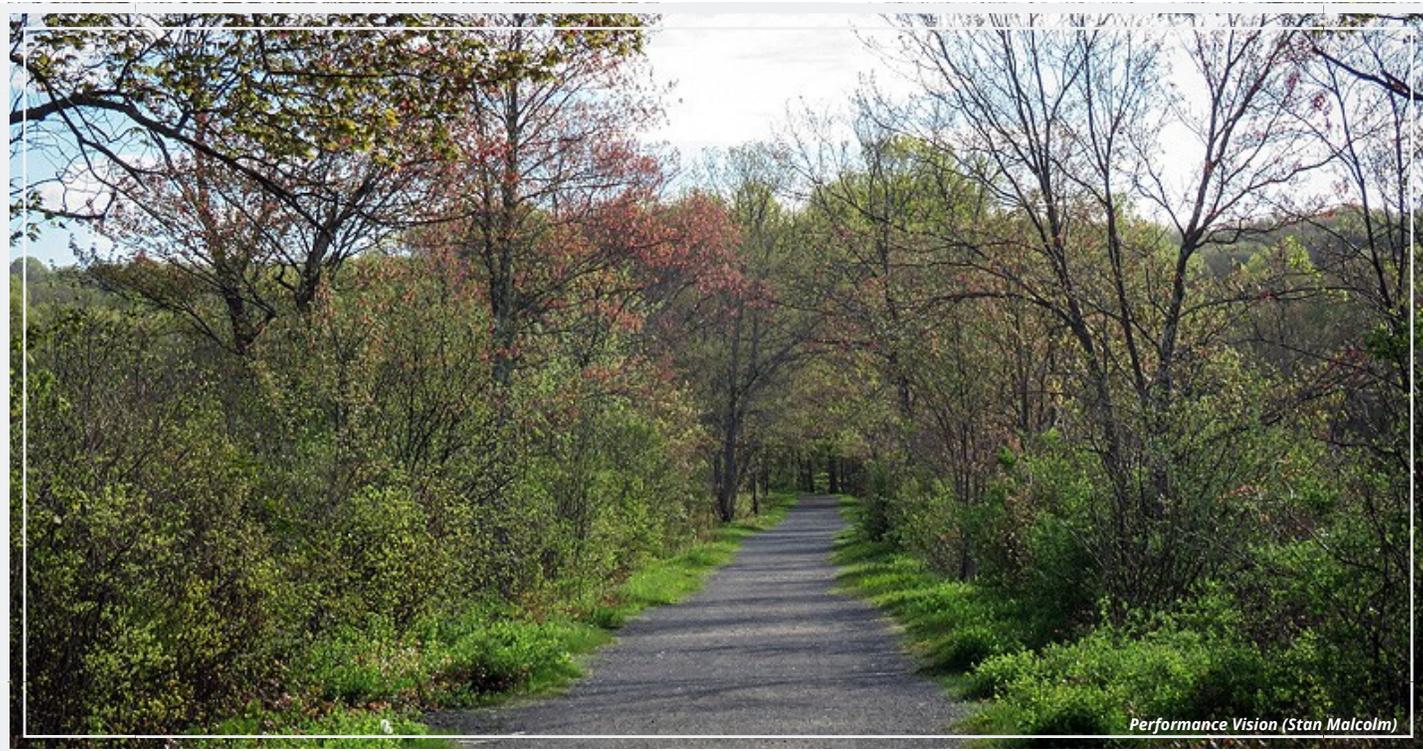




ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SALMON RIVER WATERSHED

2020



Appreciating Our Natural Areas

By Pat Young

What draws us to nature? For many it is the physical challenge of hiking or biking outdoors, anticipating what is around the next corner. For others it is the scenic vistas or the delight in spotting wildflowers, butterflies, or something larger like a wild turkey or a beaver.

In the latest pandemic however, we are also seeking connections to something bigger and space for deep breathing while escaping home quarantine. Fortunately if you live in any of the Salmon River Watershed towns, there are abundant forests, fields, trails and rivers usually just a short walk or drive away. The watershed is 149 square miles (or 95,360 acres), with 25,964 acres of land preserved (at last tally). And much of that land is open for public use and nature immersion.

