



STILL RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERS

WATERSHED PLAN PARTNERS MEETING MINUTES

11/07/2018

DANBURY MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

43 MAIN STREET; DANBURY, CT 06810

12:00 – 2:00 PM

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Jastremski, HVA
Courteny Morehouse, HVA
Lindsay Keener-Eck, HVA
Mary Ellen Lemay, H2H Regional Conservation Partnership
Carrie Davis, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust
Rebekah White, Friends of the Lake – Lake Lillinonah
Susan Peterson, CT DEEP
Ed Siergeij, Still River Alliance Commission
Nelson Malwitz, Brookfield WPCA
Kelsey Breman, Brookfield WPCA
Sandra Cox, Housatonic Valley Paddle Club
Mary Knox, Brookfield Parks & Rec
Bill Devlin, HVA Volunteer
Marcia Wilkins, Sierra Club & BOSLI
Jaime Bastian, WestCOG
Joseph Mead, Danbury Health Dept.
Dr. Ray Sullivan, Brookfield Health Dept.
Nick Kaplanis, Danbury Parks and Rec.

1) Welcome and introductions

2) Partner Updates

- HVA- Courteny updated the group on the work that the Connections crew did this summer
- Ed Siergeij (Still River Alliance Commission)- Continuing to partner with HVA on Connections and they also recently ran an Environmental Education Day for Danbury elementary schools
- Sierra Club- Forming a Land Monitoring committee
- Bill (HVA volunteer)- He is part of a group in New Milford that monitors for water chestnut (an invasive species), some found in Harrybrooke Park in the Still
- Town of Brookfield Parks & Rec- Appointed an ad hoc committee to look into expanding the Greenway trails. Working with New Milford
- Brookfield WPCA- Recently there was a public hearing regarding collecting and disposing of sewage along a stretch of shoreline (to reduce phosphorus to seven pounds a day and to get sewer into that neighborhood)
- Kelsey, also from Brookfield WPCA- Collecting Phosphorus samples related to the issue above

- Weantinogue Land Trust- Partnered with Connections this summer, focusing on monitoring easements and implementing grants (i.e., related to trail improvements); they received a \$10,000 matching grant for maintenance on historic barns on Smirsky Farm
- Brookfield Health Department- Pleased to hear the Brookfield Shore Commission update, as they have studied Dean Road in the past and found contamination; Brookfield sewer records are online now and they are being more aggressive with property owners who are lax about pumping; he also mentioned problems with blue green algae (they are monitoring)
- Housatonic Valley Paddle Club- Happy to be back in the fold and attending Still River meetings
- City of Danbury Health Dept.- Still figuring out how the new MS4 regulations affect them; they have a recent grant that involves some trails in Danbury
- West COG- They are assisting towns with MS4 permitting and wetland management and are getting more involved with H2H initiatives
- DEEP- Working with two other organizations that are working on watershed based plans
- H2H- They recently mapped areas of highest conservation value and divided the landscape into focus areas, for smaller group focus; Portions of the Still River are in Focal Area 10 and the first meeting for that area is tonight

3) Watershed Planning Process Update

Mike Jastremski, HVA – The partners and HVA is about three years into this planning process. The ECR was finished in the spring and Courteny has been conducting a circuit ride around to each of our partner towns. The next step is formulating the Vision and Goals and developing implementation strategies, which HVA has already begun to do, to some extent. Next year, HVA will start water quality monitoring and pollution trackdown in the Still River.

4) Existing Conditions Report Summary

Courteny Morehouse, HVA – Courteny gave a sample presentation of the ECR that has been presented to towns throughout the watershed. She gave a brief overview of the flooding, recreation, and water quality of the Still River including the four TMDLs that currently apply. She explained that this circuit ride provides the towns with an opportunity to learn about the watershed plan, provide feedback on the ECR and let HVA know of any town priorities for restoration.

There was a brief discussion on impervious surfaces and the work that WestCOG has done mapping tree cover (in order to identify potential planting areas)

5) Vision and Goals Workshop

Things that are missing from the Vision and Goals worksheet: Education and Outreach.

1. Water quality and public health:
 - a. Meet the TMDLs
 - b. Reduce contaminants
 - c. Establish buffers and conserve existing buffers

- d. Best Management Practices for border properties
 - e. Low Impact Development
 - f. Work with wetlands commissions
 - g. Take a policy focus: draft resolutions that could be rolled out in each town (mandates for LID, etc.)
 - h. Overlap with MS4 goals (with a focus on point and nonpoint source pollution)
 - i. Water quality monitoring program
 - j. Draft “sensitive watershed overlay district”
 - k. River should meet bathing water standards (because of swimmers)
 - l. Address emergency discharges
2. Species and habitat:
- a. Sustainable development
 - b. Invasive species removal – CIFWG working on aquatic invasives
 - c. Ongoing monitoring of rare plant and animal areas (NDDB)
 - d. Restoring in-stream habitat connectivity
 - e. Education around invasives vs. natives
 - f. Strategic land protection – regionally – encourage land conservation, partnership with land trusts & CRP
3. Recreation:
- a. Remove all obstructions/blockages from river
 - b. Motorway/canoe/kayak access
 - c. Connect the Greenway to sidewalks in developed areas
 - d. Extend Greenway and connect towns
 - e. Better advertising & outreach for the Greenway in Danbury and recreation in general
 - f. Updated paddle guide or signage
 - g. Coordinate with Chamber of Commerces
 - h. Fishing access
4. Flood resiliency:
- a. Focus on green infrastructure
 - b. Connection between river blockages/debris and flooding
 - c. Target areas that would benefit the most from flood control
 - d. Eliminate discharge from wastewater treatment plants during high waters
 - e. Disconnect DCIA and reduce %IC where possible
 - f. Update septic systems (also goes in water quality)
5. Collaboration:
- a. Keep Still River Partnership going
 - b. Collaborating on grant applications
 - c. Sharing data and resources
 - d. Sharing Best Management Practices and designs
 - e. Strategically identifying and prioritizing land conservation areas
 - f. Working with wetland commissions
 - g. A part-time Still River Watershed Management staff person
6. Capacity-building:
- a. Can be incorporated into each of these other goals
7. Education and Outreach:

- a. Focus on invasive species removal
- b. Partner with school environmental programs – Connections expansion
- c. DEEP fisheries has a great program
- d. Publish a newspaper article in the Spring on the Still River planning
- e. Link to the Still River website from town websites
- f. Make sure that the residents within this region know about the Still River and about the watershed plan
- g. Cross pollinate on social media and e-newsletters
- h. Work with West Conn to get students involved

6) Recreational Trails Committee

HVA recently applied for a grant to put together an Action Plan for completing the Greenway and water trail, and to put together a committee to specifically work on recreation planning.

7) Conclusions

Next steps: HVA will come up with a list of elements that will go into the vision and goals, and will have drafts by the December meeting.