

W E L C O M E

T O T H E

# Eightmile River

W A T E R S H E E D

T H E H E A R T

O F A

L A S T G R E A T

P L A C E

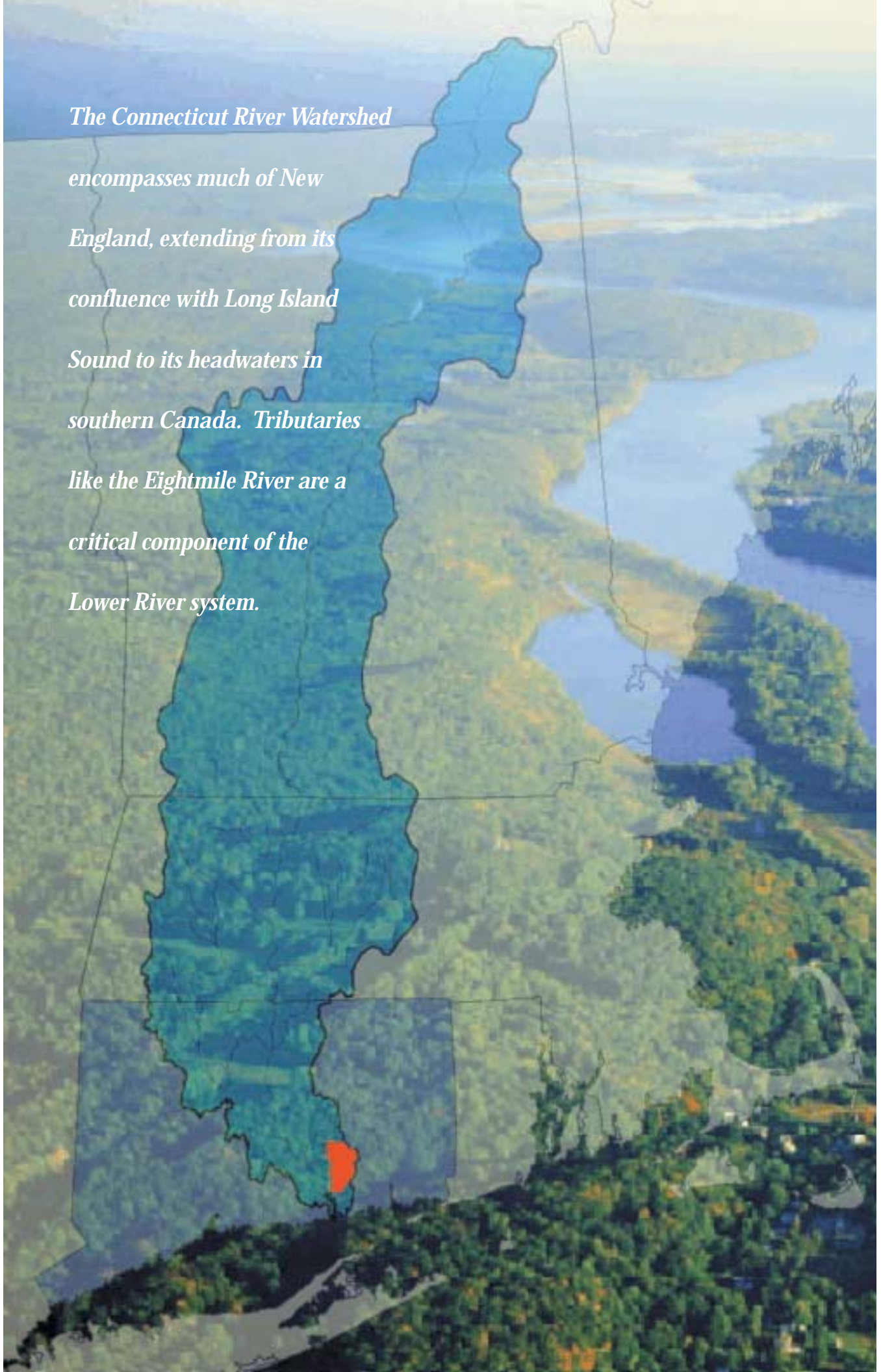


University of  
Connecticut

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM  
*College of Agriculture and Natural Resources*

*The Connecticut River Watershed*

*encompasses much of New England, extending from its confluence with Long Island Sound to its headwaters in southern Canada. Tributaries like the Eightmile River are a critical component of the Lower River system.*





