



**Conservation Technical Advisory Committee  
Regular Meeting: Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 11 am  
Virtual Zoom Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- Zach Giron – MetroCOG
- Hannah Reichle – MetroCOG
- Devin Clarke – MetroCOG
- Mark Hoover - MetroCOG
- Chris Malek – CT DEEP, Water Planning & Management
- Mary Ellen Lemay – Trumbull Conservation Commission, ALT
- Karen Burnaska – Monroe Conservation Commission
- Barbara Thomas – Monroe Conservation Commission
- Lynn Haig – City of Bridgeport
- Timothy Bishop – Town of Fairfield
- Rick Shultz – Town of Monroe
- Sarah Cwikla – Town of Easton
- Charles Vidich – WestCOG
- Kim Bradley – UCONN Extension
- Victoria Vetre – SLR Consulting
- Gail Robinson – Ash Creek Conservation Association
- Rick Landau – Ash Creek Conservation Association
- Peter Spain – Ash Creek Conservation Association
- Kate Spain – Ash Creek Conservation Association
- Bryan Quinn – One Nature LLC

**2. Regional Trails Application Update**

**Zach Giron, MetroCOG**

- This has been an on-going MetroCOG project. Staff have been out in the field collecting trail data throughout the region to be incorporated in a publicly accessible viewer. The data collection phase for the municipalities has been completed. The data was edited by MetroCOG staff to account for any gaps and ensure data accuracy. The information was published to the MetroCOG Regional Trail Viewer and sent to each municipality to conduct an internal review and provide edits/comments by October 8<sup>th</sup>. MetroCOG will address all comments and provide necessary edits before posting the viewer for public use on the MetroCOG website. A help

document detailing how to use the viewer was also created and will be posted on the website as well. Targeting for a mid-October release.

- *A question was brought up if the viewer will just highlight municipal managed trails or if land trust trails will be included as well.* Currently, there are only municipal trails in the viewer but there are plans to include Aspetuck Land Trust trails as well.
- *A question was brought up if parking for trail use was included in the viewer.* Parking is included, you can find parking information by clicking on the trailhead icon. Stand alone parking symbology is also included if there is a parking lot but it is not the trailhead.

### **3. Resilient Connecticut Update**

**Victoria Vetre, SLR Consulting**

- Over last 6 months Resilient CT has presented many tools and participated in numerous public engagement events regarding resiliency and vulnerability. A total of 63 opportunity areas have been identified in the region. Information will be in the vulnerability index report available soon for public comment and they do anticipate a fall webinar to present the area in greater detail.
- Looked deeply at affordable housing assets in high flood areas, wastewater/ sanitary sewer systems, public drinking water, well density, brownfields, and shelters.
- *A question about how brownfields are identified and if they are updated with current remediation efforts.* They have looked at EPA and DEEP sites and placed those on the map. It is a high level view at vulnerable areas in watersheds. Each site will need to be further assessed to determine what level of action has been conducted on site.

### **4. Zoning Strategies – Riparian Corridor Protections**

**Charles Vidich, WestCOG**

- Importance of riparian corridors include protection of severe flooding, drinking quality, ecosystem health. Both the federal and state government have played a large role in point source protections such as the MS4 regulations. Public Act 21-29 looks to address non-point source issues and mandates all zoning commissions to address land use practices influencing hypoxic conditions in the Long Island Sound. Now that there is a mandate there will be a push and aid for many projects in CT towns and regions.
- The report “The Case for Riparian Corridor Protections: Zoning Strategies to Reduce Pollution of Inland Waters and Resultant Hypoxia of Long Island Sound” includes an accumulation of data specific to the state of Connecticut including the effects of watershed development, historic legislative efforts to protect river systems and current inland wetland and zoning practices. The report also provides recommended zoning practices which includes river corridor protection overlay zones, protection of vulnerable watersheds, and low impact development standards.

### **5. Ash Creek Estuary Barrier Peninsula**

**Gail Robinson & Rick Landau,  
Ash Creek Conservation Association**

- There as been an ongoing erosion issue at the Ash Creek Estuary for many years. The estuary is part of the Rooster River Watershed and is a vital area for bird, fish, shellfish, and plant life. Migratory shore birds use the area as a stop over site, one of fifteen sites left in the state. The estuary is split between two municipalities, Fairfield and Bridgeport. With changing administrations and leadership between the two municipalities, it is difficult to get both parties together to protect these vital natural resources.

- Currently, Fairfield dredges the channel between the marina and the long island sound. The material that is dredged is deposited on to Jennings Beach and vital materials needed to replenish the estuary's sand spit and great marsh island are lost.
- ACCA has been taking steps to get both Fairfield and Bridgeport together to address the needs of the eroding estuary. Have recently met with Fairfield to discuss a less aggressive dredging tactic and to return the dredged material to the sand spit and great marsh island. A cost share initiative has also begun to plant 42,000 plugs of beach grass on the sand spit to reduce the erosion taking place. Both municipalities have to agree to the cost share before action can take place.

## **6. Other Business**

- Including the MetroCOG regional trails into CT Trail Finder. The method to upload trails to CT Trail Finder involves the trail managers filling out a pdf form including vital trail information. Much of the information can be taken from MetroCOG's data. MetroCOG will work with municipalities to obtain trail descriptions and complete the forms for CT Trail Finder.
- The town of Monroe is now part of Aspatuuk regional land trust. There will be a 2021 Fall plant sale (native) website link will be shared.
- Chris Malek- Stratford has been awarded a 319 grant for Bruce Brook - Harbor Watch has been working with Stratford to find sources of pathogens and eliminated several of them.

## **7. Adjourn**