Niantic River Watershed Education and Outreach
Working Group Meeting

Date: April 13th 2010
Time: 4:00-5:00 pm
Place: Waterford Town Hall

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:
Present: Sarah Lamagna, Scott Gravatt, Eric Thomas, Kim Barber, Dick Conway, Marcia
Benvenuti, Joe Mingo, Fred Grimsey, Bob DeSanto, Judith Rondeau, John Jasper
Absent: Stuart Mattison, Lynn Tytla, Denise Swiatek,
Regrets: Marvin Schutt, Al Burchsted, Laura Rotchford

1. **Announcement from Sarah**

   i. Sarah announces that she is leaving the Eastern CT Conservation District and will
   be stepping down as the Niantic River Watershed Coordinator. She has had a
   pleasure coordinating these groups and wish them all the best in the future
   ii. ECCD has already hired a new Natural Resource Specialist (and therefore the new
   Niantic River Coordinator): Judy Rondeau. She will send everyone an email
   when she is set up with an email account. All correspondence will go through her
   after Friday, April 15th.

2. **Superintendent Questionnaire**

   i. Several teachers from East Lyme and Waterford have responded to the
   Questionnaire that was sent out: 1 from East Lyme High School, 1 from East
   Lyme Middle School, 2 from Waterford High School, and 3 from Clark Lane
   Middle School. Salem and Montville have yet to respond; we may have to come
   up with another strategy to get those two school districts involved. This could
   mean the Niantic River Coordinator calling up the principals of the schools in
   those 2 towns and informing them that when we first thought of helping them, we
   had in mind the CT Mastery Test (grades 3-8) and the CAPT (high school level).
   Us helping them would ultimately help in better scores on these tests.
   ii. Sarah created a database to keep track of all the questionnaires coming in. Eric
   suggested we talk with a regional education district and help them with our
   database.

3. **Laura vs. Sarah's PowerPoint**

   i. The group looked over Laura's PowerPoint (Attachment A) and Sarah's edits
   (Attachment B). The suggested that Sarah put a picture of how a watershed

works since most people don't seem to understand it deals with topography, tributaries, etc. They also suggested there be a slide that shows/describes the difference between groundwater and runoff.

ii. A point to remember is that this PowerPoint can, obviously, be geared towards the audience it is shown to. This is a basic outline of the presentation we'd like to give; however, we will edit it accordingly, depending on who we are presenting it to.

iii. Eric suggested that when we do this presentation that we do a "prequiz" and ask the kids, students, and adults what they know about watersheds, the Niantic River, etc. And then after the presentation or a couple days later, we should ask if they remember what we talked about (an "after quiz).

4. Other PowerPoints

i. Sarah passed out several different PowerPoints done by other watershed groups just to give other ideas for our PowerPoint.

5. Website

The domain for the Niantic River Watershed website was renewed since it was expiring at the end of the April 2010. Also, the webhost was switched to incorporate a new tool called WordPress. This tool allows the website information (not the aesthetic look of the website) to be altered from anywhere that has an internet connection; however, you have to be added as an administrator to make any changes. For now, the only administrator is the Niantic River Coordinator. This tool was put on the website so that in the future, when there is a Niantic River Watershed Committee legally set up, alterations can be easily implemented to the website by the selected board members. A manual for WordPress has been developed by the Niantic River Coordinator that can be distributed to the board as needed. Tutorials on how to use Word Press are online at http://geekdesigngirl.com/tutorials/.

The new website layout has been completely redesigned to make a more current, "eye-pleasing, and user-friendly site and to make maneuvering around the site much easier. A photo slideshow has been put up on the homepage so people can see what the Niantic River and Niantic Bay looks like to connect them to the watershed. The new headings and subheadings make the information on the website easier to peruse and navigate.

