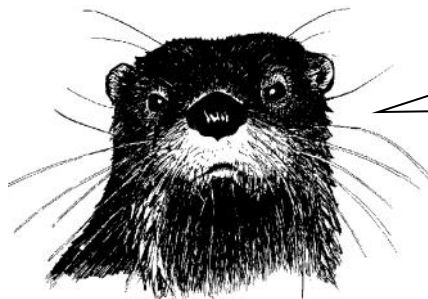




Farmington River News



We have so much to tell you—please take a look! Thanks for being a true Farmington River friend.

Issues and Activities in the Farmington River Watershed

A Summer of Accomplishments...and Some Emerging Issues

This summer was busy for FRWA with several major projects completed and new ones launched. We built our largest rain garden yet—at Bristol's Page Park—and we assisted the Pequabuck River Watershed Association with another rain garden across the street at the Bristol Eastern High School. We expanded our widely-respected water quality monitoring program into the Massachusetts headwaters of the Farmington River with seventeen new sites. We welcomed two new summer River Stewards who helped us conduct our annual water sampling research. And we began assembling the guiding committee for the newly-designated Wild and Scenic Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook. But there were challenges too.

This summer quickly kicked into high gear with a dramatic PFAS chemical spill into the Farmington River that garnered nationwide attention and led to a new statewide task force. Colebrook River Lake Dam is scheduled for a repair project with possible impacts for the West Branch. And Rainbow Reservoir in Windsor was hit with a serious blue-green algae bloom. For more information on these emerging issues in the Farmington Valley—and more!—keep reading.



Thanks to Team ESPN (photo left) for their help installing the Page Park Rain Garden. The rain garden is functioning well, and, since the plants flowered, we have observed both Monarch caterpillars and butterflies.



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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.

Summer River Steward Interns

We had a great summer with our 2019 River Stewards Paige Vichiola and Heather Bourgoïn. Both Paige and Heather studied Biology and Environmental Sciences at Central Connecticut State University. Heather is already a graduate and Paige has just one semester to go!

Along with their usual responsibilities sampling streams, analyzing bacteria samples in the lab, surveying culvert stream crossings, and conducting macroinvertebrate surveys, Heather and Paige helped us develop our new water monitoring program in Massachusetts. They helped identify potential monitoring locations on the map, drove around to scout out safe parking, and scrambled down rocky streambanks looking for safe access to the Farmington River and tributary streams throughout the Massachusetts portion of our watershed. Together, we've monitored seventeen new sites in our beautiful Massachusetts headwaters throughout the summer.



Paige Vichiola (left) and Heather Bourgoïn (right) during summer water quality sampling.

Regional Land Trust Summit

October 10, 7:00 - 8:30 PM, East Granby Library
Co-hosted by the East Granby Land Trust and FRWA

Please join us to get to know your neighboring land trust colleagues, share your land trust's experiences and challenges, offer advice on what's working, and get some advice on what could work better for your land trust and for your region. Regional Roundtables are free and open to all land trust members and others that are interested.

Light refreshments will be served. CLCC regional roundtables are free and open to all land trust board members, municipal land use commissioners and others who are interested.

Space is limited. RSVP is appreciated. Please contact CLCC Executive Director Amy B. Paterson: abpaterson@ctconservation.org or 860-614-8537.



