



# Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Fall 2022

Volume 63

The Thames River watershed includes the Five Mile, French, Moosup, Natchaug, Pachaug, Quinebaug, Shetucket, Willimantic, and Yantic Rivers and all their tributaries and nearby coastal areas of southeastern Connecticut. 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 this fall's special presentation, then you missed a presentation by Linda Colangelo, Education and Communications Coordinator for the Northeast District Department of Health, and Coordinator for the HealthQuest Northeast CT health and wellness coalition. Multiple community partners have been working together to reduce the risk of chronic illness by creating and improving places for physical activity. Work includes enhancing trails and greenways infrastructure, improving equitable access to trails and on trails, and increasing awareness of multi-use trails. HealthQuest is also working with Della M. Corcoran, MD, Kimberly Bradley at DEEP and Kristen Bellantuono with No Child Left Behind to further develop an Outdoor RX CT concept, a program that empowers physicians to start "social prescribing" – referring patients to local, non-clinical resources such as those found in nature - to benefit physical/mental health and overall well-being. This presentation focused primarily on the health benefits of being outdoors in the natural resources our TRBP partners work so hard to conserve.

The presentation, filled with important statistics for grant writers, was recorded and is available to view at this link <https://youtu.be/K4dRBrprFMo>

## TRBP Updates

The TRBP Coordinator position is funded in part by The Last Green Valley. The funding for the TRBP Coordinator through a cooperative agreement with Eastern Connecticut Conservation District for FY 23 beginning on October 1 has been renewed for an additional year.

A draft TRBP annual report has been prepared and submitted to TLGV for review. Once approved, the TRBP Annual Report will be uploaded to the TRBP website.

Planning for the 2023 Thames River Basin Partnership Floating Workshop traditionally held in June has been initiated. A return to the Thames mainstem is being considered. Grant funding will be required to subsidize the cost of holding the workshop on the Project Oceanology Envirolab in June 2023. The theme for the workshop has not been finalized. Restoration of fish passage in the Thames River watershed was one suggested theme. A second potential theme is coastal resiliency. Please forward potential funding suggestions or workshop ideas to [Jean.Pillo@comcast.net](mailto:Jean.Pillo@comcast.net).

Project Oceanology celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding at an impressive gala at Bradford House on the UCONN Avery Point Campus. Project Oceanology founder (and founding member/partner of TRBP) Mickey Weiss was honored at the event. On behalf of TRBP, a Certificate of Appreciation to Mickey and a public “thank you” to Project Oceanology were presented for their support of our organization over the past 22 years.

Social media update: The TRBP FB page has increased from 266 followers to 280. That number can be increased if our FB followers continue to share posts so more people are exposed to the content. The FB page remains active through the sharing of posts by partnering organizations and random other items I believe 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 me the information via email in a cut and paste format. Pictures are encouraged.

### **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.

Funding for the TLGV RCPP, *Improving Soil Health and Water Quality In the Thames River Watershed*, expired on June 25, 2021. This project is now complete. 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 collaborated 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: Funding for this RCPP program expired on September 30, 2022. A final project impact presentation is being planned for 2023.

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 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: This is the last year of the Forest Management Plan (FMP) and Bird Habitat Assessment (BHA) program with SNEHF NRCP project. Below is the status of those plans:

- CT – 51 landowners with FMP/BHA with a total of 2,941 acres and 2,219 acres in completed plans
- MA – 71 FMP/BHA with a total of 4,786 acres and 4,394 in completed plans
- RI – 31 FMP/BHA with total of 1,135 acres and 876 acres in completed plans.

Total for all three states is 153 FMP/BHA with total of 8,872 acres and 7,489 in completed plans. The remainder are slated to be completed by spring of 2023.

The project is moving to completion of the Healthy Forest Reserve Conservation Easements on 2 properties in CT totaling 202 acres in Mansfield and 181 contiguous acres in Hampton/Scotland/Chaplin/Windham. The 181 acres are all owned by the same family/trust and stretch between the 4 towns. We expect to complete the easement deeds in 2023.

