



FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE



2019 FRCC MEMBERS

Barkhamsted

Mario Santoro
Roger Behrens, alternate

Canton

Lans Perry (Secretary)

Colebrook

Tom Stanton (Vice Chair)

Hartland

Dan Bowler (Chair)
Bob Beeman, alternate

New Hartford

Alison Murdock
Tony Mitchell, alternate

CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)

Peter Aarrestad
Matt Gocłowski, alternate
Susan Peterson, alternate

Farmington River Anglers Association (FRAA)

Mark Swenson

Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA)

David Sinish (Treasurer)
Bill Dornbos, alternate

Metropolitan District Commission (MDC)

Jim Randazzo

National Park Service (NPS)

Liz Lacy
Jamie Fosburgh, alternate

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF WILD & SCENIC UPPER FARMINGTON RIVER

Greetings,

What an exciting year - the 25th year of the Farmington River's designation as a Wild & Scenic River! We hope you will spend some time reading this annual report as there is detailed, valuable information showcasing the contributions of the FRCC and many people that enjoy our unique river.

While there are many accomplishments to herald, there are still disconcerting trends that need to be addressed.

Starting with the positives: the October Open House with guest speaker, Nancy Johnson, and several past Farmington River Watershed Association Executive Directors, the River Steward Program, Small Grants to Hartland and New Hartford Land Trusts, the beautiful Farmington River Quilt Exhibit (our silent advocate) which continues to be viewed around the area, and the Riverside Music Series in New Hartford bringing people together to celebrate the river's 25th Wild & Scenic anniversary. These were some of the main events that highlighted the year.

One of the river's major Wild & Scenic components, Satan's Kingdom, has again become a trendy destination for people wanting to take a summer tube float. People are coming from far and wide to float this wild gorge with scenic cliff walls and a whitewater rapid. Hundreds of tubers per hour on a hot summer day can overload the environmental carrying capacity. The tubing concession does a great job providing a safe and round trip. However, independent tubers have increased tremendously and this amount of visitors can sometimes let their personal enjoyment create problems of trash, trespassing, and habitat degradation. The FRCC is working with Connecticut's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to improve this situation.

I would like to thank the members of the FRCC, and the many people seen and unseen, who keep the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the river viable.

Dan Bowler
FRCC Chair, Hartland Representative



RIVER AWARENESS. PROTECTION. AND ENJOYMENT

In 1994, the 14-mile segment of the West Branch Farmington River from below Goodwin/Hogback dam in Hartland to the Canton/New Hartford line received its designation. In 2019, the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook received Wild & Scenic status for more than 61 miles. Part of this designation added 1.1 miles in Canton above the two Collinsville dams to the existing Upper Farmington designation. The West Branch Farmington River free-flowing designated segment is now a total of 15.1 miles.

This section of the West Branch Farmington River was entered into the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System as a result of a great effort by citizens and organizations to protect the river from a proposed diversion and other major water resource projects. The Farmington is among the first “Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers” as protection comes from federal, state and local town governments and other organizations with a vested interest in the health of the river.

The 25th anniversary gave the opportunity for FRCC celebrations, including three outdoor concerts at the Pavilion in New Hartford with *WildCat Creek*, the *Podunk Throwbacks*, and *The Matchstick Architects*. The Sunday afternoons by the river were enjoyed by many as they listened to local bands and learned about FRCC and the River. FRCC helped sponsor FRWA’s 2nd Annual *Wild & Scenic Film Festival*, and the year ended with the Annual FRCC Open House in October, which included an art show, live music from *Travelin’ Trout*, and guest speakers. Honored guests included former Congresswoman Nancy Johnson; FRWA current and former Executive Directors: Bill Dornbos, Eric Hammerling, Kevin Case, Nathan Frohling, and Suzie Wilkins Berl; Phil Huffman and Liz Lacy from National Park Service; FRCC representative and FRWA board member, David Sinish; and FRCC representatives. Former Connecticut Congresswoman Nancy Johnson introduced legislation in 1984 to have the West Branch of the Farmington River studied for inclusion in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System, and FRCC was honored to have her and others who were instrumental in the process of designation to speak at the 25th Anniversary.