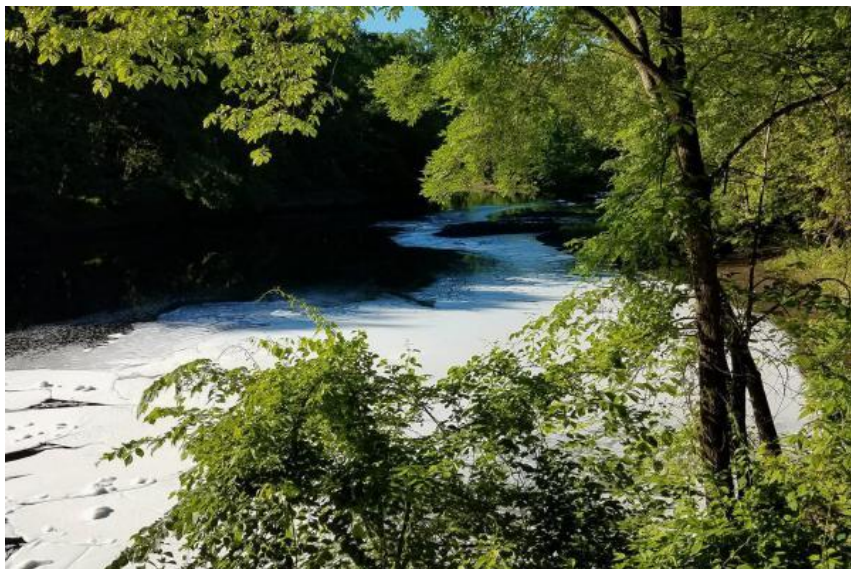
A New Threat – Forever Chemicals

The June 8th discharge of thousands of gallons of firefighting foam into the Farmington River in Windsor – caused by a fire system malfunction at a hangar at Bradley Airport – has opened FRWA's eyes to the urgent pollution threat of toxic PFAS chemicals. Nicknamed "forever chemicals" because they persist in the environment and our bodies for many years, PFAS chemicals are found in numerous consumer products and are often used in firefighting foam. PFAS chemicals travel up the food chain and accumulate in fish, wildlife, and people. They can harm human health, increasing cancer risk in the liver and kidneys, disrupting hormones, and causing thyroid and immune system disorders.

Since the June 8th spill, FRWA has been moving as aggressively as possible on two tracks to protect the Farmington River. First, we have been working with key partners and regulators to ensure that the Windsor PFAS spill is cleaned up properly and that it does not reoccur. And, second, we have been participating in the new statewide PFAS Task Force to help develop state-level recommendations for comprehensive prevention of PFAS pollution over the long term.

While we have made some early progress, much more needs to be done to keep the Farmington River safe from PFAS pollution. Currently, much of the Windsor stretch of the Farmington River is closed to fishing for food, and local businesses there are taking economic hits due to lost river recreation. More PFAS testing by CT DEEP is planned for the spill site, including for the river sediment downstream of the MDC outfall. Depending on the results, river dredging may be an option.

FRWA will keep you informed as the search for solutions plays out. Please stay tuned.



Firefighting foam in the Farmington River in Windsor—June 2019. Image source: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Protecting the River's Health

Our mission charges us with protecting the Farmington River and its watershed lands. We can't do that without your vigilance and help. Here are some growing challenges to keep an eye on:

Blue-Green Algae: Also known as cyanobacteria, this organism thrives in warm, shallow, nutrient-rich lakes. When it blooms, or grows quickly, the water will take on a deep green color. Blooms often occur in late summer or fall and can sometimes produce toxins harmful to people and dogs. A major blue-green algae bloom occurred this summer in Rainbow Reservoir on the Farmington River. The lengthening summers and hotter days caused by climate change are expected to worsen these blooms.

Renewed Development Pressure: An always present threat, development pressure along the river corridor has picked up recently with significant new land use proposals pending, or likely, in Avon, Farmington, and Simsbury. The Farmington River is healthiest when it enjoys the protection of undeveloped riverside land. These buffers act as natural, efficient water filters, keeping the River and its tributaries clean and cool. River buffers will become ever more crucial as climate change brings more frequent and heavier downpours.

Colebrook River Lake Dam

Repair: Built as a flood control project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the late 1960s, the Colebrook River Lake Dam is located on the West Branch of the Farmington River and is a critical part of the flood control system for our watershed. The Army Corps needs to repair the Dam's gates and intends to undertake those repairs this year. To access the gates, the West Branch Reservoir – controlled by MDC's Hogback Dam – will need to be drawn down 70 feet. FRWA has been involved in various discussions concerning this repair project and possible downstream impacts on river flow and river temperatures.



Volunteers Needed! September 28, 10 AM-2 PM Farmington River Cleanup

Want to spend a morning outside, on the banks of a beautiful river or stream, helping to make it look even better? Every year FRWA hosts a River Cleanup along the banks of the Farmington River from Winsted to Windsor. It's a great opportunity to do something wonderful for your river.

