

From: [Norm Needleman](#)
To: [O'Brien, Kevin](#)
Subject: RE: REMINDER: CT National Estuarine Research Reserve Public Meeting
Date: Tuesday, November 13, 2018 7:13:16 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi kevin

I'm sorry I wasn't able to make the meeting tonight, but I am still catching up after the election. The chairman of our harbor commission is attending, but can you forward any materials that are handed out at your meeting. As a first selectman of a river town and now as a senator elect of a bunch of long island sound and river towns, this is important and interests me greatly

Maybe at some point when things settle down, we can chat and you can bring me up to speed

Best

norm

From: O'Brien, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.O'Brien@ct.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2018 10:41 AM
Subject: REMINDER: CT National Estuarine Research Reserve Public Meeting

Dear Partner:

As a reminder, we are holding a public meeting on Tuesday November 13th, 2018 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the second floor Auditorium of the Academic Building at the University of Connecticut's Avery Point Campus in Groton CT. At the meeting we will provide an update on Connecticut's effort to identify and propose a location for a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR or "Reserve") in our state.

The NERR system is a federal/state partnership that establishes a location dedicated to estuarine research, monitoring, education, and stewardship. A Connecticut-based Reserve would complement and extend many existing scientific, environmental management, and education activities through the addition of funding, resources, and expertise. Additionally, it would help identify and enable new directions and initiatives by leveraging national programs.

Since the Spring of 2016, members of a multi-disciplinary team have worked to identify, evaluate, and recommend a potential Reserve. This meeting will provide a forum to share the results of their efforts, to describe the site proposed for nomination, and to provide an overview of what the next stages of the process will entail. Representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will also attend the meeting to answer questions about the national system. *Most importantly, this will also be an opportunity to find out more about what establishing a Reserve means, to ask questions, and to provide your comments.*

NOAA will announce meeting details in a Federal Register Notice no later than October 29, 2018, and notice will also be provided via local newspapers.

An agenda and informational material are enclosed with this invitation, and the project website contains additional information as well (www.ct.gov/deep/NERR).

We have endeavored to target relevant individuals and groups that are aligned geographically or topically with a potential Connecticut Reserve, but please feel free to forward this invitation to other interested parties as needed.

We hope that you are able to participate and look forward to seeing you on November 13th.

Sincerely,

Brian Thompson, Director, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Land and Water Resources Division

From: [Humphrey Tyler](#)
To: [O'Brien, Kevin](#)
Cc: banningwood@gmail.com
Subject: Conn NERRS
Date: Thursday, November 15, 2018 9:43:22 AM

Mr. O'Brien -

Thank you for the very worthwhile & informative presentation Tuesday night at UConn Avery Point on the proposed Connecticut NERRS.

I am the member of the audience who asked for more detailed maps.

Could you please send me detailed maps showing the areas in the Town of Lyme on Lords Cove that are proposed to be included in the Connecticut NERRS?

I am requesting these maps on behalf of Lyme Selectman Parker Lord, who asked me to attend Tuesday night's meeting to gather information on the proposed Conn NERRS.

I would like to be able to show Selectman Lord and other town officials what areas of the town would be included in the NERRS, so I will need maps showing enough detail to determine where the NERRS boundary lines will run in the Town of Lyme.

Please send the files to: hstyler45@yahoo.com

If the files are too large to send as attachments, we can use DropBox or some other FTP app.

Thanks much.

Humphrey S. Tyler
hstyler45@yahoo.com
[518-253-4844](tel:518-253-4844)
[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Evan Ward, Ph.D., Department Chair, University of Connecticut Department of Marine Sciences