It is also moving to completion the Healthy Forest Reserve Easements on properties in MA and RI with approximately 400 acres in MA and 200 acres in RI.

The forestry RCPP program has been extended until September 2023.

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**

### **The Last Green Valley (TLGV)**

Walktober 2022 featured over 200 events in The Last Green Valley, including hikes, paddles, bike rides, horseback rides and historical talks.

TLGV volunteers conducted a High-Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP) assessment on a property owned by Joshua's Trust.

Looking ahead to the 2023 TLGV annual meeting, a land trust theme is being developed. Please stay tuned for further developments.

In the year 2024, it will be 15 years since the 2009 TLGV Source to Sea events that included a series of paddles from the top of the Thames watershed in Massachusetts to Avery Point in Groton. Ideas are in the development stage to host a 15 Year Anniversary Source to Sea (potentially Re-Source to Sea?) including a series of landside river festivals and waterside educational programs and paddles sponsored by partnering organizations.

### **TLGV Water Quality Monitoring Program**

TLGV volunteers completed a 10-week pathogen monitoring trackdown program at the cartop boat launches along Quinebaug River. An additional sampling location in Little River at Murphy Park in Putnam was also included in this study. The data has been uploaded to the WQX data sharing site and is available to anyone for download. This data will also be shared with CT DEEP for the development of the 2024 Integrated Water Quality Report.

TLGV participates in the EPA's Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative. Under this program, trained volunteers collect cyanobacteria data either visually through the BloomWatch Program, or physically through the Cyanoscope project or chemically through the Cyanomonitoring program. Avery Pond in Preston was involved in all three protocols. In addition to these protocols, TLGV, in coordination with CT DEEP, developed a list of 11 potential sampling locations to collect and submit cyanobacteria bloom surface scum samples to ship to the EPA lab in Chelmsford, MA. These samples will be assessed for a suite of algal toxins that potentially are naturally produced as a by-product of cyanobacteria metabolism. The data collected by CMC participants will assist US EPA to understand what conditions contribute to the production of algal toxins. All 11 sample sites were visually monitored. Three sites experienced potential harmful algal blooms and were sampled, including Avery Pond in Preston, West Thompson Lake in Thompson and Roseland Lake in Woodstock. The West Thompson Lake and Roseland Lake sampling compliments other data being collected for CT DEEP to develop nutrient budgets for those lakes.

The TLGV Volunteer Stream Temperature Monitoring program focused on ten headwater streams in eastern CT. HOBO data loggers were installed in those streams before the start of the summer monitoring season on June 1 and pulled from the streams in September. Summer quality control checks discovered that three of the ten streams monitored dried up during the severe drought and those loggers were pulled early. The purpose of this monitoring is to seek out and document cold water stream habitat. The critical summer metrics from June 1 – August 31 will be compiled over the winter.

TLGV's water quality monitoring program is currently focused on the Riffle Bioassessments for Volunteers program. This program uses the aquatic larval forms of insects including stoneflies and certain mayflies and caddisflies as water quality indicators in wadable streams. The program continued through November 30. A goal of collecting ten samples to be submitted to CT DEEP was accomplished despite the severe drought impacting streamflow in summer.

This year, a new water quality monitoring volunteer initiative is being promoted for winter monitoring. In cooperation with the Izaak Walton League, a simple monitoring initiative known as Salt Watch raises awareness about chloride pollution and helps volunteers across the country submit the results of water quality tests to a national database. While this program primarily focuses on chloride concentration in streams in winter, CT DEEP has requested TLGV volunteers also collect summer data when stream levels are low and more influenced by groundwater than surface runoff. To learn more about this initiative, visit <https://www.iwla.org/water/stream-monitoring/salt-watch> or email [Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net](mailto:Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net).

#### **Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG)**

SCCOG has hired Kyle Casiglio as a planner. He has been tasked with developing a regional open space plan for the SCCOG municipalities.

