



2022 REPRESENTATIVES AND ALTERNATES

Barkhamsted
Mario Santoro
Roger Behrens

Canton
Matt Vinick

Colebrook
Alison Jassen

Hartland
Dan Bowler

New Hartford
Alison Murdock
Tony Mitchell

**CT Department of
Energy & Environmental
Protection**
Peter Arrestad
Matt Gocłowski
Susan Peterson

**Farmington River Anglers
Association**
Torrey Collins
Derrick Kirkpatrick

**Farmington River Trout
Unlimited**
Jim Buchok
Tom Carpenter

**Farmington River
Watershed Association**
David Sinish
Laura Hart

**Metropolitan District
Commission**
Jim Randazzo
Lindsay Strole

National Park Service
Andrew Petitdemange
Liz Lacy

Cover photo credit: Tom Cameron

FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE FISCAL YEAR 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Greetings:

In 1994, the US Congress approved Wild and Scenic designation for the Upper Farmington River and established the Farmington River Coordinating Committee. For almost 30 years the FRCC has been fulfilling its mission to promote the long term protection of the upper Farmington River. This Annual Report details who comprises the FRCC, how it functions and the significant ways that it continues to protect the Wild and Scenic outstanding values.

The FRCC is guided by the Upper Farmington River Management Plan. The plan is 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. The plan is a resource rich with maps and information about the Wild and Scenic corridor. We invite you read the plan and learn more about the FRCC at www.farmingtonriver.org

Remembering 1993, when the Farmington River Wild and Scenic Study Committee was advocating for federal designation, the outcome was far from certain. The idea of federal designation was met with a fair amount of local opposition. Now with 20/20 hindsight the consensus is that the designation has had great success ensuring protection and enriching a precious resource. The FRCC has successfully brought together river stakeholders, fostered a spirit of cooperation and provided education and stewardship to help make this possible.

The outstanding values of the river, with its large protected watershed and superb State Forests, have made it an increasingly popular destination point in Connecticut. Managing the rivers recreational use to minimize resource degradation, while providing for appropriate use and public access is an ongoing challenge. The Wild and 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



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 mills that dot the river's edge. 15.1 miles of the Upper Farmington River - from the Goodwin Dam (aka Hogback) in Hartland to the confluence with the Nepaug River in Canton - are designed Wild & Scenic. The Farmington is among the first "Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers." Protection comes from federal, state and local town governments and other organizations with a vested interest in the health of the river, from its initial designation in 1994. The additional 1.1 miles were added 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 is to promote long term protection of the Wild & Scenic Farmington River through the existing town, state and federal authorities. The Committee is made up of representatives of 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 National Park Service (NPS), the Farmington River Angler's Association (FRAA), and the Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited (FVTU), who officially joined the committee in 2022. The FRCC office, located at the historic Squire's Tavern, in Peoples State Forest in Pleasant Valley, Connecticut.

FRCC focuses on Resource Stewardship, Education & Outreach, Land Protection, and Grants. Read on to learn about some of the projects FRCC was involved in and grants awarded in 2022.

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

FRCC's Resource Stewardship subcommittee meets monthly to discuss resource protection and stewardship concerns, challenges, and opportunities and bring grant proposals and ideas in line the with the Management Plan to the full committee. Some of the areas of focus in 2022 are explained below.

Amphibian and Reptile Habitat Analysis

FRCC contracted with Quinn Ecological, LLC to conduct an analysis to identify critical habitat resources for amphibians and reptiles. This analysis identifies habitats contiguous with the Farmington River which may be seasonally important for a variety of species. These habitats will include terrestrial closed and open canopy uplands, wetland habitats, agricultural lands, abandoned sand and gravel extraction sites, and utility rights-of-ways. Based on the desktop analysis and field investigations, recommendations will be made for potential land acquisition parcels, habitat management, and stewardship opportunities for private landowners. In addition, areas along the Farmington River which provide opportunity for public outreach and awareness will be identified.

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 - all of which benefits the ecosystems along the riverbanks and floodplain zones of the Upper Farmington River. This program is in its 13th year and involves approximately 80 control locations. Outreach to partner organizations including Friends of American Legion and Peoples State Forest (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 partnering control methods and plans for native plants in the 2023 season.