We will provide all the supplies for the big day (gloves and bags), as well as snacks including sandwiches from Antonio's and pizza. We are on the lookout for pick-up trucks or other large vehicles that can help us get trash to the dumpsters donated by Waste Material Trucking Company of Unionville.

So where will you be? We do need lots of volunteers! If you are part of another group that might be interested, please let us know. Join us to meet your watershed neighbors and help us keep your neighborhood clean; it's a great opportunity to make new friends. Please call FRWA at 860-658-4442 or email apetras@frwa.org to register.



Cleanup locations include Avon, Bloomfield, Barkhamsted, Collinsville, Farmington, Simsbury and Windsor. Call FRWA to sign up yourself, your family, or your group for the Cleanup at (860) 658-4442 or email your registration with a preferred meet up location to apetras@frwa.org. See you there!

Wild & Scenic Film Festival—November 2, 6:30-9 PM

Join us to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic River designation on the Upper 14-miles of the Farmington River AND the newly designated Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook (adding 62 rivers miles) signed into law this March! FRWA is curating a collection of pertinent short documentaries, including **Run Wild Run Free - 50 years of Wild and Scenic River.** It will be a fun and illuminating evening with guest



speakers, light refreshments, door prizes, and raffle on Saturday, November 2, 6:30 to 9 PM at the Canton Town Hall Auditorium in the center of historic Collinsville.

Visit www.frwa.org for more information! All proceeds go to FRWA to continue our efforts preserving, protecting, and restoring the Farmington River.

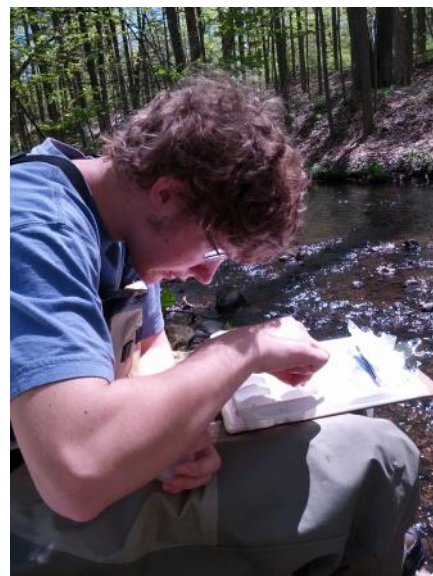


Join our Citizen Science RBV Team - Help Sample Aquatic Insects

RBV (Rapid Biomonitoring for Volunteer) workshops train volunteers to sample water quality by learning how to net and identify the aquatic macro-invertebrates (insects) that live in our streams. The types, number, and diversity of these aquatic macro-invertebrates are indicators of water quality. Results help FRWA and the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection identify high-quality streams and monitor water quality changes in the Watershed. Data informs an online annual report by CT DEEP. FRWA will hold a two-part training and sampling workshop:

FRWA RBV Workshop, Part 1, Indoor: Thursday, September 26, from 7-9 PM at FRWA, 749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury. Overview of the CT DEEP's RBV program; we will provide materials, demonstrate techniques, and explain the use of aquatic organisms in water quality monitoring.

FRWA RBV Workshop, Part 2, Outdoor: Saturday, October 5, from 9 AM - Noon, (location TBD). Following the indoor training, participants will be able to participate in stream sampling. Experienced team leaders will be on hand to guide you through the process. No experience necessary and older children are welcome with an accompanying adult. Sampling will be held rain or shine; dress weather-appropriately and bring footwear for wading in water.



FRWA Aquatic Insect Sampling (RBV) Workshop (Whole day, both Indoor then Outdoor portions) Saturday, September 28, 2019, 9 AM - 4 PM, Barnes Nature Center, Bristol

Advance registration required, email river@frwa.org or call 860-658-4442 x202 to register. Also, please let us know if you have a good, accessible riffle on a clean, rocky, babbling brook flowing through your property that you would allow us to access to sample.