#### **The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD)**

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

With CWA §319 funding, ECCD completed implementation of a suite of best management practices (BMPs) in the four towns of the Niantic River watershed including Waterford, East Lyme, Salem and Montville. 20 storm drain filters were installed east of the Niantic River in Waterford. Six tree well filters were installed, 4 in East Lyme and 2 in Waterford, 13 rain gardens were installed, and 30 rain barrels were distributed to residents throughout the Niantic River watershed. The project also included development and installation of educational signage regarding storm drain filters and rain gardens. This project wrapped up in September 2022.

##### Little River Agriculture Waste Storage Project

A free stall barn with covered manure storage in East Woodstock has been completed. The barn includes an outdoor seating area with picnic tables that ECCD used for a monthly board meeting and picnic, as well as a Little River Healthy Watershed Coalition meeting. The front stalls in the barn are reserved for heifer calves on the right and expectant mothers on the left. The public is welcome to visit the barn and meet the cows. The new barn at Elm Farm is located at 324 Woodstock Rd, Woodstock, CT.

##### Lower Natchaug River Stormwater BMPs Project

ECCD completed a contract from CT DEEP for this EPA CWA §319 grant. Two demonstration rain gardens were installed at Sunny Acres Park in Mansfield. The park is upslope of Conantville Brook, a stream not meeting Connecticut Water Quality Standards. Twelve storm drain filters were installed in a neighborhood where the system outlets to Conantville Brook at the East Brook Mall. An enhanced streamside vegetative (riparian) buffer was planted at the Eastbrook Mall. The Town of Mansfield was an important partner in the project and was recognized by ECCD for its Exceptional Project Support at ECCD's annual meeting in November.

#### Long Island Sound Futures Fund Awarded

ECCD has initiated two new projects funded by separate grants from Long Island Sound Futures Fund: 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 are coordinating on the installation of rain gardens, enhancement of the vegetated riparian buffer along a pond that drains into the cove, and downspout planters to intercept and filter roof drainage prior to discharging into the pond. Students from Ella T. Grasso Technical and Vocational School will be involved in designing and building the stormwater planters at the complex. Additionally, ECCD will develop a stormwater BMP guide for condominium associations which will be distributed throughout eastern CT.

The *Pollinator Pathways for Healthy Watersheds* project involves installing rain gardens and riparian buffers that will double as pollinator habitat along locally designated priority pathways, providing important habitat for a variety of pollinators while intercepting and treating contaminated stormwater. Several rain gardens and a riparian buffer along Baker Cove have been installed already, and more will follow in 2023.

#### The Little River Watershed Based Plan Update

The Little River Watershed Based Plan update is being funded by a Sourcewater Grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service through Connecticut Soil and Water Council, with supplemental funding from a University of Connecticut Regional Conservation Partnership Project grant. The plan is focused on developing a list of water quality improvement projects agreeable to local agribusinesses that are fundable through Farm Bill programs. Once complete, NRCS can designate the Little River watershed as a National Water Quality Initiative watershed with a special pool of funding so that agribusinesses won't need to compete at the State level for funding to complete these projects. ECCD staff are working with NRCS staff to assure that conservation practices that will be supported by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 will be included in the final document. Outreach will continue to local farmers to determine what types of projects will match their nutrient management goals.

#### West Thompson Lake Water Quality Study

Under a cooperative agreement with CT DEEP and USGS, ECCD is managing a Clean Water Act section 604B grant from CT DEEP for water quality monitoring in West Thompson Lake and Quinebaug River. USGS staff has conducted water quality monitoring to obtain data from which CT DEEP will develop a nutrient budget for West Thompson Lake. ECCD is responsible

for grant reporting and data management. Quinebaug River upstream of West Thompson Lake receives wastewater discharge from 3 sewage treatment plants and the lake is impounded by a flood control dam. This is a one-season monitoring project. Prior to the early September rains, West Thompson Lake was experiencing historically low water levels as a result of extreme drought conditions in August and experienced a potentially harmful algal bloom in late summer.

