



FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE



REPRESENTATIVES

Barkhamsted

Mario Santoro (Vice Chair)
Roger Behrens (Chair)

Canton

Lans Perry (Secretary)
Matt Vinick (Treasurer)

Colebrook

Alison Jassen

Hartland

Dan Bowler

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
Laura Hart, alternate

Metropolitan District Commission (MDC)

Jim Randazzo

National Park Service (NPS)

Andrew Petitdemange
Liz Lacy, alternate



Annual Report

Greetings,

From one of the driest to one of the wettest years, the FRCC continued to successfully fulfill its mission to promote the protection of the Upper Farmington Wild & Scenic River and its large watershed area. The FRCC was established in 1994 by an act of Congress when the Upper Farmington River received Wild & Scenic designation. The committee meets on a regular basis to advocate and educate for river quality and to resolve issues by coordinating and maintaining cooperation between the various river stakeholders. In this report you will find who comprises the committee and the many ways it works to protect the Wild & Scenic outstanding values.

This annual report highlights the FRCC's accomplishments of the past year as guided by the Upper Farmington River Management Plan. The plan is not a set of regulations but rather a stewardship guidance document approved by Congress and required for the Upper Farmington to be included in the National Wild and Scenic River system. The FRCC follows the Plan's guidelines and recommendations. The Plan is a resource rich with maps and information about the Wild and Scenic corridor. We invite you to read the Plan and learn more about the FRCC at www.farmingtonriver.org

The FRCC is also experiencing some gains and losses. Liz Lacy has been the FRCC National Park Service representative since its inception. Her expertise and dedication successfully launched and has guided the FRCC for the past 27 years. Alas, Liz is drifting down the river to continue her work on the newly designated Lower Wild & Scenic section. Fortunately for the committee and the river, Andrew Petitdemange is replacing Liz as our new NPS representative. Andrew brings years of experience and expertise in ecological restoration, resource management, community partnerships, youth employment and volunteer program development. He earned a B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Maryland and an M.A. in Urban and Environmental Planning from Tufts University.

The Wild & Scenic Farmington River adds beauty and vitality to our towns as well as economic well-being. This treasure needs to be appreciated and protected. We are fortunate to be able to play a part in guaranteeing that this outstanding resource will remain wild and scenic for generations to come. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas with us and wish you continued enjoyment of this special area.

Roger Behrens
FRCC Chairman, Barkhamsted

A Partnership Wild & Scenic River: Protecting the Upper Farmington River

Our river provides clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Every year, thousands of people canoe, kayak and fish the waters of the Farmington and visit the state parks, forests and historic sites that dot the river's edge. 15.1 miles of the Upper Farmington River, from the West Branch Reservoir (aka Hogback) in Hartland to the confluence with the Nepaug River in Canton, are federally designated Wild & Scenic. In 1994, the Farmington was among the first to adopt the "Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers" model - protection comes from federal, state and local town governments and other organizations with a vested interest in the health of the river. Initially only 14 miles were designated but an additional 1.1 miles were added in 2019 under the Dingell Act. It is critical that we work together to protect and preserve this natural beauty.

The Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC) is an advisory body that was created when the river was designated to coordinate management activities by implementing the Upper Farmington River Management Plan. The purpose of this approach is to promote long-term protection of the Wild & Scenic Farmington River through existing town, state and federal authorities. The Committee is made up of representatives from the five river-fronting towns (Hartland, Colebrook, Barkhamsted, New Hartford, and Canton), the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA) the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), the Farmington River Angler's Association (FRAA), and the National Park Service (NPS).

FRCC focuses on Resource Stewardship, Education & Outreach, Land Protection, and Grants. The FRCC office is located at the historic Squire's Tavern, in Peoples State Forest in Pleasant Valley, Connecticut. Read on to learn about some of the projects FRCC is involved in and grants awarded in 2021.

