



# Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Spring 2022

Volume 61

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 TRBP meeting, Dan Mullins and Jean Pillo of the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District summarized the Regional Conservation Partnership Project **Improving Soil Health and Water Quality in the Thames River Watershed** managed by The Last Green Valley. With technical assistance from the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District and 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 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 an updated watershed-based plan for Little River (Woodstock, Pomfret, Thompson and Putnam) based on agriculture needs.

Project match was provided through implementation of CWA Section 319 grants conducted by ECCD and funded by CT DEEP using US EPA non-point source grant funds. Thames River Basin Partnership provided outreach for the 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 Updates**

The TRBP Floating Workshop took place on June 10, 2020. This year is the 50th anniversary of both the CT Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Act as well as the US EPA Clean Water Act. The event took place at the Plainfield Fish Hatchery. Denise Savageau, President of the Connecticut Association of Conservation Districts, gave the keynote address. Following her remarks, Chief Ranger Bill of The Last Green Valley, recounted the history of how the Quinebaug, Willimantic and Shetucket Rivers became designated as National Recreation Trails by the National Park Service. He also spoke about TLGV's participation in the National Mid-winter Eagle Survey and how this data has shown an increase in Bald Eagles in Connecticut. Jean Pillo, as the Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator for The Last Green Valley and Eric Thomas of CT DEEP, spoke on water quality monitoring and how the data is used to prepare a biannual report to the US Congress. Following the tent talks, a tour of the Plainfield Trout Hatchery was conducted, lead by Bryan Decker, the Hatchery Supervisor for the Quinebaug Valley State Fish Hatchery. After lunch, participants enjoyed a paddle on the Quinebaug River, departing from the Brooklyn boat launch. An ESRI storymap to recapture the day is available at this link <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/50b96f59ce6145958cf07c36d2b339ba>

The TRBP Plan of Work expired in 2021. A new [draft TRBP Plan of Work](#) has been prepared and was distributed for review and approval. The dates for the new PoW will be 2021 to 2025. Thank you, Eric Thomas, Dan Mullins and Lois Bruinooge, for your input.

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 \$25,000 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. An announcement of grant awards is expected by summer 2022.

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. The website is functional and new documents can be uploaded but the editing features for the website are not properly functioning. These issues will be addressed as time permits. Anyone with expertise in this field that is willing to help, please contact [Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net](mailto:Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net).

## **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 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, *Improving Soil Health and Water Quality In the Thames River Watershed*, expired on June 25, 2021. A summary of final project outcomes 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>

FY15/16 (State level funding): The University of Connecticut is the recipient and lead partner in an RCPP, *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 of the financial assistance available for implementation of conservation practices 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). A draft Little River Watershed Based Plan update is expected to be presented in July 2022.

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 (HFRP) 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 7000 acres of forestland under contract for forest management plans with half of the FMPs completed! The purchase of conservation easements has been proceeding slowly and none have closed to date. A new round of assistance for development of Forest Management Plans opened in October and closed on December 17, 2021.

If you are a forest landowner within the Southern New England Heritage Forest and already have a forest management plan with a bird habitat assessment and are looking to improve your woodland habitat for important bird species, and manage your woods for wildlife and people, funding is available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help you take care of your woods.

- For Connecticut Projects – Bill Reid, 860-774-3300; bill@tlgv.org
- For Massachusetts Projects – Christopher Riely, 401-225-6135; christopher@sweetbirchconsulting.com

The forestry RCPP program has been extended until September 2023.

Landowners of large, forested acreage not selected for the project (10 landowners with a combined 800 acres of forested land) collaborated to apply for conservation easements through the Forest Legacy Program. That application was submitted and is undergoing review. For more information, visit the [TLGV website](#).

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/farmland/rcpp>.

## **Partner Reports**

The window to submit events to be included in The Last Green Valley (TLGV) printed Walktober Guide has closed, but additional proposals will be accepted for inclusion on the website.