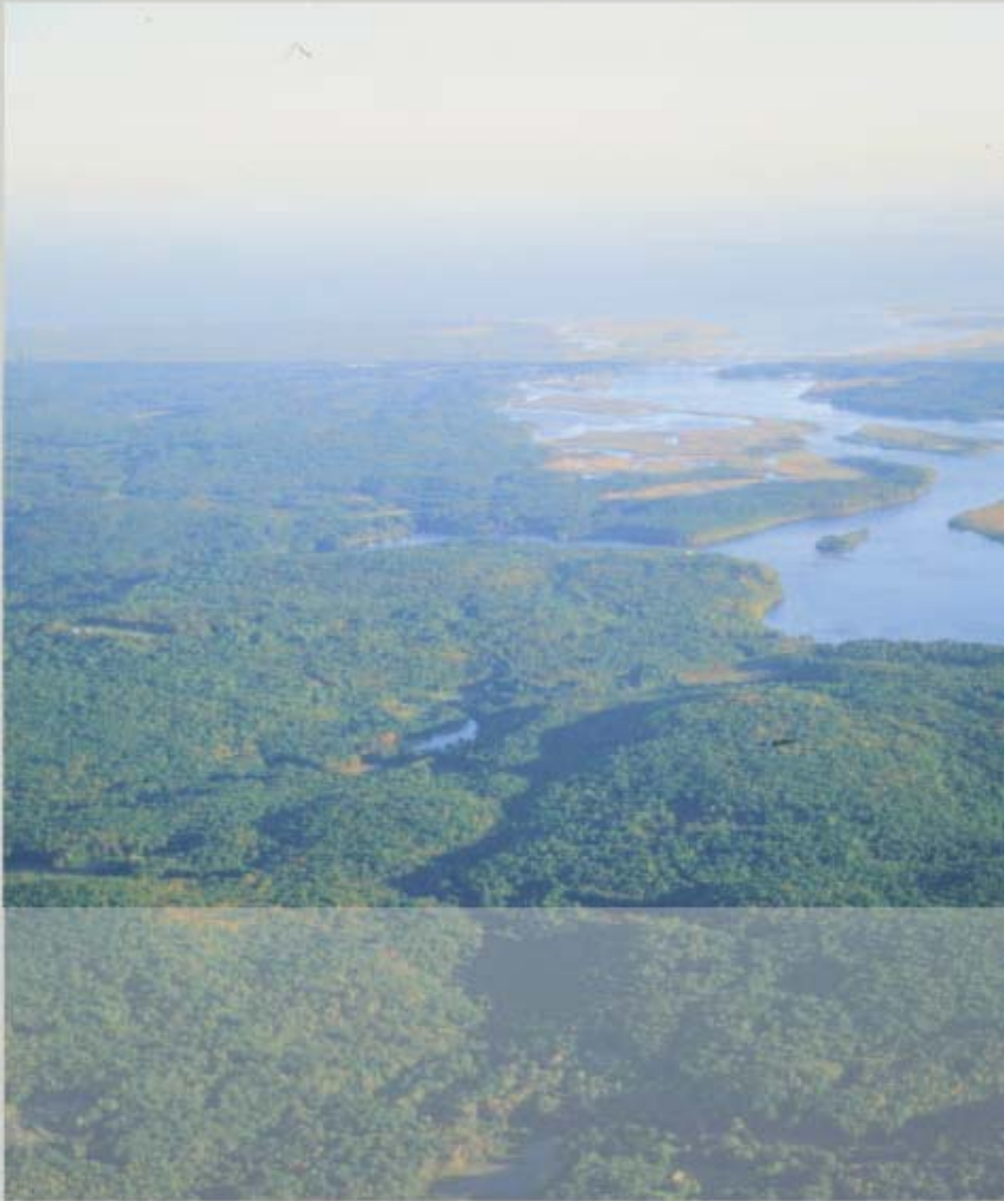
“  
We’re talking about a  
**precious, shared resource.**

To protect that resource, people and communities of the  
**Eightmile Watershed** have to understand what a  
watershed is, and how they fit into **the bigger picture.**”

— Anthony Irving, *Eightmile River Watershed Advisory Committee*

Draining to scenic **Hamburg Cove** on the eastern bank of the lower Connecticut River, this sixty-two square mile area is a corner of Connecticut that still retains the cultural and natural heritage of times past. The **classic New England scenery** of rolling hills, old houses and stone walls is dotted with sites of historic and archeological interest. Colonial mills and shipyards. Native American camps. Historic family graveyards. Victorian mansions. In fact, seven sites in the watershed are included in the National Registry of Historic Places, and forty-six other important sites have been identified by the State Office of Archeology.

