



## STILL RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERS

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### **WATERSHED PLAN PARTNERS MEETING**

3/22/2016

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

### **ATTENDANCE**

- Carl Zimmerman – WestCOG
- Sharon Calitro – City of Danbury
- Paul Avery – Brookfield Health Department
- Susan Peterson – CT DEEP
- Timothy Nolan – City of Danbury
- Marc Cohen – Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association
- Alice Dew – Brookfield Wetlands Conservation Commission
- Rebekah White – Friends of the Lake
- Ryan Boggan – City of Danbury
- Kitsey Snow – Ridgefield Conservation Commission
- Dr. Ray Sullivan – Brookfield Health Department
- Mike Zarba – New Milford Public Works
- Jessica Leonard – Antioch University New England
- James Ferlow – Town of New Milford
- Nelson Malwitz – Brookfield WPCA
- Jon Morrison – USGS
- Seth Lerman – NRCS
- Carol Donzella – NRCS
- Maribeth Chassey – Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust
- Nick Kaplanis – City of Danbury
- George Benson – Town of Newtown
- Ed Siergiej – Still River Commission City of Danbury
- Joseph Dobbins – Danbury Youth Services
- Liz deLambert – Brookfield Open Space Legacy
- Marcia Wilkins – Sierra Club
- Ryan Williams – Housatonic Valley Association
- Mike Jastremski – Housatonic Valley Association
- Savannah Judge – Housatonic Valley Association

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

### **All partners:**

- Review website and send feedback to Savannah Judge ([sjudge.hva@gmail.com](mailto:sjudge.hva@gmail.com)); we are especially looking for content to populate the Fishing, Paddling and Parks/Trails pages.
- Like the Facebook page (Still River Watershed)
- Share the website URL ([www.stillriverwatershed.org](http://www.stillriverwatershed.org)) on your town or organization's website if possible
- Review latest copy of watershed inventory at [stillriverwatershed.org](http://stillriverwatershed.org) and send suggestions for additional resources to Savannah Judge ([sjudge.hva@gmail.com](mailto:sjudge.hva@gmail.com))

## **MEETING NOTES:**

### **1) Brief overview of Watershed-Based Planning process and our progress to date (see PowerPoint)**

*Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*

- Planning Process Goals:
  1. Develop a framework for collaboration
  2. Gather and synthesize existing science and planning
  3. Educate the public
  4. Identify projects and programs to address water quality, flood damage prevention, recreation enhancement, etc.
  5. Create a 9-Elements Watershed-Based plan (which will serve as a tool for future fundraising/grant writing)
- Planning Process:
  1. Build partnerships: Recap of Still River Summit and Partners meetings
  2. Existing Conditions Report (ECR): Will consist of the watershed inventory and synthesis of existing information and new information collected in the field – this is what we are working towards as of this meeting. A draft will be put out for stakeholder and public comment
  3. Develop Vision and Goals based on the ECR that will guide the remainder of the planning and implementation process
  4. Develop implementation strategy: develop a list of potential projects to reduce pollution (construction and non-construction programs), prioritize projects, and develop implementation strategies
  5. Draft and finalize Watershed Plan: Draft Plan = ECR + Vision and Goals + Implementation strategy; will solicit stakeholder and public comments, which will be used to finalize the Plan.

## **2) Watershed Inventory and Synthesis of Existing Information (see PowerPoint and attached Inventory)**

*Savannah Judge, Housatonic Valley Association*

*Jessica Leonard, Antioch University*

*Marc Cohen, Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association*

- Key updates to inventory document since last Partner's meeting:
  - New format
  - First stage of document synthesis process is established and underway
  - Continuing to accept additional items from the Partners (e-mail them to [sjudge.hva@gmail.com](mailto:sjudge.hva@gmail.com))
- General goals:
  - Compile relevant items in one location
  - Flag key information for the ECR based on planning focus areas
- Steps:
  - When a document comes to us, we add it into the inventory based on where it relates to geographically, and based on topic (see Table: Data typically used for watershed characterization)
  - Marc and Jess have been working off of Google Docs version of the Inventory to tag items based on planning focus areas: water quality, recreation enhancement, flood damage prevention and habitat restoration/protection
  - Flag relevant page numbers and copy relevant text into an associated Google Doc
- Next Steps:
  - Finish tagging/flagging
  - Examine remaining items
  - Synthesize findings into a report for incorporating into the ECR

## **3) WestCOG GIS data update (see PowerPoint)**

*Carl Zimmerman, Western CT Council of Governments*

- 4 band 3" pixels (extremely detailed): Good for examining land cover data and completing desktop assessments
- LiDAR is an elevation dataset with 1" vertical accuracy
  - Has measurements from ground, tops of trees, rooftops, etc.
  - Red corresponds with higher elevations
- DEM: raster products
  - Nice, clean product
  - CAD-compatible (useful for hydraulic analyses)
  - Can be used to evaluate the flow of water on a site-scale, i.e. an area as small as a yard or a parking lot
- SEM: tells you where the surface is (e.g. tree or building)
- Planimetrics
  - Completed for southern 8 towns in the COG
  - There is a 90% chance WestCOG will be able to get this done within a year for the northern 10 towns as well
- Examples of derived or modeled data:

- Land cover classification, such as impervious cover analysis at the parcel level (relevant for water flow/quality monitoring)
- Water modeling
- Stream buffer land use analysis
- Forest fragmentation analysis
- Contiguous areas study (in Fairfield County) – “The smallest connection for the biggest block”

*Questions:*

- *Is this WestCog-wide?* WestCOG has data for the southern towns now (email [czimmerman@westcog.org](mailto:czimmerman@westcog.org) for more information), and will ultimately be WestCOG-wide
- *Is DEM for surface water only?* Yes, the model does not have an infiltration component. Data can be used to model surface flows at a plaza parking lot to model where water is supposed to go and compare to where it *is* going (reality v. engineering)
- *How do we obtain this data?* Eventually it will be public domain; WestCOG is waiting for quality control before going public. However, if you are interested in this data for research purposes, contact Carl to obtain data for in-house use only.