TLGV also has several funding opportunities for non-profit organizations:

## **Youth Engagement Grant**

The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) is pleased to announce a new round of partnership grants for non-profits and municipalities to engage and benefit youth (under 21) in projects to conserve, celebrate or enhance The Last Green Valley’s significant natural and historic resources or

promote economic development, such as tourism and outdoor nature-based recreation. Projects that are developed or led by youth will receive priority consideration. In addition to being youth-focused, collaborative projects between organizations and/or municipalities are encouraged. Projects that enhance access for diverse audiences to the abundant natural and historic resources of the National Heritage Corridor are also encouraged. [Click here for the details.](#)

### **Keeping The Last Green Valley Clean, Green and Invasive Free!**

The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) is making funding available to non-profits and municipalities that wish to organize a cleanup event, pollinator planting or invasive species eradication event. Recipients working in the heritage corridor will be reimbursed up to \$500 for expenses such as publicity, cleanup supplies such as trash bags, work gloves, small gardening tools, native seeds and plantings, and food for your volunteers. TLGV will also help publicize your event and work with you to recruit more volunteers. This program is proudly sponsored by Bank Hometown. [Click here for more information.](#)

### **Forestry Stewardship Funds for Landowners**

The Last Green Valley is part of the Southern New England Heritage Forest (SNEHF), a 1.49 million-acre unfragmented forest corridor stretching along the Connecticut and Rhode Island border to the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts. Bounded by more heavily urbanized areas, with more than one million nearby residents, the SNEHF has an astonishing 76% forest cover and offers one of the last viable wildlife corridors from southern to northern New England. The SNEHF is a green oasis and the last undeveloped region in the coastal sprawl from Boston to Washington, D.C.

The Last Green Valley was awarded \$2000 from the Connecticut Society for Women Environmental Professionals to be used towards stipends for non-profit partners who will deliver environmental education programs for TLGV's innovative, high quality traveling summer day camp experience for approximately 120 middle school youth.

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD)

### NOAA B-WET Grant, Project Oceanology Outdoor Learning Alliance

ECCD is partnering with Project Oceanology to implement projects with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's B-WET Program. The funding is to install outdoor learning spaces at 6-9 schools in distressed communities in eastern CT. It is a 3-year project and ECCD will assist to design and develop the outdoor learning spaces, including roofed pavilions, creating and installing educational signs, community gardens, rain gardens, pollinator habitat and more, depending upon the specific needs of the schools. The project also involves teaching students about nonpoint source pollution and its impact to the environment. During the first year of the project, Project Oceanology and ECCD are working with the Thames River Magnet School in Groton and the Charles Barrows STEM Academy in Windham.

Project update: ECCD and Project O have ordered kiosks for the outdoor classrooms at Barrows STEM Academy; with funding from Community Foundation of Eastern CT, ECCD is supplementing our work at Barrows by installing raised bed gardens, a compost bin and

educational signs. At Thames River Magnet School, an outdoor classroom is under construction including a roofed cedar pavilion in which to conduct classes.

#### Little River Agricultural Waste Storage and Management Project

With CWA §319 funding, ECCD, in collaboration with NRCS and Elm Farm in Woodstock, CT, has been constructing an agricultural waste storage and management facility. The roofed facility, a free-stall barn with a manure pit, manure scrape alleys and manure pumping capacity, is complete. Elm Farm moved its herd back into the barn, so stop by and check it out while enjoying refreshments from the farm store. The facility will protect water quality directly in May Brook, but also Roseland Lake and Little River. Little River provides drinking water to the Town of Putnam so this project will improve the quality of Putnam's drinking water and hopefully reduce water treatment costs for the residents of Putnam.

#### Green Schoolyards (CFEC)

With funding from Community Foundation of Eastern CT, ECCD is creating 2 green schoolyards in underserved communities in eastern CT, Putnam and Windham. At Barrows STEM Academy in Windham, ECCD is collaborating with teachers, students and volunteers to install cedar raised bed gardens for vegetable production, a composting system, a rainwater collection system and educational signage. At Putnam's Elementary School, ECCD staff, Putnam teachers and students in an after-school environmental club have been preparing the courtyard at the elementary school for the outdoor classroom, which will include a white board kiosk and log seating, a rain garden, pollinator habitat, a sensory garden, rain barrels and blue bird houses. This spring, Jean Pillo of ECCD, led the environmental club to conduct a Riffle Bioassessment of macroinvertebrates to determine the health of the Little River which runs adjacent to the school.

#### Niantic River Watershed 4-Town Bio-Infiltration, Filtration & Water Collection Project

With CWA §319 funding, ECCD is implementing a suite of best management practices (BMPs) in the four towns of the Niantic River watershed, Waterford, East Lyme, Salem and Montville. To date, 30 rain barrels have been distributed and 8 rain gardens have been installed. This spring and summer, additional rain gardens will be planted, 20 storm drain filters will be installed and 4-6 tree filters will be manufactured and installed.