Top left photo (clockwise): Bill Dornbos, Eric Hammerling, Suzie Wilkins Berl, David Sinish, and Kevin Case.

Top right: (left to right): Nathan Frohling, Nancy Johnson, Eric Hammerling, and Kevin Case.

Bottom left and center: Summer concert series featuring the Podunk Throwbacks.

Bottom right: Nancy Johnson and Liz Lacy.



RIVER STEWARD PROGRAM

For the summer of 2019, FRCC had a paid steward team - Jonathan, Leeane, Emma and Michael - working 16 hours each per weekend (Friday - Sunday), and Donna, Mickey and Nora returning as volunteers. The program ran from June 1st - August 25th. Stephan Bastrzycki runs the River Steward Program.



Left to right: Stephan Bastrzycki, Jonathan Dolecki, Emma Foley, and Leeane Marvin (steward not shown in photo: Michael Willano)

The primary task of the team is to help ensure the Upper Farmington River is a fun and safe place to recreate - through outreach and education. By interacting with users and encouraging people to reduce the amount of items taken on the water, 'Pack Out What You Pack In', the alcohol policy at Satan's Kingdom State Recreation Area, awareness of the Steward Program, and the importance of the river to the community - we hoped to make people's visit to the river more enjoyable.

Total paid hours for Assistant Stewards: 832 hours

Total volunteer hours: 127 hours

Estimated # of people engaged (besides survey): approximately 520

Estimated # of large garbage bags picked up with liter: 152 (counted 3 small bags as one large)

Areas most frequently trashed: Tubing takeout, Satan's Kingdom put-in, Peoples State Forest, side trails on East River Rd

Accomplishments of the 2019 Steward Team:

- User Surveys
- Marching in the Fourth of July Parade
- Assisting Betsy Corrigan with invasive plant control
- Frequent trash cleanups
- Social Media posting
- Educating youth at the Barkhamsted Recreation Summer Camp
- Promoting the Junior River Ranger Program
- Supplying local sites and businesses with FRCC brochures
- Presence and displays at local events (Still River Music Festival, FRCC Music Series, FALPS events, and Barkhamsted Historical Society events)
- Conduct outreach from kayaks

User Surveys – this summer the Stewards surveyed users on the Wild & Scenic Upper Farmington River. The data will be used to determine peoples perceptions of the river, and aid with the future Recreational User Plan.

Stationary User Counts – we counted users in Satan's Kingdom on a typical good weather day, both during the week and on a weekend day. We differentiated between customers of Farmington River Tubing (FRT) versus independent tubers. Also counted were multi-person floats, canoes/kayaks and attached coolers to tubes. Representative of a nice weather weekend day: 3,092 users (2,365 FRT tubers, 614 independent tubers, 113 boaters), and on a nice weather weekday: 528 users (484 FRT tubers, 42 independent tubers, and 2 boaters).

Angler Counts – Collecting data on anglers was more challenging because they are mostly stationary. Angler data was collected by either paddling down the river or by walking the shore or driving the road where the river is visible in order to count users.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Water quality monitoring in the upper Farmington River watershed is administered by FRWA Water Quality and Project Coordinator, Alisa Phillips-Griggs. Data from water samples, temperature, and macroinvertebrates are collected and analyzed.

Fifteen sites were monitored for bacteria, chemicals, nutrients and minerals from April to November. These sites have been monitored for long-term data for the past 15 years. Analysis of the data is conducted in the MDC laboratory. Results are compiled and shown on the FRWA website. www.frwa.org



FRWA interns deploying a HOBOT in an unnamed tributary of the Mad River.

FRWA deployed HOBOT water temperature loggers and increased the number of sites from 8 to 10 within the Upper Farmington River Watershed in 2019. HOBOTs record water temperatures hourly throughout the year in multiple locations in the watershed to monitor ambient in-stream temperatures to identify and document cold water habitat to assess long term trends. FRWA's data is shared with the CT DEEP and uploaded to the regional Stream Temperature Database. Three are located in the West Branch Farmington River and one each in Morgan Brook, Center Brook, Mad River, Still River, Cherry Brook, Beckley Pond Brook, and unnamed tributary to the Mad River.

