

Thames River Basin Partnership (TRBP) Plan of Work Month 2021- 2024



What is the Partnership?

The Partnership is a voluntary, cooperative effort to share resources and to develop a regional approach to natural resource protection.

Priority areas of concern for the basin are:

- Protect the region's agricultural and natural areas being threatened by land-use changes;
- Protect ground and surface water quantity and quality being threatened and degraded by contamination and nonpollutant causes;
- Protect the region's biodiversity; and
- Improve the coastal zone resource conditions.

The Partnership is a fluid organization. Any government agency, non-profit conservation organization, Native American Tribe, educational institution, faith-based organization, industry, municipality or individual with a focus on our key areas of concern in the greater Thames River watershed and surrounding areas is welcome to participate in the quarterly meetings and other events.

Goal 1: Accelerated and coordinated regional conservation.

- A. Promote the use of and updates to online natural resource mapping programs to help develop priorities for open space planning.
- B. Promote farmland preservation through agricultural conservation easement programs and CT Department of Agriculture Farmland Restoration Program.
- C. Promote working forest land conservation through the purchase of conservation easements and other open space land acquisition programs.
- D. Promote the planning for and development of connected corridors of open space utilizing greenways and/or blueways.

Goal 2: Improved water quality in impaired watersheds and anti-degradation measures for water quality in healthy watersheds.

- A. Support plan development that focuses on non-point source (NPS) pollution reduction, or healthy watershed preservation or other water quality/quantity conservation plans.
- B. Support the implementation of existing NPS reduction, healthy watershed or other conservation plans and committees formed to oversee the implementation of those plans.
- C. Provide assistance to farms that develop and implement Best Management Practices to reduce NPS contaminated runoff.
- D. Support projects that will reduce nutrient imports to existing nutrient rich watersheds.
- E. Support the CT DEEP Integrated Water Resources Management efforts as a focus to achieve water quality standards in Connecticut.

- F. Promote the Connecticut Green Plan.
- G. Support the efforts of the US EPA Region 1 led Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative to locate and understand potential harmful cyanobacteria blooms.
- H. Support studies of streamflow and retention of long-term stream gaging stations.
- I. Support the continuance of Eastern Connecticut Stormwater Collaborative and/or creation of stormwater authorities.
- J. Facilitate planning for, and protection of sustainable drinking water supplies and development of healthy watershed collaboratives.

Goal 3: A public concerned with, and invested in, the continued biodiversity and the long-term health of the region's ecosystems.

- A. Support citizen science monitoring programs including but not limited to The Last Green Valley Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program, CT Lake Watch, the Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative, the mid-winter eagle survey, and mammal monitoring.
- B. Participate in educational outreach on the subject of biodiversity considerations in regional planning.
- C. Promote the use of native plant landscaping, invasive species management and the impact of climate change on the landscape level.
- D. Promote the valuable ecosystem services of natural areas, including tidal marshes, inland wetlands, large forest blocks and stream continuity.
- E. Promote the Pollinator Pathway Initiative on the municipal and intermunicipal level.
- F. Promote and encourage fish passage initiatives, fish habitat restoration and compatible culvert replacement.
- G. Promote *The Plan to Restore Diadromous Fishes to the Shetucket River Watershed* and *Statewide Salmonid Action Plan*.
- H. Promote cold water stream habitat mapping and protection measures.

Goal 4: Improved coastal-zone water and habitat quality.

- A. Promote opportunities to reduce excess nutrients, sediment and indicator bacteria/pathogen input into the watershed for improved water quality and habitat conditions in the Thames River and Long Island Sound estuaries and coastal embayments.
- B. Support targeted water quality and habitat monitoring efforts in the coastal region.
- C. Promote the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, the Long Island Sound Study and similar plans.
- D. Promote community resilience and risk reduction through planning and the use of climate change and coastal resilience tools identified as implementation measures in the Governor's Council on Climate Change.
- E. Promote the use of living shoreline habitat techniques and monitoring protocols (dunes, coastal marshes, vegetation, etc.).
- F. Facilitate planning and local land-use response to climate change and sea level rise.

Goal 5: Increased educational opportunities for citizens and municipal leaders.

- A. Develop and conduct a Thames River "Floating Workshop" to address current resource issues related to the greater Thames River watershed. This annual event provides educational opportunities for municipal officials, local businesses, and concerned

citizens.

- B. Participate in public education and outreach regarding farm conservation and soil health programs, including support for the annual regional event, Celebrating Agriculture Day.
- C. Promote working forested land management and preservation through education and outreach to forest landowners.
- D. Promote the Sustainable CT program to increase participation of Thames watershed municipalities or elevating the designation of those currently enrolled.
- E. Provide education and outreach support for the ongoing and future Regional Conservation Partnership Programs.
- F. Promote and/or participate in volunteer water quality monitoring to help expand knowledge of current water quality conditions and long-term trends of the region's water quality.
- G. Facilitate sharing of water quality data including the WQX Web online tool.
- H. Promote the use of low-impact development, green stormwater infrastructure and riparian buffer enhancements to reduce water quality impacts of land development.
- I. Assist with education and outreach related to Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), Department of Transportation and other institutional MS4s.
- J. Promote land-use and natural resource training and advanced training for municipal officials.
- K. Promote statewide natural resource protection plans and other available data through presentations at TRBP meetings, social media posts and links on the TRBP website.

Goal 6: Increased visibility and presence of TRBP through organizational efforts and improved regional partnerships.

- A. Continue to enhance the Partnership's organizational structure in order to develop a sustainable and balanced workload, while achieving desired outcomes.
- B. Actively solicit input from First Nations people and Environmental Justice Communities in the formulation of regional conservation planning initiatives.
- C. Promote TRBP activities to the region, which shall include distribution of the TRBP Plan of Work, annual reports, fact sheets, workshop information, Partners in Action Report and social media posts.
- D. Maintain the <https://thamesriverbasinpartnership.org> website for the promotion of the organization and its goals, and to disseminate information to the membership.
- E. Continue and expand the TRBP outreach through social media to provide access to information on Partner activities between quarterly newsletter publications.
- F. Promote greater participation in TRBP quarterly meetings through engaging presentations.
- G. Continue to establish workgroups to focus on specific issues, including but not limited to website development/upkeep committee, outreach/social media committee, floating workshop planning committee, fundraising committee and/or others, to increase participation in Partnership management.
- H. Encourage Partnership representatives to participate in one or more work group/sub-committees, and to provide updates regularly on relevant Plan of Work objectives of their organization at quarterly meetings.
- I. Conduct long-range strategic planning to ensure sustainability of the partnership