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Control

The Peoples and American Legion State Forests are extensive watershed forests bordering the upper Farmington River, and are important for natural diversity, wildlife, and recreation. These forests have a large eastern hemlock component, critical for wildlife habitat, thermoregulation, and filtering of the streams that feed into the main river. FRCC has been working with Dr. Carole Cheah, Research Entomologist with the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, to continue control efforts of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) through the release of *Sasajiscymus tsugae*, a beetle that predate on HWA. Our native Eastern Hemlock is susceptible and

severely impacted by HWA, especially when also stressed by drought and other native and exotic insect pests. Hemlocks here were found to have recent heavy infestations of HWA in recent years. With climate change, these forests have also been subject to months of severe drought in summer 2020, an abnormally dry spring in 2021, and extreme summer drought in 2022, creating stressful conditions for moisture-loving hemlocks. In May of 2022, 5,050 beetles were released on infested hemlocks along the upper Farmington River at the American Legion and Peoples State Forests, with the help of volunteers from the FRCC, Friends of the American Legion and Peoples State Forests (FALPS), and staff from the CT DEEP Forestry Division, and funding from FRCC. Biological control with *S. tsugae* to reduce HWA pressure and impacts appear to have significantly helped hemlocks survive and initiate recovery, 5–18 months after beetles were released, in spite of other significant stressors such as the drought. *(Photo of beetle release on infested hemlocks in Peoples State Forest, FRCC Hartland rep, Dan Bowler, and a FALPS volunteer, pc: C. Cheah).*

Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality monitoring has been conducted by FRWA on the Farmington River Watershed for the past 18 years. Nonpoint source runoff 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. Bacteria can be a good indicator of nonpoint source pollution, and therefore monitoring *E. coli* is conducted throughout the Farmington River and its tributaries.

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. Detailed information can be found in the Water Quality Report from 2022 online at frwa.org/resources

Bacteria: Fifteen sites were monitored for bacteria, from June to September. Samples were collected by trained FRWA volunteers, David and Carrie Sinish, and FRWA staff. Analysis of the samples was conducted by FRWA at the Simsbury Water Pollution Control Authority laboratory in Simsbury, CT. The main difference is the weather patterns, which play a role in the water quality. Due to drought and lower flows, 2022 had higher levels of bacteria than in 2021 when flows were higher. Regardless, some sites never exceeded the levels of concern in 2021 or 2022. Bacteria monitoring is also conducted upstream of the Upper Wild & Scenic section in the headwaters in Massachusetts, where FRWA monitors 17 sites. This was the third year of data collection in the Farmington River Watershed in the Massachusetts. This data can better inform where in the watershed there may be higher levels of *E. coli* and help inform of potential land causes behind these factors.

Water Temperature: FRWA deployed HOBO water temperature loggers at 13 sites within the Upper Wild & Scenic Farmington River watershed in 2022. 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. The data indicates high-quality cold waters, even during drought, 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.

Chloride: Six sites were monitored for chloride in the Upper Wild & Scenic Farmington River watershed in the season of 2022. This program is in partnership with the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) Salt Watch program. Sites are monitored year-round to determine how locations fare throughout the year, especially in winter months when road salts are applied, and in summer during high-production times for aquatic plants and animals. FRWA aims to collect long-term data on chloride throughout the watershed, identify impairments and locate potential preservation & restoration opportunities. The majority of locations had low concentrations of chloride, with the Farmington River being the lowest, due to volume of water. Most sites are located on tributaries flowing into the Farmington River as they have lower volumes of water and are at risk of having higher chloride concentrations. The EPA's chronic concentration criteria (CCC) of chloride for aquatic life is 230 mg/L. Results showed that most sites remained lower the 230 mg/L over spring and summer months. During drought in August 2022, chloride values rose, but remained under 100 mg/L, except for Jim Brook which had a value of 251 mg/L.

FRCC sponsored municipal staff from Hartland, Colebrook, Barkhamsted, New Hartford, Canton, and Winchester to attend a Green Snow Pro Training, hosted by the UConn T2 Training Center. The training opportunity for municipal DPW and Highway departments was held in March and presented on the dual benefit of adopting new road salting practices: 1) significant money savings for towns and 2) protection of important water sources.