FRWA conducts macroinvertebrate sampling days in September and October to monitor streams of the watershed on a rotating basis. Two sites and ten volunteers assisted this year. Results are available on DEEP's website. www.ct.gov/deep

NEW FRCC MEMBERS

2019 brought in new representatives to the committee – we welcome Pete Aarrestad, CT DEEP Inland Fisheries Division Director; Bill Dornbos, Farmington River Watershed Executive Director; Matt Goclowski, CT DEEP fisheries biologist; and Mark Swenson, Farmington River Anglers Association.

FARMINGTON RIVER QUILT

To see the entire quilt virtual visit farmingtonriverquilt.org where you will find photos, descriptions of each section, and a video.

EXHIBITS IN 2019

- March & April – East Granby Public Library;
- July & August – Canton Public Library;
- October – Granby Public Library;
- November & December – New Hartford Senior Center;
- January – Simsbury Public Library

UPCOMING EXHIBIT

- August & September – Avon Free Public Library



Quilt section 17—Morgan Brook Pool by Cat Allard of Litchfield, CT

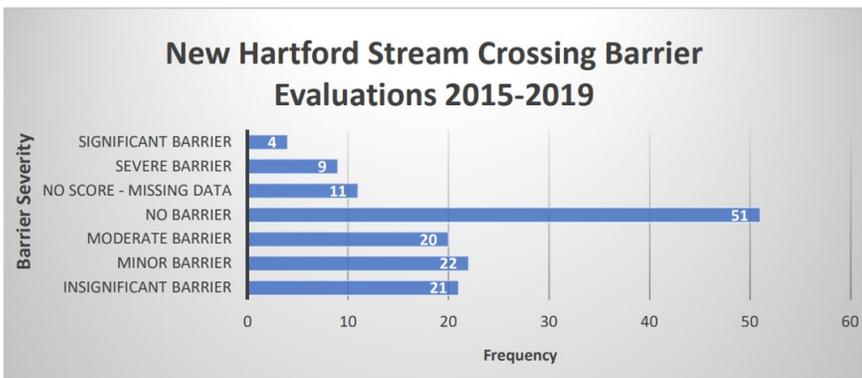
STREAM-CROSSING ASSESSMENTS



Improper crossings can be damaged during flood washout, which creates a severe barrier to aquatic passage.

FRWA has continued work in assessing stream crossing conditions within the Farmington River Watershed in order to determine structural integrity as well as the ability of passage for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. These assessments can be useful in determining which crossings require repair for the safety of human lives and property, and they also provide insight into the ability of aquatic organisms - such as diadromous fish - to move throughout the watershed. For instance, a collapsed culvert can impede the migration of American Shad, and a crossing that is too narrow for the stream channel it covers can cause deposits of sediment that will prevent the eggs of Atlantic Salmon from reaching maturity. Crossings that are designed inadequately may also fail in the event of flood conditions, which can cause human safety risks and property damage. In working with the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC), FRWA intends to identify crossings that are in need of repair or replacement within the Farmington River Watershed.

During 2019, sixty crossings were surveyed in New Hartford, and all field data was entered into the Stream Continuity Database. A total of 137 crossings within New Hartford have been surveyed since the start of the NAACC inventory in 2015. Water levels were very low throughout the entire summer, which impeded proper assessment of many crossings.



Assessments within New Hartford are nearly complete, with the exception of several sites that are within the MDC public water supply or private property, 7 sites within the Nepaug State Forest, and 30 crossings that contained little or no water flow. These crossings would be better assessed after the water table is recharged by rainfall and flows are higher.

SATAN'S KINGDOM

Due to recent and growing concerns of the overuse and trash resulting from the tubers (both private parties and from the tubing concession), discussions with DEEP and local law officials and FRCC has begun. FRCC initiated a meeting with DEEP about the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV's) of the Wild & Scenic Farmington River and the problems with River Users. Attendees included Mike Lambert, Bureau Chief of Outdoor Recreation and Keith Williams, Head of Marine District Environmental Conservation Police. This provided a platform to review data on trouble areas, and share stories and concerns. All agreed that DEEP enforcement in concert with local law enforcement is critical and that starting early can prevent larger problems. Plan on continued meetings going forward. FRCC was pleased with the responsiveness and encouraged by engagement promised by DEEP.

