



Thames River Basin Partnership Partners in Action Quarterly Report

Winter 2017

Volume 41

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 Workplan](#) 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 winter meeting of the Thames River Basin Partnership at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Norwich, then you missed a presentation given by Lou Burch, CT Program Director for the [Citizens Campaign for the Environment](#). Lou gave an overview of the process for and progress on the development of the [Connecticut State Water Plan](#). CT Public Act 14-163 instructs the [CT Water Planning Council](#) (WPC) to develop a CT State Water Plan for the management of the water resources of the state. Phase I of the process has been completed and Phase II is in progress. Stakeholders and the public are encouraged to participate in outreach meetings and comment on the plan. Partners are encouraged to sign up for the WPC e-alerts by sending an email to wpc@ct.gov. Future meetings in eastern Connecticut will be promoted on the Thames River Basin Partnership [Facebook](#) page. Be sure to visit the page and "Like" and "Follow" it to receive these and other notifications.

TRBP Updates

SAVE THE DATE! The TRBP's annual flagship event, the Floating Workshop, has been scheduled for June 9, 2017. This year will mark the 17th year for this event. FW XVII will feature Little River watershed in Woodstock and Putnam, CT. The watershed is an USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) [National Water Quality Initiative Watershed](#). Many conservation practices and water quality restoration projects have been funded in the watershed by both the NRCS and the CT DEEP with support of EPA Clean Water Act funding. Upstream of a public drinking water supply surface water intake, the Little River watershed been

the focus of much remediation and agricultural conservation practice installations. The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) is currently involved in a study of Roseland Lake in the watershed, and is in the process of developing a lake and watershed management plan. ECCD has completed multiple other projects within the watershed, and is on track to complete several more. Stay tuned as the details for this exciting workshop develop. We have reserved the barn at Roseland Park for the indoor presentations. The on-water component will take place on Roseland Lake. Workshop participants will be encouraged to bring their own paddle craft to the workshop. If you have a small powerboat that can transport a few people that don't have paddle craft and are willing to take on passengers for the event, please contact the [TRBP Coordinator](#). There is a possibility of a morning tour of several project sites before the workshop. Anyone with interest in serving on the TRBP Floating Workshop XVII planning committee should also contact the [TRBP Coordinator](#).

The TRBP website www.TRBP.org is still static. The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, on behalf of the TRBP, is once again seeking grant funding to restore and improve this important outreach tool. The grant awards will be announced in April, so keep your fingers crossed. There is an ongoing fundraising effort to match the grant funds. The grant, if funded, will allow ECCD to hire a website designer and pay for ECCD staff time to work on this project. To date, this fundraising effort has raised \$300 towards the estimated \$4000 project cost. If you are interested in supporting this project, please mail your donation to TRBP, c/o ECCD, 238 West Town Street, Norwich, CT 06360. Write your check out to **ECCD** and put "TRBP website fund" in the memo on the front of your check.

For now, the Last Green Valley (TLGV) is continuing to temporarily host a basic [TRBP page](#) on its website where recent meeting agendas, notes, newsletters and the TRBP Plan of Work can be downloaded. If you are not able to activate the hyperlinked text above, go to www.thelastgreenvalley.org and look for watershed protection under the "learn and protect" tab. Then, go to the TRBP tab.

TRBP has an active [Facebook](#) page. The [TRBP coordinator](#) will post your upcoming event or other announcements to the page upon request. If you use Facebook, please "Like" and "Follow" the TRBP page and TRBP postings will show up in your feed, and then please "share" the featured partner activities with your "Friends" to generate interest in our organization.

Partner Reports

A benefit of participating in Thames River Basin Partnership includes the opportunity to collaborate with other conservation organizations in order to achieve greater success of our joint conservation goals. In recent years, this has been evidenced by interagency cooperation through opportunities for programs funded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP). The RCPP encourages partners to join in efforts with agricultural producers to increase the restoration and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife and related natural resources on regional or watershed scales through locally-led initiatives. NRCS invites potential conservation partners to submit project applications for fiscal year (FY) 2018 federal funding through RCPP. Project pre-applications are due on or before April 21, 2017.