Road-Stream Crossings

FRWA has been continuing work assessing road-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. Road-stream crossing assessments can be useful in determining which crossings may pose a threat to public safety during storm events, and they also provide insight into the ability of aquatic organisms such as diadromous fish to move throughout the watershed. Inadequately designed crossings may also fail in the event of flood conditions, which can cause human safety risks and property damage. FRWA performs stream crossing assessments through the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC). The FRWA intends to prioritize crossings for repair or replacement within the Farmington River Watershed. In 2022, stream crossing assessments were performed in the town of Canton, with 7 completed. FRCC supported the NAACC database with a membership. Results can be viewed on NAACC's website. www.naacc.org/naacc_data_center_home.cfm



Cherry Brook

FRCC provided a special grant to FRWA to monitoring Cherry Brook. Cherry Brook watershed is listed by CT DEEP as impaired for recreation on two segments for bacteria. Canton experienced severe drought in the summer, which brought low water levels and decreased stream flow, resulting in increased stormwater run-off and higher bacteria levels. Site CB-4140 on Meadow Rd. where the impaired segment starts had the highest *E. coli* values. Nutrients indicate pollution at Meadow Rd. Sawmill Brook consistently had high values of phosphorus, likely from the residential area upstream. Other sites with high nitrogen or phosphorus values can be due to drought and stormwater run-off. Drought brought stress

to all waterbodies in the summer of 2022, with only a 1 degree difference in temperature to the average for cold water fish, Cherry Brook fared well in terms of temperature. Macroinvertebrate surveys indicate high water quality at three sites. The one site with insufficient sensitive species can be the result of upstream habitat or drought.

GRANTS and LAND PROTECTION

As part of our effort to support local endeavors and enhance protection of the Upper Farmington River, FRCC offers small grants for applicable projects 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. Some of the projects FRCC supported this year are listed below:

Barkhamsted

Barkhamsted Historical Society – FRCC helped with the cost to replace a historically accurate roof at Squire’s Tavern in Peoples State Forest. FRCC’s office is located in Squire’s Tavern, and it is the place for our annual Open House event.

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, as this projects progresses.

Colebrook

FRCC help fund expenses for Colebrook Land Conservancy’s 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

The Town of Hartland together with FRWA is updating the Town Natural Resource Inventory maps and reports, with funding from FRCC.

The FRCC Land Protection Grant provided some transaction costs for the Hartland Land Trust to preserve their property’s wetlands and its uplands for water quality as well as for maintaining natural habitat for the rich diversity of plant and animal life on the property and significant outstanding resource values. The property drains into the west branch of the Wild and Scenic Farmington River, essential to the clean recreational and drinking water supply for the greater Hartford region. FRCC funding will include management plan which will guide HLT to preserve the conservation values of the property in perpetuity. Preserving the property will build on the existing protection of conservation lands in countering fragmentation and sensitive habitat loss and promoting connectivity.

New Hartford

Tree planting with Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited - On April 30, 2022, Farmington Valley TU members in conjunction with the Farmington River Watershed Association planted over 40 trees of various species along a 13 acre tract of land bordering the Farmington River across from Satan’s Kingdom State Recreation Area. In addition to the plantings, volunteers conducted invasive plant removals.

Winchester

The Winchester Land Trust (WLT) has recently acquired a 6.5-acre parcel from the Town of Winchester. FRCC awarded a grant to help with surveying fees of the Highview Drive parcel, which is adjacent to and creates a wildlife corridor between WLT’s 2- acre South Rd/ Locascio Property and the 120-acre Houlihan Woods/Michael Giordano Tribute Area. The forests in this area shelter many animals including eastern coyote, wild turkey, porcupine, beaver, red fox, raccoon, black bear, skunk, bobcat, and fisher. The Highview Drive parcel drains to a stream which connects to Burr Pond and then the Still River. The addition of 6.5 acres to protected land will conserve water quality, natural resources, and wildlife habitats.

