

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

NFWF/Legacy Grant Project ID: 1401.10.024231

LI Sound Futures Fund 2010 - Small Grants/Education - Submit Final Programmatic Report (Activities)

Grantee Organization: City of Norwich Harbor Management Commission

Project Title: Thames River Interpretive Signage at Norwich Harbor (CT)

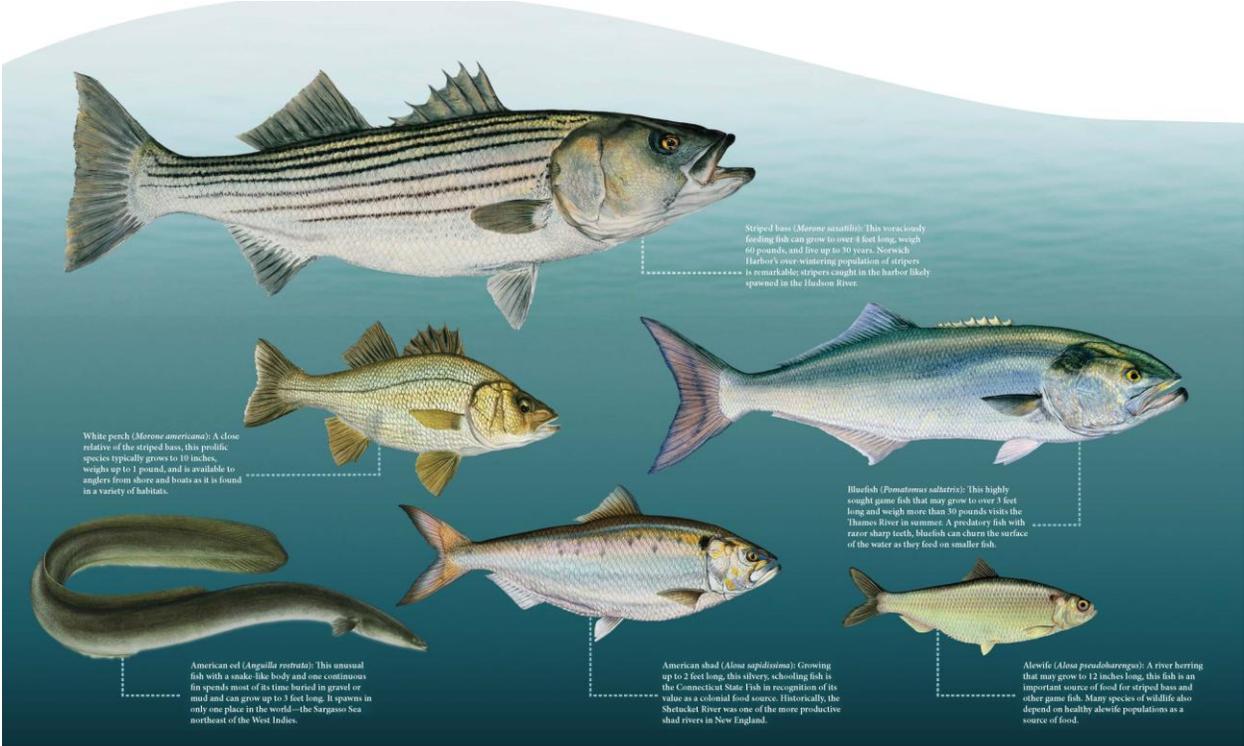
Project Period 11/01/2010 - 08/15/2012
Award Amount \$9,480.00
Matching Contributions \$0.00
Project Location Description (from Proposal) Brown Memorial Waterfront Park, Norwich City Hall, American Wharf Marina, City of Norwich, New London County, CT. Latitude: N 41° 31' 23.1664" Longitude: W 72° 4' 43.0971".

Project Summary (from Proposal) Prepare and install wayside signs depicting environmental themes concerning the Thames River watershed and Norwich Harbor. Project will design these signs to provide educational benefits in an urban setting.