"A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FARMINGTON RIVER: AND THE QUEST FOR A NATIONAL WILD & SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION" - BY DAVID SINISH



An excellent short history of the West Branch Farmington River and how it came to be Nationally designated, with photos and maps.

Go to farmingtonriver.org to read online or request your own copy.

INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT

Betsy Corrigan, field biologist with FRCC and noted invasive plant species expert, continued hosting volunteer-based workshops on invasive plant species and removal techniques. She continues control work of invasive plants, surveys, planning and research, mapping and documentation - all of which benefits the ecosystems along the riverbanks and floodplain zones of the Upper Farmington River. This program is in its 10th year and involves approximately 80 control locations. Outreach to partner organizations was a key highlight for the 2019 season. Partnerships with Friends of American Legion and Peoples State Forest (FALPS), CT DEEP, Colebrook Conservation Commission, New Hartford Land Trust, and the Town of Barkhamsted, have continued and new partnerships with Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited (FVTU), New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission, and the MDC were established in 2019.



A work crew of River Stewards and volunteers in Peoples State Forest with Betsy Corrigan.

Phragmites are encroaching onto the MDC land and will spread down a detention basin outflow into the river corridor if not controlled. A plan for 24 acres of grassland – a critical habitat – at Upper Greenwood was developed with MDC foresters and DEEP Wildlife Division. The purpose of the removal is to restore the natural plant community by eliminating invasive plants, and to open the site to more sunlight that will maintain upland turtle habitat. The cutting back of **Autumn Olive** and **Multiflora Rose**, and pulling up **Mugwort** at the Riverbank Restoration Area in Pleasant Valley continued with help of FRCC representative and New Hartford Conservation Commission chair, Alison Murdock.

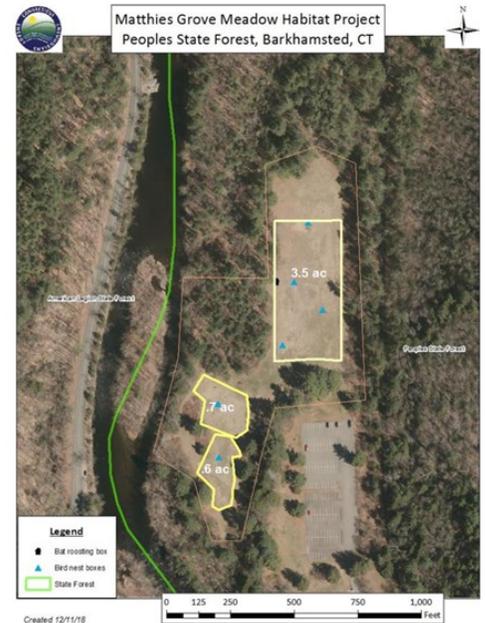
Japanese Stiltgrass work was conducted with assistance from Colebrook Conservation Commission and FALPS. Assessment and options for **stiltgrass**, **knotweed**, **honeysuckle**, **mugwort** and **burning bush**, were discussed at New Hartland Land Trust's recently acquired Butler Farm property.

Invasive plant control sessions at Matthies Grove in Peoples State Forest continued with focus along the edge of bird meadow habitat. The goal is to allow the edge or ecotone to recolonize with native plants. Removing the fruit-producing invasive plants for the edge will prevent colonization of the meadow.

GRANTS

Barkhamsted – FRCC is supporting the scope of work for the Town of Barkhamsted provided by the consultant engineers at Princeton Hydro to address the streambank restoration adjacent to West River Road just below entrance of Sandy Brook into West Branch Farmington River.

FRCC gave to Friends of American Legion and Peoples State Forest (FALPS) funding to help with the Matthies Grove Pollinator Project. The purpose of the project is to improve/increase the biological diversity of a grassland area, which comprised of 3 areas comprising 3.5 acres, .7 acres and .6 acres. Habitat enhancements will have particular benefit to grassland species of wildlife including Indigo Buntings, Eastern Bluebirds, Field Sparrows, pollinators (butterflies and bees), and beneficial insects. FRCC also gave a grant to FALPS for the cost of printing updated Peoples State Forest Maps.