EDUCATION and OUTREACH

FRCC's Education and Outreach subcommittee meets monthly to discuss educational programs, projects, outreach events, publications, and opportunities and bring grant proposals and ideas in line with the Management Plan to the full committee. Some of the areas of focus in 2022 are explained below.

River Steward Program

The FRCC River Steward Program was created and is run by Stephan Bastryzcki. Donna Bastryzcki, Stephan's wife and the Barkhamsted Recreation Director, generously volunteered with this program. FRCC hired five stewards in 2022 which started in June and worked through August. Unlike 2021 where the area saw unusually high precipitation, the summer of 2022 consisted of a severe extended drought. River flows were low and recreation on the water was affected. Tubing rides at Farmington River Tubing took longer. Boaters renting from Collinsville Canoe and Kayak sometimes were forced to drag boats over particularly low sections of river. For the anglers, fish were more stressed due to low water levels and higher temperatures, which lead to CT DEEP temporarily closing fishing.

The FRCC River Stewards engaged various river users. Through our partnerships with Collinsville Canoe and Kayak (CCK) and Farmington River Tubing (FRT) we are able to do on land and water. FRT allows the stewards to float through Satan's Kingdom on their tubes, and then take the bus back to the put-in area. This makes it easy for them to strike up casual conversations with other tubers, and also even perform trash cleanups that would be sometimes impossible to do from shore. CCK again this year graciously set aside four kayaks for the stewards to use on the flatwater section above Collinsville. Some of the most common questions the stewards reported getting this year were related to fishing, litter, river safety, upcoming events, learning more about what the stewards do, the Junior River Ranger Program and why the flows were so low.



River Steward Statistics and Data:

- Total paid hours for the Assistant Stewards: 1049
- Total volunteer hours: 90
- Estimated # of people engaged: 610
- # of garbage bags picked up with litter: 50
- Litter hotspots: Satan's Kingdom, People's State Forest, Church Pool, Party Rock in Collinsville, along West River Road

The stewards gathered user count data at Satan's Kingdom. The highest hourly river user count we saw in 2022 was on July 23rd from noon to 1PM. It was a clear day with the river flowing at 156 cfs, and we recorded 615 users per hour, which is similar to the highest numbers recorded in previous years: 428 FRT tubers, 131 independent tubers, 54 people on multi-person floats, 2 kayaks/canoes, and 26 coolers.

River Steward Team Accomplishments:

- Engaging river users on both land and water
- Installation of Wild & Scenic kiosks on state property
- Informational booths at events and at river + brochures to businesses, town halls, post offices, DEEP facilities
- Promoting the Junior River Ranger Program
- Trash Cleanups and Invasive Plant control work days
- Building relationships with local businesses
- Continued to grow our social media presence and created Steward videos
- River user and license plate counts
- Events: March in Fourth of July Parade, Meet the Stewards/Family Fun Day, 2 paddle with the stewards at Collinsville Canoe and Kayak
- Participate in the Town of Barkhamsted Summer Camp
- Continued Sister City partnership with Groundwork Bridgeport

In 2021, FRCC and Groundwork Bridgeport (GWB) established a partnership and 'Sister City' program. GWB came to the Farmington River four times and worked hand-in-hand with last year's steward team. This year we reciprocated by going to Bridgeport on two occasions. Funding to do this was supplied by a grant GWB had received. On the first trip our stewards learned some history of the area and then helped with a beach cleanup. The second trip our stewards took part in a Bio Blitz. These trips are great learning opportunities for the stewards. It gives them a chance to see a completely different environment than they do here on the Farmington, and learn what some of the issues are in an urban setting. Giving stewards an opportunity to learn skills and have experiences related to their college major is also important to the future success of the program.

Wild & Scenic Educational Kiosks

FRCC funded the building of new kiosks, by local carpenter, William A. Winchester, Jr. Kiosks were replaced on CT DEEP and MDC properties, with help from the River Steward Team, FRCC reps, CT DEEP, and MDC. A big thanks to the crew from CT DEEP Maintenance and to MDC for their help in providing equipment and labor to get this done. New panels were reviewed by FRCC Education & Outreach subcommittee and installed.