Sylvain De Guise, Ph.D., Director, Connecticut Sea Grant College Program

~~~~~  
Kevin P. O'Brien  
Sr. Environmental Analyst  
Land & Water Resources Division - Coastal Resources Section  
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127  
P: 860.424.3432 | F: 860.424.4054 | E: kevin.obrien@ct.gov



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[www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep)

***Conserving, improving and protecting our natural resources and environment;  
Ensuring a clean, affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy supply.***

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Dear attendees,

Aspects of this reserve could be beneficial. It's important that fishermen, aquaculture, and the working waterfront are adequately represented at this meeting and in development of this plan. Literature and FAQ's published below this article, state (I believe falsely) that this program will not lead to increased regulation. Any reserve should provide irrevocable protection to fishermen, aquaculture, maritime transport/industries, the Port Authority, and the US NAVY.

The DEEP needs to modify the tenor and attitude they lead with. They currently lead with an authoritarian attitude and treat businesses, individuals, and many municipalities as the enemy. A strong open minded approach with a reverence for the environment that encourages creative thinking to responsibly overcome emerging environmental challenges would benefit us all. Currently fear of retaliation from CT DEEP stifles free and open debate necessary to reach the best solution to any problem.

This meeting was publicized in the Sunday paper, before a Monday holiday, for a Tuesday meeting. I strongly urge CT DEEP to schedule another public meeting to solicit the opinions of working water industry that will be affected by this preserve. Written comments submitted to DEEP do not carry the same weight as those voiced at a public meeting covered by the Newspaper, the Newspaper, the Newspaper.

Kevin Blacker,  
108 Main Street,  
Noank, CT 06340

**From:** [Old Lyme Land Trust](#)  
**To:** [O'Brien, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** More detailed NERR map of Lord's Cove  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 14, 2018 7:12:34 AM

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Dear Mr. O'Brien,

Thank you very much for the NERR presentation last night! I was there presenting the Old Lyme Land Trust and we appreciate the tremendous amount of work that's gone into this project.

I wanted to reiterate the request for a more detailed map of the Lords Cove area. The Old Lyme Land Trust has two properties in the vicinity — part of Goose Island and the John Lohmann CT River Preserve. It is difficult to make out the maze of boundary lines on the current map to determine exactly where these properties stand.

Also it would be helpful if you could confirm that property owners in the area will loose none of there existing rights, including the right to limit public access or even to limit some forms of scientific research on their property.

Thank you again.

Anne Galliher  
Secretary, Old Lyme Land Trust

**From:** [Jeff](#)  
**To:** [O'Brien, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** NERR  
**Date:** Thursday, November 15, 2018 1:08:43 PM

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Kevin,

Very good presentation Tuesday.

In reviewing the site plan for the proposed NEER, I see that western border in the Essex area runs through or along Thatchbed Island. The island is owned by State of Connecticut and Essex Land Trust.

The Thatchbed was once more than 20 acres and is now less than 8. We have lost valuable habitat and breeding ground. DEP in the early 2000's mowed and sprayed to get rid of phragmites. Part of the fallout from that action lost the root structure that was holding the island together.

Efforts are being made to preserve what is left and possibly restore much of what we lost.

From your presentation it sounds as if inclusion in the NERR would be beneficial to our preservation and restoration efforts. As Chairman of the Essex Harbor Management Commission, I am very interested in this situation. The Commission is in the last stages of surveys and studies that include river current analysis from Thatchbed across the river. This information will be available if there is any interest.

Please let me know if the Thatchbed is included in the site.

Thank you,

Jeff Going, Chair  
Essex Harbor Management Commission  
860-961-5090

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Penny Heller](#)  
**To:** [O'Brien, Kevin](#)  
**Subject:** Quick update re: NERR  
**Date:** Friday, November 30, 2018 8:57:56 PM

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Hi Kevin - Just so you have the whole story (since I missed some important details when I talked with you this morning), Deb Pacileo asked if the western boundary of the proposed reserve could be moved from Lynn Pt to Cornfield Pt in Saybrook. This very small change would align the reserve boundaries with the sturgeon ESA block as shown on the Blue Plan map. The current boundary cuts the sturgeon block just about in half. If this western diagonal boundary was drawn somewhat arbitrarily, moving it a mile or 2 (after the public comment period or whenever appropriate) to match up with the ESA makes sense so its placement carries a definite reason while making the reserve only slightly larger. This request should be viewed as comment from the Marine Fisheries Division since they weren't able to participate in the prior process due to lack of staff.

Thanks! Penny

