



Niantic River Watershed Committee

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Niantic River Watershed Coordinator's Report

May 7, 2020

Good evening,

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

Outreach/Education: I have posted announcements on our Facebook page regarding the Healthy Lawns, Healthy River project and the upcoming stormwater monitoring program. I have had recent communication with Connor of the Fishers Island Seagrass Management (FISM) Coalition. The Coalition is charged with protecting and managing the seagrass beds off Fishers Island. I am interested in learning any strategies they use that could be transferable to the Niantic River.

Monitoring: Subsequent to discussion at last month's meeting I applied for the US EPA Stormwater Toolbox Equipment Loan program. I was notified on April 17th that we have been awarded the equipment. EPA is currently in the process of determining how best to conduct trainings and distribute the equipment while complying with safe social distancing guidelines.

NRWPP Update: Progress continues on the watershed plan update. Fuss & O'Neill should be sending us the draft update soon for internal review. It will then be distributed to our partners for review and comment. The Steering Committee had a progress conference call on April 22nd. The next call will be held the week of May 18th. As follow-up to the open space workshop (held in February) I participated in a round table held by the CT Land Conservation Council, and a Thames River Basin Partnership meeting which featured the mapper tool CLCC is developing. Additionally, CLCC announced earlier this week that they have been awarded additional funding from the Community Foundation of Eastern CT to continue work on the mapper in New London County.

Healthy Lawns, Healthy River CBSM Outreach Campaign: I have received the contract from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (the funder). Pending action at this evening's meeting, I will submit the signed contract. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus, I do not see how we can safely conduct this project this year. Once the contract is finalized, I will be asking for an extension. I do plan to start project publicity and outreach this year, and can also start ordering materials (signs, brochures, etc.).

Grants: As previously stated, we have been awarded the EPA Region 1 Stormwater Toolbox Equipment Loan. Using this equipment as a base, I have prepared and submitted the 2020 Dominion proposal to support the administration of the monitoring program. Somewhat

problematically, Dominion has extended the due date from April to September due to the corona virus outbreak. I am also in the process of preparing a NFWF Long Island Sound Futures Fund proposal (due June 2nd) to support fuller development of the monitoring program, including project materials, volunteer recruitment and training, data management and analysis, etc. I spoke with Erik Mas of Fuss & O'Neill about collaborating to prepare a LISFF proposal to implement a recommendation from the plan update. However, since we have been awarded the equipment, I chose to pursue that project instead. The National Estuary Program (NEP) Coastal Watersheds Grant (CWG) Program has released an RFP; Letters of Intent are due on August 7th. Save the River has indicated potential interest in developing a collaborative project.

Water Quality Improvement Projects: ECCD has received the Four-town Bioretention project. ECCD anticipates beginning this project this summer.

Staff hours: In April, I worked approximately 53 hours on Niantic River Watershed Committee business and projects. Of that, about 33.75 hours were for core NRWC activities (administration, outreach and monitoring activities) including preparation of the 2020 Dominion grant proposal and the EPA Stormwater Toolbox equipment loan application, about 16.75 hours were applied to the Watershed Plan Update, and about 2.5 hours were applied to the new LISFF CBSM campaign.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judy Rondeau", is placed over a light yellow rectangular background.

Judy Rondeau
Watershed Coordinator