

FINAL REPORT ON CCEJ'S QUINNIPIAC RIVER FUND GRANT 2013-14

The Quinnipiac River Fund gave CCEJ a \$7,000 general purpose grant in 2013 to be used to protect or improve the environment in the Quinnipiac River watershed. The Fund allowed CCEJ to decide on its own the specific activity or program to meet the objective. CCEJ chose to apply the grant to our standing campaign to shut down Bridgeport's PSEG Harbor Station coal plant. Air pollution and toxic air emissions from the coal plant present serious risks to southern Connecticut's natural environment including that of the lower River watershed. In 2010 alone, the plant released 951 tons of nitrous oxide, 1,273 tons of sulfur oxide and 1.45 pounds of mercury and 554,068 tons of carbon dioxide (2011) into the air. These emissions cause acid rain that has reduced fish and amphibian populations in the river, impacting the entire wildlife food chain in the area.

Our project has two long-term goals: (1) Retire the Bridgeport Harbor Generating Station no later than 2015; and (2) Create and facilitate a community planning process to focus on a green, sustainable post-retirement use of the coal plant site in sync with the City's redevelopment plans. To achieve these goals, CCEJ and its partners in the Healthy Connecticut Alliance applied a multi-pronged strategic approach that included using legal strategy and building public pressure. CCEJ was to provide community canvassing and grassroots outreach and secure special expert/ public official support for the Alliance.

Major accomplishments that CCEJ reached through the project in the River Fund grant period were as follows:

Several CCEJ supporters joined with volunteers throughout Connecticut to protest against the Bridgeport coal plant at facility operator PSEG's headquarters in Newark, New Jersey in mid October. As part of the event, we delivered 1000 signatures to a petition from Bridgeport residents demanding the plant be shut down. Several news outlets including WMBC-TV and the Star Ledger of New Jersey and Bridgeport's own Connecticut Post covered the event.

We organized a Coal Speakers' Bureau, comprised of 17 Bridgeport residents, which made presentations to 250 city residents on the health impacts of the coal plant and the need to shut it down. Since November, we have organized a less formal Environmental Justice League of Bridgeport community people to speak one-on-one about coal's environmental impacts and other issues. We find the League is increasing our outreach significantly.

We held three well-attended community conversations on shutting down and re-using a power plant, and its possible environmental benefits for the city and region.

Along with former organizer Dan Fischer, our volunteer Diana Black has represented community members in meetings with local leaders, unions, city council people, the Mayor, and PSEG regarding shutdown of the coal plant. Diane has discussed the coal plant on her regular radio show on local station WDJZ, facilitated Healthy CT Alliance meetings and hosted Open House events.