[Resource Stewardship: Invasive Plant Management \(page 2\); Water Quality Monitoring page 3-5\); Grants & Land Protection \(page 5\). Education and Outreach: River Steward Program \(page 6-7\); Events \(page 7\). Annual Budget \(page 8\).](#)

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Invasive Plant Management

Betsy Corrigan, field biologist with FRCC and noted invasive plant species expert, continued control work of invasive plants, surveys, planning and research, mapping and documentation to benefit the ecosystems along the riverbanks and floodplain zones of the Upper Farmington River. This program is in its twelfth year and involves approximately 80 control locations.

Control work in 2021 included removing Japanese stiltgrass, autumn olive, bittersweet, mugwort, lesser celandine, spotted knapweed, multiflora rose, privet and honeysuckle in locations along East River Road, West River Road, Upper Greenwoods and Matthies Grove. Many volunteers, including the River Steward team, Groundwork Bridgeport and Friends of American Legion and Peoples State Forest (FALPS) assisted in removal.

Outreach to partner organizations including FALPS, CT DEEP, Colebrook Conservation Commission, New Hartford Land Trust, the Town of Barkhamsted, Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited (FVTU), New Hartford Open Space Preservation Commission, and the MDC continues, as we plan for collaborative control locations, methods, and plans for invasive plant removals and native plants reintroductions in the 2022 season.

Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality monitoring has been conducted by FRWA on the Farmington River Watershed for the past 17 years. The principal objectives are to:

- 1) document high quality waters for protection and preservation;
- 2) measure inputs from tributaries to the Farmington River;
- 3) establish a database for use in documenting future changes in water quality;
- 4) identify impairments and locate potential preservation & restoration opportunities;
- 5) educate and involve residents in waterbody protection;
- 6) inform a cohesive understanding of the entire Farmington River watershed, in MA and CT; and,
- 7) reveal trends relative to changing climate and precipitation patterns via long term monitoring.

Polluted stormwater runoff (nonpoint source pollution) is the primary water quality concern in the watershed. Water quality in some watershed streams is particularly important to maintain since the Farmington River Watershed contains the water for the Greater Hartford drinking water supply, serving 400,000 people. The data is shared with partners including the CT DEEP and helps educate watershed residents. The monitoring program in the Upper Wild & Scenic Farmington River watershed is administered by FRWA Conservation Director, Laura Hart. Data from water samples, temperature, and macroinvertebrates are collected and analyzed.

