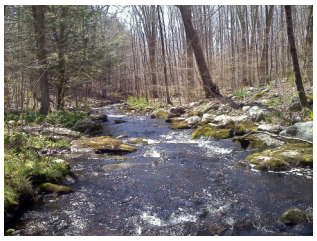
SALMON RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SALMON RIVER WATERSHED

2014



Baseline Water Quality Monitoring

In the summer of 2013, the SRWP, with the help of many dedicated volunteers, initiated a baseline water quality monitoring program in the watershed. For ten weeks data was collected at eleven sites throughout the watershed for stream temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, total dissolved solids and salinity. Each tributary can have varying measurements as a result of its geology, ground and surface discharges and surrounding land use, among other things. Baseline stream data is a critical tool for watershed management to determine change over time.

To review the full report please visit the website at www.salmonriverct.org

Painted turtles basking in the summer sun. ***Photo courtesy of S. Malcolm***

Colchester Land Trust Heading for Accreditation

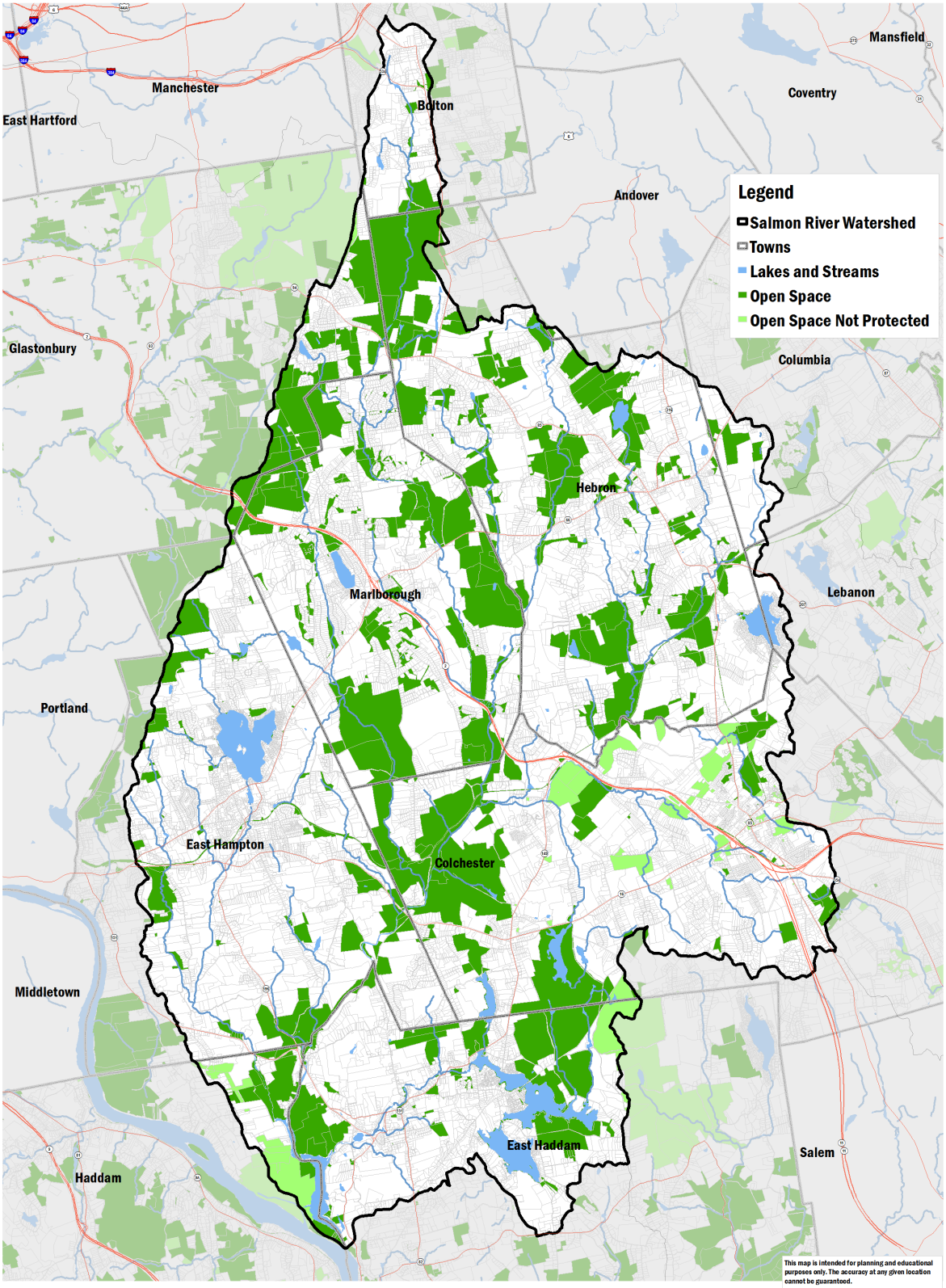
The Colchester Land Trust is rapidly moving toward national recognition. In the summer of 2013, the CLT was selected as one a few land trusts in the country to be reviewed by the accreditation committee of the Land Trust Alliance, a national governing body that assures all accredited trusts operate under the best operating procedures.