Summary of Accomplishments The Harbor Management Commission has successfully completed its interpretive signage project utilizing the funds provided by the Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant program in 2011. The project consisted of design, fabrication, and installation of three approximately 30-inch by 36-inch, low-profile, wayside exhibit signs depicting themes related to the natural environment of the Thames River watershed and the Norwich Harbor. Preparation of the signs involved significant research, writing, and graphic design efforts overseen by the Commission. Drafts of text and images were reviewed by a number of interested agencies as required by the LISFF, including The Last Green Valley, Connecticut Sea Grant, and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Office of Long Island Sound Programs, Fisheries Division, and Watershed Division. These agencies approved the final designs prior to fabrication. Panels entitled "Fish of the Harbor" and "The Historic Norwich Waterfront" were installed by the Norwich Public Works Department on the waterfront at Howard T. Brown Memorial Park in February 2012; the panel entitled "Watershed of the Thames" was installed by the Public Works Department along the public walkway at the American Wharf Marina in March 2012.

Lessons Learned The project went well and according to plan.

Conservation Activities	See Narrative - Not Required
Progress Measures	Other Activity Metric
Value at Grant Completion	Not Required



Fish of the Harbor

Norwich waterways provide exceptional fish habitat. Fresh water from the Shetucket and Yantic rivers flows into Norwich Harbor where it mixes with salt water in the Thames River. This diverse environment supports a variety of fresh water and salt water fish, along with anadromous fish that live most of their lives in the ocean but swim upstream to spawn in fresh water. For centuries, these fish sustained Native Americans who gathered nearby each spring for rich harvests of the seemingly unlimited shad, salmon, eel and other species. Early settlers and colonists also depended on these migratory fish now pursued by recreational anglers.

Dams built across the Shetucket River and its tributaries in the 1800s harnessed water power for manufacturing but blocked the spawning runs of shad, alewife and other anadromous species. These fish were eliminated from their natural habitat in the entire watershed upstream of the Greenville Dam. To allow fish to swim past the dam, Norwich Public Utilities worked with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to install a fish lift in the dam in 1996. Thousands of shad and many other fish species now pass through the Greenville fish lift each year. Restoring anadromous fish to their natural habitat provides recreational, economic and environmental benefits.

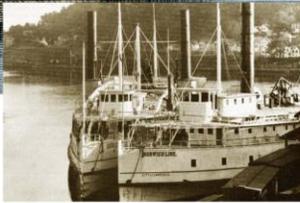
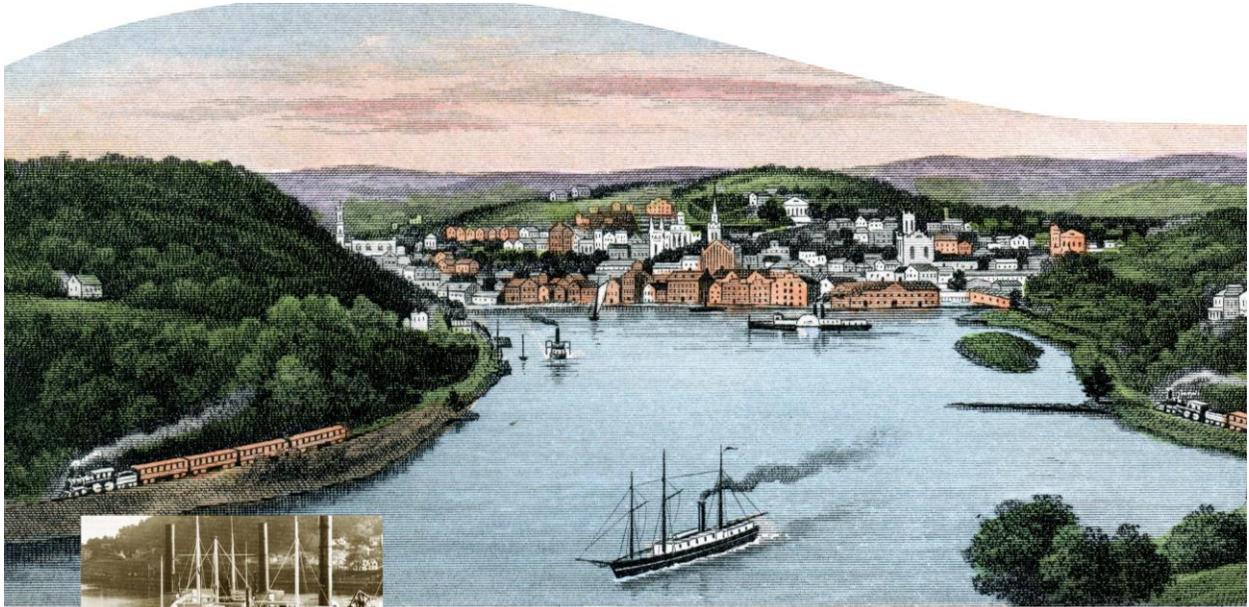


Shad and other anadromous fish trying to reach their natural spawning grounds in the Shetucket River swim into an opening in the Greenville Dam where a "fish elevator" carries them over the dam so they can continue their journeys upstream.