So whether its fishing off the banks of the Salmon River, wading in Raymond Brook at Grayville Park, taking a ride along the Air Line State Park Trail or finding an old woods road in the State Forest to wander, please join us in thanking all those that have supported land preservation and stewardship in our watershed.

Our Volunteers and Interns

The Salmon River Watershed Partnership is committed to providing volunteer and student intern field learning experiences throughout the watershed. Our volunteers have given many hundreds of hours assisting with stream assessments, stream monitoring, outreach and as board members. Our interns have gone on to work for CT DEEP, CT Dept. of Health, Professional Environmental and Engineering firms, Zoos and Aquariums, Watershed, Groups and g and other non-profit organizations.



Last community riffle macroinvertebrate assessment at Lyman Brook in Marlborough.



Interns Emma Coffey (left) and Cameron Jaks (right) work on entering HOBO logger files and finalized field data sheets on a sunny fall afternoon.



Riffle Bioassessment by Volunteers (RBV) data forms and stream samples prepared to be sent to the CT DEEP laboratory facilities in Windsor. During the 2019 season our team was able to sample 14 rivers, streams and brooks in the watershed.

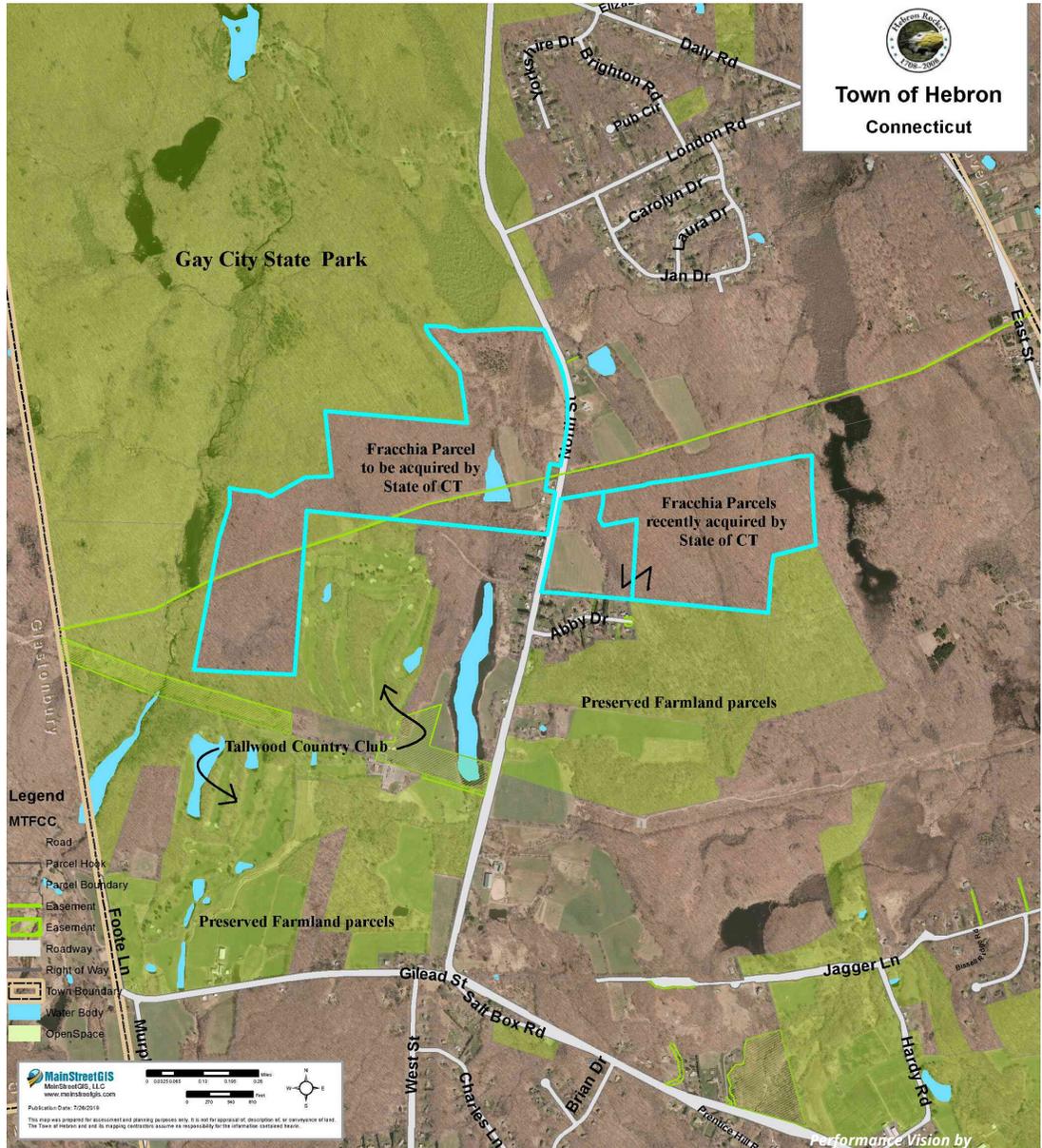


Community volunteer training for riffle macroinvertebrate assessment in Colchester and East Hampton.