The former site was very basic and included headings such as Home, The Watershed, What Can You Do?, News & Events, and Contacts without any subheadings (making it much harder to navigate the site). The new site has headings and subheadings as follows:

I: Home
II: About
    i   The Watershed
    ii   NRWAC
    iii Niantic River Coordinator
    iv   Meetings

III: News
    i   Current News
    ii   Archives
IV: Our Services
    i   Education
    ii   Monitoring
    iii Outreach
V: Contact Us
    i   Partners
VI: FAQ
VII: What Can You Do?
    i   Our Impacts
    ii   The Solutions

The website also includes widgets (a small, portable application or piece of dynamic content that can easily be placed into a Web page or an embedded browser within a rich client). These widgets can be found on the right hand side of the website and displays a banner stating (Be a NIMBY for the Niantic) and the current news stories that have been published.

The Coordinator has been updating the site with agendas, minutes, presentations, and local news stories about the Niantic River and the Niantic River Watershed Advisory Committee throughout the year. More photos and information has been put up on the website so give people an idea about what the NRWAC does and where they want to go in the future.

Also, Google Analytics has been added to the page (through html code) which shows the administrator not only who has visited the website but what pages they looked at and how they got to the homepage. This is important to look at closely so that we can see what search engines people use to get to our site and where, in the future, we can advertise.

Attachment C shows what the previous website looked like while Attachment D shows the additions made to the current website. To see the updated website at its fullest, please visit www.nianticriverwatershed.org.

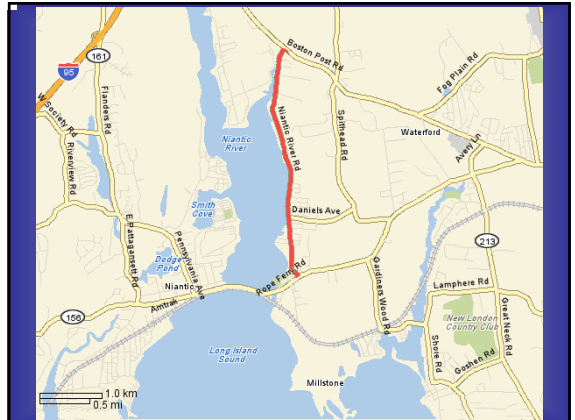   **6.**   Next meeting **May 11th, 2010 5:00-6:00 pm.**

The Niantic River Watershed
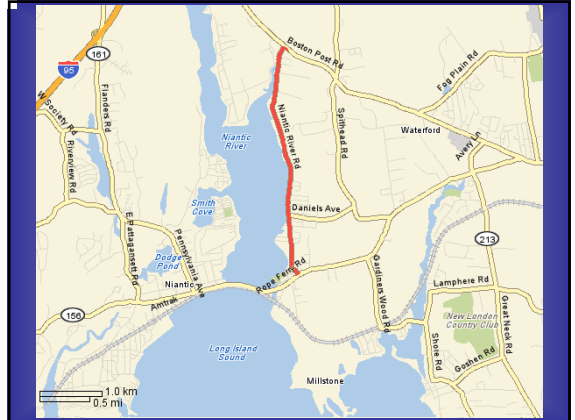
What is a Watershed?

A watershed consists of all land that drains to a body of water; in this case, it is the Niantic River.

The Niantic River Watershed

- Local water features such as Fairy Lake, Horse Pond, Barnes Reservoir, Bogue Brook Reservoir, Lake Konomac, Darrow Pond, Latimer Brook, Oil Mill Brook and Stony Brook, as well as the Niantic River itself, are all part of what we call the Niantic River Watershed.
- The watershed covers 31.3 square miles, or approximately 20,000 acres and includes areas from the four towns of East Lyme, Waterford, Salem and Montville.

How do we impact our Watershed?

- **The Niantic River does not currently meet state water quality standards because of observed degradation of aquatic life.**
- **Nitrogen and bacteria are the two greatest water quality concerns for the Niantic River.**

1

•**Polluted runoff accounts for approximately half (50%) of the nitrogen inputs into the Niantic River.**

Beginning in the 1980s, there was a sharp decline in eelgrass and in subsequent years eelgrass populations have shown annual variation.