**From:** [Roger Sherman](#)  
**To:** [O'Brien, Kevin](#); [tessa.getchis@uconn.edu](mailto:tessa.getchis@uconn.edu)  
**Subject:** Comments to Proposed CT NERR  
**Date:** Friday, November 30, 2018 3:47:53 PM

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Kevin I would like to comment on the Proposed CT NERR. In my 30 years on the Groton Shellfish Commission it has become apparent that the single most adverse effect on water quality is the Municipal Sewer Systems inadequacy. I would recommend a complete survey of the systems in the proposed area.

I will give you two examples in the Groton area, About ten years ago we were experiencing high fecal counts in the Poquonock River. This situation continued for two years until we formed a clean water task force of which I was a member. I complained about the number of homeowners who smelled sewage in the area. The head of the Sewage Dept. said they knew they had problems in the Fort Hill Homes loop (650 homes). I asked him what he meant. He said on a dry day they had 200 K gallons in that loop. And on a rainy day they had 2 Million gallons. After dye tests which the Shellfish Commission paid for, it became apparent that the Sewage was ending up in the storm drains and then into the river, Two years and \$7 Million bond issue later we had all laterals and all mains relined.

Recently the Stonington, Mystic River Plant, which we had studied extensively for two years in an effort to extend the Direct Harvest area in the winter for our commercial leases, was sited by DEEP for a number of inadequacies. Among them was high fecal counts and that the plant was operating at over 90% of capacity. I understand that there are no firm plans for expansion. Meanwhile, in the Mystic area they are planning new housing in the Mystic Village area.

I have no info on the numerous other plants and systems in this area. Groton shellfishing areas are affected by the Stonington River Sewage System, the Groton system, the City of Groton system, the New London system, the Norwich system. I think these systems are the " long pole in the tent" for the Proposed CT NERR. Thank you for the opportunity to comment . Feel free to call me. Roger M. Sherman 860-536-1893

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Getchis, Tessa <[tessa.getchis@uconn.edu](mailto:tessa.getchis@uconn.edu)>  
**To:** Roger Sherman <[rmsherman67@aol.com](mailto:rmsherman67@aol.com)>  
**Sent:** Fri, Nov 30, 2018 11:12 am  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed CT NERR

Hi Roger,

For now, comments can be directed to: Kevin O'Brien at CT DEEP ([kevin.obrien@ct.gov](mailto:kevin.obrien@ct.gov)).

Let me know if you have any questions.

Best,  
Tessa

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**From:** Roger Sherman <[rmsherman67@aol.com](mailto:rmsherman67@aol.com)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 28, 2018 at 4:38 PM  
**To:** "Getchis, Tessa" <[tessa.getchis@uconn.edu](mailto:tessa.getchis@uconn.edu)>  
**Subject:** Proposed CT NERR

Tessa Please send me the contact info for comments on the proposal. My comments will concentrate on the need for a complete survey of the Sewer Treatment facilities that discharge "treated sewage" in to the proposed reserve. In my time with the shellfish commission, over 30 years, that has been the single most degrading effect on water quality. Recently we learn that the Mystic River Treatment Plant is operating at over 90% of capacity, with no firm plans for expansion . Of course it is not only the plants but the systems. Thank You, Roger



## Connecticut River Conservancy

*Clean water. Healthy habitat. Thriving communities.*

Lower Valley: deKoven House  
27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT 06457  
860.704.0057 · [www.ctriver.org](http://www.ctriver.org)

November 7, 2018

Kevin O'Brien  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Land & Water Resources Division  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Mr. O'Brien,

The Connecticut River Conservancy and our partners below enthusiastically support the nomination of a Natural Estuarine Research Reserve in Connecticut as presented in the materials distributed in advance of the November 13, 2018 public meeting.

Since 1952, the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) has worked to protect your rivers from source to sea so everyone can enjoy them. Our rivers belong to all of us. We are their voice. This means we find environmental problems and fix them, across all four river states. We run community river cleanups. We remove deadbeat dams. We plant trees. We protect and restore wildlife. We speak up on behalf of your rivers.

The health of our estuary and Long Island Sound is extremely important to all of us that work within the Connecticut River watershed. Our collective work contributes, in some way, toward a healthier Long Island Sound. While conditions in LIS have improved substantially over the last few decades, further effort must be made in order to achieve goals set for its health and productivity. Any and all resources to help to further our understanding of the challenges LIS and our estuary face in a changing climate are most welcome.

The time to establish a Natural Estuarine Research Reserve is now. We encourage CT DEEP to move forward with the nomination.

Sincerely,

Alicea Charamut  
River Steward

The following organizations sign in support of nomination of Natural Estuarine Research Reserve in Connecticut:

The Connecticut Council of Trout Unlimited  
Jack Kovach, Vice Chair

The Farmington Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
John DiVenere, Chapter President

Farmington River Watershed Association  
Aimee Petras, Education and Outreach Coordinator

Chicopee 4 Rivers Watershed Association (MA)  
Keith Davies, President

