



ECCD OUTLOOK

A publication of the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, Inc.

Summer 2018 Edition

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Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels for Eastern Connecticut

As previously reported, ECCD received funding from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund to conduct workshops, install 100 rain gardens and 100 rain barrels in eastern Connecticut. Partnering with the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, various service organizations at UConn, the Coca-Cola Bottling Company, the Thames River Basin Partnership, the Niantic River Watershed Committee and The Last Green Valley, ECCD has been working feverishly to implement the program.

Rain gardens and rain barrels are low-cost solutions to reducing non-point source pollution from entering our rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and Long Island Sound. Rain gardens are slight depressions in the ground in which a variety of plants are installed. Stormwater runoff from rooftops, driveways and sidewalks is redirected into the rain garden where it infiltrates into the soil and is filtered of contaminants. Rain barrels collect rainwater from rooftops which can then be used to water gardens and flowers around the yard.

To date, ECCD has distributed 60 rain barrels and installed numerous rain gardens including many high-profile locations such as the Lebanon Historical Society Museum, the Mystic Museum of Art, Waylands Wharf in Stonington Borough, the June Norcross Webster Scout Reservation in Ashford, Bicentennial Pond in Mansfield and the Voluntown Peace Trust. ECCD has also conducted 5 rain garden workshops and 3 rain barrel workshops.



Rain garden installed on May 19th at the Lebanon Historical Society Museum

If you are interested in attending a rain barrel workshop, or installing a rain garden or rain barrel at your home, school, church or business, please contact Dan.Mullins@comcast.net, or call 860-319-8808 for more information.

~ ~ ~

Community Foundation of Eastern CT Awards Grant to ECCD

The Community Foundation of Eastern CT (CFECT) has awarded Eastern CT Conservation District (ECCD) a \$40,000 capacity-building grant. With the funding, ECCD will develop a strategic plan and create a stormwater collaborative in southeastern CT.

Development of the strategic plan will allow the District to identify opportunities to build partnerships, expand revenue streams, develop comprehensive education programs and increase its capacity to address pressing conservation issues, from polluted stormwater to habitat degradation, in eastern CT. The strategic plan will be a blueprint that will guide the District over the next 5-7 years.

Creation of the stormwater collaborative will provide important resources to local municipalities which are struggling to implement unfunded mandates required under the State of CT's *General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems* (MS4 General Permit). The MS4 General Permit mandates that MS4 towns implement 6 minimal control measures to clean up the stormwater entering its storm sewer systems before it enters water bodies, including public education programs to raise awareness among residents about stormwater pollutants generated through daily activities.

ECCD is excited about the opportunity to partner with the Community Foundation to protect local ecosystems and habitats for wildlife, while improving the quality of life for all of CT's residents.

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Judy Rondeau Promoted to Assistant Director

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District is excited to announce that Judy Rondeau has been promoted to Assistant Director. Judy has been with the District since 2010 serving on numerous boards and committees, as well as conducting and implementing many projects and programs. Over the years, Judy has developed a deep and broad set of skills that will serve the District well as the staff and board move forward to develop and execute a strategic plan.

In addition to serving as Assistant Director, Judy will continue her regular duties managing projects, coordinating the Niantic River Watershed Committee, conducting workshops and advising residents and municipal staff in eastern Connecticut. Judy will also be project manager for the development of the Southeast CT Stormwater Collaborative, an initiative to assist District municipalities to understand, implement and collaborate on requirements mandated under the State of CT *General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems* (MS4 General Permit).

Judy was awarded the Lesa Meng Aquatic Conservation Award from the American Fisheries Society - Southern New England Chapter at their summer meeting in June. The award recognizes an individual or individuals from outside the fisheries profession that have made an outstanding contribution to conservation or the fisheries profession in southern New England.

Congratulations Judy! Good luck in your new position. If you would like to send your regards to Judy, she can be contacted at Judy.Rondeau@comcast.net.



