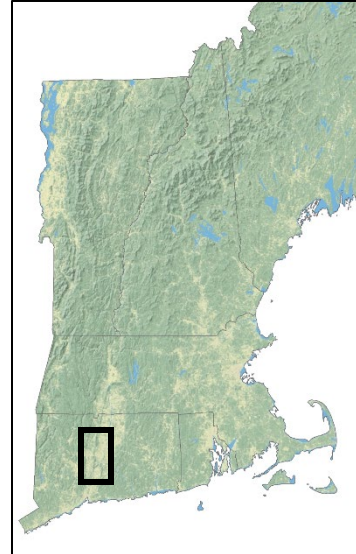


NELF Explorer Case Study: **CT Urban-Suburban River Corridors Working Group**

Who: Park Watershed, Inc. & Trinity College

MARY PELLETIER & SUSAN MASINO

Park Watershed, Inc. works to conserve and revitalize vulnerable landscapes that offer the ecosystem benefits of “wild” landscapes within cities and high-density suburbs. Through community engagement, scientific research and ecological revitalization, Park Watershed cultivates clean water and healthy urban environments within the municipalities of the Park River regional watershed. Community engagement includes educational programs in science, arts and cultural heritage, as well as environmental justice issues. Ecological revitalization involves habitat assessment and restoration, land conservation, green infrastructure design and transportation planning that will ensure civic responsibility for local water quality.



What: Outreach for Environmental Planning

The project team conducted nine outreach meetings with regional environmental, educational, and government groups focused on environmental planning. The team featured NELF Explorer and the NELF Scenarios to inspire conversations about the environmental and human health benefits of urban riparian corridors and urban forests, and how to use planning and regional cooperation between upstream-downstream municipalities to maintain and increase green spaces within densely populated areas in the lower Connecticut River watershed. They also developed outreach postcards to highlight the benefits of planning to maintain intact riparian forests within walkable communities.

Why: River Systems Essential for Thriving Cities

Contiguous forests, wetlands, and floodplains along waterways serve as essential wildlife and bird habitat and migratory pathways, and also provide valuable green infrastructure ecosystem services that benefit public health and mitigate damage from flooding. Despite the many benefits these ecosystems provide, these green spaces are in jeopardy due to encroachment of development and other pressures stemming from being situated in a densely populated area.

What's next: Continuing the Conversation

The project team is currently embarking on an expanded inquiry into the conservation of intact forests along Park River tributaries, towards growing nature-based solutions to the climate crisis, in partnership with *Nature, Cities, and Brain Health*, a component project of the Trinity College Public Humanities Collaborative.