Millers River Watershed Council (MA)  
Ivan Ussach, Director

Lyme Land Conservation Trust  
Kristina White, Executive Director

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut  
Margaret Miner, Executive Director

November 13, 2018

Kevin O'Brien  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Land & Water Resources Division  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Mr. O'Brien,

As current Chair of the Friends of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, I am writing to express our coalition's enthusiastic support for the establishment of the lower Connecticut River as part of a proposed National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR).

The Friends of Conte was established in 2005 with the mission to cultivate and sustain a healthy Connecticut River watershed for all. We represent a thriving network of more than 70 public and private organizations working to enhance outdoor recreation, environmental education and conservation opportunities. Collectively, our member organizations comprise more than 100,000 members living and working across the watershed.

We recognize that the work that we do collectively across the entire Connecticut River watershed to support the legislative purposes of the Conte Refuge has a direct relationship to the health of Long Island Sound and its estuaries. The presence of a NERR in Connecticut will add valuable resources and scientific information to our ongoing efforts to protect and improve our natural resources and local economies.

Yours sincerely,



Markelle Smith  
*Chair, Friends of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge*  
*Landscape Partnership Manager, The Nature Conservancy*  
136 West St., Suite 202  
Northampton, MA 01060

Cc: Executive Committee, Friends of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge:

Andy Fisk, *Executive Director, Connecticut River Conservancy*

Patrick Comins, *Executive Director, Audubon Connecticut*

Melissa Ocana, *Climate Adaptation Coordinator and Extension Project Manager, University of Massachusetts*

Kristen Sykes, *Director of Conservation Strategies, Appalachian Mountain Club*

David Stier, *Director, Springfield Science Museum*



145 Dennison Road  
Essex, CT 06426  
860/581-8554 FAX: 860/581-8543  
[www.rivercog.org](http://www.rivercog.org)

Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,  
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,  
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam,  
Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield  
Middletown, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook  
Portland, Westbrook

November 15, 2018

Mr. Kevin O'Brien  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Land & Water Resources Division  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

**SUBJECT: Nomination of the Natural Estuarine Research Reserve in Connecticut**

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Regional Planning Committee enthusiastically supports the nomination of a Natural Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) in Connecticut as presented at the public meeting held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018. Although only a portion of the RPC's seventeen member municipalities are located on Long Island Sound or the Connecticut River waterfront, those two natural and economic resources and their protection are of significant importance to the region and the state's chief economic driver, eco-tourism. The establishment of a NERR in the State of Connecticut, and specifically within the estuary of the lower Connecticut River Valley, will only serve to enhance the region and the state as a whole, be a benefit to our residents and to the health of the region's ecosystem. The RPC's draft Regional Plan of Conservation and Development highlights the importance of economic development as it relates to Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River and discusses the importance of educational opportunities for the citizens of the region and the state. The greater understanding of Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River that will result through the research that takes place at the NERR will enhance the environmental and ecological health of these important waters which will in turn be a benefit to all of us.

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Regional Planning Committee urges the CT DEEP to move forward with the nomination.

For the members of the Regional Planning Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J H Torrance Downes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

J H Torrance Downes, Deputy Director  
Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments



145 Dennison Road  
Essex, CT 06475  
Phone: 860-581-8554  
FAX: 860-581-8543  
[www.ctrivergateway.org](http://www.ctrivergateway.org)

Chester  
Deep River  
East Haddam  
Essex  
Haddam  
Lyme  
Old Lyme  
Old Saybrook

November 15, 2018

Mr. Kevin O'Brien  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Land & Water Resources Division  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

**SUBJECT: Nomination of the Natural Estuarine Research Reserve in Connecticut**

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

The Connecticut River Gateway Commission enthusiastically supports the nomination of a Natural Estuarine Research Reserve in Connecticut as presented at the public meeting held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018. The Commission especially supports the establishment of the reserve within the estuary of the lower Connecticut River, the area within which the Gateway Commission has its statutory authority (Section 25-102a through Section 25-102s CGS).