The Last Green Valley (TLGV) was recently awarded \$6,144,000 through the NRCS RCPP program 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. Spanning the shared borders of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th most densely populated states in the country, SNEHF contains 68 towns and covers 1.49 million acres, of which a remarkable 76% still remains in forest and high-priority forested wildlife habitat. Between 2011 and 2017, federal and non-profit organizations conducted extensive forest landowner outreach in this region, establishing an informed network of “Woodland Ambassadors” and educated and engaged landowners interested in improving and conserving their forested properties. This SNEHF project will connect these forest landowners, who would not traditionally interact with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, with NRCS programs and services. A remarkable partnership of non-profit organizations and regional, state and municipal agencies will offer private woodland owners a suite of NRCS tools for sound management and forestry conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and permanent protection through easements under the Healthy Forests Reserve Program. This project will serve as a “conservation pipeline” of forest and bird habitat plans, EQIP practices and HFRP easements on private forestlands in order to accelerate the pace of conservation in SNEHF. For more information, please contact [TLGV](#).

The University of Connecticut (UConn) is preparing to kick off their *Path to Reduce Pathogens in CT Agricultural Runoff* project. This \$669,000 NRCS RCPP project will focus on bacteria levels in Connecticut’s rivers and shellfish beds in which they unacceptably high. This is, in part, caused by agricultural runoff. To address soil and water quality degradation, ten conservation partners will collaborate 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 Partnership, UConn Extension, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Project objectives include:

1. develop conservation partnerships focused on reducing pathogens associated with agricultural activities;
2. identify and target critical areas for treatment approaches;
3. encourage adoption of conservation practices that reduce pathogen export from agricultural areas to streams and shellfish beds;
4. identify the opportunities for and barriers to producers and landowners in adopting pathogen conservation practices and evaluate the success of the project.

Potential conservation practices to reduce pathogens will include composting, nutrient management, residue and tillage management, cover crops, fencing, buffers and filter strips, vegetated treatment areas and wetlands. This project will incorporate cutting-edge research tools that will allow for the identification of species-specific DNA markers. This will allow the source of *E. coli* to be determined by which species contributed it, which in turn will focus remediation efforts where they are most needed. [Jack Clausen](#) of UConn is the project lead for this project.

The monarch butterfly is a new national priority species of the Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) program, a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Populations of monarchs, a pollinator species cherished across North America, have declined significantly during the past two decades. This collaboration aims to help the species recover by working with agricultural producers to make wildlife-friendly improvements on their farms, ranches and forests. Producers interested in NRCS assistance should contact their [local USDA service center](#) to learn more. NRCS accepts landowner enrollment applications on a continuous basis. NRCS offers more than three dozen [conservation practices](#) that can provide benefits to monarchs as well as a variety of other pollinators.

TLGV volunteers once again were organized to cover a large area of eastern Connecticut during the annual mid-winter [eagle count](#) held from 7 – 11 AM on January 14, 2017. The number of sightings were down from previous years. The majority of observers were stationed along the major rivers. Half of the 12 reported sightings were on lakes and ponds which were not frozen over, as in a typical year, due to warmer temperatures.

TRBP wishes to thank Dave Bainbridge for his effort to organize a Poquetanuck Cove eagle count team for the past 11 years. Dave will be permanently moving south to enjoy his retirement. If anybody is inspired to take over his coordinator role in this project, please contact the [TRBP Coordinator](#).

CT DEEP is accepting written comments regarding the Siting of Grid-Connected Clean Energy Facilities. Written comments were due by January 19, 2017, but submissions a few days afterward might be considered.

- DEEP has posted a [revised agenda](#) and the [presentations](#) from the January 10th Workshop.
- Here is the link to the [DEEP/Energy Filings](#) website where all documents are posted in various matters. You can retrieve material by clicking on the blue triangle and then the blue underscored text/date next to the item you want to look at. The document will be attached on the following screen for you to open and view. Please note that when you are at the bottom of the listings you may have to click on next page or previous page to view more listings.
- CEQ has distributed a draft discussion paper on Energy Sprawl: land-based solar generating project siting of grid connected facilities impacts on agriculture.

