



Thames River Basin Partnership April 19, 2022 Meeting Notes (Draft)

Attendance: Jean Pillo, ECCD/TRBP Coordinator, Dan Mullins, Cindy Wright Jones, TLGV vol & ECCD Board; Tom Morgart, Bill Purcell, Garrett Timmons, USDA NRCS; Sam Alexander, SCCOG; Marcia Kilpatrick, Hampton CC; Michelle Maitland, Groton Public Works; Kristin Distante, Town of Groton CC; Gary Lussier, Thames Valley Trout Unlimited; Jean McInnis, Mohegan Environmental Protection Agency; Timothy Clark, The Nature Conservancy; Joellen Anderson, Avalonia Land Conservancy; Beth Bernard, Goodwin Conservation Center and CT Forest and Parks Association; Amanda Fargo Johnson, Connecticut RC&D; Alicia Tyson, CT Sea Grant.

Special Presentation: Dan Mullins and Jean Pillo of the ECCD gave a wrap up summary of the Regional Conservation Partnership Project led by The Last Green Valley. With technical assistance from the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District and the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, the final project outcomes were:

- Technical assistance provided to 18 producers
- 13 additional producers were helped to determine their eligibility and to begin the EQIP application process implementing soil health conservation practices
- 6 contracts were awarded by NRCS totaling \$125,504.38 and covering 365.6 acres
- Edge of field monitoring for nutrients and sediment runoff was conducted on two farm fields for 3 years. The data was shared with the producer.
- Under an extension of the project, technical assistance was directed to support the development of a watershed-based plan for Little River (Woodstock, Pomfret, Thompson and Putnam).

Project match was provided through implementation of NRCS conservation practices by ECCD funded by the CT DEEP using US EPA non-point source grant funds. The Thames River Basin Partnership had an outreach role in this project.

The presentation is available at this link: <https://thamesriverbasinpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/TLGV-RCPP-Improving-Soil-Health-and-Water-Quality-in-the-Thames-Watershed-Project-Summary-Presentation.pdf>

TRBP Financial Report:

Activity	Item	Transaction Amount	balance
Starting Balance		1574.85	1574.85
	Membership renewal for American Canoe Association	125.00	1449.85
		Final Balance	1449.85

TRBP Coordinator's Report

TRBP Floating Workshop planning is ongoing. This year is the 50th anniversary of both the CT Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Act and the US EPA Clean Water Act. The event is planned

for June 10, 2022 at the Plainfield Fish Hatchery. Due to biosecurity concerns, we were asked to schedule our visit to the fish hatchery in the morning, prior to a planned optional afternoon paddle on the Quinebaug River. The tentative agenda is to have a keynote speaker (still undetermined) followed by a presentation on the successful return of breeding bald eagles to the Thames watershed and finally, a tour of the Plainfield Trout Hatchery by lead by CT DEEP. After a lunch break, there will be an optional paddle on the Quinebaug River from the Brooklyn boat launch, led by TLGVs Chief Ranger Bill Reid. Workshop costs are still undetermined. Please save the date if you wish to attend.

An application for a LL Bean Club Fostered Community Grant for \$1000 to offset the cost of the Floating Workshop was prepared, submitted but subsequently denied. The grant would have covered the cost of renting canoes/kayaks for use by people from economically disadvantaged communities to allow them to participate in the Floating Workshop. Several meeting participants offered to supply equipment if needed, and one offer to support a workshop scholarship was made.

The TRBP Plan of Work expired in 2022. A new draft TRBP Plan of Work has been prepared and will be distributed for review and approval. The dates for the new PoW will be 2022 to 2025. Thank you, Eric Thomas, Dan Mullins and Lois Bruinooge, for your input.

The coordinator participated in 3 Highstead Foundation sponsored Regional Conservation Partnership Network monthly online meetings this quarter. Meeting topics included

- Build Back Better and Infrastructure Bills Q/A- What Can this mean for RCPs?
- Collaborating with Drinking Water Partners
- Building Authentic Tribal and Indigenous Relationships (In Connecticut, there are 5 recognized Tribes. Three of them are in eastern CT.)

Using ECCD as the lead TRBP partner in an RCP 2022 Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund grant opportunity, ECCD applied for funding to support the creation of a new TRBP subcommittee focused on coordination services for the Natchaug Healthy Watershed Protection Plan. A key recommendation of the Plan is to organize a Natchaug Watershed Advisory Board. The two-year grant for \$25000 will fund ECCD staff time to organize the Natchaug Watershed Advisory Board and establish 13 working groups under the Board to implement the recommendations of the Natchaug Healthy Watershed Protection Plan. Approval/rejection of the project is expected by summer 2022.

TRBP was represented at a 50th IWWA Planning Meeting to include the TRBP FW on the list of activities.

TRBP website – there continue to be intermittent website update interruptions caused by a lag between WordPress updates and compatibility updates of the Plugins used to build the website. Recently a hyperlinked message that appears to be linked to an online gambling site has intermittently been visible on the home page. **DO NOT CLICK THAT LINK** if it reappears. The coordinator has been working with GoDaddy to resolve this and other issues. The partnership voted to approve spending up to \$500 to hire GoDaddy WordPress support services to resolve website issues.

Social Media update

The TRBP FB page is has increased to 227 followers. The FB page remains active through the sharing of posts by partnering organizations and random other items believed will be of interest to the group. If any of our partnering organizations wish to have their message shared on the TRBP website, please send the information to Jean.Pillo@comcast.net in a cut and paste format. Pictures encouraged.

Partner Reports

TRBP Partner Reports will be compiled into the Spring 2022 Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Report.

Next meeting will be on July 19, 2022 and tentatively will be held virtually via Zoom until all agencies are cleared for indoor in person meetings.

Meeting notes prepared by Jean Pillo, ECCD/TRBP Coordinator. These meeting notes are considered draft until approved at the next TRBP meeting.