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Algae Monitoring in Roseland Lake, Woodstock, CT

After several years of researching water quality issues in Roseland Lake, ECCD published the Roseland Lake Management Plan in March 2018 http://www.conservect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ECCD-RoselandLakeManagementPlan_final.pdf. One of the recommendations in the Plan is to learn more about the types of algae in the lake and which types are dominant under different conditions. For example, many types of cyanobacteria (sometimes referred to as blue-green algae) thrive when the water temperature is above 25°C (77°F). Some kinds of cyanobacteria can also “fix” nitrogen from the air when the dissolved nutrients in the water are used up, just like the soil bacteria that helps peas and beans grow in your garden. Cyanobacteria have an advantage in warm water over other algae types. Knowing the conditions in the lake before a bloom occurs may allow the lake managers to treat the lake to prevent a bloom from occurring.

Cyanobacteria are tiny photosynthetic organisms that can be found in diverse places, including fresh water. Under the right conditions, cyanobacteria can form “blooms.” These blooms can be a problem because many types of cyanobacteria produce toxins which are dangerous to humans and wildlife. These cyanobacteria and their toxins can be found in the water as well as in the air nearby. Impacts of cyanobacteria blooms may include skin irritations, illness, loss of plant and animal life, loss of aesthetic appeal, loss of recreational opportunities, and reduction in property values. (<https://cyanos.org/>)

Under the ECCD Cooperative Agreement with The Last Green Valley (TLGV), Jean Pillo, ECCD Watershed Conservation Project Manager, began a new water quality monitoring project in 2018. This pilot project of TLGV’s Water Quality Monitoring Program is being funded in part by a Watershed Assistance Small Grant (WASGP). The WASGP grant is funded in part by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection through a United States Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant, and administered by Rivers Alliance of Connecticut.

In the summer of 2018, Jean, with the assistance of TLGV volunteers, has been sampling and analyzing water from Roseland Lake every 2 weeks. Samples collected with a plankton net are being reviewed using a digital microscope. Images of the algae are being uploaded to a special i-Naturalist website and identified by a team of experts organized by the US EPA. Other samples, collected using a 3 meter long tube sampler, are being processed and analyzed using a fluorimeter. A fluorimeter passes light beams through a water sample to measure the relative concentration of two types of plant pigments. These pigments are chlorophyll, which is found in all types of plants, algae, and phycocyanin, a pigment unique to cyanobacteria.



A plankton net is used to collect algae samples from the lake.

With this information, we will learn what types of cyanobacteria are in the lake, and their relative abundance compared to other algae types. In addition to samples being collected every 2 weeks from May to September, the team is collecting other data, including water temperature, dissolved oxygen concentration, pH, conductivity and turbidity using other TLGV equipment. This data is being collected at 0.5 meter intervals over the deepest part of the lake. It will show if the lake is divided into temperature layers and if there is oxygen in the lowest layer of the lake. A secchi disk is also being used to measure water clarity. Water temperature data in the lake surface layer and the tributaries and outlet of the lake is being collected every hour using temperature data loggers, also purchased with funding from the WASGP grant. During the previous TLGV/ECCD study of Roseland Lake, we learned that when the lake sets up distinct temperature layers, all the dissolved oxygen in the bottom layer is used up. Under those anoxic conditions, the phosphorus stored in the lake sediment is released into that bottom layer of water.

Cyanobacteria are different from other types of algae because they can migrate up and down in the water using gas pockets inside their cells. This allows them to access the phosphorus from the bottom of the lake, then float up to the surface where the sun fuels photosynthesis and their explosive reproduction into an algae bloom. The results of this project are being shared with the Putnam Water Pollution Control Authority which manages Roseland Lake, the Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative, CT DEEP, CT Department of Health Drinking Water Division and US EPA. Updates on this project are being posted periodically on the Roseland Lake Facebook page. ♦

Thames River Basin Partnership Floating Workshop XVIII



The Thames River Basin Partnership Floating Workshop XVIII took place on June 15, 2018. The focus of this year's workshop was river continuity. Scholarships were available this year for municipal staff and commissioners through a grant provided by the Chelsea Groton Foundation.