Project update: ECCD staff has been assessing additional sites for installing rain gardens. Joan Lazar, a master gardener, has been designing the rain gardens and Heather Palardy, ECCD staff, has been creating graphics for the designs. ECCD staff and Waterford DPW staff installed the storm drain filters this spring.

#### Long Island Sound Futures Fund Awards

Long Island Sound Futures Fund announced its awards for its 2021 grants. ECCD has received funding for two proposals: 1) *Quanaduck Cove Multi-Residential Low Impact Development Demonstration Site* and 2) *From Rain Gardens to Riparian Buffers: Pollinator Pathways for Healthy Watersheds*. The Quanaduck Cove project involves developing a demonstration site for stormwater best management practices that can be installed at condominium complexes. At Quanaduck Cove, ECCD and the condominium association will install rain gardens, riparian buffers and downspout planters. Additionally, ECCD will develop a stormwater BMP guide for condominium associations which will be distributed throughout eastern CT.

The *Pollinator Pathways* involves installing rain gardens and riparian buffers that will double as pollinator pathways, providing important habitat for a variety of pollinators while treating contaminated stormwater.

Project update: ECCD received the executed contracts for both LISFF grants and planning has begun.

#### Lower Natchaug River Stormwater BMPs Project

ECCD received an executed contract from CT DEEP for this EPA CWA §319 grant. Planning is underway to install rain gardens and storm drain filters in the Lower Natchaug River watershed. Rain gardens will be installed primarily at Sunny Acres Park and Eastbrook Mall, both in Mansfield. The stormdrain filters will be installed in catch basins throughout a neighborhood west of East Brook Mall. The Town of Mansfield is a critical partner in this project.

Updates from CT DEEP:

TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) program – lake nutrient and bacteria-focused TMDL development is being planned for several water quality-impaired waters in the greater Thames River basin. This includes some preliminary meeting with MA DEP program staff on cross-state watersheds for TMDL development at Roseland Lake in the Little River sub-regional watershed, and the West Thompson Lake and upper Quinebaug River. As reported earlier, DEEP has completed its statewide lake nutrient TMDL with the first technical watershed summary appendix AND a watershed-based plan for the Bantam Lake watershed in northwest Connecticut – available online at Bantam Lake Watershed Projects <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Water/Watershed-Management/Bantam-Lake-Watershed-Projects> .

The State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) is making available the draft *State of Connecticut Integrated Water Quality Report (IWQR)* for public review and comment (Public Notice) from **June 6, 2022 to July 6, 2022**. Interested persons may obtain copies of the draft IWQR on the CT DEEP website at <https://www.ct.gov/deep/iwqr>. Hard copies of the IWQR may be requested by contacting [DEEP.IWQR@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.IWQR@ct.gov). The IWQR has been prepared by the CT DEEP to fulfill requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) under Sections 305(b) and 303(d). The final document will be submitted to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) following the Department’s consideration of comments received.

Written comments on the draft IWQR must be received by CT DEEP by **July 6, 2022** in order to be considered prior to submission of the final IWQR to US EPA. Electronic comments are preferred and should be directed electronically to Rebecca Jascot at [DEEP.IWQR@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.IWQR@ct.gov). ***Please use subject line “IWQR 2022 Comments.”*** Comments may also be submitted in paper form to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse, Water Planning and Management Division, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127, Attn: Rebecca Jascot.

A public informational meeting took place on June 15, 2022.

This core water quality assessment document covers numerous streams, rivers, lakes, ponds and coastal embayments and estuaries across the greater Thames River watershed. Assessments document waterbodies that are either meeting water quality criteria or falling short of full support of said uses, indicating in an “impaired” status that needs further action(s). This biennial report will include action categories for those impaired waters, a schedule for some of those actions, and a list of impaired waters now assessed as fully supporting one or more impaired uses – often the result of actions taken by partners and stakeholders such as those participating in Thames River Basin Partnership. The current 2020 (and previous) assessment report is available online at <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Water/Water-Quality/Water-Quality-305b-Report-to-Congress>. DEEP notification of the new assessment report will be distributed on the CT DEEP Water Quality listserv, which has a free registration; see at Water Quality 305b Report to Congress.