These procedures called Standards and Practices or "S&P" not only assure a sound organization, but deal with issues like fund raising, conflicts of interest, contracts, easements, landowner relationships, community benefits and a wide range of issues. S&P becomes the guidance for everything a trust may encounter in its operation, dealing with donors, landowners and the public and maintaining its non profit status.

The CLT has received a grant to cover part of the cost of a consultant to guide the trust through the process. Three complete binders must be prepared in advance with every policy and agreement included that CLT has created since it started in 2002. The consultant, Connie Manes of Kent, CT, feels CLT has done a good job keeping proper records, enacting sound practices and should be a good candidate for accreditation. The fact that CLT is a relatively young land trust and holds a relatively few parcels and easements makes the process manageable. Most everything was done right from the start. Still, a lot of work remains in the coming months.

For more info: www.colchesterlandtrust.org ***L. Hageman***

Salmon River Watershed Open Space



Open Space Mapping

An important part of watershed management is knowing where preserved parcels are located, especially in relation to stream corridors and other sensitive resources. Preserved lands are the single most effective tool in maintaining high water quality and protecting critical habitats. This map depicts protected lands in the Salmon River Watershed. The darker green areas are lands with development restrictions in place while the lighter shaded green areas show land which is managed as open space but without permanent restrictions.

Many thanks to the watershed towns for providing open space information and to SRWP Member E. Wilson for contributing her GIS skills.

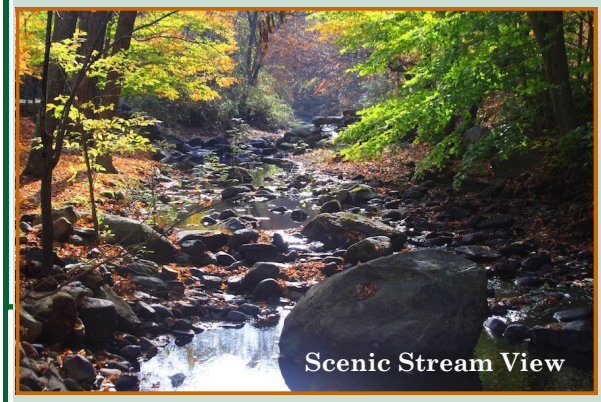
Completion of a 9000 foot linear trail in Marlborough along the Blackledge River Greenway

Phase III of the planned 9000 linear foot trail along the Blackledge River was completed in 2013. This trail extends from West Road south to North Parker Road crossing over the Foote Sawmill Brook meandering alongside the river. The Blackledge River is a major tributary to the Salmon River. Its headwaters originate in Bolton and it flows through Hebron, Marlborough and into Colchester where it joins the Jeremy River to form the beginning of the Salmon River, which then flows to the Connecticut River. It is an important resource for native fisheries and much of the river corridor has been preserved through combined efforts of the Town of Marlborough, the State of Connecticut and local landowners. The Blackledge River was designated as an official Greenway by the State in 2007 in recognition of its natural resources and cultural and historical features. As planned, the Blackledge River Greenway will eventually host an 8 mile north-south trail extending from Glastonbury to Colchester.

For updates, walks and trail map; please visit www.marlboroughct.net and click on the Nature Trails & Sidewalks Commission under Departments tab.

Hidden Valley Farm
A Key Acquisition on the Moodus River

In 2013, the East Haddam Land Trust acquired an easement on about 45 acres from Gary and Donna Bogan and thus helped fulfill a 30-year Land Trust goal of protecting property along the Moodus River. The Land Trust also purchased 1-1/2 acres from the Bogans to use as a trailhead, for parking, and for fishing access.


Scenic Stream View

The easement acreage protects approximately 4,200 feet along the Moodus River, two historic former dams and mill races that were once part of the twine industry in Moodus, and also provides fishing access along the river.