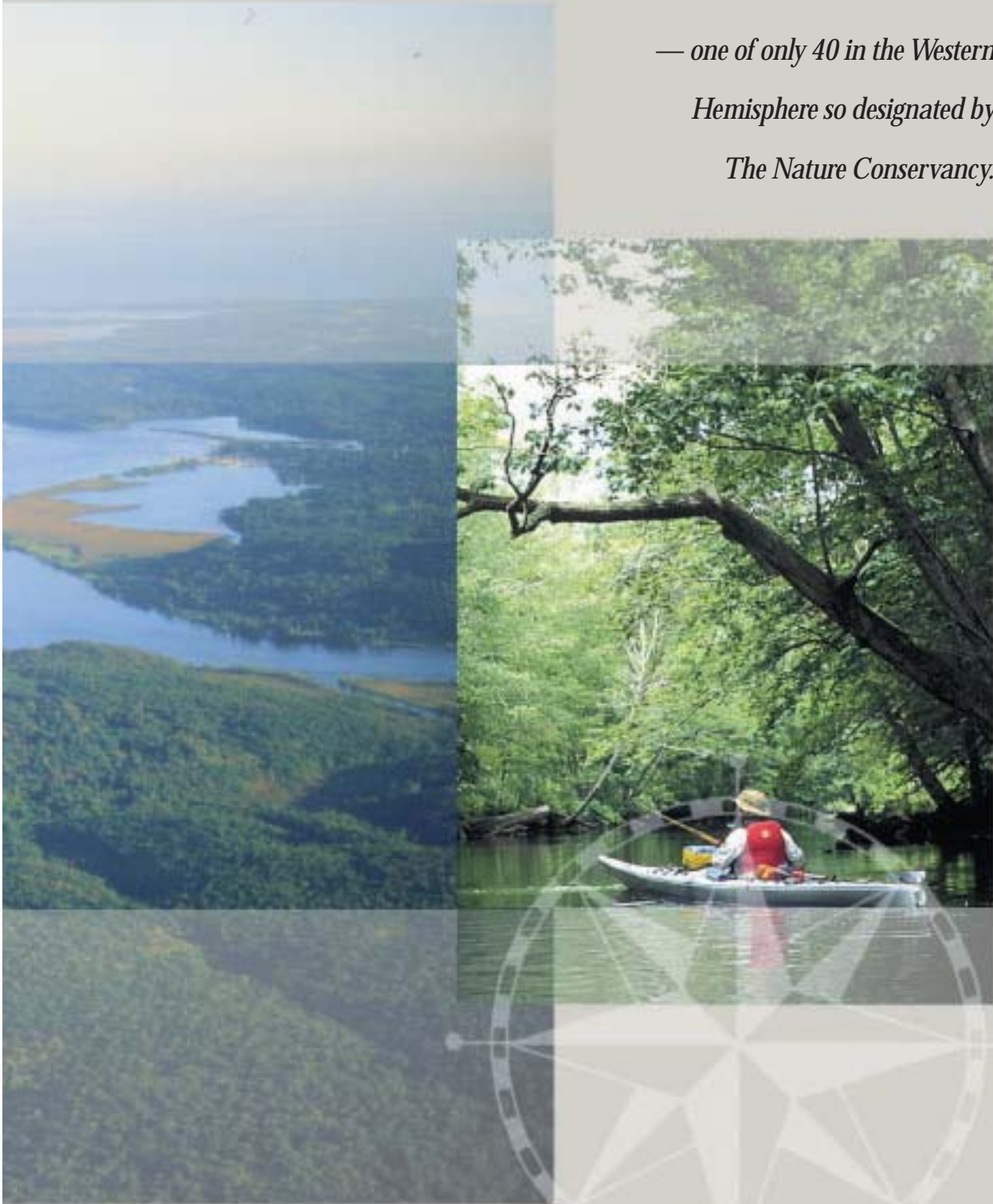
**And the natural environment is truly remarkable.** The Lower Connecticut River has been recognized by a host of organizations concerned with the environment - The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, to name a few. Geology



and history have combined to spare this region from the intense development common at the mouth of major rivers. Since the 1970's, the cleanup of the River from pollution has transformed what was once described as “American’s best-landscaped sewer” to a

# “Last Great Place”

— one of only 40 in the Western Hemisphere so designated by The Nature Conservancy.



