



SALMON RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

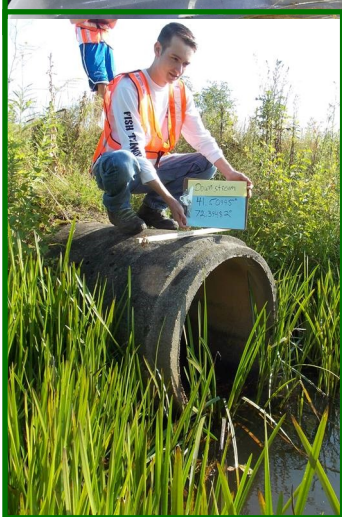
SALMON RIVER WATERSHED

2019

Getting the Community Involved



The Salmon River Watershed Partnership is committed to providing opportunities for its community residents to experience watershed resources up-close and engage in meaningful field-learning activities.



LakeSmart in East Hampton

The Town of East Hampton, through its Conservation-Lake Commission and Planning and Zoning office has embarked on a new program called "Protecting Lake Pocotopaug." This program is based largely on the Maine "LakeSmart" program and encourages private property owners around the lake to make improvements in their properties and



Photo courtesy of Chatham Health Dept

their use of those properties to better protect the water quality of the Lake. An informational brochure and flier with twenty-one steps to improve properties was recently mailed out to every household in the watershed.

The program will encourage property owners to make improvements to their properties through the use of best management practices. Volunteers will conduct assessments of properties upon request and give them a score based on their use of best management practices. Properties with a high enough score will be certified as being "lake healthy" and property owners will receive a plaque to display proudly. Volunteers from the Conservation-Lake Commission are currently developing the assessment tool, as well as best management "how-to" guides to help homeowners understand what improvements should be made and their benefits.

In addition to this new program focusing on private properties, the Planning and Zoning Commission has embarked on a process to update the Lake Pocotopaug Protection Zone, an overlay zone intended to provide for the preservation of water quality through the zoning process. The current overlay language has been in place since the 1990's. With a renewed focus on protecting water quality since the development of a nine-point watershed plan meeting EPA guidelines, now is the time to update this critical overlay zone.

For more information about this Program, please contact the East Hampton Planning and Zoning Dept. Additional reports and information can also be found on the East Hampton Conservation and Lake Commission page on the town website.

-Jeremy DeCarli



A few LakeSmart ideas...

- *Do not dump anything down the stormdrain as it many lead directly to the Lake*
- *Minimize chemical use on your landscaping as excess may end up in the Lake*
- *Use native plants, as they are generally better suited to the climate and soils and require less care.*
- *Install rain gardens to soak up excess water.*
- *Maintain well-vegetated buffers next to small streams and drainage ways to help filter water.*

Our thanks to.....

The efforts of the Salmon River Watershed Partnership would not be possible without the support of many volunteers, the watershed towns and local businesses and organizations. Special thanks to...

GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc., CME Associates, Goodwin College UCONN Soil & Water Club, Ken Geisler (GIS Mapping), Chatham Health District, CT River Coastal Conservation District, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, The Nature Conservancy, Society of Women Environmental Professionals, Stan Malcolm-Performance Vison Photography, USGS, Mystic Aquarium and Moodus Sportsmen's Club

Farmland Preservation in Lebanon

For over 300 years AGRICULTURE has been Lebanon's predominant land use! Lebanon farms today continue to provide food and fiber necessary to support the masses, just as it did at the time of our nation's founding.

Lebanon has the greatest amount of active farmland of any town in Connecticut and the greatest amount of preserved farmland in New England. Of the 158 farms in Lebanon, over 50 are permanently preserved through conservation easements. These 5,500 acres of prime and important farmland soils will be preserved for agriculture forever.

In 2006, the town established its local farmland preservation program. Since that time, 2,500 acres of farmland has been permanently preserved. The town has spent \$430,000 (or \$172 an acre) to help preserve over \$12,000,000 worth of farmland -- with farm property owners receiving almost \$10,000,000 in Federal, State, local and non-profit dollars and donating over \$2,000,000 of property value to place a conservation easement on their property. Local tax dollars for these projects has represented less than 5% of the total farmland preservation cost.