#### 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 supporting installation of outdoor learning spaces at grade schools in distressed communities in eastern CT. It is a 3-year project. In the first year, ECCD assisted with the design of outdoor learning spaces at Thames River Magnet School in Groton and at Barrows Stem Academy in Windham. In addition to installing a roofed pavilion at Thames River Magnet School and outdoor white board kiosks at Barrows STEM Academy, the project also involved teaching students about nonpoint source pollution and its impact on the environment. In 2023, Mahan Elementary School in Norwich and Catherine Kolnaski STEAM Magnet School in Groton will be the focus of attention.

#### **Project Oceanology**

As previously mentioned, Project O celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in style at a gala held in the Bradford House at the UCONN Avery Point campus. Congratulations Project O for achieving this milestone and for all the educational opportunities you offer to citizens throughout the region.

In addition to partnering with ECCD on the creation of outdoor classroom learning environments, Project O staff also conduct indoor classroom programs.

With funding provided by New London Water Authority Community Fund, Project O staff is conducting a program with the New London School System on the Impacts of Wastewater on Water Quality in Thames River. Students examine Project Oceanology's water quality dataset and make graphs showing geographic and seasonal variation in nutrient concentrations and other water quality parameters. Funding for New London Water Authority Community Fund has been provided in part by Veolia Water.

Project O has also developed a *Kelp in the Classroom* program supported by an AXA-XL Insurance Company grant. Marine seaweed is of great importance to coastal and nearshore environments. Preserving plants can be used for species identification and studying taxonomic relationships between plants, as well as to determine geographic variations and to support studies of their tissues and structure. Seaweed pressing is also practiced as a form of art. In this lesson, students learn about seaweed anatomy and classification as they collect, identify and preserve seaweed specimens.

Project O challenges students to think about products they can use and actions they can take in their households to live sustainably. Students learn about everyday products that they might use at home that contain microplastics and similar products they can use that are plastic free. They also learn about products that prevent microfibers from getting into the environment like the

Cora Ball which grabs microfibers from laundry and prevents it from being released into the environment.

Project O offers a variety of lab or in school programs for students of all grade levels. You can learn more about its programing at this link. <https://www.oceanology.org/educational-programs-labs>

### **CT DEEP Watersheds Program**

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is now accepting proposals for fiscal year 2023 Clean Water Act Section 319 grants. Section 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act (Section 319) is a Federal program to control nonpoint sources (NPS) of water pollution. Connecticut receives funds from EPA for Section 319 grants that can be passed onto communities, local conservation groups, and other organizations for NPS implementation projects, plans, and statewide NPS management efforts. Proposals may be submitted by any interested public or private organization and must be received by February 9, 2023. A link to the Request for Proposals can be accessed at <http://www.ct.gov/deep/nps>. Please contact the DEEP Watershed Program at [deep.watershed@ct.gov](mailto:deep.watershed@ct.gov) with any questions.

Recently completed Nonpoint Source grant-funded contract projects within the greater Thames River and southeast coastal watersheds include:

- ECCD grantee -for medium dairy farm agricultural waste management project in Woodstock. Completed September 30, 2022
- ECCD grantee – for urban stormwater management and multiple best management practices (BMPs) for Lower Natchaug River watershed, southeast Mansfield. Completed September 30, 2022
- ECCD grantee – for urban stormwater management and multiple best management practices (BMPs) for Niantic 4-town watershed, East Lyme, Montville, Salem and Waterford. Completed September 30, 2022

CT DEEP has reviewed comments and finalized the 2022 *State of Connecticut Integrated Water Quality Report (IWQR)*. <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Water/Water-Quality/Water-Quality-305b-Report-to-Congress>.

Still pending: CT 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.

Still pending: CT 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 conducted dye testing on the Scotland Dam on October 17 looking for signs of leakage. Results are pending.