# But even in a Last Great Place, the Eightmile

The watershed - an area that contains large portions of the towns of East Haddam, Lyme, and Salem, as well as pieces of Colchester and East Lyme — drains to scenic and historic Hamburg Cove, a well-used recreational area known to harbor rare and endangered plants and animals. A number of other rare and unusual plants and animals populate the watershed as well, providing a rich assemblage of biota increasingly hard to find in southern New England. Bobcat, otter, and red fox reside here. Spectacular birds of the secluded forest like the Cerulean Warbler can be found as well, in addition to large raptors such as the Great Horned Owl and the American Bald Eagle.



# stands out.

The rich assemblage of wildlife can be mainly attributed to the fact that, despite over 350 years of settlement, **the watershed is still over 80% forested.** Impressive bedrock ledges, waterfalls, vernal pools, floodplains, bogs, and large tracts of unfragmented hardwood forest, tied together by the Eightmile main stem and its tributaries, make for an incredibly diverse landscape which then gives rise to a diversity of life. These natural areas, combined with farms, villages, and winding roads, create the unique mosaic that makes the Eightmile watershed a special place.



It's beautiful, historic,  
ecologically important and  
quintessentially



# New England. *But for how long?*

Like much of Connecticut, the Eightmile is threatened by the type of unplanned growth that can quickly degrade or destroy the cultural and natural resources of an area. Streams, lakes and wetlands degraded by polluted runoff; forest lands and fragile stream corridors fragmented by “cookie-cutter” subdivisions; historic and archaeological sites lost to inadequate construction precautions — in sum, **the homogenization of the rural New England landscape** into Everytown, USA. The inevitable price of progress and economic prosperity?

**Absolutely not!**



# There are alternatives,

but they require **good land use planning**  
by local governments and **thoughtful**  
**stewardship** by local land owners.

**The Eightmile River Watershed  
Committee**, a group of local officials and  
citizens, is working to make these alternatives a  
reality. The Committee's goal: *balance  
conservation and growth in the watershed in  
ways that ensure the long term social, economic,  
and environmental health of its communities.*

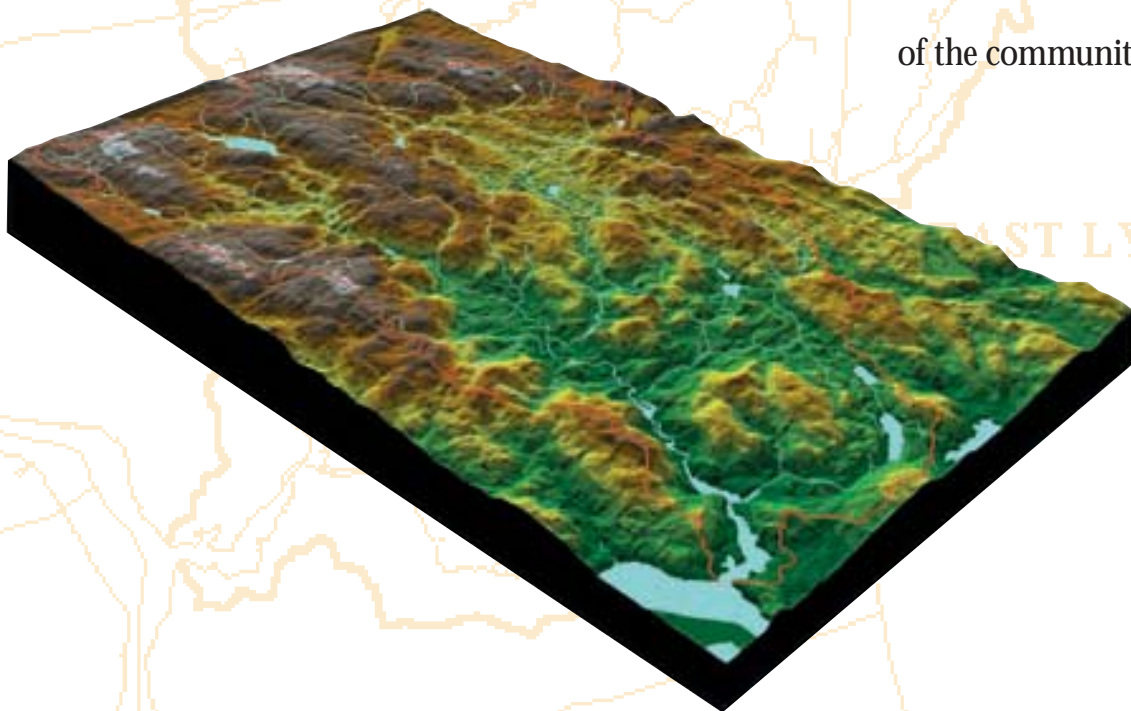
Their tools: **information** and **education**.