Why preserve farmland and agriculture? Studies show that agricultural land use pays more than its fair share in local taxes and helps offset the cost of municipal services for residential property. Studies also show that the more rural or less developed a community, the lower its taxes, as people, not crops or cows, demand municipal service. Lastly, farmland preservation, agriculture, and open space are good for the environment. They help maintain the varied scenic vistas and landscapes and tranquil quality of life that most residents enjoy!

-Phil Chester

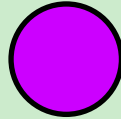


Photos...from top to bottom

- 1. Grabber Farm, 233 acres, preserved 2016**
- 2. John & Dawn Drum Farm, 34 acres, preserved 2016**
- 3. Leone Farm, 65 acres, preserved 2018**
- 4. Jon & Donna Skate Farm, 37 acres, preserved 2011**

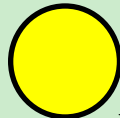
SRWP Water Monitoring Programs

Watersheds are ever-changing systems. Fluctuation in water chemistry, habitats, animal populations and vegetation are expected. Some of those changes are related to natural phenomena and some are related to man-made influences. The Salmon River Watershed Partnership, with the help of many dedicated volunteers, works to track baseline conditions. Results are shared with the watershed towns and other organizations such as CT DEEP. Below are four monitoring programs conducted in the watershed.



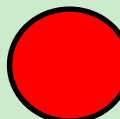
Macroinvertebrate Stream Assessments:

Thanks to many community volunteers and local schools, a number of stream segments are monitored annually to determine whether streams are meeting their aquatic habitat support goals. Certain macroinvertebrates (aka stream bugs) are particularly sensitive to pollution. These include species in the mayfly, stonefly and caddisfly families. So when we find them in a stream, it is a way of confirming stream health.



Temperature Stream Loggers:

In partnership with CT DEEP and in an effort to learn more about the stream temperature fluctuations, especially during particularly stressful summer-time conditions, SRWP deploys Onset HOBOTM stream loggers annually to collect hourly data on temperature. This in turn gives us a much more accurate “picture” of what is happening in our local streams.



Baseline Summer Water Quality Monitoring:

Six years ago we started measuring certain parameters at various locations in the watershed. We measure water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, total dissolved solids and salinity. Not only does this allow us to track changes over time, but it is also an opportunity for local students to get involved in field service learning activities.



Salt Impacts: A growing concern in Connecticut is the impact of salt in our groundwater and streams. Several years ago, the Green Team at GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. in Glastonbury approached us with a proposal to seek a grant to purchase 4 Onset HOBOTM conductivity loggers, which have been launched throughout the watershed and take hourly readings all year long. Chloride (salt) level increases along with other constituents result in increased conductivity readings.