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Lucas Young Named National Soil Health Champion *Four Generations, all Young, Planning for and Chasing the Legacy of Their Soils*

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) is proud to announce that Lucas Young of Valleyside Farm located in Woodstock, Connecticut has been named a Soil Health Champion by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

ECCD worked with NACD to nominate Young, based on his extraordinary work to promote soil health management practices on the family farm and advance the adoption of these practices within the larger farming community. ECCD supports the work of Lucas by helping to publicize field days and farm tours, and by providing resources for other soil health related promotional activities.

Soil Health Champions are raising awareness about the benefits of soil health practices from the local level to a national one. Champions share their personal experiences using best management practices through the national network on a peer-to-peer basis and through NACD-hosted national meetings and events.

The land that Lucas manages has been in his family for 11 generations. As dairy farmers, their cows, which consist of a 220 milking herd of beautiful Holsteins, are a treasured part of their farm. The quality milk they produce is shipped to make the Cabot dairy products you love! The land the cows are raised on was originally part of a King's grant, remaining in the family ever since it was deeded to his ancestors in the early 1700's. "We are blessed to be the caretakers and continue its long-standing legacy. As a multigenerational operation (four currently on the farm), our history drives our future and we are always looking for new technologies and ideas to keep our business sustainable and moving forward. This year we are building our own creamery where we will bring a touch of our past back by selling our dairy products directly to our neighbors in the surrounding community."

The words of Lucas's grandfather, Dexter Young, say it all, "Lucas wakes up in the morning thinking and talking about the legacy of the family and the farm." Lucas's determination to shape the family legacy is apparent in all that he does, from hosting soil health workshops to participating in research to study the best methods to germinate and manage

Continued on page 5

Friends of Shetucket River Valley

A main tributary of the Thames River, the Shetucket River (20.9 miles) flows south from Willimantic through Franklin, Scotland and Sprague. It joins with the Quinebaug River in Norwich, and its waters flow into the Thames River and then into Long Island Sound. Much of the adjacent land along the Shetucket is still forest and fields.

The Friends of Shetucket River Valley (FoSRV) was formed to protect open space in the Shetucket River Valley for the future enjoyment of the public and the preservation of key habitat for fish and wildlife. They do not purchase land, but assist other not-for-profit organizations and municipalities to acquire and preserve open space.

FoSRV works with the towns of Windham, Sprague, Scotland, Franklin and Lisbon in support of their conservation initiative. Their commitment is to educate the public about this beautiful natural resource that is the Shetucket River Valley, to raise funds for preservation activities including property and conservation easement purchase and to work with area land trusts, organizations and state & federal conservation agencies to insure permanent conservancy.

Anyone wishing to learn more, to make a donation, wishing to volunteer or to become a member is invited to visit the FoSRV website at shetucket.org.

cover crops as well as traveling to various regions to explore and learn from other leaders in the field. Pursuing the family legacy has economic benefits, as well. According to Tim Young, Lucas's father, the soil health practices they have adopted "make the farm viable and sustainable for future generations."

As field manager for the family farm, Lucas has been instrumental in converting Valleyside Farm's practices to supporting soil health. Under Lucas's leadership, Valleyside has implemented no-till farming and the use of diverse cover crops. Last year, with assistance from CT DEEP through Sec. 319 of EPA's Clean Water Act, Valleyside purchased precision planting equipment to allow its cover crop to remain in the ground longer which helps to naturally feed the next crop.

"It is an honor to be chosen as a Soil Health Champion," said Young. "Building soil health is essential if America is to meet the challenges of providing food, fuel, and fiber for a growing population here and abroad. I encourage my fellow farmers to research methods that can improve farming practices all while keeping economics and sustainability in mind. We are all unique due to the make-up of our lands but we can always learn from one another."

