



Thames River Basin Partnership Annual Report for FY 2022

The Thames River Basin Partnership met three times this fiscal year using a Zoom platform for virtual meetings due to the ongoing Covid Pandemic.

The October 2021 quarterly meeting was cancelled due to an expected lack of attendance.

January 2022: The special presentation featured Donna Merrill, a member of the Connecticut Pollinator Pathway Steering Committee gave an overview of the Connecticut Pollinator Pathway initiative. The Pollinator Pathway is a voluntary program for private landowners to take actions that will support native pollinators on their property. Multiple Thames watershed municipalities currently support the Pollinator Pathway initiative and are qualified to earn points for their Sustainable CT certification. There were 26 participants in the meeting.

April 2022: The special presentation featured presentation by the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District. They presented a summary of the final outcomes of an NRCS RCPP project entitled “Improving Soil Health and Water Quality in the Thames River Watershed”. TLGV was the lead partner in this project. This 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). Utilizing the RCPP Program, four collaborating partners implemented soil health conservation practices through EQIP on cropland in eastern Connecticut’s Thames River Watershed. Water quality monitoring and technical assistance were also included in the project. There were 17 people in attendance at the meeting.

July 2022: The special presentation featured Alicea Tyson, Sustainable and Resilient Community Extension Educator at CT Sea Grant. She spoke about the Sustainable and Resilient Community (SRC) Team and her focus in Eastern CT and collaborative opportunities she is working to establish. There were 11 people engaged in a lively facilitated discussion on asset mapping in region as part of her presentation.

After each quarterly meeting, a newsletter, the Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Report was compiled based on Partner reports at the meetings and other sources. These newsletters are available for download on the TRBP website.

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

The TRBP annual Floating Workshop was held on June 10, 2022 at the Plainfield Fish Hatchery. The theme of the workshop was a Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the CT Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Act, which preceded the passage of the Federal Clean Water Act by several months. Denise Savagau, President of the CT Association of Conservation Districts, give the keynote address, followed by a talk given by Chief Ranger Bill Reid of The Last Green Valley. Bill gave the history of the three water trails (Quinebaug, Willimantic and Shetucket Rivers) recognized as National Recreation Trails by the National Park Service, and how they came about following the 2009 Source to Sea adventures organized by TLGV. He also spoke on

TLGV's eagle monitoring efforts that have helped to document an increase in American Bald Eagles in CT and an increase in the known number of breeding pairs that have made their home in eastern Connecticut. Improved water quality in our rivers made it possible for both the increased use of our rivers for water-based recreation, and for the return of Bald Eagles. Jean Pillo, switching to her TLGV Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator hat, spoke on TLGV's water quality monitoring program and data that had been submitted to CT DEEP that has been used to document water quality in the greater Thames watershed area, followed by Eric Thomas of CT DEEP, who gave an overview on how to use a new app to determine water quality in Connecticut and an overview of the draft 2022 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring Report to Congress. Following our outdoor tent talks, the workshop transitioned to a tour of the Quinebaug Valley Fish Hatchery led by Bryan Decker of CT DEEP. After a light lunch, many of the workshop attendees participated in an optional paddle on the Quinebaug River. Prior to the paddle, the paddlers were read a piece on the history of the First Americans that lived in this area, the Nipmuc Tribe, and asked to think about how the land may have been stewarded then vs how it is currently managed. In total, there were 18 people involved in this year's Floating Workshop. A storymap of the day's events was generated in place of a post workshop report. To view the storymap, use the link provided in the chat.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/50b96f59ce6145958cf07c36d2b339ba>

The Thames River Basin Partnership website has been kept up to date, and between newsletters, partner updates were shared via the Thames River Basin Partnership Facebook page.

An updated TRBP three-year plan of work was prepared and approved by consensus. A conscious effort was made to foster inclusivity of First Nations people and Environmental Justice Communities in future Partnership efforts.

Report compiled by Jean Pillo, TRBP Coordinator



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