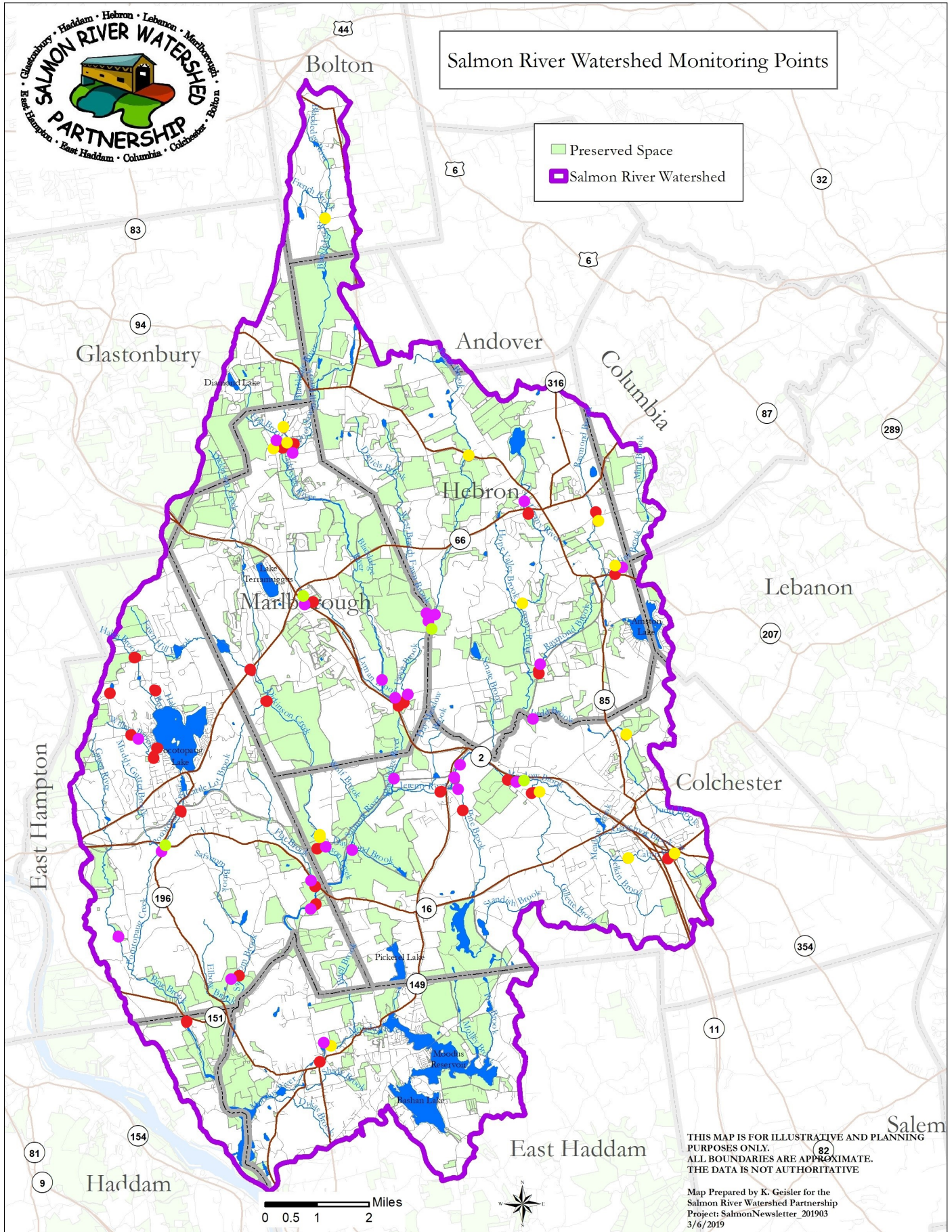
The map to the right depicts general monitoring locations, color-coded to the type noted above.





Salmon River Watershed Monitoring Points

- Preserved Space
- Salmon River Watershed



THIS MAP IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE AND PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. ALL BOUNDARIES ARE APPROXIMATE. THE DATA IS NOT AUTHORITATIVE

Map Prepared by K. Geisler for the Salmon River Watershed Partnership Project: SalmonNewsletter_201903 3/6/2019

Steering Committee

Watershed Towns

Bolton: Rod Parlee (temp)

Colchester: Jay Gigliotti,
Randy Benson (alternate)

Columbia: Bryan Tarbell

East Haddam: Bernie Gillis,
Jim Ventres (alternate)

East Hampton: Jason Josefiak,
Josh Wilson (alternate)

Glastonbury: Tom Mocko,
Dennis Mcinerney (alternate)

Haddam: Gail Reynolds,
Jim McHutchison (alternate)

Hebron: Brian O'Connell,
John Mullaney (alternate)

Lebanon: Carol Morris-Scata

Marlborough: Peter Hughes

Organizations

The Nature Conservancy:
Shelley Green

Connecticut DEEP: Eric Thomas

Land Trusts

Colchester Land Trust:
Lisa Hageman Cathy Shea (alternate)