Fish illustrations by © Rick Ford / www.fishbase.org
 Dam photo: Courtesy of State of Connecticut DEEP / Inland Fisheries Division
 This project by the Norwich Harbor Management Commission was funded by the Long Island Sound Study, Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

Norwich on the Harbor





Steamboats and Water Power: In the 1800s, passengers embarking from steamboats on the Norwich waterfront made train connections to points north. Cotton from the south also arrived by boat and was then transformed into finished fabric in water-powered textile mills on the Yantic and Shetucket rivers.

1839 image of Norwich Harbor. Courtesy of Judge Charles K. Norris
 Factory image. Courtesy of the State Memorial Museum
 This project by the Norwich Harbor Management Commission was funded by the Long Island Sound Study, Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

The Historic Norwich Waterfront

In 1684, a public dock was built nearby at the head of the Thames River, where the Yantic and Shetucket rivers converge. As the community grew, the confluence of the three rivers gave shape to Downtown Norwich—the city’s nucleus today and for much of its history. Norwich developed as a natural trading center and the gateway to the interior of eastern Connecticut. Norwich Harbor became a deep-water seaport, linked to commerce with Europe and the West Indies. Before bridges were built, Norwich was the crossroads of eastern Connecticut — the first place north of the Thames River mouth where the river could be crossed by horse and carriage.

By 1756, Norwich was the second most populated city in Connecticut; its growth and prosperity due to the maritime trade. The banks of the Thames provided an abundance of timber, and many merchant vessels were built in Norwich shipyards along with whaling ships and, later, steamboats. Steamboat service to New York began in 1817. When

railroads converged on the city from all directions in the mid-1800s, Norwich combined maritime, rail and overland transportation systems into a major center of commercial activity. This was a grand era when the city was dominant in the economic, social and political life of Connecticut.

Norwich waterways also powered industry. Great mills were built on the Shetucket, and vast industrial works that manufactured textiles and other goods dominated the city’s economy into the 1900s as maritime trade declined. During this time, the rivers were used for disposal of industrial and human waste. The waterfront was seldom thought of as a source of recreation or pleasure. After World War II the mills closed and the industrial base crumpled, with profound impacts on the city and southeastern Connecticut. Today, the unmatched natural beauty and resources of the harbor and three rivers endures and continues to hold the key to the city’s future.

Norwich on the Harbor



NORWICH HARBOR ON THE THAMES RIVER NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

