

## **About Our Project:**

The Oxford Main Street Project is an exciting four-phase community development project:

- Phase I – Little River Nature Preserve (17 acres of open space across from Oxford Town Hall)
- Phase II – Walkway/bike path connection to Market 32
- Phase III – Walkway/bike path connection to fish ladder, Seymour
- Phase IV - Connection to Larkin Bridal Trail/TBD

The project is a non-profit collaboration between local government, the State of Connecticut, local businesses, landscape architects, environmental agencies, including the Housatonic Valley Association, Trout Unlimited and Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, and other community-based organizations. It will provide the community and visitors to the Town of Oxford with world-class trout fishing, hands-on education highlighting the importance of the wetlands habitat to our eco-system and environment, hiking trails, walking and bicycling paths, shopping and culinary experiences along Oxford Road.

When completed, the Oxford Main Street Project will be enjoyed by the community and visitors from near and far. The Little River Nature Preserve will preserve and protect our wetlands and educate this generation and future generations on the critical importance of the wetlands to our environment.

### **Little River Nature Preserve:**

The Little River, which runs from Oxford, CT on Oxford Road (CT Rt. 67) to Seymour, CT, is an Enhanced Wild Trout Managed Stream (WTMA Class 3). This stream supports both cold and warm water fish. The cold water areas are found in Oxford. The stream has wild trout and is also stocked (T) with adult and fry trout. The stream includes Brook Trout (BK), Rainbow Trout (RBT) and Wild Brown Trout (BN). Little River is a Class "A" stream, therefore it also contains native Wild Brook Trout which are 3"-4" in length. The Wild Brook Trout must be immediately released back to the water because of their size. The waters of Little River become warmer in the Seymour area, where Small Mouth Bass and other warm water fish have also been caught.

Surrounding Little River are 17 acres of natural wetland habitat, featuring wildlife and plant species that are integral to our environment. This beautiful backdrop sets the stage for Little River Nature Preserve.

The design of Little River Nature Preserve is being engineered by landscape architectural firm Aris Land Studio, LLC, and will include minimally invasive, handicap-accessible trails and bridges. Indigenous species will be labeled, and the preserve will offer guided and self-guided studies of the natural wetland habitat. There will also be fishing areas for the avid trout fisherman/fisherwoman on this wonderful fresh-water resource. The creation of the Little River Nature Preserve Center, in conjunction with Little River Nature Preserve, will offer educational programs, workshops and guided walking tours highlighting the importance of wetlands to our natural environment and the animal and plant species that grow and live in the habitat. These programs and tours will be led by biologists, environmentalists and educators and will be offered for all age groups. Ample parking will be available across the street (currently Center School parking area). A pedestrian bridge will be constructed to allow easy passage from the parking area to the recreational area.

### **What is a Wild Trout Management Area (WTMA)?**

A Wild Trout Management Area is monitored and managed by the State of Connecticut. Wild trout (self-sustaining populations) are important renewable resources to Connecticut's trout stream fisheries. They are usually more colorful, feisty and tasty compared to stocked trout and are conserved through special regulations identified by Wild Trout Management Class. A Trout & Salmon Stamp is required to fish in a Wild Trout Management Area.

### **What are the Wild Trout Management Area (WTMA) Classifications?**

Wild Trout Management Areas have three (3) classifications.

Class 1 – Catch and release only, open year-round. Use of single-hook artificial lures or flies only.

Class 1 WTMA's have abundant wild trout. Wild trout are self-sustaining populations. There is no trout stocking, and there is no closed season.

Class 2 – Two (2) trout per angler per day limit. Trout must be 12" or larger in length to keep from opening day to the last day of February. Class 2 WTMA's have some wild trout and stocked trout.

Class 3 - Five (5) fish per angler per day limit. Trout must be 9" or larger to keep from opening day to the last day of February. Class 3 WTMA's have some wild trout and stocked trout.

### **Walking Path:**

In addition to trails through the Little River Nature Preserve, outdoor enthusiasts and visitors will be able to walk and/or bicycle from the Little River Nature Preserve along Oxford Road (CT Rt. 67) and enjoy shops, baked goods and specialty items along the way.

### **News:**

Town of Oxford Grant Writer/Administrator and OMSP Chair Kathleen O'Neil has been very busy in procuring grant funding for the OMSP:

- Routing Grant has been awarded for \$150,000.00 that will delineate the best route from the Seymour-Naugatuck Greenway to the Larkin Bridle Trail.
- LOTCIP funding for the Town Municipal Center redesign, connecting pathways and sidewalks in the amount of \$3,800,000.00 +/- (To Be Announced).
- Connecticut Connectivity Grant was awarded in the amount of \$398,000.00.
- Community Support Group Grant was awarded in the amount of \$15,000.00.
- Katherine Matthies Foundation Grant was awarded in the amount of \$5,000.00.
- Valley Foundation Grant was awarded in the amount of \$6,200.00.

**Partners:**

Connecticut DEEP  
Town of Oxford, CT  
Housatonic Valley Association Inc. (HVA)  
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (COG)  
Trout Unlimited  
Thule Inc., Seymour, CT

**Donors:**

Town of Oxford  
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (COG) - \$15,000.00

**Links to Partner Sites:**

Deep – <https://www.ct.gov>  
Town of Oxford, CT – [www.oxford-ct.gov](http://www.oxford-ct.gov)  
Housatonic Valley Association – <https://hvatoday.org>  
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (COG) – <https://nvcogct.org>  
Trout Unlimited – <https://www.tu.org>  
Valley Community Foundation – [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org)  
Katherine Matthies Foundation – [www.bankofamerica.com/philanthropic/foundation.go?fnld=55](http://www.bankofamerica.com/philanthropic/foundation.go?fnld=55)  
Thule – <https://www.thule.com>

**Blog Content:**

Coming Soon...

**Contact Us:**

Want to learn more about this great project? Interested in becoming a donor, partner and/or volunteer in helping to create a community asset that will develop a town center, encourage tourism to the town, bolster business growth and economic development and provide an educational and recreational resource? Are you interested in participating in a project that will give back to the community and the State of Connecticut in the years to come? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact: Kathleen O'Neil, Town of Oxford Grant Writer/Administrator, OMSP Chair  
203-888-2543 X 3067 M/T 9:00 AM-5:00 PM, W 9:00 AM-12:00 Noon