



Farmington River News



We have so much to tell you— take a look inside! Thank you for being a true Farmington River friend!

Activities and Issues in the Farmington River Watershed

Meet FRWA's Summer Interns: Ciara, David and Kelsey!

FRWA has three interns joining our team for the summer sampling season! They will perform *E. coli* bacteria sampling and lab assessments, assist in deployment of several HOBO temperature dataloggers, conduct biological surveys, and help us with our conservation efforts on the Frey Property.



From left: Ciara, David, and Kelsey

Ciara Kilkenny is a Central Connecticut State University student majoring in biology with a concentration in environmental science. She says, "I am very excited to be working with FRWA for the summer, allowing me the opportunity to be able to expand my knowledge of river assessment and water quality, as well as learning new skills and working with new people!"

Growing up between the Everglades and the Atlantic, David Baldwin grew an affinity for the environmental and watershed sciences. In March of 2022 they were named a Yale Conservation Scholar and assigned as an intern for the FRWA for this summer. His background is in biogeochemistry and applied ecology, an interdisciplinary study of environmental science, data science, chemistry, and justice.

Kelsey Murray is an Environmental Geography & Sustainability major at Central Connecticut State University. She says, "I'm passionate about the environment and excited for the opportunity to be part of the team at FRWA."

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Frey Property Tree Planting

This spring, volunteers from Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited (FVTU) came together with FRWA staff to enhance the meadow and riparian habitats on the Frey Property, a 13-acre plot of riverside land that was donated to FRWA by Lily Frey. A total of 41 native birch, maple, cottonwood, dogwood, oak, sycamore, and willow trees were donated and strategically planted to help stabilize river and pond banks while helping to provide wildlife habitat and refuge. FRWA is installing several wildlife cameras as well as a continuous temperature datalogger in order to help us monitor environmental changes as we enhance the habitat quality at this site.





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FRWA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the Farmington River and its Watershed through research, education, and advocacy.

FRWA Partner Events- Summer 2022

The Farmington River Quilt is Visiting the Pomperaug Watershed!

The Farmington River Quilt features 24 artist's interpretations of sections of the Upper Wild & Scenic corridor from Goodwin Dam to Canton. Each unique piece is accompanied by a message from the artist describing what inspired them to create it. Visit the Southbury Public Library in June and July to view the display! Presented by the Farmington River Coordinating Committee.



**Farmington River
Coordinating Committee**

Scan the QR code or visit farmingtonriverquilt.org to learn more, and to see where the quilt will be hanging this summer.



Unearthing History: The Discovery of a 12,500 year old Paleo-Indian Site Along the Farmington River in Avon, CT

Experts in the field of early genetics, ice age animals, Paleo-Indian foodways and trade routes and ancient DNA will provide background and help in understanding the rich nature of the Brian D. Jones site. Hosted by the Avon Public Library, and funded by the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee's Grants Program.

Thursday, September 15, 7 PM: *Looking into the Past with Ancient DNA*

Presented by Christina Balentine and Samantha Archer, PhD

candidates and research scholars at the UConn Dept. of Anthropology. They will present a broad overview of ancient DNA (aDNA) research past and present, discuss the ethical considerations of working with priceless aDNA samples, and highlight their own dissertation research using aDNA.



Scan the QR code to register

Visit the Partnership Wild & Scenic Library Displays

Learn why 61.7 miles of the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook in Connecticut are protected under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Hosted by the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee.

June- East Granby Public Library, 24 East Center Street

July- Granby Public Library, 15 North Granby Road



Bristol Green Team Park Cleanups

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth, and Community Services is seeking volunteers to help clean up Bristol Parks! Come lend a hand, and the Green Team will provide you with supplies when you arrive.

Saturday, July 9, 9 AM at Rockwell Park, meet at the Front Entrance Arch

Saturday, August 13, 9 AM at Veterans Memorial Boulevard, meet at the Wozenski Way Parking Lot

No registration required! Visit bristolct.myrec.com to learn more.