[http://www.ct.gov/ceq/lib/ceq/Energy_Sprawl_in_Connecticut -- 1-4-17 DRAFT.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/ceq/lib/ceq/Energy_Sprawl_in_Connecticut_-_1-4-17_DRAFT.pdf) (CEQ is seeking public comments to complete recommendations).

[CT MS4 Stormwater General Permit](#) and Outreach:

There is a new MS4 GP Listserv – it is active with municipal staff and consultants, etc. Interested partners are encouraged to sign up.

DEEP is pulling together a comprehensive list of impaired waters that is applicable to the MS4 permit, soon to make that accessible via an online map – stay tuned. For now, check out the [MS4 map CLEAR](#) staff have started here. It includes the impaired waters from the 2014 State Integrated Water Quality Report (DEEP is expected to release an update in late January), as well

as urbanized areas (one of the other “priority areas” for the permit). Just turn the layers on using the checkboxes on the left. At this time, it doesn’t list what the water is impaired for. That update is expected in the near future.

CT DEEP recently posted the [Connecticut 2015 Clean Water Act Section 319 Report](#). This annual report to EPA summarizes Connecticut’s 2015 efforts by highlighting the pertinent activities to address nonpoint source pollution, provides the status of active Section 319 funded projects and discusses adjustments to the program plan that were considered in 2015.

The 2016 CT Integrated Water Quality Report is due out by the end of January in draft form for public review. There will be a 45+ day comment period following the release of the report.

Click [this link](#) to access the page where the draft report will be posted. This report:

- will include flow impaired waters in this reporting cycle, and
- will further integrate TMDL priorities with 303d Vision watershed prioritization and action plan development.

CT DEEP continues its efforts toward compiling [Connecticut Stream Flow Standards and Regulations](#). The greater Thames, Pawcatuck and Southeast Coastal basins were previously classified. The Connecticut River Basin draft is about to go public. The Housatonic, Southwest and Tenmile River Basins are slated for completion by the end of 2017.

[State of Connecticut E-Regulations](#) portal is now available on the Secretary of State website. Those that are interested can sign up for eReg Alerts.

Connecticut DEEP is Accepting Proposals for [Grants under Section 319](#) of the Federal Clean Water Act for Fiscal Year 2017. Proposals submitted in response to this FY2017 Request for Proposals must be received electronically by March 3, 2017. Proposals should be submitted by email to Charles Lee at Charles.Lee@ct.gov.

DEEP is accepting applications through February 2, 2017 under its [Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program](#), which includes its Urban Green and Community Gardens Program. The 2016 grant awards were announced this past November. Grants were awarded in 17 communities worth \$4.7 million. A total of 1,170 acres will be protected, plus 2 urban community gardens will be initiated. Click [here](#) to read the press release.

Grant awardees in the Thames watershed from the last round of grants included the Town of Sprague (Bombero, 7 acres on Shetucket River) and Northern CT Land Trust (Nipmuck Woods, Stafford 86 acres). Land was also protected within the Niantic River watershed (in East Lyme and Waterford).

You can now e-subscribe to the [Connecticut Wildlife Highlights](#). Click [here](#) for the January 2017 issue.

The MassDEP Watershed-Based Plans website is now active. This is a new web-based tool for developing watershed plans statewide. The [website](#) is now live, with a specialized module for MS4 communities launching in the near future.

The Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association (ASRWVA) is continuing to work with the town of Woodstock on an update of the Little River Sourcewater Protection Plan and to help draft potential regulations for an aquifer protection overlay area in the southeastern part of town. The Woodstock Conservation Commission is soliciting input from town agencies and the public, and will develop regulations to present to the Planning and Zoning Commission in an advisory role to that commission. The Woodstock Conservation Commission identified this important resource during an extensive natural resource inventory and has prioritized developing proactive water quality protection measures that include a ban on regulated activities over high priority aquifer recharge areas. A [video](#) produced by the CT DEEP demonstrates the vulnerability of this type of resource to certain types of pollution.