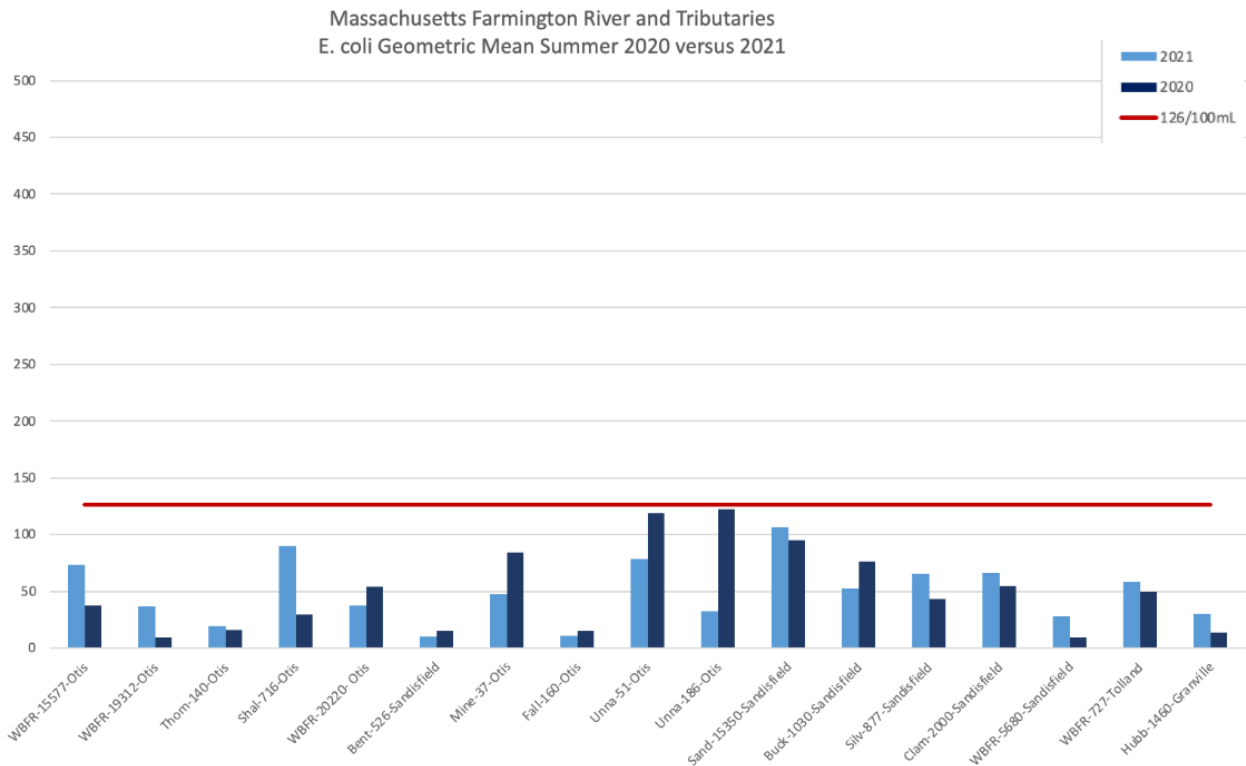
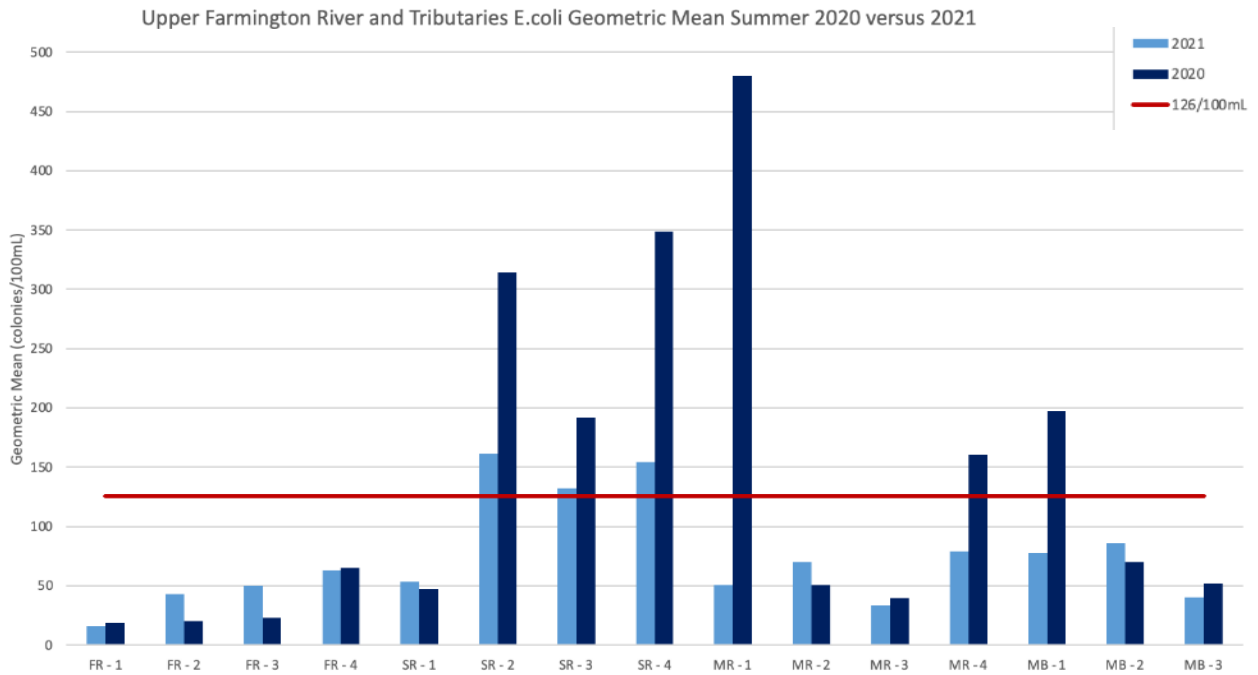
Fifteen sites were monitored for bacteria, from June to September. Samples were collected by trained FRWA volunteers, David and Carrie Sinish, and FRWA staff. Water quality monitoring is also conducted upstream of the Upper Wild & Scenic section in the headwaters of the Farmington River in Massachusetts, on 17 sites in the West Branch Farmington River and its tributaries. This was the third year of data collection in the Massachusetts portion of the watershed. Analysis of the samples was conducted in the USGS laboratory.