Farmington River Quilt Project

The Quilt was on display at the Simsbury Public Library February and March; Canton Public Library April and May; Southbury Public Library in June and July; and the Burlington Public Library in September and October. To see the entire quilt virtually, visit farmingtonriverquilt.org



EVENTS

Earth Day Cooperative Farmington River Cleanup

FRCC participated in the 2nd Earth Day Cooperative Farmington River Cleanup, organized by the Farmington River Anglers Association, and in partnership with the Farmington River Watershed Association, Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited. The cleanup was a great success with approximately 100 volunteers filling a large dumpster full from trash collected along the river from below Hogback Dam to Collinsville. A thank you to the volunteers with raffle prizes was held at Hurley Business Park in New Hartford after the cleanup.

Barkhamsted Nature Day Festival

The family-friendly event was held at Matthies Grove Pavilion, Peoples State Forest, Barkhamsted, and was co-sponsored by the Town of Barkhamsted, Friends of American Legion and Peoples State Forest, and FRCC.



FRCC and DEEP Paddling Event

FRCC hosted a summer paddling event with staff from CT DEEP to discuss issues, concerns, and opportunities for the Wild & Scenic Farmington River.

FRCC Open House

FRCC was pleased to get back to hosting the Open House event at Squire's Tavern in October 2022 with artwork, historic photographs of the river, live music from Travelin' Trout, and a large gathering of river folk.

Wild & Scenic Film Festival

FRCC was proud to yet again help host the Wild & Scenic Film Festival along with the Farmington River Watershed Association. The greater Farmington River community came together at the Canton Town Hall Auditorium and virtually. Over 300 people enjoyed celebrating the river and learning about Wild & Scenic designation.

ANNUAL REPORT 2022—OVERVIEW OF EXPENDITURES

Resource Stewardship - \$46,237.12

Invasive Plant Program
Water Quality Monitoring Program
Land Protection Assistance
Stream Crossing Surveys

Education and Outreach - \$75,742.21

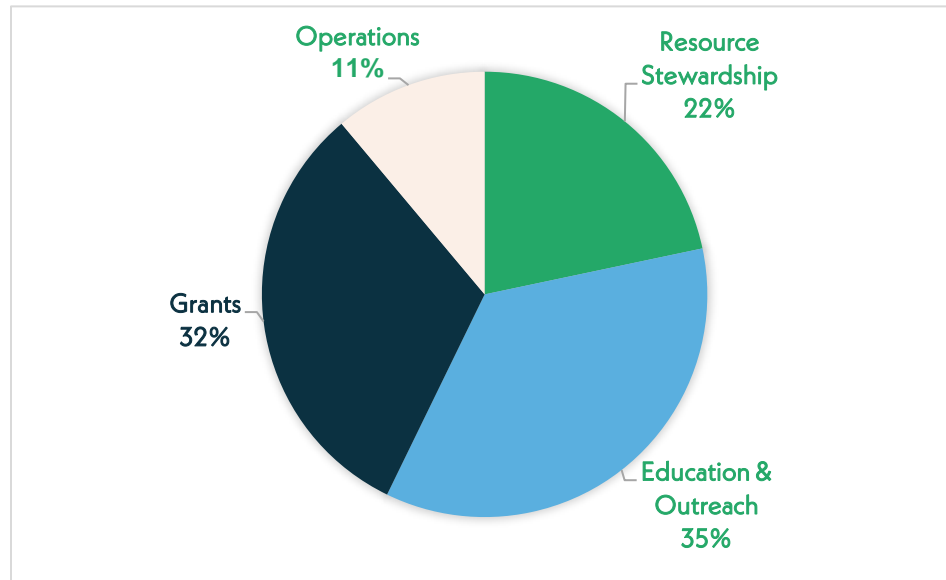
Kiosks
River Steward Program
Publications and website
Farmington River Quilt Project

Grants - \$67,540.45

Operations - \$23,668.12

Operational Expenses

Indirect - \$15,000



The federal fiscal year is from 10/1/2021 to 9/30/22 (some funds from previous years where paid out in 2022 as this year is the final of a 5 year cooperative agreement). Fiscal year 2022 total \$228,187.90

THE 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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WEBSITES

FarmingtonRiver.org
FarmingtonRiverSteward.org
FarmingtonRiverQuilt.org