FRWA Events– Summer 2022

FRWA Summer Twilight Paddle

Thursday, July 21, 5 PM-7:30 PM, Collinsville Canoe & Kayak, 41 Bridge Street, Collinsville, CT, rain date Thursday, July 28

Come say hello to FRWA staff, enjoy the sounds of Collinsville's Music on Main series, and make new friends while exploring the river. CCK will be offering \$10 canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard rentals to FRWA members, volunteers, and river friends!



Visit the events page on frwa.org for registration information

Libraries Love Lakes Family Fun Night

Tuesday, July 19, 5 PM-6 PM, at Burlington Public Library, 1 Speilman Road, Burlington, CT

July is Lakes Appreciation Month! Join Heather Geist, FRWA's Education and Outreach Manager, to celebrate with storytime, arts & crafts, and a live secchi disk demonstration!

Community Science Opportunity– Help Us Monitor Aquatic Insects and Critters

Saturday, September 10, 10 AM, location TBA, rain date Saturday, September 17

This year's RBV training will be held in the Cherry Brook watershed in Canton, CT. Training consists of one virtual presentation followed by one day in the field. Virtual training will provide an overview of the CT Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Riffle Bioassessment for Volunteers (RBV) program, demonstrate collection and identification techniques and explain the use of aquatic organisms in water quality monitoring. For the in-stream sampling, participants wade into the water, collect organisms into a net, sort and identify and preserve a representative sample for verification. This event requires wading through rocky streambeds, so wear appropriate clothing and be ready to get your hands dirty!

If you would like to train to conduct RBV, send an email to hgeist@frwa.org.

Save the Date for the 35th Annual Farmington River Cleanup

Saturday, September 23, 9 AM-11 AM, rain date Sunday, September 24

FRWA hosts this annual event as part of the Connecticut River Conservancy's Source to Sea Cleanup. Come along and beautify the Farmington River while stopping litter from making its way into Long Island Sound. We will be sending out teams all throughout the watershed.

Do you know of any spots along the river that could use a clean-up? We are always looking for new sites! Send your tips to hgeist@frwa.org.



River Cleanup site leaders needed!

We need dedicated site leaders throughout the watershed to hand out bags and gloves as well as to direct volunteers to clean-up locations.

If you would like to be a site leader please email hgeist@frwa.org



How Bad Is It ...to use pesticides on my lawn?

The summer months provide time for outdoor enjoyment and relaxation. It is also a busy season for biting insects and other pests. Many products and services are marketed heavily to rid your yard of these unwanted guests, but at what cost? Sprays can drift and contaminate our air. Pesticide runoff can contaminate groundwater and drinking water supplies, and it can decimate healthy ecosystems in local waterbodies.

Many pesticides have been linked to cancer, neurological toxicity, reproductive issues, and developmental impairment in humans. Federal regulations do not require toxicity testing for any pesticides that are not used on food, but they can still be sold for residential use. Furthermore, pesticides are tested for toxicity on a standalone basis even though many of them are sold in conjunction with **other chemicals**. The popular “Weed & Feed” product is a combination of three different pesticides as well as a variety of additives. Many of these chemicals are known to be harmful on their own, however no research is conducted to determine their combined, or *synergistic*, toxic effects in humans.

If you want to control pests naturally, there are many aromatic plants that release pest-repellent chemicals. These include a variety of herbs and flowers that you may already know! Chrysanthemums release natural pyrethrum, and pot marigolds repel a variety of unwanted insects while attracting beneficial species. Alliums are regarded as a broad-spectrum natural insecticide, and nasturtiums produce edible flowers that repel various bugs and beetles.

Scan the QR code or visit the River-Friendly Landscaping page on frwa.org for a full table of plants that you can use to keep pests out of your yard!