Recreational Groups

Trout Unlimited: Duke Preston

Member at Large

Silvio O. Conte Refuge-Haddam Neck: Jim McHutchison

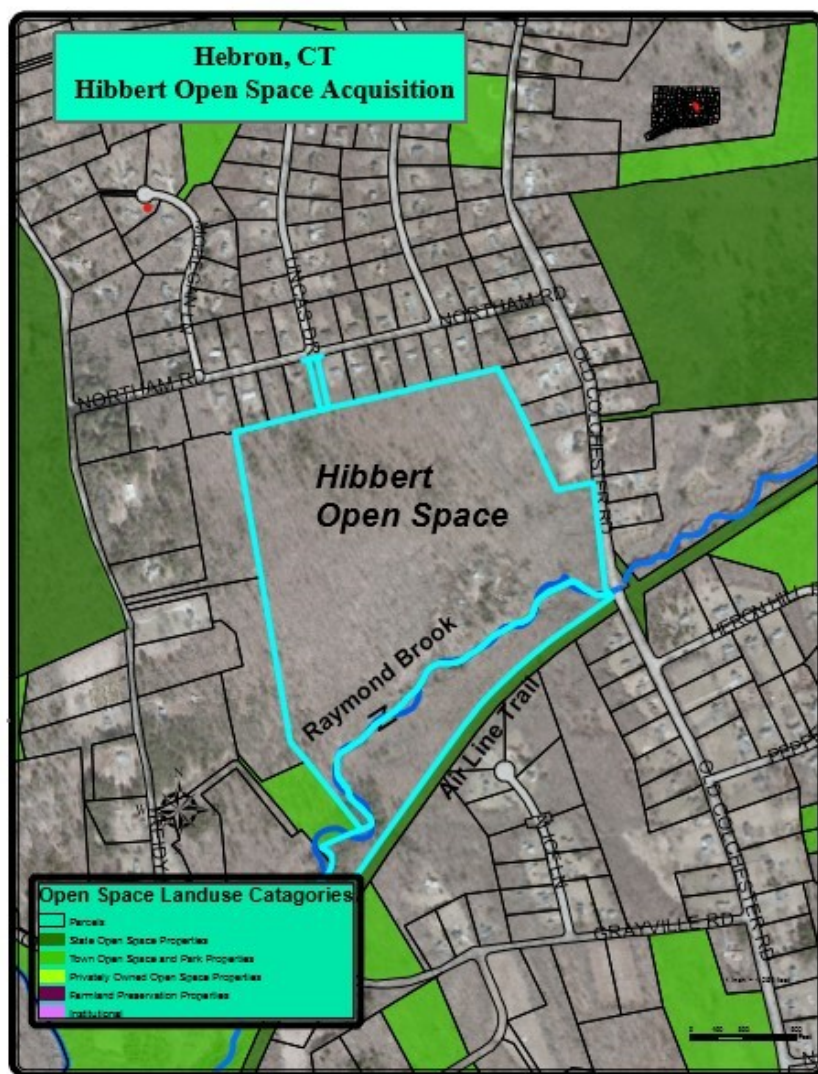
Watershed Coordinator:
Patricia Young

Website:
www.SalmonRiverCT.org

Hebron Open Space Purchase – Raymond Brook Greenway Corridor!

The Town of Hebron, upon recommendation from its Open Space Land Acquisition Committee, has recently acquired the 82-acre Hibbert property located along Old Colchester and Northam Roads and within the Raymond Brook Greenway, as depicted in the town's Plan of Conservation and Development. The property abuts the Air Line State Park Trail (Air Line Trail) from Old Colchester Road to Grayville Road, providing a protected scenic view from the Air Line Trail to the north. The property also includes a .6 mile stretch of Raymond Brook, a Class A watercourse and tributary of Jeremy River, traversing alongside the Air Line Trail, just to the north (the Jeremy River is a tributary of the Salmon River). This acquisition complements several other Hebron open space purchases in the Raymond Brook Greenway Corridor, protecting the water quality of the Salmon River Watershed.

The site is comprised of a unique blend of wetland and diversified upland forest and is home to a "Species of Concern" as identified by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. In proximity to other large areas of open space, this area provides for a significant, undisturbed area for wildlife and for passive recreational uses including hiking, fishing and picnicking. An existing access drive on Old Colchester Road leads to a large open field within the parcel and affords an opportunity to expand the very limited parking to the Air Line Trail in this area.



-By Frank Zitkus and Mike O'Leary

Twelve-Town Air Line State Park Trail– A Master Plan

On January 7th, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) awarded funds to Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (CTRC&D) through their Recreational Trails program. The grant money, in the amount of \$188,522.00, will be used to carry out CTRC&D's proposal of the Twelve Town Air Line State Park Trail Master Plan.