Through the adoption of zoning standards and through the acquisition of over 1,100 acres of undeveloped land in the lower Connecticut River Valley with partners and by itself, the Gateway Commission has been protecting the environmental and visual integrity of the estuary since 1973. The establishment of the Natural Estuarine Research Reserve within the valley would capitalize on the pristine nature of the lower river and provide educational resources to further study this amazing local, regional, national and international asset.

The Gateway Commission has partnered with many environmental organizations through the years including the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Connecticut DEEP, the Connecticut River Conservancy, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, Connecticut Forest & Park Association, The Nature Conservancy, the Connecticut Audubon Society, the Trust for Public Land, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, the Middlesex Land Trust as well as the local municipalities and land trusts which operate in the lower river valley. Through these partnerships, the lower Connecticut River is the pre-eminent resource that it is. The establishment of the NERR will serve to add another important partnership and further enhance this amazing part of the State.

The Connecticut River Gateway Commission urges the CT DEEP to move forward with the nomination.

For the Gateway Commission,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J H Torrance Downes".

J H Torrance Downes, Deputy Director  
Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments

*Protecting the River Since 1973*

November 16, 2018

Mr. Kevin O'Brien  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Land & Water Resources Division  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

**SUBJECT: Nomination of the Natural Estuarine Research Reserve in Connecticut**

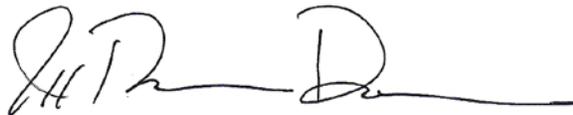
Dear Mr. O'Brien:

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments enthusiastically supports the nomination of a Natural Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) in Connecticut as presented at the public meeting held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018. Although only a portion of RiverCOG's seventeen member municipalities are located on Long Island Sound or the Connecticut River waterfront, those two natural and economic resources and their protection are of significant importance to the region and state's chief economic driver, eco-tourism. The establishment of a NERR in the State of Connecticut, and specifically within the estuary of the lower Connecticut River Valley will only serve to enhance the region and the state as a whole and be a benefit to our residents. The research that will take place at the NERR and the increased educational opportunities it will provide will be important and welcomed in all of our communities and will enhance the environmental and ecological health of the region and state.

Although we understand that the boundary of the NERR cannot be amended during the nomination process, should the site be selected to proceed, we encourage all involved to consider modifying said boundary to include the northern portion of the original Connecticut River site, from Essex and Lords Cove to Cromwell and Portland. Inclusion of these ecologically-significant coves and fresh water tidal marsh locations as core or buffer areas would not detract from the existing character of the NERR which will be submitted for nomination, but enhance the Reserve's research and educational opportunities.

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments urges the CT DEEP to move forward with the nomination.

For the Chief Elected Officials of the seventeen RiverCOG municipalities,



J H Torrance Downes, Deputy Director  
Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments

Lowell Weicker, Jr.  
PO Box 877  
Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371

November 12,

Mr. Kevin P. O'Brien  
Sr. Environmental Analyst  
Land & Water Resource Division  
Bureau of Water Protection  
Connecticut Department of DEEP  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

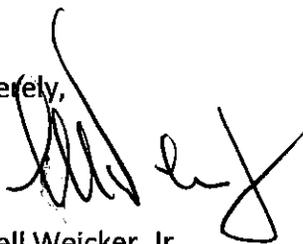
Dear Mr. O'Brien:

I write today as a private citizen and resident of Old Lyme. Unfortunately, I am unable to be with you this evening in Groton but am well represented by my neighbors.

As a United States Senator I maintained a strong interest in and support for the marine research programs of NOAA. With three-quarters of the earth's surface covered by water, it is important that we understand this resource and conserve the multitudes of species that inhabit our waters. As Governor of Connecticut, I located the DEEP near the mouth of the Connecticut River Estuary in recognition of its importance to the state. The Estuary is a breeding ground, nursery, habitat and migratory stopover for countless species of plants, fish, birds and other wildlife.

I am in wholehearted support of the proposal to establish a dual sited NERR in upper Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River Estuary. Given the importance of the Sound to the State of Connecticut and the importance of the Connecticut River Estuary to the Sound, this proposal is long overdue. We live at a time of great change and our waters and the species that inhabit them are fragile resources. The challenges presented by nature require that we better understand these issues. This can only be done through more research.

Sincerely,



Lowell Weicker, Jr.  
Former United States Senator and  
Governor of Connecticut

# FRIENDS OF WHALEBONE COVE

PO Box 333, Hadlyme, CT 06349

October 27, 2018

Kevin P. O'Brien  
Senior Environmental Analyst  