Stream Bugs & Pond Critters - September 29, 10-12 PM

Discover the fascinating underwater life of our Watershed with FRWA Water Quality Monitoring as we explore Walton Pond and Poplar Swamp Brook at beautiful Winding Trails in Farmington. Spend the morning pond-side and wading in the brook to observe, identify, and marvel at the life histories and ecology of insects and other creatures that inhabit still and flowing waters. Learn how and why we use aquatic insects in our watershed-wide water quality monitoring.

We will provide nets, buckets and expertise; you need only bring your curious mind. We meet at Nature's Porch, which is Winding Trails' beautiful certified Connecticut grown building. We will go outdoors rain or shine. Please dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear to wade in shallow water (water shoes, old sneakers, or waders.) This program is open to all ages but children must be accompanied by an adult. *Registration is required by 3 days prior to the event; please register through the Winding Trails website: www.windingtrails.org/register/?id=981.*





Final Draft of the Pequabuck River Watershed-Based Plan

FRWA is nearing the completion of our "watershed-based plan" for the Pequabuck River Basin. The purpose of the plan is to address one very specific problem: pollution from multiple ("non-point") sources that enters the river via rainstorms and snowmelt. Non-point source pollution in stormwater runoff is the primary form of pollution in our watershed. It includes sediment, petrochemicals, pesticides, bacteria from animal waste, and a host of other substances. It's a major problem in paved areas, where contaminated stormwater spills straight into waterways without being filtered and detoxified by plants or soil. A plan for the Pequabuck is a first step toward reducing its stormwater pollution.

Once approved, municipalities and local groups can use the plan as a guidance document to improve the water quality along the Pequabuck and its two major basins, the Coppermine Brook and the Poland River. The plan can be read in draft form by visiting FRWA.org and clicking on our Current News section. We are accepting feedback until **September 17. Attend our September 26th meeting in the Bristol Public Library on September 26, 10:30am to learn about the Final Pequabuck River Watershed-Based Plan and next steps.**

Best Management Practices Tour Pequabuck River Watershed October 5, 2019, 10 AM - 12:30 PM

Join us as we tour locations throughout the Pequabuck River watershed and discuss with experts the value of installations designed to improve the health of our river and our drinking water. This tour is designed to inform land use officials and others interested in environmental solutions aimed at creating a healthy watershed. Locations on the tour include the Middle Street / Brass Mill Dam, Southeast Business Park Stormwater Management Area, and Rockwell Park. Tour is \$10 per person, to RSVP email pequabuckriverct@gmail.com.

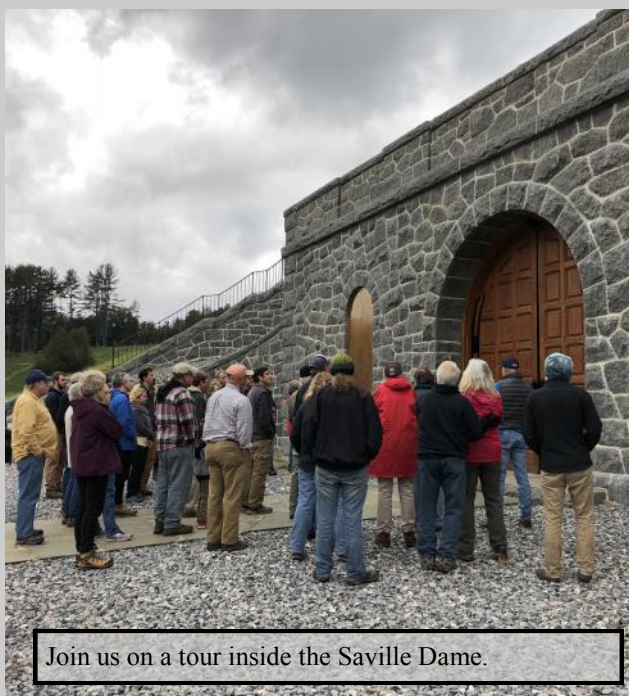
Saville Dam & Old Barkhamsted Hollow Tour Saturday October 19, 2019, 10-3 PM

Join us for a tour deep inside the bowels of the Saville Dam followed by a trek to some of the old Barkhamsted foundations spared inundation as the Barkhamsted Reservoir filled. We complete our tour with a visit to the relocated and renovated old Barkhamsted Center schoolhouse. The history and preservation of our watershed is interwoven with the story of the Metropolitan District and the pursuit of clean drinking water for Greater Hartford.

