest to learn more about agroforestry, forest farming, maple tapping, forest management, and more! Reach out to welcome Adam at adam.houston@yale.edu.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment wants to invite you to join its new “CT Water Protectors” message board. The message board is intended to facilitate easy communications with grassroots leaders interested in CT water issues including, but not limited to, toxic pollution prevention, sustainable resource management, water infrastructure, coastal resiliency issues, updates on the CT State Water Plan, and more. If interested in having your email address added to the list, *please email Lou Rosado Burch* lburch@citizenscampaign.org or *CCE’s intern Claire Christiana* ca03chri@siena.edu. Please be sure to include your full name and any affiliation you would like listed under your contact.

News from Municipalities

The City of Norwich is seeking funding assistance from FEMA for a study looking into the removal of the Yantic River Upper Falls Dam for the purpose of flood mitigation. The dam was constructed in the 1860s but the flood gates on the dam have not functioned for over 15 years.

The Woodstock Conservation Commission is continuing its efforts to expand the number of participants that are voluntarily enrolling in the Pollinator Pathway initiative. For more information on this initiative, visit their website <https://woodstockconservation.org/pollinator-pathway>.

The Eastford Conservation and Historical Preservations Commission has also been promoting the Pollinator Pathway initiative to town residents.

Thompson’s Office of Planning & Development, with support from the Economic Development Commission, Recreation Commission and grassroots non-profit Thompson Together, have launched a crowdfund campaign to bring an exciting new public art installation to Riverside Park! The campaign is being run under the Sustainable CT matching program, a partnership with crowdfunding platform Patronicity. Conceived as a wrap-up to last year’s successful “Nips for Holiday Cheer” program, the planned art installation will incorporate the 48,000+ nip bottles diverted off Thompson’s roadsides during that temporary collection program. Because the bottles are not easily recyclable, using them to create the public art pieces will keep them out of the waste stream, while serving as a permanent reminder of the problem of plastic waste for the region’s roads, rivers and streams. The first of the sculptures is planned for completion and unveiling as a feature of the 3rd annual UPcycled Art Show at Thompson Community Day on Saturday October 2, 2021.

Building on its commitment to creating a more climate change resilient Commonwealth (MA), the Baker-Polito Administration announced \$21 million in grants to cities and towns through the [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Program](#). The following communities will receive funding to complete the MVP planning process in 2021-2022: Oxford, \$26,900; Southbridge, \$22,000; Webster, \$25,000.

Land Trust Updates

The Wyndham Land Trust recently acquired two properties that add to the 5000 acres of forest and grasslands already protected by the land trust in Connecticut's Quiet Corner. The new 86-acre Cartier Preserve is located north of Quarry Road in Woodstock. The new 65-acre Potrzeba Preserve sits a short distance away to the west of Swedetown Road in the northwest corner of Pomfret. In addition to these new acquisitions, threatened grassland birds in the Quiet Corner just got a boost thanks to a donation of farmland property to the Wyndham Land Trust. An anonymous donor recently gave 112 acres on Cabbage Hill Road in Woodstock to the Wyndham Land Trust. The land is a mixture of hayfields, meadows, and forests that is now protected from development in perpetuity.

Avalonia Land Conservancy acquired a North Stonington parcel known as the Herman E. Sheets Forest. Now that it owns the 86-acre parcel of land on Puttker Road, Avalonia will begin crafting a management plan to evaluate the property, identify invasive plant species and mark up trails. Eventually, the forest will be open for public access for hiking as well as fishing in the Green Falls River that runs through the property. The group is aiming to provide universal access to the river, meaning it will be accessible for people of all abilities.

The New Roxbury Land Trust hosted a free webinar featuring Joselyn Clark & Dr. Claire Rutledge, Research Scientist from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. The focus on the August webinar was the Emerald Ash Borer. They presented an infographic on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and taught viewers how to identify EAB, symptoms of their presence, and affected ash trees.

Workshops and other Learning Opportunities

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District is hosting a series of "Pie & Coffee Farm Talks". The talk series is geared toward small farm owners, hobby farmers, homesteaders and horse keepers who want to be sure their farms, forests, grazing lands and animals are healthy and productive. Attend one talk or all of them. Admission to the programs is free. This talk series is being funded by a National Association of Conservation Districts Technical Assistance Grant, and in partnership with the Senexet Grange #40 and the Woodstock Agricultural Commission.

Due to the ever-changing and unpredictable factors around Covid variants, the talks will be given using a hybrid model. A limited number of local farmers will be able to participate in-person, at the Senexet Grange located at 628 Route 169 in Woodstock, CT. Face masks will be required. Those who choose to will be able to attend remotely via Zoom. Based on up-to-date CDC and state recommendations, we may shift the talk series to an all Zoom format.

All programs will begin at 6:30 PM and will include a very informative talk followed by a chance to ask questions. Pie and refreshments will be available for sale to support the Senexet Grange and the programs they provide to keep agriculture alive and thriving in our community. To register for the **in-person talks or for more information**, please email maura.robie@comcast.net and include the talk title in the subject. More details and Zoom Registration Links for the talks are below. Once you register for a talk, you will get an email confirmation and the link to the program for which you are registered.