DEEP’s Watersheds program continues to administer a number of federal grant contracts, primarily with Eastern CT Conservation District (ECCD) in the greater Thames River and Southeast Coastal watersheds, to further implement priority recommendations of approved watershed-based plans. Current projects are located in the Little River sub-regional basin (Woodstock, dairy farm agricultural waste management), Niantic River sub-regional coastal basin (East Lyme/Montville/Salem/Waterford, urban stormwater retrofits), and the lower Natchaug River watershed (Mansfield, urban stormwater retrofits). Additional nonpoint source implementation projects are being planned in the French River watershed (Thompson, urban stormwater retrofits) and in the Baker Cove/Birch Plain Creek coastal watershed (Groton, urban stormwater retrofits). Pollutant load reductions are estimated and reported to DEEP and EPA for each of these projects. Additional technical assistance support by ECCD through Section 319 NPS grants administered by DEEP is providing coordination support for local watershed teams including in the Little River, Baker Cove, and Niantic River watersheds.

DEEP is reviewing the comprehensive Natchaug River Watershed Protection Plan and will be releasing the document for public review and comment soon before finalizing and submitting the final document for EPA approval. ECCD completed the implementation portion of this document in 2020.

DEEP is reviewing the revised Roseland Lake Nutrient Management Plan submitted by ECCD following the need for revised modeling calculations and modified plan recommendations.

DEEP is reviewing the Bolton Lakes Watershed Management Plan for 9-element Watershed-Based Plan consistency. The Plan was recently submitted by a local coalition of towns and stakeholder interests for this set of three impounded headwaters of the Hop River/Willimantic River watershed.

CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program announced the 25th grant round of the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA). Applications and appraisals should be submitted in an electronic format on/before September 30, 2022. For more information, visit their webpage <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Open-Space/Open-Space-and-Watershed-Land-Acquisition-Grant-Program>.



The Connecticut Bird Atlas field collection phase has been completed as of early 2022 and now the all-important data analyses and eventual reporting will commence.

Area greenway planning and projects continue throughout the greater Thames and Southeast Coastal watersheds. The town of Coventry has received a \$350,000 Recreational Trail grant to pursue detailed planning work for a long segment of the Nathan Hale Greenway; this segment connects the Nathan Hale Homestead through the State Forest and abutting town of Andover, with opportunities to further connect to the Hop River State Park Trail in Columbia.

The Connecticut Greenways Council approved applications for the establishment of the Groton Cross Town Greenway, designed to run east to west and connect the Town of Groton with the City of Groton, and the Tri Town Trail Greenway, based on a proposed trail system running north to south in Preston, Ledyard and Groton.

Audubon CT is now accepting Letters of Intent for the 2022 Grant Round of the [CT Wetland In Lieu Fee \(ILF\) Program](#). Eligible projects include wetland creation, restoration, enhancement, or preservation (wetland, upland, etc.). Review the guidelines carefully to learn more about the program, important due dates, and to obtain an application form. Download the ILF Letter at this [link](#). Direct any questions to Audubon's ILF Grant Program Manager Anthony Zemba via email at [azemba@landtechconsult.com](mailto:azemba@landtechconsult.com) or by phone at (203) 454-2110, ext. 190.

UConn CLEAR has new, finer spatial resolution land cover data available – down to 1 meter resolution! Access to data and interactive mapper available at UConn CLEAR website. <https://clear.uconn.edu/>

UConn CLEAR has been hosting an informative series of webinars in support of the newly passed CT state legislation enabling (not requiring) all towns to establish a stormwater authority. Archived webinars are available at <https://clear.uconn.edu/category/event/webinar/2022-webinar/> Beyond the successful efforts of the first such authority in established in New London, CT, there is currently a regional effort through the Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments working on a feasibility study with a select number of member towns as well. Stay tuned!

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service New London County office reported that it is working to issue contracts for all applicants that applied for the first round of cost-share projects. The second round of applications has closed and NRCS will only be able to fund some of the projects. In total, there were 45 applications with four of them being for larger manure composting projects.

The US Army Corp of Engineers celebrated with a ribbon cutting for the opening of the replacement Blain Bridge over the Quinebaug River on the West Thompson Flood Control Dam property in Thompson, CT.

The Connecticut Farmland Trust is partnering with the CT Department of Agriculture to protect a 500 acre dairy farm in Voluntown, CT. Bryon Gallup is the owner of Gallup Farm and is the last of 13 generations of his family to farm the land. The land will be protected in four pieces to

assure the land will be affordable for the next generation of farmers. So far, 300 of the 500 acres have been protected through this partnership.

