



# Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Winter 2024

Volume 68

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](#) 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 winter's special presentation, you missed a presentation by Lois Bruinooge, Executive Director of The Last Green Valley. TLGV was the lead partner in a USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service funded multi-state, multi-partner Regional Conservation Partnership Project known as the Southern New England Heritage Forest RCPP. This \$6 million initiative was focused on keeping forests as forests and moving landowners down the conservation pipeline.

One approach was to work with forest landowners to develop forest management plans with bird habitat assessments. At the conclusion of the project, almost 9000 acres of forested land on 142 properties had a forest management plan.

A second project strategy was to steer eligible forest landowners to work with NRCS to make improvements on their forest land. At the conclusion of the project, there were a total of 24 contracts with NRCS on a total of 953 acres of forest land to fund NRCS forest management practices.

The third part of the project was focused on permanent woodland protection using the NRCS Healthy Forest Reserve Program. The final tally was 8 properties representing 901 acres preserved or on the road to being permanently preserved in the 3-state project area.

Partners involved in the project contributed \$7.6 million of project match to make the total project value over \$13 million. Other project benefits included strengthening of old partnerships. New partnerships were formed. In Connecticut, 821 acres of forested land that were not funded for conservation as part of the RCPP initiative due to limited funding were bundled together into a Forest Legacy Program application, which has been approved. A new land trust advancement initiative started up. A [conservation mapping](#) initiative showing the most current protected open space was created, and in Rhode Island, a new RCPP project was funded.

To view Lois' presentation, use this link. <https://youtu.be/PHUFw2F2nN0>

## **TRBP Updates**

The TRBP Plan of Work is set to expire in 2024. A Plan of Work committee will be reviewing and revising the Plan of Work, which will continue to reflect the changing dynamics of the environment and the evolving conservation themes that reflect our partners' missions. In Fall 2023, with funding from NRCS, CT Council On Soil and Water Conservation and CT Association of Conservation Districts, collaborating with all 5 Conservation Districts in the state, held a series of facilitated listening events, designated by NRCS as "local working groups (LWG)". LWGs convened to hear from locals about local natural resource concerns. Concerns raised at the LWG on November 7<sup>th</sup>, hosted by CT National Estuarine Research Reserve at Avery Point, will inform updates to TRBP's Plan of Work. At the January meeting, members of TRBP recommended completing the 2024 – 2027 draft plan of work prior to the April 2024 TRBP meeting. The TRBP coordinator will distribute the current [Plan of Work](#) to partners, along with a survey. The survey will be used to assess which action items their organization are currently focused on and which, if any, are obsolete. The committee will incorporate suggestions from the survey into the workplan, adding new focus areas or revising others, as respondents to the survey indicate. Responses will be requested by February 14, 2024 and a steering committee will be formed to update the Plan of Work prior to TRBP's April quarterly meeting.

Planning for the 2024 TRBP [Floating Workshop](#) is underway. One suggestion raised at the January meeting is to highlight water quality concerns in Wequetequock Cove by teaming with Wequetequock Clean Water Coalition (WCWC) to celebrate the cove at a festival. Coalition members have coalesced around common concerns and are developing a workplan to implement recommendations from *Anguilla Brook/Inner Wequetequock Cove Watershed Based Plan*. WCWC is also pursuing resources to increase the size of the culvert beneath the railroad bridge transversing the cove, as well as to bring sewer lines to the area and extend public water supplies to residents around Wequetequock. If held at Wequetequock, the floating workshop will feature a community paddle on the cove. TRBP will pursue options so non-paddling participants can experience the treasures of the cove as well. Combining resources and efforts with WCWC and other organizations to host the festival will assure its success and amplify its impact. The suggestion was discussed but no conclusion reached, so other Floating Workshop suggestions can be sent to [Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net](mailto:Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net).

[FY 2023 TRBP Annual Report](#) was submitted to TLGV and posted to the TRBP website.

TRBP social media was kept active showcasing partner activities that are compatible with the TRBP Plan of Work. Check out what our partners have been up to at this [FaceBook link](#).

If any of our partnering organizations wish to have their message shared on the TRBP Facebook page, please send the information via email to Jean.Pillo@Comcast.net in a “cut and paste” format. Pictures are encouraged.