The ECCD wrapped up its first season of its project *Monitoring Edge-of-Field Monitoring*, funded through an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant. This project will compare the results of formal edge-of-field monitoring using NRCS protocols and a modified edge-of-field monitoring protocol developed by ECCD. ECCD is partnering with UCONN, which is providing technical assistance and has loaned the district the sophisticated monitoring equipment in use. This equipment is set up next to simpler passive stormwater collectors designed by GKY industries. Very limited data was collected last season due to the drought. The equipment has been removed from the monitoring site for the winter. Monitoring will resume this spring once the weather warms up.

ECCD is preparing to install a woodchip bioreactor on a farm in Woodstock. The woodchip bioreactor will intercept the sub-surface tile drain runoff. Through the natural process of denitrification, the bioreactor is expected to remove significant concentrations of nitrate from the runoff. Nitrate is a major pollutant that leads to anoxic conditions in Long Island Sound. For this demonstration project, ECCD will be collecting water samples before and after run-off flows through the bioreactor to determine the effectiveness of this technology. This technology has been reported in some cases to also reduce the amount of pathogens in the tile drain runoff. Bioreactors are in use in other parts of the country, but this is the first project of its kind in CT. NRCS soil scientists assisted ECCD to locate the tile drain system under the field using ground penetrating radar technology and flagged the nearby wetland. An engineer is in the process of designing the system. The system is expected to be installed by early spring. A second part of this project includes the purchase of a precision planting equipment, designed to plant through standing cover crops. This technology will extend the amount of time that living roots are in the soil, contributing to improved soil health conditions. This new equipment has been purchased and will be utilized this spring.

On another Woodstock farm, ECCD is preparing to install subsurface drainage under silage bunkers to keep clean water separate from contaminated leachate and away from nearby water resources. The project also includes the construction of a silage leachate collection system and conveyance system, including a custom-built receiving tank, for milk house waste and manure. Engineering plans are in development. Ground breaking on this project is expected this spring.

ECCD is spear-heading an Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative with many partners. A series of workshops have either taken place or are being planned to cover a range of topics. Workshop themes include Soil Health, Water Quality, Water Conservation, Composting and

Invasive Plant Management. This project is being funded by the NRCS through the National Association of Conservation Districts.

ECCD staff was hired by the Town of Mansfield to complete a comprehensive baseline management report on a local farm that is being protected through the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Ag Land Easements (ACEP- ALE).

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments represents members of 19 towns in southeastern CT. The public draft of their 10 year Plan of Conservation and Development will be available soon for comment. Several public information sessions are being planned in February. TRBP will publish this information on the TRBP Facebook page when it becomes available.

Here is some very good news! Eastern Long Island Sound received an A- (92%), the best grade in the Sound in the 2016 Long Island Sound Report Card. This Report Card was produced by Save the Sound, a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment, and published in October 2016 using 2015 data. Funding was provided by the Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative. Science direction was provided by Jamie Vaudrey, Ph.D. and Jason Krumholz, Ph.D. The Report Card provides a geographic assessment of annual Long Island Sound ecosystem health for 2015. Visit www.longislandsound.ecoreportcard.org for information on specific methodologies, indicators, thresholds, grading and subregion designations.

Report Winter Fish Kills

If you observe dead fish, contact the MA Environmental Law Enforcement's 24-hour radio room at (800) 632-8075. A MassWildlife biologist will review each situation to determine whether the kill is natural or requires a site investigation.

The phone numbers for reporting a winter fish kill in Connecticut are included on the fact sheet which you can access through the link below.

http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/fishing/general_information/winter_fish_kill_fact_sheet.pdf.