In exchange for a $200,000 grant from the Town of East Haddam to the East Haddam Land Trust, the Town has an additional easement on the property that provides further assurance that this acreage will remain protected and also have public access.

Hidden Valley Farms is accessible from Grist Mill Road. Parking is available in a small lot adjacent to the Moodus River. Easy hiking trails meander through woods, meadows, wetlands and along the Moodus River for fishing and wildlife observation, and connect Grist Mill Road with Clark Gates Road.

Photos courtesy of S. Thurmond - wildandscenicart.com


A spring peeper

Steering Committee

Watershed Towns
Bolton: Andrew Perham

Colchester: Jay Gigliotti, Adam Turner (alternate)

Columbia: Rob Hellstrom

East Haddam: Emmett Lyman, Jim Ventres (alternate)

East Hampton: Peter Aarrestad, Emily and Josh Wilson (alternates)

Glastonbury: Tom Mocko Dennis McInerney (alternate)

Haddam: Liz West, Jim Puska (alternate)

Hebron: Brian O'Connell, Frank Zitkus (alternate)

Marlborough: Peter Hughes, Joseph LaBella (alternate)

Organizations

The Nature Conservancy: Shelley Green

Connecticut DEEP: Eric Thomas

Colchester Land Trust: Lisa Hageman, Leslie Curtis (alternate)

Trout Unlimited:, Henry Fredericks

Member at Large

Silvio O. Conte Refuge-Haddam Neck: Jim McHutchison

Watershed Coordinator: Patricia Young

GOT BUGS?

With the help of many community volunteers, RHAM High School Aquatics Class, and the Colchester Brownie Troop, the Partnership was able to assess 12 river segments last fall, with the Bolton Conservation Commission contributing two additional sites.

In a protocol developed by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, benthic macroinvertebrates (aka water bugs) are collected, sorted and field identified by volunteers. A specimen of each type is preserved and sent to the state lab for verification. This assessment is a method of determining whether a river segment is meeting its goal for aquatic life support.

From left to right-collection of the macroinvertebrates, sorting insects into ice cube trays and a spirited discussion on wing pads, gills and numbers of tails present to key out species.

List of Rivers Assessed in the Salmon River Watershed

- Blackledge River (upper) in Bolton (by Bolton Conservation Commission)
- Blackledge River (lower) in Marlborough
- Dickinson Creek in Colchester
- Fawn Brook (upper) in Hebron
- Fawn Brook (lower) in Marlborough
- French Brook in Bolton (by Bolton Conservation Commission)
- Jeremy River (upper) in Hebron
- Jeremy River (lower) in Colchester
- Judd Brook in Colchester
- Moodus River in East Haddam
- Pine Brook (Eastern) in Colchester
- Pine Brook (Western) in East Hampton
- Raymond Brook in Hebron
- Salmon River in East Hampton

RHAM HS Aquatics Class

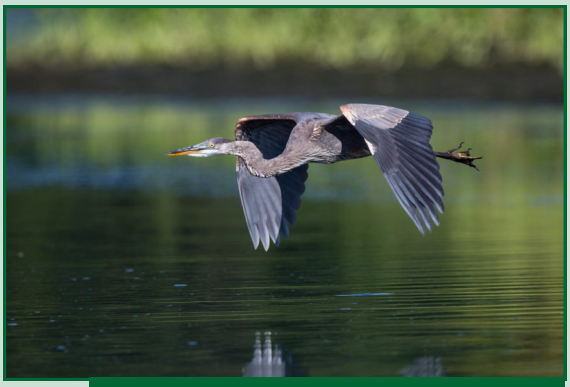
Our Thanks….

The Salmon River Watershed Partnership activities would not be possible without the support of the watershed towns, the Partnership Committee and all our volunteers. Over 100 volunteers participated in 2013, contributing over 600 hours of their time.

We offer special thanks to: **Stan Malcolm** (photographer and entomologist) for putting together a picture guide for macroinvertebrate identification; **Jon Morrison, Chris Frey, Chuck Toal, Guy Holtzer** and **Jane Brawerman** (CT River Coastal Conservation District) our field training leaders; board member **Emily Wilson** for her continued GIS Mapping skills; and **Goodwin College** for equipment support. Thanks also to the **Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, The Nature Conservancy** for their assistance with Partnership activities.

What's Happening in Haddam Neck?

The Salmon River Division of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge currently consists of several hundred acres located in the Haddam Neck vicinity. It has a loosely formed Friends Group which has been working cooperatively with United State Fish & Wildlife Service officials on several stewardship projects over the past couple of years.