Hebron: Partnering With State to Preserve Land in the Watershed

By Frank Zitkus & Map
By Mike O'Leary

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has finalized the acquisition of a 189-acre former farmland property from the Fracchia family in Hebron. Located on Route 85 (North Street), it directly abuts Gay City State Park and Meshomasic State Forest, expanding recreational opportunities. It will protect the headwaters of the Blackledge River (a class A watercourse), and significantly expand a wildlife habitat corridor.



DEEP previously purchased another 105 acre parcel from the Fracchia family in May 2019. Comprised of 15 acres of farmland and 90 acres of forest, this property abuts a large area of existing preserved farmland to the south and will protect land associated with Bishop's Swamp Wildlife Management Area located to the east in Andover and Hebron.

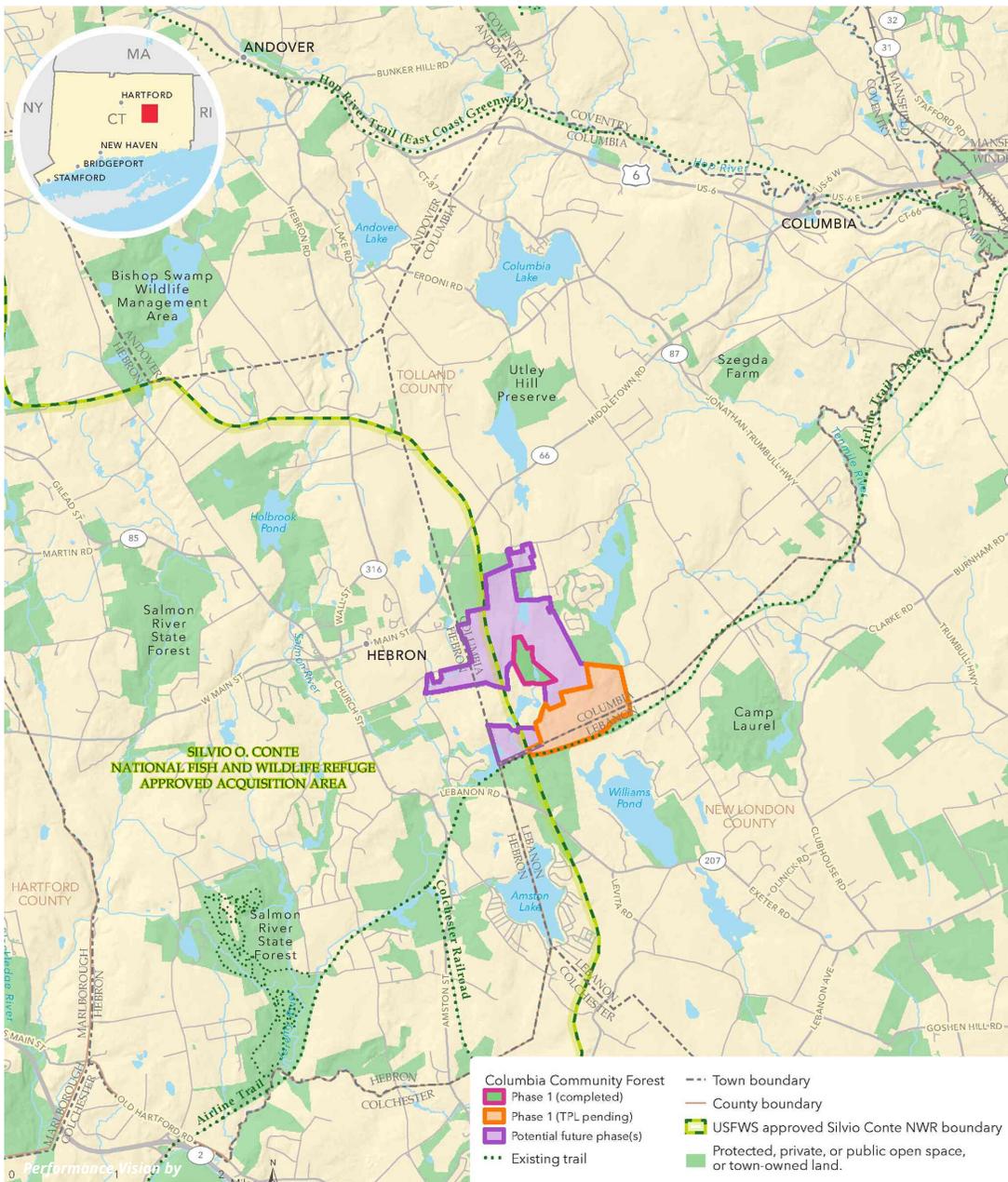
The Hebron Open Space Land Acquisition has assisted with both these DEEP acquisitions by identifying the properties and conducting coordinated outreach to the family. The Town greatly appreciates the Fracchia family's cooperative efforts to preserve their land. The Town and State joint preservation efforts have resulted in the protection of several environmentally sensitive areas in Hebron, all available to the public for our enjoyment and benefit!