The operator of the Saville Dam will guide us through the earthen embankment impoundment that backs up the 30 billion gallon Barkhamsted reservoir providing drinking water for Greater Hartford. After touring the dam, we venture onto the reservoir lands where the MDC forester will explain how the MDC manages forest diversity for water quality.

Then Barkhamsted Historian, Erik Landgraf, will guide us around the relics of old Barkhamsted Hollow, a village mostly flooded by the creation of the Barkhamsted Reservoir in 1940. Structures that were not flooded were torn down or moved by the water company, but not without a trace. Mr. Landgraf will bring the old town roaring back to life as he regales us with vignettes of life in the village, as past and present eerily meet. Then it's on to the old Barkhamsted Center schoolhouse; we'll see what you remember from your school days.

Pre-registration is required, space is limited, contact FRWA at (860) 658-4442, or email: river@frwa.org to register. Tour begins at 10:00 a.m., dress for the weather, wear footwear to walk in the woods, and pack a lunch and water. Cost: \$20 per FRWA member; \$25 Non-member (prepayment guarantees space).



Join us on a tour inside the Saville Dam.



We Don't Do This Work Alone—Thank You for Your Continued Support!

We often field questions at the office from the public about what they have seen while enjoying the river. This summer was no exception and included reports of blue-green algae in Rainbow Reservoir, various photos of weeds (aquatic and terrestrial) asking if they are invasive, exciting wildlife sightings, and questions about where the Windsor PFAS spill occurred and health concerns. We also take calls from concerned residents asking if FRWA is tracking this new development proposal/zoning amendment/public hearing happening in their town. All of this activity is outside of what our program grants typically fund, but it is critical to our mission (and we love it!).

And our work is a true shared endeavor. We are fortunate to have a community of dedicated volunteers, advocates, and donors who pitch in. These include dedicated water monitoring volunteers that sample routes every other week come rain or shine (thank you, Dave and Susan!) and our tireless advocates from Farmington Valley towns (you know who you are!) who make sure we can attend critical public hearings so the river gets the voice it deserves. With 23 Connecticut towns in the Farmington River Watershed it would be daunting to keep track of urgent town matters without so many friends and allies.



Our wonderful 2019 River Stewards out in the field.

Approximately 1/3 of FRWA's budget comes from the support of people like you reading this newsletter. Because of you, we can win amazing grant and foundation support for our innovative programs and research. Please continue your support by filling out the form below or by donating online!

FRWA Donation Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Check one: ☐ **I want to donate now:**
☐ **\$40** ☐ **\$60** ☐ **\$120** ☐ **\$150** ☐ **\$250** ☐ **\$_____ other amount**

____ I have enclosed my check payable to FRWA, or please charge my MasterCard or Visa. (circle one)

Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Code: _____

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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 or
phoned in to Aimee Petras at (860) 658-4442 x 201.



FRWA Fall 2019 Events

September 26	Pequabuck River Watershed-Based Plan Presentation—10:30 a.m., Bristol Public Library
September 26	FRWA Aquatic Insect Sampling (RBV) Workshop (Part 1: Indoor portion), Simsbury
September 28	Farmington River Cleanup, various locations in the Watershed
September 28	FRWA Aquatic Insect Sampling (RBV) Workshop (Whole day, Indoor & outdoor), Bristol
September 29	Stream Bugs & Pond Critters, Nature's Porch, Winding Trails
October 5	FRWA Aquatic Insect Sampling (RBV) Workshop (Part 2: Outdoor portion)
October 5	Best Management Practices Tour of Bristol
October 19	Saville Dam Tour, Barkhamsted
November 2	Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Town Hall Auditorium, Collinsville

Visit FRWA.org for the entire list of events and registration requirements or check our Facebook page.

Follow us on social media!



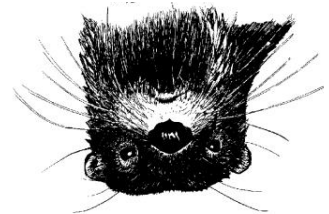
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