*These plants release pest-repellant chemicals!
Clockwise from top left: Chrysanthemum, Pot Marigold, Allium, Nasturtium*

In a study of 30 common pesticides:

22/30 were toxic to birds

29/30 were toxic to bees

30/30 were toxic to fish and aquatic macroinvertebrates

Instead of pesticides, try planting a container garden with some of these *mosquito-repellant plants*:

- Basil
- Catnip
- Floss Flower
- Geranium
- Lantana
- Lavender
- Lemon Balm
- Lemongrass
- Marigold
- Mint
- Rosemary
- Thyme

Sources and images: beyondpesticides.org • ehhi.org • farmersalmanac.com • thespruce.com • treehugger.com

FRWA Spring Outreach– What Have We Been Up To?



FRWA teamed up with FRAA in New Hartford for their Earth Day Cleanup this year.

We’ve had a busy year so far! For Earth Week, FRWA staff hosted booths at the Bristol Central High School and Tunxis Community College environmental fairs, advocated stormwater best practices in Canton and New Hartford, assisted in the Farmington River Anglers Association (FRAA) River Cleanup, and chatted with watershed residents at the Barkhamsted Earth Day Festival. We planted 41 native trees on the Frey Property with Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited to close out the month of April. FRWA also conducted biological assessments for aquatic macroinvertebrates in the Nepaug River with the Montessori School of Greater Hartford in April and May!



FRWA Research and Outreach– Summer 2022

2022 Water Quality Monitoring

FRWA has added 11 new *E. coli* bacteria monitoring sites this year in the Cherry Brook watershed in Canton, CT. We've also installed two new HOBO temperature loggers in the Cherry Brook watershed, one in Indian Meadow Brook in Winchester, CT, one in Sandy Brook in Colebrook, CT, and one on the Frey property in New Hartford, CT. We submit temperature and *E. coli* data to the CT DEEP, and our *E. coli* data is posted on frwa.org.



FRWA has installed 5 new HOBO temperature dataloggers in the watershed this year!

FRWA monitors *E. coli* bacteria during the recreation season from June until August. Scan the QR code to view FRWA's *E. coli* data



Why Do We Monitor for Water Quality?

FRWA conducts chemical, physical, and biological monitoring in tributaries and water bodies throughout the Farmington River Watershed. These measurements allow us 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.

What we are monitoring	Total sites	New sites for 2022
Chloride	17	17
<i>E. coli</i> bacteria	67	11
Temperature	18	5

Thank you, Simsbury!

FRWA extends our gratitude to the Town of Simsbury Water Pollution Control Authority for allowing us to use their lab facilities to process our bacteria samples this summer.



FRWA Receives Diversify Whitewater Grant for Paddling Tour

FRWA has been awarded with funding from Diversify Whitewater to invite fifty participants from the Greater Hartford Area on a paddling tour! Diversify Whitewater is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in paddlesports by removing the barriers that exist for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and allies in kayaking, canoeing, rafting, and stand-up paddleboarding. Paddlers will travel from the mouth of the Farmington River in Windsor, CT to Windsor Meadows State Park, just underneath the Bissell Bridge on the Connecticut River.



If you would like to nominate a group to participate in this event, please send an email to hgeist@frwa.org.



River Spotlight: **Satan's Kingdom**– Route 44, New Hartford, CT

How did Satan's Kingdom get its diabolical name? One old legend tells of how the devil himself would use the gorge as his personal playground, until the archangel Gabriel blew his horn and banished all demons from the region. Another theory is that the steep slopes of the gorge provided safe haven for societal outcasts during the 1800s. More stories tell of a farmer's curse on the rocky soil and references to the many deaths that occurred there during the construction of the New Haven & Northampton Railroad. Today, however, the name Satan's Kingdom is synonymous with summertime fun.

The rapids that run through this gorge have been popular with whitewater enthusiasts for decades. Connecticut has deemed the rapids a state recreation area, and FRCC and the River Steward Team work to promote river etiquette practices to ensure that the high levels of recreation are not harming the river's natural resources. Learn more about FRCC's work at farmingtonriver.org.

Farmington River Tubing provides tube and floatation vest rentals, parking, facilities, and shuttle buses during the summer months. You can visit Farmington River Tubing at 92 Main Street, New Hartford, CT, or online at farmingtonrivertubing.com.