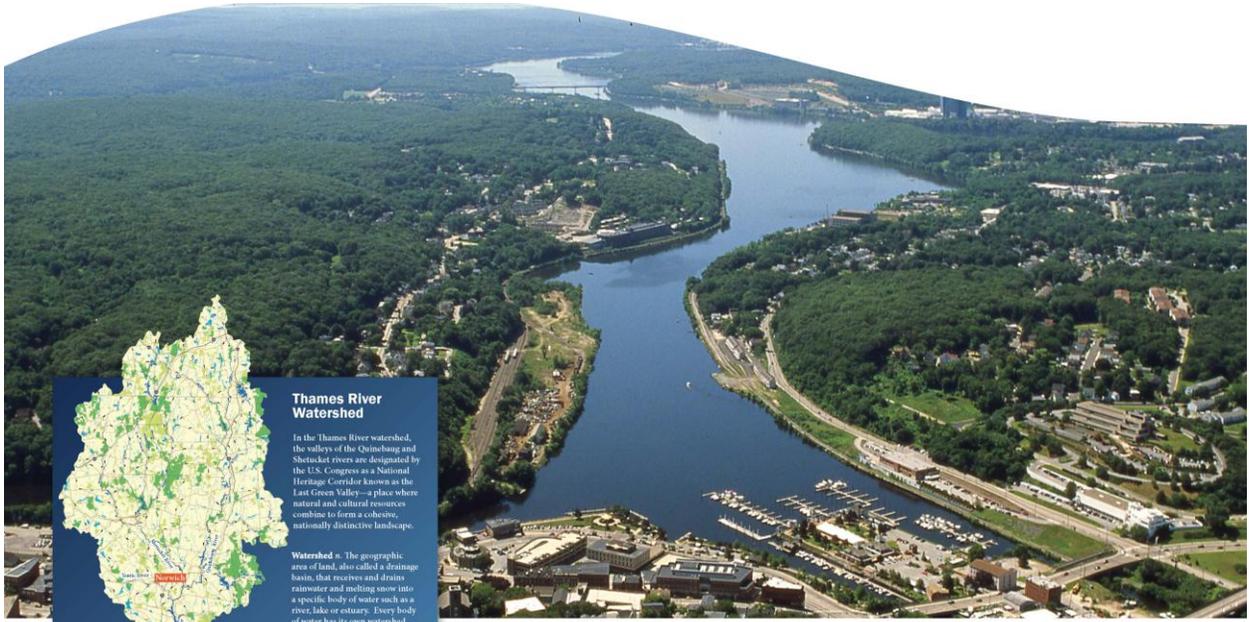
This exhibit presents three illustrated panels with information concerning Norwich Harbor and the Thames River. Prepared by the Norwich Harbor Management Commission, the panels are displayed at Brown Memorial Park and the American Wharf Marina, and were designed and fabricated with financial assistance provided to the Commission by the Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

The panels were prepared to advance the goal of the Norwich Harbor Management Plan to increase public awareness of the exceptional natural history and coastal resources of the Norwich Harbor. At the direction of the Harbor Management Commission, the panels were written by Commission consultant Geoff Steadman with graphic design by Paul Singer Design. Special thanks are extended to the Slater Memorial Museum, Judge Charles Norris, and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for their contributed images, and to the Norwich Department of Public Works for installation.

Thank you to everyone who reviewed our work in progress and provided thoughtful comments and advice, including representatives of the Long Island Sound Futures Fund; Norwich Public Utilities; Norwich Historical Society; Connecticut Sea Grant; The Last Green Valley; and DEEP Inland Fisheries Division, Office of Long Island Sound Programs and Watershed Management Program.

*Norwich Harbor Management Commission
John Paul Merein, Chairman*

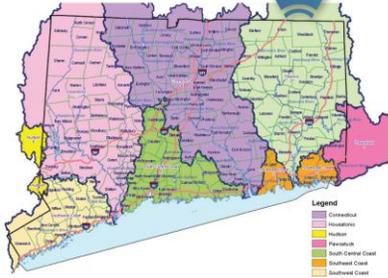
February 21, 2012



Thames River Watershed

In the Thames River watershed, the valleys of the Quinebaug and Shetucket rivers are designated by the U.S. Congress as a National Heritage Corridor known as the Last Green Valley—a place where natural and cultural resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape.

Watershed is the geographic area of land, also called a drainage basin, that receives and drains rainwater and melting snow into a specific body of water such as a river, lake or estuary. Every body of water has its own watershed, and smaller watersheds are joined together to form larger watersheds.



Watershed map: Courtesy of The Last Green Valley, Inc.
 State watershed map: Courtesy of State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
 Aerial photo: Courtesy of G. Stoddard
 This project by the Norwich Harbor Management Commission was funded by the Long Island Sound Study, Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

Watershed of the Thames

From the Norwich waterfront, the Thames River flows south 16 miles to Long Island Sound. Measured by the volume of fresh water it empties into the Sound, the Thames is the third largest river in Connecticut—behind the Connecticut and Housatonic. An intricate web of tributaries feeds into the Thames from the north, including the Quinebaug, Shetucket, and Yantic rivers. The Thames watershed of 1,500 square miles covers most of eastern Connecticut and parts of Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Within the watershed, rainwater and melting snow drain off the land, pulled downhill by gravity to the Thames and ultimately into Long Island Sound.