Hartland – FRCC gave a land grant to the Hartland Land Trust to help with the closing costs of a 112 undeveloped acres in the Farmington River Watershed in West Hartland.

New Hartford – FRCC continued to support the New Hartford Land Trust (NHLT) in protection of the 8.1 acre conservation easement for the Butler Farm and Riverfront Trail Preservation project and other land acquisition support. NHLT believes that the conservation of Butler Farm and riverfront is one of the most important preservation opportunities the community has ever had. With FRCC’s support, NHLT is able to play a key role in protecting the riparian area with a conservation easement.



SCHOLARSHIPS

It was FRCC’s pleasure to award scholarships to Alyssa Hotchkiss of Colebrook, attending SUNY Cobleskill, and John King of Barkhamsted, attending West Virginia University. The deserving recipients were busy over the summer too - during FRCC’s award ceremony at Hogback Reservoir, led by FRCC representative Roger Behrens, Alyssa Hotchkiss was attending her High School graduation and John King was atop Mount Washington for his summer Observatory internship (*see photo above, left*).

The Pat Keener and Nancy Johnson Scholarships (\$1,000 each) are awarded every year to a high school or college student from one of the five riverfront towns (Barkhamsted, Canton, Colebrook, Hartland and New Hartford) to study the field of environmental science.

INTERNSHIP

Beyond scholarships, FRCC often provides internship opportunities for college students in the environmental science field. In 2019, Megan White worked on GIS layers and collected information for maps for the Recreational User Plan in the capacity as the FRCC intern.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019—OVERVIEW OF EXPENDITURES

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP - \$29.627

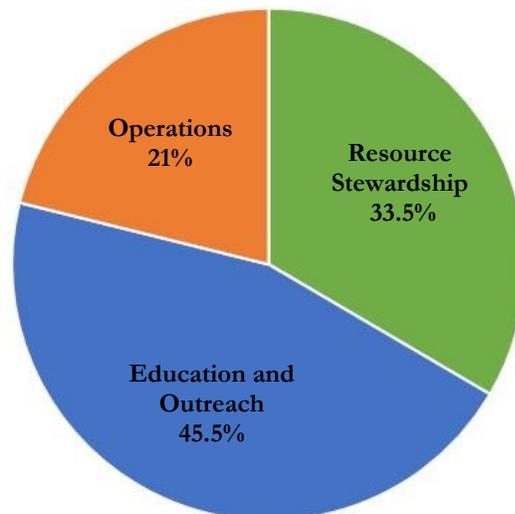
- INVASIVE PLANT PROGRAM
- WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM
- LAND PROTECTION ASSISTANCE
- STREAM CROSSING SURVEYS

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH - \$40.216

- PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE
- KIOSKS
- SCHOLARSHIPS
- RIVER STEWARD PROGRAM
- 25TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS
- FARMINGTON RIVER QUILT PROJECT

OPERATIONS - \$18.703

- OPERATIONAL EXPENSES
- INTERNS



FISCAL YEAR 2019 TOTAL \$88.546

FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Farmington River Coordinating Committee is integral to the implementation of the Upper Farmington River Management Plan. The Committee comprises appointed representatives from the five riverfront towns, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), National Park Service (NPS), Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA), and Farmington River Anglers Association (FRAA). Monthly meetings are typically held at the Committee's office at Squire's Tavern, just inside Peoples State Forest in Pleasant Valley. The Upper Farmington Wild & Scenic River designation extends from just below Goodwin/Hogback Dam in Hartland to the confluence of the Nepaug River in Canton for a total of 15.1 miles.

FRCC'S MISSION IS TO PROMOTE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF THE UPPER FARMINGTON RIVER BY:

- BRINGING INTERESTED PARTIES TOGETHER ON A REGULAR BASIS
- STIMULATING COOPERATION AND COORDINATION AMONG THE PARTIES
- PROVIDING A FORUM TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE ISSUES
- COORDINATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPPER FARMINGTON RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

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