Columbia: Growing the Wells Woods Preserves

By Ann Dunnak

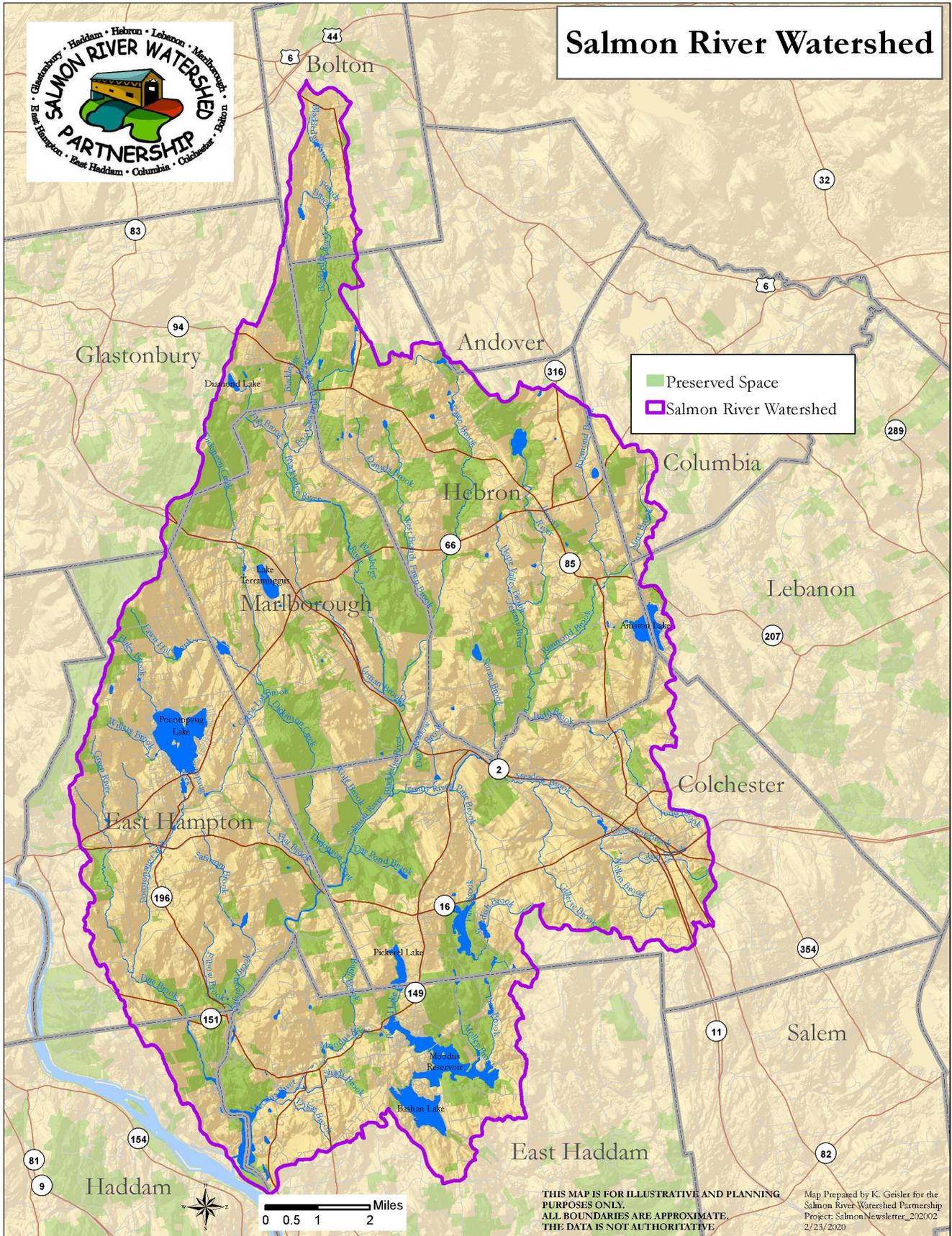
Columbia is working diligently to conserve the area of town known as Wells Woods, which has parcels that are located at the headwaters and just outside of the Salmon River Watershed. Two years ago the town closed on the first 56 acre parcel and anticipates acquiring another 400 acres in the spring of 2020.