Information about the condition, location and  
significance of cultural and natural resources,  
to help land use decision makers and land  
owners know what they have. Education, to  
help them know what their options are, and  
how they can make a difference.



# Through the Eightmile River Watershed Project,

the Watershed Committee is working with natural resource experts from the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System (CES), The Nature Conservancy and other organizations to compile an impressive body of information on a computerized mapping system, known as a geographic information system, or GIS. Maps depicting the natural and cultural resources of the watershed are produced for the review, input and use of all interested members of the community.



# Cooperative Extension

educational programs then translate this

information into knowledge that can be used

by local officials and property owners.

•

## **Forest stewardship programs**

to help forest owners do a better job of caring for their forest while enjoying it and earning income from it.

•

## **Estate planning programs**

to help property owners preserve their land for future generations.

•

## **Water quality programs**

to help land use boards do a better job of protecting the lifelines of the watershed.

•

## **Environmentally-friendly gardening and landscaping programs**

to help streamside property owners beautify their land while protecting water quality and wildlife.

•

## **Municipal planning programs**

to help local commissions articulate their vision for the future of their communities, and give them tools to preserve the rural landscapes, historic sites, and natural resources that make the area unique.



COLCHESTER

On December 23, 1997 the First Selectmen of Lyme,  
Project through the signing of the **Eightmile River Wat**

a non-binding cooperative agreement that underscores the towns' commitment to work to

There are many ways to contribute, from attending educational programs to

signing a "compact" of your own that affirms your commitment to manage your

property in ways to protect the watershed.

