Natchaug River Watershed
Conservation Action Plan – ReCAP August 2019

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Conservation Action Planning (CAP)

• Simple, straightforward and proven tool for planning, implementing and measuring success for conservation projects.

• Strive for inclusive representation, active participation and transparent decision-making.

Timeline

- **2004**: Chaplin and Eastford Natchaug River Alliance meetings
- **2006**: 8 Towns apply and receive Greenway Designation
- **2008**: June: Chief Elected Officials endorse Conservation Action Planning
  Oct: CAP Workshops begin
- **2009**: Jan: Workshop
  Natchaug River Watershed CAP Drafted
- **2010**: Steering Committee Develops Work Plan
Step 1 - Defining the Project: Scope

- 114,000-acres
- Benchmark Stream for Water Quality
- Rich diversity of aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals
- More than 75% forested
- Largest public surface drinking water supply watershed in Connecticut
Defining the Project: People (Stakeholders)

- 3 Rivers – Designated Greenway Rivers by the Connecticut Greenways Council - 2006
- 8 Primary towns – all supported Greenway designations
Workshop 1: Conservation Targets

- Main Stem Rivers
  - Fenton
  - Mount Hope
  - Natchaug
- Headwater Streams and Wetland Complexes
- Cold Water Fisheries
- Aquifers and Groundwater Recharge
- Lakes and Ponds
- Forests
- Grasslands
Indicators (example) Headwater Streams and Wetlands

Physical Structure and Composition:
• % Natural Habitat
• % Riparian Habitat
• Woody Debris (presence/absence)

Water Quality:
• Biological Communities (presence/absence)
• Macro invertebrate abundance

Watershed Condition:
• % Natural Cover
Workshop 2: Critical Threats

• Incompatible Development (Residential and Commercial)
• Incompatible Road Construction and Maintenance
• Excessive or inappropriately timed Groundwater Withdrawal
• Incompatible Dams and Dam Maintenance
Workshop 3: Analyze the Situation & Brainstorm Strategies

- Secure endorsement of Natchaug River CAP strategies through an intermunicipal compact signed by all municipalities
- Conduct outreach and education to make sure people understand the importance of the Natchaug River Basin and how their actions affect the health of the watershed.
- Adopt road and stormwater BMPs to keep forests and water healthy.
- Implement a watershed wide mechanism to balance conservation and economic growth in less sensitive areas across the watershed.
Education and Outreach: What happened?

- Intermunicipal compact signed April 2011
- Educational video celebrating Conservation Compact and Natchaug watershed curriculum developed.
- 12 Natchaug participants joined 2011 Forest Stewardship Short Course
- 15 Natchaug sites included in Stream Monitoring

Photo Courtesy H. Drinkuth
Road and Stormwater BMPs: What happened?

• Developed Library of Road Construction and Maintenance BMPs

• Draft “Dashboard Manual” developed, final document not completed

• NEW(ish)!
  • 2017 MS4 General Permit - Low Impact Development Practices
  • 2019 CTDOT Stormwater General Permit

Photo Courtesy of the Great Moose Lake Association
Balance Conservation and Economic Growth: What happened?

- Prioritized critical forest lands for protection of water resources
- Conducted inventory of municipal land use regulations
- Provided recommendations for enhanced protection of forest and water resources (e.g. River Overlay Zones, LID regulations, Transfer of Development Rights)

Natchaug Subregional Watershed Basin:
Permanently Protected Open Space, Privately Owned or Municipal Open Space and Unprotected Forested Parcels with Greatest Impact on Water Quality
Map Complied by the Green Valley Institute, 2010
Balance Conservation and Economic Growth: What happened?

- US Fish and Wildlife Service North America Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)

- $1 million + leveraged $3.5 million in matching funds = 1,123 acres of forest and wetland protected from conversion
Thank you for keeping the Natchaug River Watershed clean and healthy!

Photo Courtesy of Chris Demers