



Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.

New Canaan, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Weston, Wilton, CT; Lewisboro, NY

June 13, 2016

Mr. Christopher Sullivan
Planning and Standards Division
CTDEEP WPLR
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association to support the proposed selection of the Norwalk River and the Norwalk Harbor embayment as candidates for water quality restoration work as part of Connecticut's Integrated Water Resource Management Plan.

The Norwalk River Watershed faces many challenges to water quality. In addition to the 4 waste water treatment plants along the river and leakage from old septic systems, it absorbs storm water runoff from Route 7, which runs the length of the river, and from the densely developed commercial corridor which lines it. The watershed community has come together to address these problems, however, and represents one of the earliest community-driven initiatives in the country to restore and protect watershed resources.

The year-round monitoring of water quality in the Norwalk River by Harbor Watch and The Norwalk River Watershed Action Plan, created in 1998 and updated in 2011, guide and support the work of a dedicated and active community of volunteers from the community. This team is organized and ready to work with the State to help restore water quality and fish and wildlife habitat in the area.

In the last year alone, the Norwalk River Watershed Association has worked with the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative, Harbor Watch, Trout Unlimited Mianus Chapter, Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership, scout troops, high school students, the land trusts and the conservation commissions in the seven watershed towns, town governments, area businesses and its team of community volunteers to protect and restore the watershed. NRWA works with these groups to sponsor riverbank cleanups and restoration through invasive plant species abatement and the planting of native plants as well as educational walks and talks. NRWA connects the community to the open space and waterways of the watershed by publishing a trail map of the area which it is updating this year with a grant from REI Norwalk. NRWA is currently working with NRWI and the town of Wilton to

mitigate the storm water runoff from the road and parking lot at a town park, which currently drains directly into the river. Volunteers will help install rain gardens as well as lay pervious pavement and install a bio-swale between the parking lot and the river. In May NRWA hosted a talk by the director of Harbor Watch updating the community on changes in water quality in the Norwalk River and fish populations in Norwalk Harbor.

This is the sort of community involvement and activism we at NRWA are proud to be part of. We look forward to collaborating with the State on similar projects over the next 6 years to really make a difference in the water quality and fish and wildlife habitat in our watershed.

Thank you,

Louise Washer
President, Norwalk River Watershed Association