

## Instructions

### QUINNIPIAC RIVER FUND GRANT AWARD - FINAL REPORT QUESTIONS

This form is to be completed by all nonprofit organizations that received a grant through the Quinnipiac River Fund.

## Grant Details

### Grant Details

Organization Name

River Advocates of South Central Connecticut

Grant Description

to support the creation of public access on the lower Quinnipiac River, as well as to support advocating on state and local permits affecting water quality and quantity, and carry out bacteria monitoring.

Total Grant Amount

17,000.00

## Report Questions

1. List the specific objectives/outcomes of the project and tell how they were met during the grant period. Also, provide an update on any special conditions of the grant (if applicable).

River Advocates, as a nonprofit provider of river trips, carried out Lower Quinnipiac Public Access, Phase II for residents and visitors by continuing the inventory and cutting of log jams in Quinnipiac River State Park, the second of three segments of the lower Quinnipiac River between Quinnipiac St., Wallingford and Rte 22 in North Haven. We followed DEEP protocols to protect habitat while cutting a passageway, leaving most of each log in place.

We also continued advocating for state and local permits affecting water quality and quantity. We were unable to carry out bacteria monitoring because the executive director broke her ankle, which required surgery and recovery.

2. Please share your successes, challenges and any lessons learned through the implementation of your project. Were there any unintended consequences or lessons learned that may affect how you operate your program moving forward?

Clearing log jams/public access--

Chain sawing is difficult in a river. Some trees are very large and partially suspended over the water. To cut passage, crews must secure a rope through the tree to create a railing to steady the cutter as he moves along the trunk. Other trees can be cut from the floor of the riverbed if the cutter stands just upstream in waders, especially in low flow conditions. Still others can be cut from a canoe with a handsaw or by using loppers to cut a passage through the upper branches while leaving the trunk alone.

We learned to use hunters and anglers as crew members, as they are most interested in public access.

Some cutters prefer jon boats to canoes to provide more elevation and stability to make the cut. River Advocates borrowed a jon boat for this purpose. The challenges are that very few volunteers are experienced, capable or willing to cut repeatedly. We must constantly recruit new people. Also, new trees fall and re-clog the river after a segment has been cleared.

We were unable to host the April guided wildflower hike because the executive director was immobilized but did host a briefing (Oasis: Abandoned) on the vanished Banton Street community for sketch artists from New Haven on June 15th. They learned the history of the site and followed instructions of the executive director, who was confined to a chair, to explore artifacts at the site and returned with sketches of the long-gone neighborhood.

#### Permit advocacy--

We assisted community volunteers in opposing an inland wetlands permit in Wallingford for a restaurant on a parcel bisected by two ravines. The commission believed the second ravine was a drainage ditch that could be filled, but our research showed it was a stream, Nod Brook, which ran underground before entering the ravine.

On Nov. 4, 2024, we submitted comments on the proposed NPDES permit for allnex (formerly Cytec). Our comments included:

We do not object to the issuance of the 5-year NPDES permit but request that DEEP consider our comments on these areas:

1. We promote public use of the Quinnipiac River and our water trail-building work teams are in the river May through October (and even beyond October in favorable weather and flow conditions). Bacteria control should continue through October.
2. The temperature limits seem too high. The accompanying documents refer to a maximum observed water temperature value of 25 degrees C (or 77 F) in August, but the permit would allow higher maximum temperatures up to 85 degrees F and a maximum 4 degree F increase from the discharge. This seems too high for a healthy fish population to exist. Perhaps more stream buffers can provide additional shade and allow the maximum temperature to be 80 degrees F.
3. We understand the challenge of reaching a balance between lowering aluminum levels while constrained by the need to use aluminum to reduce phosphorus loading. The phosphorus reduction by municipalities and industry since 2012 has been remarkable and we would like to see it continue. If there is an aluminum-free way to keep phosphorus low, that would be ideal.
4. We are pleased that the permit will now include monitoring for PFAS compounds.
5. Toxicity has been a persistent problem for aquatic life in the lower Quinnipiac for decades. We are pleased that DEEP proposes that the permit will continue to require toxicity testing using Daphnia and other aquatic organisms.
6. The proposed permit sets a maximum discharge limit at 2,809,000 gpd. Since allnex has already reduced its wastewater treatment discharge to 800,000 gpd in September 2024, and has stated they wish to achieve the goal of zero discharge within a decade, does DEEP need to set such a large discharge limit for the next 5 years?

DEEP responded to comments and issued the new NPDES permit, which will continue to require toxicity testing using Daphnia (water fleas).

#### 3. What are the opportunities and needs of your organization as it continues to move forward with its work to positively impact the Quinnipiac River?

Opportunities include the possibility of restoring guided river trips through Quinnipiac River State Park as log clearing continues north towards Toelles Rd., Wallingford and the return of guided hikes on foot trails through the park. Other opportunities include public access through two publicly owned parcels on the east side of the river, which greatly shortens the distance cutters must travel. We also hope to resume bacteria monitoring.

Needs include a more stable source of experienced chain saw workers and the resumption of the internship program. It may be necessary to identify and recruit another chainsaw team such as Americorps CCC, industry-sponsored cutters or first responders.

## Attachments

**Financial information (required):** Please provide a detailed accounting of how the specific grant dollars were spent based on the budget submitted in the grant application.

Detailed Accounting  
Actual Budget 2024.docx

**Pictures (optional):** Please attach one to three pictures in JPEG format, in the highest resolution possible, of activities that have occurred throughout the grant period as a result of grant funding. By providing pictures, your organization is consenting to unlimited use of the pictures by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and/or the Valley Community Foundation in publications in print and online (including [www.thequinnipiacriver.com](http://www.thequinnipiacriver.com)). Please include a description of each photo and, when known, the photographer to be credited.

Picture 1  
thumbnail (6).jpg

Description and Photo Credit  
Volunteers assess very large tree blocking Quinnipiac River in North Haven before cutting the top to allow boat passage.  
(Mary Mushinsky-River Advocates of South Central CT)

Picture 2  
thumbnail (10).jpg

Description and Photo Credit  
Volunteer cuts segment of large tree to allow small boat passage on Quinnipiac River in North Haven.  
(Mary Mushinsky-River Advocates of South Central CT)

Picture 3  
thumbnail (3).jpg

Description and Photo Credit  
New Haven area artists show the sketches they produced at Oasis: Abandoned, a public access event held June 15, 2024 at Quinnipiac River State Park.  
(Mary Mushinsky-River Advocates of South Central CT)