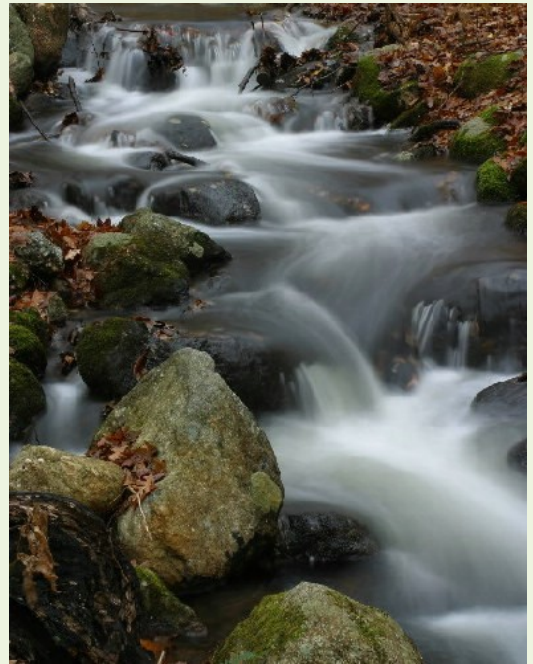
The goal of the Master Plan is to re-establish the economic significance and value of the Air Line Trail, which was formerly the Air Line Railroad and dates back to the 1870s. The railroad once connected New York City to Boston. During the summer months, the railroad brought a huge influx of city people to the country for vacation. Many local farm families boarded these visitors for the extra income. The railway made possible the start of the resort business still flourishing on Williams Pond. Today, the Air Line State Park Trail is public property and is used for biking, walking, hiking, and horseback riding.

The Master Plan will be developed in collaboration with a task force made up of representatives from the Towns of Portland, East Hampton, Colchester, Hampton, Hebron, Columbia, Chaplin, Lebanon, Windham, Pomfret, and Thompson. The project's scope encompasses over 50 miles of the Air Line Trail and properties adjacent near the trail, including town centers, state and town parks and forests located within the twelve towns, four Council of Government regions, and the Last Green Valley region.

NOTE: CT Resource Conservation Development Area, Inc. is a qualified 501 (3) (c) non-profit organization. CT RC&D also serves as the fiscal agent of the Salmon River Watershed Partnership.

For the most up to date information on the Air Line State Park Trail project, please visit www.ctert.org and click on the Air Line Trail Master Plan tab.

Photos courtesy of Stan Malcolm. For more photos, visit www.performance-vision.com



Five Miles of River Cleaned Up in 2018!

Yup, that's right, five miles of river were cleaned up as part of the CT River Watershed "Source to Sea" event in September of 2018. Many thanks to all the volunteers that showed up to lend a hand. Special thanks to CME Engineering for sponsoring the event and to GZA GeoEnvironmental Green Team and UCONN Soil and Water Club for their enthusiastic turn-out. Work took place along the banks of the Salmon River, Jeremy River, Blackledge River, Meadow Brook and Pine Brook.



Native BioFilter at Gay City State Park

Gay City State Park in Hebron is known for its hiking trails, picnicking spots and freshwater pond for swimming. It is also known for its wildlife, critters like deer, beaver, wild turkeys and turtles. While most folks are thrilled for a glimpse of wildlife during their park visits, there are some wildlife species that can be an issue from an environmental health concern. Canada Geese are one of these. Like many swimming, the pond at Gay City State Park has sandy beaches with adjacent grassy picnic areas. While guests find this attractive, the problem is that, so do Canada Geese. They are more than content to munch on the grass and then leave droppings on the adjacent beach. Visual access to the water gives them a sense of safety.

So how do we create a less inviting space for geese but do it naturally? As you may have guessed, native plants do it best. In a cooperative project between CT Master Gardeners, DEEP State Parks and Salmon River Watershed Partnership, a native habitat restoration area, aka a BioFilter, was designed and planted in the summer of 2018. It lies between the picnic area and open water. Plants chosen have enough height to disrupt the geese's visual access, but are low enough to maintain visitor views to the pond. As they fill in, native plants also help with filtering any overland flow to the pond and are pollinator friendly. Look for informational signage in the summer of 2019.

"My very favorite project is a habitat restoration project at Gay City State Park in Hebron," New London County Master Gardener Coordinator Paul Armond said. "This was a wonderful collaboration among the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Salmon River Watershed, park staff and our program."



Funding for this project was made possible by CT Master Gardener Program, Salmon River Watershed Partnership and Society of Women Environmental Professionals with assistance from CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Chatham Health Department and CT River Coastal Conservation District