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station requests the public to be on the lookout for Spotted Lantern Flies and, if noted, to please report them. For more information about Spotted Lantern Flies and how to report them, use this link <https://portal.ct.gov/CAES-SLF>.

The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut recently announced the recipients its Environmental Grant Awards. To review recent grants awarded by Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, visit <https://cfect.org/nonprofits/recent-grantees>. Congratulations to all our Partners and wishing you great success to complete these projects that will protect and improve the natural resources of the greater Thames River watershed area.

The United States Botanic Garden & American Public Gardens Association announced financial awards for the Urban Agriculture Resilience Program. These awards support public gardens and community partners across 19 states. Connecticut College was a recipient of one of these financial awards in partnership with FRESH New London.

The UCONN Avery Point Campus won second place in the Master Plan Category for the annual EPA Rain Works Challenge. For their project, they redesigned the university's Avery Point campus to mitigate the effects of stormwater pollution on the terrestrial and marine ecology of Long Island Sound.

### **News from Municipalities**

Governor Lamont Recently Announced \$7.5 Million in State Grants to Preserve 1,013 Acres of Open Space and Renew Green Spaces in Urban Areas.

#### Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grants

**Town:** Bozrah and Montville

**Project Name:** Glemboski-Ous Property

**Sponsor:** Town of Bozrah

**Grant:** \$300,000

**Total Area:** 160 acres

**Description:** This property, at the southwest corner of Bozrah (105 acres) and the northwest corner of Montville (55 acres) is mostly forested, containing scrub-shrub wetlands, large glacial erratics, vernal pools, wetlands, and stone cairns in the upper Trading Cove Brook Watershed. Trading Cove Brook is a Class A stream and cold-water habitat with gravel aquifers. The stream comprises a large portion of the boundary between this property and The Nature Conservancy's 338-acre Milo Light Preserve (MLP). This acquisition extends a conservation corridor anchored by MLP, creating a nearly 500-acre contiguous block of preserved forest in a prime cold-water stream corridor. This property and MLP will provide a cornerstone for future potential conservation activities in this corridor, primarily to the north and east. Several species in the Natural Diversity Database are known to inhabit the property. It contains several key habitats identified in DEEP's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan, and 7.7% of the land consists of Statewide

Important or Prime Farmland soils. Passive recreational activities include hiking, nature observation, photography, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hunting and fishing. There are well-defined, woods roads laying the framework for a trail system connected to MLP. Mountain biking and equestrian uses will be considered. The parking area will be on South Road. A stone-dust path accessible to persons with disabilities is contemplated.

**Town:** Willington

**Project Name:** Talmadge Estate

**Sponsor:** Town of Willington

**Grant:** \$81,250

**Total Area:** 16.17 acres

**Description:** This forested parcel has an address on Boston Turnpike, but its frontage is on the west side of Mason Road in southeastern Willington. It is southerly of the 28-acre Daniel W. Talmadge Conservation Tract (OSWA funded in 2005), westerly of the 138-acre Royal Knowlton Preserve (OSWA funded in 2008), and southeasterly of the 420-acre UConn Forest Block (has a 50-year conservation easement in place). Adding this parcel to this protected core forest expands it to more than 602 acres. The parcel contains wetlands, which drain toward a small, unnamed stream in the southern boundary. The parcel is close to the Fenton River, within its public water supply watershed, and Cold Water Supporting Drainage Basin, identified by DEEP. Approximately 75% of the parcel is within the Aquifer Protection area, which recharges the Fenton River and UConn's wellfields. The Fenton River is regionally important as a fishery designated as a Class 3 Wild Trout Management Area. Protecting this parcel and its tributary stream helps maintain forest cover, reduces stormwater runoff in the Watershed and Aquifer Protection Area, supports local and regional surface and ground water quality goals for public water supply protection, and maintains the health of the fishery. The town will add a public access trail on Mason Road, leading to the parcel's hilltop vista overlooking the wetland and forest below, and connect to the Talmadge Spur Trail. Two state-listed turtle species have been documented nearby.