The preserved land will protect valuable habitat, forests and watershed headwaters and will also provide about ten miles of hiking and mountain biking trails. Further, the properties will connect Mono Pond and the Air Line Trail State Parks.



The process would not have been possible without the help of The Trust for Public Land (TPL). TPL provided the expertise to leverage the land conservation deal and it will then deed the parcel to the State of Connecticut and Columbia will actively be involved in developing a joint management plan and steward the property.

To find out more about the Trust for Public Land please and how you can help go to <https://www.tpl.org/our-work/connecticut>



Be A Watershed Steward

By Patricia Young

We all live in a watershed. While anyone that is fortunate enough to live near a lake, or on the banks of a river or cove, may be more aware of keeping unwanted stuff out of the water, most of us have less connection to the water from our yard. We may have wetlands, or vernal pools, but no sign of any flowing water. Regardless of whether you can see water from your deck or porch, we all impact water flow and water quality by our everyday actions. So, keeping that in mind, we ask that you consider the following suggestions.

- **Don't Flush:**

Well of course you need to flush, but things like old medicine, furniture stripping materials, pesticides and even large amounts of oil can cause problems. If you are on a septic system, then whatever you flush can upset the anaerobic digestion process and also result in groundwater contamination. Groundwater feeds our local streams. For dos and don'ts on what to flush and keeping your septic system operating properly, contact your local Health Department.



- **Go Native:**

When making decisions about landscaping, consider going native. Native plants are best suited for our local conditions, such as soils and climate. They are also important food resources for pollinators. And native plants require less care; meaning less watering and less fertilizer, to thrive. Contact your favorite local nursery retailer for recommendations on native plants available.



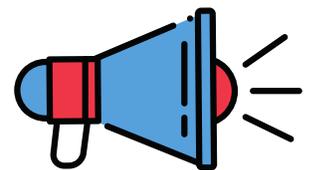
- **Watch Your Salt:**

No, we didn't talk to your doctor, but she would likely agree that we all need to watch our salt. Its important to not over-salt sidewalks, driveways and parking areas during winter. That excess salt washes away with snowmelt or rainfall, but can end up in tributaries or groundwater. We have been observing increases in chloride (think salt) levels in our local streams, especially during summer months.