EAST  
HADDAM

SALEM

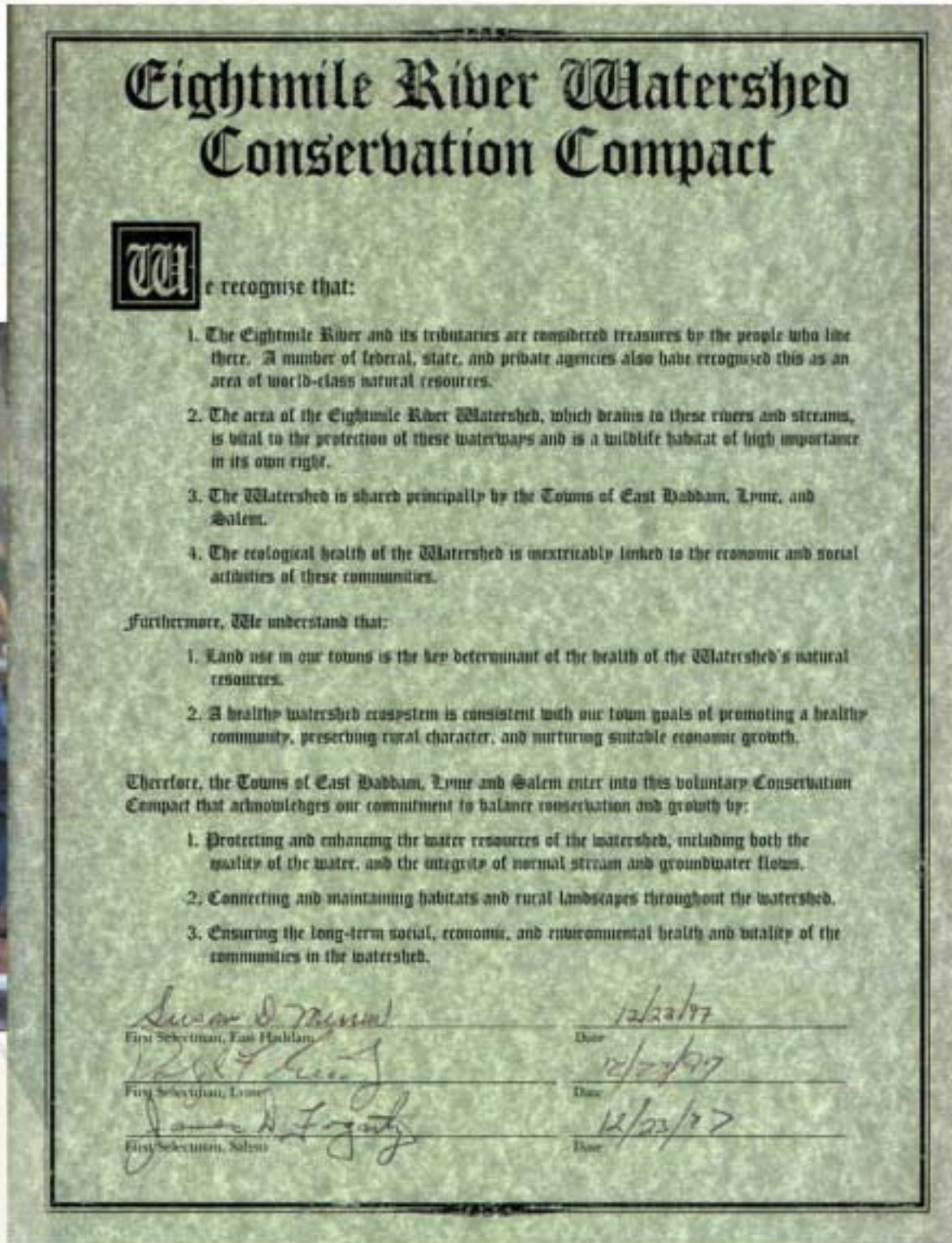


LYME

EAST LYME

East Haddam and Salem signaled their support of the Eightmile Watershed  
**ershed Conservation Compact,**

gether to protect their natural and cultural heritage. **You can join this effort, too.**



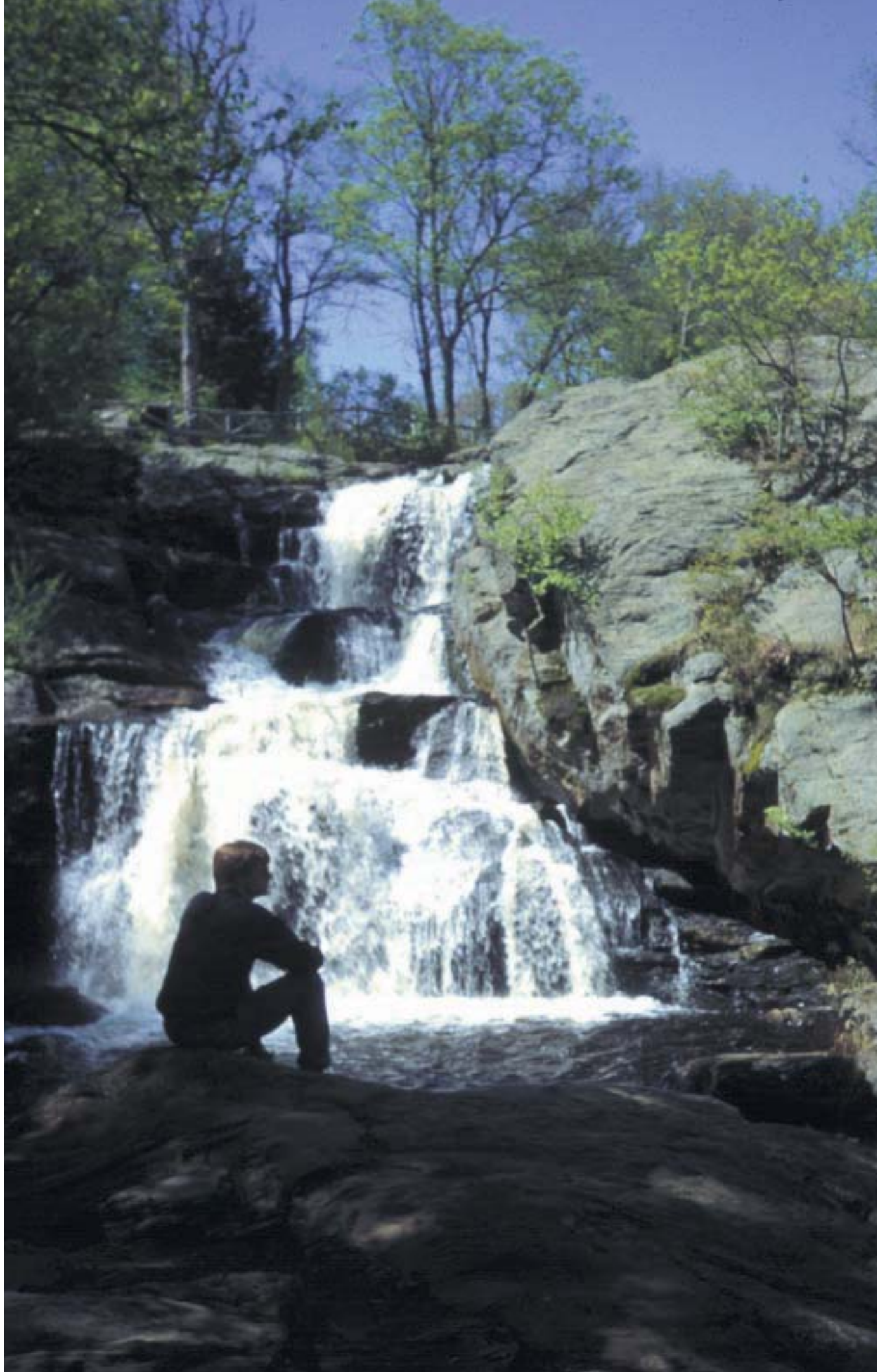
It all **boils down** to  
**quality of life,**