Scallops and winter flounder, which rely on eelgrass as nursery habitat, are practically missing from the Niantic River.

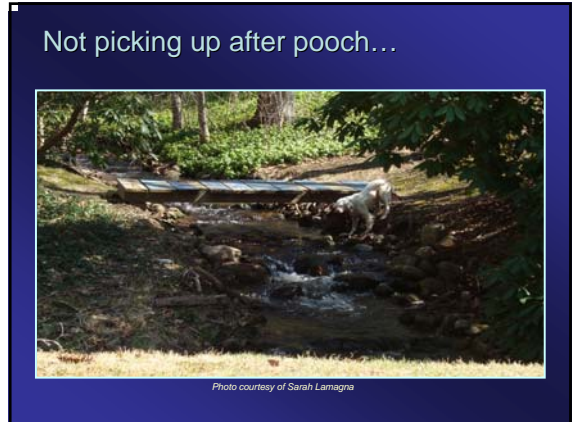**New species like green crabs and grubby, which are more tolerant of polluted waters, appear to be on the rise in the river.**

How can we help protect our Watershed?

- Native plants
- Rain barrels & rain gardens
- Increasing pervious surfaces
- Mulch
- Soil testing
- Vegetative buffers
- Clean up pet waste
- compost

The Niantic River Watershed

Presented by: Sarah Lamagna
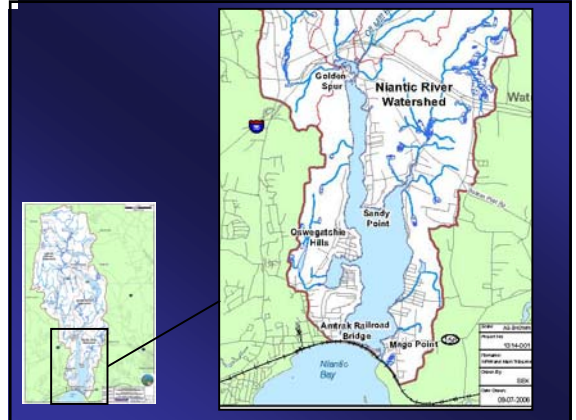
What is a Watershed?

A watershed consists of all land that drains to a body of water; in this case, it is the Niantic River.

A Watershed

Courtesy of www.chescocooler.org/watersheds
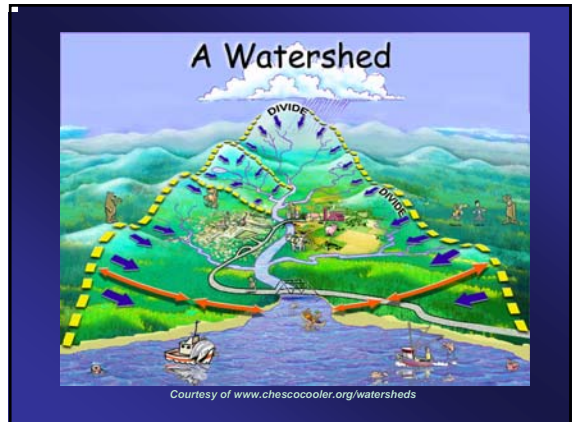
What does the Niantic River Watershed include?

Local water features

- Fairy Lake
- Horse Pond
- Barnes Reservoir
- Lake Konomac
- Darrow Pond
- Latimer Brook
- Oil Mill Brook
- Stony Brook
- Cranberry Brook
- Bogue Brook Reservoir
- Also the Niantic River itself

The watershed covers 31.3 square miles (20,000 acres) over four towns: East Lyme, Waterford, Salem and Montville.

What is a the Problem?

- **The Niantic River does not currently meet state water quality standards because of observed degradation of aquatic life.**
- **Nitrogen and bacteria are the two greatest water quality concerns for the Niantic River.**

What has happened?

Beginning in the 1980s, there was a sharp decline in eelgrass and in subsequent years eelgrass populations have shown annual variation.