Finally, Eric Thomas of CT DEEP has been the longest-standing representative serving on TRBP. He will be retiring on February 1st. It is uncertain at this time whether CT DEEP will assign a new representative. Participation in TRBP by a DEEP representative has been very beneficial to the partnership. The TRBP Coordinator has sent a letter to DEEP requesting the agency to assign a new representative to the Partnership. TRBP partners may consider preparing their own letters of support for this request. Letters should be addressed to [Erik.Bedan@CT.gov](mailto:Erik.Bedan@CT.gov).

## **Partner Reports**

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

January is Eagle Month at The Last Green Valley. In addition to programming focused on American Bald Eagles, on January 6, 2024 TLGV volunteers also participated in the Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey, in partnership with CT DEEP. Nationally, US Army Corps of Engineers coordinates the survey. In 2024, 33 TLGV volunteers surveyed 18 river locations (moving water) and 17 Pond/Lake locations (flat water). A total of 31 eagles were counted, including 23 adults, 7 juveniles and 1 unknown.

The Last Green Valley Water Advisory Committee hosted Greg Bugbee of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station to present on the spread of Connecticut River *Hydrilla*, an aggressive aquatic species which is known to have spread to 6 locations, including Amos Lake in Preston.

TLGV staff are currently drafting the spring edition of *In Touch* magazine which will highlight owls.

TLGV [Spring Outdoors](#) events will be held from March 19 to June 20, 2024. If your organization would like to host an event, use this [link](#) to register. Event registrations are due by February 5, 2024. Please contact [Fran@tlgv.org](mailto:Fran@tlgv.org) with any questions.

Once again, TLGV will be sponsoring Clean Up/Green Up projects. The 2024 flyer with details is available [here](#).

### **The Last Green Valley Water Quality Monitoring Program Update**

This fall, volunteers with The Last Green Valley completed 8 stream surveys using CT DEEP's protocol for Riffle Bioassessment for Volunteers (RBV). The RBV protocol uses pollution sensitive underwater bugs as water quality indicators. A stream with 4 or more types of specific pollution-sensitive bugs meets the CT water quality standards for aquatic habitat. The samples were submitted to CT DEEP for validation by an aquatic entomologist. The final results are pending review of the samples.

### **Eastern Connecticut Conservation District**

Green Schoolyard v2.0 - ECCD staff are planning a green schoolyard project at Jennings School in New London. Ambassadors for the school's Global Connections Initiative (staff and students) will be developing a green schoolyard action plan. Actions from the plan will be selected for implementation. Funded in part by Community Foundation of Eastern CT. CFEC funding is being combined with a LISFF grant, "Urban Waters and Underserved Populations."

Urban Waters and Underserved Populations is a joint project involving ECCD, and CT's other four conservation districts. ECCD will be combining funding for this project in tandem with Green Schoolyard v2.0 grant. An Enviroscape has been purchased. This project may also include implementing a small project at Ocean Beach Park (New London). Funded by Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

From Rain Gardens to Riparian Buffers – work on installing rain gardens and riparian buffers throughout eastern CT along the coast from Groton to Stonington and along the tri-town trail from Groton to Preston has been paused for the winter. Rain gardens have been installed in Stonington, Groton and Ledyard. A riparian buffer is planned in Ledyard at a soon to be installed boat launch at Lantern Hill Valley Park. Riparian buffers have been installed in Groton and Stonington. Funded by Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

Water Quality Data W. Thompson Lake – ECCD is assisting USGS by managing data for water quality monitoring at West Thompson Lake. The final data from the 2022 season has been formatted for sharing with DEEP and is pending completion of final data transfer quality control measures. ECCD will likely assist again next season for another year of sampling. Funded by CTDEEP with 604b funding.

Wequetequock Clean Water Coalition – With funding from a Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund grant, ECCD is assisting a locally led coalition of businesses and residents who are collaborating with several conservation organizations to address water quality issues outlined in the Anguilla Brook/Inner Wequetequock Cove Watershed Plan. The watershed is in Stonington and North Stonington. The tidal cove of Little Narragansett Bay scored a water quality grade of D- in the most recent Save the Sound Long Island Sound Report Card. The Coalition will be working to implement the green infrastructure recommendations in the Plan, as well as develop a robust Community Engagement strategy to involve the local community in watershed-friendly landscape alternatives. The local community near the cove is also concerned with groundwater quality. Since this coastal village is not currently connected to public water and sewer, ECCD facilitated meetings between the local community and the CT Department of Health Drinking Water Division and the CT DEEP Wastewater Division. The coalition also requested that US Fish and Wildlife Service assess the culvert beneath the Amtrack bridge that restricts tidal flushing of the cove. USFWS approved the request and is currently working with partners to begin data collection. Project partners include Clean up Sound and Harbors (CUSH), Save the Sound, Save the Bay, Project Oceanology, Avalonia Land Conservancy and others.

