

Thames River Basin Partnership Plan of Work January 2015 - 2018



What Is The Partnership?

The Partnership is a voluntary, cooperative effort to share resources and to develop a regional approach to resource protection. The Partnership grew out of the locally led workshops held by the region's Conservation Districts. Priority areas of concern for the basin are:

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

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

TRBP Plan of Work Committee

Jean Pillo, Watershed Conservation Project Manager
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Eric Thomas, Watershed Manager
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Lois Bruinooge, Executive Director
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Holly Drinkuth
The Nature Conservancy

Anne Roberts Pierson
Avalonia Land Conservancy

Beverly Thornton
Brooklyn Conservation Commission

Goal 1: Protect the region’s agricultural and natural areas being threatened by land use changes

Action Items

- A. Accelerate the pace of conservation by participating in the development of a regional conservation strategy.
- B. Support implementation of the key strategies of Natchaug River Basin Conservation Action Plan, the Poquetanuck Cove Conservation Action Plan, the Mount Hope River Developed Land Best Management Plan Matrix and other conservation plans developed to promote natural resource conservation activities.
- C. Promote related land use educational programs conducted by the Non-point Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Program, Center for Land-use Education and Research (CLEAR) and other UConn Extension System programs.
- D. Participate in planning and publicizing an annual regional agricultural event known as “Celebrating Agriculture Day”.
- E. Encourage development of locally important farm soil mapping.
- F. Promote land stewardship through the continuance of the NRCS Healthy Soils initiative.
- G. Provide assistance to farms to develop and implement Best Management Practices that will reduce NPS contaminated runoff.
- H. Continue to promote the creation and support of municipal Agriculture Committees/Commissions through the AGvocate program,
- I. Provide education and outreach support for Regional Conservation Partnership Projects.

Goal 2: Protect ground and surface water quantity and quality

Action Items

- A. Promote and/or participate in water quality/quantity monitoring projects that help to understand the current status and long term trends of the region’s water quality.
 - a. Support stream flow studies and gauging stations
 - b. Support efforts to evaluate healthy water habitats and promote water quality anti-degradation strategies.
 - c. Support citizen science monitoring programs
 - d. Support monitoring in the Thames River Estuary.
 - e. Facilitate sharing of water quality data through various means.
 - f. Support opportunities to reduce nitrogen input to the watershed and for improved water quality conditions in Long Island Sound
- B. Promote the Connecticut DEEP Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan
 - a. Promote and support stormwater retrofit projects including Green Infrastructure projects.
 - b. Promote and support the use of Low Impact Development strategies in new development projects.
 - c. Assist with education and outreach related to the Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) general permit.
 - d. Provide assistance to farms to develop and implement Best Management Practices that will reduce NPS contaminated runoff.
 - e. Support the development and implementation of Watershed Based Plans to restore water quality conditions for impaired waters
 - f. Promote funding assistance opportunities for water quality/quantity projects provided by partnering organizations
- C. Facilitate Planning for, and Protection of, Sustainable Drinking Water Supplies
- D. Support implementation of the key strategies of Natchaug River Basin Conservation

Action Plan, the Poquetanuck Cove Conservation Action Plan, the Mount Hope River Developed Land Best Management Plan Matrix and other conservation plans developed to promote natural resource conservation activities

Goal 3: Protect the region's biodiversity

Action Items

- A. Participate in educational outreach on the subject of biodiversity considerations in regional planning. Promote statewide plans and other available data through links on the TRBP website.
- B. Promote funding assistance opportunities for habitat improvement projects provided by partnering organizations.
- C. Promote the use of native plant landscaping and invasive species management.
- D. Promote and encourage fish passage initiatives, fish habitat restoration and culvert assessments.
- E. Promote the use of online natural resource mapping programs to help develop priorities for land use and open space planning
- F. Cooperate with CT DEEP regarding initiatives related to river flow impacts on habitat.
- G. Promote the Connecticut Statewide Forest Resource Plan and Connecticut Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy and Young Forest Habitat Initiative
- H. Promote the Connecticut's Wildlife Action Plan

Goal 4: Improve the coastal zone resource conditions

Action Items

- A. Support watershed restoration implementation efforts in the coastal region
- B. Support the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan
- C. Facilitate Planning and Local Land Use Response to Sea Level Rise
- D. Support The Plan to Restore Diadromous Fishes to the Shetucket River Watershed
- E. Promote the protection and resilience of natural shoreline habitat.
- F. Promote protection and resilience of natural shorelines (e.g. beaches, dunes and marsh advancement) and restoration of living shorelines.
- G. Promote the use of living shoreline habitat techniques and monitoring protocols (dunes, coastal marshes, vegetation, etc.) Promote living shoreline techniques protection methods (dunes, coastal marshes) and living shoreline monitoring protocols
- H. Promote community resilience and risk reduction through planning and the use of Climate Change and Coastal Resilience Tools
- I. Support water quality and habitat monitoring efforts in the coastal region
- J. Support small coastal stream habitat management efforts for naturalized and wild sea run brown trout.
- K. Reduce nitrogen loads in the watershed for improved water quality and healthy habitat conditions in the Thames River Estuary.
- L. Support efforts to comprehensively plan for and reduce conflicts between traditional uses, natural habitats and wildlife, and future uses of Long Island Sound (this could also be in Biodiversity)

Goal 5: Provide Informational and Educational Opportunities on Natural Resource Issues to Individuals and Groups throughout the Thames River Watershed Basin

Action Items

- A. Develop and conduct a Thames River “Floating Workshop” to address current resource issues related to the greater Thames River watershed. This annual event provides educational opportunities for municipal officials, local businesses, and concerned citizens.
- B. Develop or promote workshops on topics requested on the 2009 Thames River Basin Partnership Municipal Survey.
- C. Promote land use and natural resource training and advanced training for municipal officials
- D. Work with partners to assess and develop access sites for small boats and fishing within the Thames River Basin to promote stewardship of natural resources through public access for recreation.

Goal 6: Partner with Individuals and Groups to Address Regional Environmental Issues, Strengthen the Partnership’s Organizational Structure and Increase the Diversity of Stakeholders

Action Items

- A. Continue to enhance the Partnership’s organizational structure in order to develop a sustainable and balanced workload, while achieving desired outcomes.
- B. Promote TRBP activities to the region, which shall include distribution of the TRBP Plan of Work, annual reports, fact sheets, workshop information, Partners in Action Report etc.
- C. Maintain the www.trbp.org website for the promotion of the organization and its goals, and to disseminate information to the membership.
- D. Promote greater participation in TRBP quarterly meeting through engaging presentations.
- E. Establish workgroups (i.e. Poquetanuck Cove Preservation Committee, Floating Workshop Committee, Brownfields) to focus on specific issues.
- F. Conduct long range strategic planning to ensure sustainability of partnership.