The graphs on the following page show the bacteria sites in the headwaters in Massachusetts and on the Upper Wild & Scenic Farmington River, comparing 2020 to 2021. The main difference is the weather patterns, which play a role in the water quality (see photos, below). Due to higher flows, 2021 had lower levels of bacteria than in 2020 when conditions were drier.

Regardless, the Massachusetts sites never exceeded the levels of concern in 2020 or 2021. The Still River and Mad River and Morgan Brook did exceed in 2020, but fared better in 2021, due to increased water flows diluting the levels of bacteria. This data can better inform where there may be higher levels of polluted stormwater runoff and help inform of potential land causes behind these factors. The data helps inform FRWA of where to install green infrastructure projects to reduce polluted stormwater runoff. The photos below depict the visual difference between 2020 and 2021.



Water quality site on Hubbard Brook, Granville, MA Left: drought of 2020. Right: flooding of 2021.



Water Temperature

FRWA deployed HOBO water temperature loggers at 10 sites within the Upper Wild & Scenic Farmington River watershed in 2021. HOBOs record water temperatures hourly throughout the year 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. The

data from the tributaries indicate high-quality cold waters, which is beneficial to aquatic life. Streams or stream segments fully supporting aquatic life will be listed in the next Integrated Water Quality Report (IWQR) and added to the DEEP's running list of miles of Healthy Waters assessed. The IWQR is prepared by DEEP and submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency every two years.

FRWA conducts macroinvertebrate sampling days in September and October to monitor streams of the watershed on a rotating basis through the CT DEEP's RBV program. Macroinvertebrates are used to find high-quality, cold water habitats in tributaries. Results available on DEEP's website. www.ct.gov/deep

Grants & Land Protection

As part of our effort to support local endeavors and enhance protection of the Upper Farmington River, FRCC offers grants for projects that align with our management plan goals ranging from the riverbank to the watershed level. **FRCC Land Protection Program** supports conservation and restoration of the river as well as land protection within the five riverfront towns along the Upper Wild & Scenic Farmington River.

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 awarded the Town an additional grant in 2021 as this projects progresses.

Colebrook

FRCC awarded a grant to help with the Colebrook Land Conservancy with the acquisition of the Sandy Brook Forest Preserve. Permanently preserving this pristine 147-acre parcel will protect important land and water resources as well as diverse habitats.

Hartland

Hartland recently added 52 acres to the Mill District Preserve in West Hartland. The Preserve now totals 139 acres of contiguous forestland. FRCC was happy to have been able to help fund this acquisition of forest wetlands and an upper perennial watercourse that drains into the West Branch Wild & Scenic Farmington River. *(Beaver Pond; right.)*



New Hartford

FRCC helped fund the 9.19-acre Jones 'Mountain Sawmill' property on Steele Road acquisition by the New Hartland Land Trust and FRCC continues to assist the New Hartford Land Trust for the Helen Butler Riverfront Trail parcel that consists of 8.1 acres along the Farmington River in New Hartford. It is part of a protected riparian corridor supporting a diversity of wildlife species and their associated habitat as well as important recreational and historic resources.