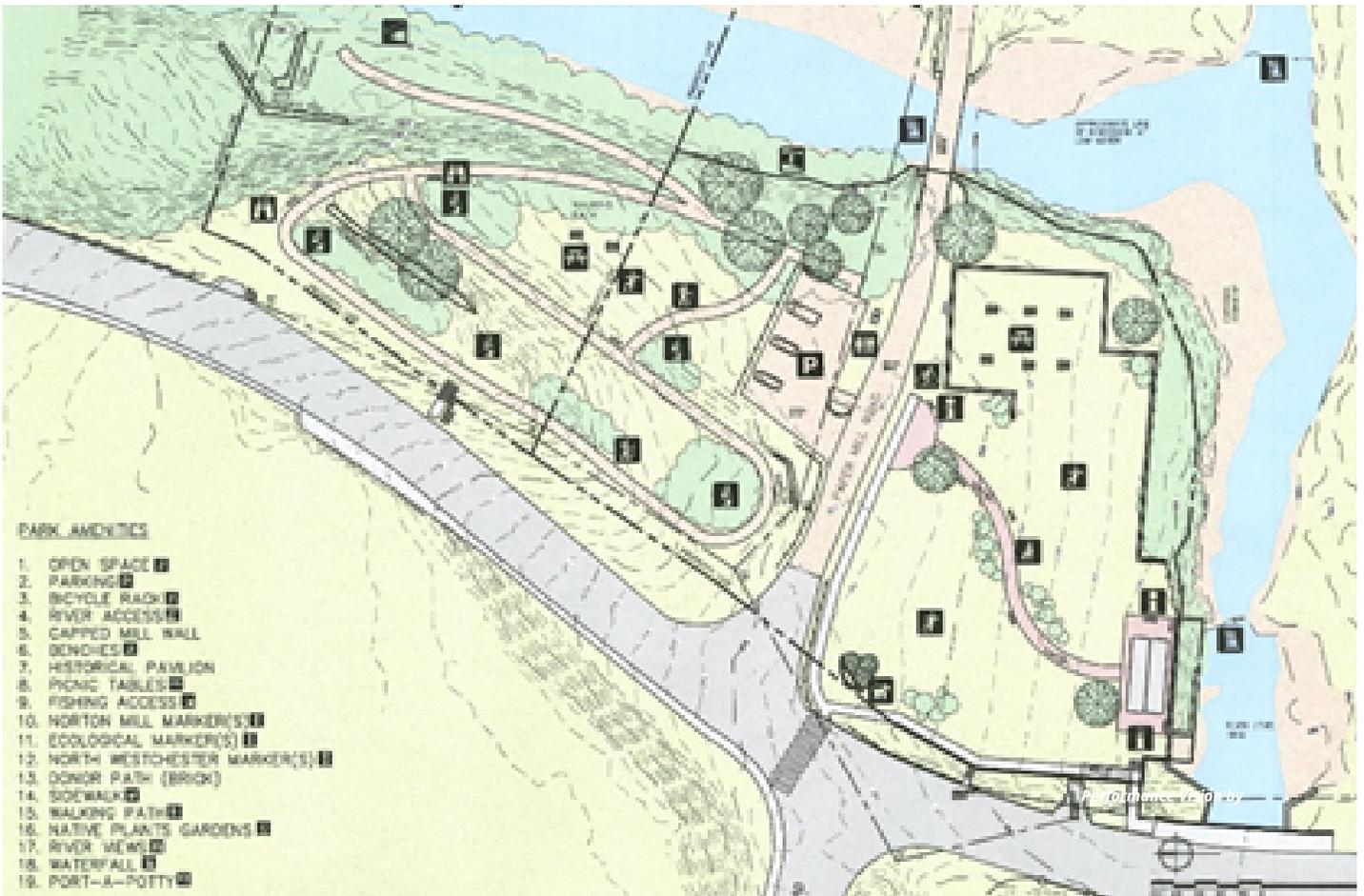
- **Be Loud:**

Yes, we are giving you permission to be loud for your watershed. Your voice is essential so that town leaders know watershed protection is important to the community. And get involved! Consider volunteering on a local land use board, land trust committee or even your local watershed. Contact us for more information at salmonriverct@att.net



Norton Mill/Dam Project Update

By Jay Gigliotti



In 2016, the Norton Mill Dam was removed as a partnership project between the Wasniewski family, The Nature Conservancy, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Town of Colchester. The removal opened up 17 miles of upstream fisheries habitat.