Quanaduck Cove - Funded by a Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant, ECCD is working with the Quanaduck Cove Court Condominium Association in Stonington to install a suite of

stormwater best management practices to reduce contaminated runoff from draining into Quanauck Cove, an embayment of Stonington Harbor and Long Island Sound. An enhanced vegetated riparian buffer along the cove shoreline was installed in 2023. Several condominium owners will be installing stormwater planters at their downspouts to intercept, absorb and filter roof runoff. The stormwater planters have been designed and built by students at Ella Grasso Tech and will be installed this spring. A final project deliverable will be a LID stormwater management guidance manual for multi-unit residential complexes like condominiums and apartment complexes. The manual will feature stormwater management practices that can be incorporated into the landscape to reduce the impact of stormwater from dense residential developments.

Project Oceanology B-WET Grant – ECCD is participating in an outdoor learning alliance with Project O. In 2024, the project involves the installation of a pergola at Charles Barnum Elementary School in Groton and the installation of pollinator gardens at Barrows STEM Academy in Windham.

EB Mitigation Fund/Mohawk Northeast Mitigation Fund Shewville Fishway Construction in Ledyard, CT – ECCD has been awarded additional funding from CT DEEP through the Inflation Reduction Act to install the Shewville Dam fishway. The final contractor to construct the fishway has been selected and construction is expected to begin in June when the spring alewife migration is over.

Free-stall barn/manure waste storage facility in Lebanon, CT – ECCD executed the agreement with LISFF and the project is in the planning stages. ECCD anticipates site work will begin in late spring 2024. Funded by Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

French River-N Grosvenordale BMPs – in collaboration with the Town of Thompson, ECCD will be installing a rain garden at the newly reconfigured Blain Rd intersection. Additionally, pervious pavers will be installed at the Thompson Public Library. Both elements of the project will be completed by summer 2024. Funded by CTDEEP with EPA CWA Section 319 funding.

Birch Plain Creek Stormwater Improvement BMPs – recently, ECCD received an executed contract to conduct a stormwater improvement project at Groton Estates, located above Birch Plain Creek. The District is collaborating with management at Groton Estates and the City of Groton to install tree filters, stormdrain filters, rain gardens and one or two hydrodynamic separators, as well as education and outreach to residents at the Estates. The best management practices (BMPs) are recommendations from *Baker Cove Track Down Survey and Abbreviated Watershed-Based Plan*, to improve water quality in the Creek and Baker Cove.

### **CT Resource Conservation and Development Area (CT RC&D)**

The 2024 CT Compost Conference has been scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2024. Registration 8:30am, Conference 9am-5pm at the Connecticut College Crozier-Williams Building, 270 Mohegan Ave Pkwy, New London, CT. Registration is required. To register, go to: <https://www.ctcompostalliance.org/2024conference>. Donations can be made via Patronicity: [https://www.patronicity.com/project/2024\\_ct\\_compost\\_conference#!/](https://www.patronicity.com/project/2024_ct_compost_conference#!/).

Christian Swanson has accepted the position of Energy and Environmental Programs Coordinator with CT RC&D.

The CT RC&D Job Jumpstart Program is funded through a cooperative agreement with NRCS to team new conservation planners with NRCS mentor staff to learn skills and gain the experience required to become certified conservation planners or soil engineer technicians. The program currently has 7 staff working in NRCS offices throughout the state.

The Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry grant program is a Connecticut Department of Agriculture program “to provide technical assistance, distribute grant funding to producers, coordinate training programs, coordinate projects that pilot or demonstrate water and land-based conservation practices, create tools that help reduce barriers to accessing assistance for water or land-based practices on farms, establish equipment-sharing programs, and to support other activities that will increase the number of farmers who are implementing climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices.” CT RC&D was awarded a \$1 million in grant funding through the program. CT RC&D’s successful proposal included two major objectives: to offer sub-grants to Connecticut producers who want to implement energy or soil health practices; and to work closely with USDA and other partners to offer 4 conservation equipment hubs by implementing 3 new hubs in the state and expand on an existing one. This spring CT RC&D will be announcing the first round of small grants, totaling \$250,000, to recipients funded through the program.

