



# *Niantic River Watershed Committee, Inc.*

*www.nianticriverwatershed.org*

## Minutes

**Niantic River Watershed Committee**

**Monitoring Subcommittee Special Meeting**

**August 3, 2023, 5:00 pm**

**Conference Room 1 – East Lyme Town Hall**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT  
2024 APR 30 A 8:37  
Cynthia M. Miller  
TOWN CLERK

Attendees: Don Danila (chair), Susan Gonzalez, Don Landers, Jim Pagnetti, Chris Tomichek, and Jamie Vaudrey, Watershed Coordinator. Dave Turner and Eric Thomas (CT DEEP ex officio member) joined ~5:15 PM.

1. Welcome: Don Danila opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.
2. Review and approval of April 2023 Monitoring Subcommittee Meeting Minutes:  
Don Landers moved to approve the meeting minutes as written, seconded by Susan Gonzalez. All in favor, the motion passed.
3. Water Quality Monitoring:
  - a. Brief update on 10-year Water Quality Monitoring Report:  
Don mentioned that the report is nearly finished with only comments yet to be received and considered from Jamie Vaudrey. When completed, the Millstone Power Station printing office will produce a limited number of copies for distribution to selected persons or offices with any others receiving an electronic copy.
4. Discussion of commencing outfall bacterial water sampling this summer:  
Jamie led the discussion. To avoid having any expired chemicals we can partner with Harbor Watch to receive test kits when needed and then replenish them as necessary. Jamie prepared and presented two documents: a 2020 Bacterial Proposal Narrative and a 2023 Summary of Past and Current Bacteria Monitoring – Niantic River (attached), which she discussed. Some years ago, Don Landers performed some outfall sampling in the river, which can serve as a pilot program for current proposed work. Based on Town of East Lyme MS-4 sampling, which was done in cold weather, any high bacterial counts could indicate more problematic discharges occurring during warmer summer weather. These were also wet weather samples, which we are likely not to take. Samples from DABA showed only about 1% of their 3,000+ samples were out of compliance. But these samples were taken out in the river and not from outfalls. We need to further refine our sampling plan and scheduling. Some items to consider include the use of boats, selection of outfalls, timing (weekly or biweekly, etc.), and tidal influences. Jamie will examine the data again and look for promising sites and refine the sampling plan. Some items set are that we take samples in the morning so they can be processed in a timely manner and dry weather sampling.

Jamie believes we have the funds to process about 200 samples, if so needed. Dave Turner asked about sample chain of custody. Jamie noted that she has a form that will ensure we follow proper protocols. The Pathogen Monitoring Program established by Harbor Watch, CT DEEP, and New York State (NY DEC?) may provide further guidance. Don D. mentioned that if we need personnel help, we should contact STR-STH.

5. Partner Reports:

a. Brief update on Niantic River eelgrass study:

Jamie reported that although the initial treatment using iron to reduce sulfides looked promising at first, all the planted eelgrass eventually died by early June. This iron treatment still could be effective but other factors, such as water temperatures, remain to be considered to ensure success. We briefly discussed a program on Long Island where eelgrass seeds were collected, glued onto small live clams, and which were then distributed into estuarine areas. Jamie noted that the Long Island Sound Study has allocated about \$1M for eelgrass restoration projects.

b. Brief update on Waterford Solar Farm water temperature monitoring:

Don D. reported that along with Susan and Deb Moshier-Dunn, the water temperature recorders had data retrieved twice since their initial report. Although Susan has sent him the new data, Don has not undertaken any new analyses due to his focus on the 10-year WQ monitoring report. He hopes to start this work in the next few months. More temperature data will be retrieved this coming fall. If the analyses show no water temperature effect from the solar site, then this work will be discontinued.

6. New Business: there was no new business.

7. Next regular group meeting – October 5, 2023, 5 PM, East Lyme Town Hall

8. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Danila  
Chair, Monitoring Sub-committee