#### **4) Field Assessments (see PowerPoint)**

*Ryan Williams, Housatonic Valley Association*

*Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*

- HVA will be assessing 40 miles of streams in the Still River Watershed, which has been divided up into 12 subwatersheds: Padanaram Brook, Boggs Pond Brook, Miry Brook, Sympaug Brook, East Swamp Brook, Upper/Lower Limekiln Brook (broken into two because of its size), and five segments of the Still River main stem.
- Original plan was to survey all impaired reaches in the watershed, but these may not always be the best choices (some reaches are buried and therefore inaccessible, others are in the middle of large wetlands, etc.; these conditions are not conducive to supporting restoration projects). To identify other survey reaches, we'll look at: impervious surfaces, public open space and land trust properties.
- Assessments will be completed using the Unified Stream Assessment (USA) developed by the Center for Watershed Protection (CWP). HVA staff has been trained and an EPA-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is in place.
- HVA will map and document impacts including stormwater outfalls (also collecting water samples and testing for ammonia nitrogen at suspicious outfalls), severe erosion, impacted buffers, utilities in the stream corridor, trash and debris, road/stream crossings, channel modification, and miscellaneous impacts.
- Ultimately HVA will create an interactive mapping tool showing impacts throughout the watershed that can be manipulated to show data of interest.

- See PowerPoint for additional detail on data that will be collected and expected outputs.
- Next steps: looking at upland sources of pollution using the Unified Subwatershed and Site Reconnaissance (USSR) protocol.

## 5) **Looking ahead: Existing Conditions Report and Public Outreach, Vision Statement and Goals, Implementation Strategy (see PowerPoint)**

*Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*

- Draft ECR will have a major public outreach component. HVA will develop materials for a lay-audience, including: graphics-rich executive summary of the ECR, a multi-media presentation, handouts, and interactive opportunities including Story Maps at [stillriverwatershed.org](http://stillriverwatershed.org) as well as on the Facebook page (Still River Watershed); materials will be translated into Spanish and Portuguese, the two most widely spoken languages in the watershed besides English.
  - Goal: have draft ECR ready for public rollout by late fall of 2016
- Still River Watershed Partners will develop vision and goals for the watershed plan based on the final ECR

## 6) **[www.stillriverwatershed.org](http://www.stillriverwatershed.org)**

*Savannah Judge, Housatonic Valley Association*

- Changes since last Partner's meeting:
  - New URL ([www.stillriverwatershed.org](http://www.stillriverwatershed.org)), separate from the Still River Alliance Commission
  - New layout with pages dedicated to watershed management as well as recreation: fishing, paddling, and parks/trails. Designed to engage people in the watershed based on what activities they're interested in.
  - The most recent version of the Inventory document will be posted to the website on the Inventory page.
- *Feedback from Partners:*
  - Add accidental sewage leak information
  - Change Candlewood Lake photo

## 7) **MS4 Stormwater Planning and the Still River Watershed Plan**

*Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*

*Susan Peterson, CT-DEEP*

- HVA would like to provide the towns with resources to assist with MS4 compliance.
- Chris Stone from CT-DEEP Stormwater Section to speak to this topic at the next Partner's meeting.
- There is a [map on the DEEP website](#) with links to factsheets about each municipality.

- Lots of connections between MS4 compliance and the Watershed Plan and fieldwork

#### **8) Still River Youth Stewardship Program (see factsheet for more information)**

*Savannah Judge, Housatonic Valley Association*

*Joseph Dobbins, Danbury Youth Employment Services*

*Ed Siergiej, Still River Alliance Commission of Danbury*

- HVA has partnered with Danbury Public Schools, Danbury Youth Employment Services, the Still River Alliance Commission, the Town of Brookfield, and others to start a new initiative called the Still River Youth Stewardship Program.
- Program is designed to connect young people with restoration projects in the watershed (e.g. buffer plantings, wetland restoration, invasive species management), provide job skills in environmental science, and create a new pathway for watershed plan outreach.
- The purpose of the program is to improve water quality and build awareness about the Watershed Plan by giving young people personal opportunities to engage with the watershed, gain valuable job skills in the field of conservation, and become local ambassadors in their communities.
- The Program will be divided into 3 field seasons: in the spring and fall, we will be working with Danbury High School and the Alternative Center for Excellence, respectively, and in the summer we'll be working with Danbury Youth Employment Services. There will also be a big outreach component; ultimate goals are to educate youth ambassadors and build awareness about and support for the watershed plan.
- With the help of our partners and supporters, HVA submitted a grant proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Urban Waters Grant Program and is pursuing smaller, more local grants in the interim.
- Restoration projects identified for 2016 include the Still River Greenway in Danbury and Brookfield and Lake Kenosia Beach.
- The idea is to get the program infrastructure in place this year in anticipation of the restoration projects that will be identified through the watershed planning process.

#### **9) Source to Sound (see flier for more information)**

*Mike Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association*

- HVA is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year; to celebrate, HVA is organizing a Source to Sound paddle trip along the Housatonic and its tributaries, from its headwaters in western Massachusetts down to Long Island Sound.
- Register online if you'd like to paddle for an afternoon or for the whole trip.