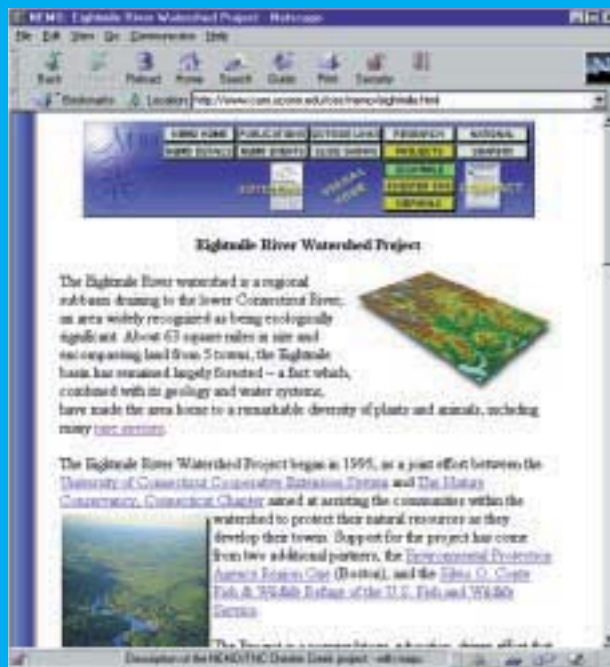


and the need for local residents to take a more active role in determining the future of their communities. Because when you drive to the store, go out for a walk, or look out your window, you ought to know just where you are -- not in Everytown, USA, but in the Eightmile River Watershed, the heart of a Last Great Place.

*The Eightmile River Watershed Project is a collaboration of the towns of Lyme, East Haddam and Salem with the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency, Region One.*

*Funding provided by the Silvio O. Conte Refuge of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Water Quality Initiative of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES).*





For more on the Eightmile River Watershed Project, including community contacts, get in touch with us at the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System at:

**TEL:**  
(860) 345-4511

**FAX:**  
(860) 345-3357

**INTERNET:**  
lkane@canr1.cag.uconn.edu

**WORLD WIDE WEB:**  
<http://www.canr.uconn.edu/ces/nemo/eightmile.html>



The Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Project educates local officials about the links between land use and natural resource protection. NEMO is a Water Quality Initiative project of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CRSEES). The Eightmile River Watershed is part of the overall natural resource-based planning approach that NEMO promotes.