Land & Water Resources Division - Coastal Resources Section  
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT, 06106-5127      **RE: NERR Nomination of Connecticut River Estuary**

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

Friends of Whalebone Cove is a 501(c)(3) neighborhood conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the natural condition of Whalebone Cove, a freshwater tidal marsh in the Connecticut River estuary of worldwide prestige and prominence.

Friends of Whalebone Cove supports the nomination and designation of the Connecticut River estuary as a *National Estuarine Research Reserve under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act*.

Located in the Hadlyme section of northern Lyme, Whalebone Cove is a tranquil 116-acre tidal wetland hidden on the east shore of the Connecticut River that is a nature sanctuary within the Silvio O. Conte Wildlife Refuge of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. It abounds in wildlife year-round and provides fishing, hunting and paddle craft recreational opportunities. It also has the largest stand of wild rice in Connecticut.

Whalebone Cove is listed in the Ramsar Convention on International Wetlands as one of the freshwater marshlands in the Connecticut River Estuary Complex that is of global importance. The Nature Conservancy has called Whalebone Cove "one of the most undisturbed and biologically significant freshwater marshes along the Connecticut River," and the Cove is included within The Nature Conservancy's list of 40 "Last Great Places" in the western hemisphere.

The Cove is an important wintering area for bald eagles and black ducks, and is also a significant foraging area for migratory waterfowl, including Canada geese, mallards, and wood ducks. Other bird species that feed and breed in the Cove and its upland shoreline are great blue herons, sora, least bittern, marsh wren, Carolina wren, white-eyed vireo, osprey, and red-tailed hawks.

Designation of the Connecticut River estuary as a NERR site will be an important step in helping to provide much needed research and educational programs in the lower Connecticut River Valley that will contribute to the ecological security for the Whalebone Cove habitat, and indeed throughout the region.

For these reasons, Friends of Whalebone Cove strongly endorses nomination and designation of the Connecticut River Estuary as a National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Thank you for your consideration of our endorsement.

Sincerely,



Humphrey S. Tyler  
President  
Friends of Whalebone Cove, Inc.



14 November 2018

TO: Mr. Kevin P. O'Brien, Sr. Environmental Analyst  
Land & Water Resources Division - Coastal Resources Section  
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127

RE: CT NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

Dear Mr. O'Brien,

Congratulations on taking a major step forward with the CT NERR nomination! Judging from the number of participants at last night's meeting, and the tenor of their comments, the nomination is off to a good start. Let me add my voice to the chorus of support for a long overdue NERR in CT.

Just to formalize and provide more detail on my comments provided orally at last night's meeting:

1. I encourage the nomination committee and SST to continue with their good work, and the thoughtful process that's beginning to shape the design of the Reserve. December 18 is not far off, and there's still a lot of work to be done.
2. I also encourage you to provide supporting documentation for the selection process so the public can gain a better appreciation of the procedural mechanics; understand some of the rationale and terminology, which is new to many; and provide more thoughtful input and recommendations, as well as support for the nomination. Despite a very well-structured presentation last evening, it was difficult to keep pace and understand the many nuances of the selection process, criteria and scoring.
3. As I noted at the meeting, I suggest a closer look at the NERRS Goals and Objectives found in the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, as well as NOAA agency-wide plans. I think *NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan* (December 2010), though probably outdated, provides an excellent entrée into how the committee might want to frame its arguments for nomination. In the cover letter by then NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco, she writes of "...the highest priority opportunities for NOAA to contribute substantially to the advancement of society." I think these priorities unarguably set the tone for a successful nomination and the nomination should speak to each one: *availability and quality of freshwater; exposure of people and communities to high impact weather; stresses of urbanization of the coasts; the exploitation of ocean and coastal resources; and pervasive effects of climate change on society and the environment.* She caps the list with, "...these are the central challenges we must face if

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we are to improve human welfare and sustain the ecosystems upon which we depend.” Dr. Lubchenco really brought to the fore the concepts of ecosystem-based management and the integration of science-service-stewardship, directly aimed at those stated human and environmental outcomes, as a viable path forward that persists today. I can think of no better philosophical roadmap to attain the NOAA vision of *Resilient Ecosystems, Communities, and Economies*. That spirit should pervade the nomination.