#### Urban Green and Community Garden Grants

**City:** Groton

**Sponsor:** City of Groton

**Grant:** \$17,500

**Total Area:** 11,151 square feet

**Description:** This parcel is adjacent to Washington Park and Lake George and is home to the city's public service offices, Groton Utilities customer care, the police department, and an auditorium used for community programs. The city seeks to install rain gardens, plantings, and educational signage to enhance the site's stormwater management with green infrastructure and reduce pollutants entering local water bodies. The project will reduce impervious surface water run off to the stormwater drainage system, with approximately 293,610 gallons of water being treated annually through bio-filtration and 3.05-pounds of nitrogen, and .386 pounds of phosphorus will be prevented from entering local water bodies annually. Green infrastructure installments will complement the open spaces and ADA accessibility. The project will be a win in the city's action plan to address resiliency and serve as a highly visible educational resource.

**Town:** Killingly

**Sponsor:** Town of Killingly and Killingly Community Garden

**Grant:** \$2,382

**Total Area:** 4,314 square feet

**Description:** This garden, located at 79 Westfield Avenue, is the site of the old Killingly High School, soon to be the Killingly Community Center. There is a main garden, a pollinator garden, a greenhouse, and a garden next to the greenhouse. The gardens are accessible via paths of pavers. The food, herbs, and pollinator plants are cared for by the Killingly Community Garden members, a group of 5 to 7 dedicated volunteers who continually improve plantings, make improvements, and maintain the property. Volunteers meet on weekdays to weed the garden and harvest produce for the food pantry, and on the weekends they complete chores, such as mulching, planting, and building new structures. This grant will improve accessibility and infrastructure with additional pathway pavers, add trellises to support the plants and row covers to protect vulnerable crops and increase the yield contributed to local food banks. It will fund weeding tubs and sickles, pruning shears, and a lopper. It will add new food and pollinator plants, a bench and raised planters.

**Town:** Windham

**Sponsor:** Town of Windham and Garden Club of Windham (a.k.a. the Friends of the Garden on the Bridge)

**Grant:** \$60,371

**Total Area:** 0.38 acres

**Description:** The Garden on the Bridge is a historic town property that served as a major roadway into downtown Willimantic until Thread City Crossing (a.k.a. the Frog Bridge) was completed in 2001. The bridge connects Route 32 and Pleasant Street on the south side of the Willimantic River, to Main Street and Route 66 on the river's north side, providing access to downtown restaurants, shops, jobs, and public transportation. In 2001, the 1857 bridge was going to be dismantled but the residents came together to preserve its historic value. The improvements began in 2005 but over the years the collaboration weakened, and the bridge fell into disrepair. The Garden Club of Windham/Friends of the Garden on the Bridge came together in 2020 to improve the bridge and its access areas. Along with the city, they plan to improve the Main Street access area, which lacks shade and amenities, and the Pleasant Street access area's cracked sidewalks to provide places to sit and rest, to clear sight lines, and add lighting. This grant will enable the town and Garden Club of Windham to complete the Phase 1 Hillside work, which includes clearing of brush, re-grading, creating terraces, and building a small amphitheater, and begin Phase 2 improvements on the bridge, such as finishing the threadway and plaza. Over the next two to three years, they plan to replace lighting and seating, reinforce cracked planters, add a bike rack and trash barrel, refresh the plantings, and introduce public Wi-Fi. When major work is completed, they hope to add signs identifying the plantings, provide information about Willimantic's industrial history, and directional signs to the hiking and biking trails in the area.

Congratulations to all the Municipalities and the volunteers that have worked together to apply for this funding to improve your communities!

The Town of Woodstock Conservation Commission is continuing its [Pollinator Pathway](#) initiative for a third year. Lydia Pan, Executive Director of the *Mountain Laurel Chapter of Wild*

*Ones*, gave a live presentation on the Importance of Native Plants at the Woodstock Town Hall on April 6, 2022.

The Town of Groton Conservation Commission is initiating a Pollinator Pathway project. It is also promoting a moratorium on data centers located in the town.

### **Land Trust Updates**

Avalonia Land Conservancy, working in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, Aquarion Waters, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Town of Stonington, added the Copsps Brook Preserve to their land holding. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFbeoKTb2XQ>.

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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 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

Next meeting will be on July 19, 2022 at 9:30 AM Eastern Time, via Zoom. We request you register in advance for this meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYoceuvqTkrHt2m7VliBO5sNC7i4FAKN-5K>. The zoom link to the meeting will be sent to you automatically when you register.

If you are not already on the e-distribution list for this publication, sign on to our TRBP Distribution list <http://thamesriverbasinpartnership.org/subscribe>, or you can download previous versions of this quarterly publication from the TRBP website <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. Funding support for FY 22 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.