### **Trout Unlimited Thames Valley Chapter**

A mini slide show of a Fenton River streambank restoration project was presented at the TRBP meeting. This project was completed in partnership with Joshua's Trust. The purpose of the project was to address stream bank erosion along Fenton River upstream of the Gurleyville Grist Mill in Mansfield. UCONN Civil Engineering students originally developed the project plan to include hardscaping along the bank. US Army Corp of Engineers discourages hardscaping for streambank restoration projects. Help was requested from Trout Unlimited National, which recommended installing a brush mat along the stream bank, anchored in place and back-filled with discarded Christmas trees. A grip hoist was used to manually pull large felled trees into position. The trees were anchored in place with boulders. After Christmas, discarded evergreen trees will be anchored into place behind the brush mat. The trees will capture sand and gravel naturally and fill in the areas behind the logs along the bank.

The Papermill Dam fishway design project funded by Long Island Sound Futures Fund is at the Phase 1 65% design completion stage. The dam has developed structural issues and future actions are pending DEEP feedback.

### **MASS DEP**

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has available for public review and comment the DRAFT Massachusetts 2022 Integrated List of Waters ("Integrated Report"), which represents the most recent update on the status of Massachusetts' surface waters. The report is submitted to United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) every two years in fulfillment of the reporting requirements of sections 305(b) (Summary of Water Quality Report) and 303(d) (List of Impaired Waters) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Section 303(d) of the CWA requires states to identify those waterbodies that are not expected to meet surface water quality standards after the implementation of technology-based controls and to prioritize and schedule them for the development of a total maximum daily load (TMDL). A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant that may be introduced into a waterbody and still ensure attainment and maintenance of water quality standards. The development of the 303(d) List (Category 5 of the Integrated Report) includes a public review and comment process, and the final version of the list must be formally approved by EPA.

The 2022 Integrated Report is available for review and comment here (<https://www.mass.gov/lists/integrated-lists-of-waters-related-reports>). Written comments on the Draft 2022 Integrated Report should be submitted no later than 5:00 PM on December 23, 2022 via email (preferred) to [richard.f.chase@mass.gov](mailto:richard.f.chase@mass.gov) or mailed to:

Richard F. Chase  
MassDEP-Bureau of Water Resources  
Watershed Planning Program  
8 New Bond Street  
Worcester, MA 01606

For MassDEP's 2022 Integrated Report, quality-controlled data submitted to DEP prior to the pre-established deadline of 1/15/2021 was considered, relative to the watersheds that were

assessed. Data submitted after the 1/15/2021 deadline will not be considered for the 2022 Integrated Report but will be reviewed and considered in a subsequent cycle, dependent on the workloads planned for future assessment cycles.

### **UCONN Extension/Center for Landuse Education and Research (CLEAR) and Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) updates**

Connecticut Trail Finder <https://www.cttrailfinder.com/> is a free, interactive mapping site designed to help Connecticut residents and visitors find publicly accessible hiking, walking, snowshoeing, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and paddling trails across the state. It is a critical resource for trail managers, allowing them to provide the public with up-to-date, comprehensive information about their trails through individual trail listings that allow users to view a digital trail map, get essential information, submit trip comments and photos, and connect with other users. Trails must be uploaded to the map by trail managers using Avenza Maps, a free mapping solution for iOS and Android devices. To date, 215 trails have been uploaded.

A new online *Local Watershed Assessment Tool* that uses high resolution land cover to assess stream health for over 4300 local watersheds in Connecticut is available. The tool includes a scenario builder where you can estimate the impact of future land cover changes. To access the tool, use this link: <https://experience.arcgis.com/template/68b1ebdd244a4f1a800a15af0e600307>

### **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

At the end of the Federal fiscal year, the New London County NRCS office had 53 contracts for conservation practices totaling \$3.8 million. The Inflation Reduction Act may increase the funding for some contracts. These projects include forestry, wildlife habitat improvement, soil health and manure storage. Multiple projects are near completion. Most forestry projects will be completed in winter. The deadline for applying for programs for fiscal year 2023 was October 21, 2022.

NRCS' FY2023 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is perfect for agricultural producers who want to continue to farm, or forest landowners wanting to manage their forestland, but want to use less resources and have less of an effect on the land. Some of the benefits include increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife population improvements, and better resilience to weather extremes.