And that spirit does pervade the NERRS Strategic Plan and its Vision for *Resilient estuaries and coastal watersheds where human and natural communities thrive*. My suggestion last night was to go beyond the remarkable habitat attributes and value beyond the shoreline to acknowledge the importance of healthy watersheds to estuaries in your site-selection process, and in making your case. While the size of the proposed Reserve will undoubtedly provide ample opportunities to link estuaries and their watersheds, it was disappointing to me that it was not considered in the site selection process. It is so important to water quality but also to the shoreline squeeze on estuarine resources, and the relationship between land and water is amply reflected in the NERRS vision as well as many of the goals and objectives where watersheds are prominently identified as important to resiliency objectives, scientific understanding, education, stewardship and, most importantly, to coastal planning and decisions since communities are in the upland (mostly), and not in the water.

I do diverge on one point (and digress here) – I think NOAA has over-emphasized climate change effects to the detriment of an integrated management approach that balances other important drivers of change, especially development, almost to the point of introducing a bias to the objectivity of science. Granted, climate is important, and threatening, but its effects are not easily disentangled from the myriad stressors that come from the multiple drivers of change – climate, yes, but also development, agriculture, resource extraction (living and non-living), habitat destruction, and invasive species – collective contributors to the perils our environment and society endure now, and fear in the future. I hope the nomination committee will consider this point, and maintain objectivity in their plan that sustains the integrity of science and its application to management. The emphasis on climate is also unfortunate as it is such an intractable problem, with widely-unpredictable consequences for the future. Management dollars are, in my opinion, much more effective in sustaining healthy, resilient ecosystems as best we can, which means allowing recovery and transition to changing conditions rather than so-called “resilient” communities, which only defer climate impacts to a future date.

4. My final recommendation is to revisit the proposed Reserve boundary to at least assure there are adequate opportunities to research, monitor and develop management relationships between watershed health and estuarine health. I am not suggesting that the watersheds be incorporated into the Reserve boundary, though I wouldn't object to that either if the possibility exists. As I noted in my oral comments, I really see the

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Salmon and Eight Mile Rivers as ideal field laboratories to research water quality effects and impacts from land to a tidal river, and the Niantic River for a more direct relationship to coastal estuaries as well as a test-bed for management and training. There has been so much invested in managing watersheds to benefit coastal estuaries, especially for nutrients, but also for biointegrity and biocondition gradients that are becoming more prominent in ecosystem management. The effect of nitrogen on eelgrass, for example, is a high priority for NERRS, and the water quality SWMP stations are designed to study nutrient impacts. It's an add-in that I think is simple and beneficial to a well-rounded nomination, and easy to highlight as focus areas. I do suggest extending the CT River boundary upriver to the Haddam area to capture the Salmon and Eight Mile, but also to have Machimoodus and Haddam Meadows State Parks in the Reserve. They could provide potential Reserve facility sites or ancillary access and education sites as well. If you need to trim areas, I think the Thames River estuary might become a "buffer" area, trading it for the Niantic buffer area, which could be elevated to a focus watershed-estuary area.

I hope these comments are well-received as constructive and helpful to the nomination. As you know, I am available to advise on the nomination, or to simply elaborate on issues or concepts I've offered. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



Owner and Principal Scientist

Cc: Betsey Wingfield, Chief, Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse  
Brian Thompson, Director, Land and Water Resources Division

November 18, 2018  
Mr. Kevin O'Brien (kevin.obrien@ct.gov)  
CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection  
Land & Water Resources Division  
79 Elm Street.  
Hartford, CT 06106

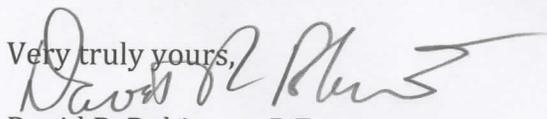
Subject: Comments on Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR)

As way of introduction, I am David Robinson a local resident of East Lyme and Waterford, Connecticut. I live on the water of the Niantic River watershed and have for the past 38 years; I share a cottage in Pleasure Beach, Waterford that has been part of our family for 73 years. I am a professional engineer licensed in New York and Connecticut. I am an avid water-person both professionally and recreationally and am personally familiar with the coastline from Barn Island through Bluff Point, Mystic River, Thames River, Jordan Cove, Niantic River and Bay through the Connecticut River watershed. I have been in the business of inspecting and rehabilitating underwater structures throughout the Northeast for the past 48 years. A former USCG licensed captain, NAUI Instructor, USN trained in Deep Sea Diving and Salvage, former submariner, ADCI Air Diving Supervisor.

First, I support the designation of the mapped areas as a designated Connecticut NERR.