Photo courtesy of http://www.buzzardsbay.org/eelgrass/eelgrass-uncatena.jpg

Scallops and winter flounder, which rely on eelgrass as nursery habitat, are practically missing from the Niantic River.

New species like green crabs and grubby, which are more tolerant of polluted waters, appear to be on the rise in the river.

How do we impact our Watershed?

Polluted runoff accounts for approximately half of the nitrogen inputs into the Niantic River

Photo courtesy of Sarah Lamagna

Vegetative buffer

Lawn up to the edge

Photo courtesy of Sarah Lamagna

Removing riparian buffers

Not picking up after pooch…

Photo courtesy of Sarah Lamagna

How can we help protect our Watershed?

- Native plants
- Rain barrels
- Rain gardens
- Increasing pervious surfaces

Photo courtesy of Pat Young

Photo courtesy of Pat Young

- Mulch
- Soil testing
- Vegetative buffers

Photo courtesy of Sarah Lamagna

- Clean up pet waste
- Compost

Photo courtesy of Sarah Lamagna

Niantic River Watershed

A Treasure Worth Protecting

www.nianticriverwatershed.org

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| Home | The Watershed | What Can You Do? | News & Events | Contacts |

Niantic River Watershed

Latimer, Oil Mill and Stony Brooks

What is the Niantic River Watershed?

A watershed consists of all land that drains to a waterbody, in this case, it is the Niantic River. Local water features such as Fairy Lake, Horse Pond, Barnes Reservoir, Bogue Brook Reservoir, Lake Konomac, Darrow Pond, Latimer Brook, Oil Mill Brook and Stony Brook, as well as the Niantic River itself, are all part of what we call the Niantic River Watershed. The watershed covers 31.3 square miles, or approximately 20,000 acres and includes areas from the four towns of East Lyme, Waterford, Salem and Montville.

What is the Problem?

The Niantic River is currently not meeting the Department of Environmental Protection's water quality standards. It is not supporting aquatic life known to inhabit the estuary in the past. Symptoms of this condition include, algal blooms, seasonal variations in eelgrass populations, loss of scallop populations and

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Clean Water Starts at Home

Be a NIMBY for the NIANTIC

Being called a NIMBY is not usually a good thing because it stands for Not in My Back Yard. This phrase is often used for folks that seem concerned about something only when it is near their property. But in this case we want you to be a NIMBY and remember the **N**iantic **I**n **M**y **B**ack **Y**ard

If you live in the Niantic Watershed, which includes parts of East Lyme, Waterford, Salem and Montville, then drainage from your site ends up in local streams such as Latimer's Brook, Stony Brook, and Oil Mill Brook. These all drain to the Niantic River, then Long Island Sound.

This means we are responsible for what happens in our local streams and rivers and the sound. It also means we can all do our part in helping the Niantic River and all its ponds, steams, brooks and wetlands.

Need some ideas?

Click on the tab to the left

Clean Water Starts at Home

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Clean Water Starts at Home

Clean Water Starts at Home

Need some ideas?

- **Native Plantings**-Native plantings are best suited for our local environments, typically requiring less care, chemicals and water. They also provide important habitat resources for native wildlife.

//www.americanmeadows.com/Images/Product/med/

- **Rain Barrels**-Capturing your rainwater with a rain barrel is just plain good sense. It saves water and reduces thermal water pollution.

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Welcome to Niantic River Watershed

Welcome to the new Niantic River Watershed homepage! The Niantic River Watershed website offers updates on the progress of the implementation of the Niantic River Watershed Management Plan, ideas on what landowners can do on their own property to

Be a NIMBY for the Niantic

We want you to be a NIMBY for the Niantic River: Niantic In My Back Yard. If

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The Watershed

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The cause of this impairment to aquatic life is not completely understood; however, there is a building body of scientific evidence that states that the river is overloaded with nutrients, primarily nitrogen. Nitrogen enriches the brackish Niantic River water, like fertilizer on a lawn, increasing

Courtesy of ECCD

Be a NIMBY for the Niantic

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