Winchester

FRCC awarded a grant to the Winchester Land Trust to survey a 6.5 acres Highview Drive Property, which is located in the Mad River sub regional basin. The Mad and Still Rivers in Winchester are major tributaries to the Farmington River.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

River Steward Program

The River Steward Program was created by and is led by Stephan Bastryzcki for FRCC. In 2021 the River Steward program saw a sizeable expansion. The Town of Canton approached FRCC with a request to have steward presence in Collinsville. The steward program grew from 3-4 paid stewards a year to 7 paid stewards. The stewards started their season the first weekend of June with a training day, which included a visit from Sergeant Logiodice from CT DEEP to speak about proper incident reporting. For much of June the weather was nice and early season crowds indicated a summer of extremely high visitor usage on both the river and surrounding trails like 2020 had been. July and August saw unusually high amounts of rain, which required Colebrook River Lake and West Branch (Hogback) Reservoirs to release large amounts of water as they quickly filled up. This impacted recreation as the high levels made recreation unsafe.

Accomplishments of the 2021 River Stewards:

- **Expanded outreach** - An increased steward presence into Collinsville Center, included attending the Farmers Market, setting up booths at Collinsville Canoe and Kayak (CCK), and engaging users on the riverbanks; Grew social media presence and content; Kept local businesses, campground, nature museum and government buildings supplied with FRCC flyers; Tabled various locations.
- **Groundwork Bridgeport partnership** - Created a 'Sister City' program with Groundwork Bridgeport (GWB). GWB students came up four times to the Farmington River to help with projects.
- **New website** - Stephan and the E+O subcommittee launched a complete remake of the River Steward website working with the LUMI agency. Farmingtonriversteward.org
- **Monofilament Receptacles** - Installed 6 monofilament containers along the river, maintained by FRAA.
- **Access to Boats** - Created partnerships with Farmington River Tubing and CCK for in-kind use of tubes and kayaks for on the water outreach.
- **Incident Reporting**- Worked with Mark Swenson (FRAA) and Sergeant Logiodice (CT DEEP) to implement a training for the stewards and angler guides to call in accurate reports to DEEP dispatch.
- **Events** - Organized a 'Paddle with the Stewards' event. Participated in Riverton's 4th of July Parade.
- **Trash Cleanups**
- **Invasive Plant Management** - Helped with invasive plant removal
- **River User Info** - License plate counts to estimate number of river users and out of state visitation levels.

One of the big accomplishments of the steward program this summer was the creation of the above mentioned 'Sister City' collaboration with Groundwork Bridgeport (GWB), and the work that was able to be done with their help. GWB work to expand knowledge and build skills in young people interested in managing the natural and social environments in their community. GWB came to the Upper Farmington a total of four times this summer, and for each visit, a different project was planned. Their first visit included helping Betsy Corrigan with invasive plant control and engaging users at the Barkhamsted Family Fun Day (another collaboration with Barkhamsted Recreation). We got multiple positive comments from attendees about giving inner city youth the opportunity to come to an area they normally might not have the chance to see. On their second visit, GWB worked alongside the stewards at Barkhamsted Summer Camp, and did a trash cleanup. The third visit was the monofilament install. The fourth visit was to help with outreach along the river and then an overnight camping trip at one of the group sites in Peoples State Forest. The River Stewards are now looking for ways to reciprocate and support Groundwork on projects in Bridgeport.

Growing our presence into Collinsville Center was also another big accomplishment. It meant learning a new area, attending different events, and keeping an eye on a spot the Town of Canton was concerned with, known as “Party Rock”. The stewards never had any problems with user conflicts at that site, but did report having to do some trash cleanups there. We continue to get the word out about the steward program through in-person engagement, social media, and our website, but it is still clear that many who visit the area are not getting the message. The most common questions asked of the stewards are “what is our program about?” and “what does a typical day for us involve?” Other questions include: asking for general information on the river, are the water levels safe to for recreation, what do the rapids look like now, and is the fishing good? Increased statistics in 2021 as a result of increased steward presence, more volunteer hours, and less restrictions.