The Town of Colchester acquired the property located at 139 Westchester Road for \$1, after a yearlong demolition project of the mill building and water dam removal. The town is working on the remaining remediation of the mill site, with work expected to be completed in the spring/summer 2020.

The old mill site and the adjacent abutting 1.2 acre parcel, is now at the planning stage to create the Norton Mill Park. The Norton Park Committee was formed to help determine funding options and guide the development of plans for the park. The committee has put together a conceptual draft of the park plans (see fig 1 above) and is incorporating a sidewalk connection to the Airline Trail. The Park shall contain features and artifacts showcasing the history of the site. Additional amenities include walking trails, recreation areas, picnic tables, benches, fishing locations, informational kiosks, bathroom and parking facilities.

Over 60 Tires Removed from the Banks of the Jeremy River in Colchester

By Patricia Young

On a lovely fall day in September, over thirty people gathered at the RT 2 – RT 149 Commuter Lot in Colchester with one goal; to leave the riverbanks adjacent to the commuter lot and a section of the Air Line Trail State Park cleaner and debris free. Not particularly an easy task as it had been noted that tire dumping along the banks of the Jeremy River adjacent to the commuter lot had escalated recently.

The local office of GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., led the initial group organization and was joined by Benesch Engineering, both with offices in Glastonbury. They solicited the help of Cisco Geotechnical Drilling, also with a Glastonbury office, who provided the machinery to winch all the tires from the steep banks of the Jeremy River up to the commuter lot where they were stacked for pick-up and recycling by Lakin Tire East of West Haven.

Over 60 tires were removed from the banks of the Jeremy Rive along with several rooms of old carpet, ceramic floor tiles, an old washer machine shell, a 55 gallon drum and about 10 bags of recyclables and over 20 bags of trash. The Salmon River Watershed Partnership would like to extend our appreciation to our local and distant business partners along with the Town of Colchester for picking up the remainder of recyclable and trash items.



Controlling Aquatic Invasive Plants with an Ecoharvester

By *Bernie Gillis*

The Moodus Reservoir is a five hundred acre lake, featuring East Haddam's only public beach and two state board launches for the recreational enjoyment of boaters, fishermen and swimmers. Moodus River is a tributary in the Salmon River Watershed, emptying into the Cove below RT 151. The Moodus Reservoir Preservation Group, Inc. (MRPG) is a local 501(c)(3) non-profit community membership organization of shoreline property owners, lake users, community associations and other concerned parties working to protect and improve the health of Moodus Reservoir, including invasive plant monitoring and control.

MRPG began in 2010 as a small gathering of several lake front families who were concerned with the findings of the 2009 Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) Aquatic Vegetation Survey, which recorded abundant plant life throughout the lake including 24 native species and, unfortunately, 3 non-native invasive weeds.

MRPG began a dialogue with CAES, the town of East Haddam, DEEP and other lake associations throughout the state regarding concerns with the rapid increase in invasive plants in the Reservoir and lake water quality. MRPG endorsed a new CAES study of the Reservoir's upper and lower basins, sharing the cost with the town of East Haddam, which was published in 2013.

After years of lake studies and trying various methods of weed control, including the unsuccessful use of aquacides, MRPG determined that the Eco-Harvester was the best option. The Eco-Harvester is not a cutter, it pulls aquatic weeds from the roots using a drum/conveyer system and can skim weeds from the surface. This approach will minimize or eliminate the need for chemicals.

To date, MRPG has raised over \$90,000 to use toward the purchase of the Eco-Harvester and supplemental equipment with delivery expected in June 2020.

Thanks to MPRG and Al Howat for information used for this article.

For more information on MPRG, see <http://www.moodusreservoir.org/>.



A SPECIAL THANKS TO

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



- GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc.
- Lakin Tire East
- Benesch Engineering
- Goodwin College
- Cisco Geotechnical Drilling
- Ken Geisler
- CT River Coastal Conservation District
- Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
- The Nature Conservancy
- Society of Women Environmental Professionals
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)
- Mystic Aquarium
- Moodus Sportsmen's Club



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Matthew Bordeaux
Town of Colchester

Gail Reynolds
Jim McHutchison
Town of Haddam

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Town of Columbia

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Town of Hebron

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