Sources and images: hmdb.org • farmingtonrivertubing.com • atlasobscura.com



Satan's Kingdom, 1930



Tubers at Satan's Kingdom

Creature Feature: Great Blue Heron- *Ardea herodias*

Standing up to 5 feet tall with a nearly 6 foot wingspan, the largest of all herons holds its neck in an "S" curve as its wings beat slowly in flight. Herons are found in marine or freshwater coastlines, rivers, lakes, and ponds, as well as in larger wetland habitats.



Adult herons (right) have blue-gray body feathers, black shoulders, shaggy feathers on the neck and back, white head, and a black plume that begins at the corner of the eye and extends behind the head.

An immature heron (left) lacks shaggy feathers on the neck and back, as well as the distinct black stripe. Their body feathers are gray-brown with a black cap on the head.



Feeding Habits: Herons prefer fish, but they also eat crabs, insects, snakes, amphibians, and small mammals. They hunt by standing or slowly wading in shallow water, tracking their prey.

Migration patterns: Most New England herons begin their journey south by mid-autumn and return in the spring, but a few prefer to stay for the winter in coastal areas or open freshwater.

Brooding habits: Rookeries of up to 50 pairs return to the same nests each year. Nests are built in dead trees, shrubs, or reed beds, and can measure up to 4 feet across. The female heron lays 3-5 green-blue eggs that hatch after 4 weeks. Young herons fly at about 2 months old, and they become independent at 3 months.

Status: This heron, along with its nest and eggs, is protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Herons were once threatened by hunting, habitat loss, and pollution, but today they are plentiful in CT and MA.

Sources: usgs.gov • ctaudobon.org • massaudobon.org Photo credit: Rick Warters (top right)



Much Of Our Work Is Not Possible Without YOU!

Did you know that support from our members comprises one third of our budget?

This winter FRWA embarked on a new program sampling for chloride in our rivers and streams. Chloride runoff from road salt application is becoming an increasing problem in surface waters. It can be harmful to aquatic animals, and it does not always get washed downstream and back to the ocean. We were able to start that monitoring program without a grant source due to support from our members.

Your donations allow us to be nimble when the time is right. These donations allow us to take on new programs for which we have not yet secured grant funding. They also allow us to buy supplies for the FRWA office, and they keep **the lights on while we're waiting on grant funding.**

Thanks to you, citizens have someone to call upon for information and help with public comments and advocacy issues. Together we are a stronger voice for river-friendly decisions and policies. We thank you, our valued members, for your continued support that makes our work possible.

Scan the QR code to show your support by donating online to FRWA today!



Event Spotlight- **Alisa's Retirement Celebration**

This May, the FRWA Board of Directors hosted a fantastic party to celebrate longtime staffers Alisa Phillips-Griggs and Aimee Petras. The party was complete with a river-themed cake and a ten-piece bluegrass band! Alisa recently retired, and she is now training to become a Master Naturalist so that she may continue to conserve the watershed that she calls home. Aimee is fully dedicated to watershed preservation and restoration, and she was appointed as the FRWA Executive Director in 2021. Congratulations Aimee and Alisa!



Remember that FRWA is a 501(c)(3) organization, so gifts are tax deductible, and its vitality depends upon you.

Prefer to mail in your gift? Send this slip to the address below.

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Please send to: Farmington River Watershed Association, 749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

Credit card donations may be submitted online at www.frwa.org via our secure online contributions server.



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FRWA 2022 Summer Events

Saturday, July 9– Bristol Green Team Cleanup at Rockwell Park

Tuesday, July 19- Burlington Public Library Lakes Appreciation Month Family Fun Night

Thursday, July 21- FRWA Summer Twilight Paddle at CCK

Saturday, August 13- **Bristol Green Team Cleanup at Veteran's Memorial Boulevard**

Saturday, September 10- FRWA RBV Training

Thursday, September 15- *Looking into the Past with Ancient DNA* webinar

Saturday, September 23- 35th Annual Farmington River Clean-up

Scan the QR code to visit frwa.org, where you can find a full list of our upcoming events with registration information!



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