
The Still River Greenway Project



Bringing New Life To An Old River

A Primer Celebrating Its Revitalization

The Still River: A History & Progress Report

The Still River is a cultural icon in Danbury. For many years, Danbury's main watercourse was abused by industrial and sewage discharges. This abuse took its toll on the River, and it gradually lost its beauty and ability to support aquatic life. The citizens of Danbury considered the River to be "dead".

"Rumors of my death are greatly over-exaggerated."



If the Still River could speak, these words of Mark Twain would be its rallying cry. Since 1970, there has been an amazing turnaround in the vibrancy of the River. Significant growth has been spurred by the Clean Water Act, regulatory efforts of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and a commitment by Danbury industries to clean up discharges to the River. Additionally, a major upgrade to Danbury's Sewage Treatment Plant in 1993

dramatically improved the quality of the discharge to Limekiln Brook (a major tributary to the Still River). Finally, new construction in the watershed is carefully scrutinized by the City's Environmental Impact Commission (EIC) to ensure that erosion of soil does not foul the River.

The fish are back!

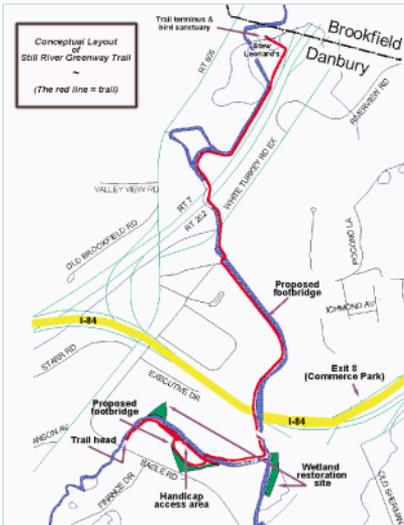
In 1997 and 1998, the Fisheries Unit of DEP conducted a survey of the Still River in Commerce Park, which was previously found to be devoid of life. Amazingly, these recent surveys discovered a vast diversity and abundance of finfish, including bass, shiners, darters and pickerel. The improvements in water quality have paid off! The River has shown its gratitude to these efforts with this rebound back to life!

A community celebration of the River

In 1995, the City of Danbury initiated the "Still River Restoration Project," which includes the development of shoreline and floodplain improvement projects in Commerce Park and a "Greenway Trail" past these projects and along the River to showcase this environmental success story. Our website provides the citizens of Danbury and Western Connecticut with a preview of what the project is all about and a running progress report on the status of all of our efforts.



Details of the Project



The Still River Greenway Project is a multi-faceted environmental project that will be created on a 2.2 mile corridor from Commerce Park to the Danbury-Brookfield border, across from Stew Leonard's (left). Features of the project include:

Environmental Restoration Projects

At selected locations along the Greenway Trail, projects have been designed to improve the flood plain's natural characteristics for absorbing storm water pollutants from urban runoff. Additionally, an experimental demonstration of creating a revetment structure along the shore-water interface has been designed to improve fish habitat and stabilize the shoreline from undercutting by the River.

Recreational Access to the River

To showcase the beauty of the River corridor and the environmental demonstration projects, public access is provided along the flood plain trail and in the River through a canoe trail. A handicapped access zone has been designed near the trail head. A bird and wildlife observation loop is planned for the trail terminus at the Brookfield border. There is a long term goal of extending the Greenway trail north into Brookfield to connect the linear park to the River, behind the Brookfield Municipal Center.

The Still River Museum

The Danbury Preservation Trust created a museum exhibit that showcases the history of the River. After a brief exposition in 1994, the exhibit lost its home; fortunately, the displays are in safe storage. The Still River Greenway project aims to provide a permanent location along the trail for the Museum exhibit. A modular home is available to house it temporarily.

Environmental Education

The final aspect of the project is to educate the public about the dynamics and dramatic recovery of the River and flood plain. This will be accomplished through signage along the hiking and canoe trails, which are keyed to brochures that explain the ecosystem and environmental value to preserving urban landscapes.

Where we are now and where we are going

Project Status

After four years of planning, design, permitting, and grantsmanship, the Still River Greenway project went into construction in September 1999. All of the environmental demonstration projects were successfully installed. The first section of the Greenway Trail (near the trail head) was installed with benches, signage, a self-guided educational trail, and bird nesting boxes. In spite of the onslaught of Floyd, a major tropical storm, the installations and all other aspects of the project withstood the flooding that inundated the Greenway. With the success of this installation, the project is off of the drawing boards and onto the flood plain!

The Challenge: Finishing the initial project work

The successful installation of 1999 was a milestone, since it was the most complicated part of the project and provides a template for the completion of the remainder of the Greenway. It is our hope to extend our work, mobilize volunteer labor, and raise the funds necessary to complete the initial 2.2 mile Greenway section:

Volunteer Labor: The work needed to extend the trail from our initial "trailhead" in Commerce Park will involve the clearing of paths, production of brochures, the placement of signs and benches, and the installation of wildlife observation points along the trail. We are planning several "volunteer days" to involve business sponsors, conservation organizations, and citizens to construct the remainder of the hiking and canoe trails, with integrated education points.

Funding: Substantial capital is needed to build two pedestrian bridges across the River, construct the building that will house the Still River Museum, and to provide additional handicapped-accessible locations.

Ideas: Our best resource for this project are the creative ideas of individuals and organizations that have helped with this project to date.

What You Can Do To Help

The strongest asset of this project is community enthusiasm. If you would like to join us, we can be reached at:

Telephone	(203) 797-4625
E-mail	EHD@airbridge.net.
Website	www.Danbury.org/StillRiver

The enclosed card lists our financial goals for each phase of the project. Donors for any milestone (or a portion) will be recognized on a "donation plaque" at the appropriate site on the Greenway.

Milestone	Objective	Financial Target
1	Construction of Commerce Park pedestrian bridge	\$ 60,000
2	Design of Berkshire Corporate Park pedestrian bridge	\$ 25,000
3	Construction of second pedestrian bridge	\$ 150,000
4	Design of second handicap access zone	\$ 10,000
5	Construction of second handicap access zone	\$ 30,000
6	Design of Still River Museum	\$ 10,000
7	Construction of Still River Museum	\$ 50,000