



STILL RIVER WATERSHED PLAN

PARTNERS MEETING

6/23/2015

DANBURY CITY HALL, ROOM 3C
155 DEER HILL AVENUE ~ DANBURY, CT
1:00 PM

ATTENDANCE

- Mike Cunningham – Land Trust of Danbury
- James Ferlow – Town of New Milford
- Susan Peterson – CT DEEP
- George Benson – Town of Newtown
- Rebekah White – Friends of the Lake
- Mike Towle – WestCOG
- Marcia Wilkins – Sierra Club
- Katherine Daniel – Town of Brookfield
- Jonathan Chew – WestCOG
- Dennis Elpern – City of Danbury
- Mike Jastremski – Housatonic Valley Association
- Savannah Judge – Housatonic Valley Association
- Wilkins Lugo – Housatonic Valley Association
- Cole Baldino – Housatonic Valley Association

ACTION ITEMS:

All partners: Review website and send feedback to Mike Smith (stillriveralliance@gmail.com) and Mike Jastremski (MJ.HVA@outlook.com); Also please link to Watershed Plan page from your organization's page if possible:

(<http://stillriveralliance.wix.com/stillriverwatershed#!watershed-plan/cxfw>)

All partners: Review Still River Watershed Fact Sheet and River Smart materials and send comments to Mike Jastremski (MJ.HVA@outlook.com);

All partners: Review draft watershed inventory, note any missing items, send list of items to add to Mike Jastremski (MJ.HVA@outlook.com)

MEETING NOTES:

1) Public Outreach strategies

a. Website demo

- Savannah Judge, Housatonic Valley Association

- Getting and internet home for the watershed plan is essential as we begin public outreach
- Need a place to send people who are interested in more information and getting involved.
- 5 Main Categories:
 - Greenway: Photos, links, history, maps.
 - Recreation: Conditions, USGS, fishing, paddling, forums.
 - Watershed Plan: Sign up, Facebook page feed, River Smart, watershed summit, partners, links to web, sponsors specific to watershed plan, documents
 - Get Involved: Still river stewards, how to join/volunteer, Still River Alliance events and commission, blog.
 - Events: Still River Alliance Commission.
- Is there specific information people would like to see that isn't there?
 - RSS Feed: live, automated updates, news stories, publicity-
 - o Which feeds would be appropriate for our page?
 - o How can we filter out irrelevant stuff, ensure we have relevant stuff esp. local info?
 - Google Analytics: How many people visit the website, what they use.
 - What does this website look like on a mobile phone? Does it need format tweaking? Today most people use their mobile phone as the primary viewing source, strive for mobile site first, web second.
 - Concept of creating a web community- a place for communication rather than just static info
- Can people link to site from their site?

b. River Smart

- *Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*
- River Smart is an outreach program developed by several partners for the Aspetuck and Pomperaug watersheds
- HVA currently working to expand it throughout the Housatonic Watershed
- Primary target to date- streamside landowners.
 - Provides landowners with a set of set of clear, achievable actions that individuals and families can take to reduce their personal pollution contributions.
 - People are encouraged to sign the River Smart Pledge to put some of those actions into practice.
- Benefits of River Smart:
 - Lots of resources have been developed- website, postcards, fact sheets and flyers, etc. – a number of those were distributed at the meeting including a new fact sheet about the Still River and the

watershed plan that integrates River Smart- partners should review

- Easily identified brand that indicates an individual, household or business is committed to taking meaningful steps to reduce their contribution to water pollution problems (acting RiverSmart)
 - Can help MS4 communities meet obligations for public education under MS4 permit.
 - River Smart materials can easily be modified to include local partners and specific info about local watersheds and communities
- HVA will conduct River Smart outreach to all landowners within .1 miles of impaired reaches- roughly 3000 households
 - Initial mailing encouraging people to sign up (self-select as interested in the river and water quality), and then neighborhood-scale gatherings to talk about River Smart and the watershed plan. Could follow up with neighborhood-scale stewardship events like a river cleanup or buffer restoration.
 - Comment made that River Smart is designed for the individual property owner. Can we redesign another aspect for commercial land owners which seem to be a majority of abutting property owners along the river?
 - Allow companies to display a river smart sign outside their agency, this starts discussion.
 - Important to be wary of creating a tool for “greenwashing”
 - New Milford, Brookfield and Danbury have mostly large scale industrial stream side owners.
 - How would the pledge differ for commercial compared to residential?
 - Shift focus to storm water management and riparian buffer for example.
 - Is there monitoring/follow up process?
 - Make a contest out of it?
 - Develop a catalog of local examples of River Smart properties/practices.
 - River Smart ambassadors and local “project corps” to install things like rain gardens
 - Get organized groups to spread awareness or implement it into their projects (Boy & Girl Scouts?).
 - Recognition day for land owners who succeed, tours?
 - Target landscapers, nurseries, landscape architects to become River Smart.
 - Can college landscape architect students use the River Smart aspect in their thesis/final project?
 - UConn is pushing for projects that are more real world applicable