The majority of the fish kills reported turn out to be natural events not caused by pollution. During the winter, ice and snow cover can cause low dissolved oxygen levels in ponds. Ice and snow can limit the amount of light that reaches the water column and interfere with photosynthesis and decomposition of organic matter, which in turn can decrease the amount of oxygen available to fish. These conditions may result in winter fish kills. Weedy ponds that are less than 15 feet deep are particularly vulnerable. Ice anglers may encounter signs of a low oxygen environment when they drill through the ice and notice the smell of rotten egg or observe sluggish or dying shiners. The odor is hydrogen sulfide gas which is a natural byproduct of low dissolved oxygen environments, and is not likely the result of pollution. Oxygen levels will return to normal shortly after the ice melts in the spring.

Upcoming Workshops and Conferences

The 28th [Annual Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference](#) for the New England states and New York will be held on April 12-13, 2017 at the Hotel Northampton in Northampton,

Massachusetts. This conference, which is coordinated by New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) in partnership with member states and EPA, has become the premier forum for sharing information about nonpoint source pollution (NPS) issues and projects in the region. In 2017, the conference sessions will reflect the following theme: “Lessons Learned: What Worked, and What Didn’t?”

SAVE THE DATE of Saturday, April 29, 2017, to attend Connecticut Lakes Conference 2017 (CLC 2017) at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven. Organized by the Connecticut Federation of Lakes (CFL), the Conference will run from 9:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Many outstanding speakers and topics are already lined up. Whether you want to learn more about cyanobacteria, aquatic invasive plants, volunteer water monitoring, lake association successes or lake neighborhood landscaping, to name a few of the topics, CLC 2017 will be the place to be on April 29. The CFL is in the process of putting the finishing touches on Conference planning and a flyer will be distributed in early March. In the meantime, please get this date in your calendar so you don't miss the opportunity to learn more about lakes, whether that occurs during the presentations or interacting with the other CT “Lakers” and Conference sponsors.

<http://www.ctlakes.org/>

The [11th Annual Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources \(CCNR\)](#) is a multidisciplinary conference bringing together individuals working with natural resources and environmental management in Connecticut to share research, information and ideas. The sentiment “many resources, one environment” reflects the conference vision that, while many may focus their efforts on the conservation of particular natural resources, Connecticut has but one environment, and we all work and live much too close together to not gather and interact with one another. The conference features a mix of professional and informal forums to promote information exchange, networking and a sense of community regarding Connecticut’s natural resources and recognize achievements of dedicated individuals and groups. This year’s conference will take place on March 13, 2017 at the UCONN Storrs campus.

Open Space News

John Hibbard, past president of the CT Forest and Parks Association, donated 105 acres of forested land in Woodstock, CT to the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. This parcel abuts a 23 acre lot owned by the town. For more information, click [here](#).

Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc has been working towards land trust accreditation status. The paperwork has been submitted and the review of their documents is expected to be completed in April.

News from the Municipalities

The Woodstock Conservation Commission has invited Paula Coughlin, Citizen Science Coordinator for the CT Audubon Society Center at Pomfret, to give a presentation on her work with volunteers collecting data in Woodstock. Ms. Coughlin leads a mammal monitoring project that has visited the same transect in the Nipmuck Forest in northwest Woodstock since 2003. She also has been documenting vernal pools and assessing riffle environments during this period. Her presentation will feature some of the data she has collected. The program will take place at

the Woodstock Town Hall on January 31, 2017 beginning at 7 PM. This program is free to the public. Sponsored by the Woodstock Conservation Commission.

Other News

On December 12th, EPA issued draft recreational water quality criteria and/or swimming advisories for the cyanotoxins microcystin and cylindrospermopsin. EPA has drafted recommended concentrations of the cyanotoxins to protect human health while swimming or participating in other recreational activities in and on the water. Once final, states can consider adopting these criteria into their water quality standards and using them for Clean Water Act purposes. Alternatively, states can use these same values as the basis of swimming advisories for public notification purposes at beaches. The draft criteria and/or swimming advisories are based on peer-reviewed, published science and methods. EPA is also providing information on the latest science on human health effects from exposure to cyanotoxins, discussion of other governmental guidelines for recreational waters, and information on incidents involving exposure of pets and other animals to cyanotoxins. EPA will accept comments on the draft criteria document for 60 days.