#### CT DEEP

##### Clean Water Fund Project Priority List:

The Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) is pleased to announce that the Draft Clean Water Fund Priority List for FY 2024 and FY 2025 is available for public comment. A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 1pm via ZOOM (virtual option only). Public comments will be received through February 23, 2024. Details about a public hearing and how to submit comments are included in the public notice. The priorities include meeting nitrogen load allocations required by TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) for Long Island Sound, CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow) abatement as required under long-term control plans, and phosphorus reduction to control nutrient enrichment of streams. Funding levels are enhanced with federal BIL (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) Supplemental grant funds. The 2-year draft priority list includes the following projects within the greater Thames basin: Norwich WPCF Upgrades (\$191 million), Norwich South Thames Street Force Main (\$2.5million), and Sprague WPCF Denitrification Upgrades (\$1 million).

Connecticut's Integrated Water Planning Management (IWPM). There is a posting for Request for Public Comments for Water Quality Planning Topics and Locations. Public comments will be collected from January 3, 2024, through February 16, 2024. Two public meetings were held on January 16th via Zoom. DEEP featured a presentation on the Integrated Water Planning Management process and identification of water quality priority focus topics and potential waters for development of Water Quality Action Plans. Written comments may be submitted through email or regular mail by February 16, 2024. Email comments should be submitted to: [rebecca.jascot@ct.gov](mailto:rebecca.jascot@ct.gov). All comments must be submitted in writing. For more information visit the IWPM 2 Webpage and Factsheet.

**Long Island Sound Watershed Operations Plan:**

DEEP Watersheds staff is participating in the advisory committee involved in the LIS Watershed Operations Plan now under development through USDA-NRCS. Potential project ideas have been solicited and several initial ones are within the Thames River estuary. The advisory group began to initiate outreach meetings and the latest meeting discussed the approach and how to balance virtual and in person options. The group decided on three (more information to come) and that there will be a virtual option for anyone who cannot attend in person. These meetings will be to share what the program is and what categories of projects are. DEEP can consider and listen to what community needs are that could be applicable in this process.

**DEEP Nonpoint Source Grant Program RFP Announcement:**

The FY2023 Section 319 Nonpoint Source grant RFP is open with application submission deadline to DEEP by 2/8/24. Use this [link](#) to access the grant RFP.

**Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual webinar – What You Should Know:**

On January 22, 2024, CT NEMO hosted the second webinar of DEEP's Stormwater Quality Manual Webinar Series on the newly released Connecticut Manual. CT NEMO has teamed up with CT DEEP to help provide more information and insight into the revised Manual and what it means for you. The webinar featured The Low Impact Development Process, and highlighted how the Manual offers a pathway to stormwater management design from non-structural to structural practices. In case you missed DEEP's first webinar on the new Manual, you can access the recording, slides, FAQs, and a breakdown of the Manual on the DEEP website: <https://ctstormwatermanual.nemo.uconn.edu>.

**CT MS4 Update (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System):**

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, DEEP hosted a virtual public "listening session" for the MS4 Permit. The session consisted of a short informational presentation of the existing permit and target reissuance roadmap by representatives of the Water Permitting and Enforcement Division. The remainder of the allotted time was used for the solicitation of comments from stakeholders. The current Small MS4 General Permit was reissued on September 29, 2023 and is available on the DEEP Website at: [Municipal Stormwater \(ct.gov\)](#). Comments are due by February 24, 2024 and can also be sent via email to DEEP.StormwaterStaff@ct.gov or by mail to:

Stormwater Permitting, Compliance, & Enforcement Program  
Water Permitting and Enforcement Division  
Bureau of Materials Management and Compliance Assurance  
Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

**Sign up for DEEP's Municipal News Bulletin:**

DEEP staff is excited to share that we have created a news bulletin specifically designed for local governments. This bulletin is part of our broader effort to engage our municipal and Council of Governments (COG) partners more effectively.