There is a vital relationship linking the Thames, its watershed and Long Island Sound. An arm of the sea, the Thames is an estuary where salt water from the Sound mixes with fresh water from the watershed. As the tide rises and falls twice each day along the entire length of the river, precipitation

falling in the watershed runs off roads, parking lots, farms, lawns, and other surfaces. As the water runs over the ground and into storm drains, it picks up pollutants such as oil, sand, debris, pesticides, bacteria from animal waste and nutrients from fertilizer. This runoff pollution can make its way to the Thames and eventually to Long Island Sound.

Long Island Sound depends on the environmental quality of its tributaries and watersheds. If the water flowing into the Sound is polluted, the water we swim in and fish we eat will be polluted too. Alone, each source of runoff pollution has only a small impact, but the cumulative impacts of many sources throughout the watershed can be significant. Everyone can help reduce runoff pollution, simply by being aware of how watersheds work. Everyday water-friendly practices, such as proper disposal of pet waste and limited use of fertilizers and pesticides, help keep Norwich Harbor, the Thames River and Long Island Sound clean for people, fish and wildlife.

Norwich on the Harbor



Final Programmatic Report Narrative

Project: 2010-0071-022-Thames River Interpretative Signage at Norwich Harbor, CT

1. Summary of a Accomplishments

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2. Project Activities & Outcomes

Activities

- The project consisted of design, fabrication, and installation of three approximately 30-inch by 36-inch, low-profile, wayside exhibit signs depicting themes related to the natural environment of the Thames River watershed and the Norwich Harbor. Preparation of the signs involved significant research, writing, and graphic design efforts overseen by the Commission. Drafts of text and images were reviewed by a number of interested agencies as required by the LISFF, including The Last Green Valley, Connecticut Sea Grant, and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s Office of Long Island Sound Programs, Fisheries Division, and Watershed Division. These agencies approved the final designs prior to fabrication.

Outcomes

- Promotion and enhancement of public enjoyment of the City’s harbor and waterways, and provide educational benefits in an urban setting that previously lacked interpretive signage related to the City’s harbor and waterways. The signs are enjoyed by Norwich residents and all others, including those who otherwise might not be exposed to information concerning the Thames River watershed and the City’s coastal resources and waterways.

3. Lessons Learned

Tying in the program with existing Harbor Management plans creates a cohesive structure for resource management.

4. Dissemination

Upon completion of the project, the Harbor Management Commission made a presentation of the signs to the City Council and prepared an exhibit with less than full size copies for display at different indoor locations, beginning in the City Hall. In addition, the images have been added to the City’s web-site (<http://www.norwichct.org/>). Copies of the signs are now being used in various promotional initiatives concerning the Norwich Harbor.

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Article published Mar 9, 2012

New wall exhibit on Norwich Harbor at City Hall

Claire Bessette

I often tell various city officials that they need more "wall stuff" in their offices or in the hallways of City Hall.

It's a magnificent building, with high ceilings that, of course, mean big walls of white blank space. The new Lincoln portrait and the giant portrait of Judge Park across from it help decorate the halls at the former main entrance to City Hall.

Most people now come in through the Broadway lower level entrance. They make their way to the elevator across from the assessor's office.

Now, that formerly blank wall features a new exhibit titled "Norwich Harbor on the Thames River," a scaled down version of the permanent outdoor exhibit soon to be erected at the Howard T. Brown Memorial Park and the Marina at American Wharf. The exhibit was funded through the state Long Island Sound Study program.

One panel shows "Historic Norwich Waterfront," a view looking north from the river into the harbor. There's a steam-powered tall ship heading southward, a side-wheel paddle steamer sitting in the harbor, more ships along the banks, which are lined with brick warehouses and waterfront businesses. There's a train on the west bank tracks.

An aerial view of the harbor looks south from the marina area. Another panel shows "Fish of the Harbor," with illustrations of six common fish species – striped bass, bluefish, American shad, white perch, American eel and alewife.

More panels outline the Norwich Harbor Management Commission's "Waterfront Vision" with aerial photos accompanying a listing of the 11 goals to be spelled out in a new Harbor Management Plan now being written, starting with "Comprehensive Mixed-Use Redevelopment of Underutilized Waterfront Sites."

So next time you're at City Hall, check out the new harbor exhibit outside the assessor's office. Then take a walk to Brown Park to view the real thing.