Thursday, Sep. 30, 2021 - *Manure and Nutrient Management on Small Farms*. This presentation will be given by Jim Hyde, State Agronomist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Jim has exceptional knowledge and excitement for sharing best management practices of composting and helping others to improve their animal waste management systems.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIudu2pqj4oHN37rHkev3TZpKt8-FFkd7f4>

Wed, Oct. 27, 2021 – *Grazing Animals 101* presented by Joe Emenheiser, Livestock Extension Educator, UCONN Department of Extension. Joe Emenheiser joined the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources as an assistant extension educator in 2020 and is looking forward to connecting with Connecticut farmers to promote healthy livestock production systems and the economies that go with them.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrcO-qrDgiHdX8AC0e97j9sMPESGkHdOhR>

Wed, November 3, 2021 – *The Importance of Forest Management and Potential Funding Assistance Help with the Costs* presented by Bill Reid, Chief Ranger for The Last Green Valley. Healthy forests can provide many economic and environmental benefits, and a good forest management plan (FMP) will help you reach your goals. Certain woodland owners may also benefit from funding assistance to develop FMPs through USDA NRCS cost share programs. Bill Reid from The Last Green Valley has helped sign up many of your neighbors and will be explaining how you, too, can benefit from these programs.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkceuvqjItHdCg1Wf9I9yGfBmljW25SiU3>

Tues, Nov. 16, 2021 – *Soil Health for Small Farms* presented by Caro Roszell, Soil Health Specialist, American Farmland Trust. Caro will talk about soil health indicators for small farms, i.e. methods for self-monitoring of soil health impacts on management practices. She will give examples of various farms she's worked with around New England.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vc-iurT4pHdbk-WUhB2i2rgVaFhnEbTJh>

A Path Forward: Understanding and Restoring Degraded Forests:

A Working Lands for Wildlife Virtual Event

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 22 Time: 11 am – 1:30 pm

Register at: <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/a-path-forward>

Description: This webinar will explore the complexities of forest degradation as a result of poor forest management planning. We will gain a basic understanding of land-use history as it pertains to forest degradation and how misconceptions of forest ecology have led to poor land management practices. Then, we will learn how forest products markets (or lack thereof) can perpetuate the mismanagement of forest resources. Once we grasp these basic concepts, we will learn from applied research on conditions of degraded forests and what we can do to restore them. Event hosts: Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society; NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife Event partners: USDA Forest Service, Society of American Foresters, Southern Research Station, American Bird Conservancy, The Forestland Group, White Oak Initiative

Credits available: 2 Category 1 Continuing Education Credits through the Society of American Foresters

Bird-friendly Forestry Webinars for RCPs, Landowners, Conservation Partners, and Land Trusts:

New Webinars Available For Sustainably Managing Forests With Birds In Mind

Join Highstead, the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#), [Audubon Vermont](#), and the [Northeast Bird Habitat Conservation Initiative](#) for the upcoming Bird-friendly Forestry webinar series focused on best practices in silviculture and forestry management for birds in New England, with a focus on at-risk species.

Steve Hagenbuch, Senior Conservation Biologist and Forester at Audubon Vermont, will present four interactive sessions that will cover different topics such as habitat requirements and management practices, bird-related forestry strategies for landowners, foresters, and conservation partners, and a review of the various technical and financial resources available to support habitat management and conservation. Continuing Forestry Education Credits (CFEs) are pending for each webinar through the [Society of American Foresters](#).

Visit the following URL to learn more about the workshops and select the workshop(s) that best fit your needs. <https://highstead.net/insights/new-bird-friendly-forestry-webinars-to-support-new-england-birds>

- Session #1: The Power of Birds in Driving and Sustaining Forest Management within the RCP Network
September 15, from 2-3:15 pm ET, register for session #1 here-
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtcuCsqD0uHdaE_zZz_KzEatiZX3ooid_j
- Session #2: Habitat Requirements and Management Considerations for Forest Birds in New England
September 22, from 2-3:15 pm ET, register for session #2 here-
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqc-GorDwjH9MpXVL25h5cRi3pXd9P7bJM>
- Session #3: Bird-friendly Forestry Practices and Strategies for Landowners
September 29, from 2-3:15 pm ET, register for session #3 here-
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtdeCupj4pHN2Mcd9wkySIGL6ISpOHzzEI>

Session #4: Technical and Financial Assistance for RCPs, Conservation Partners, and Landowners

October 13, from 2-3:30 pm ET, register for session #4 here-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIsdOmrqjwrEt1pPklxNnI-wGQFdum3JH9K>

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 meets quarterly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Next meeting will be on October 19, 2021, via Zoom. Register for the meeting at this link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmid=ZUkf-qurzgjE9SjPP4TZ2-hc0IrycWn08E5>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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<http://thamesriverbasinpartnership.org/newsletters>.

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 21 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.