Through CSP, NRCS helps private landowners build their business while implementing conservation practices that help ensure the sustainability of their entire operation. Agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities such as cover crops, ecologically-based pest management, buffer strips, and pollinator and beneficial insect habitat – all while maintaining active agricultural production on their land. CSP also encourages the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques such as precision agriculture applications, on-site carbon storage and planting for high carbon sequestration rates, and new soil amendments to improve water quality.

The program helps producers better evaluate conservation options and benefits to their operations, as well as to our natural resources. Methods and software for evaluating applications

help producers see why they are – or are not – meeting stewardship thresholds and allow them to pick practices that work for their objectives. These tools also enable them to see potential payment scenarios for conservation early in the process.

While applications for CSP are accepted year-round, to be considered for FY2023 funds they must be received by December 16, 2022. Use this [link](#) for more information.

### **Save the River - Save the Hills**

With 75% of the project funds supplied by CT DEEP, STR- STH was able to purchase a new pumpout boat to be used at East Lyme and Waterford marinas. This pumpout boat will prevent onboard sewage from being discharged into the waters of Long Island Sound and Niantic River coastal areas.

### **The Association of Clean Water Agencies**

October 18, 2022 was the 50 year anniversary of the Federal Clean Water Act. The Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA) produced a StoryMap, 50 Years of the Clean Water Act (arcgis.com), to commemorate the occasion.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7d0f08ced7114279a76ac501d30ef3b7>

### **Save the Sound**

Save the Sound published their biannual [Long Island Sound Report Card](#). Once again, eastern Long Island Sound received an A+ grade, but two of the coves being monitored by the Unified Water Study received lower marks. The eastern end of Long Island Sound benefits from better tidal flushing from the Atlantic Ocean.

### **News from Municipalities**

#### **Important news for our Municipal Partners - Long Island Sound Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program**

With funding from US EPA through Long Island Sound Study (LISS), New York Sea Grant (NYSG) and Connecticut Sea Grant (CTSG) announce a funding to municipalities and community organizations to facilitate the hiring of grant writers to assist with the development of grant applications for sustainability and resiliency focused projects that will impact communities within or partially within the Long Island Sound Coastal boundary (within Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk counties, Western Connecticut, and Eastern Connecticut). See Sustainable and Resilient Communities webpage for regions.

<https://longislandsoundstudy.net/our-vision-and-plan/sustainable-and-resilient-communities/>

The intent of the Long Island Sound Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program is to reduce staffing and capacity barriers that municipalities and community organizations may face when applying for competitive funding opportunities, help communities develop successful sustainable and resilience focused project grant applications, and for municipalities and community organizations to develop capacity for navigating the funding landscape.

Funding is to be awarded in a range of \$5,000- \$9,950 per application directly to the applicant's selected grant writing support contractor on a cost reimbursable basis. Match will not be required.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all available funding is allocated, which may be no later than September 30th, 2023.

CT Applicant Informational Webinar - December 13th, 2022 2:00 - 3:00 pm  
Register for the Webex Webinar by following the registration [link](#).

## Land Trust Updates

**Wyndham Land Trust** acquired a critical 91-acre property on the Bull Hill ridgeline that connects with existing lots they own and will allow them to extend their trail system on Bull Hill. The Bull Hill ridgeline is on the Thompson/Woodstock border.

**Avalonia Land Conservancy** received its Land Trust Alliance national accreditation renewal in August, and closed on the 224-acre Copps Brook property in May/June.

Two major upcoming initiatives for ALC are the acquisition of a 669-acre preserve in Montville/Salem and the merger of East Lyme Land Trust with Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., which are proceeding judiciously.

The Montville property will be the largest single conservation effort for Avalonia since the 443-acre Browning Conservation Easement in Norwich/Sprague. The East Lyme merger will bring amazing wetlands under Avalonia stewardship.

In partnership with the Mansfield School System, **Joshua's Trust** is coordinating special programming on water resources. The new Mansfield Elementary School building will be a net zero school. At Barrows STEM Academy, a pollinator garden and programming at one of its nearby properties will be integrated into programming.

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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 January 17, 2023 at 9:30 AM Eastern Time, via Zoom.

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 23 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.