Our dedicated team will serve as your point of contact, facilitating communication and raising awareness of municipal projects, funding opportunities, and regulatory information. This initiative is aimed at fostering a stronger connection between DEEP and local governments, ensuring that you have access to the most relevant and up-to-date information. DEEP is committed to seeking meaningful feedback on its programs and fostering an exchange of information that will result in greater understanding, participation, and success in environmental outcomes for the people of Connecticut.

If you have any questions as we build out this municipal service, please write to us at [DEEP.Concierge@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.Concierge@ct.gov). If you are interested in receiving further municipal information from DEEP, please sign up [here](#).

### **Northeast Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG)**

NECCOG, in collaboration with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), is looking for feedback from the public to hear your ideas for reducing climate pollution in the Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Windham and Woodstock region. Please join NECCOG's free public workshops to share your ideas that will help northeastern CT towns unlock match-free federal implementation dollars to reduce climate pollution in the Worcester-MA and Northeastern-CT Region.

Public listening sessions have been scheduled at  
Thompson Library Community Center on January 29, 2024,  
Plainfield Town Hall on January 30, 2024 and  
The Bellinham Auditorium at the Windham Town Hall on January 31, 2024  
All programs will be from 6 – 7:30 PM. A light dinner of pizza and kids activities will be available onsite. RSVP by 1/26/24 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WKSMVLR>  
Questions should be directed to [Jim.Larkin@NECCOG.org](mailto:Jim.Larkin@NECCOG.org).

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

As a result of funding the TLGV Southern New England Heritage Forest RCPP, NRCS in Connecticut is involved with 13 contracts to fund projects that resulted through the project. This project has been evaluated as effective outreach for NRCS programs.

NRCS is continuing to enroll farmers in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program. NRCS also offers assistance with many Climate Smart Programs, some of which provide water quality benefits. By January 2024, in New London and Windham Counties, NRCS already had 74 EQIP and 17 CSP applications on the books.

### **Project Oceanology**

Project O has increased its capacity for its summer camp programs. To learn more about the 2024 summer camp, use this [link](#).

Project O is participating in the L-TRAP program. The L-TRAP project is a collaborative conservation effort between The Maritime Aquarium, Save the Sound, Project Oceanology, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, Remote Ecologist and local fishers to improve the ecosystem. So far, the partners have completed 57 of 95 federally funded trips to do this



work. The three Connecticut based groups have removed 1,500 abandoned lobster traps from the Sound, averaging 30 – 40 traps per trip.

Quahog Bowl is the CT/RI regional competition of the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, a quiz-bowl style academic competition that tests teams of students nationwide in ocean-related topics across the disciplines of biology, chemistry, policy, physics and geology. The competition was on hiatus for several years due to the pandemic. This year, the Quahog Bowl has been revived and will be hosted at Project O with 8 teams participating. There will not be a national event this year. Good luck, teams!

Project O is in the process of developing more programs catering to the adult population. Watch for new programs to be announced this spring.

The Envirolab III research vessel has been sold. This ship has been the base of many TRBP Floating Workshops. A search is underway to find a new ship to serve as Envirolab IV, with hope that community investment funding will help with the purchase.

### **Amos Lake Association**

Since the discovery of *Hydrilla*, an aggressive aquatic invasive species, was discovered near the State boat launch, Amos Lake volunteers have been reacting to help prevent further spread of this plant. The *Hydrilla* was confirmed through DNA analysis by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station to be the same as the unique type found in the Connecticut River. The Connecticut River *Hydrilla* has now been confirmed in 6 lakes in Connecticut. CAES staff and ALA volunteers reacted quickly to try to remove the *Hydrilla* from the lake, and ALA volunteers will be diligent to survey the lake in 2024 for any signs of further spread. A partnership of 4 of the 6 lakes impacted are working together on the *Hydrilla* issue.

ALA is working with Preston's Conservation Commission on its Sustainable CT goals and will be continuing its *Paddles on the Water* awareness program in 2024.

### **Connecticut Council of Soil and Water Conservation**

In partnership with all five state Conservation Districts, CT CSWC organized a series of local work groups, one in each district, to gather information from residents about important natural resource concerns in their area. This information will help inform federal and state natural resource assistance programs to address local conservation needs. The session held in Eastern Connecticut Conservation District's service-area was held at UCONN Avery Point in November, with over 50 people attending.