Great Blue Heron
Photo courtesy of Pierre Faber

Projects thus far have included control of invasive species, littering, and off-road vehicle traffic in cooperation with Federal enforcement in one case. These efforts are succeeding. In addition the Friends Group has done some cooperative road improvement and is planning to remove some derelict buildings and other trash as well as maintenance of grassland bird habitat and general cleanup.

If you are interested in knowing more about the Friends of Salmon River Division or participating, contact Jim McHutchison at jamesmchutchison@mac.com, Phil Gaudreau at pgaudreau41@comcast.net, or Pat Young at salmonriverct@att.net.

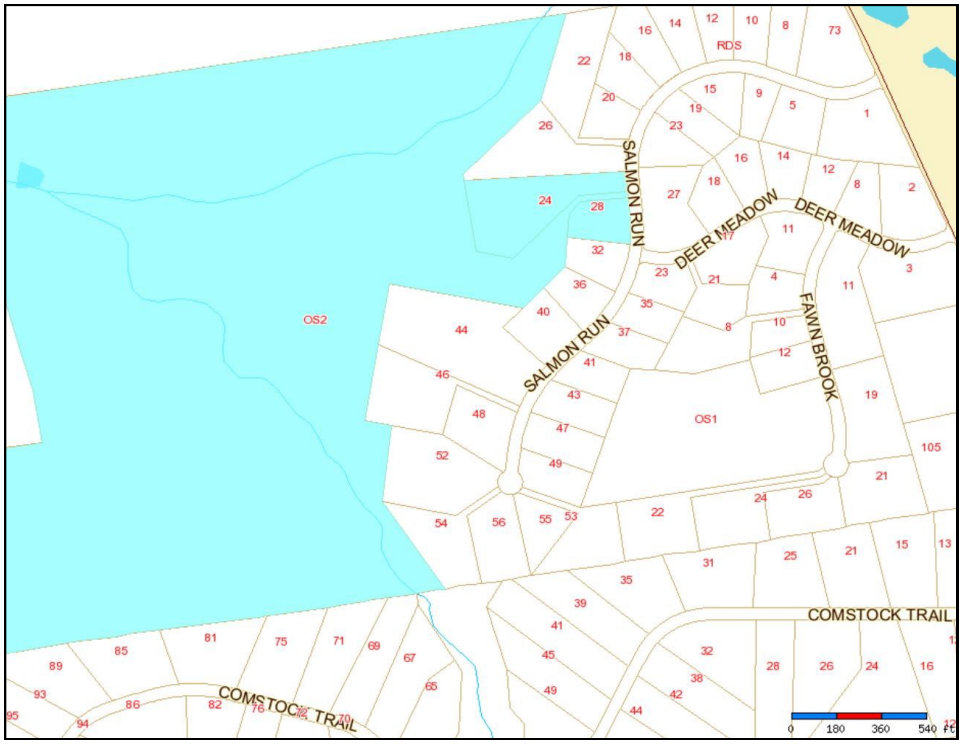
J. McHutchison

CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS

A Tool for Preserving Critical Resources in East Hampton.

"Conservation Subdivisions", or "Open Space" or "Cluster" Subdivisions as they are also known, have been around for awhile. The basic premise is that smaller lots with reduced setbacks are allowed leaving more land to be preserved in its natural state. Densities are typically based on what a traditional subdivision would yield, but some towns also allow a small bonus in numbers to encourage this approach. Since lots and lot frontages are smaller, roads are also shorter, along with utilities and storm drainage, translating into less cost to construct for the developer and less cost to the town to maintain.

Salmon Run Estates is a good example of how this type of design balances lot yield with preservation. The original parcel was just over 201 acres. The multi-phase yield was 58 lots with about 150 acres retained as permanent open space. This land abuts the Salmon River State Forest and features tributaries which feed the Salmon River. The town, working with the applicant, also approved a number of environmentally friendly best management practices or BMPs as design elements. These include narrower roads which reduces the amount of stormwater run-off, and limited curbing where feasible to encourage stormwater to infiltrate rather than discharge to an adjacent stream.



Salmon Run Estates embraces the "open space concept" , highlighting these features when advertising lots and homes for sale.

Salmon Restoration in Connecticut...What's New?

In 2011 the White River National Fish Hatchery in Bethel, VT was destroyed by tropical storm Irene. This was the primary facility for raising juvenile salmon for the Connecticut River Restoration Project. Without funding to restore the facility and citing poor progress on restoration, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which coordinated the restoration effort, decided during the summer of 2012 to end its participation. The states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts also decided to end their participation in salmon restoration shortly thereafter.

