

## **“Salisbury is Wet and Wild” Is that too racy?**

Article for the Lakeville Journal that is a Summary of NRI Water Section

March 2025

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Salisbury Conservation Commission’s quarterly missive. Our mission is education - educating ourselves as well as fellow Salisburyans on the important natural habitats specific to our beautiful and fascinating town, and how to preserve them.

With Earth Day around the corner, we want to encourage landowners to consider why, how and how much fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides they apply to their land. Please pick up your free lawn sign at the Town Hall while supplies last that shows your support for chemical-free lawns.

IMAGE of SIGN

In this article we summarize “Water – Wetlands and Watercourses”, a chapter from the Town’s Natural Resources Inventory (NRI). You can find the whole NRI here. [LINK TO NRI](#). We like to think holistically about our natural resources and how they all work in concert to provide the nature we love and steward. As we consider the lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, bogs, swamps, fens, vernal pools of Salisbury, we are also thinking about what drains into them and how we can help to keep them clean, productive and viable habitats during our time here in Salisbury.

### **Salisbury is Wet and Wild – Summary of the NRI’s Water Section**

Salisbury’s rich assemblage of wetlands and watercourses are the lifeblood of our landscape. We are fortunate to have many large bodies of water in town as well as riparian areas, all which support and provide a multitude of habitats making up our unique and precious ecosystem.

For instance, Salisbury is home to two high elevation lakes that sit atop the Riga Plateau, also known as the Taconic Uplift: Riga Lake and South Pond. These ponds, sitting at a higher elevation than any other water source in town, have colder water and feed that cold water to swamps, wetlands and streams, supporting **keystone (?) species such as ???** These cool water temperatures provide a valuable facet to our town’s overall ecosystem.

Did you know that Salisbury’s location within the State, as well as its elevation gradient of close to 2,000 feet, and its landscape that remains relatively unfragmented, have resulted in the Town being a reservoir for biodiversity of statewide and regional significance? Klemens et al (2021), wrote that in using climate change modeling, it is predicted that Salisbury will be the only area of the State where cold-water species will be able to continue to flourish because of climate change.

PHOTO OF RIGA PLATEAU?

On the valley floor we have four large hardwater (what does that mean?) lakes; Lake Wononscopomuc (Lakeville Lake), Lake Wonopakook (Long Pond), Lake Washinee (West Twin Lake) and Lake Washining (East Twin Lake). These lakes are stewarded by numerous lake associations where dedicated volunteers work to preserve and enhance their ecology. Please visit [salisburyct.org](http://salisburyct.org) [LINK](#) to learn more about how you can volunteer.

At the town's eastern border is the mighty Housatonic River whose flood plain contains rich soils, perfect for agricultural uses as well as provides important wildlife habitat in the oxbows. In 2023, 41 miles of the Housatonic, including the stretch in Salisbury, were designated by the National Park Service's Partnership to be in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program which protects and enhances rivers throughout the country. Smaller rivers that run through town are the Salmon Kill River seen from Main Street, Ball Brook running at the north of town, and Moore Brook running between the Housatonic and Salmon Kill.

Finally, what are hidden from view are the extensive sand and gravel deposits known as till which were deposited by the last glaciation some 12,000 years ago. Driving north on Undermountain Road these glacial terraces are clearly visible as gently undulating agricultural fields. Water percolates through these terraces and feeds the subterranean aquifer but also breaks out and gives rise to many unusual habitats, such as fens, that contain many endangered and rare species.

The water features and resources we have in Salisbury add to our life here in obvious ways such as fishing, boating, and yes, drinking, but also in many nuanced ways as they support our many productive and exceptional ecosystems.

#### IMAGE FUN AT THE GROVE

Salisbury's rich assemblage of wetlands and watercourses are the lifeblood of our landscape. Over the last decade, increased cycles of drought and flooding in concert with development, especially around lakes, is increasing runoff and pollutants to these receiving waters and have impacted these resources threatening many wetland-dependent species.

One thing landowners can do to preserve our waters is to use less or no chemicals on our land.

We would like to be interactive, so please send topic suggestions and comments to [leepotter@salsiburyct.gov](mailto:leepotter@salsiburyct.gov).