The [\*\*Mountain Laurel Chapter of Wild Ones\*\*](#), based in New London, CT, is sponsored by the Connecticut College Arboretum. Wild Ones provides mentorship and learning opportunities for those new to gardening with native plants through educational programming, volunteer opportunities and our human community of native plant enthusiasts. To receive announcements of their public programs, subscribe to their mailing list by emailing [wild.native.plants@gmail.com](mailto:wild.native.plants@gmail.com). Links to their upcoming events can be found at this [link](#).

There next local program will feature "Alternative Landscapes that Benefit Water Quality",

co-sponsored by the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources and Pollinator Pathway East Lyme.

**SPEAKER:** Lydia Pan, President, Wild Ones Mountain Laurel Chapter

Saturday, January 27, 2024 @ 2 pm - 3 pm

East Lyme Public Library, 39 Society Rd, Niantic, CT 06357

This program is free and open to the public; however, registration is required.

<http://www.eastlymepubliclibrary.org/events>.

**UCONN College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources** sponsored a Native Plant and Pollinators Conference in November. The event was sold out.

**The Long Island Sound Coastal Watershed Network** held a webinar on January 11. The webinar was focused on Tackling Nitrogen Pollution: Reducing Fertilizer use in Communities. The Network was launched in 2021 to host a collaborative webinar series designed to showcase and advance local actions that target pollution from activities on land including nitrogen pollution, fecal bacteria, and consumer plastics and debris that enter the Sound's water through sewage, stormwater and groundwater. Event archives are posted at

<https://www.liswaterquality.org/liscwn-archives/>

## **News from Municipalities**

### **Town of Thompson**

Paving is complete at the redesigned Blair Road/Route 12 intersection in North Grosvenordale. The completed project will include rain garden installed in partnership with ECCD.

A USDA Urban Agriculture grant is funding development of a master plan for a 3.2-acre parcel of town-owned land located at 65 Main Street. The project will develop a small business support center and public food forest. The town conducted a workshop on January 24<sup>th</sup> to which the public was invited to view a presentation of the initial concept plans and to provide input to the plan. If you would like additional information, contact Thompson's Planner, Tyra Penn-Gesek at [planner@ThompsonCT.org](mailto:planner@ThompsonCT.org).

The Town of Thompson approved the purchase of property where the old East Thompson Train Station was located, with the remains of the original Turn Table. This property is adjacent to the Air Line Trail State Park.

### **Town of Groton**

The Conservation Commission is continuing to participate in the Plan of Conservation and Development update. Downtown Mystic experienced severe flooding due to the combination of heavy rain and high tides. After the January 2024 coastal flooding, there is a strong focus on sustainable and resilient development to minimize impacts to community investments.

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

With funding from US EPA through the Long Island Sound Study (LISS), New York Sea Grant (NYSG) and Connecticut Sea Grant (CTSG) announced a second round of funding open to

municipalities and community organizations to facilitate the hiring of grant preparation and writing support to assist with the development of grant applications for sustainable and resilience focused projects that will impact a community(ies) within or partially within the Long Island Sound Coastal boundary (within Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk counties, Western Connecticut, and Eastern Connecticut). Find more information at this link:

<https://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/grants-and-grant-writing-assistance-opportunities/long-island-sound-resilience-grant-writing-assistance-program/>

## Land Trust Updates

**Avalonia Land Conservancy** continues to add acreage to its impressive portfolio of conserved properties in Southeastern Connecticut. In December 2023, the land trust received two donations of land and purchased two other properties within Ledyard, Preston, Griswold, and Groton—all in New London County. The cumulative acreage of the parcels is over 100 acres. These donations help to preserve vital environmental resources such as core forests, wetlands, vernal pools, streams and wildlife habitats. More information about these land donations can be found at this [link](#).

## Connecticut Land Conservation Council

Planning for the 2024 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference is in full swing, and CLCC is excited to announce its return to Wesleyan University on March 23, 2024. For more information or to get involved in conference planning, contact Cristina Hayden at [chayden@ctconservation.org](mailto:chayden@ctconservation.org). More information about the conference can be found at this link: <https://ctconservation.org/conference/>

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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, TRBP meets quarterly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

The next meeting will be on April 16, 2024, at 9:30 AM Eastern Time, via Zoom.

If you are not already on the e-distribution list for this publication, sign on to the 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 24 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 donating to the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District and designate it to support the Thames River Basin Partnership Coordinator position.