



Niantic River Watershed Committee

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Niantic River Watershed Coordinator's Report

February 7, 2019

Good evening,

Following is a summary of my activities since the January meeting.

Outreach/Education:

- CT Volunteer Water Monitoring Conference: Proposals submitted by Don Danila and John Jasper on monitoring in the Niantic watershed were accepted for presentation at the April 5th conference.
- Niantic River Lawn Care Community-Based Social Marketing Behavior Change Pilot Project: We had a conference call on January 7th with the volunteers who assisted with the surveys. The volunteers shared their experiences and observations. We discussed alternatives to the recycle bin stickers that might be more noticeable, including temporary yard signs. Holly Drinkuth of the Nature Conservancy is evaluating communities in southwest Connecticut for a similar outreach project in a more urban setting. Robert Burg will be presenting the results to the Niantic River Nitrogen Work Group at their next meeting (June 2019). I will be arranging meetings with Waterford and East Lyme selectmen and municipal staff to discuss the results and determine if there is interest in expanding the outreach from the target neighborhoods to a town-wide distribution.
- STR-STH Niantic River Outreach and Get Pumped Projects: A May 2019 workshop at East Lyme High School is planned to wrap up the Niantic River Behavior Change/Outreach grant project. As part of the project, Suzanne Thompson and I are meeting with Montville High School teacher Holly Moriarty and the Environment Club on Feb. 20th to discuss installing a rain garden at the High School (through the ECCD 100 Rain Gardens project). I've also had similar discussions with Laura Ashburn about the East Lyme High School Environment Club installing a rain garden at the East Lyme High School (through the NRWC Rain Garden fund).
- UConn Natural Resources Conservation Academy: I provided copies of our RBV field sheets to an NRCA student who is conducting an evaluation of how well RBV volunteers identify insects versus the identifications made by DEEP staff. DEEP will use the results of the analysis to determine if additional training and/or resources are necessary to help volunteers correctly identify riffle-dwelling insects.
- Niantic River Nitrogen Work Group: I attended a Technical Advisory Committee meeting on January 14th and a meeting of the main group on Feb. 4th. Jamie Vaudrey reviewed the status of the Niantic River estuary synthesis model, which is nearing completion. The model report is due Mar. 1st and the final draft report is due Apr. 1st.

Water Quality Improvement Projects:

- Rain Garden Initiative: As previously reported, I have discussed installing a rain garden at east Lyme High School this spring with science teacher Laura Ashburn. I have also compiled a short list of prospective sites for rain gardens, and am wondering if we should approach landowners and offer to install rain gardens if they are interested, possibly recruiting local scouts or school groups to assist. I would like to use these funds up and close out this initiative.

- Latimer Brook Fisheries Study: I've had several conversations with Sal DeCarli, a biologist with EA Engineering in Rhode Island. Sal is interested in developing a project and securing grant funding to conduct a biological/geomorphological evaluation of Latimer Brook. He is meeting with Trout Unlimited to discuss partnering and has requested our support if they decide to proceed with development of a project and grant application.

Monitoring: Don and I have discussed whether to install temperature loggers upstream and downstream of the proposed solar facility in Waterford. With the site cleared, thermal impacts to Oil Mill and Stony Brooks may have already started.

NRWPP Update: The revised RFP was re-released on Jan. 15th. Four consultants indicated they would submit proposals. Questions were due Feb. 1st. With the assistance of the RFP Subcommittee I compiled, answered and distributed the question and answer list on Feb. 5th. Proposals are due Feb. 15th. The subcommittee will review the proposals, interview candidates and propose an awardee for the Mar. 7th Board of Directors meeting. Candidates will be notified on Mar. 15th and the project will begin on Apr. 1st.

Grants:

- SWEP grant closes 2-14-19
- EPOC grant closes 3-15-19
- Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund closes 3-15-19
- DEEP Clean Water Act Section 319 NPS grant closes 4-3-19

ECCD Projects:

- East Lyme High School Infiltration Project: ECCD is anticipating receipt of the amended contract in the next month. We are preparing bid documentation to secure a contractor to conduct the installation. The project is on target for July/August 2019.
- LISFF 100 Rain Gardens/100 Rain Barrels: ECCD has wrapped up this project for the winter. We have requested an extension so we can expend remaining funds.
- 4-Town Bioretention Project: Contract preparation is underway. ECCD will be installing rain gardens, rain barrels and tree filters (or tree wells) in each of the watershed towns (funded by the CWA §319 NPS grant program) in 2019 - 2020.
- Southeast Connecticut Stormwater Collaborative Pilot Project: The winter quarterly meeting was held in January 2019 at the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) office in Norwich. ECCD has applied for additional funding from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut to continue support of the collaborative and expand into northeast CT. The next meeting is scheduled for April 2019.

Staff hours: In January, I worked approximately 26 hours on Niantic River Watershed Committee business and projects. Of that, about 18 hours were for core NRWCC activities (administration, outreach and monitoring activities) and about 8 hours were applied to billable projects, including the Behavior Change project and the Watershed Plan Update.

Respectfully submitted,



Judy Rondeau
Watershed Coordinator