As a board member of Save the River-Save the Hills, I have a strong interest in having the Niantic River watershed and Niantic Bay be designated as part of the buffer zone to the proposed Core areas of our regional Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve. These are important recreational and commercial marine areas. Additionally, there are previous studies, and ongoing studies of water quality and chemistry that can be tapped for any research chosen by NERR. In addition to caring for our watershed, we have a strong interest in assisting any who would provide research or betterment proposals to our regional watershed. We have a core group that can be tapped for support in these areas.

Please consider this letter as a request to be considered for adding the Niantic River Watershed and the Niantic Bay to the Buffer Zone for the proposed Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR).

Very truly yours,  


David R. Robinson, P.E.  
PO Box 909, East Lyme, CT 06333 Cell: 203-395-2609



Connecticut River Joint Commissions  
10 Water Street, Suite 225  
Lebanon, NH 03766  
(603) 727-9484  
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November 20, 2018

Kevin P. O'Brien Senior. Environmental Analyst  
kevin.obrien@ct.gov  
Land & Water Resources Division - Coastal Resources Section  
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT, 06106-5127

Dear Mr. O'Brien

New Hampshire's Connecticut River Valley Resource Commission, created by the legislature in 1987 and Vermont's Connecticut River Watershed Advisory Commission, similarly created in 1988, was directed to cooperate with each other to preserve and protect the resources of the Connecticut River Valley, and to guide its growth and development. They have met together as the Joint Commissions since 1989 to advocate for and ensure public involvement in decisions affecting the region.

As President of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions and as a practicing wetland scientist for nearly thirty years I am aware of the global significance of the Connecticut River estuary and tidal wetlands complex, and wholeheartedly support the creation of a National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) site in the Connecticut River estuary.

As you may know, this estuarine system is one of only 38 wetlands within the United States that is recognized by the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Ramsar website provides the following description of the Connecticut River estuary and wetlands.

“Shifting sandbars have preserved the river's extraordinary assemblage of natural and undisturbed plant and animal communities. The site includes open water; fresh, salt and brackish tidal wetlands; floodplains, river islands, beaches, and dunes. The system serves as essential habitat for numerous regionally, nationally, and globally rare or otherwise significant species and forms an extensive biological corridor that links marine and estuarine waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Many migratory and Neotropical bird species nest or winter in the marshes, which regularly support over 10,000 individuals, consisting of 18 species of waterfowl. Two million people live in the river basin that supports active commercial and recreational fisheries, various tourist facilities and activities.”

The Connecticut River Joint Commissions wishes to enthusiastically support the creation of a NERRS site in the Connecticut River estuary.

Sincerely yours,



Jim McClammer, President

DRAFT

**From:** [Craig Repasz](#)  
**To:** [O'Brien, Kevin](#)  
**Cc:** [pauster@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:pauster@mysticaquarium.org); [ls.broker@cox.net](mailto:ls.broker@cox.net); "Thomas Robben"  
**Subject:** COA Support for the NERR Designation for selected sites along Long Island Sound  
**Date:** Monday, December 03, 2018 10:23:41 AM

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Dear Kevin

The Connecticut Ornithological Association strongly supports the effort to designate the selected sites along Long Island Sound to be part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve. These habitats are at great risk due to sea level rise, invasives, development and pollution. It is important to understand the impact that these factors will have on wildlife. Conservation efforts must be grounded in the strong research and monitoring that the NERR would provide. It is critical that Connecticut has sites in the NERR program.

We look forward to collaborating with the NERR on both research and educational initiatives after the site is established.

Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Craig Repasz  
Connecticut Ornithological Association  
Conservation Chair



# MYSTIC AQUARIUM

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W [mysticaquarium.org](http://mysticaquarium.org)

December 3, 2018

Kevin P. O'Brien  
Environmental Analyst  
Land and Water Resources Division  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Via E-mail: [kevin.obrien@ct.gov](mailto:kevin.obrien@ct.gov)

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

Mystic Aquarium would like to express our strong support for designation of a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) in the Connecticut waters of Long Island Sound. The proposed NERR, as detailed by our Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will be a unique addition to the network of NERR sites off the northeast United States. We look forward to collaborating with the NERR on both research and educational initiatives after the site is established.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Cubina  
Senior Vice President, Mission Programs

The mission of Mystic Aquarium is to inspire people to care for and protect our ocean planet through conservation, education and research.