"Lucas richly deserves this honor. He will be a stellar advocate in helping to increase adoption of soil health practices – his humility, when discussing soil, disarms the staunchest doubters," said Dan Mullins, Executive Director of the District.

Lucas has also installed other conservation practices to help protect the environment. Last summer, Lucas and his 13 year-old son Chase installed a woodchip bioreactor to remove excess nitrogen from tile drain discharge. Chase looked confident and regal as he steered the front-end loader into position. Surely the King's grant will be left in good hands as four generations of Youngs pursue the noble enterprise of dairy farming while implementing soil health practices that will improve the farm's soil quality and protect local waterways.

To arrange a speaking engagement, interview, field tour, or other activity with Lucas Young or the NACD Soil Health Champions Network, contact NACD's Beth Mason at beth-mason@nacdnet.org or ECCD's Dan Mullins at Dan.Mullins@comcast.net.

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Chris Peltier of Tier Technology Services Receives ECCD Technology Award

On April 3, Executive Director Dan Mullins presented ECCD's Technology Award to Chris Peltier (right in photo) at the 2018 opening of the Hallville Fish Ladder in Preston.

In addition to providing staff support at the office, Chris has also been working with ECCD and DEEP to bring the computer and camera, funded through the Andrew Tate Memorial Fund, into operation at the annual openings of the fish ladder since its inception in 2013.

Through Chris's technology support, the public can access the Hallville Fish Ladder camera online and observe fish passage right from home or office during operation from April to July.

The fish ladder is closed for the season and will reopen in April 2019. Go to www.conservect.org/eastern next spring for a link to watch as the alewives pass by, completing their journey upstream from the ocean to Hallville Pond to spawn. **Thank you Chris!**

2018 Connecticut Envirothon

Congratulations to all the high school students and teachers/advisors who participated in this year's competition!

First place: Academy of Aerospace & Engineering

Second place: Housatonic Valley High School - Team 1

Third place: Farmington High School

Outreach Support to ECCD

We extend our many thanks to the following supporters of conservation for their generous assistance and outreach!

- ✧ 2017-18 Water Quality Monitoring Volunteers
- ✧ 2018 Plant Sale Volunteers
- ✧ Andrew Tate Memorial Fund
- ✧ The CT Audubon Society
- ✧ CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
- ✧ Green Team of Frito Lay-Pepsico, Dayville
- ✧ The Town of Lisbon
- ✧ Ocean State Job Lot
- ✧ Retired Senior Volunteers
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- ✧ The Last Green Valley, Inc.
- ✧ UConn Extension System
- ✧ USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ✧ Windham County Agricultural Society, Brooklyn

Thank you for your acts of kindness that follow:

♥♥♥ ECCD wishes to express its respectful appreciation for donations ♥♥♥ fondly made on behalf of others in the name of conservation.	
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Town Support

We would like to thank the following towns for their 2017-18 contributions to ECCD which help to support regional conservation throughout eastern Connecticut.

Ashford, Brooklyn, Columbia, Eastford, Franklin, Hampton, Killingly, Ledyard, Lisbon, Mansfield, Pomfret, Preston, Sprague, Sterling, Thompson, Voluntown and Waterford.

The Town of Killingly was accidentally excluded from last summer's list of municipal donors. We apologize, and greatly appreciate Killingly's generous support over the years.

ECCD Remembers Tom ODeil as a Leader in CT Conservation

Tom wore many hats in the CT conservation community and is remembered for being a founding member of the CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation and the CT Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions. Locally, Tom served 40+ years as a board member of the CT River Coastal Conservation District and as the Chair of the Westbrook Conservation Commission. To know Tom was to know his passion and commitment to conservation.

Peace Tom.

ECCD Gives Thanks to Our Supporters

We extend our sincere appreciation to you for supporting natural resource conservation in eastern Connecticut. Your donations truly enhance our outreach and education, while keeping our 36 towns and coastal shorelines evolving into greater health and beauty through sound stewardship.

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