Statistics and Data from the Summer Steward Program (2021 vs 2020):

Total paid hours for the Assistant Stewards: 1177 / 576

Total volunteer hours: 110 / 40

Estimated # of people engaged: 1150 / 560

of large garbage bags picked up with liter: 80 / 25

Areas with the most litter: Satan’s Kingdom, Ramp Road, People’s Forest, Hogback Road, Party Rock in Collinsville, Riverton Baseball Fields

EVENTS

Farmington River Quilt

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

Earth Day Cooperative Farmington River Cleanup

FRCC participated in the 1st Earth Day Cooperative Farmington River Cleanup, organized by the Farmington River Anglers Association (FRAA), and in partnership with the Farmington River Watershed Association, Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited, and Brewery Legitimus. The cleanup was a great success with 150 volunteers filling a large dumpster with trash collected along the river from below Hogback Dam to Collinsville. A thank you to the volunteers with raffle prizes was held at Brewery Legitimus after the cleanup.

Wild & Scenic Film Festival

FRCC was proud to yet again help host the Wild & Scenic Film Festival along with our partners, the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA). The greater Farmington River community came together for the 4th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival as a hybrid event. The live event was at the Canton Town Hall Auditorium and it was also accessible virtually. Over 200 people enjoyed celebrating the river and learning more about the Wild & Scenic designation.

Celebrate the River through Art

The exhibit featured art from members of the community who have been inspired by the area's Wild & Scenic characteristics: scenic beauty; free-flowing, clean water; fish & wildlife; recreation; and history & culture. Thank you to artists Rita Bond, Dan Bowler, Tom Cameron, Jim DeCesare, Holly Hall, Fran Hoffnagle, Germaine Lemieux, Deborah Leonard, Jean Miller, and Robin Schofield.

Annual Report 2021—Overview of Expenditures

Resource Stewardship - \$32,100.13

Invasive Plant Program - \$5,212.50
Water Quality Monitoring Program - \$19,500
Land Protection Assistance - \$5,000
Stream Crossing Surveys - \$2,387.63

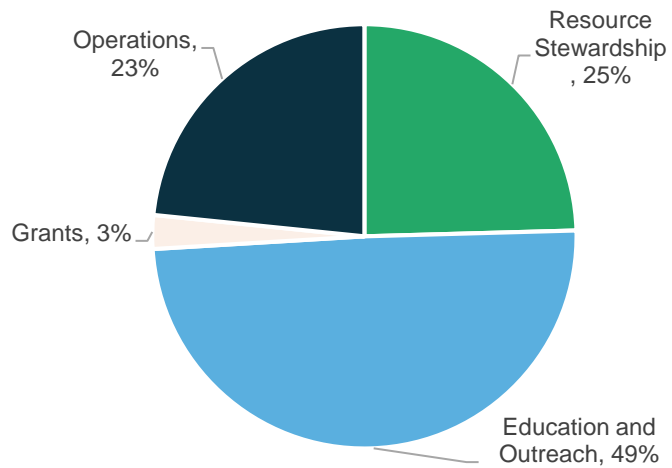
Education and Outreach - \$64,682.77

Publications and website - \$674.21
Kiosks - \$2,460.15
River Steward Program - \$39,626.50
Farmington River Quilt Project - \$53.91
River Messaging Campaign - \$21,868.00

Grants - \$3,351.00

Operations - \$30,568.63

Operational Expenses - \$4,218.63
Project Assistance - \$12,000.00
Administration - \$13,000.00
Organizational development - \$1,350.00



The federal fiscal year is from 10/1/2020 to 09/30/2021

Fiscal year 2021 total \$130,702.53

Farmington River Coordinating Committee

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

FRCC

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FRCC@farmingtonriver.org

WEBSITES

FarmingtonRiver.org

FarmingtonRiverSteward.org

FarmingtonRiverQuilt.org



FRCC meeting at Hogback Reservoir, June 2021