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-12/documents/draft-hh-rec-ambient-water-swimming-factsheet.pdf>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has published a new report, 'Climate Change Indicators in the United States, 2016 (Fourth Edition)'. <https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators>. For a free copy, send a request to EPA's Climate Change Indicators Team at climateindicators@epa.gov.

EPA is changing its regulations governing how small municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) obtain coverage under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permits. The change will promote greater public engagement through clear requirements on the opportunities for public participation on the permitting process. The final rule establishes two alternative approaches that an NPDES permitting authority can use to issue and administer small MS4 general permits that address the court remand. Both approaches ensure that the permitting authority establishes what is necessary for the MS4 to reduce the discharge of pollutants from its MS4 to the maximum extent practicable, to protect water quality, and to satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements of the Clean Water Act. Both approaches also ensure that the public participation requirements of the Clean Water Act are met. This regulation does not establish any new substantive requirements for small MS4s.

<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-rules-and-notices#proposed>

EPA has released a document to assist non-government organizations, state and local officials, and private landowners in making decisions regarding the removal of obsolete dams. The document describes the impacts of obsolete dams on water quality and public safety, the permitting requirements for removal of these dams, and potential sources of funding that may be available to support dam removal. The document does not change existing policy on dam removal. <https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/frequently-asked-questions-removal-obsolete-dams>

EPA and the U.S. Geological Survey released a report providing scientific and technical information related to protection of aquatic life from the effects of hydrologic alteration.

Exacerbated through climate change, hydrologic alteration can affect aquatic species' ability to spawn, gather nutrients from the stream system, access high-quality habitat and other survival practices. The report presents a literature review of natural flow and a description of the potential effects of flow alteration on aquatic life, as well as examples of water quality criteria that some states have developed to support natural flow and maintain healthy aquatic life.

<https://www.epa.gov/wqc/aquatic-life-ambient-water-quality-criteria#final>

EPA has updated its Human Health Benchmarks for Pesticides in drinking water to reflect the latest scientific information. The benchmarks are levels of certain pesticides in drinking water or source waters for drinking water at or below which adverse health effects are not anticipated from one-day or lifetime exposures. First developed by EPA in 2012, the benchmarks are intended to be used for informational purposes by states, tribes, water systems and the public to help interpret monitoring data for pesticides for which there are no drinking water standards or health advisories. These revised benchmarks incorporate updated toxicity assessments from the pesticide registration process and exposure assumptions derived from the EPA's Exposure Factors Handbook. <https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations/drinking-water-contaminant-human-health-effects-information#benchmarks>

NOAA released the "NOAA Water Initiative - Vision and Five Year Plan." The plan is designed to give people and governments better access to the water information they need for their unique circumstances, so that they may take appropriate actions to address water-related risks and manage their water resources more efficiently and effectively.

<http://www.noaa.gov/explainers/noaa-water-initiative-vision-and-five-year-plan>

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) announced the launch of a new Massachusetts Clean Water Tool Kit website, which serves as the state's primary public education resource related to nonpoint source pollution. The Toolkit, developed for MassDEP by Geosyntec Consultants, includes sections focused on the major categories of nonpoint source pollution, 127 fact sheets on best management practices to reduce pollution, and a collection of "Interactive Scenarios" based on Massachusetts landscapes. The Interactive Scenarios allow users to explore ways to reduce pollution and improve water quality in a variety of highly detailed landscapes that are typical in Massachusetts, including residential, agricultural, urban, roads, construction and shoreline restoration. To view the Clean Water Toolkit, go to <http://prj.geosyntec.com/npsmanual>. For more information, contact Malcolm Harper at Malcolm.harper@state.ma.us

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 3rd Tuesday of the month.

The next TRBP meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 18, 2017. The meeting location and special presentation have not been determined at this time.

Contact [Jean Pillo](#) at (860) 928-4948 for more information or to be added to the TRBP distribution list.

If you are not already on the e-distribution list for this publication, contact [Jean Pillo](#) by email and request to be added, or you can download the past versions of this quarterly publication from the [TRBP website](#).

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. Partial funding support for FY 17 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.