c. Underserved Populations- Urban Waters Learning Network

- *Wilkins Lugo, Housatonic Valley Association*
- Wilkins is here with HVA under a Sorenson Fellowship from Brandeis U.
 - Sorenson Fellowship Mission: To put social justice into action. Wilkins is doing this through developing outreach strategies for to underserved communities along the Still River and its tribs.
- Issues in SRW: Language and social barriers
 - Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese are primary languages.
 - Subsistence fishing vs. sport fishing.
 - Cultural practice and religion.
- Underserved population outreach strategy status:
 - Wilkins has made connections with the Urban Waters Learning Network- this will be an important resource moving forward
 - We are compiling a list of community groups, churches, etc. that may be able to help us connect with the underserved
 - Once list is developed, we'll conduct outreach including bringing presentation about the river and the watershed plan to interested local groups
- Can partners help us:
 - Understand which populations we should be focusing on in their community?
 - Connect with community groups in their area who work with underserved populations?
- Partner suggestions:
 - WestCOG has information on underserved populations through their transportation planning work
 - Contact Environmental Justice staff at CT DEEP

2) DRAFT Watershed Inventory review and discussion

- *Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*
- HVA summer River Stewards have pulled together an initial list of plans, regulations, studies and data sources that are or may be relevant to watershed management
 - Also a separate list of spatial data we will use to begin building a GIS database for the watershed- more work to be done on this before it's sent out for review- stay tuned
- Key component of EPA Watershed Plan element #1 "Identify Causes and Sources of Pollution"
- Next step is partner review of initial list- especially important for partners to tell us what we're missing from their community
- Once we've agreed that we've cataloged everything, next step is to dig in, extract relevant information and synthesize.
 - What level of analysis is necessary to meet EPA requirements?
- Partner suggestion:
 - Be sure to look at lakes in the watershed

- Several docs that are missing were noted- please include these in your list as discussed

3) Stream corridor/subwatershed assessment Quality Assurance Project Plan update

- *Susan Peterson, CTDEEP*
- Draft QAPP submitted to DEEP and EPA for review 6/3/15
- Still being reviewed – A time consuming process
- DEEP to return to HVA with comments- advise making changes and re-submitting to EPA.

4) Water quality monitoring

- *Rebekah White, Friends of the Lake*
- FotL is developing a WQ monitoring program under funding received from Royal Bank of Canada.
- Additional funding request from NFWF Urban Waters Grant Program still under review- expect to hear this month
- Draft QAPP in progress
- Highlights:
 - 15 sites, volunteer based.
 - Monitor from April until October 30th (correspond with permits)
 - o Every 2 weeks.
 - Buy a device instead of multiple kits to reduce time and spending and disposable kits.
 - YSI device
 - Meters are quicker and more reliable.
 - Newtown has devices that they can lend
 - Testing for P, N, bacteria, DO, temperature, conductivity, oxygen redox potential, pH, and turbidity.
 - The sites are about 2 miles apart.
 - Looking for hotspots to target sources.
 - Test at different times, flows, temps ect..
 - Key for tracking implementation.
- 3 grants in play (UW, RBC)
- What sort of variability do you have when testing?

5) Municipal/non-profit outreach: Still River Watershed Plan circuit ride

- *Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*
- HVA has received a grant from First Light that includes funding for a sort of Watershed Plan road show

- Another way of getting information to community groups and municipalities

Recommendations from Partners:

- Go to other peoples meetings!
 - Who should we be targeting? (Municipal boards)
 - Lions and rotary clubs, chamber of commerce.
 - A lot of these groups have monthly meetings.
- Invite the people you want to convince, not just friends.
- Give specific information
 - Allowing them to become fully on board and not back out when the details are given later.
 - Economic development vs. environmental sustainability.
- What should you talk about, you have to make them care! Give tours of basins, hear differing opinions.
 - Scare them – heavy into the problem.
 - What do you like about the river, how do you feel?
- We are at the study stage – we think we know, but need evidence.
- Can partners help facilitate these meetings in their community?

6) Other Business

- Westcog Remote Sensing Data:
 - 3 inch resolution spectra data of land use and land cover.
 - LIDAR data.
 - Many applications that will be relevant to the watershed plan
 - Contact Mike Towle if interested (mtowle@westcog.org)

7) September meeting

- Doodle poll seems to be working well- we will issue another in late August