Barring evidence in the future that Atlantic salmon stocks elsewhere in North America are rebounding strongly, the goal of restoring a run of thousands of salmon to the Connecticut River watershed has been abandoned.

State Fisheries Biologist, B. Williams weighing out salmon fry for volunteers to release to Salmon River tributaries

The State of Connecticut has decided to continue working with Atlantic salmon, but reduce the effort to a smaller 'legacy' salmon program. The goal of the program will no longer be to establish a self-sustaining population, but maintain a small legacy population. Most of the efforts will be directed to maintaining the popular sport fishery for hatchery raised salmon and education with programs like 'Salmon-in-the-Classroom'. Some salmon fry stocking will continue in Connecticut River tributaries with especially good habitat, including the Farmington and Salmon Rivers in Connecticut, but the number of fish stocked will be drastically reduced. After 2013 any returning adult salmon will be allowed to migrate upriver and spawn on their own.

Why bother with legacy populations? The presence of Atlantic salmon, even at greatly reduced rates from hundreds of years ago, offers many benefits.

- Mature salmon raised in hatcheries offer a unique freshwater ***angling*** experience enjoyed by many Connecticut anglers.
- Whether it is learning about impacts due to historic land use, climatic changes, or raising salmon eggs in a classroom setting, salmon continue to play an important role in ***education***.
- Returning salmon have a ***gene pool*** that could be important in the future for new restoration efforts.
- The presence of salmon contributes to the ***biodiversity*** of the ecosystem.
- They are a ***sentinel or indicator species*** who presence or absence can be indicative of the health of an ecosystem.
- Even reduced salmon numbers offer ***opportunities for continued research*** that can be important locally and in other parts of the world with similar species.

Hebron's Newest Land Acquisition Offers Further Protection for Raymond Brook Marsh

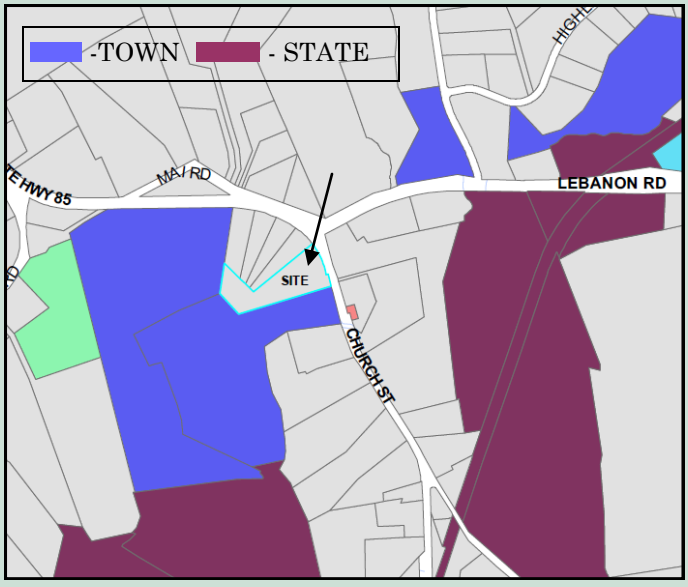
In January 2014, the Hebron Open Space Land Acquisition Committee (Committee) approved a recommendation to acquire a 3.4-acre parcel of land for open space preservation. The parcel, known as the "Michaud property", is located along Church Street and lies within Town's "Aquifer Protection Zone" and "Future Open Space Greenway Plan". The parcel abuts 49 acres of open space purchased by the Town in 2013 (Cardillo parcels) and is approximate to Raymond Brook and Raymond Brook Marsh, a "state-wide wetland of Special Concern".

As one of the last remaining undeveloped parcels near the Raymond Brook Marsh, acquisition of the property would continue the Town's efforts in protecting the high water quality of this vital watercourse and wetland and provide for an extended area of wildlife protection.

Over recent years, the Town and the State of Connecticut have preserved several large parcels within and abutting the Marsh. Acquisition of the "Michaud" parcel, which abuts these open spaces, would expand this public use area, offer an alternative access to this special unique site and provide additional protection of the Marsh and its inhabitants.

The recommended purchase received approval of the Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission in February 2014 and was referred to a March 20, 2014 Special Town Meeting by the Boards of Selectmen and Finance for voter approval.

F. Zitkus



FOR MORE INFO....

www.salmonriverct.org

or

"Like" us on FACEBOOK at Salmon River Watershed Partnership